

“What can we make with this?”
Creating Relevant Art Education Practices
in Rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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Abstract**“What can we make with this?” Creating relevant art education practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa****April Renee Mandrona, PhD
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My doctoral dissertation, “What can we make with this? Creating relevant art education practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa” explores the possibilities and limitations of art education with a focus on young people in after-school and community settings. Using a postcolonial feminist framework and invoking methods of community art education and critical ethnography, “What can we make with this?” also investigates theories and practices of rural development, research in the Global South, and the challenges of working in a context deeply affected by poverty, structural racism, anti-child bias, systemic violence, and HIV and AIDS. Using an asset-based approach to build relevant and meaningful art practices, the project focuses on identifying and using resources (materials, tools, techniques) that are accessible to participants within their surrounding environments. This includes recycled/repurposed materials, naturally occurring substances such as clay, and locally donated goods such as fabric. In my analysis of these creative activities, I highlight the relational complexities of engaging in localized art making as well as the political genealogy of material production and art education in these rural communities. Central to this investigation is self-reflexivity and ethical self-inquiry as I explore my capacities to attend, to listen and respond to the realities and experiences of others. This ethical navigation is linked to the practice of building transnational solidarity with these groups of young people. My research shows that within the context of significant personal and socio-economic challenges, young people are capable of remarkable agency and innovation as well as making significant contributions to the dialogue around issues of concern in their lives.

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Acronyms

AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ANC: (South) African National Congress

ASDY: Arts, Social Development and Youth Programme

BCM: Black Consciousness Movement

BEd: Bachelor of Education

CAPS: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements

CAC: South African-Flemish Community Arts Centre Project

CVMSC: Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change

DAC: Department of Arts and Culture

DBE: Department of Basic Education

DoE: Department of Education

DOL: Department of Labour

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSRC: (South African) Human Sciences Research Council

IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party

KZN: KwaZulu-Natal

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

NGO: Non-government Organisation

NP: (South African) National Party

NSC: National Curriculum Statement

NYACHE: National Youth, Arts, Culture and Heritage Campaign

OBE: Outcomes-based Education

RTEP: Rural Teacher Education Programme

SACP: South African Communist Party

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UDF: United Democratic Front

UKZN: University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNAIDS: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNISA: University of South Africa

YAP: Youth Into Arts Programme

Important people

Alex

Ceramicist (sculptural work) at Ardmore Ceramics in Lidgeton, KwaZulu-Natal

David Andrew

Artist, Researcher, and Lecturer of Visual Arts at the University of Witwatersrand

Juliet Armstrong (1950-2012)

Artist and Professor of Ceramics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Cathy Brennon

Ceramicist and previous owner of The Underberg Studio and Framing in Underberg,
KwaZulu-Natal

Gerald Hagg

Chief Research Specialist and Acting Research Director at Human Sciences Research
Council of South Africa

Fée Halsted

Painter, ceramicist, and owner of Ardmore Ceramics

Craig Higgson-Smith

Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor at the Centre for Victims of Torture, Johannesburg,
South Africa

Lovemore

Ceramicist (wheel work) at Ardmore Ceramics, originally from Zimbabwe

Mpho Mabule

Manager at the Department of Arts and Culture

Susan Selepe

Deputy Director for the Promotion for Performing Arts at the Department of Arts and
Culture

Julia Smith

Land owner, retired teacher, and wife of Paul Smith who lives adjacent to the Uklewama
Primary School

Paul Smith

Land owner, retired vocational teacher, and husband of Julia Smith

Zakhona

Local entrepreneur, teacher, and artist in the Vulindlela area specializing in the creation of recycled art works

Vukela Secondary School

Umculi	Macro	Mrs. Nobuntu (Teacher, Life Orientation)
Ntwenhle	T-Girl	Mr. Nkoqo (Principal)
Izzy	Oluhle	Mrs. Gogo (Deputy Principal)
Nomathemba	Mondx	
Two-Slice	Nokx	
Small	Mendy	

Vuselela Secondary School

Thenjiwe	Khanyisile	Mr. Mlungisi (Principial)
Emanuel	Sakhile	Mr. Malusi (Teacher, Maths)
Mcebisi	Thabo	Nomusa (Secretary)
Umbrella		

Ukwenama Primary School

Sphesihle
 Mrs. Ngcongo (Teacher, grade 4-6)
 Mrs. Nokukhanya (Teacher, grade 2-3)

Adult Women

Vemvane	Celukwazi
Nomandla	Khwezi

A BEGINNING

1

With art you can make anything. Yes, the impossible. That is art.

-Lovemore.

Originally from Zimbabwe, an artist at
Ardmore Ceramics in Lidgeton, KwaZulu-Natal.

Introduction

We are late leaving Pinetown as one of the students was waylaid. As we drive on night begins to fall. Just after Howick, the sky is dark but heading up into the hills it is ripped apart by a full yellow moon. On both sides of us orange and red flames engulf the brittle winter grasses. As we climb in elevation I can see shadows of tree plantation workers moving in and out of darkness as they spread the fire with their torches. The flames reach up as if to lick the moon and black smoke obscures the pale light. I don't blink, I just stare into the hills; I wonder, "What is this place, this world on fire?" (fieldnotes, July 24, 2011)

The vastness of possibility South Africa contains is simultaneously overwhelming and exhilarating. South Africa is a place that pulls you in; it finds its way into the deepest recesses of your being and does not let go. It both disturbs and inspires with images of strife and joy that knock you breathless. So I felt during my two visits there, a total of four months teaching art to children and adult women in after-school and community settings. My time there has had a permanent impact on me, the full effects of which I have yet to comprehend. Within the margins, the rural South African periphery, Lovemore's statement takes on particular saliency. It speaks of the generative and transformative potential of art, of the connections that are enabled by shared creative activity, and of hope. The creative process begins with people and art, with its inexhaustible imaginative potential, can be a departure point for change. But in rural South Africa, the redefining of the possible often takes form within the context of limitation, whether those limiting factors are poverty, illness, or a lack of safety and support systems. Here, the making of art as a site of transformation is not devoid of struggle, nor is it transcendent of reality. Instead it is bound to context, as individuals cannot remove themselves from the dangers and

pleasures of their world to heal, to create. However, art, and perhaps especially that which develops in difficult circumstances, can function to disrupt common stereotypes about rural South Africa, those of passivity and stagnation, and actively condemn damaging scripts about the Dark Continent, “barbaric” rebel violence, backwardness, dirtiness, hunger, and corruption.

“What can we make with this?”: Overview of the research

Using a context-specific and place-based understanding of issues that engages with locally produced knowledge, this dissertation examines art making and art education teaching practices within a rural South African setting. The purpose of the research was to work collaboratively¹ with rural, “under-resourced”² communities, with particular focus on young people, to develop and implement art activities that respond to local specificity in relevant and meaningful ways. This research involved the use of art materials and techniques that drew on traditional sources or employed available assets in new and innovative ways. I do not distinguish here between “high art” and craft. Rather, the choice of tool, technique and material reflects the needs of the context and as such all of these creative approaches fit within my particular understanding of “art education.” With a community development³ and social change framework in mind, this research aims to address issues faced by participants in their daily life and enable dialogue, awareness and small-scale change. The research process involved my own learning

¹ I understand collaboration as an evolving, interactive and personal process that occurs during joint activities. It is inherently reciprocal but involves the naming and negotiation of issues of power and control. In a research and learning context the focus is on the other as a means of affirming the other person. I recognize that this is but one possible definition and may not correspond to those of the research participants. Within creative practice I draw on the work of Ravetz, Kettle and Felcey (2013) who define collaboration as “workmanship-like exchanges between individuals and across disciplinary boundaries that are freely entered into, and through joint endeavour leave one or both sides significantly changed.” In this context, “workmanship” is conceptualized as occurring in any field “but crucially involves risk and contingency, so that craft is about using skilled attention to entre life’s generative, relational, temporal and improvisory flow” (p. 1).

² Under-resourced is a term adopted by institutions such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal to identify South African schools/communities that lack material resources, services, and opportunities (e.g. <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/dbrief/april2010/S4.html> and <http://cvm.ukzn.ac.za/ResearchProjects/Everyvoicerecounts.aspx>).

³ The term community development remains contested, especially in relation to international contexts as it can imply deficiency in need of outside corrective intervention. However, here I draw from a framework of radical community development, which, “locates the roots of inequality in the structures and processes of society, not in personal or community pathology. [...] it is always re-framing in dynamic with current thought, political contexts and lived experience [...] it is a practice that needs to be constantly re-examined in relation to participatory democracy in order to maintain its integrity and relevance to its commitment to a fair, just and equal world” (Ledwith, 2011, p. 14).

positioned alongside that of the research participants. All parties are viewed as capable agents with specific skills, knowledge, abilities and insights. The goal was to engage with the research contexts in such a way as to allow for the exchange and inception of ideas, practices, and products centred on artistic creation.

The dissertation itself documents the development of the connections and misconceptions between me and rural community members, especially young people, while exploring the economic and socio-political factors before, during and after my actual trips, which shape rural lives. The text follows both my situated journey in rural South Africa and my intellectual journey as my understanding of my experiences evolves and I grapple with the complexities—ethical, relational, and cultural—that emerged from the research context. My intention is to make explicit the assumptions and interpretations that come from being who I am as a white, academic, privileged young woman who was very new to this particular environment. With this comes an acknowledgement that my position in the world constitutes what a minority of the population⁴ experiences. The descriptions of my responses often do not attempt to hide my own prejudices, anxieties, and visceral reactions, but I do aim to unpack them. In this way I attempt to identify and communicate some of the tensions around conducting research within rural South Africa, and majority world⁵ contexts in general.

As the title suggests, this dissertation is about the creative endeavour but also about what can happen when people make art together; what can happen in that small circle and how this relates to the permeable social spaces that surround it, the schools, the homes, the communities. It is about a process of recognizing the potential and agency that is based in the questioning of the taken for granted, of the status quo and the overlooked. Asking *What can we make with this?* is also about limitations, the limits of research to “make a difference” in the lives of participants but also the limits of language and theory to represent the complexities of lived experience. My engagement with this question has also been about navigating the limits of my own knowledge

⁴ For example, the United Nations reports that nearly half of humanity (2.8 billion) survives on less than US\$2 a day and 98% of the world’s hungry live in developing countries.

See <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/food/vitalstats.shtml> for these and other statistics.

⁵ I have adopted the terms majority and minority world instead of global north/south, developed/developing or first/third world as do Panelli, Punch and Robson (2007) “to shift the balance of our world views that frequently privilege ‘western’ and ‘northern’ populations and issues...[and] to acknowledge the ‘majority’ of the world population, poverty, landmass and lifestyles in the former” (p. 14). My choice of these terms is done with the acknowledgement that it still may not avoid binary distinctions or generalizations but that it represents a movement toward a deeper level of critical awareness.

and representational skill. It is about working with what is available at a given moment and embracing the partiality that this entails. In telling the story of both myself and those I met, I accept my state of uncertainty, of not necessarily knowing how to unravel the many conundrums and contradictions that I encountered.

Research questions

This dissertation is a coming together of multiple theoretical and methodological pieces. The research questions I ask are grounded in critical feminist and anti-colonial lenses as well as productive theories such as generative rurality described below. I combine the methodologies of community art education (CAE) and critically reflexive ethnography. I chose to dovetail artistic and ethnographic approaches for, “Drawing attention to these social interactions and interpretations is necessary not only in the analysis of projects by ‘northern’ artists in ‘southern’ contexts, but in any art practice that involves and aims at social exchange” (Siegenthaler, 2013, p. 737). Formulating the answers to the questions I posed has necessarily been an interdisciplinary process. The weaving together of multiple approaches is demanded by the research context but also reflects my own eclectic background. Trained in both quantitative and qualitative research practices as well as visual art, I continue to pull from the realms of science and art. My study explores the following set of inter-related questions:

1. What role(s) can art education play in a South African context? More specifically, what effects can art education have when there are significant personal and socio-politico-cultural challenges, for instance, poverty, epidemic illness (HIV and AIDS), and violence?
2. What artistic materials, tools, and processes can be employed, which not only respond to the local research contexts but that are also accessible and sustainable and have meaning for participants? More specifically, can local substances such as naturally occurring clay or recycled materials be used in ways that are useful and relevant? What implications can the South African use of these materials have for other contexts?
3. What pedagogies emerge to make knowledge (artistic, social, cultural) transmittable and meaningful both within peer groups and between the learners and me?
4. What professional and personal resources do I need to draw upon and manifest as a

researcher and art educator to function effectively in these communities? In this instance “effective” can be defined as the capacity to enhance the well-being of participants or doing the most good and least harm in terms of addressing their educational, social, and personal needs.

Connecting the dots

As a white, female doctoral student originally from Atlantic Canada, I knew little about South Africa and its people prior to my first trip to the area in July of 2011. But once academic connections afforded me the opportunity to travel, work, and conduct research in rural South Africa, it was aspects of my own childhood and upbringing that drew me to it. While my background is different, it still offers connections to the countryside of South Africa: the stillness, the expanse of the natural landscape, and the freedom of movement. My encounters with a form of rural community art education had early beginnings. My parents are ex-patriot Americans and were part of the “back-to-the-land” movement. They came in the early 1970s desperate to return to a more simple existence out of reach from the unpleasantness of city life and a nation torn apart by the Vietnam War. They came to Canada with very little and settled in rural New Brunswick, two kilometres from the nearest neighbour, where the landscape and natural environment were a dominating force. By national standards we were land-poor, with an abundance of acreage, but little monetary wealth to speak of. I am an only child and was homeschooled until age 10. My wilderness was a space of isolation but also a springboard to creativity sparked by necessity and inspiration.

The first reaction of visitors to our home was one of fear, fear of attacks by ferocious beasts and being trapped by harsh weather forces. The wildness of the surroundings seemed all-consuming. For me however, the isolation did not evoke feelings of imminent peril, but freedom and possibility. Navigating this world fed my self-reliance and curiosity. Both time and space stretched out before me, as most endeavours, such as heating the house, took longer and required more direct physical interaction with materials. This expansive environment was simultaneously limiting and fluid. From an early age I learned how to plant seeds, start a fire, and do home repairs. As it only took about an hour a day to keep up with the mandated provincial curriculum, a great deal of my time was spent making things. I was often in the company of individuals, my

parents included, who were highly skilled makers. I learned many specialized methods from family friends as part of my alternative education. There was also an abundance of materials—mud, twigs, rocks—that were free for the taking and were therefore easily sourced or scavenged. I often asked myself, “What can I make with this?” and there were an abundance of ideas. I believe this is why I value industrious abilities and making something out of nothing: earth to food, broken to fixed, trash to art. This valuing is critical to my research orientation as a whole and surely affected my impressions, motivations, and decision-making along the way.

From these beginnings came my desire to explore the relationship between that particular form of being-in-the-world that is rural living and the approach to context and materials that is born from this way of life. This is a form of learning that is intimately related to place, to specifics, yet it is also transferable. So when the opportunity presented itself for me to travel almost 13 000 kilometres to a part of the world I had never been, and knowing that my life would undoubtedly be very different than the lives of the people I was about to meet, I still felt a strand of connection⁶.

Greying subjectivity: My positionality

I position myself and my history because within the field of qualitative research the notion of “trustworthiness ” (also called “credibility” or “persuasiveness,” [Butler-Kisber, 2010]) is enhanced through reflexivity and the exploration of researcher bias and influence or the problematizing of researcher positionality throughout all aspects of the research. Positioning of the self is common across interpretivist research perspectives, specifically feminist, critical race and queer methodological approaches, and often begins by exploring one’s social categories (race, class, gender, sexuality, age, etc.) as these are considered to be salient factors in shaping who we are and how we view the world. Such affirmations of researcher self-identity are intended to make explicit the hierarchies of power that exist within social research and the ongoing navigation of these constructs. Thus, articulating difference between the researcher and

⁶ My current research developed out of an ongoing relationship with Dr. Claudia Mitchell and her Participatory Cultures Lab at McGill University. In 2004 Mitchell co-founded the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The primary goals of the centre include teacher development, community outreach and the advancement of research on issues such as HIV and AIDS. In 2011, I was invited to act as an onsite coordinator for the centre’s Rural Teacher Education Project, a practicum initiative for pre-service teachers that involves teaching preparation in rural schools.

participants is intended to promote more conscious and sensitive ways of exploring, collecting and interpreting data. If researchers do not problematize their colour, gender, class status, educational advantage, etc. (upfront and throughout their work) they risk thinking from an unstated position of privilege effectively obscuring and reproducing sources of oppression.

In my research with young people of Zulu descent from communities that are marked by varying levels of individual and collective impoverishment rooted in practices of racial segregation, my whiteness and material advantage represented immediate difference. While I unpack issues related to my own reflexivity and positionality throughout the dissertation, it is nonetheless important to address a few points up front about my identity. In her book *Understanding White Privilege* (2006), Francis Kendall discusses what it means to be white, the ways in which white privilege is upheld and what is necessary for its dismantling. She argues that:

[...] those of us who are white and, by definition, have white privilege must engage in sustained self-examination about how our race affects our lives. If we don't fully understand our individual and collective roles in maintaining a system of white superiority, our relationships with people of color remain superficial, our ability to function in diverse workplaces is greatly diminished, and we fail to create a just world in which everyone has an equitable opportunity to contribute and thrive (pp. 1-2).

Where I grew up, the closest town of Sussex, New Brunswick was predominantly white, middle class, and Christian (across multiple denominations including Baptist, Anglican, and Wesleyan). I attended a high school with a student population of about 1 000, of which fewer than 10 were not white. For most of my childhood my parents lived below the national poverty line. However, during the course of his life my maternal American grandfather, through shrewd investment strategies and a lifetime of hard work as a machinist, had saved a sizable amount of money. A portion of these funds was put in a trust fund for me, until my 18th birthday. This allowed me to attend my undergraduate university of choice and incur no student debt. Throughout my post-secondary education career I also was awarded a number of academic scholarships⁷, one of which I used to travel and research in South Africa. This has led to a class identity, which continues to shift to incorporate upper/middle class values and abilities as well as

⁷ For my doctoral research I received the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Doctoral Scholarship and the Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement, both through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

working and alternative roots, what adult and community educator, Glynis Cousin (2010) refers to as “upwardly mobilizing” or “a class hybrid” (p. 13).

These particular social classifications are hard to ignore, especially when in the rural South African research setting where I am often the only white person, and a white woman with visible access to money in the form of a rental car and accommodation at the local guesthouse. This, along with my “being from away”, shaped both how I was interpreted and how I interpreted others. To the principal of one school I was seldom referred to by name, instead I was called by my place of origin, “Canada.” Transplanting myself into another country, dissimilar to Canada in many ways, with a very recent history of racial segregation where my racial group was the minority yet still controlled the majority of the resources and wealth, I saw manifestations of oppression around every corner. I was met with comments from other whites like “*They* [black people] don’t show any emotion. *They* are so cold”; “*They* take no pride in their homes”; or “All coloureds have bad tempers.” These statements were often followed up with “It’s cultural,” or “It’s a different culture,” to ensure that I did not misinterpret this as racism but understood that these attitudes were based on “true” differences. Initially, I compared the ways in which South Africa was far worse, in terms of poverty and social stratification, than Canada. As I think about them now, my short-sighted reactions not only highlighted my own privileged position but also my naivety and even blindness to the forms of marginalization that have existed long before me and continue to play out in the place I call home.

For my particular position in the field, my identity as a woman was also determinant. My sex and perhaps some of my normalized feminine attributes such as long, straight hair, petite stature, and typical feminine voice, have at times labelled me as “girl-like” throughout my life, and did serve to position me in different, sometimes conflicting ways. It could be said that I represent a standard of beauty and femininity that, despite a majority black population in South Africa, is often exalted by the country’s contemporary popular media and advertising⁸. Because of the lingering effects of colonial hierarchies, my white femininity “continues to exude a powerful sense of normativity” (West & van Vuuren, 2007, p. 213). My body as a normalized cultural site was brought sharply into focus when a black student teacher asked for a piece of my hair to put into her weave. In other instances I was viewed by the locals as someone in need of

⁸ This is exemplified by the prevalence of body-altering practices such as the use of skin lightening creams for women (Dlova, Hendricks, & Martincgh, 2012).

protection from the dangers of the South African environment. A friend warned, “You must always lock both doors if you are alone! Thieves may come and take this one off at the hinges, silently!” I was seen as vulnerable and naïve to the threats of attack and robbery. But in retrospect, it was also my arrogance or perhaps my small-town, Canadian-informed point of view that gave me away. It was here, in my relationship to violence, that my lack of South African competencies was revealed.

Because of my specific socio-cultural and geographical origins, I have experienced little direct violence. In most of the places I have lived on the east coast of Canada I have seldom locked my home or car. And although I know other women who have experienced domestic and gender-based violence, such instances have not occurred within my own life. Part of being in South Africa and looking back at my experience has been coming to recognize the ways in which women and girls there and elsewhere are subject to violence in its various forms. I could feel the visceral weight of violence in the narratives of participants and in my witnessing of violent acts against others. In this way violence was brought closer to my daily awareness, yet I was still an onlooker.

To say that intersecting issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, among others, did not surface during my research would belie my experiences in South Africa. However, as suggested by Cousin (2010), positionality like other forms of identity is fluid⁹. For researchers to assign themselves and their participants to social categories that are rigid and binary suggests “no ‘grey’ meeting point, shared predicament or ethical space” and can function to obscure other entry points for connection. She continues: “no human being is entirely ‘other’ than another, even where unequal social structures make this very hard to see. Reflexive space has to include a concern for our common humanity alongside a concern for inequality and power” (p. 16). The choice to focus on certain differences, even those that are particularly visible such as skin colour, is not unproblematic:

The power to construct the central notion of what is ‘different’ between researchers and their ‘other’ is also held by researchers, who can ultimately decide what they feel do and do not have in common with their subjects. This constitutes researchers as particular ‘knowing selves’[...] against whom the ‘other’ (research subject) is appropriated [...], described and valued despite the feminist researcher’s best interests in hierarchal power negotiation and ‘voice-giving’ (Bott, 2010, p. 160).

⁹ While I employ a fluid construction of identity, I recognize that there are critiques of this theoretical position.

An expanded understanding of researcher positionality thus acknowledges difference but also explores ways of possible connection. Cousin (2010) suggests that reflexivity in the research process also includes proposing to participants “‘possible horizons of meaning’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 125), and perhaps the skill of the researcher to do so may be more important than their personal biography and status as an insider or outsider” (p. 15). Collaboratively negotiating an alternate vocabulary or mode of representation for experiences, emotions, and larger issues can become a vehicle for the articulation of realities that may otherwise be nameless or formless. Through both teaching and artistic expression, the possibilities of an “enabling vocabulary” (Cousin, 2010, p. 15) are expanded in all directions as one moves through words, images and surfaces.

My exploration of art education within a rural South African community explores notions of the “bricolage”¹⁰ or working with what is at hand, and the process of creating alternative creative spaces through a shared focus of intent. The bricoleur or tinkerer works through experimentation with the materials, techniques, and resources that are at hand in a particular environment. The potential of materials and contexts are identified and developed. The maker, context, artistic process, and art product are therefore entwined, as the approach is relational and embedded. Materials socially designated as valueless, such as refuse or mud, can be given renewed value as the potential, utility, and identity of an object can be transformed. And it is through this form of art making that connection to and engagement with place can develop. Just because items are commonly available does not make them of little value. However, as children often occupy subaltern positions globally as in the South African environment, they often only have access to these materials deemed valueless or of little value. As a result, young people have to be more flexible and inventive. Making dolls with the children in some of Johannesburg’s poorest communities, multiliteracy scholar Pippa Stein (2006) recounts her experience:

Don’t worry, we’ll make our own, they said. We want to make things with our hands [...]

¹⁰ Drawing on multiple sources Denzin and Lincoln (2000) offer a definition of terms:

A *bricoleur* makes do by “adapting the *bricoles* of the world. *Bricolage* is the ‘poetic making do’” (de Certeau, 1994, p. xv) with “such bricoles—the odds and ends the bits left over” (Harper, 1987, p. 74). The *bricoluer* is a “Jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself” (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17). In their work, *bricoleurs* define and extend themselves (Harper, 1987, p. 75). Indeed, the *bricoleur’s* life story, or biography, “may be thought of as bricolage” (Harper, 1987, p. 92) (p. 4). As further suggested by Kincheloe (2001) “bricolage can also imply the fictive and imaginative elements of the presentation of all formal research” (p. 680).

No child had the means to purchase any materials for making the dolls; they had found the resources, the waste in their environments and had transformed them according to their interests. What these figures reveal is the dynamic relationship between creativity, innovation and resources; “resources” take different values and meanings in different contexts of use, revealing the slippability of the concept of “waste”. Here waste is generative: turning the ordinary, the soiled into the aesthetic (pp. 171, 180).

This suggests a fluidity with which children are able to move through imposed concepts of worth, transforming what is around them. This was also my own experience, as this dissertation will relate.

At the core, my application of a relational and contextualized approach to art education is rooted in ideas around the power of art making for young people and their communities. Recent estimates place approximately 36 per cent¹¹ of South Africa’s population between the ages of 0 and 18 years old, making young people the largest age group in the country (UNICEF, 2012a). From a development perspective, this means a necessary shift in how young people are positioned within post-apartheid South Africa and what questions are asked:

Over the past two decades, political conflict, armed violence, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic created a crisis of unprecedented proportions for younger generations of Africans. Within this stressful environment, how do young people organize and make sense of their daily lives? How do they negotiate their private and public roles and envision their future? [...] More than anyone else they are the ones who undergo, express, and provide answers to the crisis of existing communitarian models, structures of authority, gerontocracy, and gender relations (de Boeck & Honwana, 2005, pp. 1-2).

Thus, I assert by no stretch of the imagination that the well-being of young people is essential to sustaining the country as a whole. Significant changes across all spheres of social life may, “force adults to re-conceptualize the ways in which children and childhood have thus far been described, and may force a space where children’s power is recognized” (Henderson, 2003, p. 8). Focusing on young people will require exploration of and investment in untapped or unrecognized sources of innovation, and expanding the ways in which we as researchers and adults engage with young people. Doing so may have significant implications both socially and economically. However, the ever-shifting social landscape through which South African young people must navigate is highly complex, and an area of academic scholarship that has only

¹¹ This translates to approximately 18 million out of a total population of 50 million.

recently received attention (e.g. Mathe, 2013; Moses, 2008). Forms of art education from the ground up (that which is driven by the needs, ideas, and knowledges of local people) can offer a way to develop skills and shed light on the everyday experiences of young people.

Perhaps the greatest power of art lies in its multiplicity. Art can be a form of expression, a way to represent individual and collective realities, and a way to support oneself. It is also often about asking questions, questions that bring forth new ideas, solutions, collaborations, and often more questions. Art researchers and practitioners need to ask what art means to young people and the possibilities it holds for them, but also what their participation means for expanding the meanings and understandings of creative practice. In the words of my young South African friend, an aspiring artist who struggles with heroin addiction, “Without art humanity dies...for me, art saves¹²” (T. Naidoo, personal communication, July 12, 2012). There is an elegant simplicity to this statement. While the processes may be complex, the actual act of making art or showing someone else how to make something often requires relatively minimal effort and can have huge implications. Thus the words of my young friend point to something very real and profound, echoing the sentiment of educational philosopher and social activist Maxine Greene (2000):

Without the presence of the arts, I cannot conceive of open spaces, or the lift of imagination that may (at least here and there) make the actualization called freedom possible. All this demands the activity of what we are calling a social imagination—a capacity to envisage a transcending of the violence, the unfairness, the alienation, the carelessness we see and feel around us. I would hope, as you do, that the evils and deficiencies on our minds today will be named, viewed as obstacles to the becoming we hope for in collaboration with the diverse young (p. 13).

Mr. Naidoo’s statement, however, lends a particular urgency and immediacy to the effects of art making in the lives of young people but also the broader implications for society. He draws attention to a precariousness that although not staved off, can be traversed.

Situating the research: Art and art education in South Africa

Everywhere I travelled in South Africa art was visible, whether on proud display or in crevices. The art takes on its own particularities and often includes forms of bricolage. From the

¹² Mr. Naidoo has had the words “art saves” tattooed onto his hand as for him, “Art is what I am, and what I am is art” indicating that making art is essential to his identity and survival (personal communication, April 24, 2014).

packed markets of Durban to the small outdoor stalls in Howick (located in the Midlands) with artisans turning beer cans into elephants and the men in pickup trucks in grocery store parking lots selling massive ironwood sculptures, art persists. In the rural schoolyards I had to strain a little harder to see the art but it is there: the young boys push along intricate wire vehicles with discarded cans for wheels, at recess snack packaging is turned inside out and folded neatly into silver rings which adorn the fingers of young girls, and some school walls tell stories in graffiti. However, as I have come to learn through my interactions with young aspiring artists, artisans, and university professors there seems to be disconnection between multiple areas of artistic practice and production in the country. The art that is happening within the rural schools, local artist communities, and art institutions, is marked by only a degree of cross-pollination. There continue to be a number of barriers to accessible art education opportunities in rural communities, as well as for lower income areas more generally.

Local, national, and international influences help to shape the various contexts in which art making unfolds in South Africa. In terms of mainstream and institutionalized art practices, there are a number of art galleries and museums. Most of the major art institutions are located in the larger city centres and are more prevalent in provinces with higher income levels. For the most part, rural and township areas are devoid of such art institutions, although there is a series of independent galleries and artisan shops along the Midlands Meander¹³ catering to tourist patrons and supporting local artisans. Johannesburg and Cape Town are each home to divisions of the Goodman Gallery and the Everland Read Gallery. The South African National Gallery is also found in Cape Town. Within the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg (the closest city to the research location) is one of the county's major art establishments. Durban has mostly smaller organizations many of which are collectives or groups of artists working together to promote and sell their work such as ArtSPACE or the Durban Artist Group¹⁴.

The international market for South African art, both in terms of traditional craft items that have gained more prominence in fine art galleries and the work of contemporary artists in media

¹³ The Midlands Meander runs about 80 km from Pietermaritzburg to Mooi River and is the largest arts and crafts tourism route in South Africa. For the official site see here: <http://www.midlandsmearnder.co.za/>.

¹⁴ For a more complete list of galleries in KZN see for example, <http://www.southafrica.info/travel/cultural/973777.htm#.U1Qdqij1pa8>.

such as painting, photography, and printmaking, is vibrant and diverse. According to artist and scholar Sue Williamson (2010), following the cultural isolation of the apartheid era, South African artists began to gain more and more attention from international galleries and a global market for South African art developed in kind. Art coming from the burgeoning democracy¹⁵ was very much a part of the discourses that were questioning and reshaping what it meant to be South African. Art in the new South Africa had a particular caché for international audiences as it was tied to a long and difficult history that was witnessing an immense and hopeful transformation. Despite the temporal demarcation of the beginning of the democratic era, there is a persistence of engagement with socially responsive themes that “questions the reductive binary between resistance and post-apartheid art that has come to dominate accounts of before and after South Africa’s democratic election” (Wits University Press, 2014, para. 11). Currently, there are only a few galleries in South Africa that have the resources to support the international promotion of South African artists through events such as art fairs. The biannual sale at Bonhams¹⁶ in London devoted exclusively to South African art is perhaps one exception. The Visual Arts Network of South Africa (VANSA) study, “Schemes for Promoting South African Art Internationally,” has been tasked to determine how the presence of the country’s artists can be increased in the world art scene¹⁷.

South Africa has rich heritage and contemporary expressions of various art forms that are present throughout the country. The country is well known for a variety of specific art forms based in traditional craft techniques including ceramics, basketry (made from natural grasses and reeds as well as man-made materials such as telephone wires), beaded sculptures, dolls, jewellery, and textiles. These art forms are an important part of the culture and economy of

¹⁵ From June 4, 1948 until May 9, 1994 the white National Party governed South Africa. Party policies included apartheid and the promotion of Afrikaner (an ethnic group descendent from mostly Dutch settlers) culture. For a detailed analysis of South Africa’s transition to democracy see for example Wood (2000). By the term democracy (post-apartheid) I am referring to the official end of apartheid that occurred in 1994 and the legal framework whereby a democratically elected government was put in place. However, I recognize democracy as a complex set of ever-changing yet ever-persistent relations. Also, while a country may be defined as democratic in relation to the prevailing system of government, I recognize that this does not preclude the existence of oppression at the hand of the state or institutionalized structures. Rather, a country’s status as a democratic nation may actually obscure the recognition of struggles of inequality that occur across majority and minority world contexts.

¹⁶ In 2011 Bonhams had over \$18 million in sales from South African art, making it the global market leader in this area. For more information see <http://www.bonhams.com/departments/PIC-ZAP/>.

¹⁷ See <http://www.vansa.co.za/>.

South Africa as is reflected in the South African Tourism website, which highlights opportunities for tourists to purchase “traditional and contemporary objects d’art” that they can take home¹⁸. However, in artistic and in educational contexts, there remains a conceptual and physical separation between crafts or handicrafts and art. For example, the National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC), the national funding body for the arts, distinguishes between crafts and visual art with each area involving separate granting schemes¹⁹. Crafts are also often associated with the informal economy (or employment activities outside the sphere of government monitoring) and include “items that are produced by hand, usually in the townships or in rural areas, often based on traditional skills that have been adjusted to meet the needs of the contemporary market, and that are sold mainly to people from outside the traditional community” (McLachlin, 2005, p. 3). Most street traders in the informal economy are black females, who tend to be poor with low education levels (CAI, 2013). As reported by the South African Agency for Reconstruction (2010), there is a clear disjuncture between two arts and culture “universes”:

On one hand there is a formal organised sector that is intellectually, emotionally, technically and stylistically driven by European and North American artistic experience. This is largely well organised, and supported by the market, but geographically confined for the most part to Cape Town, Durban and, most especially, Johannesburg. On the other hand, there is an enormous popular culture sector, relatively organised and, variously designated as “traditional”, “African” or “indigenous” that, while embracing the entire country and its diverse peoples, is largely under-funded, under-commercialized and threatened by its more formal counterpart. This is in part a consequence of the latter’s access to capital and ability to shape tastes, styles and preferences through their dominance of the ideological mechanisms for cultural reproduction (p. 5).

The existing divisions (along lines of race, class, gender, and geography) can be traced back to their roots in the oppressive practices of the colonial and apartheid systems. Generally,

¹⁸ See <http://www.southafrica.net/za/en/articles/overview/arts>.

¹⁹ See <http://www.nac.org.za/>.

prior to democracy, the education of indigenous²⁰ South Africans did not include learning to make or appreciate art forms that were considered to be outside their social and cultural station by the ruling whites. Tracing the historical relationship between schooling and handicrafts, Rogerson and Sithole (2001) point out that 19th century missionary schooling for rural indigenous South Africans included the encouragement of traditional art forms or “useful crafts.” In the 1930s, as a result of the consolidation of colonial control, rural impoverishment increased dramatically, causing mass starvation amongst both black and white populations and the near collapse of rural life (Balfour, de Lange, & Khau, 2012). The stimulation of “native home industries” was presented as a poverty reduction solution. However, the state was concerned that the growth of these industries posed a threat to the white-owned factory enterprises. This patronizing interest in indigenous arts education (and the education of indigenous South Africans in general) set the stage for the legislation of the apartheid education system. Introducing the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which formally outlined the segregated education system for black South Africans, Dr. Hendrick Verwoerd stated:

I just want to remind the Honourable Members of Parliament that if the native in South Africa is being taught to expect that he will lead his adult life under the policy of equal rights, he is making a big mistake. The native must not be subject to a school system which draws him away from his own community, and misleads him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze (as cited in Ndimande, 2012, p. 527)

Following the 1994 democratic elections, the first version of the new curriculum for South Africa’s education system, Curriculum 2005, was introduced in 1997 and made arts and culture a formal and compulsory subject in the public schools. This legislation was part of the process of redress and reclamation of cultural forms that had been violently subjugated. The reworking of art instruction in the education system continues with the introduction of the

²⁰ In the South African context, the majority black population, including people of Zulu descent, can be considered indigenous. As indicated by Breidlid (2013), this understanding of indigeneity differs from the conventional modern usage of the term, which describes indigenous peoples, knowledges and worldviews as outside dominant state systems. A contextually relevant meaning of indigenous also differs from that which is presented by international bodies such as the UN, which constructs indigenous people as maintaining historical continuity with pre-colonial existence and with social formations that are non-dominant and distinct from the prevailing sectors of society. Breidlid (2013) further contends that with such restrictive definitions “the fact is suppressed or concealed that many peoples and majority population groups in Africa, Asia, and Latin America adhere to cultures, belief systems, and epistemologies that differ from hegemonic Western ones. Such suppression also occurs in the education systems” (p. 31).

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Implementation of CAPS began in 2012 at the lower grade levels. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure continued transformation of the curriculum as inherited from apartheid and particularly “to provide a clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis” (Department of Basic Education, n.d., p. 2). Currently however, according to David Andrew, South African arts researcher and critic, the situation for the arts remains fragmented. There continues to be disconnect between official policies on arts education in schools, what is happening on the ground, and in art institutions. Aesthetic devices find a presence everywhere in the country, but formal school-based art instruction tends to be located in private, well-resourced or government schools (personal communication, April 17, 2013).

Although the North American understanding of Art Education as a separate discipline that trains teachers of visual art does not figure into South African tertiary educational institutions as such (it is also uncommon for art education programming to be included under Faculties of Fine Arts), there are a number of universities, colleges, and even private secondary schools throughout the country that offer training in visual arts and related fields such as Art History, Visual Communication, and Visual Studies. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) at Pietermaritzburg, the University of Pretoria, the University of Witwatersrand, and the University of Cape Town, to name a few, all have well established visual arts programming at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In the apartheid-era, teacher-training colleges offered in- and pre-service arts education programs. While the majority of available programming was limited, the Giyani College of Education in the now Limpopo Province provided an exemplary platform where artist educators worked with teachers. The ongoing upgrading of teacher knowledge and skill in the visual arts is necessary; however, there continues to be a lack of sustained political will needed to drive forward change. For example, the Wits University Advanced Certificate in Education (Arts and Culture) programme that ran as a two-year, part-time upgrading for in-service teachers was terminated in 2012 after eight years.

Throughout South Africa, community art education projects and centres have played an important role in supporting making and learning in the arts, particularly for people who may not have had access to artistic education and encouragement. As indicated by South African art historian and theorist Lize van Robbroeck (2004):

Arts centres played a decisive—in fact indispensable—role in the establishment of modern “black” art praxis in South Africa. Pioneer centres such as the Polly Street and Rorke’s Drift, and the later, independent and highly politicized centres of the struggle era provided a current of cultural output that ran parallel to, and at times vitally intersected and dovetailed with, the dominant mainstream of academically trained and institutionally validated “white” art (p. 41).

As outlined by the most recent *Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage*²¹ (DAC, 2013a) the South African government has continued to stress the importance of experiences of and participation in the visual arts, especially for black women and young people as well as for those living in the less resourced and more rural regions of the country (pp. 56, 57, 63). There is a focus on the development of accessible and inclusive programming originating at the local community level, which supports the building of indigenous forms of art and cultural expression (p. 39). This being said, there exists a conflicting narrative of neoliberal ideology (in the White Paper and throughout formal arts discourses) that positions the arts as a commodity and denies the role of artistic participation as a constitutive part of democracy (e.g. Costandius & Rosochacki, 2013; Whittaker, 2014). This view is problematic, as it bases value on observable and quantifiable outcomes. Art that does not fit within this paradigm is rendered superfluous, part of leisure time or non-essential to living a “good life.” While the current socio-political context highlights a number of barriers to the development of community-driven art practices, it is clear that such social initiatives are perhaps more critical than ever.

Indigenous knowledges and cultural production²²

The expansion of colonialist powers in locations such as South Africa positioned western (European) knowledge and worldviews as superior to those of indigenous peoples. One of the

²¹ This is considered the most important general policy in the area of arts and the original was adopted in 1996 after extensive public consultation. The criticisms of the current policy focus around the content and the process of the policy’s development. The previous policy was formed after input from stakeholders from within the arts communities over a period of 8 months while the new document was drafted by a small group of experts with limited knowledge of the creative sector. The narrow definition of art confines its role to job creation and economic prosperity. Non-profits, individual artists, and public entities are not identified as distinct areas. (See for example, <http://arterialnetworksouthafrica.co.za/our-work.html>).

²² While these large thematics are not the primary focus of my dissertation and I will only sketch some main considerations related to them, it is important to recognize how indigenous understandings and practices tie into the continual processes of cultural and knowledge production. Inherent in this consideration is the ongoing threat to indigenous knowledges—due to historical oppression as well as new forms of neo-colonial domination—and the alienation often experienced by indigenous students.

underlying tenets of colonialism is the denial of diversity, including epistemic diversity, which necessitates the creation of the Other as primitive, irrational, and superstitious (Bredlid, 2013). Such hierarchal power relations enable those in control to shape what groups have the authority to create knowledge, from what locations or sites knowledge is produced, and where and how knowledge is circulated and legitimated (McGovern, 2013). Thus the production of knowledge is an aspect of power that is historically and culturally specific (Foucault, 1980) and as such is an inherently political process. It is not, in other words, a “mirror that passively registers, without interfering, the essential features and casual relations already existing in the world” (Rubio & Baert, 2012, p. 2). Although colonial domination often no longer exists as physical occupation, the persistence of ideological colonization has meant that indigenous perspectives, cultural forms, and systems of knowing continue to be appropriated, marginalized or rendered invisible. Schooling has been identified as a key source for the disruption and erasure of indigenous culture as historical and contemporary educational practices do not recognize locally produced knowledge that indigenous students bring with them (e.g. Maurial, 1999)

As a form of cultural production, art making constitutes an important site for the development, exchange, adaptation, and continuation of indigenous knowledge. Rather than existing as a static entity, locally produced understandings evolve, often adapting and modifying information from alternate sources, creating new hybridized forms (Gegeo, 1998). Indigenous knowledges have perhaps always been counter-hegemonic and potentially transformative. But only more recently have they been recognized as such via the theorizing of postmodern, feminist and indigenous scholars. “A key aspect of this transformative power involves the exploration of human consciousness, the nature of its productions, and the process of its engagement with cultural difference” (Semali & Kichelow, 1999, p.15). Indigenous art occupies a unique space within settler colonialism, as “both a site for articulating indigenous resistance and resurgence, and also as a creative praxis that often reinscribes indigeneity within aesthetics and commodity forms that circulate in the capitalist market” (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. 1). The re-valuation of indigenous cultural production as ‘art’ is necessarily a part of redressing the devaluation of formerly colonized indigenous peoples (Merlan, 2001). Art education that takes up indigenous knowledge systems in a recently democratized country such as South Africa, can engage with counter hegemonic relational practices, and function as an intermediary space of possibility

where indigenous and nonindigenous people and ideas can come together. With this consideration comes my acknowledgement of the complexities of categorical definitions such as ‘art’ and ‘indigenous art’ and that the persistence of inequality “serves to police the borders between art as theirs and ours,” a distinction, which is premised on the notion that there are real and clear-cut differences (Merlan, 2001, p. 203). However, decolonization is not limited by a rigid set of “[...]‘decolonial aesthetic’ practices or techniques” (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. 100). Rather, as Martineau and Ritskes (2014) highlight, indigenous art is perpetually in motion and resists singular modalities, forms, and content.

The research context

Canada Research Chair in environmental education David Greenwood (2009) states that if we are to create a responsive form of rural education we must first pursue the questions “What happened here? What needs to be remembered, restored or conserved?” Such an inquiry, he continues, “does not only suggest learning from Indigenous people’s relationships to places over time and into the present; it must also probe the dissonance between Indigenous and settler epistemologies” (p. 3). In taking up these questions, I begin with looking at the rural research location. Although my relationship with the research context continues to unfold as I return and maintain connections with people, the bulk of the fieldwork occurred over a three-month period from July to October of 2011 and during the month of February 2012 (Figure 1) in the Vulindlela sub-district of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. The word Vulindlela, roughly translated into English means, “to open the road,” “to open the way,” or “to clear the way.” Vulindlela lies within the Midlands region about 150 kilometres northwest of the coastal city of Durban and covers approximately 28 000 hectares (Figure 2, 3)²³. The sub-district is considered rural and “under-developed.” It is a predominantly isiZulu-speaking community and is home to approximately 230 000 people (Caprison, 2011). Of the total population about 20 per cent are students spread over 75 schools (of which 24 are secondary schools, Kharsany et al., 2012). The

²³ The two secondary schools are located in the Vulindlela sub-district (bright red) of the greater Msunduzi municipality (dark red). The primary school is in the Impendle district (beige). Despite the use of these identifiers in scholarly literature and municipal planning documents, Vulindlela, for example, was not recognized or used by any one that I met. I think this contrast is notable. Negotiations around individual and communal land rights in the country are ongoing. But I think it is also important to show where the research sites are. My map is specific enough to allude to where they are, but general enough to show that borders are constructed and fuzzy.

area includes numerous villages, many of which are under tribal authority. Homes made of mud/cement dot the rolling hills. Local amenities include small tuck shops²⁴, funeral parlours, churches and community meeting houses. There are a total of seven health clinics and approximately 60 community-based organizations concerned with issues connected to youth, women, religion, politics, and housing (Caprisa, 2011).

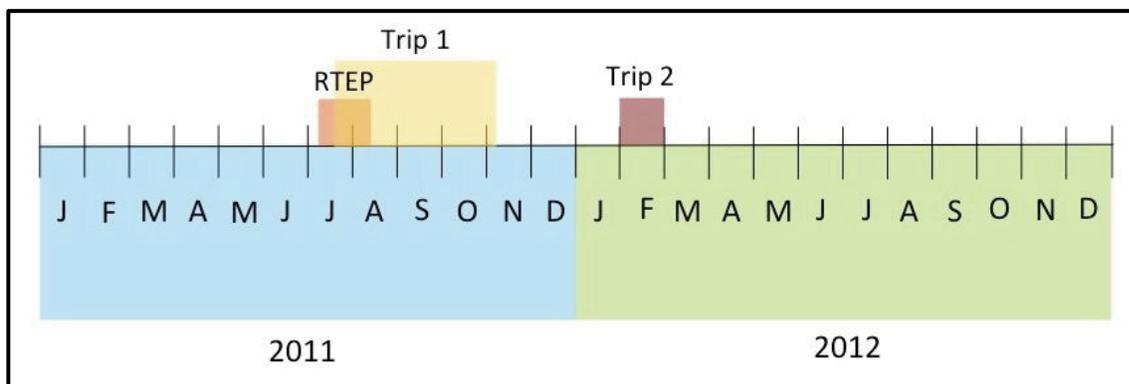


Figure 1: Fieldwork timeline

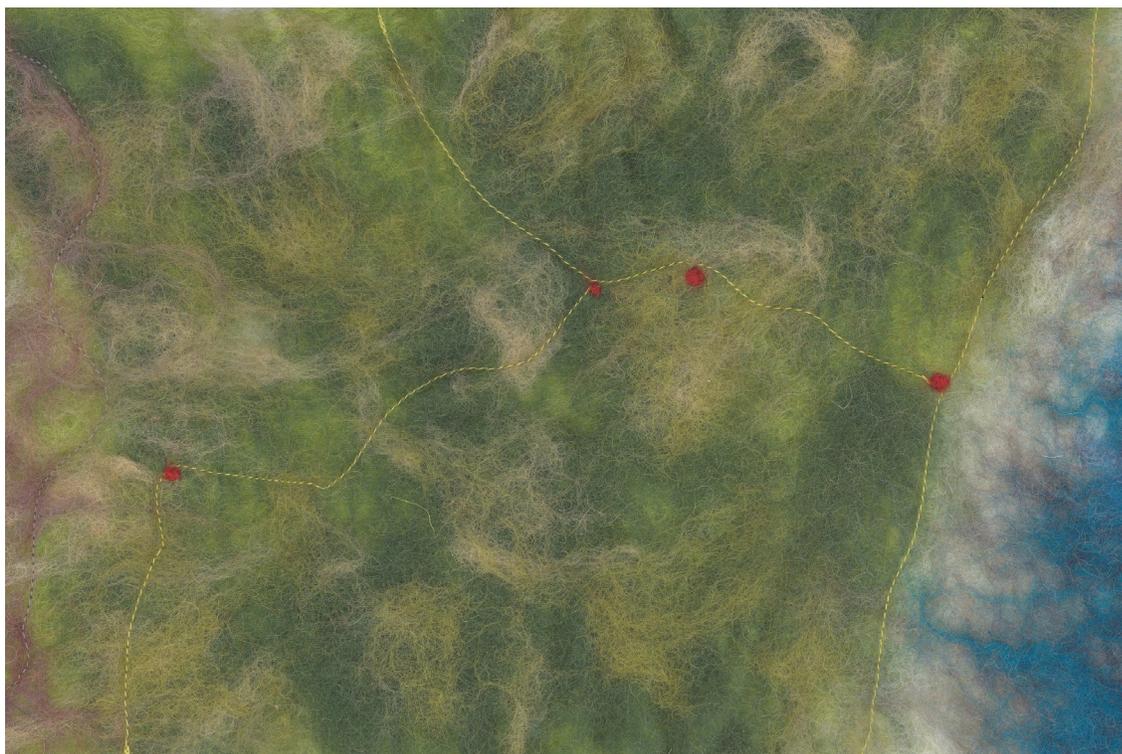


Figure 2: Map showing major highways and Underberg, Howick, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban (L to R)

²⁴A small convenience-type store selling goods such as packaged snacks and drinks.

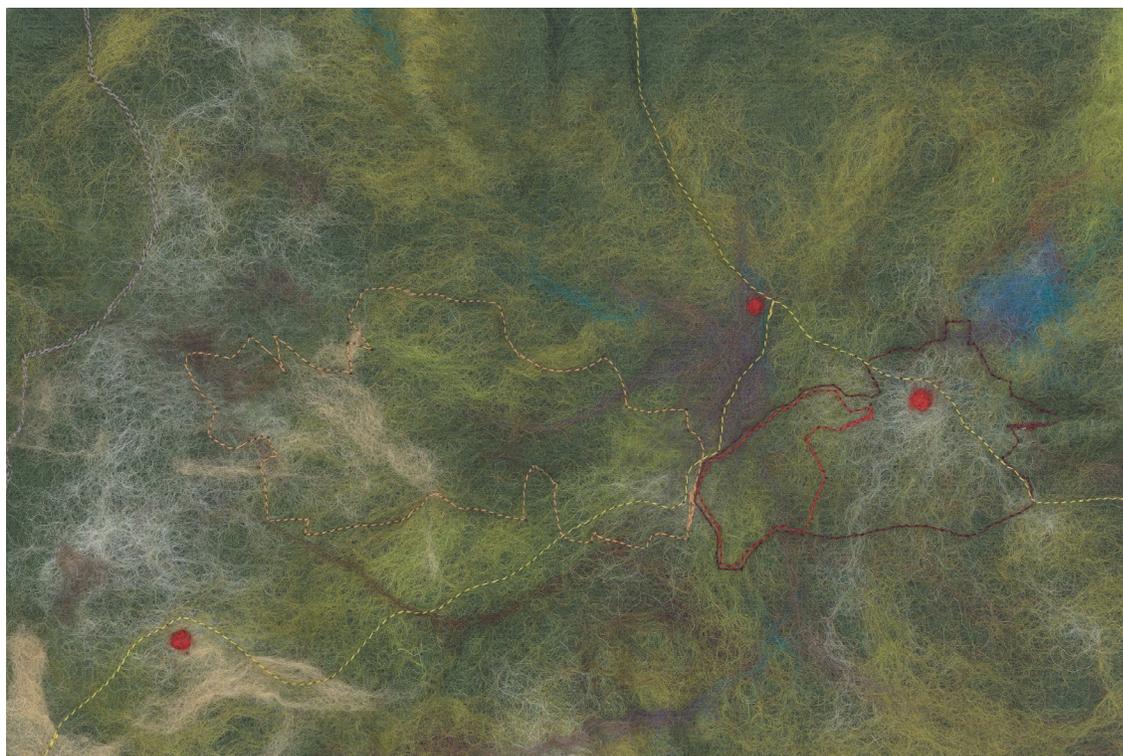


Figure 3: Zoomed map showing Impendle district (beige), Vulindlela sub-district (bright red), and Underberg, Howick, and Pietermaritzburg (L to R)

The bare statistics of the place read like many other areas in South Africa. There is limited infrastructure and few employment opportunities, which contribute to high poverty levels. Indeed, unemployment in South Africa has been called the “biggest thief of hope amongst young people” (Ramphela, 2002, p. 12). The majority of adults are unemployed or underemployed with some studies reporting government grants (pension, welfare and child maintenance) as the main source of household income for over half the inhabitants. Most people who do work earn somewhere between R800 to R1500 a month (Udidi, 2011), which in 2014 is roughly equivalent to \$82 to \$158 Canadian dollars. Available estimates by Mashego, Johnson, Frohlich, Carrara, and Karim (2007), put the crude death rate in the area at 29²⁵ deaths per 1 000 people per year (or 2.9% of the total population). This research also revealed an especially heavy mortality burden on the 20- to 39-year-old age group. HIV infections rates among young people, particularly women below age 20, has shown a disturbing increase. However, there are marked

²⁵ World Bank (2014) figures for South Africa as a whole during the same time period put the crude death rate at 15 (or 1.5% of the total population).

differences in rates from school to school in the district, an occurrence which, as of yet, is not fully understood (Kharsany et al., 2012).

This rather grim factual picture has been shaped by particular structural conditions of the past. For close to two decades (including several years after democracy) the province witnessed what was essentially a civil war between black political factions. This conflict remains a largely unacknowledged yet significant force that continues to shape contemporary rural life worlds. Less than a decade ago, the province of KwaZulu-Natal was still marred by the highest rates of political and civic violence in the country, for which there was no effective or organized government intervention. Many of the towns and settlements within Vumalala witnessed surges in violence sparking an exodus of refugees. According to South African political activist and adult educator John Aitchison (1993), much of the violence was stunningly brutal as people were beaten, stoned, clubbed, burned, raped, sjamboked (flogged), and tortured. As much of the conflict took place in homes, schools, and in the streets, those most affected by the violence have been civilians who were already poor and isolated, thus further exacerbating existing marginalization (Higson-Smith, 2002). Little reference to this devastation was part of the submissions to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC), which made public the human rights atrocities resulting from the practices of the apartheid regime and the resistance struggle. Anthea Jeffery's volume *The Natal Story* (1997), the most comprehensive body of research on the subject, put the death toll from violence or the "unofficial war" in KZN from 1980 to 1996²⁶ at close to 12 000 (or about 5% of the total population). Conservative estimates placed the number of injured at 25 000 (an additional 10%), with countless others rendered homeless or made refugees. The Midlands witnessed the highest number of deaths in the KZN region. The violence was primarily politically motivated although Jeffery notes "the difficulty in many instances of distinguishing between political violence and conflict arising from a complex array of other factors"²⁷ (p. 1).

²⁶ From 1985 to 1987 President Botha issued a state of emergency. This effectively reduced the coverage of the political unrest and police brutality by national and international news. For more detail see <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/state-emergency-south-africa-1960-and-1980s>.

²⁷ Jeffery (1997) identifies additional precipitating factors including environmental (rapid urbanization and increases in shack settlements), social (mounting competition for scarce resources), and economic (the South African economy fell into a recession in the 1980s and early 1990s).

The violence in KZN was tied to conflict between the African National Party²⁸ (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), two of the major anti-apartheid organizations, competing for political control²⁹. The National Party (NP) government did little to prevent or intervene in the violence and reports indicate that the state was complicit in the strife as the warring of black factions was beneficial for upholding white rule (Jeffery, 1997). As the fighting from this so called “black-on-black” war rippled outwards from Pietermaritzburg, the surrounding townships and informal settlements were divided into two hostile sectors, one controlled by the ANC and the other by the IFP. This created additional divisions within a society that was already segregated along racial lines as all Zulu speakers were required by the ANC and IFP to declare their political allegiance. Trespassing in a zone controlled by the opposing party—a “no-go area”—was considered punishable by pain of death. Essential activities such as using water taps or hospital services became treacherous and one could not venture into a sector that was not identified as their own. As Jeffery (1997) noted, “Schools in one sector have become inaccessible to students living in the opposing sector. Teachers living in one sector have been unable to work in schools located in the other. In some areas, intimidation of teachers has prevented schooling for six months at a time, or longer” (p. 3). For 16 years, all normalcy was shattered. Since 1994, statistics for KwaZulu-Natal suggest that the number of politically motivated murders have declined, which is partly attributed to the lessening of tensions between the IFP and ANC as well as the stabilizing effects of a democratically elected government (Deegan, 2005). Although political violence has lessened in Vulindlela and other Midlands regions, it still occurs. Several recent murders of ANC Midlands party members promoted appeals to the government for protection for its leaders (Munusamy, 2013). Some research also notes, that while generally the incidents of violent crime in KwaZulu-Natal remained relatively

²⁸ The ANC was founded in 1912 by both traditional African chiefs and lawyers and ministers of religion with some Western education. Its purpose was to represent and protest for the interests of the black South African people. In 1944 Nelson Mandela was one of several young black radicals who belonged to the ANC Youth League campaigned to transform the organization into a more militant one. In 1960 the ANC was banned and forced underground. In the following year Mandela later became the leader of the ANC armed wing (for a more detailed discussion of the party's evolution see for example, Ellis, 1991).

²⁹ Each party provides a different explanation for the violence. The ANC connects the conflict to the IFP's attempts to undermine the transition to democracy by acting as an extension of the former South African state and colluding with “third forces” within the police and army. The IFP blames the ANC/SACP (South African Communist Party) alliance and the use of violence to destabilize and overthrow the government, eliminate black political competition, and secure a centralized socialist state (Jeffery, 1997).

stable, there was a shift in form from politically motivated inter-ethnic attacks to community violence that is classified as familial and criminal (Barbarin, Richter, de Wet & Wachtel, 1998).

Today, lived realities throughout rural post-apartheid South Africa are confronted by both past and present mechanisms of inequality and oppression. The legacy of early colonial practices, the racially segregated apartheid system, and multiple violent conflicts have compounded with enduring challenges including poverty, violence, racial and gender inequalities, and the effects of HIV and AIDS. These forms of trauma have affected the social fabric of South Africa and “directly or indirectly attacks what constitutes culture, of which there are some essential yet vulnerable elements: body/space practices, religion, histories language, state organizations, and economics” (Stamm, Stamm, Hudnall, & Higson-Smith, 2003, p. 95). Within particular communities, the effects of these challenges will be varied and so too the responses, which depend on a unique combination of resources and capacities.

My connection to the research context

The issues faced by those living in rural areas continue to receive relatively little sustained attention from the South African government. Much of the impetus for positive change has come from within rural communities themselves often with the help of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and groups of academic researchers³⁰. My rather serendipitous connection to Vulindlela and foray into to the research was aided by my involvement in the Rural Teacher Education Project (RTEP), which is both a training programme and research partnership between the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and rural schools in

³⁰ For example, in regard to rural education, it was not until 2005 when the first official reports were released: the Nelson Mandela Foundation “Emerging Voices: A Report on Education in South African Rural Communities” and the South African Department of Education (DoE) Ministerial Committee on Rural Education “A New Vision for Rural Schooling.” In response, two years later the DoE established a Directorate on Rural Education and in 2008 developed a “National Framework for Quality Education in Rural Areas.” However, government accountability concerning the poor conditions in rural schools had been lacking. Prior to an out-of-court settlement between the minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, and a non-government organization, Equal Education, in November 2012, there were no published standards that defined minimally adequate school infrastructure. The evidence collected by Equal Education largely from 20 schools in remote areas revealed poor conditions (water, sanitation, buildings, etc.) but also a fear held by school administration to speak out against the DoE should the lose their jobs. As a result of the case against the DoE, the new standards were made publicly available September 12, 2013 and mean, “anyone can hold the government to account for any school that fails to meet these standards” (John, 2012, n.p.). However, the minister of education has outlined a 17-year timeframe for implementation, meaning that many learners will continue to go without basic facilities, possibly for their entire school careers.

Vulindlela. The RTEP and related research projects is part of an ongoing partnership between international institutions including the Participatory Cultures Lab at McGill University of which I am an active member. The RTEP initiative offers cohorts of Bachelor of Education (BEd) students in their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year of study the opportunity to experience a teaching practicum in a rural school under the mentorship of in-service teachers. The primary purpose of the residential initiative is to counter the urban bias in South African teacher training. Although pre-service teachers are required to receive training at both resourced and under-resourced schools, a teaching practicum at a rural school is not mandatory and is often impractical due to travel distances or lack of transport options. The RTEP also aims to contribute to supporting teachers and learners in rural areas.

Beginning in 2007, the RTEP was developed as a research project of the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change (CVMSC) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and was also one of the five strands under the overarching umbrella of the rural schools-university partnership project, *Every Voice Counts*, launched in 2002. Research at the CVMSC focuses on education within rural areas and recognizes rural education as a vital issue within the Southern African development context. The mandate of the CVMSC is concerned with a cultural production model of education and seeks to further develop and promote the use of creative visual methods of research inquiry and representation. The use of arts-based methodologies been invaluable in determining the realities of these communities and the issues they face. This framework of empowerment and democratic education allows for an exploration of the intersections between creative production, politics, cultural forms and community development. The CVMSC aims to identify the challenges faced by rural schools and communities, as well as strategies for addressing them. Integral to this research is a strength-based framework which positions rural places as dynamic and the people who live there as agents capable of creating change within their own communities³¹.

From July 16 to August 10, 2011, independent of my own research, I held a position as one of two onsite coordinators for RTEP, which involved taking on a non-evaluative, supportive role focused mostly on the pre-service teachers. This ranged from providing interpersonal dispute resolution, emotional support, encouragement, and help with resource acquisition. We

³¹ For details regarding the mission of the CVMSC, research, publications, resources and project see <http://cvm.ukzn.ac.za/Homepage.aspx>.

were housed with the pre-service teachers in a rural lodge, travelled with them to the school and were present at the rural school during office hours. We also helped the pre-service teachers to develop and implement various after-school activities with the rural students. At the end of most teaching days (except for Fridays), we conducted a debriefing/collaborative reflection session in which the pre-service teachers were asked to share their daily experiences. This short but intense period allowed me to observe the daily inner workings of the school and establish connections with staff and students. This experience laid the groundwork for my subsequent research endeavours. In 2011 I worked with children and youth in after- and out-of-school community settings. In 2012, I worked with the previous core group and additional women and children in school and in informal workshops at a landowner's home. Our collaborative and responsive work, and how it addresses my four research questions identified on page 4, is the basis of this dissertation.

Dissertation structure

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

In the second chapter I present the theoretical perspectives and key issues that serve as a guiding framework throughout the dissertation. Chapter 2 draws on insights from postcolonial feminism, as a lens through which to approach the constructs of majority world locations and people, community, and childhood. Contemporary postcolonial feminist critique reaches across disciplines and involves an intersectional examination of how people are defined by a multiplicity of factors including race, ethnicity, class, ethnicity, age, gender, and sexual orientation. This theory also takes up (neo)colonialism forces as sites of oppression and resistance that occur as a continually unfolding history rather than within a distinct temporal period. Postcolonial feminism sheds light on the ways in which it may be possible to build alliances between researchers, communities, and individuals across borders. It is essential that the stories of people in majority world contexts are told. The expression of these narratives disrupts and challenges dominant western-centric interpretations and worldviews.

Also in Chapter 2, I bring together generative rurality theory (Balfour, Mitchell, & Moletsane, 2008) and place-based pedagogy (Corbett, 2007) to extend the analysis of social positioning offered by postcolonial feminism into explorations of geographical location and how

rurality shapes lifeworlds. Both theories represent attempts to disrupt deficit paradigms associated with rural contexts and examine how incorporating place-consciousness into educational paradigms can be used to create pedagogies that better respond to rural realities. Similarly, rubbish theory (Thompson, 1979) demonstrates that by reworking the socially imposed value of objects and materials, new creative potential can be realized and this can serve as the basis for creative transformation. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of a small change paradigm (Hamdi, 2004) that is a connecting thread between the aforementioned theoretical models and the methodological scaffolding of Chapter 3. Small change as a process for starting small initiatives challenges western researchers in particular to engage in focused and attentive engagement with the nuances of localized ingenuity.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodologies and research procedures of the study that includes a weaving together of community art education and critical, reflexive ethnography. I trace my use of these approaches in addressing each of my four research questions. By examining the roles of art making in difficult circumstances including violent conflict and extreme poverty, I position art education as both necessary and potentially transformative. I present community art education as a practice outside of the formal education system that is participant and context-driven (Adams, 2002; Barndt, 2011; Krensky & Steffen, 2009). This approach to art education is intended to support the development of artistic capacities while engaging with the everyday issues faced by individuals, which are shaped by broader socio-cultural, political, economic, and historical forces. I then offer critical approaches to ethnographic inquiry as a means to document and explore the stories of the people who lend their voices to this work and my own journey through the research process. In my description of the application of this methodology I use specific instances of data collection and interpretation in an effort to “show rather than just tell” (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 149) about how the research was produced.

Chapter 4: What can art making do in South Africa?

This chapter begins with a broad look at the issues faced by contemporary South Africa and their rootedness in a history of racism and oppression. Drawing from quantitative and qualitative research, I touch on disparities in educational opportunities, health, and income as related to race, gender, and rurality. I then move into an overview of the post-apartheid education reforms that were designed to ameliorate past inequalities and lead to the adoption of neoliberal policies. These policies include an outcomes-based education (OBE) and the current hybridized system, which have transformed how art is being taught in schools and conceptualized across social contexts. As the location that serves as a primary point of contact with art and art making for young people, school is critical in shaping how art is engaged and understood. While community art programming for youth is an area of concern as identified by the South African government, there remains little sustained engagement with program development and initiatives are splintered. I conclude Chapter 4 with an examination of the ways in which art making can respond to lived experiences and look at some of some recent and ongoing socially responsive projects using the visual arts from independent artists, local industry, and research groups with social change agendas.

Chapter 5: The possibilities and politics of localized art making

In the fifth chapter I continue to take up research Question 1, as well as Question 2 and 3, which relate to the artistic materials, tools, and processes involved in the development of a pedagogical practice with the rural groups. I introduce each of the research locations and participant groups before detailing our experiences. With the use of smaller, individual sub-chapters, I present each primary art form we explored. This includes found art, woodwork, beading, ceramics, and sewing. Drawing on past and contemporary expressions, I chart the significance of the art forms and associated materials within Zulu culture. I also examine the ways in which each form and material is embedded with multiple and often conflicting meanings related to identity markers, particularly race, class, and gender. Taking a focused look at the practices developed by me and the participants, I highlight both the relational and creative potential, and the challenges that were revealed through our interactions.

Chapter 6: An ethics of effectiveness

Following from the development of the localized artistic practices and the corresponding interpersonal exchanges, this chapter aims to answer my final research question and tease apart the ethical quandaries that were evoked by events that prompted my disorientation and ethical questioning. Through this process of reflection I address the major themes that emerged from my fieldwork including: insider/outsider identity, childisms, and the present history of violence in South Africa. As a way of connecting my journey as a teacher on the ground and my subsequent working through the dissertation here in Canada, the chapter begins and closes with the story of Emanuel, a then 14-year-old participant in the art workshops. Invoking Emanuel and our (mis)alignments frames my exploration of ethical functioning as a deliberate and continual process of reflection. Each theme is explored through my narration of experiences that served to disrupt my taken-for-granted understanding, thereby prompting my own ethical shifts or evaluations. Here, I draw on multiple interpretative lenses including feminist and indigenous perspectives as I search for a way to reconcile conventional codes of ethical conduct with everyday decision-making processes.

Chapter 6 then moves into a discussion of the personal and professional resources that I need(ed) to draw upon to create a deep level of ethical engagement as a researcher, teacher, and artist working with indigenous groups. To answer this question, I draw on interdisciplinary scholarship spanning theories from music, literary studies, and human rights discourses to anthropology. I identify empathy, improvisation, and reflexive analytical intentions as central to my ongoing ethical functioning. Temporality is viewed as a space with in which layered and dynamic understandings of the self and others can develop. I theorize these factors as key in the mobilization of a form of community art education that is socially responsive and responsible in that it engages the tensions, partiality, and possibilities of research encounters.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: Art and hope

Here I return to my four research questions and provide a synthesis of the dissertation. I describe some of the ways in which I have continued to work with the research communities and upcoming initiatives. This final chapter addresses the significance of the study for the participants and me, my work going forward, as well as to scholarship.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2

Locating my theoretical position

As a researcher concerned with community-oriented work within a majority world context, I locate my work within postcolonial feminism (also referred to as feminist postcolonial theory). Contemporary feminist and postcolonial theories as critical paradigm perspectives share ontological roots yet the two are distinct bodies of scholarship. Postcolonial feminism seeks to bring together key tenants of each position or broadly, to “racialize mainstream feminist theory and to insert feminist concerns into conceptualizations of colonialism and postcolonialism” (Lewis & Mills, 2003, p. 3). I take up postcolonial feminism in relation to my research in a rural South African setting, particularly in terms of understanding notions of community and childhood. I emphasize my own and the study participants’ narratives of personal experience (an exchange enabled by the art teaching/making process) as a way to investigate local and global forces shaping the lives of young, rural South Africans. My research also draws on additional theoretical and methodological perspectives that share a commitment to social justice and equity as well as those that position the research context within a generative and strength-based framework. This includes generative rurality theory, place-based pedagogy, rubbish theory, and a small change paradigm.

“Post” colonial theory

Generally speaking, postcolonialism is concerned with the historical and continuing effects of colonialism. Postcolonial theory has come to be defined by the assumption that all postcolonial societies have and still face explicit or implicit manifestations of colonial domination, including inequality, poverty, and cultural loss, issues that endure despite political sovereignty (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006). In other words, “The new global order does not depend on direct rule. However, it does allow the economic, cultural and (to varying degrees)

political penetration of some countries by others” (Loomba, 2007, p. 12). In today’s unequal world, “much of the difference falls across the broad division between people of the west and those of the non-west” (Young, 2003, p. 3). ‘Post’ in this instance does not mean post-independence or after colonialism. Rather “it establishes postcolonialism as resistance to colonialism, not as an era succeeding it; it is a force that exists in partiality and in opposition to colonialism, not in an autonomous totality” (Brown, 2000, p. 87). As suggested by transnational feminist theorist, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2013),

[t]he ‘old’ (and enduring) hierarchies of colonialism, racism, classism, and (hetero)sexism are alive and well [...] Global processes of domination and subordination are certainly complex in 2013, but the technologies of colonialism are still accompanied by violence and exclusion that are systematic (p. 968).

Given the nature of these struggles as perpetual, a defining characteristic of postcolonial theories is an interrogation of dominant Euro-Western concepts of knowledge construction. There is also a foregrounding of “vernacular” or indigenous perspectives and experiences. Such approaches acknowledge the role that colonization continues to play in the construction of research practices and recognize the value and legitimacy of indigenous social formations. In this sense there is a concern for the foregrounding of colonized voices and an engagement with issues that have arisen from a history of various forms of oppression (Rigney, 1999).

A postcolonial feminist study

Concerns over inattention to issues of gender in postcolonialism and an absence of race analyses in feminism had an impact on the development of postcolonial feminism as a crosscutting area of theorizing. Non-white and lesbian feminist scholars, such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, Barbara Smith, and Angela Davis challenged “affirmations of universal sameness” (Code, 1998, p. 69) and “sisterhood” of much white, western, heterosexual feminism that ignored issues of race and class as well as other considerations of difference. As noted by Benita Parry (2004) in her analysis of the development of postcolonial studies, criticisms also developed over the privileging of discourses and ideologies within postcolonial critique, mainly through the institutionalization of postcolonial studies (located particularly with departments of English and Cultural Studies). Opponents saw the increase of textual accounts of history as redefining colonialism as merely a symbolic encounter that largely ignored the social

and material conditions of marginalized peoples' lives (Parry, 2004, p. 73) as well as other forms of colonial violence such as institutional practices. Within the discipline of postcolonial studies,

where premises affording analytical priority to formations of discourse and signifying processes were already at the fore, discussion of the internal structures of texts, enunciations, and sign systems became detached from a concurrent examination of social and experiential, contexts, situations, and circumstances (Parry, 2004, p. 73).

Postcolonial feminism also seeks to address “the marginalization and exclusion of a separate trajectory of feminist thought about race, power, culture and empire” (Lewis & Mills, 2003, pp. 1-2) as it relates to mainstream postcolonial theory. Thus there is a commitment to a continual re-examination of postcolonial theory (as well as feminisms) and the taking up of a different genealogy, one that draws connections between the contributions of women scholars and activists to ideas around colonial and postcolonial structures of power. Contemporary postcolonial feminist theorizing,

analyzes how historical and racialized relations have contributed to structural inequalities along axes of race, class, gender, and other social relations. [...] A distinctive and grounding element in postcolonial feminism is that of exposing and countering marginalizing practices and relations of power rooted in colonizing histories (Reimer-Kirkham & Anderson, 2010, pp. 198-199).

As such, oppression is conceptualized as an intersection of multiple and mutable sites of social categorization that have concrete and specific effects. An overarching goal of postcolonial feminism is the “development of democratic practices that continually resist relations of domination in all spheres of life” for all marginalized people (Stone-Mediatore, 2003, p. 130). As philosopher Stari Stone-Mediatore explains, feminism that engages majority world concerns necessarily intersects with other social struggles; as such an attempt to change entrenched systems of domination cannot ignore the relatedness and complexity of oppressions. The overlapping nature of identity also implies that an individual may have common interests with many groups (labour, environmental, social justice, etc.) or identify with multiple sociocultural categories (girl, indigenous, student, artist, etc.).

In this work, great importance is given to the daily experiences of people. Analytic processes are used to link individual experiences to the larger social structures, which influence those experiences. Essentially there is a movement of focus between “the micropolitics and the macrostructures of relations of power” (Reimer-Kirkham & Anderson, 2010, p. 199). The

overemphasis of the discursive intersections of power, a critique levelled against postcolonialism, risks ignoring the material problems of everyday life (McEwan, 2001). Postcolonial feminism, however, is a “project that embodies the urgency as well as the internationalist commitment” (Mohanty, 2003, p.1). In other words, on-the-ground action and addressing the practical needs of “marginalized” peoples is prioritized. Issues such as poverty are viewed as having very real and very serious life and death effects that cross national borders.

While the issue of globalization and its effects has been a concern of feminist and postcolonial activists for some time, such as with Mohanty’s (2003) anti-capitalist and transnational feminism, addressing global capitalism and rising neoliberal agendas is perhaps more urgent than ever. There is a need to connect the situations of the disenfranchised to the lifestyles and associated political and economic practices of those in the minority world. Without such an express linkage, “affected non-citizens are wrongly excluded from consideration—as, for example, when the claims of the poor are shunted into the domestic political arenas of weak or failed states and diverted from the offshore causes of their dispossession” (Fraser, 2013, p. 1). There is a direct relationship between the wealth, natural resources, and commodities accessible to minority world people and the disenfranchisement of those living in the majority world. In South Africa, for example, the five largest mining companies are owned by North American, European, or Australian corporations (Mining Intelligence Database, 2013).

Given this understanding of transnational relations, I ground my pedagogical approach to community art education in a feminist interpretative paradigm. Broadly, pedagogy is a term that describes the relationships and “interactions between teachers, students, and the learning environment and learning tasks” (Murphy, 2009, p.35). The concept includes both the practical, lived aspects of teaching and the theoretical discourses of teaching and learning that connect these acts to the structures of culture and social control (Alexander, 2008). Feminist pedagogy can be described as:

engaged teaching/learning—engaged with self in a continuing reflective process; engaged actively with the material being studied; engaged with others in the struggle to get beyond [...] destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance knowledge; engaged with community, with traditional organizations, and with movements for social change (Shrewsbury, 1993, p. 6).

Telling lives

Of particular importance to my exploration of localized struggles and strengths is the use of ethnographic narrative. While I tell my own stories and experiences in the following pages, they of course intersect with the lives of others I seek to know and understand. Here I can claim no truths or ultimate revealing insights into the experiences of those I met. As put by cultural theorist Paul Willis (2013), “I have never argued that direct engagement and intersection with subjects can hope to produce, somehow, a ‘picture of reality’, or that having been in the field bestows an ethnographic authority which gives hot line, or a guaranteed ‘truth connection’ called reality” (p. 113). Rather, the point of engaging in fieldwork and the resulting ethnographic text is an attempt to grapple with a puzzle, a process that involves the constant reformulation of ethnographic imaginings. Through my ethnographic encounters, the following pages represent my “creative attempts to imagine others’ lives” (Stone-Mediatore, 2003, p. 9) and to challenge others (myself included) to rethink previous interpretations of young, rural South Africans.

Central to my research approach is the exploration of counter narratives that may often disturb or contradict the dominant social scripts as put forth by educational institutions (among others) that help to construct groups with the rural South African setting, especially those who are black, young, and economically disadvantaged. Benjamin Barber proposes, “education is systematic story-telling” (1992, p. 22). But whose story is the one that gets told? McKay (2010) argues that the “master narrative is conveyed via stereotypes, communiqué, and ideology which objectify persons of colour as inherently weak, devoid of power and voice, and incapable of contributing to the larger society” (pp. 25-26). It is through forms of community art education that these master narratives can be interrogated and new ways of seeing oneself and the world can be put forth. In other words, by articulating (e.g. verbally, artistically, relationally) individual and intersecting realities young people can “speak their own truths” (Goldbard, 2006, p. 63). I recognize that the individuals (children and youth) within the research communities are speaking their truths but that these expressions do not necessarily evoke a broader community truth. Within this neoliberal moment however, transnational feminist-informed tales could potentially enable individual lives to expose some of the flaws in neoliberal governance, reveal counter visions, and uncover solidarities and tensions across borders (Davis & Craven, 2011).

As a means to better understand the complexity of lived realities, postcolonial feminism

is responsive to feminist discourse that urges researchers to engage ideas around reflexivity, intersubjectivity, reciprocity, and the construction of knowledge (Reimer-Kirkham & Anderson, 2010). In writing about the lives of others and reproducing their words, I follow Wanda Pillow's (2003) analysis of the relationship between subjectivity and representation. She defines the post-modern subject "as multiple, as unknowable, as shifting" (p. 180). In creation of life stories, Pillow (2003) urges us to use a form of telling "that pushes toward an unfamiliar, towards the uncomfortable," which cannot be reduced to a simple story of subjects, subjectivity, and transcendence or self-indulgence. Rather reflexivity itself must be interrupted and positioned not as "clarity, honesty, or humility but as practices of confounding disruptions—at times even a failure of our language and practices" (p. 192).

Edward Bruner (1997) suggests that ethnographies are guided by an "implicit narrative structure, by a story we tell about the people we study [with]" (p. 264). The ethnographic text is woven together from the ethnographer's experiences and interpretations and what participants reveal about their own lives. The textual retelling of experience represents something of a contradiction. We tell stories perhaps because we find comfort in continuity. The world is impermanent and in constant flux. Narratives like the ones I present here are an attempt to hold that flux for a moment. As Ruth Behar (1996) notes, a researcher "never observes the behavioural event which 'would have taken place' in his or her absence, nor hears an account identical with that which the same narrator would have given to another person" (p. 6). But it is in this mutable space where individual and collective identities are built and rebuilt.

Postcolonial feminism and the majority world

Postcolonial feminism acknowledges the precariousness of ideological and face-to-face encounters between western cultures and indigenous cultures. Much theorizing around the "Third World" subject has been formed in dominant cultures and as a result is laden with imperializing structures and assumptions (Kwok, 2005). Despite their contributions to scholarly inquiry, both western postcolonial and feminist writings have been criticized for making generalizations about majority world individuals and assuming homogeneity amongst a diversity of people and experience, particularly in relation to the nature and realities of oppression. As suggested by Mohanty (1988), the production of the "Third World woman" as a monolithic subject is

connected to the use of feminist concerns and discourses as they exist in North America and Western Europe as the primary point of reference. The use of the term Third World itself “both signifies and blurs the functioning of an economic, political, and imaginary geography able to unite vast and vastly differentiated areas of the world into a single, ‘underdeveloped’ terrain” (Sangari, 2002, p. 1). The experiences of feminists in western contexts are taken to represent a normalized, unified “truth” to which all others are compared. This practice is in itself a form of discursive colonialism and significantly limits the extent to which, for example, collaborations can be formed between white western women and people of colour from around the world. Mohanty (1988) further cautions that,

Similar arguments pertaining to questions of methods of analysis can be made in terms of middle-class, urban African and Asian scholars producing scholarship on or about their rural working-class sisters which assumes their own middle-class culture as the norm and codifies peasant and working-class histories and cultures as Other (p. 62).

This presents a rather difficult task for researchers whose topics of inquiry are aspects of the majority world context. In concurrence with Lorde’s (1983) argument, it cannot be the task of majority world people alone to educate those in the minority world of their existence and needs. For this is “a primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master’s concerns” (p. 101). Instead, it is the role of all those involved to reveal, probe, and otherwise engage with the circumstances that hinder equity and justice. Such sustained activism, as signalled by Sneja Gunew (2013), means, “feminist knowledge must also remain constantly alert to its own conditions of existence, and in particular, to its own conclusions (p. 25). There is of course, no easy answer as to the question of “How?” and the chosen paths will inevitably produce mistakes and prompt re-evaluation. It also remains the case that academics from the global north are empowered both economically and socially to make those in other countries the subject of their inquiry, while the reverse is seldom encouraged or even possible (McEwan, 2001). Scholars who believe that the intellectual and political value of conducting research across borders outweighs the philosophical and contextual pitfalls, must be responsible for the development of “critical analyses of our multidimensional struggles with such crossings” (Nagar & Geiger, 2007, p. 272). Any work must contain “self-consciousness about the effect of western scholarship in the ‘third world’ in the context of a world system dominated by the west” (Mohanty, 1988, p. 63). Structures of power at each level need to be defined and named for

researchers themselves are implicated (inadvertently and intentionally) in the construction of social realities and upholding the status quo. Any attempt to challenge dominant perspectives must examine relations on the ground and at the localized level as well as the balance of world power. For a researcher, “[...] ‘the field’ becomes an ever more politicized arena, and departure from the geographical ‘field site’ does little to extract her from the political implications of her research or from engagement with political issues that she analyses” (Mendez & Wolf, 2011, p. 650). Irrespective of class, age, ethnic, or racial location one’s potentially hegemonic position must be addressed as no research unfolds in a political or historical vacuum. As suggested by feminist philosopher Uma Narayan (1998), postcolonial feminist scholars can counter static interpretations of culture by examining the political and historical contexts through which “particular cultures” came into being. Similarly “this historical sensibility also needs to be attentive to the historical and political processes by which particular values and practices have come to be imputed as *central* or *definitive* of a particular ‘culture’” (p. 93).

The majority world and the notion of community

As my primary mode of inquiry is an engagement with various communities through techniques of art education and ethnography, it is necessary to address the theoretical conceptualization of community, particularly in relation to social justice and activist research agendas. The participants in my research have also been designated (both through self-identification and socially imposed categorizations) as belonging to various communities such as schools, rural villages, and organizations such as church groups. Rather than unitary constructs however, their navigations of community were often expressed in a complex configuration that simultaneously affirmed and rejected membership (Dempsey, 2010). The term community itself embodies a number of contradictions and ambiguities as there tend to be differences in how it is experienced, imagined, and expressed both on the ground and in disciplinary rhetoric. In the public and scholarly imagination the word evokes positive notions of belonging, solidarity, and harmony as well as carrying with it certain moralistic implications. However, perspectives concerned with social change question such abstract and one-dimensional understandings by examining the politics associated with defining and representing local actors. The myth of cohesion (Nair, 2004) and of communities as already fully formed entities (Dempsey, 2010) are

challenged in favour of more nuanced conceptualizations. These theories emphasize liminality and continual emergence. Critical theorizing on community also illuminates the role that communication plays in both the reproduction and disruption of power relations (DeChaine, 2005).

In their application of postcolonial feminism to community research, health researchers Joan Anderson, Koushambhi Khan, and Sheryl Reimer-Kirkham (2011) question the notion of community by “problematizing (a) essentialist constructions of community, (b) researchers’ claims to community partnerships, and (c) the historically grounded relations of power that can be inferred by *community*” (p. 26). Building on the above areas of questioning, my own theoretical positioning seeks to disrupt simplistic notions of community belonging and ideas of “bounded, homogeneous ‘local’ communities” (Mendez & Wolf, 2011, p. 646). The term carries at least three components that can refer to a group of people, geographical location, or a quality of relationship (Creed, 2006). However, a singular definition is not required but rather its multiple meanings need to be critically examined. Gerald Creed in his anthropological examination of community constructs argues, “common notions reveal the taken-for-granted understandings of the world that are so internalized or routinized as to escape comment and specification. It is essential, then, to look inside this seemingly transparent term and discover the associations that are, as it were, hidden in plain view” (2006, p. 4).

It also cannot be assumed that community research partnerships, even among those individuals who belong to the same ethno-cultural group or who share common concerns and goals, are neutral and mutually beneficial. Unexamined researcher-community affiliations are problematic, and so too is the assumption that such relationships unequivocally produce an understanding of the truths of others’ lives as well as unmediated access to cultural authenticity, something which fieldwork or extended time in the communities does not resolve. While research with communities is ideally intended to be in the best interest of the participants, the reasons for collaboration are diverse and taking part in the research process may in fact undermine their values and rights to self-determination (Anderson, Khan, & Reimer-Kirkham, 2011). Rather, ethnographic fieldwork and scholarly research in general is constituted from “fraught and ambiguous relationships” (Alexander, 2004, p. 137).

Like Mohanty (2003), however, I do believe in solidarity, and that radical possibilities lie in creative alliances across national borders. Academics wishing to know more about the lives of others and promote positive change in the world, must take a stand with those seeking equity, justice and respect. Drawing from feminist theory on the role of empathy, American political philosopher Carol Gould (2007) articulates solidarity as a form of social empathy or “as an imaginative understanding of the perspectives, situation, and needs of others as a basis for moral action in response to them” (p. 148). Such a conceptualization provides a basis for explaining the connection between people across distances and responsibility toward them, or at the very least presents “an account of our motivations for taking these seriously” (p. 149). This position also acknowledges that solidarity politics still have shortcomings and are not immune to the imposition of western values and neo-liberal mindsets (Binnie & Klesse, 2011). In their feminist analysis of fieldwork, Richa Nagar and Susan Geiger (2007) propose the processual practice of situated solidarities that account for our placed-based positionings and,

aim to understand the larger interconnections produced by internationalization of economies and labor forces while challenging the colonialist prioritizing of the West. They are attentive to the ways in which our ability to evoke the global in relation to the local, to configure the specific nature of our alliances and commitments, and to participate in the processes of social change are significantly shaped by our geographical and social-institutional locations, and the particular combination of processes, events and struggles underway in those locations (p. 273).

Anderson, Khan, and Reimer-Kirkham (2011) further contend that for indigenous people “community is embedded in a (dis)connection to place and the ‘land,’ and typically, this connection is imbued with (neo)colonial dominance” (p. 29). Indigenous groups, such as those in North America, Australia, and South Africa have been forcibly removed, relocated, and have seen their tribal lands parcelled up by the government into reservations. During apartheid, black people were forced to live in rural or what was dubbed bantustans or “homeland” areas (Gardiner, 2008; Lurie, 2000). Human geographer Thembele Kepe (1999) examines this relationship between community and government legislation within rural post-apartheid South Africa. In order to redress past imbalances and improve life for millions of black people, particularly for those who lived in rural areas or former homelands, the new democratic government aimed to reform land practices through redistribution, restitution, and tenure. The target population for these policies were the disenfranchised blacks, specifically the poor and

women. Policies such as the Restitution of Land Right Act of 1994 were designed to legalize the informal communal land practices so that communities could collectively re-acquire and manage land. The involvement of local communities was central to achieving these goals and in the new democracy, community became a legally recognized entity (Crehan, 2006). However, the process was (and continues to be) highly fraught as generalized representations were used in defining the boundaries of local communities and who did or did not qualify as a beneficiary for both land and the redistribution of other resources. This conceptualization is also based on the assumption of clearly discernable coherence and organization among groups of rural inhabitants as well as the nonexistence of internal power dynamics. As suggested by Kepe (1999), “While it is often comfortable for outsiders to use the term ‘local communities’ to refer to people who live in village localities in rural areas, it is in the same areas that the definition of ‘community’ is both complex and ambiguous” (p. 417).

In her analysis of the notion of community, Kumkum Sangari (1995) critiques the prevailing conceptualizations as reductive and static, thus a “defence of community in the name of social pluralism defeats its own declared objective of maintaining cultural diversity” (p. 3289). Community formation involves often contradictory logic and is tied to the historical creation and dismantling of communities by colonial forces (Anderson, Khan, & Reimer-Kirkham, 2011; Sangari, 1995). South African bodies, such as government and NGOs, continue to work towards new landscapes of possibility for its marginalized communities and the nation as a whole. However, this raises a number of questions regarding how the interests of various groups can best be represented and served. For example, in her anthropological study of community art practices Kate Crehan (2006) asks, “given the often fractured nature of ‘communities,’ in what sense does *the community*, as opposed to the different individuals and groups of which it is composed, have desires and needs?” (p. 53). It is therefore with caution that I employ the term community (both in relation to the individuals who form my participants and the community-based methods I employ in my research) as I simultaneously seek to unpack its multiple and dynamic meanings.

The child and childhood

The inclusion of discussions around the child and childhood in feminist and postcolonial theorizing is not new, although theorizing remains somewhat unarticulated and is dispersed across a range of disciplines, such as sociology, development studies, queer studies, literature, and film studies (e.g. Oakley 1981). Considerations of children as a marginalized group have been connected to women's movements and feminist theorizing as women and children share a number of negative, socially constructed characteristics as described by the dominant system of predominantly western, white patriarchy. As suggested by critical development psychologist Erica Burman and cultural theorist Jackie Stacey (2010), "[t]he infantilization of women has long been close to the feminization of childhood, as a state of dependency, and the naturalization of both conditions was central to the elaboration of the colonial project" (p. 228). For example, there are similarities between the daily unpaid work of women and children. Activities by both groups, which may involve household chores, caring for younger family members and manual labour, are characterized by low-productivity and occurring within the domestic sphere resulting in their systematic devaluation as "not real work" (Ansell, 2005).

Generally, feminist analyses have been primarily concerned with unpacking women's relationship to children, such as investigations into motherhood, domesticity and gendered socialization rather than on feminist approaches to the child and childhood (Burman & Stacey, 2010). However, within the last decade or so, there has been a growing focus on children as a separate yet diverse area of feminist scholarly investigation. Elisabeth Young-Bruhel in her recent book *Childism* (2012) draws a number of connections between feminist movements and examinations of institutional and individual prejudice against children. Feminist scholars such as Barbara Baird (2008) have also brought attention to the intersection of feminist and child politics or "instances of politics of all kinds which pivot, in part or in total, on the discursive figure of the 'child'. This child is not always specified in any detail, although it is often laden with racialized, gendered, classed and sexualized cultural assumptions" (p. 292).

Work in postcolonialism has also resulted in new perspectives of the child and childhood. As argued by Gaile Cannella and Radhika Viruru (2004) in their volume *Childhood and (Post)colonization*,

the construction of the child and the subsequent treatment of those who are younger in years should be considered through the lens of postcolonial critique. For a variety of

reasons the labels, forms of representations, and positions imposed on those who are younger can be categorized as oppressive, controlling, and even colonizing (p. 83).

As suggested in this book and elsewhere, prevailing conceptualizations of children are based in western understandings, particularly medical and psychological stage models of “becoming,” in which young people are positioned as incomplete humans who will, through a series of developmental milestones, eventually become adults with superior competency, rationality, and intelligence. Childhood is often viewed as a period of innocence that should include time for children to play and indulge in fanciful or imaginative exploits. This is contrasted with adulthood, which is a time for work and exposure to the world as it really is, with all its hardships and vulgarities. However, oppositional categories such as the child/adult binary are arbitrary positions reinforced and naturalized by popular and academic discourses. This understanding implies that children are defined by their relationships to adults rather than as human beings in their own right. As argued by Stone-Mediatore (2003),

The binary categories in those discourses, such as “work” and “home,” “mind” and “body,” “culture” and “nature,” and “man” and “woman,” appear to correspond to opposing realms of reality. The daily life of people in marginalized positions problematizes such seeming oppositions, for such people are often charged with either mediating or upholding the boundaries between the realms of life that ruling categories oppose. [...] When we view the world from the perspective of people who do such mediation and boundary maintenance, we see that current discourses oversimplify the human condition, which does not divide up into discrete spheres except through someone’s labour (p. 182).

Critical approaches in sociology, anthropology, geography, etc., have also contested such linear and western-centric constructs. As suggested by anthropologist Deborah Durham (2004), youth, child, and adolescent as culturally constructed and variable categories have been explored repeatedly, although differences within cultures have received comparatively less attention. There is however still a tendency to “treat childhood, youth and adolescence as universals that other cultures or times have not yet ‘discovered,’ recognized, or recognized appropriately” (p. 591). Within the South African context researchers have noted a number of polarizing representations associated with young people and their socio-cultural roles. They are often portrayed as victims (of poverty, AIDS, violence, and floundering social welfare systems) or as delinquents and sources of disruption, but rarely are they considered to be constructive social actors (Twum-Danso, 2004). In relation to media reporting on the AIDS epidemic, for example,

AIDS orphans are cast as “the innocents who are perhaps the most vulnerable victims of AIDS” (Meintjes & Bray, 2005, p. 149). Such reporting also tends to direct moral judgement at adults (implicitly black adults), particularly biological mothers and broader familial and community networks (Meintjes & Bray, 2005). This discourse “represents the so-called first world as the benevolent saviour of younger human beings whose ‘savage’ parents, communities, and ‘corrupt’ countries have failed to provide the universal normal childhood” (Cannella & Viruru, 2004, pp. 104-105). In this sense scripts of normality are imposed on children, particularly those of colour in the majority world, which are a reflection of the generic child figure of the popular imagination or a white, blond, blue-eyed boy (Jenkins, 1998 as cited in Baird, 2008). In addition to “oversimplifying the functioning and life experiences of those who are normalized” a “focusing on normality such as normal child needs can actually privilege particular knowledges and skills while disqualifying others” (Cannella, & Viruru, 2004, p. 104).

Formal education for young people is often uncritically touted as progressive and emancipatory (the Millennium Development Goals [MDG] for example, emphasize universal enrolment in education, especially for girls, as a solution to global ills). Education is incredibly important to the growth of children and their communities, often leading to better jobs and reductions in absolute poverty. However, for children, educational structures can also create oppression and exclusion, the effects of which may last beyond the schooling years. To elaborate, dominant methods and theories of education around the world continue to be based in models developed during the Victorian era. This system of schooling was designed to produce people with the purpose of obediently and unquestioningly running the bureaucratic administrative “machine” that maintained the British imperial conquest (Mitra, 2013). The expansion of colonial and imperial forces is linked to the creation of geo-political and psychosocial *borderlands* or divisions between various groups. Gloria Anzaldúa (2012) describes borderlands as “physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the spaces between two individuals shrinks with intimacy” (p. 19). It is the borderland classroom in particular that “occupies a strategic site in the terrain of cultural imperialism insofar as it reinscribes relations of domination” (Brown, 2000, p. 6). For example, Deepa Sreenivas (2010) argues that for poor Indian girls education is a site where

marginalizations are produced through an intersection of class, cast, and gender. It is a place where the child must continually work to meet the criteria of the “norm,” a construct that is often out-of-sync with her own self-identity and that of her home community. Thus “while rights may bring a child to school, a different imaginary would be needed to keep her there and allow in her a sense of self-worth and confidence” (Sreenivas, 2010, p. 278).

In the face of the continued social exclusion of young people across the globe, academics and activists are pushing for greater inclusion of young people’s voices in the research process and in societal structures in general. Western academic paradigms aim to protect populations describes as “vulnerable” including children and indigenous groups. However, researchers can be challenged to find acceptable institutional ways to recognize children’s self-authority and agency while acknowledging the researcher’s privileged position. This has given rise to methodologies that employ participatory, child-centred, or collaborative strategies that attempt to explore not only the ways in which young people are marginalized, but to recognize their various agencies and the diverse ways in which they navigate their worlds.

Education and social change

Knowledge of the everyday

A discussion of education and social change needs to start with reference to the work of notable Brazilian theorist and activist, Paulo Freire and his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, originally published in English in 1970. It remains a foundational model for community-based work that positions liberatory education as a politicized process that must begin with the experiences and perceptions of learners, that draws content from their daily lives, and that conceptualizes the roles of teachers and learners as fluid and bidirectional. Freire’s principles “framed literacy more broadly as not only learning to read the ‘word’ but also to read the ‘world’; his problem-posing approach to education drew upon the social contradictions learners faced in their daily lives” (Barndt, 2011, p. 11). Thus the student is able to apply learned skills to enlarge their understanding of the world. Within this framework a teacher is not considered an expert who deposits or gifts their knowledge unto the student. Instead, through a critical and dialogical co-creation of knowledge, learners are able to identify sites of struggle or oppression in their own lives and connect these to larger social structures.

Aspects of Freirean theory are applicable to my own research, such as the emphasis on education from the ground up, the non-neutrality of human praxis and the relationship between power and education. I also recognize its limits. The work of Freire, although grounded in the experiences of the disenfranchised, comes with its own underlying cultural assumptions. That is, there are limits to the universality of his pedagogy. For example, the range of experience admitted by Freirean concepts of conscientization,³² dialogue and social transformation is perhaps too narrow. Within contexts like South Africa where multiple peoples, ethnic groups, and language collide, the fragility of dialogical processes is underlined. Also, understanding particular lived patterns of individual-community relationships may be more important than emphasizing universal human nature (Bowers, 2001). To assume commitment to and engagement with particular Freirean forms of political resistance amongst my own participants—all young people in a rural area—may in fact negate their own understandings of and participation in social change. It follows then that within the rural South African context participants may also have their own definitions of oppression and empowerment (see for example, Bowers & Apffel-Marglin [2004]). There is ongoing debate in South Africa as to the presence and purpose of Freirean perspectives in the country's education and social movements (e.g. Harley, 2012). There was a notable incorporation of Freire's theories in the People's Education movement³³ of the 70s, 80s, and into the 90s, with a clear link to a number of arts education projects (D. Andrew, personal communication, May 15, 2014). Research efforts continue to track more recent manifestations and what role they may play in the evolving arts and culture landscape.

Building a pedagogy based in lived reality is far from a straightforward process. Knowledge that is anchored in the vernacular or the everyday takes on forms specific to the particular and often involves a degree of trial and error conducted by all parties involved. Thus it is type of pedagogy-in-motion that cannot be predetermined or too constrained. Drawing on the work of Freire, American scholar bell hooks (1994) proposes a form of “critical awareness and engagement,” a holistic pedagogy that emphasizes the wellbeing of both teachers and students.

³² The term conscientization or *conscientização* “refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1996, p. 16)

³³ Beginning in the 1950s, demand for democratic education for the people of South Africa developed in response to the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and linked to Athenian principles of “people's power” (see for example, Mathebula, 2013).

Teachers “who embrace the challenge of self actualization will be better able to create pedagogical practices that engage students, providing them with ways of knowing that enhance their capacity to live fully and deeply” (p. 22). In the application of this methodology to my own work, I find that fostering the growth of the participants is enmeshed within my personal development as a researcher, teacher, and person in ways I will describe.

Imaginings

Research that is rooted in the lived experiences of participants must also allow for an opening up of the imagination. Here I take imagination to mean the fundamental capacity to dream, to desire, to envision, to innovate. This process of “seeing what can be” connects both the practice of mapping a narrative for oneself or one’s community with artistic creation. Both situated knowledge and imagination emanate from the self, contribute to the development of the self, and reinforce a form of self-creativity that encourages reflexivity. Such reflexivity can help people to understand what is important to them and their communities. This self-conscious and evaluative process is a lifelong endeavour towards growth that is fuelled by a yearning for communication with the world.

Expressing agency through exploring different modes of seeing and alternate perspectives is what Maxine Greene (1995) refers to as the “democratic imagination.” This reshaping of the imagination may be released through many sorts of dialogue between many different groups of people. The definition of dialogue then is robust and moves beyond words to other often more subtle forms of expression. Creating opportunity for “access to and participation in the creation, consumption and distribution of the arts of is clearly a vital dimension of democracy” (Meade & Shaw, 2007, p. 418). The link between democratic participation and art takes on particular saliency within a South African setting as although the first democratic election occurred in 1994, the country remains in a state of transition and is still reeling from the effects of an unequal system. By using the term democratic imagination in relation to art education I am suggesting as Meade and Shaw (2007) do, “a potential capacity for entering attentively to the experiences of others, excavating and exploring the causes of flaws and wounds in society, thinking critically about structures and relations of power and acting creatively to transform the world for the better” (p. 414). The unique ability of art to take us out of ourselves so that we may

generate new images and understanding of our experiences allows for a renewed negotiation of relations and roles (Meade & Shaw, 2007). Within the complex environment of post-apartheid South Africa the faculty of imagination is an essential component to envisioning positive change. Imagination is not merely an escape but a beginning (Greene, 1995).

Generative rurality and place-based pedagogy

Within South Africa (and elsewhere), due to deeply rooted binary understandings, rurality has been synonymous with deficiency. Historically, urban centres have been cast as comparatively civilized with populations that are wealthier, more educated, and healthier (Bourke, Humphreys, Wakerman, & Taylor, 2010). The role of rural areas in sustaining collective survival, however, is occluded (Balfour, de Lange, & Khau, 2012). As suggested by rural education scholar Relebohile Moletsane (2012), it is the persistence of deficit paradigms and problem-based ways of thinking within the popular and academic domains that have contributed to a lack of social and educational change within rural communities. In the wake of ongoing issues related to education, economic development, and social mobility, state structures continue to pathologize or position rural peoples as failed citizens (Swanson, 2013). There is a tendency to treat the various forces at play (social class, poverty, student background, poor school performance, etc.) as isolated, rather than as interrelated components of a complex system (e.g. Vally & Spreen, 2014). Moletsane (2012) further cautions that unless there is a shift to strength-based epistemologies, necessary change will remain elusive. And as Canadian educational sociologist Michael Corbett (2007) signals, “[r]ather than support place-based ways of knowing, economic and cultural networks in rural and coastal communities, the school has typically stood in opposition to local lifeworlds” (p. 10). Conventional approaches to education equate urban lifestyles and knowledge with the norm, and as such the particular experiences that are rural living are not considered.

As a counter measure, there has been an effort to move beyond conceptions of rural places as stagnant, backwards, homogenous, and passive (Baker³⁴, 2012; Balfour, Mitchell, &

³⁴ Balfour, Mitchell, and Moletsane (2008) and Balfour et al. (2008) address rurality in the South African context; Baker (2012) examines the development of rural queer identities in eastern Canada; Donehower, Hogg and Schell (2012) explore understandings of rurality in the US (e.g. Appalachia); and Isserman (2005) describes issues of rurality in the US, but for an international audience.

Moletsane, 2008). A more complex understanding presents “rural places, spaces, and people as deserving equal attention, access, and consideration in matters of economic and public policy such as job creation, education, health care, and technology” (Donehower, Hogg, & Schell, 2012, p. 3). This shift involves addressing the use of a “diseased and deceased” model of rurality as well as the romanticization of rural life. This emerging perspective explores the ways in which rural and urban areas are not dichotomous but are intimately related to one another while recognizing that the rural is “dynamic, or a set of preferences that have value independent of urban influences” (Balfour et al., 2008, p. 97). As suggested by Isserman (2005), the “separation of territory into town *or* country, urban *or* rural, leads us to define rural simply as homogeneous with respect to not being urban [...] rural is used in overlapping and often contradictory ways, always defined by what it is not” (pp. 465-466, emphasis in original). In South Africa, research informed by the experiences of rural people suggests that rural households and livelihoods are fluid and represent multimodal connections across geographical space as practices of mobility, such as migration for employment, link rural and urban places (Neves & Du Toit, 2013).

Past and present systems of inequality in South Africa make for a particular intensity of rural lifeworlds as “even though there is poverty in the urban context, the fact that there is better support and infrastructure and a better chance of obtaining assistance (in the form of social services), such support is either absent or inaccessible in rural areas” (Balfour et al, 2008, p. 98). However, research on rural education in South Africa (e.g., Ebersohn & Ferreira, 2012; Islam 2007, 2010; Islam, Mitchell, de Lange, Balfour, & Combrick, 2011) describes how ongoing adversities are balanced by the potential for creativity, innovation, and resiliency within rural sites. Educationist Robert Balfour (2012) and Balfour et al. (2008) argue for a “generative theory of rurality,” one that avoids static and disempowering definitions and conceptualizes the rural environ as transformative and vital. This theory accounts for the dynamic and complex relationships between humans and rural geotypes and positions the environment as an active force in the formation of self and community identities. These ideas are echoed in the sentiments of Favio Chávez, environmental technician and music teacher for the Recycled Orchestra. The musicians are young people from the slum neighbourhoods built amidst Cateura Dump, Paraguay who play instruments made of trash created by skilled bricoleur and landfill worker Don “Cola” Gomez. In Chávez’s (2012) words, “People realize that we shouldn’t throw away

trash carelessly...and we shouldn't throw away people either." I would argue that the act of art making is also tied to changes in the identity of the artist and the propensity for self-definition.

The generative theory of rurality considers three interconnected variables: forces, agencies, and resources. Forces involve "the movement of labour and production from the rural to the urban and back again as constituted by space, movement and time" (Balfour, 2012, p. 14). Agencies are described as a set of dispositions and behaviours in which an exercise of will towards a continuum of outcomes, such as activism and entropy, are possible. Relations between space, time, and movement are, to varying degrees, influenced and regulated by an individual's agencies. Resources can be either purchased or generated (situated, material, and psychosocial), but whose efficacy in a given context "is largely dependent on the influence of agencies and forces" (Balfour et al., 2008, p. 102). By examining these three mutually affecting, dynamic variables it is possible to determine the extent to which a rural education context can be effective, transformative, or dysfunctional depending on how the individuals regulate the relationship between time, space, and place.

As argued by Moletsane (2012), "It is [the] strengths (or assets) that need to be harnessed in understanding the human condition and in developing interventions to effect social change" (p. 4). There is an additional layer of complexity in the ambiguity of contextual variables, as there exists "the conflicting potential of resources and the role that perception plays in determining whether these are possibilities or limitations" (Balfour, 2012, p. 16). The process of identifying and helping to develop the existing strengths and resources within rural communities involves adopting place-conscious and context specific strategies and positioning research participants as "protagonists taking action in their everyday lives" (Moletsane, Mitchell, de Lange, Stuart, Buthelezi, & Taylor, 2009, p. 5). As agents "people make use of time, space, and resources differently to transform an environment rather than be subject to it" (Balfour, 2012, p. 9).

On the value of the valueless

On working with garbage as an art material, artist, bricoleur and activist Vik Muniz says, "It's an economy of means that's relevant to the experience...I am always dealing with preconceived ideas you have of the value of materials, so the point of departure is familiarity.

Then it's easy for you to transcend to something else" (Slenske, 2010, n.p.). In his 1979 book *Rubbish Theory*, Michael Thompson suggests that the meaning of things is not intrinsic to the things themselves but is socially and culturally constructed. He proposes three categories of object: durable, transient, and rubbish. Durables are objects, which may increase in value over time and have an infinite lifespan (such as antique furniture) while transient represents objects that are declining in value and have finite life spans (such as a used car). Rubbish on the other hand, is invisible or unvalued, and "continues to exist in a timeless and valueless limbo where at some later date (if it has not by that time turned, or been made, into dust) it has the chance of being discovered" (Thompson, 1979, p. 10). Extending Thompson's theory that the category of rubbish is one of "in-between" or a "region of flexibility," consumer research scholar Liz Parsons (2008) suggests that "it represents a category of objects which embody a significant amount of potential for re-emergence through processes of recycling, re-use and re-absorption into everyday lives" as an "object that has been 'rubbished' by others [...] can be brought to light through the exercise of new or different sets of knowledge" (p. 391). Of particular interest here is the processes through which objects, materials, and things "might act as symbolic resources for lifestyle and identity construction" and the "creativity of social actors in creating conditions for value to emerge" (Parsons, 2008, p. 390).

Small change

As a bridge of connection between theory and method I draw on a small change paradigm (Hamdi, 2004) that explores how small, low-budget, and practical art-based projects can be effective in sparking change that ripples outward. Definitions of "development" as promoted by the major agencies financing development programming (such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the African Development Fund) have been for the most part narrowly defined by economic parameters (Escobar, 2012) and informed by social capital theory, which correlates deficiencies in the skills and aptitudes of individuals and groups with lower levels of health, educational attainment, income, happiness, security (Harriss, 2002). Development is thus often distributed by wealthier western nations via loans or monetary restitution to areas perceived to be impoverished and "least-developed" as a consequence of colonial domination (Goldbard, 2006; Moyo, 2009). This out-dated and limiting focus on the financial has prompted

a more nuanced conception of the relationship between tangible and cultural development as contributing to community development. In contrast, what may be seen by ordinary people as development is “a body of activities and actions emanating from a philosophical and spiritual base that satisfies physical, spiritual and psychological needs” (Abah, 2007, p. 437). In this sense, the typical hierarchy of development outcomes is reversed so that the focus is firstly on the enabling of empowerment and agency, and secondly on issues such as job creation (Berman, 2009).

The concept of small change proposes that “by starting small and being strategic community-based initiatives have the potential to influence wider social, political and economic agendas” (Burnell, 2012, p. 136). Nabeel Hamdi, a small change development practitioner, elaborates on the approach outlining a code of conduct that emphasizes imagination and spontaneity while acknowledging the ignorance and naivety of the practitioner in development contexts: Ignorance is liberating; Start where you can: never say can’t; Imagine first: reason later; Be reflective: waste time; Embrace serendipity: get muddled; Play games, serious games; Look for multipliers; Work backwards: move forwards; and Feel good. This “bottom-up” methodology is people-centred and focuses on their imaginative capacities. It suggests a change in perspective and scale of thinking especially if those coming from the western world are to notice the component parts to locally produced ingenuity. This view recognizes environments as complex systems that demand,

a kind of professional artistry, which enables us to improvise and be informed, working somewhere between order and chaos, making what we can out of what we can get, making plans without too much planning, making most of it up as we go along, a creative process of trial and error informed with experience and theory (pp. 116-117).

Small Change focuses on placemaking and challenges the false separation between people and place. Rather, place is considered central in mediating social and economic productivity. The exact meaning of place, placemaking, and belonging should be defined by communities themselves. Typically people already know what needs to happen to improve their lives, but

often they do not have the means or the legitimacy³⁵ (Hamid, 2010).

³⁵ For a detailed narrative of theory in action refer to Hamid (2010), which charts his experiences in Europe, the US, Latin America, Africa, and post-tsunami Asia. See also the work of the Small Change Forum, which is a network of people using the small change approach in community development. The Small Change Forum is currently partnered with Multisensory, an organization supporting artists to make art with, for, and about the people of Sandwell, UK. The group's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SmallChangeForum>) showcases numerous small change initiatives in action from around the world. There are also a series of case studies describing the application of the Hamdi's paradigm, in for example Strichley, UK (Burnell & Hamdi, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

3

Toward an integrated methodology for localized art education

Given the interwoven frameworks highlighted and discussed in the previous chapter, I see art education research and pedagogy within the rural majority world as necessarily relational, politically engaged, and ultimately hopeful. My research, as a form of qualitative inquiry “represents the work in narrative form of some kind, deals with the particular, accounts for context, takes a critical and reflexive stance, includes participant voices, and tries to be accessible, credible and persuasive” (L. Butler-Kisber, personal communication, January 28, 2013). Here I briefly outline my general approach. In working with rural South African communities I adopted a double-layered methodology³⁶ that guided both the in-field research and the building of the dissertation itself. This involved:

1. A praxis of community art education (CAE) that is grounded in the pedagogy of everyday knowledge and experiences of ordinary people (young people in particular), artistic/visual methods that develop hands-on skills and foster imagination (this includes both the capacity to imagine new futures for oneself or community and artistic innovations), contextual specificity, and the creation of ongoing collaborative partnerships (within and between groups);
2. Ethnographic inquiry as a narrative and critically reflexive mode of documenting, articulating, and exploring the above experiences.

³⁶ I see method as flowing from methodology; however, I recognize that there is some disagreement over the separation of these terms. In distinguishing between method and methodology, I find the explanation offered by Staller, Block, and Horner (2008) helpful: “In general, methods refer to the tools used in the research endeavour” (p. 27) or procedures used to gather and analyse data as guided by research questions(s). They position methodology “as a perspective or theory of social reality” (p. 28). Using ethnography as an example Staller, Block, and Horner (2008) state, “ethnography is a generally recognized technique for gathering data in a natural setting. So ethnography is a method or a tool for data collection. However, in deciding on how to approach an ethnographic project, one might shape it to pursuant to a variety of possible theoretical positions, such as feminist ethnography, critical ethnography, or autoethnography. Therefore critical ethnography, autoethnography, or feminist ethnography are methodologies because they start from a certain perspective (or theoretical position) about social reality” (p. 28).

My use of these methodologies reflects the spontaneity and adaptability that was required to work within a research context that was largely unknown to me. The connection between social justice, educational practice, and ethnography is well recognized and is reflected in the study of educational sites both by those within them and by outside social science researchers. In her book *Ethnographic Eyes* (1999), literacy educator Carolyn Frank outlines guidelines for the use of ethnography by teachers and student teachers working within the school system. She argues that the combination of ethnography with teaching practice enables teachers to expand their cultural perspectives, develop more effective observational techniques, and encourages critical reflection on their own practice. The work of American linguistic anthropologist Shirley Brice-Heath (e.g., *Ways with Words* [1983]) demonstrates how ethnography can expose the often hidden influences of political and economic structures on marginalized communities, ultimately fostering more just practices and understandings regarding the socialization of young people. Such work reflects the strong connection between ethnographic modes of inquiry and the configuration of radical or emancipatory approaches to pedagogy (see for example, Brown, 2000) and reflects my own approach as well.

I used CAE and ethnography in tandem to address my four research questions. Answering each question required a multiperspectival approach, in which doing and reflecting overlapped. There is a degree of consonance between aspects of the two methodologies such as the importance of exploring the historical and contemporary socio-cultural, political, and economic at play within the research context. However, in her description of CAE, community arts educator and environmental sociologist Deb Barndt (2011) makes explicit the roles of all research partners in a shared colonial history and our aims to decolonize our practice as educators. She states,

No matter where we are located, we have to confront the fact that we are all immersed in colonial contexts that are not just of the past, but perpetuated in new forms such as corporate globalization. Our projects inevitably reflect our locations between colonization and decolonization (p. 3).

Critical ethnography, on the other hand, provided a focused lens through which to examine the highly intricate nature of interpersonal relations in the field, issues of representation, the role of intersecting identities, and the constructs we use to describe social experience.

This being said, my exploration of each question did involve drawing more heavily from

one of the two approaches. Also, for the purposes of this dissertation and in terms of providing an overview and background to the development of each methodology, I describe them separately. The first three questions were tied more closely to CAE as they seek to understand the aspects involved in the teaching of art and how this form of pedagogical interaction evolves:

1. What role(s) can art education play in a rural South African context? More specifically, what effects does art education have when there are significant personal and socio-politico-cultural challenges, for instance, poverty, epidemic illness (HIV and AIDS), and violence?
2. What artistic materials, tools, and processes can be employed, which not only respond to the local research contexts but are accessible and sustainable and have meaning for participants? More specifically, can local substances such as naturally occurring clay or recycled materials be used in ways that are useful and relevant and what implications can these materials have for other contexts?
3. What pedagogies emerge to make knowledge (artistic, social, cultural) transmittable and meaningful both within peer groups and between the researcher/practitioner and learners?

Generally speaking, CAE relates to how I conducted the fieldwork and is oriented towards investigating the processes involved in teaching art with the research communities. It is teaching as a way to understand the lives and experiences of others. Question 1 is addressed by both my on-the-ground research and my ongoing inquiry into the past and present effects of the factors that influence the lives of young people in rural communities. The context is laid down in Chapter 4. Following from the contextual mapping, I conduct a literature review of sorts that charts the various ways in which art education and contemporary creative practices have been developed in response to issues such as poverty, gender-based violence, and HIV and AIDS. Drawing from this groundwork, in Chapter 5, I document the development of art education practices with the rural research communities. Art education in this context necessitates working with young people in a way that responds to, for lack of a better phrase, exceptional circumstances (although I recognize that their experiences are not necessarily rare) or teaching in zones of trauma. This form relating requires an awareness of the issues that participants may face but is balanced by the acknowledgement that these experiences in no way define them and there is a diversity of forms and effects. While my approach draws from decolonizing pedagogical

practices that use art to explore participants' own cultural histories as an act of reclamation and recovery (i.e. Barndt, 2011), I assume no specific individual histories or effects, but take up the personal experiences of the participants.

Questions 2 and 3 relate more specifically to the tools, materials, and teaching processes I employed (and continue to employ) to generate knowledge around art production within the rural communities (Chapter 5). The former question is addressed more directly through the on-the-ground research and my physical presence in the environments. Building on the work of Barndt (2011), I frame my interaction in terms of a spiral approach, which I elaborate on in the following section. The latter question is addressed through my narration of experiences and the creation of pedagogy as I go. This process did not end with the culmination of the fieldwork period but is ongoing. Upon my return from South Africa I continued to plan future projects, exchange supplies, art works, and letters and worked to maintain a connection with participants digitally (e.g. Facebook). I also continued my research here in Canada to bring increased contextual understanding to my experience.

The final question is approached through a form of reflexive ethnographic inquiry that examines the sequence of events, teasing out various themes from the data (Chapter 6):

4. What professional and personal resources do I need to draw upon and manifest as a researcher and art educator to function effectively and ethically in these communities? In this instance “effective” can be defined, as the capacity to enhance the well-being of participants or doing the most good and least harm in terms of addressing their educational, social, and personal needs.

As an immersive approach well suited for cross-cultural research, ethnographic inquiry guided my fieldnote writing and how I understand my experiences and my own identity as a researcher, teacher, and artist. This documentation includes my own and others' potential and limitations, assessments of ethicality and effectiveness, as well as boundaries of time, space, and material resources but also the generativity that comes from such points of friction. As illustrated by the descriptions of my experiences, there were often multiple ethical frameworks colliding—my own ethical stance (as informed by my personal history and understandings of ethics constructed by university requirements and human rights documents) and those which were expressed by some individuals at the research sites. Working to develop my critical understanding of these various

stances, I gradually move toward a third space of critical awareness. This exploration is intended to elucidate my rethinking and repositioning during and after the fieldwork. In this sense it is never conclusive but reflects my coming to understand aspects of South African life and my own changing perspective as I work to respect others' cultural differences and also support children's rights that I believe transcend context.

Art is not a luxury³⁷: Art making and art education in challenging circumstances

As an area of research, art making and art education in contexts marked by significant personal and social challenges remains under-theorized and diffused across a range of disciplines (e.g. art education, art therapy, psychology, peace studies). Barriers to understanding the roles and effects of creative activity, particularly in environments punctuated by struggle and oppression, may stem in part from the impossibility and inevitability of representing artistically, or otherwise, individual and collective hardship (Bisschoff & Van de Peer, 2013). Experiences in such fraught locales are highly complex and diverse, which suggests that capturing and critically evaluating the impact of artistic engagement in these instances is not an easy undertaking. There is however a growing body of research from around the world that takes up the role of art making and teaching in contexts such as extreme poverty (Miller, 2007), life-threatening illness such as HIV and AIDS (Lewis & Gerus-Darbison, 2014), war and conflict (Cohen-Evron, 2005; Gould, 2000), genocide (Wix, 2009), state-perpetrated violence (Adams, 2002), forced migration (O'Neill, 2011), and natural disasters (McManamey, 2009).

In such cases the verbal approach to analysis and explanation may fall short. Artistic interventions, on the other hand, can "offer the possibility of yielding new insights and perspectives, largely because they work in different ways and formats in addressing the unspoken" (Heidenreiche-Seleme & O'Toole, 2012, p. 17). As argued by Catherine Cole (2014), performance and human rights researcher, the challenges of today's world place extraordinary demands on art. However, contemporary scholarship testifies to "art's ability to represent and activate cultural memory, stimulate cultural imaginaries, generate participatory engagement, depict charged subjects that are innately hard to represent and do so by using a wide palette of forms, tones, genres and styles". She continues, "The arts can signal presence, highlight absence

³⁷ As affirmed by Audre Lorde in her 1977 essay *Poetry is Not A Luxury*, I too believe that art making is vital and necessary to the human condition.

and tolerate silence without necessarily trying to fill it” (p. 4). It is clear that art holds considerable power in instances of crisis, trauma, or loss to help individuals and communities take up their experiences and develop methods of coping and even (re)building social relationships and structures. Research has demonstrated that opportunities for collective creative activity are significantly correlated with life achievement and resiliency (e.g. Prescott, Sekendur, Bailey, & Hoshino, 2005). Art offers a means to engage with difficult questions and can reveal something of other’s lives. Connecting with others through art making can offer a kind of bearing witness to their intuitive and urgent responses to their lived reality and also to their extraordinary adaptability (Kalmanowitz & Lloyd, 2005).

In apartheid South Africa, grassroots creative activity played an important part in the anti-apartheid resistance struggle as well as in personal transformation. Rooted in ideas of Black Consciousness, art centres and collectives were spaces that “allowed for nuanced engagements of identity to emerge which simultaneously expressed a form of socio-political critique” (Lochner, 2013, p. 315). During this time, artists and arts educators in alternative contexts such as art centres were positioned as “cultural workers” or individuals, who, in confronting oppression, interrogated socio-cultural boundaries. As noted by John Pepper (2009), “the cultural worker was elevated to a position of critical importance in the democracy movement, and at the same time artists were brought to a position of equivalence with other workers in the struggle” (p. 80). In the democratic era however, this designation has shifted. Writing in 2005, South African artist-writer Joseph Gaylard lamented that,

Fundamentally, we have not really engaged—as a community of practitioners, curators, administrators and organisations—in organised debate and action around the role that the visual arts might play in society beyond the gallery opening, the art journal and the arts academy: the world of the crèche, the school, the prison, the old age home, the HIV/AIDS hospice, mental health facility and so on [...] neither the tertiary sector nor the professional environment provide young people with opportunities for informed, thoughtful and satisfying engagement with the pressing needs of the society, an engagement where the artist is positioned as a resource, rather than as a voyeur of the woes of others” (para. 6, 9).

Today, engagement with “ideologically driven” art making has been officially phased out as defunding and governmentalization has pushed practices into the commercialized private sector (Makhubu & Simbao, 2013). There has also been a parallel change in South African historiography. As noted by Ewald Mengel and Michela Borzaga (2012), discussions of

structural injustice and domination have been replaced by conceptualizations of the colonizer-colonized relationship as one of mutual hybridization and reciprocity characterized by moments of intimacy between ruler and ruled. As a result, the link between cultural trauma and contemporary economic and political relations is obscured and old injustices resurface, “albeit under new guises and masks” (Mengel & Borzaga, 2012, p. x). The current inclination towards neoliberalism and capitalism in South Africa has caused some scholars to question the extent to which real change and the creation of inclusive artistic spaces is possible (Makhubu & Simbao, 2013). Attempts to address the challenges face by South Africans “have been slow to take root, and there has been a tendency to focus large-scale commissions on predominantly decorative interventions that feed into capital-centric urban development initiatives” (Sitas & Pieterse, 2013, p. 328).

The above examples are indicative of recent efforts within academia to respond to and complicate questions regarding the role of art making in post-apartheid South Africa. However, important artistic activities have also developed at the community level, which aim to politicize and democratize public spaces, as well as some of the locations identified by Joseph Gaylard (2005). The Gugulective of Cape Town challenges the legitimacy and authority of conventional gallery spaces by creating their own exhibition spaces in the townships³⁸. Other examples include Dala, a transdisciplinary collective of practicing artists and educators that explores the role of creative production in the building of safer, more liveable cities³⁹. Also, the NON-NON Collective of Johannesburg (artists Donna Kukuma and Kemang Wa Lehulere) locates their practice “in the liminal space between art and life.” They collaborate with ordinary people such as street beggars and hawkers as well as grassroots artists such as street performers and photographers. These creative collectives advocate “the power of marginality” and seek “formulate ways to deal with race gender and class disparities through interventions, not in isolated spaces of gathering but in the flow of everyday life” (Makhubu, 2013, p. 417). These initiatives demonstrate that art has the potential to mine the deeper emotions, hopes, aspirations, and visions. Art allows imagination free rein to create new paradigms, make us more complete

³⁸ See, for example, <http://www.global-activism.de/directory/gugulective>.

³⁹ See, for example, <http://vimeo.com/43984279>.

individually, and evolve socially and politically. Art educators and practitioners should not shy away from this powerful and sometimes disturbing or even explosive function of creativity.

Community art education

There are a number of methodologies and terminologies for the global practice of linking research activities with artistic practice and community engagement such as community art(s) (Cleveland, 2008; Lowe, 2000), developmental community arts (Combat Poverty Agency, 1996), community cultural development (Goldbard, 2006), community-based arts (Knight & Schwarzman, 2005), community-based art education (Krensky & Steffen, 2009), social justice art education (Dewhurst, 2010), cultural work (Luckman, 2012), and participatory arts (Laaksonen, 2010), to name a few. While there is overlap between many of these approaches as they share common roots (e.g. popular and informal education) and each is concerned with the transformative capacity of cultural activities (i.e. the arts) for members of the public, there are differences of emphasis and practitioner role. Without attempting to draw fine distinctions, I adopt the term community art education (CAE). I find the term CAE useful as it highlights the interconnectivity and mutually supportive nature of the complex concepts of community development, artistic production, and pedagogy that is involved in this particular form of social change initiative. As with my case, the practitioner is often trained in studio arts and the teaching of art with and for communities. There is a concern for the under-representation of the interests of non-mainstream populations as CAE initiatives typically seek “ways to acknowledge those divergent community voices and use community resources” (White, 2008, p. 71).

Broadly defined CAE “encompasses all art education activities that occur outside standard art educational settings (such as the formal school curriculum or training for specialized populations of aspiring, emerging, or established artists) and frames them as ‘community art’” (McLeod, 2011, pp. 16-17). Conceptions of community and the nature of the relationships art educators aim to establish with the people they work with vary depending on agendas of the practitioners and the adoption of community engagement or social change platforms (see for example, Helguera, 2011). Within the context of this study CAE is explicitly oriented to the generation of small-scale social change and as such is considered:

both a creative practice and a teaching method to fulfil educational objectives ranging from creative self-expression to competency with discipline specific standards. [It] can be

a tool to situate young people as engaged citizens within their communities by employing the arts as both a process to understand social issues in the larger community context and a product that contributes to public dialogue (Krenksy & Steffen, 2009, pp. 12-13).

My implementation of CAE involved an evolving process of interaction with the research context from which I could establish a method of relating and an approach that best served the participants. This emerged as a spiral pattern of action and began with 1) My observation of the research context and dialogue with participants so that their artistic interests, ideas, needs and goals could begin to be identified; 2) The identification of available community resources that could respond to the above aspects. Interactive or mobile interviewing (Brown & Durrheim, 2009), that is, a participant-directed data collection method using largely unstructured conversation, was employed to gather information on what materials, techniques, and other assets could be accessed by the various participant groups. I interviewed a range of community members for the purpose of building a responsive form of CAE including students, teachers, artisans, housewives, entrepreneurs, school administrators, and so on. I was concerned to ensure that the accessibility of resources that were not contingent on my continued presence, even if I acted as an initial intermediary. Once identified, 3) The source was explored and information/materials were collected (by both me and the participants) and brought back to the art-making locations for use. To investigate the suitability in a given context, 4) The use of the resource was explored by the group, which often involved a trial and error approach and hands-on art-making demonstrations led by me or participants. If a resource was considered by participants to be desirable for continued use, 5) Additional techniques and process were implemented as new ideas and approaches were developed by the groups. In order to continue the exploration of resources, 6) The process was started again and the spiral repeated.

It may be useful to examine in more depth what I mean here by a pedagogy based on dialogue, given that I was working in a context where multiple languages were used (isiZulu, English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans) and the first language of the children with whom I engaged was usually isiZulu. With individuals for whom English was an effective language of communication, I often engaged in verbal dialogue. However, with participants for whom communication in English was difficult (mainly the youngest of the primary students), I employed a style that did not rely heavily on verbal exchange. Instead it centred on the visual and physical aspects of communication (e.g., the use of oversized props, hands-on

demonstrations). Also older children would take on the role of translator if and when talking was necessary. While my lack of fluency in the local language, isiZulu, is problematic, I offer an expanded definition of dialogical pedagogy that moves beyond the verbal. Anthropologist Paul Rabinow in his *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977) speaks of eruptions, interruptions, and constant breakdowns of communication that at first may produce frustrations but may later reveal turning points:

Whenever these breaks occurred [...], the cycle began again. This cross-cultural communication and interaction all took on a new content, often a new depth. The ground work we laid often seemed to fall away from under us and we scrambled somewhere else. More had been incorporated, more could be taken for granted, more could be shared. [...] Fieldwork, then, is a process of intersubjective construction of liminal modes of communication (pp. 154-155).

Using art making as a grounding, the participants and I worked toward developing a system of shared symbols through which to gain some common understanding all the while recognizing its inherent incompleteness. We were in a sense giving form not only to artistic ideas but also to our own constructed communication and the interwoven identities we were creating together.

Creating space

The establishment of CAE practices is often a navigation of physical space. In my research this meant finding workspace within the context of the specific schools and community locales. Verschelden et al. (2012) suggest that community art practices challenge practitioners to work both *in* a context and *with* a context. Working in a context requires ongoing contextual awareness in terms of practical issues such as the convenience or safety of a research site. In the present study, teaching art to “carve out a [concrete] research space, and ultimately a [metaphorical] dialogic space” (Tolia-Kelly, 2007, p. 134) translated into the constant negotiation of spaces both by the participants and me. We often struggled to work and establish a presence in the spaces available to us, which included an unused classroom, a storage room, or simply outside on the school grounds behind a building.

Working with a space requires an approach that operates as a “reflection of the history of an area and as a creator and carrier of social change. [...] Practitioners have the task of exploring past and present meanings of a particular context and its current use by individuals and groups, in order to generate perspectives on its future” (Verschelden et al., 2012, p. 287). Thus my use of

CAE and working with the research context involved my on-the-ground activities and my inquiry into the past and present effects of and responses to ongoing socio-politico-cultural issues in rural communities and the greater South African environment. In this sense, through the reflexive process that I created within my research activity and reporting, I move between the more general context and the specific experiences of the participants.

Cultivating collaborative partnerships

By cultivating collaborative partnerships, I am referring to the development of connections between the research communities and me. We continue to work together as a way to communicate and share experiences, affirm lives as sources of knowledge, and “stimulate each other in a synergistic process of collective knowledge production [...of which] art, education, and research become part of the same dynamic and creative process” (Barndt, 2011, p. 16). As part of the evolution of these relations, collaborations between participants may grow, possibly to include new art group members and partnerships, thus expanding the creative network. In building this process, I consider what it means to “cultivate these relationships of collaboration over space and time, within an ever-shifting political and material context, marked by ongoing negotiations concerning the meanings of these collaborations” (Bullington & Swarr, 2010, p. 87).

As a large transnational initiative exploring the ways art can mobilize communities, the VIVA! project offers an exemplar of methodology that engages the transformative potential of the arts with colonized communities. Of particular relevance to this project is the process of naming and working with contradictions as it is “only within the spaces created by contradictions of any given moment that we can take action” (Barndt, 2011, p. 11). As issues are brought up through the research process they are approached dialectically as opposed to via positivist, linear, or dichotomous methods of framing. Tensions are not necessarily to be resolved but rather acknowledged as inherent aspects of research with communities.

To synthesize their methodology and avoid dichotomous thinking, the VIVA! team has proposed a three-level spiral. Each level of the spiral is returned to and evaluation is continuous. The first level of the methodological spiral, *Intercultural*, addresses encounters of “differences of race/ethnicity, age, gender, and class” and is viewed as “facilitated by art-making practices that

embrace diverse ways of knowing and a wide range of cultural expression” (Barndt, 2011, p. 57). The second level, *Intergenerational*, focuses on communication between young people and adults. My application of this analytic level to the rural South African context includes examining existing relationships between community members. I also consider my various roles in relation to young and older people, which were seldom neutral. I often occupied an intermediary position between young people and adults who controlled access to material resources, spaces, and other knowledgeable community members. The final level in the VIVA! spiral, *Integrated and holistic*, draws on various disciplines to address more than just the artistic requirements of the participants but is also responsive to physical, emotional, and psychological needs. This methodology relates to a framework of “creative tensions,” which is used to acknowledge and address “the messiness and challenges of this counter-hegemonic work, and adopt a self-critical stance” (Barndt, 2011, p. 19). I have adopted a similar approach as a means to examine the tensions that unfolded from my research. By focusing on “creative tensions” that emerge through interactions associated to the project, I emphasize the dynamic relationships between the participants, the larger research context, and myself.

Towards a critically reflexive ethnography

As indicated earlier, the self-reflection and contextual research that I necessarily brought to my CAE methods moved these towards a critically reflexive ethnography rooted in feminist concerns. Broadly, the term ethnography refers both to a certain form of research and to the resulting written product. It is,

[...] a research process based on fieldwork using a variety of mainly (but not exclusively) qualitative research techniques but including engagement in the lives of those being studied over an extended period of time. The eventual written product—an ethnography—draws its data primarily from these fieldwork experiences and usually emphasizes descriptive detail as a result (Davies, 2012, p. 5).

In following D. Soynini Madison’s (2012) lead, I take a critical stance. She defines critical ethnography as a practice that,

begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes or injustice within a particular *lived* domain. By “ethical responsibility,” I mean a compelling sense of duty and commitment based on principles of human freedom and well-being and, hence, a compassion for the suffering of lived beings. [...] The critical ethnographer also takes us beneath surface appearances, disrupts the *status quo*, and unsettles both neutrality and

taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control (p. 5).

Within the context of ethnography I understand reflexivity to be “a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference [...] reflexivity at its most obvious level refers to the ways in which the product of the research are affected by the personal process of the researcher” (Davies, 2012, p. 4). Often the ethnographer speaks in the first person, experiments with different writing forms and strives to take up moral and political questions through self-awareness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). The researcher’s personal experience is used in a manner that elucidates the culture or phenomenon under study. Such texts fall along a continuum from “starting research from one’s own experience to ethnographies where the researcher’s experience is actually studied along with other participants, to confessional tales where the researcher’s experience of doing the study becomes the focus of investigation” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740).

I extend criticality in the ethnographic consciousness to the use of reflexivity itself, as does feminist theorist Wanda Pillow (2003), who proposes that researchers be suspicious of reflexivity. She states:

Thus a reflexivity that pushes toward an unfamiliar, towards the uncomfortable, cannot be a simple story of subjects, subjectivity, and transcendence or self-indulgent tellings. A tracing of the problematics of reflexivity calls for a positioning of reflexivity not as clarity, honesty or humility, but as a process of confounding disruptions—at times even a failure of our languages and practices. [...] This is a move to use reflexivity in a way that would continue to challenge the representations we come to while at the same time acknowledging the political need to represent and find meaning (p. 192).

For me, the writing of my dissertation is part of the work of understanding my positionality and subjectivity, and ultimately addressing my fourth research question on my continued ethical functioning.

At each level of my research, however, there is a hybridity of form. The representation of my research therefore, is not pure ethnographic inquiry as it is informed by and draws inspiration from a variety of discourses including journalistic non-fiction, narrative inquiry, and autobiographical texts. The vein of connection between exemplars from each genre found here is a focus on what has been described as the “shadow side” (McLean & Leibing, 2007) or the “borderland” (Brown, 2000). This includes not only an investigation alongside people who are often marginalized or pushed to the edges of social inquiry but a related interrogation of the often

uncomfortable positioning of the researcher within each step of the research and writing. It is the researcher's own changing and mediated perspective that lies at the core of the analysis (Rabinow, 1977). Within this framework the researcher's knowledge is conceptualized as "partial" (Clifford, 1986) and their negotiations with the social world are open-ended, ambiguous, and contradictory. In this sense, borders are not cut-and-dry, there are no discrete identities as people are never simply "black or white, male or female, 'First' or 'Third' World (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 12). Instead contexts are explored,

in ways that shake the author's faith in fixed interpretations, ways that reiterate that the meaning of events are never secure, ways that clarify that these meanings are socially produced and historically situated. Writing then becomes, in part, less a mastery of a form of knowledge and more a collection of excerpts, outtakes from a continuous conversation about what happens on the edges of multiple forms of knowledge (Emoff & Henderson, 2002, p. 3).

This writing is placed within an agenda that foregrounds the needs and interests of the participants, while also offering a critique of the very research practices it engages in an effort to move towards a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of social phenomena.

The construction of fieldnotes and the resulting ethnography involves building a special relationship between the present and the past. Initial impressions and reactions are expressed and then revisited, reworked and re-examined. The entire process is of course never neutral. As a method for analysing and interpreting ethnographic data, medical anthropologist Annette Leibling (2007) discusses what she describes as the "veiling of data" or "data in the shadow." This can happen because of the human limitations of the researcher or our own blind spots and shortcomings. However, by working in places affected by recent cultural traumas, such as South Africa, researchers may encounter the veiling of whole sites, forces, and histories (Rhodes, 2013). Leibling goes on to describe a process of excavation or "lifting out" (a term borrowed from Gendlin, 1978/1979) as an approach for apprehending these complexities and lifting the veil. In lifting out, "elements that are sensed as problematic are recontextualized" (Leibling, 2007, p. 145), and a new perspective on a given situation is created. Through looking back and seeing the past as incongruent with the present, new insight and positionings emerge. This dialogue with the past, however, "does not mean the discovery of a final truth or an archaeology of the inner self, but a process of sensibilization towards one's own and others' categorizations of the world" (Leibling, 2007, p. 141).

Up close

In their handbook *Doing Ethnographies*, Crang and Cook (2007) outline a nonlinear and critical practice of conducting ethnographic research. To begin, they suggest abandonment of the read-*then-do-then-write* model of inquiry as one that quickly falls apart as it does little to accommodate the unexpected and dynamic nature of social research. Alternatively, a more flexible framework is suggested as it is expected that the research will necessarily be rethought and plans rewritten “on the hoof” in ongoing but systematic ways in order to understand how the project is taking shape. Similarly, moving between reading and writing reflects the evolving nature of the dissertation construction. This immersive approach to the research process accommodates the variety of complexities that continue to emerge from my research practice.

While in the research context I kept fieldnotes that I put through various layers of revision and expansion. I produced more detailed and frequent notes (on a daily basis) during my stays in the rural areas, although I also kept track of my experiences when elsewhere in the country and took note of conversations as well as pertinent current events. As I was not simply an observer but also engaging in the process of teaching art making sessions and engaging in other activities, it was often difficult to take notes as events were unfolding⁴⁰. During such occasions I relied on jottings (Figure 1) or brief translations of “to-be-remembered observations into writing on paper as quickly rendered scribbles about actions and dialogue” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011, n.p.).

⁴⁰ I opted not to rely on my audio recorder (unless in a formal interview setting) and chose not to record the art making sessions or personal conversations with the young participants. This was done with the knowledge that this may impact the accuracy or comprehensiveness of the field data but writing a few quick notes during and extended entries afterwards was much less intrusive and conducive to relationship building. I also wanted to avoid as much as possible the audio recorder becoming a distinctive part of my identity as interpreted by community members.

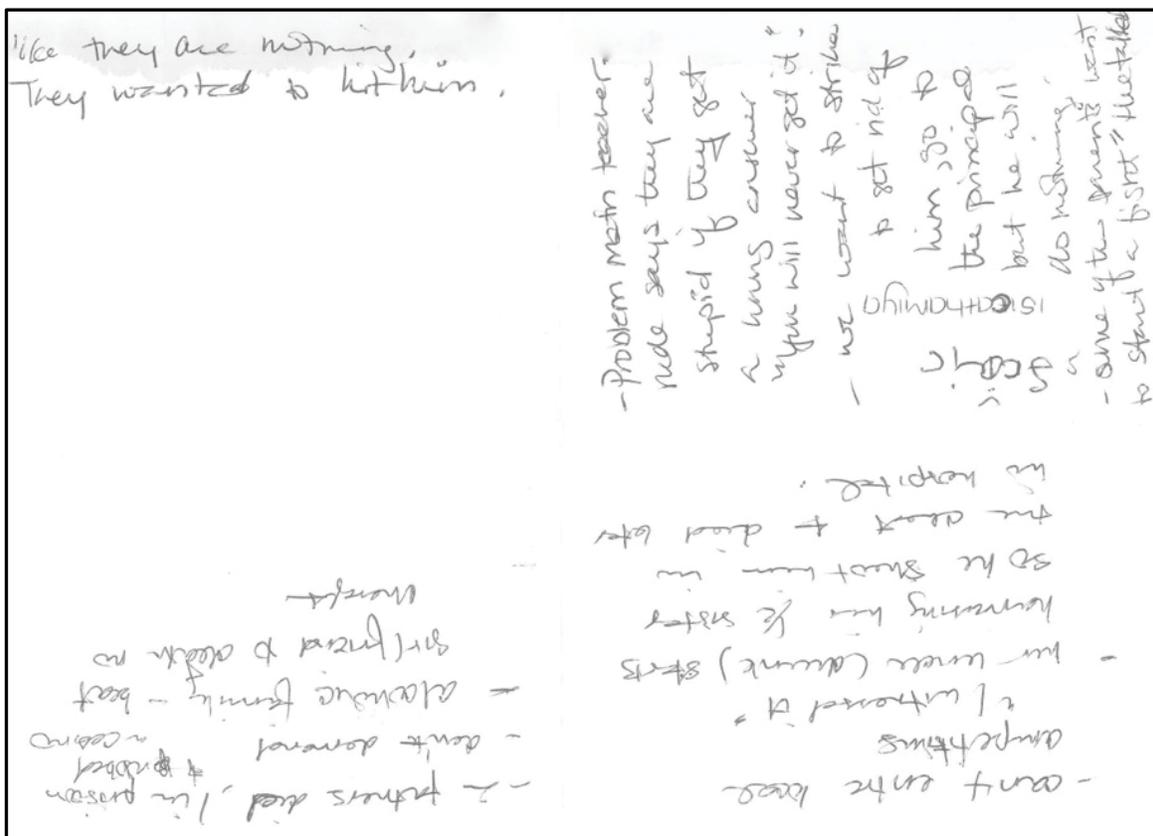


Figure 4: Example of a jotting that includes my writing as well as the writing of participants as they explained words or concepts to me

I had taken to writing on small scraps of paper, which I then referred to later in the day to jog my memory as I attempted to create more complete descriptions of the scene. These expanded fieldnotes were initially written by hand in a stream-of-consciousness style, as it was often impractical to type them on a laptop (Figure 2). The handwritten notes were then transcribed into a word processing document and underwent a second revision that checked for grammar and flow to produce a 100-page document that could then be coded and analyzed.

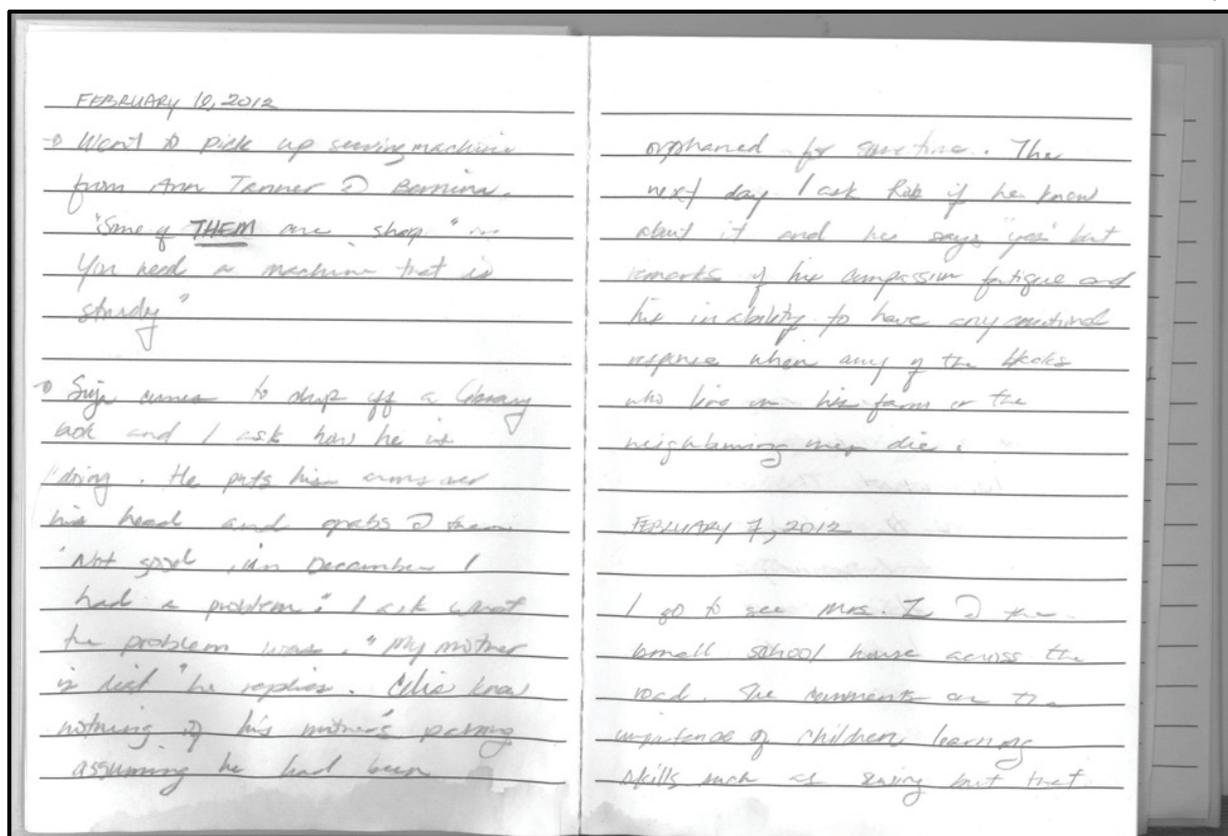


Figure 5: Example of extended fieldnotes from one of my notebooks

The writing of my fieldnotes was a movement between two approaches described as "comprehensive note taking" and "the salience hierarchy" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Wolfinger, 2002). The former approach involves systematically recording everything that happened during a specific time period while with the later, the researcher begins with their most noteworthy observations and as such is more explicitly governed by their particular positioning and tacit knowledge. As described by Crang and Cook (2007), my initial fieldnote entries were more in depth as I attempted to get a broad sense of a particular setting in terms of characters, routines, roles, landscapes, and discourses as well as how I fit into all of this. Put slightly differently, these methods for writing describe the ethnographer's "apprehension of figure and ground" (Rhodes, 2013, p. 16). My fieldnote writing then became more of a blurring of the two methods as I began to focus on happenings that stayed in my mind, surprised or puzzled me, or provoked some other strong response in me.

In analyzing my fieldnotes I treated the text (and my accompanying photos and visual

renderings) as data⁴¹ from which I culled the responses to my four research questions, identified reoccurring themes, and arranged a coherent ethnographic account. I applied a version of the six-step thematic analysis method described by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006), moving from what Lynn Butler-Kisber (2010) calls the coarse-grained phase to the fine-grained phase of analysis. Although I map this process in a series of steps, it is not linear. As I moved back and forth between the phases it became more of a recursive exercise. The first step involved familiarizing myself with the data by reading and re-reading the text in an active way or searching for meanings and patterns. At this point I also dialogued with myself about what was being revealed (Butler-Kisber, 2010), making memos of initial impressions or ideas. As a second step I generated initial codes identifying segments of text by colour and writing preliminary notes in the margins and as footnotes. In the third step, I refocused the analysis by sorting the codes into broader, potential themes. While at this point I was guided by my four research questions, I also examined the data for emergent themes. Moving into fine-grained analysis, the fourth step involved the refinement, separation, combination, and eventual discard of some themes (the final themes included insider-outsider ethics, childisms, and violence and cultural trauma, see Chapter 6). I identified field text “chunks” (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 31) that could provide possible responses to my research questions and grouped thematic extracts together. It became possible to see certain connections between themes or how they fit together, and the overall story the told about the data. Here I also began to ask specific questions of the fieldnotes such as:

- Why did I include this information?
 - What assumptions am I making?
 - What strategies am I and/or participants using?
 - How do I and others talk about, characterize and understand what is going on?
- (adapted from Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995)

Often my asking of questions was prompted by my emotional and visceral reactions contained in

⁴¹ Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) argue for reading fieldnotes as a data set from which a thematic narrative can be constructed. Etherington (2004) makes a helpful distinction between two forms of analysis when conducting narrative research (an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of research practices): the analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. The analysis of narratives uses the stories as the starting point rather than the end point of the analysis and seeks to identify crosscutting themes. Narrative analysis on the other hand, “does not seek to find similarities across stories, and is not interested in conceptual themes, but instead values the messiness, depth, and texture of lived experience” (p. 81). In this sense the analysis is the creation of a story.

the text. The field text tended to be dominated by noticeable feelings of anger, bewilderment, and sadness but also by intense joy and delight. I began to pay attention to the frequency that I used certain words or words that stood out for their intensity. The fifth stage involved defining the themes and identifying the essence of what each of them was about. As well as outlining the story that each theme told, I considered the broader overall narrative that I was trying to tell with the data. Concurrent with the analysis of my field text, I was building a review and synthesis of scholarship that related to questions around the South African context. Of particular interest were historical and contemporary forces that help to shape rural lifeworlds and the points of intersection with art making and educational practice. I often used visual maps as a means to trace connections between and within research areas.

In the sixth and final step worked to weave together the field text extracts with an analytic narrative to construct responses to my research questions. This process recalls Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) interpretation of the qualitative researcher as a bricoleur who prepares a representation from multiple fragments. I treated the writing of the dissertation text as a narrative but not in the sense of a conventional ethnographic text, for certain academic requirements needed to be fulfilled (i.e. theoretical underpinnings, procedures). Nonetheless, I aimed to create a fluid document that described my journey. I recognize that as a researcher I am guided by my own assumptions and convictions at all stages of the research process. It is the interpretation and writing stages that draw particular concern since here researchers have representational control and the power to choose, analyze and report data to other academics (Valentine, 1999). While my field texts and dissertation have undergone numerous revisions in an effort to hone and clarify meaning, the words of the participants that appear throughout in quotation marks are their own. I have maintained their idiosyncratic language use and tried to produce their utterances and associated gestures as close to verbatim as possible.

On the use of the visual

Debates around the ethics of visual materials and methodologies are ongoing as the use of visual data raises a number of specific concerns that are different from representational practices such as text (e.g. Clark, 2012; Hurdley, 2010). The use of visual tools in social science research, including photographs and film, played a significant role in the fetishism, exploitation, and

colonization of indigenous peoples (e.g. El Guindi, 2004, pp. 39-34; Hight & Sampson, 2004). Scholars must work to identify and ameliorate the colonial legacy of visual research for indigenous populations as well as other groups who have been systematically marginalized by research practices, such as young people and the economically disadvantaged. In my research, questions surfaced around the confidentiality of participants, particularly the learners in the secondary schools where there were tensions between administration, parents, and the student body. As indicated by Wiles et al. (2008), “People who are interconnected can easily identify others in visual images from jewellery, clothes, gestures or gait, even when attempts have been made to anonymise individuals” (n.p.). This paralleled my experience. The young people were often able to identify all individuals in photographs of the art groups even if only a small part of that person was visible.

As can be seen throughout this document, I have chosen to include photographs of the participants along with things that they have said or summative statements about them in my own words. In the consent forms (Appendix A-N) the participants (or their guardians) could indicate with a check mark their agreement to be photographed. I took numerous photos that showed the faces of the participants. Originally, I felt that to include them in texts and presentations was a betrayal, potentially exacerbating any existing vulnerabilities. I wondered if people would assume that they were poor, HIV-positive, or victims of abuse or neglect. After a great deal of internal debate, I came to realize that while these images are possible sites of risk, they also show strength, agency, and the participants’ concrete individuality. In other words, images highlight the “the individuality and concrete identity of the other” (Welch, 1990, p. 127). Photographs also make the participants real for the reader in a way that is different from written language. Postcolonial feminist critique views the history of research as a form of violence: emotional, intellectual, spiritual, or otherwise. In thinking about violence I was reminded of a technique. If you are attacked, you are to yell over and over “My name is ___” as a way to make the attacker see you as a person. So I have included images of the participants throughout the dissertation in an effort to help the viewer SEE them as individual persons in a way that text alone cannot. I feel that the importance of letting the participants be seen outweighs the potential risks that might ensue, although I recognize the uncomfortable nature of this position given that I cannot predict or prevent all potential negative ramifications. I have included captions with the

photos that reflect self and mutual identification. So I encourage the reader to really look, and to see.



Figure 6: Umculi

Umculi is working towards a career as a surgeon. He is also an aspiring and talented musician; he pairs intricate hip-hop beats with poetry of love, pain and joy.

The context of transformation

In this chapter I explore several broad areas of background information to provide a contextual frame for my research practices, as any form of art education must be mindful of such complexities. What follows reflects how and what I needed to learn in order to connect with the place and the people. It is a more quantified portrait of South Africa that reflects the broad situation in terms of the legacy of colonial oppression, poverty, and violence as well as recent crises such as the HIV and AIDS epidemic and how these issues permeate all aspects of life. These large-scale interpretations are valuable in that they are illustrative of both the depth and scope of the issues faced by contemporary South Africans. Following from this analysis, I also offer comparative examples of Canada's socio-economic and demographic statistics as it is important to use my own context as the basis for my own lived understanding and to make clear that inequality exists here too. In line with critical research perspectives, qualitative and quantitative methods do not exist in a hierarchy as "measurement and statistical analysis that would, for example, illuminate income disparities among different groups, and how these disparities intersect with other variables, are as important as in-depth narratives and narrative analysis" (Anderson, Khan, & Reimer-Kirkham, 2011, p. 32).

Having said this, the lives and experiences of people are not reducible to numerical indices and the two forms of informational representation are not interchangeable (Stone-Mediatore, 2003, p. 112). Thus, the purpose in presenting this form of information is also to create a space for my own data and the experiences of the participants in order to respond to—either affirm or counter or otherwise complicate—such contextual categorizations and to unpack their rhetorical construction. I also recognize that the challenges faced by the South African people cannot always be explained by the past but are also circumscribed through interactions in the here and now.

It is against this particular backdrop of large strokes that I examine how art has been used

to respond to and influence contemporary lived realities. As a young democracy with a rapidly evolving social landscape, the country appears in a constant state of transition. As suggested by artist, educator, and scholar Kim Berman (2012), the current framework of engagement with the arts “is less about reconciliation and healing from the past and instead about the need for agency, activism, civic responsibility, and participation” (p. 145). As the “new South Africa” tries to find a place in the global economy while contending with issues that are both convoluted and mutable, art has emerged in many ways and forms as a medium of possibility and positive change.

Apartheid South Africa

A longstanding practice of colonial domination, apartheid in South Africa was based on an official discriminatory legislation that segregated inhabitants according to race and created an “enduring system so brutal it has few parallels in modern history” (Hunter-Gault, 2000, p. v). From 1948⁴² to 1994 the ruling Afrikaner government, the National Party, engendered and maintained white supremacy through the domination and oppression of the black majority, which was increasing while the white population was decreasing (in 1980, blacks represented 71.5% while whites only 16.2% [Foreign Policy Study Foundation, 1981, p. 42]). This relative proportionality emerged in the 19th century with largely Dutch and British settler immigration, and remains true today. The Population Registration Act passed in 1950⁴³ legislated South Africa’s non-white populations to an inferior social position with lesser rights. Life for many blacks was marked by the denial of basic freedoms, suppression of traditional practices,

⁴² For a detailed discussion on South Africa’s history of colonization and the relationship between various colonial powers (notably the Dutch and the British) see for example, Smith (1998).

⁴³ As the cornerstone of apartheid legislation, the act required registration from all inhabitants and classification according to race. Classification was based on factors such physical features (e.g. skin colour, hair), language skills, and line of descent. There were originally three racial categories including “White,” “Black” (African/Bantu), and “Coloured,” which was further subdivided into “Cape Malay,” “Griqua,” “Indian,” “Chinese,” and “Cape Coloured” (Christopher, 1994, p. 103). This law led to the classification and reclassification of people, often with devastating consequences: “Families are torn apart when husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters are differently classified, with all the ensuing consequences to their personal, economic, and political lives” (Foreign Policy Study Foundation, 1981, p. 49). The Population Registration Act was meant to work with other laws to cement the oppression of non-whites, such as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 that disallowed marital unions between whites and non-whites and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950, which prohibited sexual relations between whites and blacks. A related piece of legislation the Group Areas Act also passed in 1950, determined where urban inhabitants could live as determined by specific racial zones (Christopher, 2002).

appalling living conditions, violence, torture, and abuse at the hands of the apartheid state. This had a severe impact on the quality of life for this population group. For example, in 1980 when opposition to apartheid welled, the estimated life expectancy for a black South African man was 55 years (Mostert & van Tonder, 1982), by which time he might have achieved on average slightly less than two years of formal schooling (Thomas, 1996, p. 331). If he succeeded in being employed—in a country with 20.9 per cent unemployment among non-whites (Loots, 1982)—he could expect to earn an average of approximately R1 460 (income) per year (Trieman, McKeever, & Fodor, 1996), or the equivalent of C\$1 600 of the era. The General Pass Regulations Bill denied this black man the right to vote⁴⁴. He could not travel through certain urban neighbourhoods—unless his job for his white employer made certain explicit routes possible. He had to carry a pass at all times that demonstrated this small entitlement⁴⁵. He knew that the situation was no better for his wife, since by 1980 a black woman would likely have completed just one year of formal schooling (Thomas, 1996, p. 332), meaning that she had less education than her husband, but would likely outlive him, with a life expectancy of 60 years (Mostert & van Tonder, 1982).

At the same time, there was a very different reality enacted for whites. The life expectancy for a white man was almost 67 years and 74 years for a white woman (Mostert & van Tonder, 1982). Both white men and women of this cohort received approximately eight years of schooling (Thomas, 1996). White wives were also actively discouraged by the government from entering the labour force and instead were directed to focus their efforts on raising large families to increase the white population (Brown, 1987). Alternatively, for black women having many children could help ensure the survival of individual families by increasing the number of labourers per household. “Thus, while the rich can reinvest capital and get richer, the poor can only ‘get children’” (Michaelson, 1981, p. 13). White men's mean yearly earnings were

⁴⁴ This bill was a product of a previous 1905 government legislation but was upheld by the apartheid regime.

⁴⁵ The misleadingly named Native (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act of 1952 required all blacks to carry “reference books” with identifying information such as name, address, fingerprints, and their “right” to live and work in the towns and cities of South Africa (Breckenridge, 2005).

approximately R11 065 (or close to C\$12 200 at the time), almost eight times that of their black counterparts (Trieman, McKeever & Fodor, 1996)⁴⁶.

Post-apartheid South Africa

Within South Africa today, many of the racial stratifications still exist in areas such as education, healthcare, and household income. Although there have been some significant improvements in, for example, the educational attainment of blacks [Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), 2012a], the indigenous population continues to experience lower material and subjective levels of well-being than whites (Posel, 2012). As measured by the Gini coefficient⁴⁷, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries on the planet. Since 1994, this unequal distribution of wealth has remained fairly stable despite a rise in the country's overall economic growth (Sharma, 2012). The racial divisions in poverty levels "can be attributable to the cumulative disadvantaged characteristics of Africans, such as their current levels of educational attainment, demographic structure and area of residence, as well as to the inertia of past racial inequalities" (Gradin, 2012, p. 187). There continue to be significant differences between average household incomes across the various racial groups as well as marked gender discrepancies. According to the most recent census of 2011 (Stats SA, 2012a), black-headed households had an average income of R60 613 (roughly equivalent to C\$8 155), while whites reported on average R365 134 (C\$49 056). This represents a 169.1% increase in levels since 2001 for blacks and 88.4% for whites. At an average of R67 330 (C\$9 059) per annum, white female heads-of-household make close to half that of their male counterparts (R128 329 [C\$17

⁴⁶ It should be noted that these statistics represent estimates only. Although the first simultaneous census took place in 1904, under colonial rule non-white South Africans were often misrepresented. For example, by the late 1980s there were still no accurate figures on mortality rates as the registration of birth or death of blacks was not standard practice (Brown, 1987). This suggests that figures such as those for infant mortality and death rates of the black population were higher than reported. It has also been argued that counting by race and the gathering of census data is itself a highly political process: "Censuses derive their power from their competing sources: statistical methods and the political agendas of state bureaucracies. The crucial point is that political imperatives and, in certain cases, racial ideas infuse the census-taking process. They are not extracted from the process, magically producing a distilled statistical truth. Indeed, it is the tension between the imputed statistical objectivity of censuses and their grounding in political life that generates confusion and ambivalence among the counted" (Nobles, 2000, pp. 183-4).

⁴⁷ The Gini coefficient is an economic index of income inequality with a range of 0% (absolute equality) to 100% (absolute inequality). Institutions, such as the World Bank and CIA, to establish poverty levels within a given country, often rely on this comparative measurement. Some recent estimates place the 2011 index for South Africa at 63.6% (Hodgson, 2012). By contrast, a recent coefficient for Canada was 39.5% (Sharpe & Capeluck, 2012).

241]). The official statistics for this time period put unemployment among the black population at 35.6% and 5.9% for whites.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s mortality rates in South Africa increased in nearly all age groups due to HIV and AIDS (Mayosi et al., 2012). Reasons for health disparities are complex, however, since as suggested by epidemiologists Kellee White and Luisa Borrell (2011), segregation affects health “by creating vastly different economic, physical and social neighborhood environments and shaping health behaviors” (p. 439). According to the World Bank (2013), 2011 life expectancy estimates for men were 52.0 years and 53.2 years for women. Estimates among men and women of upper middle income however, were 75.3 years and 70.6 years respectively. Current estimates published by StatsSA (2013) indicate that the highest percentage of registered deaths occurred among black South Africans at 62.8% compared to the white population group at 6.8%.

Although schools in post-apartheid South Africa are desegregated, many of the divisions remain with historically black institutions serving the poorest communities. A StatsSA (2012b) statistical release indicates that in 2011 the plurality of black South African men aged 20 years or older had received at least some secondary schooling (36.4%), while the percentage with no formal education showed a declining trend (8.7%). Despite this improvement since apartheid times, there has continued to be a significant gender gap with women of the same cohort receiving at least some secondary education (34.3%) but 12.1% having no formal education. The largest gains have been made in higher education with the portion of blacks more than doubling between 1996 and 2011 to 8.3 %. This general increase in the educational attainment of the black population is at least partially attributable to the South African School’s Act (1996), which made schooling compulsory for children aged 7-15 years. In 2010, 94% of South Africa’s children were enrolled in primary education (Mayosi et al., 2012).

The impact of HIV and AIDS

According to UNAIDS (2013), the HIV prevalence estimate in South Africa for those aged 15-49 was 17.3% in 2011 (a value that has remained relatively stable since 2005). This puts the current number of people in the country who are living with HIV at 5.6 million. Death due to HIV and AIDS has also shown a slight decline at 43.6% in the same year (a drop from 52.3% in

2006, Mayosi et al., 2012). Statistical information from large-scale surveys indicates that generally progress in addressing the epidemic has been insufficient. Rural communities tend to be disproportionately affected by various adversities compared to township and urban locations. Therefore, “poor” and least developed schools are over-represented by those located in rural areas, particularly in Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal provinces (Gardiner, 2008). HIV and AIDS is also a greater threat to rural communities (Khau, 2012)⁴⁸ with some studies indicating associated mortality rates significantly higher than in the country as a whole (e.g. Mashego, et al., 2007).

What does this mean for South African young people today?

The myriad of intersecting issues faced by young people in South Africa today has created a volatile atmosphere. The alterations to the life cycle with so many adults dying in the prime years of life, the influence of past and present injustices, and processes of social exclusion have meant precarious and shifting roles (Msibi, 2012; Nduna & Jewkes, 2012; Swartz, Harding, & De Lannoy, 2012). Over the last few decades the HIV and AIDS epidemic has resulted in increased numbers of vulnerable children, orphans, and child-headed households (CHH⁴⁹) (Shisana et al., 2009). As a mechanism for learning, social support, and integration the education system faces significant challenges in terms of providing quality educational opportunities for all. Despite their majority status, young people in South Africa (and across the continent) face continued marginalization by political and social structures and have only recently received serious attention from academic and policy makers. This neglect “is not only an arrogant error, but also a potentially dangerous one; it follows that a crisis of youth is in fact a crisis of the continent, and vice versa” (Twam-Danso, 2004, p. 7). Most of today’s young South Africans are the first generation to be born within a democratic country, many without personal memories of apartheid. This has meant an identity transformation for the nation and its people, one that seeks to break away from the imposed identity concepts as dictated by centuries of colonization. In many ways this transformation carries with it considerable uncertainty. The past is being

⁴⁸ This disparity has been linked to migration/mobility patterns. There are a high number of urban dwellers and migrant labourers who return home to their rural villages after becoming ill. There is also a paucity of information and access to health services in rural areas.

⁴⁹ Defined as households with only individuals under the age 18 (StatsSA, 2011a, p. 7).

simultaneously recovered, reclaimed, and reinterpreted so as to move forward into a radically different future.

Young people, health, and well-being

HIV- and AIDS-related illness and death have had a considerable impact on family structures and have brought new responsibilities, roles and adversities for young people. The negative effects of the epidemic tend to be exacerbated by co-occurring issues such as poverty (Taylor, Kidman & Thurman, 2011) and may also lead to mental and physical health problems, food insecurity, financial burdens, decreased educational outcomes, and an increase in caregiver roles (e.g. caring for younger siblings and ill or dying family members in HIV-affected households). While young people are not “simply casualties or victims of their adverse social environments” (Van der Hiejden & Swartz, 2010, p. 42), there is a need to foster their safety and growth in what can be very difficult contexts. Critics argue that the reality for many young people has been met by an inadequate government response in relation to the sensitivity, availability, and accessibility of services designed to help them and their families.

The number one goal in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (halve levels by 2015). Recent reports on South Africa’s progress state that the country is “off-track” (UN, 2013, p. xiv). Although the poverty levels are high in South Africa, children are hit the hardest out of any group. In 2008-2009 close to two-thirds (63.9%) of children were in poverty⁵⁰ compared to 52.3% of the total population. More than seven out of every ten (71.3%) black African children were living below this poverty line, while 2.1% of white children were found to be in poverty at this level (Lehohla, 2013). The social exclusion of young people (15-34 years-old) from the labour market is a concern as historically this group is particularly affected by unemployment (Lehohla, 2012), making it difficult to change poverty trajectories. There are also strong connections between the intergenerational transfer of material assets and either escapes from or increases in poverty levels. Disinheritance or the exclusion from asset inheritance may exacerbate poverty for younger generations, thus growing up poor increases the likelihood of remaining poor as an adult (Cooper & Bird, 2012). This suggests that cycles of poverty can be extremely difficult to break.

⁵⁰ This measurement takes into account both food and non-food needs.

One of the most reported on and potentially long-lasting results of the epidemic has been the rise in the number of orphaned⁵¹ children. Almost one-fifth (3.6 million) of children in the country are orphans and among those the majority are of black African descent. KwaZulu-Natal has the highest proportion of children and correspondingly the greatest number of orphans (StatsSA, 2011b). In 2009 there was an estimated 1.9 million AIDS orphans across the country and in 2011 that number jumped to 2.1 million (UNAIDS, 2010; 2013). Despite the hopeful reports that the overall mortality rate has shown a tendency toward stabilization, the South African Actuarial Society (2011) has projected that by 2025, the proportion of orphans attributable to AIDS will be 82%. Although there is limited data across various areas of well-being, studies have found that among double orphans, self-reports of health are worse and there is a greater likelihood of reporting serious physical illness compared to non-orphaned cohorts (DeSilva et al., 2012). A 2011 report focusing on KwaZulu-Natal indicated that households with either orphaned or vulnerable children also tend to exhibit minimal resource availability with very low-income levels (80% of respondent homes made below R1 000 per month [C\$140] for an average family of 7.5 people). Of these same households, 63% were categorized as “severely food insecure,” meaning that “30 days preceding the survey they had often cut back on meal size or the number of meals; or at least once had run out of food entirely, had gone to bed hungry, and/or had gone an entire day without eating” (Taylor, Kidman & Thurman, 2011, p. 4). A lack of nutritional food has been shown to have detrimental effects for general health as well as recovery from ill health (e.g. Weiser et al., 2012).

Although just beginning to be identified and understood, the negative physical effects associated with orphanhood often occur together with considerable psychosocial distress and mental health problems. Due to decreased visibility compared to symptoms of physical illness, psychological distress may be more difficult to address. However, the shock of losing a loved one, the absence of adult support, and multiple compounding traumas, such as stigma, rejection and material need, can greatly impact the psychosocial well-being of young people. Research by Cluver et al. (2012) has shown that living with a caregiver who is sick with AIDS and AIDS orphanhood produce comparable levels of mental distress. This study also indicated that such

⁵¹ As defined by UNAID, the term orphan may refer to a children under the age of 18 who has lost either their mother (maternal orphan) or their father (paternal orphan). A child who has lost both parents is termed a double or dual orphan.

children are also at higher risk for developing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. Such effects amongst AIDS-affected young people tend to have persistent and deleterious consequences even compared to cohorts who may experience comparable stressors such as exposure to chronic community violence (Cluver, Orkin, Gardner, & Boyes, 2012). In addition, these young people tend to experience combined interactive effects of environmental stressors such as stigma, bullying, and poverty resulting in elevated risk status and increased measures of poor mental health (Cluver & Orkin, 2009).

A related challenge for young people in South Africa is that some of them are heading up households. These child-headed households (CHH) may be an outcome of orphanhood but it may also be a result of parental migration (for work in larger city centres) or even abandonment. Mendy, a 15-year-old secondary school participant, revealed to me that as both her parents work and live full time in Pietermaritzburg she is in charge of their rural household:

We get to chatting and she apologizes for her irregular attendance. She tells me that Saturdays are very busy for her as there are a lot of chores to complete. She lives with her younger brother. "You know boys, they don't like doing chores," she says (fieldnotes, October 15, 2011).

Mendy is not an orphan, as both of her parents are still alive, but she still has the responsibility of looking after herself and her brother on a day-to-day basis.

A recent Statistics South Africa report (2011) indicated that 0.5% (100 000) of all children in South Africa lived in CHH in 2010 but that 63.1% had parents who were still alive. Although this represents a relatively low number out of the total child population and suggests that such children are often absorbed into extended families or other households, it still presents issues related to adequate levels of care for young people. Children who live alone or with other children may have difficulty adapting, as they must take on the role of primary caregiver and are responsible for providing basic material and emotional support to younger family members (Human & Van Rensburg, 2011). Research evidence also indicates that children may live alone for intermittent time periods making it difficult to collect representative data and to develop appropriate response measures (Meintjes, Hall, Marera, & Boule, 2010).

Negative educational effects have also been reported for children living in AIDS affected households or in otherwise stressful social ecologies. Orphanhood and the associated effects have been identified as a robust predictor of decreased school performance (Chuong & Operario,

2012). Young people who take on carer roles of ill parents can be negatively affected as they may miss school, drop out of school completely, experience hunger while at school and have concentration problems due to worry about the ill person (Cluver, Operario, Lane, & Kganakga, 2012). In turn, these negative educational impacts are thought to contribute to poorer long-term educational outcomes.

Through my interactions with Mrs. Nobuntu, a Life Orientation teacher at one of the research schools, these statistics were given a human face. Mrs. Nobuntu is also responsible for the vulnerable children and orphans at the school, often paying out of her own pocket to ensure that those who are hungry, sick, or unclothed do not go without for too long. On one occasion she informed me that a student has come to her and said she has not eaten in three days:

She then shows me a record of all of the students who cannot afford to buy uniforms this year. She flips through page after page. She points to two pieces of paper that have been stapled into the book. “Look, this is the learner I was telling you about. This is another one, she is in grade 10.” The typed passages are dictated by the children themselves and each begin with an explanation of their orphanhood. The first girl is without any immediate family. They have all died from “illness.” She has no income and must rely on her grandmother who gives her food when she can. The second learner has also lost most of her family but now she must take care of her young brother who is in grade 7 (fieldnotes, July 22, 2011).

My home and native land: A picture of the Canadian context

It is important to provide some statistics pertaining to the contemporary Canadian context, as both a point of comparison and as an indication of the national environment from which I come. In terms of indexes such as life expectancy and quality of life, Canada has ranked among the top countries in the world (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2013). From 2007-2009 the life expectancy for women was 83 years and 79 years for men (Statistics Canada [StatsCan], 2012a). Recent infant mortality rates (2009) are 4.9 nationally, however, the rates for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are both about three times higher at 15.5 and 14.9, respectively (StatsCan, 2012b). These regions fall within some of the most remote areas in the country and are home to larger populations of indigenous⁵² Canadian—First Nation and Inuit.

⁵² Canada is a settler nation in which lawmakers and policy makers carried on colonialist strategies and mindsets of their “home” countries. A full discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

As of May 2013 Canada's unemployment rate was 7.1% (StatsCan). While the country's recent Gini coefficient was 39.5% (Sharpe & Capeluck, 2012), a breakdown of the statistics reveals wealth and earning disparities between various groups and regions. The current generation of rich Canadians is "staking claim to a larger share of economic growth than any generation that has preceded it in recorded history" (Yalnizyan, 2010, p. 3). Links have been also made between colonial legacy and the persistence of First Nations people as some of the country's poorest (Wilson & MacDonald, 2010).

Nationally, the three leading causes of death include cancer, heart disease, and stroke (StatsCan, 2012c). HIV infection is, however, on the rise and continues to be a national health concern as the period of 2008 to 2011 saw an increase from 64 000 to 71 300 placing the estimated prevalence rate at 208.0 per 100 000 people (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2012). Although individuals with HIV come from all levels of society and regional areas, those disproportionately affected are men who have sex with men, First Nations peoples, injection drug users, and migrants from endemic countries (Hogg et al., 2012).

South African Curriculum reform

As a new democracy that sought to reject the oppressive and dehumanizing governance of the past regime, the 1996 Constitution, which is founded on tenets of human rights and social justice, is closely aligned with the democratization of the education system and continues to guide curriculum transformation. The new Constitution is intended to "heal the divisions of the past" by promoting the equality of all citizens and the "free potential of each person" (Z.A. Constitution, pmb.). While the newly elected ANC government began to reform the structures of the old regime as guided by one of the "most progressive constitutions in the world" (e.g. Crush, 2001; South African Government Information, 2008; Yigen, 2000) the nature of the handover helped to ensure that white interests would still be protected. As noted by South African educator Crain Soudien (2007),

the compromise between apartheid government and the liberation movements developed in the early 1990s was brokered around the reform, as opposed to the dismantling, of the country's major social institutions, including the school. Following from this [...] the social institutions therefore had to be restructured within the rules and bureaucratic parameters of the institutions as they were found in 1994 (p. 183).

Under apartheid, the accumulation of wealth for blacks was severely curtailed by restrictive legislation and minimal employment or educational opportunities (Southall, 2004). It follows then that the aggressive (although somewhat constrained and isolated) brand of capitalism and the inequitable access to services that supported the pillars of apartheid were not eradicated completely. As South Africa entered into the competitive global marketplace and began to adopt neoliberal policies, the prejudicial apartheid system of wealth and services produced long-term effects upholding unequal power relations.

Beginning in the late 1900s, Afrikaner nationalists sought to secure the subservient relationship between Africans and whites through both domestication and indoctrination. The co-opting of religion and the politicization of education was essential to this process (Msila, 2007). The objectives of apartheid education was to entrench apartheid capitalism and reproduce racial and class relations by ensuring that non-white youth were directed into the unskilled labour market (Christie & Collins, 1982). In 1953 the Bantu Education Act was enacted. The act mandated that blacks be responsible for the financing of their own education so as to incur minimal cost for whites (Hartshorne, 1992). The majority of funding for black education did not come from the central government revenue but from a poll tax levied only on the black population. Black communities were also expected to pay for half the cost of building new schools and the total cost for any extra teachers that were needed to relieve those that were severely understaffed. Reports noted that “only when the structure stands virtually shoulder-high does the department pay for the roof and fittings—and even so, many applications for equalization grants have been turned down because the department’s funds for the purposes are exhausted” (Robertson, 1978, p. 116).

The majority of black teachers were grossly under-qualified. In the mid-1970s only 1.7% held university degrees, 10.4% had matriculated, 49.3% had 2 years of secondary schooling, and 21.0% had only completed the primary level (Samuel, 1990). Thus it follows that many teachers may have had less or equivalent educational attainment as their pupils. Also, by this time the average public expenditure for white students was more than 15 times that of black students

(Thomas, 1996). Collective resistance against apartheid education grew and in 1976⁵³ with the imminent introduction of Afrikaans as the primary medium of instruction for social studies and mathematics, the Soweto uprisings erupted as student groups took to the streets in protest. On June 16, 1976 police shot into a crowd of approximately 15 000 students, wounding several and killing two⁵⁴ (Wood, 2000). The national infrastructure of knowledge production became a battleground where the struggle between democracy and authoritarian rule was waged. Some estimates place the number of black South Africans killed at the hands of police during the protests⁵⁵ as high as 600 (Harrison, 1983, p. 143). Although intense violence and heavy handed policing followed the uprisings, students continued to push against the tyranny of apartheid education with protests and school boycotts continuing into the 1980s. By the early 1990s, decades of political mobilization by the disenfranchised (of whom a significant portion were youth) and increasingly restrictive international trade sanctions forced the hand of the elites who began negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC) for the transition to a democratic system (Wood, 2000).

The legacy of inequality and racialized practices of the apartheid regime have been exacerbated by the rising neoliberal imperative, creating a new form of systemic dysfunction and the current paralysis of educational structures within South Africa. Neoliberalism is a system of policies and practices that that promotes economic growth whereby a minority of private interests (i.e. extremely wealthy investors and large companies) infiltrate all aspects of social life and promote free trade, privatization, deregulation, and minimal government intervention in the market as a means for increasing personal profit (Chomsky, 1999). “Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse and has pervasive effects on ways of thought and political-economic practices to the point where it has become incorporated into the

⁵³ In 1973, English and Afrikaans were given 50:50 status as official languages of instruction. In Soweto first English was officially introduced in 1975 and then Afrikaans in 1976. Prior to 1975 mother tongue had continued to be the medium of instruction at the junior primary level. As reported by Ndlovu (2006), “When in 1976 the Department of Bantu Education enforced Afrikaans in selected schools, the affected African pupils were required to adapt to learning two ‘foreign’ languages within two years” (p. 327).

⁵⁴ Photographer Sam Nzima captured the death of one victim, Zolile Hector Pieteron, a 13-year-old boy. The now iconic image depicts the small boy being carried in the arms of a fellow student. Hector’s sister runs beside them. A reproduction of this photograph can be seen in Helena Pohlandt-McCormick’s (2008) book “*I Saw a Nightmare...*” available in electronic form here: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/index.html>.

⁵⁵ For detailed accounts of the uprisings see, for example, Ndlovu’s (2006) *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume 2 (1970-1980)*.

commonsense way we interpret, live in, and understand the world” (Harvey, 2007, p. 23). In other words, for neoliberalism to become a dominant system of thought and action, a process of naturalization must occur whereby the expression of fundamental concepts is deeply embedded within everyday practices. And what better way to do this than to permeate the most basic of social services such as education. However, what sets education apart from other areas under neoliberal control such as healthcare, social security, or environmental regulation is that it allows for the proliferation of the system itself not only through the creation of unequal power relations and unnavigable regulatory structures but through the management of how and what knowledge is produced and accepted as legitimate.

By many accounts, current approaches to education in South Africa have reached what might be described as an impasse (e.g. Badat & Sayed, 2014; Legotlo, 2014). The reasons are far from straightforward but dominating factors such as the apartheid legacy, racial and class inequity, high levels of violence and crime, corruption in the government, and the AIDS epidemic continue to shape and account for how social realities are experienced. A widespread epidemic such as AIDS “adversely affects the potential and actual capacity for a society and economy to reproduce itself in a variety of ways, via transmission of knowledge and education, through maintenance of social and cultural patterns, or via the peopling of institutions” (Barnett, 2005, p. 141). This interruption of human bonds has had a significant impact on how and what knowledge is transmitted both within the formal schooling sector (Mitchell, Stuart, Moletsane, & Nkwanyana, 2006; van der Berg, 2007) and the myriad of informal intergenerational learning practices and processes (Vaas, 2005). For example, in South Africa there are marked inequalities between teachers in various contexts “in terms of their access to learners who are cognitively well-prepared for schooling, are physically healthy and whose homes function as a second site of acquisition” (Shalem, 2009, p. 127). While AIDS-related death and illness disproportionately affects young and middle-aged adults, women are also at the greatest risk for being infected with HIV (Muula, 2008) and they are also key knowledge holders for specific forms of indigenous knowledge. Information on art forms such as pottery, beading, and woodcraft has been obscured due to breaks in lineages of knowledge (Vincentelli, 2003). It is therefore often difficult for artistic traditions to survive.

Outcomes based education to the current South African education system

As part of the democratic transition, the new government sought to replace the racist education system of the past with one that was premised on ideas of social justice and inclusion. Since the 1990s, South African has drawn on “global exemplars in education and other spheres of governance to fashion a raft of new policies” (Christie, 2013, p. 781). The revision of the education system was a massive undertaking and involved input and pressures from various minority world countries, including Canada. In keeping with international trends, a form of outcomes-based education (OBE) was adopted. The 1995 Department of Education White Paper laid the groundwork for the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), which was developed with the goals of proving a radical shift from oppressive apartheid education by fostering democratic and participatory citizenship. South Africa joined other western industrialized nations such as the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in the movement towards a “new paradigm” in education (Malan, 2010). The most iconic instance is this legislation is the American “No Child Left Behind Act” of 2001. The new education paradigm for South Africa included policies for qualifications frameworks, outcomes-based curriculum reforms, and competency-based training in vocational education. OBE and other forms of assessment-driven policy or standards-based accountability are designed to enable measurement of private provision while also providing a regulatory and control mechanism for public provision (Allais, 2012). The basis for OBE is empirical performance standards against which all aspects of education are measured. Learning is assessed through outcome statements or a list of specific competencies, which students must demonstrate in order to give evidence of understanding and to progress through subsequent grade levels.

In principle, OBE is a progressive, student-centred approach that encourages freethinking and non-hierarchical knowledge distribution. It presents an alternative to conventional forms of education, which are seen as elitist and detrimental to explorative and open exchange through the focus on content-driven and teacher-centred methods. Qualification-driven reform in South African education was regarded as a viable alternative during the democratic transition and had previously entered policy reform circles through the labour movement (Allais, 2007). During the nascent democracy, OBE held the promise of unifying the nation and ameliorating past injustices. As a result, the ANC adopted OBE and a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

as progressive policies. The *South African Schools Act* of 1996 made provision for compulsory education for the first nine years of schooling. This legislation sought to see schools increasingly manage themselves.

The preceding apartheid education system was controlled by the white ruling class and was characterized by the neglect and paternalism of the black majority (Jansen, 2004). On the other hand, OBE was viewed as a participatory system rooted in principles of social justice and an essential part of the educational struggle against apartheid as, in theory, the outcomes are determined by all stakeholders. This approach was reflected in the formation of School Governing Bodies and Representative Councils of Learners as part of the governance structures of schools. With its grounding in existing knowledge and skills, OBE curriculum was also seen as a way to provide increased relevancy to the everyday lives of students, particularly those who had been previously marginalized (Allais, 2012).

OBE policy and implementation has been the focus of intense critical debate. Since the beginning of education reform, the government and donors have continued to invest substantial resources in determining the precise problems. While the government has responded quickly to research findings, “in the welter of everyday crisis talk, these responses have gone largely unnoticed and are rarely analysed and discussed” (Chisholm, 2011, p. 50). Due to research evidence and intellectual opinion, 2010 marked the official abandonment of OBE. From January of 2012 to 2014, the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was implemented in order to streamline the NSC. However, rather than a complete dismantling of OBE, CAPS represents an amendment to the previous NCS of 2002. In an attempt to get “back to basics” the emphasis has shifted from outcomes to content and practical work. There is now a “more mixed and hybrid situation in South African, arising in part from the overlay of different histories and curricula” (Chisholm & Wildeman, 2013, p. 96). Linda Chisholm and Russell Wildeman (2013) argue that on one hand South Africa is caught between “an advancing regime of testing, accountability and finance, a focus on basics, multiple choice tests, teaching to the test and charter schools,” and on the other hand “a receding regime of thoughtful learning, problem solving, critical thinking, child-centred education and comprehensive high schools” (p. 95). The full effects of the CAPS changes are yet to be seen. As cautioned by Linda Chisholm (2011), “there is no single, overarching policy intervention that will solve all problems” (pp. 52-53).

The remodelling of formal art education

Unlike conventional education, with OBE there are no individual subject areas per se. Under OBE, the South African Department of Education (DoE) grouped topics into broad learning areas, which became more specific as the grade level increased. Beginning with CAPS implementation in foundation phase in 2012, former learning areas have been renamed “subjects,” but this has not necessarily resulted in the formation of stand-alone disciplines in every area as each may encompass several topics. During the time of my research, CAPS had not yet been implemented and art fell under the Arts and Cultures learning area. This has now been renamed Creative Arts (DBE, 2011a). The school system is divided into four phases (Reception to grade 9 is compulsory). The General Education and Training band comprises the Foundation Phases (R to grade 3), Intermediate Phase (grades 4 to 6) and the Senior Phase (grades 7 to 9). The Further Education and Training (FET) band is non-compulsory and includes grades 10 to 12⁵⁶. During the time of my research the secondary student participants were at the Senior level (14 to 16 years old) and had received instruction under the Arts and Culture curriculum. Now in the FET phase, they are able to choose Visual Arts as an elective if their school offers it⁵⁷.

At the time of the research Arts and Culture comprised Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts. The cumbersome category of Visual Arts curriculum also encompassed Craft and Design and aspects of Media and Communication, Arts Management, Arts Technology, and Heritage (DoE, 2002). The result was a diffuse Arts and Culture curriculum, that, to say the least,

⁵⁶ With CAPS, in the Foundation Phase Creative Arts are positioned under the Life Skills learning area and are allocated 2 hours of instructional time per week. At the Intermediate Phase, Creative Arts remain under Life Skills but are reduced to 1.5 hours per week. At the Senior level Creative Arts are a separate subject area and are allocated 2 hours per week. At the Further Education and Training phase learners may take a Visual Arts subject as an elective for 3 hours per week provided it is offered by their school (DBE, 2011a).

⁵⁷ According to the DBE (2011a), “Schools that offer some or all of the arts subjects in FET will have access to specialist teachers, facilities and resources in those subjects. Schools that have no arts specialists and do not offer any arts subjects in FET can decide, in consultation with the school management team, staff and governing body, which art forms they will offer. Teachers responsible for teaching Creative Arts in these schools will need to undergo intensive and ongoing training in one or two art forms” (p. 10).

rendered prolonged engagement with any individual topic difficult⁵⁸. Four major “learning outcomes” were to be met by the student and assessed continuously by the teacher in each of the four arts sub-areas: 1) Creating, interpreting and presenting artworks; 2) Reflecting on cultural practices and arts activities; and 3) Participating and collaborating in arts and culture activities 4) Expressing and communicating through various art forms (DoE, n.d.). Outcomes were then assessed through a series of analytic rubrics for each form of artistic expression whereby students were required to demonstrate mastery of several specific tasks and skills. OBE leaves it to individual teachers and schools to supply their own content based in the interests, abilities, and circumstances of the children they teach (Tikly, 2003). This also includes making provisions for students who may have learning difficulties or developmental delays as the system is intended to be inclusive in nature. A successful implementation of OBE teaching and assessment practices in a context like rural South Africa requires that teachers of a single subject have a working knowledge of several disciplines, an understanding of historical as well as contemporary political and cultural influences, a sensitivity to interpersonal relations and subtle social cues of students, the ability to identify and accommodate psychological and physical impairments, a grasp of how and what power dynamics play out in the school environment, a highly flexible teaching approach, and sufficient resources (i.e., time, materials, space, facilities, and equipment).

Under CAPS the Outcomes and Assessment standards have been removed and evaluation is conducted via continual reflective processes. Visual Arts content at each of the four phases is grouped under specific topics. At the Senior Phase this includes: 1) Create in 2D; 2) Create in 3D and 3) Visual literacy (DBE, 2011a). At the FET phase this includes: 1) Conceptualizing through the development and realization of creative ideas; 2) Making creative artworks, and realization of creative ideas; and 3) Visual culture studies: Emphasis on visual literature (DBE, 2011b).

The above discussion that I offer reflects my cumulative and ongoing research. The whole arc of this project (before leaving Canada, while in South Africa, and upon returning), is reflected in my knowledge and understanding. This information has helped me grasp the issues

⁵⁸ In an effort to streamline education policy, CAPS outlines that the section of Creative Arts at the Senior Phase is determined by each school. Only two art forms (to be chosen from Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts) are to be offered based on the following criteria: the availability of minimal facilities/resources required for the subject, availability of specialist art teachers on staff or accessible to the school (e.g. itinerant teachers, parents or community artists), and learner abilities/talents and preferences. Minimal facilities are defined as “art room or appropriate space” and minimal resources are defined as “arts equipment, consumables” (DBE, 2011a, p. 10).

that rural learners, teachers, and school communities grapple with and the ways in which structural realities are addressed both in policy and on the ground. My survey of the educational context has helped to reveal how such a system may work to actively exclude people but also to see how participants and community members are writing themselves into this boarder narrative as well as the alternative modes of knowledge production that are being adopted. I am not a certified teacher; rather my orientation and experiences have been in teaching art in informal settings. My particular teaching background means that my relationship to OBE and the current system regardless of the context is that of an outsider. However, the contextual understanding that I have outlined here has enabled me to examine how I fit into the research environment and how my particular collection of skills may contribute positively to learning and change.

The possibilities of art: Art, education, and social change

Art, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu points out, holds immense significance for the people of South Africa on both practical and metaphorical levels: “it is important that people know that in being creative they become more than just consumers. They can transcend their often horrendous circumstances and bring something new into being” (Williamson, 2004, p. 7). For some, artistic production is a way out of poverty and a sustainable means of self-support. For others access to artistic tools and resources opens up new avenues for individual and collective expression. Art making also represents the rebuilding of a nation ripped apart by racism and violence where throughout most of its history art education for the indigenous people was virtually non-existent. Art making has of course existed for centuries outside of formal schooling in the country for “it is the community itself that has always served as a teacher, and the absorption of art skills has never depended on what has been taught in the classroom” (Williamson, 2004, p. 10). This suggests the existence in South Africa of varied and subtle forms of both artistic production and knowledge acquisition processes.

In South Africa since the end of apartheid, meaningful and interesting artistic projects have been taking place. However, as reported by Gerard Hagg, a specialist in arts and

community development⁵⁹, there continues to be a lack of rigorous data on the impact of art in the country and there are only a small number of experts in the cultural field who tend to be found within larger institutions (Hagg, 2010). Also, the government's conceptualization of the role of art emphasizes its instrumental qualities. This reflects a shift in South African (and international) cultural policy that positions art as a tool subservient to broader economic and social betterment rather than as integral to the transformation and development of humanity. Such a change is linked to the ideological movement of state policies away from socialist concerns toward market-driven principles as well as the centralization of arts development that largely ignored localized knowledge and expertise (Hagg, 2010).

Because of the often skewed and isolated development of art within South Africa, here I identify the ways in art making in the country is viewed differently, aside from the enshrined public policies and practice. I focus on activities that seek to explore how art can address social issues and contribute to positive change. Of relevance to my own research are 1) Art making as a form of social entrepreneurship or social development; 2) Artists as agents of transformation who use art to connect to the lives of ordinary people or otherwise influence change in disadvantaged communities; 3) Community art and education initiatives that connect marginalized schools and communities (e.g. through the establishment of relationships with practicing artists and art educators); and 4) Participatory research using art as a tool to access and represent the experiences of people who are often excluded from mainstream knowledge production. Of course, these are not necessarily discrete areas of exploration as they are often connected by common aims. For example, some shared goals include increasing the accessibility of art and creative expression, making relevant contributions to the lives of marginalized people, and democratizing cultural participation. In this sense art is viewed as a highly valuable societal asset that can affect concrete social change across contexts. What follows is a snapshot of the ongoing innovation and education related to art making specific to South Africa and KwaZulu-

⁵⁹ Previously, Dr. Hagg worked in the area of Arts and Culture and was co-manager of the project Assessment of the visual arts sector in South Africa for the Department of Arts and Culture. He specializes in arts and cultural diversity in relation to community development, community arts centres, traditional institutions of governance in relation to modern democracy, and identity and cultural diversity in conflict resolution in Africa. He is currently a chief research specialist for the Democracy and Governance research program at the Human Sciences Research Council.

Natal. However, the underlying values represent broader contemporary trends and practices in various sites across the globe.

The creative industry and entrepreneurship

The establishment of entrepreneurial enterprises in the creative sector of the economy often emerges primarily as a means of providing employment. However, social entrepreneurship (SE) is a growing field of economic activity that is also explicitly concerned with addressing social issues and social value creation. Contemporary literature on SE emphasizes the multiple forms and meaning of the practice depending on the socioeconomic and cultural environment (e.g. Mair & Martí, 2006). Broadly, these hybrid enterprises straddle the division between the capitalist business world and socially responsive public and non-profit organizations (Hockerts, 2006). This suggests that SE presents an alternative form of economic participation that simultaneously enters into the free-market capitalist system while adhering to agendas of positive social impact and sustainability. Often, there is a focus on the mobilization of existing assets of marginalized groups, rather than a reliance on outside resources reflecting an alignment with the goals of small change (Hamdi 2004, 2010). On the small scale, SE initiatives are concerned with innovative responses and the development of new social relations that help to ameliorate poverty and marginalization. There is however, also a concern amongst social entrepreneurs for finding long-term solutions to social problems and instigating transformations in the structure of social contexts. This approach requires an understanding of “not only immediate problems but also the larger social system and its interdependencies, so they can introduce new paradigms at critical leverage points that lead to cascades of mutually reinforcing changes in social arrangements” (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004, p. 262). As a consequence of the newness of the field and its cross-disciplinary form, critics point out that there is a need for greater critical reflection on the inherently political nature of the practice and the lack of understanding about what the “social” aspect means (e.g. Cho, 2006). Nonetheless, there is considerable potential for SE to significantly improve lives and livelihoods.

In South Africa, entrepreneurial endeavours related to the production and distribution of

crafts and other visual forms⁶⁰ have combined the goals of economic development and social welfare. A report by the South African Department of Labour [(DoL) Joffe & Newton, 2008] indicates that the

craft sector has been the focus of a great deal of attention in the South African economy since the publication of the CIGS [Cultural Industries Growth Strategy] reports which identified the potential of the sector to contribute to economic development and also social objectives such as the empowerment of women, poverty alleviation and black economic empowerment (p. 36).

In 2008 there were estimated to be 5 725 full time craft production enterprises nationally, with the highest proportion in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape, and Gauteng provinces. These can be categorized as informal, sole traders, co-operatives, project-based, and small batch manufacturers. Informal and sole-trader entrepreneurs represented the largest groups (DoL, 2008). Available estimates from the Department of Trade and Industry suggest that the craft sector contributes approximately R2 billion annually to the country's GDP and 1.2 million people earn a living through crafts or related trade areas (Department of Arts and Culture, 2009). The creative industries continue to be promoted by government as providing solutions to economic and social prosperity (see for example, Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2013; South African Government Information, 2011).

At the localized level in KZN, several forms of media comprise entrepreneurial art-making activities by organizations and individual artisans. For example, embroidery, ceramics, and beading are rooted in traditional Zulu creative production and have appeal for the tourist and export markets. Newer art practices such as those that employ recycled or repurposed materials also respond to the ecological niche market and draw on locally available resources. Often individuals are self-taught but may also work together in groups to further develop and share their skills. As the effects of HIV and AIDS as well as poverty and unemployment tend to be felt more severely in rural areas, these places have also become epicenters for creative solutions.

Africa!Ignite provides holistic support to approximately 1 000 rural crafters (of which

⁶⁰ The HSRC distinguishes between “crafts” and “visual art” in terms of a number of characteristics, such as the emphasis placed on creative versus economic drivers, functionality, and the social role of both the maker and the resulting products. However, there is an acknowledgement that the genres often blur. It should also be noted however, that this distinction is partially rooted in past systems of inequality, as under apartheid “Africans’ real cultural life was to occur in their homelands. According to this policy, art for whites was high-brow (opera, ballet, symphony concerts), while black art consisted of craft, dance and curios” (Hagg, 2010, p. 165).

90% are women, including a large portion of single mothers and grandmothers) from across the province of KZN. The focus is on traditional craft skills that are typically passed down from generation to generation. The non-profit agency provides services such as raw crafting materials, product development, and training as well as the implementation of water, health and environmental programs⁶¹. Fancy Stitch is a not-for-profit company run by women located in the rural area of Ingwavuma (in the northern tip of the province close to the Swaziland border). The free-hand embroidery organization intertwines platforms of artistic skills development with social connectedness and upward economic mobility. These goals are reflected in the objectives of the group summarized as, “[to] create beautiful products to a consistently high standard, encourage one another to have hope and a vision for the future, actively support vulnerable persons amongst us and raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, and encourage positive living” (Fancy Stitch, n.d., para. 4). Ardmore Ceramics (located in Lidgetton, about 38 km from Pietermaritzburg), although a for-profit enterprise, provides training and employment for ceramic artisans and sells their work around the world. The aim of the business is to uplift the artists and surrounding communities of Lidgetton and as such “Ardmore has always had an open door policy towards people who want to learn and develop their creative talent and earn a sustainable income through art” (2008, para. 2). The artists are also provided with a daily nutritious meal and healthcare.

Artists as change agents

The relationship between art and socio-political mobilization and change has a strong history in South Africa but became particularly visible between 1960 and 1990 as opposition to apartheid grew (Allen, 2009). Art was central to the resistance struggle as the Black Consciousness Movement⁶² (BCM) and the United Democratic Front⁶³ (UDF) used cultural activities to counter the white supremacy and oppression of the apartheid state. Urban artists also established arts centres for black communities, which became spaces for resistance organizations

⁶¹ See www.africagnite.co.za.

⁶² Emerging in the late 1960s, this grassroots social resistance movement developed in response to the white supremacy of the apartheid regime. For a detailed account of the movement’s evolution see Fatton (1986).

⁶³ Founded in 1983, the UDF was a non-racial coalition comprising mostly church, civic, labour, and student groups. The organization played a key role in the anti-apartheid movement (e.g. Seekings, 2000; van Kessel, 2000).

to meet and plan (Hagg, 2010). In 1989 in the “final years of struggle” and just before the beginning of the negotiated transition to democracy, Sue Williamson published *Resistance Art In South Africa*, which brought together a diversity of visual artists such as Manfred Zylla, William Kentridge, Bongiwe Dhlomo, and Jane Alexander. The book attracted significant national and international attention to the fight for democracy. The featured art related directly to the realities of repression and resistance, often depicting images of violence and strife. Public art including murals, posters, peace parks, graffiti, and wearables was included alongside more traditional forms as important for the mass dissemination of political messages. Of particular interest is the inclusion of work by children, some as young as three years, who vividly documented their own experiences with police brutality, massacres, and other acts of violence.

Today South African activist artists continue encourage awareness around contemporary issues and create inclusive artistic practices. They act as cultural instigators, attempting to bridge the many divides that are still very raw. As argued by Kauffman and Martin (2003),

Before 1994, much of the art produced in South Africa was confrontational and political in nature. For the politically engaged artists under apartheid there was no doubt about the identity of the target. After 1994, both the challenges and the possibilities have become more complex, ambivalent, and unpredictable (p. 5).

Thus, contemporary activist art speaks to an intersection of multiple histories highlighting the embedded and connective nature of oppression. As the subject matter of the art has expanded, it has brought into focus other identities and struggles that may have been previously obscured or denied. For example, as the winner of the 2013 Freedom of Expression Award, photographer Zanele Muholi cracks open still taboo subjects around sexuality and sexual health. In the words of the artist,

To all the activists, gender activists, visual activists, queer artists, writers, poets, performers, art activists, organic intellectuals who use all art forms of expressions in South Africa. The war is not over till we reach an end to ‘curative rapes’ and brutal killing of black lesbians, gays and transpersons in South Africa (Baker, 2013, para. 3).

From her work it is clear that despite the honeymoon years of the new democracy realities of hatred and discrimination still exist.

While local art activism is linked to the strategies and agendas of broader activist movements and must respond to an ever-changing social climate, it is also tied to previous resistance art and as such is still informed by discourses of protest and dissent (Allen, 2009).

Some of the most successful art is that which remains close to the lives of the people it is intended to affect. As growing areas of activist activity, graffiti and street art are being used as a means to connect to a populace that is often alienated or treated with hostility by the country's social and cultural institutions. Based around the notion that public spaces should be accessible for the public to engage with one another, artist Faith47 paints murals and graffiti throughout the decrepit townships of Cape Town⁶⁴. Specifically seeking out spaces that are crumbling or may not last very long, the artists creates juxtaposition between decay/fragility and images of strength. But this is also the physical infrastructure around which the township inhabitants make their homes. A recent street series explored the articles of the ANC freedom charter (the core non-racial platform of the party) including "There shall be work and security," "All shall be equal before the law" and "The people shall share in the country's wealth" (ANC, 2011).

Connecting communities with art

As a part of the democratic restructuring of South Africa, the ANC government recognized a need to improve the qualitative and accessibility of arts education, particularly for those who had been denied access under apartheid. As the country continues to struggle as a result of the past regime, arts education is also viewed as a link to social and cultural reclamation. This "envisaged transformation should not only be seen in terms of conceptual/ideological change, but also change that will impact positively on the socioeconomic well-being of communities within which these projects are located" (DAC, 2012, para. 4). The preceding four decades before democracy, community arts initiatives were developed by NGOs in response to the state's exclusionary cultural policies (Hagg, 2010). While a number of projects have been initiated in the past two decades they have fallen by the wayside as, "[g]enerally community arts projects in South Africa are not sustainable, due to lack of government funding and private initiative" (G. Hagg, personal communication, July 13, 2013). Unfortunately, many of the programs created by the government to address issues of cultural rehabilitation, poverty, and social inclusion of young people have been discontinued.

In 2011 a national summit was held to articulate the role of arts, culture, and heritage within South Africa. One resolution was that the Department of Basic Education and the

⁶⁴ See the artist's website <http://www.faith47.com/> for information and links to videos documenting her work around the world.

Department of Arts and Culture should co-develop initiatives to introduce arts and culture back into schools and communities. For example, the South African-Flemish Community Arts Centre Project (CAC) is a partnership between the two countries intended to improve community arts services in South Africa. Three beneficiary provinces were identified including KZN. A 2002 audit of the programme, however, revealed a number of problems with functioning. In an effort to address these issues, the Human Sciences and Research Council developed an initiative designed to build capacity for CAC and promote sustainability and service delivery infrastructure. This mandate includes connecting practicing artists and art educators with people in disadvantaged areas.

The Artist in Schools program, which began in 2013, is one of the latest attempts to empower local arts practitioners and brings the arts back into schools. The beneficiaries of the program as outlined by the DAC include: 1) Arts practitioners, including women, youth, and people with disabilities; and 2) Schools, learners, educators, and communities. While there are currently no apparent instances of this or other government arts programs impacting the rural areas where I conduct research, this does suggest a broader sense of possibility. Despite the still nascent and somewhat under-articulated status of school and community arts programming, some scaffolding does exist. The development of Artist in Schools program indicates the presence of government support and ongoing interest in the promotion of the arts. As part of this resolution the government planned to deploy 3 000 full-time art facilitators across all provinces. So far 200 schools across the country have been targeted according to the Minister of Arts and Culture, Paul Mashatile (DAC, 2013b). However, as posed by David Andrew (personal communication, May 1, 2014), “Is there a structure in place for this to happen in a sustained way, leading to the institutionalising of the AiS as a recognised presence in schools?”

A number of additional interrelated government arts education projects, campaigns, and program aimed specifically at empowering disadvantaged communities and groups were initiated in the last decade. Among them are the National Youth, Arts, Culture and Heritage Campaign (NYACHE); the Arts and Culture Education and Training Campaign; the Arts, Social Development and Youth Programme (ASDY); and the National Youth into Arts Programme (YAP). NYACHE is connected to CAC and is designed to provide training and leadership opportunities for young people in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors. The intended

beneficiaries of the Arts and Culture Education and Training Campaign are learners and youth who have access to cultural institutions and/or CAC. The goal is to “bring together young people, arts practitioners and teachers and to the relationships among community arts structures, cultural institutions, schools and tertiary institutions” (SA Government, 2008, para. 6). The goal of ASDY is the provision of greater access to the arts for all communities but particularly marginalized groups. The DAC defines these groups as “disadvantaged women, youth-at-risk, families in crisis, children without access to early childhood development initiatives and people with disabilities” (2012, para. 6). Under the auspices of the ASDY launched in 2008, YAP encourages youth to choose the arts as “serious and dignified careers” and “creates dialogues, explores possibilities of socio-economic opportunities and skills development for the youth” (DAC, 2012, para. 9). While many of these programs continue to be advertised on government websites, there is a paucity of information to be found on the status of implementation.

In reference to the present environment for the development of arts initiatives with young people, a current project manager in the DAC, Mr. Mpho Mabule wrote:

[...] backlogs and challenges remain, despite the amendment of NCS in the National Curriculum Policy Statement (CAPS) that started in 2012. Arts and Culture subject educators remain artistically illiterate and as such the quality of cultural offering in the public schools is severely compromised. Public and private investment towards the subject is very limited, as the country has had pressures in improving the quality of Matric—mainly Math and Science subject. Indeed, the DAC is also doing its best to alleviate the problem by coming up with other interventions such as the Artist in Schools and also support the implementation of the CAPS in the schools. The constraints around financial resources means that the status quo will remain for far too long in the arts education space in the country (personal communication, September 12, 2013).

This statement reveals that the DAC acknowledges that creating accessible arts programming for communities is of the upmost importance but several barriers remain. It also suggests that there is an underlying negative view of teachers’ (and school communities’) artistic capacities. This perception is somewhat at odds with models that utilize the exchange and growth of existing knowledges as a way to foster learning environments.

In an effort to address issues related to creating connections between learners, teachers and artists/art educators and increasing the accessibility of the arts, there are several important areas of research currently under investigation. Two initiatives for introducing art to such

environments include Artists in Schools⁶⁵ (AiS) and comprehensive in-service programs. David Andrew, for instance, has developed research on the artist-teacher relationship into projects exploring the alternative routes (outside tertiary institutions) for the training of arts educators and artists working in schools. In working towards a model with national application, he suggests that if a schoolteacher has expertise in one area of Arts and Culture curriculum but is also open to working across disciplines, there is potential for collaboration and support from outside artists. This presents a method for bolstering the artistic knowledge and skills of existing teachers and learners who work and attend disadvantaged schools.

Participatory arts-based and visual research

A growing body of research in South Africa draws on participatory, arts-based, and visual methodologies intended to engage directly with people at the local level. Such inquiry is based on the premise that not enough is known about the everyday lives of individuals who policy is meant to benefit such as women, young people, the economically disadvantaged, and those living in under-resourced areas. Under this umbrella of qualitative research there are a range of approaches and epistemological groundings but they tend to be rooted in social justice, feminist, or critical perspectives (Keifer-Boyd, 2011). As suggested by Gillian Rose (2012), there is a need to recognize subjective ways of seeing and take seriously the socio-cultural meanings and effects of the visual. Visual research with a participatory orientation is intended to take up issues of power between the researcher and participants, develop ethically responsible research situations, and generate new forms of knowledge (Packard, 2008). Visual approaches encompass a variety of media such as drawing, collage, drama or participatory theatre, and community mapping. Techniques such as photovoice (e.g. Strawn & Monama, 2012) and participatory video (e.g. Milne, de Lange & Mitchell, 2012) include the use of more high-tech equipment (digital still and video cameras) that are typically provided by the researchers and may or may not stay in the community after the cessation of the project.

There is also a growing interest in the use of “indigenous technologies” (any expressive

⁶⁵ While under the same name as the government Artist in Schools programme, the AiS is a separate but related project investigating the presence of artists in South African schools as a way to bring the arts into schools. The AiS project was developed by David Andrew and his research team. It takes a more global approach in an effort to synthesize past and existing projects involving arts practitioners in schools settings.

tool that is readily available and integrated into daily life) such as cell phones, which can take both still photographs and videos. Due to the relative low cost and the quality of coverage, cell phones have become ubiquitous in South Africa, even in low-income rural communities⁶⁶. In rural KwaZulu-Natal 83% of people have access to a cell phone and close to 100% of the country has network coverage (Naidoo, 2010). Harnessing the productive potential of cell phones, research such as that conducted by Claudia Mitchell and Naydene de Lange (2013) explores the creation of cellphilm (videos made with a cell phone) in addressing issues of HIV and AIDS in rural South African schools. By building in layers of analysis, response, and reflection to the cellphilm making and viewing processes, this research presents possibilities for challenging dominant discourses around young people and sexual health. This and other visual and arts-based work in South Africa suggests there is significant transformative potential in the use of community art making projects. Also the hybridization of conventional, indigenous, and new technologies represents a generative site of locally responsive artistic engagement. I was about to see for myself just how the arts played out in the particular areas of KwaZulu-Natal, the extent to which the government, institutional, and not-for-profit initiatives in the arts had an impact in the rural settings in which I developed my research, and the extent to which technologies such as cell phones were accessible and useful in creating art and building community.

⁶⁶ In 2011, almost 30% of rural dwellers browsed the internet through their phones, and the practice is rapidly expanding (World Wide Worx). Phone and mobile internet access may be purchased in small pay-as-you-go increments (~C\$1.10) and are available to modest income levels. Cell phones with prepaid services are the “only means of communication for rural and socio-economically disadvantaged [South African] households” (UNICEF, 2012b, p. 12) and as such “are currently the most important networked knowledge-exchange technology” (Ford, 2009, p. 196). South African youth aged 15-24 are the largest population group using cell phones and their software applications (UNICEF, 2012b). This has meant new levels of youth participation in the exchange and production of knowledge through digital technology on both a local and global scale.

THE POSSIBILITIES AND POLITICS OF LOCALIZED ARTMAKING

5

*This energy, which we call “making,”
is the relating of parts to make a new whole.*
-Corita Kent (2008, p. 7)

Taking up questions

Focusing on the particulars of the rural participant communities, the central purpose of this chapter is to further articulate Question 1 or what role(s) art education can play in a South African context. More specifically, I aim to explore what effects art education can have when there are significant personal and socio-politico-cultural challenges, for instance, poverty, epidemic illness (HIV and AIDS), and violence. I also aim to address research Questions 2 and 3. Question 2 relates to the identification of artistic materials, tools, and procedures that can respond to the local research contexts in ways that are relevant, sustainable, and meaningful for participants. Specifically, I seek to explore if and how substances such as natural clay and recycled materials can satisfy these criteria and what implications their use may have for other contexts. The third strand of questioning asks what pedagogies emerge to make knowledge (artistic, social, cultural) transmittable and meaningful both within peer groups and between the learners and me?

This chapter creates a dialectic relationship between ethnography and history in an attempt to articulate a form of CAE pedagogy that responds to a context that still seems largely marked by division—between rich and poor, young and old, sick and healthy. The chapter is portioned into seven sections or mini chapters: one for Context of the Research and one for each medium: Found Art, Woodwork, Beading, Ceramics, and Sewing. The analysis of each medium also serves as an organizing framework for the identification of the forces that enable and prohibited art making across the research sites. I begin the first section with an overview of the various research sites and participants. This description is followed by an account of my initial

interpretations of how art making was viewed and operated across the rural context. This is partly to show how art education was conceptualized, particularly in the school contexts, but also to show how my own understanding of art making has shifted as a result of my experience in South Africa. Then, in the concluding section, I aim to bring together my answers to the aforementioned research questions.

This ethnographic reflection is a condensation of people, events, and my own feelings (Rabnow, 1977). Some people with whom I worked figure prominently while other individuals have been left out. I approach the discussion of my art education work through materials and the politics thereof. I address each medium through a consideration of both past and present connections between material production, education aspects, and socio-political issues. I also consider the ways in which my own pedagogical practice must be responsive to these issues but acknowledge that the participants may take up art without necessarily calling on the historical or political significance of the processes and products. In this sense, the artistic practices that we developed were sites of remaking as we brought forth new interpretations of old traditions or redefined the value of materials. In addition to the possibilities of CAE, the following excerpts and experiences also highlight the limitations of this approach. Shared art making does not necessarily lead to a deep and transcendent connection or understanding between people. It can, however, be a starting point for intimate and meaningful exchanges that bring new ideas and change. While I was aware of some of the political implications of engaging in CAE going in to the contexts, since then I have done considerable research to build on my experiences in South Africa and make explicit my sense of the embedded meaning I intuited around me.

In the current era of South Africa's new democratic citizenship, art education, and artistic production represent a junction between historically rooted educational injustice and transformation. The everyday realities of contemporary young people or "born frees,"⁶⁷ take place outside the apartheid period yet are shaped by related influences embedded in politics and sociocultural practices such as chronic poverty and the AIDS crisis. In building their own practices, the young people I worked with seemed to flow between spaces of traditional craft knowledges of previous generations and contemporary productions, and, despite a somewhat insular quality, the results were often innovative creations with elements of hybridity. So through

⁶⁷ Also known as Generation Y, a descriptor given to South Africans who came of age after the end of apartheid in 1994 (Newman & De Lannoy, 2014).

exploring the politics and possibilities of CAE, I hope to connect my acts of art education to their social and geographical roots but also begin to map out the practices and processes that can lead to fulfilling encounters with art.

Embarking upon research

A few days after landing in Durban for the first time on July 15, 2011, I made the trip to the Vulindlela area with Tabitha Mukeredzi, a post-doctoral fellow originally from Zimbabwe now at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Relebohile (Lebo) Moletsane, a professor and chair of rural education at UKZN, and 14 undergraduate education students selected to be participants in the Rural Teacher Education Programme (RTEP). Tabitha and I operated as on-site coordinators and liaisons for the project. This marked my introduction to researching with rural South African communities, particularly school sites, and helped to establish a number of critical connections that would lay the foundation for my subsequent inquiry into art education in this context.

My initial three-month visit involved working with the two secondary school groups, while upon my return to the area in February 2012 I continued with the secondary schools and also invited students from a primary school and a group of adult women to participate. All three of the schools involved in the research can be categorized as under-resourced. As with the majority of public schools in South Africa⁶⁸, government funding for these schools is supplemented in the form of school fees charged to students' parents/guardians. Uniforms are also required for school attendance. As is typical for rural schools, students often travelled long distances from their place of residence either on foot (sometimes up to 1.5 hours one way) or by minibus taxi, if the service can be afforded. The students and teachers at all of the schools were South African and isiZulu speakers. As is not uncommon for South African schools (and some municipal buildings, businesses, and private homes), the secondary schools are surrounded by chain link fence with razor wire at the top. During operating hours the single gate at each of

⁶⁸ Although public schools are obligated to charge fees, as outlined by the South African Schools Act, students cannot be denied access to education or school-related services, such as the meal scheme, based on an inability to pay. However, there continue to be issues surrounding the adverse effects of school fees policies on poor students (Raab & Terway, 2010). For example, schools serving rich communities can continue to charge school fees effectively maintaining racial and class divisions (Harber & Mncube, 2011).

these schools is overseen by a local man employed as a security guard who controls coming and goings. The primary school, while not surrounded by chain link and razor wire, does have a fence to keep the cows out of the schoolyard.



Figure 7: View through the fence surrounding Vukela Secondary School

Vukela⁶⁹ Secondary School

At the Vukela School, the site of the 2011 RTEP (July 18 to August 12, 2011), I was introduced to the student body as an on-site coordinator for the project. Following this period, I began my own research at the school. Participants included a group of approximately⁷⁰ 10-15 students from grades 8, 9, and 10. As per local protocol, recruitment of the young people for my research was overseen by the principal (a previous research partner in RTEP) and the Arts and Culture teacher for the lower grade levels, who identified and approached interested students.

⁶⁹ The names of the schools have been changed to isiZulu words that reflect the atmosphere of each institution (*vukela* meaning to rise up against or desert, *vuselela* meaning renew or rebuild and *ukwenama* meaning to be delighted). Learners were consulted on the choice of pseudonyms for the schools.

⁷⁰ Due to the nature of the research context, the number of young people in each secondary school group often changed from session to session. There was however, a core group of young people at each site who attended regularly, which is reflected in the lists of names.

The first day that I met this group of students they were very direct in relaying what art forms they would like to engage with as well as the ways in which they were activity constructing their own identities in relation to constructs of race and indigeneity:

One of the girls is particularly talkative and asks if they can go around and introduce themselves to me. Of course I oblige. They tell me their names, their likes and dislikes, and what type of art they have done and would like to do such as jewellery, painting, and fashion design. Then Mondx announces emphatically that she hates speaking isiZulu. Ntwenhle adds that just because they are Black it is assumed that they have strong ties to all aspects of their culture but in fact they have actively chosen to reject various identifiers (August 31, 2011).

During our second meeting I suggested that we explore the schoolyard to see what materials it could offer up. The group began to identify, collect and use what they found with little solicitation from me. Some of what they created, such as jewellery made from plastic crisp bags, was part of an existing creative repertoire, which I discuss in greater detail in the media specific sections to follow. Other art objects developed spontaneously and reflected how the participants responded to the specific materials within that moment. In an effort to move our practice beyond the schoolyard and out into the community to explore different landscapes, I suggested we try making with clay. Ntwenhle offered up her knowledge of the area and a source for the substance.

The primary media that emerged as relevant to these students and their surrounding environments included ceramics, beading, and art using recycled/repurposed materials (this included cloth that was remade, sometimes into fashion items and the use of store-bought colorants including paint). Together we dug clay from the banks of a river not far from the school. I purchased the beads for all groups (glass seed type, 500g for ~C\$1.30) from Everlasting, a Durban craft and office supply store. For the recycled art we used mostly paper from discarded books and bits of refuse such as crisp bags and lollypop sticks. From these materials the students made jewellery, beads, and decorative pieces. From the clay the young people made small coil and pinch vessels as well as figurative pieces, some of which resembled traditional Zulu clay sculptures such as cattle. The beading of the students took the form of jewellery in basic strand designs. I also gave instructions in designs such as the “daisy-chain” that I had taught myself as a child and a newly acquired spiral pattern. We decided to meet twice per week usually for one to two hours on Wednesdays after school and most of the day on Saturdays. As the school was also used on Saturdays by a Seventh Day Adventists church group,

Bhekithemba the security guard was often at his post and would unlock a classroom for us. He went so far as to make himself available on the day of his friend's funeral.

Purely by chance, the core group comprised only two boys, Umculi⁷¹ and Macro and nine girls Ntwenhle, T-Girl, Izzy, Oluhle, Nomathemba, Mondx, Two-Slice, Nokx, Small and Mendy. Ntwenhle became my primary contact, when in South Africa by cell phone and now via Facebook. Although initial arrangements were made through the principal, Mr. Nkoqo, and the deputy principal, Mrs. Gogo, our group had relatively little contact with school administration. The recruitment of the participants by the Arts and Culture teacher (under the directive of the principal) was the extent of our groups' relationship with him. We did, however, have an ongoing relationship with one teacher, Mrs. Nobuntu. She would store supplies in the office she shared with several other teachers and when possible give us the room to work in.

During the time of my research, the student body numbered somewhere between 1 100 and 1 200. By February 2012, additional portable classrooms were added as enrolment grew. As indicated by Mrs. Nobuntu in conversation, the class size was between 50 to 70 students (per teacher). Many of the students continued to have difficulty accessing basic supplies such as paper, writing implements, rulers and other measurement tools, and up-to-date textbooks. Although under-resourced, the school does have access to running water, rain barrels, flush toilets for staff (pit toilets for students are located in the field below the classrooms), and electricity in the main administrative building (housing a staff room and the offices of the principal and deputy principal), and a few individual rooms, including one classroom which contains several computers (some with internet access). The school was also equipped with small woodworking and welding studios available to select senior students. However, there were still significant problems regarding logistics and making learning accessible. Due to a number of ongoing issues with the school administration in particular, most of the original group members have transferred to other institutions. As put by Ntwenhle (in a text message via Facebook), who remains at the school, "I min d skul iz a mess wish u culd c d classes we r learning in thre r a

⁷¹ To protect the confidentiality of the participants, as outlined by University HREC protocol I have used aliases for the names all of the students, teachers, administrators, community members, and the schools. The participants themselves chose these names or if they did not provide me with one, I chose them based on my interpretation of aspects of their identity. For example, in isiZulu *umculi* is a noun that means musician and *Khanyisile* is a female name meaning "bringer of light." In Zulu culture baby names are chosen based on what the child represents for the family, aspirations for the child's future, or the time of year they were born. However, adult individuals who operated in their professional capacity as experts on a given artistic medium retain their real names.

complete disaster...no child iz suppose 2 learn n classes lyk dat” [I mean, the school is a mess, I wish you could see the classes we are learning in they’re a complete disaster...No child is supposed to learn in classes like that (personal communication, September 24, 2012)].

Although poverty levels are high within rural areas such as Vulindlela (Gardiner, 2008), socio-economic status is not homogenous and can vary from student to student. At the beginning of my research, approximately 150 students had been formally identified as “vulnerable” by the school indicating that they were AIDS orphans, heads of household, or may otherwise have difficulty accessing basic necessities, such as food and clothing. Conversely, some students whose parents are alive and working (although perhaps absentee) reported having their basic material needs met and additional spending money at their disposal.

Vuselela Secondary School

This school had been involved in previous research with the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change (CVMSC) and was the site of RTEP 2009. Although the principal had recently been replaced (as the result of a series of events initiated by the protests of unhappy parents), the new administrator, Mr. Mlungisi, had an ongoing professional relationship with the RTEP team as well as with their affiliate, the CAPRISA clinic, which is located nearby. My initial introduction to the school staff was made possible through Dr. Claudia Mitchell but before beginning my own project, I also worked with Fumane Khanare, a doctoral student at UKZN, on her project examining schools as environments that both enable and restrict coping for young people affected by HIV and AIDS (Khanare, 2012). As with the Vukela School, the Arts and Culture teacher assisted me with participant recruitment. Ten to fifteen students from grades 8, 9, and 10 were invited to participate. Although there was some experimentation with clay and recycled materials, the main art forms that proved to be accessible and of interest to these young people were woodworking and beading. Examples of their wood projects included: bead-embellished spoons, small benches and chairs, and containers. The beaded items were jewellery—earrings, bracelets, necklaces—and ranged from simple strand construction to the more complex patterned Zulu style. We met twice per week on Thursdays and Fridays after school typically for several hours at a time.

The accessibility of and interest in the particular art forms at this site were made manifest

more gradually at Vuselela compared to Vukela. Initially the students were much less vocal and were very shy about conveying their artistic experiences and desires. At the beginning of our time together, the group indicated that they wanted to draw (I had made small “idea books” for all participants) and were occupied with this for several hours at a time. There were, however, some issues with these materials as the students stated that they would not want to keep the supplies themselves for fear of having them stolen by other students. As with the Vukela group we also explored the schoolyard in our sessions and again the young people began making things with their collections with little prompting from me. They picked up various discarded objects such as popsicle sticks and small pebbles and would ask, “What about this Miss?...Can we use this?” (September 8, 2011). I questioned them on what else they would like to make or learn and Khanyisile responded, “I would like to make clay.” Several other students agreed with, “Me too” (September 9, 2011). Beading developed as an activity mostly due to the interest and skill of Khanyisile. As she worked the others would gather around and request instructions. It was not until I drove four of the boys back home that Emanuel pointed out the sawmill next to his home and said, “I can get wood and shavings so we can use that to make things” (September 9, 2011). The next time we saw that the owner Paul Smith was about, Emanuel introduced us. Woodworking proved to be a great source of excitement and delight for all of the group members⁷².

Although my initial contact with students interested in art making was enabled by the Arts and Culture teacher, our group had relatively little contact with her despite our invitations for her to join us. She expressed reservations about asking her students if they would like to participate indicating that it was unlikely that she would be able to locate those with interest in the project. It was another teacher, Mr. Malusi, the Maths teacher, who became our source of staff support. As he lived nearby, he was often present at the school, overseeing the school garden and offering extra help with studies in the evenings and on weekends. Mr. Malusi helped us to store our materials on site and often lent the only storeroom key to our student group

⁷² Not all attempts with materials grabbed the participants in the same way. Our use of other plant-based materials such as indigenous grasses proved to be constrained by time of year and the particular weather for that season. While we experimented with *ncema* rushes [a preferred material for making Zulu sleeping mats (amacansi), baskets and beer strainers], this engagement was brief. With most of the grassy areas having been recently burned, it was difficult to find appropriate specimens and those that we did find were often too dry to manipulate. At the time, we also did not have access to individuals with the specific skills necessary to weave the grasses.

members. Nomusa, the school secretary, was also instrumental in helping us to develop the group by contacting participants and when possible, providing us with an office in the main block in which to work. The core group of student participants was almost the reverse of the Vukela school group and made up mostly of boys, and only two girls, Thenjiwe and Khanyisile. Although the young women also participated in woodworking, the majority of their time was spent engaged in beading. The main boy participants included Emanuel, Sakhile, Mcebisi, and Thabo, who were close friends and in grade 8 at the beginning of my research. Another young man, Umbrella, became the major organizer and maintaining force for the group. He still places considerable importance on the collective artistic activities of the group and as of this August 2014 time of writing, carries forward with their efforts in my absence. He has become known around the school by the other students as “Umbrella who makes *the art*” (K. MacEntee, personal communication, February 22, 2013).

Over the course of my research, the student body of 600 continued to increase as word spread about the new principal. Due to his go-getter approach and the visible improvements he made to the school, from what I can tell, community members generally viewed him positively. His favourable public opinion has led to increased enrolment. This school had similar issues regarding access to learning materials and poverty amongst students, however, while I was there class sizes were smaller. The amenities were also similar, although the school itself had begun to undergo significant renovations including the establishment of a large vegetable garden, replacement of asbestos roof tiles, new windows and doors to replace those that were missing or broken, and a carport for staff. Now there are new student dormitories for those who live far away from the school. According to the principal, plans are also in the works for the establishment of agriculture and carpentry courses.

Ukwenama Primary School

I started conducting research within the local primary school as a result of a series of personal connections with local residents. Through Emanuel (a participant at the Vuselela site),

who lived on their land with his extended family⁷³, I met Paul and Julia Smith. Emanuel has known the Smiths his whole life and often works for them on weekends doing chores such as washing cars and burning trash. The white couple had both been trained and employed as teachers, but now retired, they own and operate a sawmill and lease their farmland as a source of income. Towards the end of my first trip and for the entirety of my second, the Smiths opened their home to me and invited me to stay with them. This change in venue offered a more direct engagement with the people I worked with as I was no longer taking up residence at the Edwardian era Calderwood Hall Manor guesthouse⁷⁴, the estate of which is set back and somewhat apart from the surrounding communities. Paul and Julia Smith became a portal for opportunities for me to work with local young people but also to learn about local history, social relations, and art materials and techniques.

The Ukwenama School is located directly across the road from the Smiths' homestead in the middle of their farmland. The couple have maintained a relationship with the teachers, keeping safe the school microwave during holidays and organizing the donation of school supplies. Julia Smith and one of the schoolteachers had jointly identified sewing as a desirable activity for children and their mothers and guardians. There were several sources of supplies including excess fabric from a local women's sewing guild at the nearby community centre, sewing supplies that had belonged to Paul's mother, a primary school teacher, and donated material from local women who sewed. I also purchased an electric sewing machine. The project

⁷³ There are four families living on the Smiths' farm that are in some way connected to the Smiths via employment. According to Julia, "Traditionally workers have been allowed to live on the farm, rent-free, with their families, and keep a modest number of cattle. They build wattle-and-daub huts or houses, usually with tin roofs, but sometimes thatched. Only two of the families here have water piped to their *kraals* [Afrikaans, an enclosure for livestock]. The rest fetch it in drums from the nearest tap. None of them has electricity, but many of them now have small solar units, which provide enough power for lights and a TV" (personal communication, October 15, 2013). In Julia's account of how the various families came to reside on the farm she indicated that Ethulo, now retired, came to the Smith homestead as a young girl, when her mother found employment with Paul's father as a farm worker. She moved away when she got married, but returned and then worked for Paul's mother as a domestic and later for Julia. Ethulo's brother Olothando (died of cancer 10 years ago) was married to Mpmlelelo. Mpmlelelo's sister, Nosipho who died of AIDS in December 2011, was Emanuel's mother. Her death left Emanuel a double orphan so Mpmlelelo took him in.

⁷⁴ This estate was built in the 1800s, originally as a Scottish settler home but is now used as a bed and breakfast and wedding destination. In addition to the physical location, the resonance of the apartheid past associated with the estate would likely have created additional distance between me and the communities. This venue served as my first extended "home" in South Africa and so was the place where I prepared to do reflective thinking about my experiences in the research sites. I stayed there along with the student teachers during RTEP and for most of my first visit to the area while conducting my own research. My stay at this place also undoubtedly had unconscious influences on me, the full effects of which have yet to be realized.

participants included a class⁷⁵ of 15 students (grades 4, 5, and 6, mostly girls) who were invited to participate by two of the teachers. A female student in grade 6 named Sphesihle became a central figure in the project. She often acted as a translator especially when the teacher was not present and would facilitate conversation between me and the younger children who were often shy. I started the children off practicing basic stitches (running, over, back) on pieces of coloured felt. We then made pouches small enough to fit in their pockets, bird-shaped pincushions, Valentine⁷⁶ ornaments and dolls (inspired by a pattern from my own childhood).

This farm school⁷⁷ was significantly smaller than either of the secondary school locations with a total of 43 students from Reception (kindergarten equivalent) to grade 6 (there were no students in grade 7 at the time although the school accommodates all 8 levels) and three female teachers. The students did have access to a limited supply of learning materials such as writing implements, scissors, and picture books as these had been secured by the teachers or donated by local community members. The school itself lies in the middle of a section of productive farmland and contains three main classrooms. The building that houses the office has electricity and there is a central water tap. The students are provided a daily meal that is prepared over an open fire by the school caretaker. There are pit toilets for the schoolchildren and flush toilets for staff.

Adult women

Through word of mouth and flyers sent home with the students of the Ukwenama primary school, four adult women were invited to participate in weekend sewing workshops hosted at the Smiths' house. All of the women are employed and live in the surrounding communities; some of them commute to the city of Pietermaritzburg (60 km away) for work. The women included

⁷⁵ Within small rural schools often one teacher will teach classes of combined grade levels as opposed to mono-grade teaching. While initially only the one class was to participate, it became apparent to me that it would be problematic and unethical to refuse the younger students, especially on the days when their teacher was not present. Since these students did not have signed consent forms, I did not take photos of them/their work or discuss their activities in my writing.

⁷⁶ The young people celebrated Valentine's Day with the exchange of gifts such as cards and flowers and some made decorations. This celebration reflected larger national trends associated with the holiday as some associated festivities last up to a week.

⁷⁷ A school for black children located on a white-owned farm (Christie & Gagankis, 1989).

Vemvane, Celukwazi, Nomandla and Khwezi⁷⁸. We met for several hours on Saturdays for two weeks. The women were primarily interested in making clothing. During these group sewing sessions the women used the electric machines while the accompanying primary school children sewed their projects by hand. I brought with me several patterns for basic clothing and toys from my own collection, some of which were the ones I used with my mother when learning to sew. The clothing patterns, however, did not prove to be particularly useful as the sizes were inappropriate, so I purchased some additional ones at a fabric store in Pietermaritzburg. Our sessions focused on deciphering the pattern information, measuring and determining sizes, pinning, cutting, hemming and seam construction.

First impressions

As I think back to my first days in my new research context, I began to see how art was positioned in the everyday life of rural young people and teachers. Through my position with RTEP, I was able to observe the day-to-day life in the Vukela secondary school (and later the Vuselela secondary school and the Ukwenama primary school) and to establish relationships with school staff, students, and other community members. I encountered tensions and divisions, some stemming from old and unhealed wounds—racial inequities, internal school politics, and interpersonal conflicts—others bound to the present time and place and my own position as a transplanted foreigner who chose to align herself with the young people of the community, a complexity which I will elaborate on further in the upcoming sections.

As soon as I arrived at the school I could see that the role, value and purpose of art within this institution of formal education was both varied and at times undefined, conflicted, or otherwise complicated. My fieldnotes from this day (July 18, 2011) remind me of my impressions:

At the school goats and wary teachers greet us. We enter the staff room for introductions and immediately a division is created with teachers on one side, arms folded, talking to one another in isiZulu and the rest of us on the other side confused, smiling stupidly. We introduce ourselves first. I say that I teach art. “Art?!” a few teachers exclaim, which is followed by hushed murmurs. The teachers introduce themselves, only a few speak in English. I do not understand most of what is said but smile when others do, laughing, nodding in apparent agreement. . . There is emptiness in this place but fullness at the same

⁷⁸ As with the younger participants the names of the adult women are represented with pseudonyms.

time. There is the energy of children, which seems barely contained by the cold brick buildings. But there is also nothing. No colour, no grass, no heat except from the sun. Maybe such places are paradoxes: they lead a precarious existence, always many things at once and never fixed.

I began to look for entry points quickly realizing that everything I did was in some way political. No movement was neutral, which is true in every context but inescapable here. Materials themselves were tied to ideas and understandings that were being constantly shaped by history. There were unwritten rules governing our behaviour, particularly in relation to our use of space⁷⁹. Clay was not mere dirt; it carried meaning connected to cultural traditions, the land, the landowners, and those who tread upon it⁸⁰. At the time, it seemed to me that as groups of art makers, the young participants and I often had to operate in accordance with the expectations of others and be careful not to aggravate existing discord between students, teachers, parents, or administration. For example, Ntwenhle would often arrive to the groups later than the others, citing arguments with her mother over her whereabouts on Saturdays. Ntwenhle had discussed the project with her enthusiastic grandmother who had read and signed the consent form. However, Ntwenhle's mother had disallowed her attendance on a few occasions: "It's because she didn't even read it! She doesn't believe me!" (October 1, 2011). Despite a lack of communication between some adults and us, I could not discount the importance that these young people placed on these artistic experiences:

⁷⁹ I was aware that I as a white person could potentially create disruptions by accessing communal land such as where the river and clay is located. When I asked about it, the consensus was that if the children were with me it would not be an issue, implying that if I ventured out alone problems or unwanted attention could arise. The one time when I did go exploring alone in a public area in search of plant materials on the side of the road in Boston, I was stopped by a male police officer, who expressed concern for my safety.

⁸⁰ Land rights in rural South Africa remains a contentious issue that has various racial, classed and gendered dimensions. In 2004 the Community Rights Land Act (CLaRA) was passed in an effort to redress the racist apartheid legislation. The act gave the Minister of Land Affairs the power to transfer ownership of communal land from the state to communities under traditional leadership structures (chiefs). It was designed to help people in communities whose tenure of land was insecure due to past racially discriminatory laws and practices. However, in 2010 the Constitutional Court due to a lack of public consultation declared this bill to be invalid. This ruling did not address the act's denial of secure tenure for the 16 million people living in the former Bantustans. As of 2013 there is still no comprehensive replacement for CLaRA that addresses the land insecurity of rural black South Africans. Rather, since 2003 legislation regarding "traditional governance" has meant that unelected traditional leaders can impose control over Bantustans and people living there (even those chiefs who were compliant with the imposed tribalization of apartheid) instead of democratically elected community authorities. Some suggest that within the patriarchal cultures of black South Africans, existing land laws may undercut the rights of individuals, particularly women and child-headed households (van der Westhuizen, 2013).

Two-Slice apologizes for her absence, “Something happened at home that required the whole family to be there. I would talk about you and what you were doing here all the time to my mother but she told me I can’t go and must stop it. It was breaking my heart” (October 1, 2011).

This is not to say that we were without freedom. I remember thinking that together we could make almost anything, ideas moved in all directions. And in the process of creating we seemed to slip between worlds, going mostly unnoticed by those around us. Although we explored various materials each research site gave rise to a unique combination of artistic possibilities: wood, clay, beads, cloth, refuse.

Acquiring art materials involved the establishment of relationships with other people. My connection to those around me and subsequent access to tools, supplies, and knowledge was mediated largely by word of mouth and involved a great deal of face-to-face interaction. This method is likely familiar to most art educators (both in schools and community settings) who, often subject to budgetary constraints, must seek out a variety of sources to keep their teaching practice operational. However, my visible positioning within the rural environment (i.e. my whiteness, connection to prominent universities, financial status, access to transportation) enabled me to more easily establish connections that might have been difficult or even impossible for a black teacher or the young participants had they operated alone. I sometimes felt, due to my assumed power to bring resources to the communities, that I was granted access to them. My blunders or trespasses were tolerated for with my newness came ignorance of expected social conventions. After some weeks at the schools I was no longer considered “new,” so some relationships shifted. The curt words of the Vuselela principal, Mr. Mlungisi, indicated that by now I should know how things work and that my activities were disrupting the flow of student chores. But with other encounters openness was maintained. My inadvertent blunders were pardoned, as with each meeting I was welcomed with warmth and boundless generosity.

Found, Recycled, and repurposed art

It made sense to begin making art with what was easily available⁸¹, which in this context of limited material goods, meant the forgotten, the discarded, and the unwanted. Not knowing what I would be able to find, I knew at least there would be garbage. There is always garbage; we cannot escape it. It was the rubbish⁸² or those items on their way to becoming trash that were easily accessible to both the participants and me. This is not to suggest that the rural areas are dirty, as the contrary is generally true, but that the waste does not leave. In my experience, garbage was not transported to a far-off landfills, but that which did not burn was left in pits dug out of the ground usually located behind buildings or otherwise out of direct sightlines. As the purpose of my research was to create accessible art practices, sourcing materials that were free or cost little was paramount. Therefore, regardless of the art form, whenever possible we located and used materials whose ownership had been forfeited by others, materials that still held value.

There are however, major tensions and contradictions involved in such a transformative process. Garbage or waste is not always neutral but is simultaneously a source of creativity and risk. This contradiction of being points to the “slippability of the concept of ‘waste’” (Stein, 2006, p. 180) and to the movement between generativity and hazard. Peering through the chain link at the crèche next door to the Vukela secondary school I often observed the activities of a group of toddlers. They played with the twisted metal frame of a piece of old furniture and a broken swing set that dangled with rough chains, the clumsy rusted structures the centre of their games. In the rural South African communities (as elsewhere) some discarded materials presented a real physical danger. In their daily navigation of the schoolyard, the young people with whom I worked often had to dodge small threats such as bits of broken glass and metal. During the renovation of the school buildings at one secondary school, tiny pieces of the asbestos

⁸¹ In the *Revised Nation Curriculum Statement: Grades R-9 (Arts and Culture)* the DoE defines natural, found, recycled, and manufactured resources as “objects that are owned, picked up, re-used or taken from nature, and that can be obtained from the learner’s environment, whether built or natural, and transformed in character when used in artworks” (2002, p. 113) and proposes the use of such resources.

⁸² I use the words waste, garbage, rubbish, and trash as interchangeable terms referring broadly to materials that have been thrown away or have otherwise lost their original value. This usage reflects the isiZulu noun *udoti*, which is most commonly used to define rubbish. This term too holds wider meanings, and according to the DAC *Multilingual Natural Sciences & Technology Term List* (2013c), refers to both “natural rubbish” and “man-made rubbish.”

roof tiles (no bigger than a postage stamp) littered the grounds. Asbestos, if disturbed, can have long-term negative health effects for those exposed to the airborne particles.

The use of and relationship to unwanted or excess material is charged with uneven social and spatial implications. Waste, the amount and type we produce and our proximity to it, is a product of our socio-economic positioning, at both local and global levels. As suggested by sociologist Javier Auyero and anthropologist Debora Alejandra Swistun (2007) “the poor do not breathe the same air, drink the same water, or play on the same ground as others” (p. 46). The marginalized, often less able to collectively organize, publically voice their concerns and generally denied social power, are at a greater risk for living in close proximity to garbage and being exposed to toxic substances. Both racial and social inequalities are related to environmental inequalities or environmental injustice. In South Africa and the rest of the world “since ancient times, social inequalities have produced relationships whereby marginal and less powerful groups of people were concentrated in the least desirable residential and occupational environments⁸³” (Pellow, 2007, p. 147). While about 95% of South Africa’s waste is deposited in landfills (Kalule & de Wet, 2009), rural areas struggle to acquire funds for waste management. There continues to be an absence of municipal services including waste collection in Vulindlela. According to one student, residences and schools have their own open pits for garbage disposal: “They dig holes and put them 2 b burned everyone n da community must have a hole n his or her land to put litter” (N. Zuma, personal text communication, April 30, 2014). There were, however, instances of individuals collecting recyclable materials as a means of self-support while eliminating some materials that would otherwise become waste.

In her study of women’s role in the handling of garbage both in South Africa and worldwide, feminist, planning, and geography scholar Faranak Miraftab (2004) suggests, “[p]atriarchal gender ideology that prescribes the home and neighborhood as the realm of women, and tending to the domestic space as a sphere of their activities, has been the source of that link” (p. 887). To interact with garbage often means going against cultural consciousness that imagines that things can be “‘tossed’ from the realm of what can be safely seen and touched

⁸³ This has included the deliberate location of landfills, industry, and illegal waste disposal in areas occupied by economically disadvantaged groups, and in particular people of colour (e.g. Godsil, 1992; Waters & Bullard, 2005). This is the case with South Africa’s largest landfill “Bisasar Road” located outside of Durban, which opened in 1980 in a black residential area and does not include a buffer zone.

into an abject state of invisibility and taboo.” To touch or otherwise consume the abject trash is “to risk contamination and status as a fully civil human” (Essig, 2002, para. 14). It follows then that cultural imaginations can also construct the second class or non-citizen as one who “naturally” interacts with garbage. During my time in the rural area it was not clear to me how the garbage was generally handled. Although, after I wondered what happened to the large number of recyclable cans and glass bottles at Calderwood, the owner responded that they used to be collected by a local man but his unreliable pickup practices resulted in recyclable items being dumped into the pit along with everything else.

It is also often the disenfranchised, the economically excluded, particularly young people and women, who make a living in the informal economy by using what others have thrown away, either by collecting and reselling to be recycled or by transforming the materials themselves. In places such as Brazil, India, and South Africa (all recently industrialized countries with large populations and quickly growing economies) the re-use of discarded materials has revealed highly innovative and complex social sub-systems. In her narrative non-fiction account of the “undercitizens” of Annawadi, one of India’s slums, Catherine Boo (2012) tells the stories of individuals like sixteen-year-old Abdul. He was a household breadwinner who resold to recyclers the things that richer people threw away. She suggests that the prevailing system skews the wealth and opportunities in favour of the haves. It is extremely difficult, although not impossible, for the have nots to break the cycle of poverty and realize their aspirations. There are very few options for earning money in Annawadi except for trash picking and scavenging recyclables, a fiercely competitive enterprise controlled by Mumbai police officers who take a cut of the profits from the young men.

In my own investigations into the area of waste-to-art, I met a number of individuals who were using what was around them and developing their own highly refined re-purposing techniques. Among them were the young men with stalls at the small outdoor art market in Howick (about 40 km away from my research sites), who with little more than a few basic tools, some wire, and beer cans, have developed ways to reform the metal into elephants, alligators and cars, each with their own specialized processes for manipulating the materials and getting the forms just right. Through an introduction by one of the school principals I also met Zakhona, a local woman who supports herself and her family by making recycled/repurposed art and

teaching others to do the same. The work of Zakhona and the Howick artisans point to a nuanced navigation of socioeconomic systems. While these people operate within the current neoliberal economy of South Africa they represent an offshoot or “small practices constitutive of more personal and less alienating social relations [that] become political statements when confronted with the extension of neoliberalism into all aspects of life” (Millar, 2008, p. 29). The predominant system is not dismantled but small openings are made creating spaces for alternative social relationships, economic practices, and class structures (Millar, 2008).

In the rural schools, however, the children were somewhat removed from the art being developed for the tourist markets in the larger towns and cities or the smaller shops along the Midlands Meander. This lack of connection and integration of the young people preoccupied me, although I could not fully articulate its meaning. It appeared to me that there were a number of factors at play that promoted the isolation of the rural schoolchildren. There was the separation of geography and the difficulty in accessing the artistic exploits of artisans in a town half an hour away by car. But there was also something else happening that involved the social hierarchies within the schools themselves, which was particularly noticeable at Vukela. The available resources were distributed amongst the adults—the soccer balls were kept by one teacher and the jerseys by another. The teachers in charge of particular items even appeared possessive, as perhaps if something were to wear out or go missing it may be very difficult to replace. To me it seemed that only once resources were no longer considered to be of any value did they become more accessible to the children. On one occasion our expedition to the schoolyard revealed the illogical squandering of materials.

Inside the garbage pit, amongst the debris and rotten food, is what looks like around 200 brand-new black permanent markers. We grab a few of them but the ink has long dried. Two-Slice runs to the taps and douses the tips in water. “Do you use these markers in class?” I ask. “No, they are kept in a cabinet and only the deputy principal has the key. We are not allowed to use them.” “So what are they for then?” I press. “I think they came from the district, we got supplies for the school” (September 14, 2011).

We were confronted by the school context as others had constructed it, by teachers and school administration, by the greater socio-economic forces that shaped the daily realities of rural education. The isolation and denial of access to material objects was known to the learners and was reflected in their words. But this relationship could not be thought of as entirely oppositional, movement and momentum were still possible here.

After being confined to the small office, I decide to venture outside and converse with the pre-service teachers who have a free period. One asks if I want to see the room full of books they have found abandoned, in an unused outbuilding at the back of the school. Scrawled on the door in white chalk is “Mens [sic] Bathroom.” Inside is a slanting pile of miscellaneous books about eight feet at its highest point. We begin to pick through them scraping off years of bird feces and dust. All subjects are represented and we pull out two packages of unused accounting ledgers. So far several of the pre-service teachers have not had any luck obtaining the necessary textbooks from their respective mentors so we paw through the mess pulling out anything that seems useful. Some are old, pre-democracy but others are circa 2006. I can see the pre-service teachers clenching their teeth. “This makes me so angry! How can they say they have no resources when they just throw these away? Look, this notebook is empty.” One by one all of the pre-service teachers are taken by their peers to look at and gather what they can from the place that has come to be known as the “room of knowledge” (July 21, 2011).



Figure 8: “Room of knowledge” at Vukela Secondary School

During my time with the young learners, this room became one of our sources for art supplies.

We go to the room of knowledge where previously one of the resident chickens laid a nest of eggs. The door is now locked with a metal gate. The children conclude that the school administration put a lock on the room because the chicken was getting too smart from reading all the books... We manage to reach through the metal bars and take several books away with us. Returning to the classroom my/our presence now attracting a group of onlookers, I quickly make the rough form of a bird from the crumpled up pages of a

novel and show them how to cover it in paste and torn bits of paper. One of the girls, who tells me I can call her T-Girl, picks up the bird and says that, “Because my name means ‘bird,’ in English, it is me.” She puts it on her shoulder and makes eyes at it. I roll up a piece of tape and stick it to her shirt, we all laugh and she walks around (September 7, 2011).

In the environment of the school we had to negotiate ways around the various obstacles, even those meant for the rogue fowl rather than for the students per se. We were presented with the options of making art or not, and we chose to make. For me, making was the only real option, as to just observe the surroundings was to be useless. We moved through the schoolyard as a unit dubbed the “Little Artists That [sic] Are Looking Forward to The Future,” working within the context but also outside of it, poking at the holes, both concrete and abstract. The girls had physically reached past the imposed barriers, appropriating and reclaiming the aging tomes with T-Girl putting her name to the newly created bird. We had taken a book from behind bars and redefined it as a bird, a symbol of self but also a symbol of the larger possibilities of freedom.



Figure 9: T-Girl's bird (Vukela)

Once materials were deemed unneeded by others, they were in our domain, whether inside the razor wire fence of the school or beyond within the domestic and community spheres.

Outside I find a mango pit that has been trampled into the dirt of the walking path. When cut in half it takes on the form of a butterfly. Together Mondx and I share the painting of the wings...Another has already started to make things on her own from what is available to her and has brought in a handmade pencil holder: "I made it from a CD and toilet brown rolls...the sparkles are from a CD." She had scraped the finish off of an old CD and crushed it up to make very convincing sparkles. One of the other girls brought in a bottle of liquid soap she had made by adding water to leftover pieces of bar soap (September 10, 2011).



Figure 10: A pencil holder by Mondx (Vukela)

These innovations continued with the girls bringing in a purse made from a rice sack, a doll's umbrella from a discarded wire contraption, and old clothes that were cut apart and sewn into new objects. Perhaps I was witnessing an alternative vision of consumption: the building of social relations and ways of relating to materials moved beyond the dictates of the environment. These young people had begun to create small sites of resistance. They did not accept others' designations of objects as useless and in the process subverted their own imposed measure of worth.

As described by Ghanaian sculptor, El Anatsui, it is the ordinary, everyday things, even if used only once, that are intimately related to human existence. Speaking about his own use of castoff everyday materials—bottle caps, wire, liquor labels—in his large-scale artworks, he states:

One thing that I have grown into is working with things that have been used before—things, which link people together. I don't know about DNA, but if you touch something, you leave a charge on it and anybody else touching it connects with you in a way (Vogel, 2012, p. 104).

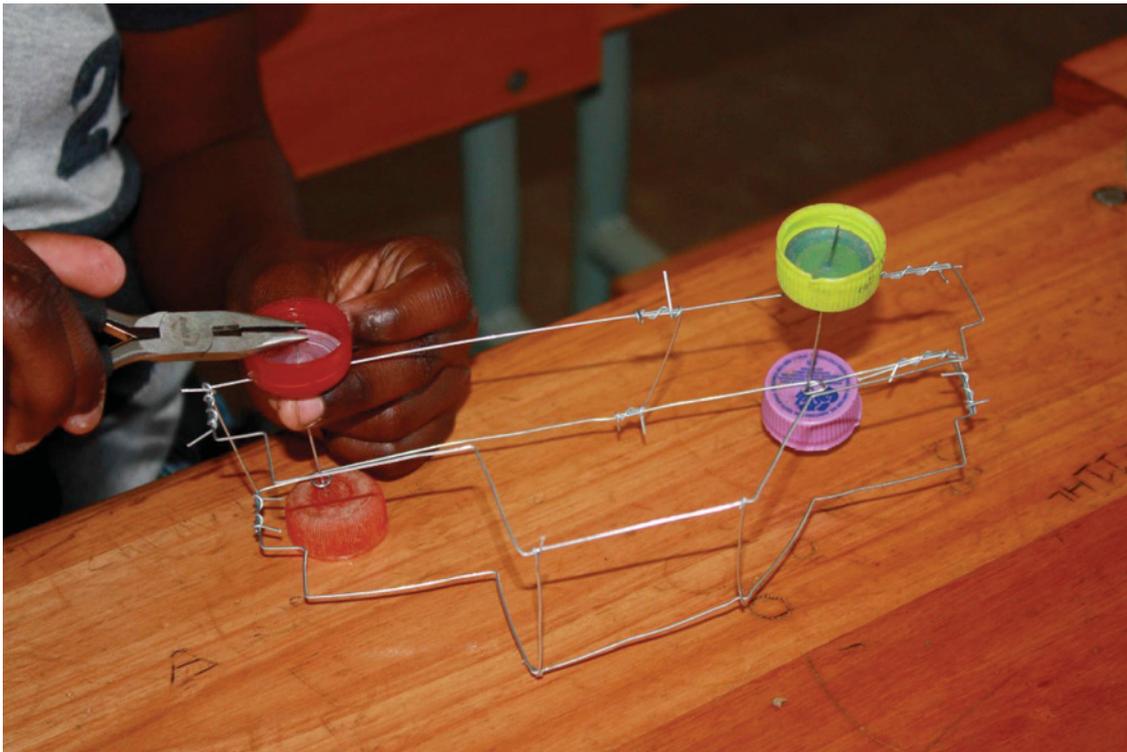


Figure 11: Macro's wire and bottle cap car (Vukela)

Thus to use something again and give it new purpose is to tap into an often invisible, yet highly relational and creative world. Garbage is, in a sense, that which has been neutralized or lost its original value and identity. Items are put in another mental category—now soiled, torn, and thrown away that is no longer a book, it is garbage—but in making something new it is possible to re-articulate that designation. There is creativity in just looking at garbage, figuring out what it could be, what it looks like, and how it could be transformed. For this type of art there are no blueprints or accepted methods of construction.



Figure 12: T-Girl's "Butterfly in action" (Vukela)

Looking back now, my experiences with the young people recall Pippa Stein's (2006) explorations of doll making with South African township children. When her papier maché doll forms fell apart the children respond, "Don't worry, we'll make our own" (p. 171). There was still a separation between me and the young people, with me not really being able to know their worlds and my artistic demonstrations and ideas not always capable of prompting their further exploration. Nonetheless my attempts met with kind reassurance, "That's very nice, Miss." The participants persisted in creating a positive outcome by making something. Now I am left wondering, what was my role in all this? I was striving to understand the context and teach accordingly but sometimes my efforts missed the mark. Perhaps, though, we were learning to take small risks together and it was significant that we were taking joyous action. Together we were in the process of making a new platform for the growth and exchange of artistic information. As the initial organizing force, I gave renewed importance to the creative process. I was there to share in their excitement when they said, "I have an idea! Let me show you."



Figure 13: Two-Slice

Two-Slice is soft-spoken yet moves through the world with a graceful joy, her presence bringing lightness to interactions.

Woodworking

Carpentry, woodworking and other art forms using wood and related materials emerged as an area of exploration for the Vuselela secondary school group. We gathered scrap wood from the schoolyard itself, which due to ongoing renovations had a small supply of leftover lumber and small masonite pieces. Our main source for wood, however, developed via Emanuel who was key in cementing the relationship with Paul Smith. Paul, a retired vocational teacher a skilled woodworker himself, became a source not only for supplies but specific knowledge of design, construction techniques, and tools. Paul sells pine and eucalyptus lumber as well as finished products including benches, cutting boards, and, sometimes, coffins. He had planted some of each species on his own land but currently buys trees from neighbouring farms where they have been planted either as windbreaks or cash crops. In our initial meeting he spoke of the importance of boys making things with their hands: “If they make something practical, like a stool, it gives them approval from their family” (September 16, 2011).

Within the rural areas of KZN, wood plays an important role in the lives of the people who live there. Wood and plant materials gleaned from local environments have been shown to be vital to rural livelihoods, potentially buffering against deeper poverty levels by contributing to household provisioning (Shakleton, Shakleton, Buiten, & Bird, 2007). Common products include fuel wood, wooden utensils, and grass/twig hand brushes (Shakleton & Shakleton, 2004). Having frequent contact with the primary school children, Julia Smith observed that typically no homework was assigned and no books are brought home. Instead they gather bits of fuel wood on their commutes for the school’s open cooking fire. Gogos (grandmas) can also be seen making their daily trips into the eucalyptus groves to collect firewood to either use or sell. In this climate⁸⁴ of heat and rain the trees grow very quickly.

The regions where the participant schools are located and neighbouring areas are not heavily forested. Rather, the vegetation covering the hilly countryside is primarily grasses and smaller shrub species. However, tree plantations of the Sappi and Mondi companies cover a

⁸⁴ The elevation of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, which lay at the foot of the Drakensburg mountain range, results in moderate temperatures year-round. During the summer rainy season (December-February) temperatures rarely rise above 30°C. There can be daily thunderstorms with rain lasting for days. However, it is not uncommon to have stretches of sunny weather during this time. The winter months (June-August) are typically dry and temperatures do not rise above 20°C. The nights can be cold with temperatures dropping below 0°C. Snow is not uncommon, particularly in the higher elevations.

portion of the landscape in the Midlands and are composed primarily of alien species such as eucalyptus, pine, and sometimes black wattle (all species used for saw logs and pulp).

Conducting research upon my return to Canada, I learned that across the province of KZN, almost half a million hectares (38.5 % of the land) is dedicated for timber production (KwaZulu-Natal Business, 2007). The planting of non-indigenous⁸⁵ and invasive species of trees in large-scale South African plantations has been linked to issues of degradation of habitat, increased water uptake and negative impacts on biodiversity (Richardson, 1998). Although wood is used in the construction of buildings (e.g. trusses and frames), the main structural component for those such as schools and municipal facilities is cinder block and related material. Depending on the funds available, homes may be constructed in a similar fashion or wattle and daub, corrugated iron, thatch, etc. New homes being built regularly in the villages produces a small source of scrap wood accessible to young people.

While wood and other plant materials figure into the current South African Science and Technology curricula from primary to senior years, it is more heavily weighted towards theory (e.g. the use of wood in industry, the classification and molecular composition of raw materials) rather than hands-on applications. There is a specialized and vocational slant in the senior phase with woodworking included in Civil Technology focusing on concepts and principles of the built environment (DBE, 2011c). As argued by Patterson (2004), there is continuity between colonial (mission), apartheid, and current curricular practices associated with technical and vocational education (previously referred to variously as industrial, agricultural, manual, and adapted education within the Southern African region). Earlier white colonist curricular ideas referred to “low skill forms of education for Africans to participate in a segregated colonial society in which their roles were defined for them largely in a rural environment” (p. 72). Vocational education

⁸⁵ Drawing on her professional knowledge as a sawmill owner, Julia Smith reported that there are remnants of mist belt forests on the southern slopes of their hills, where they are less vulnerable to fire damage. “The best known indigenous tree used for its timber is the yellowwood (*Podocarpus falcatus*, *latifolius* and *henkeli*). Unfortunately it was over-extracted from the forests during the 19th and early part of the 20th century, and now one has to have a permit to fell even a dead tree. Various raptors need them for nesting, as they grow into enormous trees, but there are very few left. The seeds are also the favoured food of the endangered Cape Parrot. Yellowwood was used for everything from farm sheds to coffins, and traditional SA furniture made from yellowwood is very valuable. There are also stinkwood and tamboti, which are popular for furniture, and sneezewood was used a lot for fence posts, as it is very hard and durable (Paul made one of our Morris chairs [type of recliner] from an old fence post). Indigenous trees are also threatened by African herbalists who use the bark in their potions. Unfortunately they often ring-bark the trees, which kills them” (Personal communication, October 13, 2013).

for blacks was oriented toward menial manual labour, while trades training was reserved for whites. The 1929 Department of Public Education manual training curriculum for woodworking (reserved for African boys) included items such as a porridge stick, plant label, coat hanger, three-legged stool and salad spoons (Patterson, 2004). Under the apartheid Bantu Education Act, renewed emphasis was placed on the importance of addressing the “[...]‘needs’ of indigenous cultures and to the rural contexts of the Bantusans” (Kidane & Worth, 2012, p. 2744) through curricula that included basic skill acquisition for black students. Many view such “practical” subjects as forerunners to contemporary technology curricula (Stevens, 2006).

The wood from the sawmill filled my car’s trunk on the days we met and Emanuel’s knapsack when I was not present. We could not continue to borrow tools from Paul indefinitely, as we were unable to guarantee their safe return so the purchasing of basic tools became necessary. Having access to the Howick hardware store, I bought basic items including a handsaw, hammer, screwdriver, square, chisels, hand drill, nails, and screws. The students built with intense and sustained concentration. Explorations were characterized by a determined, yet quick pace in what appeared to me a turbulent school environment (disruption by other students, getting locked in the classroom, student duties such as cleaning).

We arrive back at the school around 2:00 PM from the Heritage Day festivities and the boys find me immediately. Kwame, one of the teachers, headed back to school earlier to begin cooking the celebratory meal for the staff and students. Everyone is to have pap and wors [porridge made from ground corn and sausage]. The secretary advises me to start my activities after the children have eaten. I tell them that food has been prepared for them but they say, “No,” that they want to work. I am taken aback as for the last 5 hours they stayed in the community hall with little or nothing to eat (September 30, 2011).

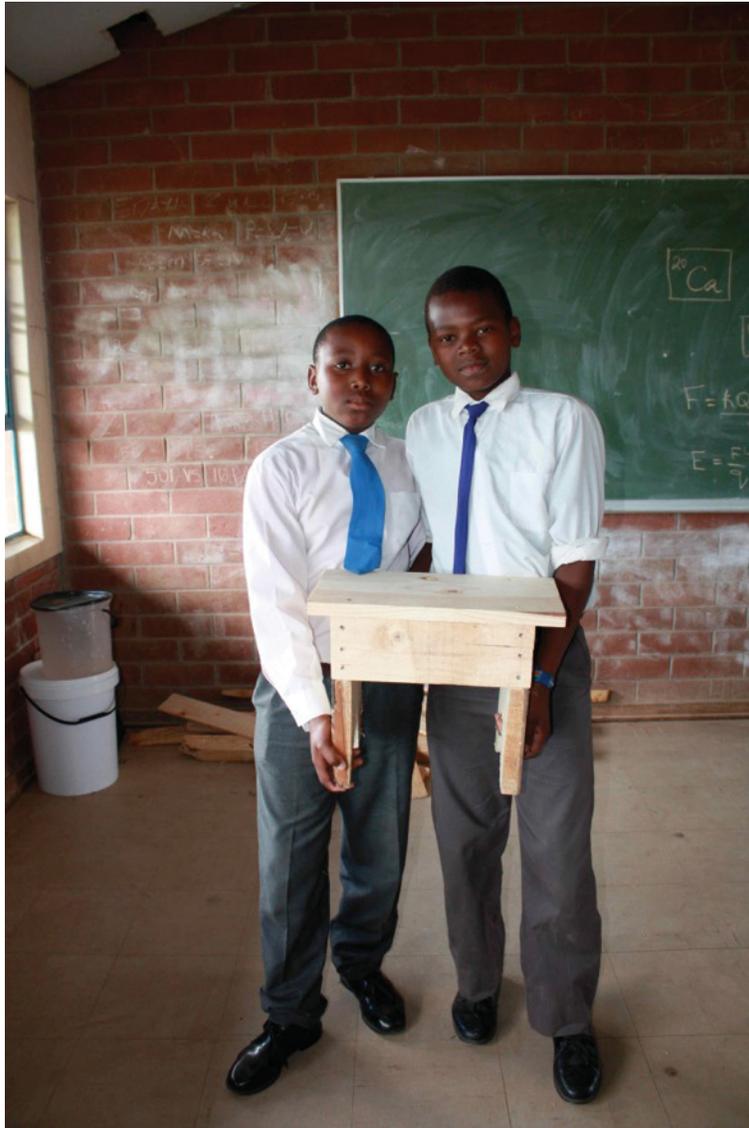


Figure 14: “One-bum bench” by Emanuel and Sakhile (Vuselela)

This experience disrupted my interpretation of the boys’ priorities and what I had assumed to be their state of material deprivation. I had expected that they would be so hungry that they would prioritize eating over art making. My willingness to engage with them around artistic production was also met with an unexpected seriousness. These young people do not take the act of creating with their hands lightly. This creative intensity is perhaps most often associated with the adult mind, the artist, the intellectual, not a child.

I pick up Emanuel and visit Paul to see if he has any books with simple wood carving techniques as I have purchased two flat chisels this morning. He begins rifling through

his shelves pulling out volumes, some dating back over 100 years. He then sets about cutting out a spoon shape from a piece of softwood and pulling down various gouges and a large wooden mallet. He tells me this particular spoon is traditionally used by the Zulu for eating *maas* [Afrikaans, *amasi* in isiZulu], a yogurt-like cultured milk product (October 6, 2011).



Figure 15: Amasi spoons by Emanuel and Mcebisi (Vuselela)

Together we were all bound up in a convolution of past and present in which materials like wood carry gendered, classed, and racialized meanings. The strong emphasis on the practicality of activities and products associated with working with wood (benches, spoons, shelves), that I myself endorsed, recalls the division of people based on assumed suitability for intellectual or manual endeavours. The available material itself, often in the form of non-indigenous species, represents the colonization, displacement, and eradication of indigenous lives. This suggests a rather uneasy position for CAE as it both consciously supports the agentic capacities of indigenous communities and (perhaps often unconsciously) is at odds with them. Perhaps this precariousness also stems from questions of how reclamation actually unfolds and how the past and present collide in such instances. It is also the case that nothing is simple. Everything we touch and think is inflected with our personal and cultural pasts, but we must still find ways to move forward. If we can't in fact dismantle the master's house with the master's tools (Lorde, 1983) what do we do if those are the main tools at hand? As researchers and community artists we have to acknowledge the complexities and respect the desires and values of the individuals with whom we work. We may well not know better than they do—as “empowerment” and “transformation” oriented projects sometimes covertly imply. Returning to these problematics

later in the conclusion, I explore the ways in which such points of tension can operate to create new openings.

As we continued to meet and create, moving on to larger objects such as a full-sized chair, the entrepreneurial potential of group's finished products became increasingly important to them. On more than one occasion they had indicated to me that they would like to be able to sell their creations and had entered into negotiations with teachers and school staff, who had expressed interest in purchasing their products.

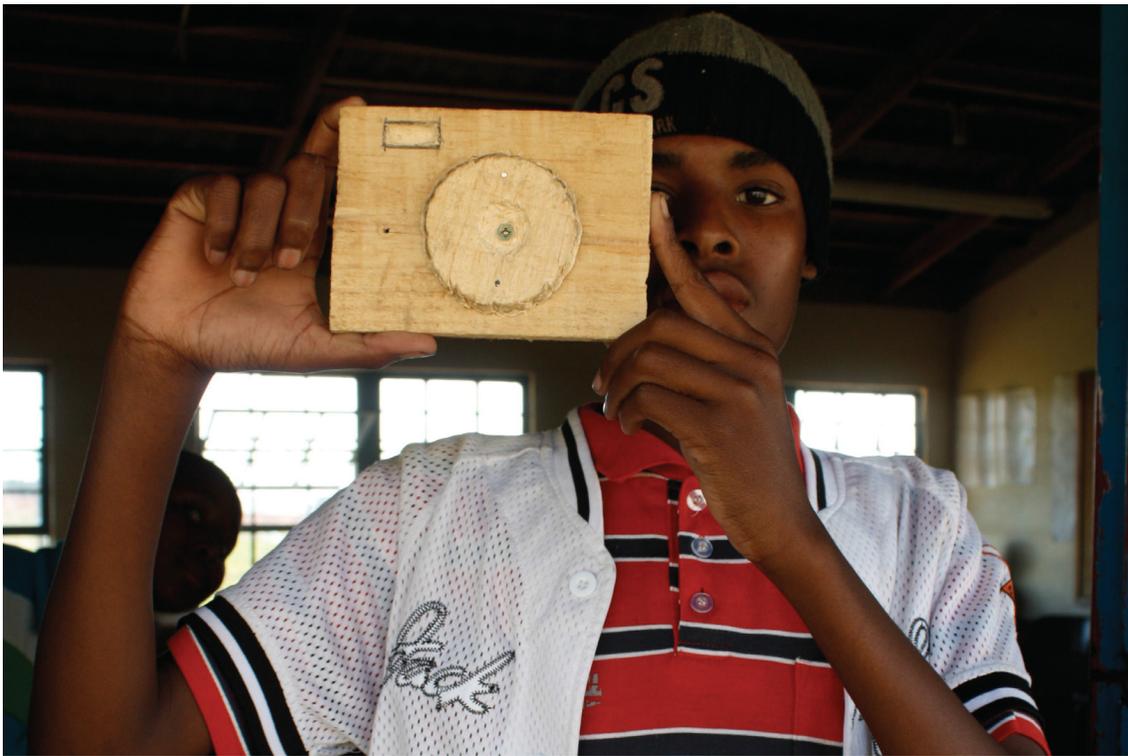


Figure 16: Mcebisi

Mcebisi is an astute and sensitive observer of others. His interpretation of the world around him was often expressed in only a few words yet revealed a deep, intelligent empathy.

These exchanges had presented the young people with an avenue for gaining a degree of financial freedom. However, taking this direction was not without its risks as there was a potential for adults to coerce the young carpenters out of their wares.

A male teacher who I have never met before comes into the room and asks what we are doing. He obviously knows already and begins to talk to Umbrella about the bench Emanuel and Sakhile made last week. “No,” he says, “I will not pay R40 [approximately \$4.50]...because he is...he is my ‘brother.’ This one will make it for me,” putting his arm around Umbrella.

This revealed the potential exploitation of the children creating items and entering into the system of capital exchange. Due to their age and social positioning, adults could potentially view their skill, knowledge, and resulting production of material goods as non-work, assigned to the category of unpaid labour separate from the world of real business. Despite these vulnerabilities, however, the intensity of young group’s creative practice was matched by an equally strong desire to take ownership of the small community that they had built. They collected materials, they maintained and kept secure the equipment, they held the only key to the schoolroom where the wood was now kept, and they found and negotiated spaces in which to work. This suggests on ongoing redefinition of boundaries between the realms of adult and child as described by South Africa’s current urban, western, industrial model of education that is still tied colonial curricula. The use of wood and the making of spoons or benches no longer represented the only educational choice. With the push from educational policy for results in the areas of math and science, woodworking, now available mostly only in larger or technical high schools, is what has been left behind despite the scientific and mathematical aspects of building with wood. In engaging with the material even with all its baggage, these young people were shaping their own artistic learning and reclaiming that which had been denied.

Beading

The practice of making and decorating with beads in South Africa emerged during prehistoric times. Bead artifacts including those made from bone, marine animals, and ostrich eggshells are thought to date back to the Stone Age (Deacon, 1995). Some researchers hypothesize that glass beads (oblate seed beads) were brought to the area between the 9th and 13th centuries via the trade routes stretching to Egypt, the Mediterranean, and China (Prinsloo & Colomban, 2008). Among the Zulu people, “beadwork in particular, has been used as a dynamic exhibition and reflection of fluid and complex identities” (Boram-Hays, 2005, p. 38) including political, cultural, socio-economic, religious, and kinship.

Traditional Zulu beaded art forms also typically contain highly personalized and localized messages created through specific bead, symbol, and colour arrangements (Jolies, 2010; Wickler & Seibt, 1995). Beaded jewellery and iconic “Zulu love letters/poems” comprise a complex communication system with sophisticated syntax and semantics of colours and geometric shapes. This form of beadwork has been used to convey messages to suitors as an important form of marriage negotiation. Contemporary beaded art forms are comprised of various two- and three-dimensional applications including jewellery, dolls, and wire sculptures. Beads continue to be an important aspect of Zulu dress and expression. For example, September 24th marks the national Heritage Day in remembrance of King Shaka⁸⁶ on which many black South Africans dress in traditional attire and participate in day-long celebrations of their culture. An important event for young people is the “beauty pageant⁸⁷.” In my own experience of this component, eligible young girls (virginal status is usually established by virginity testing) wear only beaded headpieces, necklaces, skirts, and cloth undergarments. The girls walk in front of the audience as if in slow motion, intermittently shaking their hips, which is met by shouts from the onlookers. In this instance, beads as adornment are very much tied to “Zuluness” and desirable aspects of femininity such as virtue and fertility. However, in the contemporary context of HIV and AIDS, such traditional dress “signals the valorization of women’s purity” (Hunter, 2010, p. 60).

⁸⁶ Born circa 1787 and assassinated September 24, 1828, King Shaka was the founder of the Zulu kingdom and leader of the army that nearly defeated British colonial rule (Hamilton, 2009).

⁸⁷ There is a male counterpart to this activity. The young men dress in animal skin loincloths and carry Zulu spears and swords. At the end of the event, female and male winner is chosen and the two are crowned king and queen.

The narrative and purpose of beadwork has evolved due to influences such as the AIDS epidemic, the transitional state of the country, and the influence of new markets created by the tourist industry. Understanding the new aesthetic interests of tourists has led to the development of new forms of imagery such as pieces created for sale to 2010 World Cup Soccer enthusiasts depicting or decorating the South African flag, soccer equipment such as cleats and *vuvuzelas* (noise makers). The art form has also served as a platform to explore ideas around chronic poverty, gender roles, love, sex, and disease. As part of the HIV and AIDS awareness campaign, the red ribbon is now a common symbol appearing in beaded form. With the majority of rural traditional crafts, beading is generally an art that continues to be practiced mostly by women. Often used as a poverty alleviation strategy for economically disadvantaged rural communities, beadwork production is can be an important avenue for women to discuss sensitive, traumatic, or taboo topics such as rape, virginity testing, and HIV and AIDS illness and death (Wells, 2009). The forms of expression that occur through and around beaded productions take on particular saliency in a context still dominated by a patriarchal value system and unequal gender relations where women often struggle for social recognition and rights (Hunter, 2010). This delineation of crafting activities has meant a gendering of political activism through artistic imagery.

Across all student groups, beading was employed as an artistic strategy by both boys and girls. Easily transportable, inexpensive, storable, and requiring little equipment, beading tended to be taken up often and there was typically at least one student engaging in bead work whenever beads were available at our sessions. Emanuel, Sakhile, and Mcebisi of Vuselela School used beading to adorn their carved wooden *amasi* spoons. Sakhile worked with me experimenting with the hand drill turning seeds and dried beans into beads. The result was a necklace that he often wore to our subsequent group meetings.

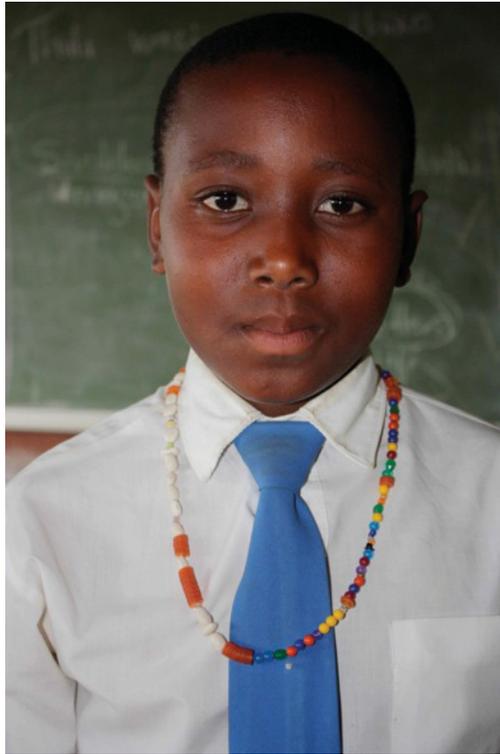


Figure 17: Sakhile wearing his necklace (Vuselela)

Similarly, the students of Vukela would enthusiastically wear their beaded jewellery creations to school, trading them with or showing them to other students or interested adults. The connection between the young people and older people with knowledge of beading appeared sporadic and varied by individual. Even though in some families older members engaged in beadwork often this did not guarantee that the knowledge would be passed on. For example, Mondx's grandmother, who at the time of the study made and sold traditional beaded Zulu skirts and other items in the Durban craft markets, reportedly taught her granddaughter the techniques.

Khanyisile, on the other hand, at the onset of our sessions had begun working extensively with her grandmother learning a number of different beading patterns and techniques. Not only was information shared across generations in her case, but as her own knowledge expanded, she shared what she was learning with both me and other young people in the group of both genders: "They form a small team. Khanyisile continues to teach the boys by showing them how to make a simple flat design. I join them and also share a new pattern" (February 17, 2012). Over the course of my research, Khanyisile became more and more skilled and continued to teach other

group members the techniques she was developing at home with the guidance of her grandmother. From the time I left until I returned again (less than four months), her work evolved from small and crooked to incredibly precise two- and three-dimensional pieces (the largest I saw was a sash measuring approximately one meter by three centimetres). She had been selling the finished items out of her home for between about \$1 and \$1.50.



Figure 18: Early and later beadwork by Khanyisile (Vuselela)

Contrary to adult-created beadwork, the young people were not necessarily calling on the historically rooted, activist, or economic practices of beading in the same way. I myself had shied away from teaching them what I had interpreted as “Zulu beadwork” due to my own perceived lack of authority and authenticity, opting instead for the styles of my Canadian childhood—the daisy chain, the spiral, the small flat pieces on a makeshift bead loom in which the colours did not hold specific symbolisms but reflected the aesthetic choices of the creator. The young people were, however, creating a space that although may have included ties to traditional practices such as those of Khanyisile’s grandmother, was for the most part self-directed and framed by their desires to learn and share with one another. Through this process they were moving the culture of beading forward and engaging in a renegotiation of meaning. They were expanding dominant beadwork practices and aesthetic forms especially in relation to issues of gender identity and teaching practices, thereby claiming new space.



Figure 19: Khanyisile (with Umbrella)

A highly skilled beader and gracious teacher, Khanyisile learned the art form from her grandmother. She has an incredible understanding of colour and pattern that reflects both her patience and a keen eye.

Ceramics

From my cursory preliminary research prior to arrival in South Africa, I had identified clay work as a possible avenue for exploration. Pottery has a long tradition with the indigenous populations of KwaZulu-Natal, which reflects the numerous natural deposits of the material. However, at this time I did not know whether the young people and I would be able to acquire clay nearby in the rural environment. Luckily, it proved to be readily available. During my time in South African, my introduction to local pottery and the techniques that I employed with the rural young people occurred primarily through three individuals: Juliet Armstrong⁸⁸, a professor of ceramics at UKZN, Pietermaritzburg; Cathy Brennon, a practicing artist and owner of The Underburg Studio (located in Underberg, a town at the foothills of the Drakensburg Mountains); and Alex, an artist employed by Fée Halstead at Ardmere Ceramics (located in Lidgeton). In my effort to learn more about the traditions and contemporary expressions of ceramics, I had first approached Juliet as an available expert on the subject. She invited me to participate in studio sessions at the university, offered information on building and firing techniques and also secured library access for me so that I could gather reference materials. Additionally, Juliet recommended that I visit Cathy. Cathy provided detailed information on clay preparation and firing techniques suitable for use with beginner potters, such as the addition of paper fibre to hand-dug clay to increase durability while unfired. It was through Juliet's student Brigitte Bestel that I met Fée and several of the clay artists who work for her. Historically in Zulu culture women are ceramicists, as they are viewed as conduits of creativity. Alex, a testament to the shifting gender roles of contemporary ceramic production, had invited me to work side-by-side with him on several occasions while he sculpted. From him I learned techniques for hand-building South African animals as well as the symbolism behind them.

⁸⁸ Sadly, in August of 2012 Juliet passed away. In my interactions with her, even before she met me in person, she was incredibly kind and open, giving freely her vast artistic knowledge and time. Juliet was instrumental in bringing international scholarly focus to Zulu ceramics and establishing community outreach programs for contemporary women Zulu potters in KZN, enabling the sale and exhibition of their work. For instances of her research on contemporary and traditional Zulu pottery see Armstrong, Whitelaw, and Reusch (2008) and Armstrong (2005). For an exploration of her own ceramic work see, for example, King (2013).



Figure 20: Alex working on his elephant and the elephant I made

KwaZulu-Natal is rich in clay deposits of both the black and red varieties that tend to be found near sources of water such as “dams” (ponds) and rivers. The main functional ceramic forms are rounded vessels, which in my experience were available for purchase from small-scale galleries and craft markets include *izimbiza* used for the brewing of *utshwala* or beer and *ukhamba* for serving and storing beer and other beverages (Fowler, 2008). The pots are burnished smooth and decorated in relief (*amasumpa*) and etched patterns with specific meanings embedded in Zulu cosmology (Armstrong, Whitelaw, & Ruesch, 2008). Traditionally the low heat bonfire method is used to fire the pots, using combustibles such as logs, dried leaves, or aloe onto which the pots are placed. The fired pots are blacked in a second firing (*ukufusa*) and coated with cow fat or shoe polish, producing a water-resistant sheen (Vincentelli, 2003). There has been a decline in the creation of Zulu pottery due to a decrease in demand for the work and the availability of other containers such as plastic. The knowledge is also disappearing because it is women in the prime of their life who have the highest rates of HIV infection (noted as early as 1992 [Karim, Karim, & Baxter, 2008]). As a result they are sick and dying and the knowledge is not passed on. Among young Zulus, the practice of boys making unfired clay animals, particularly cattle, still exists. To produce the figures that the boys sell to those driving by the rural communities, the natural clay is “sometimes mixed with cement” (F. Halstead, personal communication, September 28, 2011).

As I indicated previously, pottery was a central activity for the Vukela group. Our collection of the raw river clay had represented a new form of connection to the rural landscape that was different from what we had experienced with the other materials. We had collected a

medium directly from its original source and in the process tapped into aspects of community life and activity.



Figure 21: The river where we collected the raw clay

We walk along the edge of the river; it is murky and pale. There are other people walking along the well-worn paths and we exchange greetings. “They are so beautiful,” says Ntwenhle as she inspects the surfaces of pebbles. We find a small hole that has been dug into the bank and from the hard packed grey earth we can tell it is clay (September 24, 2011).



Figure 22: T-Girl digging river clay (Vukela)

To process the clay from its raw form we followed the practice of drying the clay in the sun, grinding it to powder on large rocks, sifting it, and reconstituting it with water to achieve a workable consistency. For the firing, we opted for a more containable technique than a bonfire as it took place on school grounds during the dry season. We used an old oil drum I had purchased for about \$3.50 from the Howick junkyard, that Paul and I had perforated with several small vents. Due to my relationship with the UKZN ceramics department, a group of students, a professor of ceramics and colleague of Juliet Armstrong's, Ian Calder, and an interested farmer came from Pietermaritzburg for the firing. Once at the school, we filled the drum with sawdust and bits of wood and paper, layering the dried clay pieces. After lighting the wooden wicks (small shards of wood placed vertically through the layers), we covered the drum with a slab of corrugated roofing, conveniently found behind one of the school buildings, and left it to smolder for two hours.



Figure 23: Grinding and sifting of dried clay



Figure 24: Firing and finished pieces (Two-Slice, Vukela)

It now seems significant that my own learning and subsequently the experiences of rural young people with pottery were guided, not by practicing Zulu potters, but by white academics and artists. This situation also recalled the relationship between Cathy Brennon, a white South African, and her current young, black apprentice whom she has worked with for several years teaching traditional and contemporary techniques. I too was a white woman, albeit a foreigner,

teaching indigenous South Africans. For me, this dynamic exposes the ways in which whites continue to shape, obscure or otherwise influence indigenous knowledge systems. Weighing the consequences of my choice to act in this context and reproduce publicly through the dissertation process the information I gathered still produces anxiety within me. I ask now, had I become complicit in the continuing colonization of the Zulu people and the hijacking of their heritage? Possibly. But perhaps such interactions can also be sites for reconciliation, for creative exchanges between races, genders, and ages. There is considerable potential in these young people sharing what they have learned and their continued revival and modification of clay forms that tap into tradition but also reflect their own lifeworlds.

Ntwenhle asks me to show her how to make flowers from the clay. She tells me that when her grandmother asked about what we do here on Saturdays she told her about the clay, “She said that we will dig clay and I must show her how to make clay flowers so that our home can be decorated” (October 1, 2011).



Figure 25: Clay bull and various unfired pieces (Vukela)

Sewing



Figure 26: Valentine heart (Ukwenama)

Before I left South Africa in October 2011, sewing had been brought up by Julia Smith as a possible area to explore (she identified sewing as an important life skill but also as a relatively inexpensive and easy to learn skill) with the primary children at the school across the road from the Smiths, as well as a small group of adult women from the community. Upon my return in February of the following year, I wanted to purchase an electric sewing machine to expand the creative possibilities. After a number of dead-end phone calls, I found a shop on the way to Vulindlela that sold used machines. The first question asked of me by the shop owner was the race of my students. My response, “Black” was followed by, “Some of them are sharp...you need a machine that is sturdy.” This statement was matter-of-fact, its sentiment presented as a basic truth. I was taken back to months prior when I filled in as a substitute instructor for a class entitled “Diversity and Learning” at UKZN. In my discussion of racism with the undergraduate students, their overwhelming response was, “But that was when I was a child, and now I know that things like skin colour don’t matter, we are all just human beings.” This interpretation of

prejudice implies it is a silly affliction of childhood or South Africa pre-democracy, outgrown like a worn-out pair of shoes. In reality, this attitude denies the students' own experiences of racism, perhaps helping to perpetuate ingrained racist practices. To actually confront the issues of ongoing racial prejudice takes more than mouthing platitudes or slogans from the rhetoric of the rainbow nation. However, to engage racism head on can have an explosive result. Despite attempts to make race invisible, the effects of the South African colour line are deeply embedded and reflected in language, such as the shop owner's, creating a kind of related hierarchy or taxonomy of material objects that result in very real daily lived interactions where racism is both expressed and felt.

In preparation for my arrival, Julia had collected three bags full of fabric donated from women she knows. She also took me to one of the outbuildings on the property, its mud walls now partially sunken in. It was home to the remaining art supplies used by Paul's now deceased mother who worked as a schoolteacher in the area. From amongst the dust we filled a basket with burlap, thread, and tiny balls of coloured yarn. A few days later, Julia brought me to the local community hall where the women's sewing guild meets. They offered access to all of the unwanted fabric and scraps. We filled more bags. Between the piles and bolts of cloth we find *ujamani* or *shweshwe*,⁸⁹ a heavily starched cotton originating in India but brought to South Africa by German settlers⁹⁰ beginning in the 17th century (Spring, 2010). Shweshwe represents a hybrid form as it was adopted and adapted by black urban and rural dwellers from their colonizer's style of dress (Farber, 2010). The fabric is identifiable by its repetitive geometric patterning and bold, yet typically limited, colour palette.

Similar to woodworking for boys, sewing was considered by the colonial and apartheid governments to be a suitable component of education for black female South African students and as guided by express religious (i.e. Christian) ideology, served the purpose of assimilating

⁸⁹ The Scholar's Zulu Dictionary (Dent, 2006) indicates that the idiophone *-shwe* means the sound of gentle breeze, gliding past or rustling (referencing the noise made by the fabric when it moves). *Isishweshwe* also refers to a Sotho (Bantu people of South Africa and Lesotho) style pinafore.

⁹⁰ People of German heritage came to South Africa as missionaries, migrant workers and settlers via their connection to other European bodies such as the Dutch East Trading Company and religious groups. Germans in South Africa can be divided into various groups (which can further be broken down into subgroups) such as: early immigrants to the Dutch Cape Colony (1652-1806); the Natal Germans; the Kaffrarian Germans; the Philippi Germans; and individual immigrant Germans during the 19th century. For a detailed account of Germans in South Africa, see J. H. Schubert's collection of genealogical information available at http://www.safrika.org/degen_en.html.

indigenous South Africans into a stratified society (Gaitskell, 2002; Patterson, 2004). Drawing the connection between the conquests of the empire and the gendered, racial, and class dimensions of education, Deborah Gaitskell (1988), a South African researcher and historian, points to the intersecting nature of oppression experienced by black South African girls and their resulting “‘industrial education’ of a domestic sort” (p. 2). While dominant conceptualizations put women’s place in the home, black girls were also frequently streamed into domestic service positions in white settler homes, thus reproducing the subordination of black women and girls. However, with the spread of sewing machines and the commercial production of clothing, sewing skills expanded outside the domestic sphere and created other employment opportunities. In her examination of the South African labour market and garment industry (1900-1980), Iris Berger (1992) notes not only the potential financial independence enabled by this form of employment but the solidarity and interconnections that developed between women (sometimes across racial lines, both inside and outside of work) promoting their participation in the labour resistance.

My initial experiences at the Ukwenama primary school, particularly the instances where the children were left alone either due to teaching staff that was stretched thin or what appeared to be poorly scheduled meetings by the school board, at times left me embittered and bewildered as to why things were the way they were and the negative consequences for the children. The challenge was to use these feelings and formulate a way of engaging the situation that would be productive. Through the process of re-examining my own reactions and my interpretations of those around me, the joy, agency, and intricate meanings that developed from interactions between the research site, myself, and the young people began to emerge. This process, however, was far from straightforward as my newness, naïveté, and transplanted status worked as both liberating and limiting factors. The intensity of my experiences and my preconceived notions of how school could be, based on my North American standards, sometimes impaired my ability to be reflexive, as this fieldnote entry illustrates:

I arrive at the school to find no sign of the teacher. Mrs. Nokukhanya informs me that the remaining teachers will be leaving early today. I work quickly to make sure those students who were absent yesterday can begin their doll, but I must leave to go to the other school. The younger students once again come in and silently line up against the far wall awaiting their promised doll supplies. I begin to hand them out but the children are called back to clean their classroom as the progress has been slowed by their absence. I

give the rest of the students supplies to take home. The normal transport will still not come until 2:30 PM so the students must stay at the school unsupervised for an hour and a half. I must leave them but I was planning on a teacher presence, [I wanted the teacher there to focus on the younger students and to help them with their sewing that they seemed so eager to get started on] as it should be expected even in a school like this. But without a real monitoring system there is little hope of reprimanding less than dedicated teaching staff (February 15, 2012).

Revisiting this excerpt I see that my recognizing of the potential held within the school had been eclipsed by my ongoing moral outrage at the education system and what I perceived as the failure of the teachers to take individual responsibility for the well-being of the learners. To paint my interpretation at the time in the broadest of strokes, I had framed the children as passive victims within this environment, obscuring the ways they exercised agency and navigated their environment. It did not consider how, in the absence of adults, the children may take up certain roles and responsibilities and even freedoms that otherwise may not be possible. It also placed the teachers in antagonistic positions to the students and conceptualized the school as an institution of anti-learning. I had effectively reduced the school, and by extension the individuals within it, to the category of “broken” and to something that could not support innovation. The reality is far more complex.

Later that same day, reflecting on what I had observed, I wrote about the lived experiences of the children:

What is life actually like for them? Do they see their circumstances, riddled with oppression and hardships as I do? I think not. But is there an arching feeling in them that this is not how it should be for them, that they deserve better? My childhood and current situation have pathetically little in common with theirs despite my effort to point out surface commonalities in my discussions of project (February 15, 2012).

It seemed then, that connections between the school, community and me would be tenuous or contrived at best. The disconnect between our everyday lives was compounded by the difficulty in communicating verbally with the children, as many of us did not share a common language, although English is the official language of instruction. This revealed a number of tensions that are indicative more generally of interactions between foreign researchers and participants and the extent to which shared understandings could be created (e.g. McGuire, 1987). However, it also allowed for the emergence of a form of communication that was not reliant on verbal exchange and instead reflected a visceral, if elusive connection:

On the way out of the school some of the younger children run beside me. One boy turns summersaults at my feet, hurling himself at the earth and landing on his back over and over. I walk the rest of the way up the pasture road with a young female student who also says nothing but smiles the entire time. She indicates that she would like to carry my bag of supplies for me by stretching out her hands. She walks the dirt road without shoes. The rest of the children wait at the gate which we must close quickly as the dairy cows are hurtling themselves toward the pavement. All of the children wave to me as I cross the road (February 8, 2012).

It became clearer to me that these children, these people, did not need me but that they had allowed me to see into an aspect of their lives, to share with me. It was these unremarkable moments that suddenly had the most weight. Often punctuated by silence, such instances were profound in their subtlety. In the moments of being and creating things together, although our differences were not transcended, connections began to be built:

Those who need help do not speak but silently raise their hands. Together we sew: I immobilize the fabric between my fingers and they move the pins to pierce the layers; I hold their hands as they push the needle through and untangle the thread... The next day on my way out of the classroom Sphehile, one of the older female students, is waiting for me and tells me in an almost inaudible voice that she has made something at home last night. She looks down at the ground with her hands behind her and sways back and forth slightly. She produces a tiny pair of light blue pants and a matching tank top from her pocket. I ask, "Who wears these?" She beams, "My doll wears them!" (February 9, 2012).



Figure 27: Clothes made by Spehsihile for her doll (Ukwenama)

Now returning to these details of my experiences, the instances I had been drawn to and compelled to document—the acts of exchange that were bound to making art together—my own blind spots begin to be revealed. Such openings are incomplete yet these blind spots offer the reference points from which, a bit at a time, emerges an image of the complexities of the context and contradictions supporting the larger system (Rhodes, 2013). I would be lying if I said that there was not immense pain and struggle here, but I had to relinquish the idea of a separate categorization of functional and dysfunctional schools and perhaps this form of dualism altogether.

Originally, I was only to work with the students a few days a week; however, this became almost every day, as the teachers were often absent because of personal reasons and the scheduling of school-related meetings. Such absences are not uncommon during school hours

with the consequence of leaving students to occupy themselves⁹¹. When I ask the student what they do when their teacher is absent they reply, “We read books.” Although in the long term I would consider the intermittence of teaching staff as problematic, it did allow for the establishment of more in-depth art programming. Our largest project, which took several days to complete, was a hand-sewn doll or little *mntu/umuntu* (a Bantu word meaning person⁹²). I created a basic pattern that the children traced onto pieces of newspaper that they then pinned to fabric (we used the same technique for making the clothing, mimicking full sized patterns).



Figure 28: Unclothed doll with fabric braids and doll wearing clothes made from shwe shwe

Although I had made white an option with unbleached muslin, none of the children chose it for their dolls. We ripped fabric in long sections that many of the children twisted or braided, with some creating a cornrow-like effect. Despite these young people representing the ethnic majority in South Africa, the store bought dolls of theirs that I had seen were not black or brown but blond-haired with blue eyes. Reading to the children from the school’s collection of story

⁹¹ This observation relates to the concept of “benign neglect” described by anthropologist David Lancy (2008) as a positive and consistent cross-cultural aspect of parenting. Although seen as an extreme socialization tactic it is considered to produce “well-adjusted adults, with personae that fit their respective societies” (p. 16). Although Lancy did not extend the concept teaching practices, the behaviours of the primary teachers in relation to their charges suggest a similar orientation.

⁹² The word denotes a vital force and, according to Bantu philosophy, it includes the living essence of both animals and minerals but also refers to the dead as entities, as even in death the life force is said to remain (Gelfand, 1970).

books on the days when the teacher was not present, I had observed that very few of the available volumes included black South African characters or experiences. Thus choosing to create a doll that more closely resembles oneself is significant and potentially transformative, particularly when the accessible imagery within the spheres of school and home reflect people that do not look like you. South Africa does have a tradition of doll making as with the “Ndebele Doll” and “Zulu Dream Doll,” which have cultural significance but also appeal to the tourist market (Klann, 2009). There are also companies specializing in the creation of black dolls for children such as Zuko Dolls out of Cape Town (see www.zukodolls.co.za). The major manufacturers of mass produced dolls (of those available in South Africa and around the world) on the other hand, have been criticized for portraying non-white people as explicitly racialized and stereotyped (Chin, 1999; Ducille, 2003). Black bodies and cultural forms are appropriated and commodified while increasingly shaped to fit Western concepts of beauty (Negrón-Muntaner, 2012). However, in the hands of the primary students who coaxed the fabric scraps into miniature humans, race was also being reworked. These young people were negotiating inclusion and exclusion with their dolls as they made decisions on body colour, facial features and dress. For some their dolls became intimates, animated objects of negotiated identity, a part of the self. When the teacher circulated the room to inspect the children’s work, some held them in the air with outstretched arms, waving them proudly. But one girl held on: “She will not relinquish the doll that is now held tightly against her chest. She pats the back of the doll gently and smiles” (February 16, 2012).



Figure 29: Doll being held

Working with the adult women on the electric machine had brought out a different connection to the material and to one another. They were eager, with Celukwazi saying, “I want to make everything, tops with short sleeves, long sleeves, pants, shorts...” But rather than operating individually, they all worked on each project together:

As they take turns cutting, all hands are on the fabric, some fingers directing, others pointing or smoothing wrinkles. When hemming all four women pin. We begin to sew on the machine and all hands remain, pushing, pulling the fabric, the women giving words of encouragement to whoever the machine operator was at that moment (February 11, 2012).



Figure 30: Pinning, women's sewing group

The sewing process had emerged as a highly participatory exercise with each person providing support for the others. I did not expect this interaction given my own sewing experiences, specifically in home economics class where each project was individualized and seen through start to finish by one person (although here there is of course no individual assessment). The children who had accompanied the women to the session at first had not appeared to be engaged in the women's activities as they sat apart from them teaching one another the hand stitches.



Figure 31: Pincushion chickens made by the primary students

But what I had thought to be a peripheral connection between the women and children was more than that. Slowly, the small cloth birds made by the children migrated onto the sewing table, becoming the women's pincushions. At next week's sewing session, Khwezi produces a small hand sewn yellow skirt and blue striped shirt sized for a doll, "I will give it to my daughter" (February 18, 2012). These instances illustrate an existing social structure that can perhaps be supported by such creative intergenerational exchanges if the space to do so can be established and maintained.



Figure 32: Doll clothes made by Khwezi for her daughter



Figure 33: Celukwazi trying on a shirt and Vemvane trying on a skirt (both sewn by the group)

Summary and Conclusions

The role of school context

The differences between the three school contexts did play a role, albeit not all-determining, in the outcomes of the artistic pursuits of the young people attending each institution. Overall, the “better” functioning schools, Vuselela and Ukwenama, enabled at the very least a stable foundation for the continuation of the young peoples’ art groups after I left South Africa and at the most, engaged and permissive art making. Due to ongoing issues between the principal and school staff at Vukela, the focus of attention was not always on the needs of the students but on the volatility of the teachers’ working own environments. At my initial arrival in October of 2011, the discord culminated in the refusal of many of the teachers to teach their classes, often leaving the students to occupy themselves. Recently, more issues have arisen as the principal physically assaulted a male student while he was in class. It appears that no official punitive actions have been taken against him. Ntwenhle stated in a text that the principal “is now a laughing stock [in the community] since that incident took place” (November 20, 2013) suggesting that his reputation has been tarnished. This lack of positive relations between the principal and school staff and students has among other things resulted in the transferring of students to other schools, although others like Ntwenhle have stayed as matriculation is not far off and relocating may be too disruptive. Those teachers such as Mrs. Nobuntu who were not participating in this form of recourse and attempted to maintain a degree of normalcy in regards to class functioning, appeared to be stretched incredibly thin in terms of their various responsibilities. As the teacher also in charge of the school’s vulnerable children, the basic needs of these individuals (primarily food), necessarily took precedence over the pedagogical needs of her own classes let alone those students interested in extracurricular art. This dynamic suggests that Vukela in particular had become a sight of competing struggles—job satisfaction for teachers and access to learning opportunities for students. Although the goals of each struggle were intimately related, the way in which they played out had underscored the hierarchal nature of the school institution.

Thus, within schools, depending on the nature of the student initiative, there may be struggles for art’s legitimacy. Even in the “better” high school, I observed that the values and priorities of the teachers, specifically the Arts and Culture teacher, were not obviously aligned

with those of the students. In our initial meeting I was told that it would be difficult to find any students interested in participating in my project, but after I began, I actually ended up having to turn students away as the group began to get bigger than I could manage. As pointed out by Gordon (2010), it is often necessary for students to seek out supportive teachers that can help make student initiatives enduring and part of the school culture. I do believe that the ability of the elementary student to continue their artistic pursuits was, and still is largely, enabled by the teachers who are interested in their holistic development as well as the willingness of these teachers to work with other knowledgeable community members, specifically Julia Smith. However, I should point out that teachers who support various student-led initiatives in school contexts where there is considerable tension between the staff and administrative powers may be taking significant risks (both personal and professional), particularly if said initiatives promote various educational justice platforms that challenge the status quo of the institutional environment. For example, the girls at Vukela, indicated that ongoing disputes between the principal, Mr. Nkoqo, school staff, and parents were precipitated by him ignoring the community's concerns and disallowing school activities: "He talked to them like they [parents] are nothing. They wanted to hit him...we don't do anything at this school!" (fieldnotes, February 15, 2012). Of particular concern in this conversation was the principal's discouragement of school-based *isicathamiya* (travelling Zulu acapella dance troupe that teaches about topics such as HIV and AIDS and gender-based violence). Teachers who support student-led activities do exist and can be hugely influential in the development of student citizenship, but in schools where basic material resources are limited or the terrain of administrative power is unstable this can be a difficult and potentially fraught undertaking.

Hanging questions

I return now to issues that emerged throughout my CAE experiences related to the use of media or art practices with significant socio-political baggage, particularly those such as wood working or sewing, which are embroiled in a history of oppressive educational practices. Formal education in South Africa, even as prescribed by colonialist and apartheid agendas, is not a static process. It is, to varying degrees, amorphous and prone to small subversions and counterpoints. However, I was often left asking, how can art pedagogy be approached and reoriented so as to

not re-inscribe the very principles it seeks to reject? Colonial forms of formal education in South Africa constitute what Greenwood (2009) calls “assimilative cultural patterns” (p. 1) that restrict the possibilities for colonized people and erase the relevant knowledge that they bring with them. In the contemporary education system of South Africa many of these processes continue to be reproduced. Alternative pedagogies must pay serious attention to what the students are saying and what is important to them. As suggested by Hicks (1994), the “process of social reconstruction advances, in part, through pedagogical strategies which increase students’ capacity for reflectivity in their decision making and actions” (p. 150). Pedagogy in this sense then is a combination of my stance and actions as an art educator and the participants’ mode of operating, of finding the joy and freedom in what they are doing. As I continue to reflect on my experiences in the following pages I also continue to articulate how, at least in respect to my own teaching contexts, the questions can be taken up. The processes of establishing a form of responsive CAE relates to my own responsibility to operate ethically, effectively, and do the least harm, a process which I tackle in the next chapter.

ETHICS OF EFFECTIVENESS

6

And now I am telling stories, standing there in the middle of the crowded street, saying in the strongest voice, “We’ll tell stories to fend off our sadness and to find our joy. We’ll retell the world, to understand it and ourselves, to bear it, survive it, love it all the same, even to change it.” I know they may not believe me, but it doesn’t matter.
-Ailbhe Symth (2001, p. 400)

Towards an ethics of effectiveness

This chapter explores moments of ethical questioning that transpired during the fieldwork and my processes of reflection and evaluation, teasing out main themes from the research. Through this analysis I address the fourth and final research question: What professional and personal resources do I need to draw upon and manifest as a researcher and art educator to function effectively in these communities? In this instance “effective” can be defined as the capacity to enhance the well-being of participants or doing the most good and least harm in terms of addressing their educational, social, and personal needs. This understanding of efficacy describes an ethical⁹³ attitude, as my ability to respond to and reflect upon the relational aspects of the research process is critical to my journey in becoming ethically aware. My examination of

⁹³ I make a distinction between ethics and morality, however I recognize that I cannot draw this thread of consistency through all of my experts. I align my perspective with that of anthropologists Naisargi Dave (2012) and Saba Mahmood (2005) who extend Michel Foucault’s theorizing. In her reading of Foucault, for example, Mahmood (2005) writes: “Foucault distinguished ethical practices from ‘morals,’ reserving the latter to refer to sets of norms, rules, values, and injunctions. ‘Ethics,’ on the other hand, refers to those practices, techniques, and discourses through which a subject transforms herself in order to achieve a particular state of being, happiness, or truth.” She continues, “ethics is a modality of power that ‘permits individuals to effect their own means or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being’ (Foucault, 1997b, 225) in order to transform themselves into the willing subjects of a particular moral discourse” (p. 28). As a primary concern of mine is coming to understand the lives of young people who must navigate various and often competing norms regarding their proper moral behaviour (i.e. their expressions of sexuality, presence in public and private spaces, and participation in civic life) such a distinction between ethics and morality is important. In South Africa, there also continues to be a persistent sense of moral panic around, for example, street children in Cape Town and their alleged criminal activity. Often the media perpetuates the image of street children as dangerous, as reports increasingly associate them with urban crime and disorder (Samara, 2011).

the relational space is a deliberate attempt to challenge patterns of exclusion and oppression. I focus on my efforts to link with others both in moments of camaraderie and across fractures of misrecognition. I draw specifically on moments that challenged my understanding of the world in ways that produced embodied feelings of disorientation.

My engagement with the fourth research question begins with a consideration of an ethics of community art education practice. Similarly, my use of the term needs should not be confused with a needs-based interpretation of welfare whereby needs are “framed in discursive ways by those who are powerful enough to offer solutions: classically, these include identification of those ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ of care or welfare” (Cockburn, 2005, p. 86). I emphasize needs as articulated or embodied by the participants, rather than any abstract needs that I bring or that the research context imposes.

I conceptualize the ethics of effectiveness within the framework that involves a continuous evaluation of my intentions and actions. I take up the experiences that held a particular saliency and push to reach past my initial conclusions. This stance means that I enact CAE to respond to the needs of the participants while remaining cognizant of the potential benefits and pitfalls that my engagement with these individuals can bring about. I reflexively use descriptions from my fieldnotes not to definitively explain the origins of actions and events I observed but to address how I may take up CAE to operate in contexts that are not only complex but also often paradoxical to me. In this sense the methodology is unpacked and linked back directly to the research contexts. In the pages that follow I develop a conversation between the ethics of the universal and the particular in relation to issues such as child well-being. Rather than to imply one “true” ethical story, my intention is to create provisional meaning of participants’ experiences and lives (Rice, 2009) as they intertwine with my own. By navigating my interpretative insights along with participant knowledges I explore my inner conundrums alongside the greater ethical issues of conducting social science research, always with the goal of understanding what I need to be an effective researcher in challenging situations such as Vulindlela, South Africa.

In the following sections I examine the processes involved in the development of my ethical research practice in such challenging contexts. This chapter also exemplifies how the interplay of my methodological orientation and the conceptualization of political and cultural

identity—my own and others’—affect the research process (Geleta, 2014). I describe scenarios that highlight specific difficulties as well as openings in relationships between myself and participants in a context of fluid, and at times volatile, dynamics (Levinson, 2010). The salient themes that emerged from my fieldnotes include: 1) My role(s) as an outsider-insider; 2) Childisms or prejudice towards young people as revealed in adult-child relations and interactions; and 3) South Africa’s historical legacy of violence and trauma. The themes and related excerpts relate to what Guillemin and Gillam (2004) call “ethically important moments” or “the difficult, often subtle, and usually unpredictable situations that arise in the practice of doing research” (p. 262). In a sense each thematic section is an attempt to decipher the negotiation and construction of difference in the field sites and in writing, acknowledge and partially lessen the impact of power hierarchies in the research process and speak to broader local and global political contexts and realities (Alexander, 2006). From this analysis I aim to draw out the personal and professional resources necessary to my continued ethical functioning. I also draw attention to specific narratives and knotty issues so that the lives of people such as Ntombiyesizwe or Ntwenhle do not, as expressed by anthropologist David Valentine (2003) “become evened out” and become represented “without attention to the complexity of their lives, their social identifications, their capacity for agency” (p. 35) or the circumstances of their marginalization. I have conceptualized my own ethical development in terms of empathy, improvisation, and analytical intentions.

I have not necessarily found satisfactory external explanations for many of the events I witnessed, but I now have a greater understanding of how they are part of the South African context. I recognize that the effects of my efforts here are still being interpreted. My most pressing questions stem from the ethical issues involved in conducting research with marginalized populations in the majority world. However, the insights that I offer here are applicable to a multitude of participant populations across the globe.

I begin with a conversation with Emanuel, a 14-year-old participant in the art workshops. He is an important and reoccurring figure throughout my work because of his artistic skill and knowledge, his role as a nexus of connection within the community, and his navigation of particular life circumstances that have in some ways become emblematic of rural South African youth. This is a narrative that I will return to at various points in this chapter as I grapple with

how our subjective realities diverge and align. My story begins at the time of my return to South Africa, for my second research trip.

I arrive in Vulindlela and Emanuel comes by the house to return a library book that Julia has borrowed on his behalf. I am eager to see him. I have grown quite fond of him over the course of the project; he is shy but highly aware. I ask him how he has been. He puts his arms over his head and grabs at them awkwardly, “Not good, in December I had a problem.” I ask what the problem was. In the past, he had used the word problem to describe an event that creates a disturbance in his life: he cannot come for reading lessons at the house because he “has a problem,” it conflicts with his auntie baking muffins. “My mother is dead,” he says. I seize up at his words, at his quiet frankness. I am unprepared for his response. I stare at him for a moment. I tell him that he can come talk to me anytime, as I will be here at the main house for the next few weeks. I don’t know what else to say to him, what to offer him. His loss is beyond my comprehension. I feel weak and useless. I want to console him but feel that we are far away. Dropping by unannounced at the “boss and madam’s” house even just to see me may be inconceivable. But I also cannot go to him; I cannot wander over to his home although I can see it from the window (February 6, 2012).

After this encounter I hoped to see Emanuel again but he does not come for his reading lessons with Julia Smith and at school he is elusive. His friends have noticed a change. They tell me he has not come to the art making sessions because he has lost the hammer and is feeling guilty and ashamed. I try to assure them that this is not a cause for absence and that he would never be banned from the group for this action, hoping that they can convince him to come back. “He is unhappy,” says Mcebisi but continues, “He is a good person.”

I was left wondering what exactly to do and my feeling unable or unsure of how to connect with Emanuel created an unshakable feeling of disorientation. I felt destabilized by my uncertainty of action but also because I was not sure of what role I was to play in this context. In revisiting my reactions I now ask “Was/am I a friend, a mentor or nothing even close?” I felt responsible to him, to make better his pain. I continue to try to understand Emanuel’s needs and whether I even was/am in a position to be asking such questions. Would I have been committing transgressions by seeking him out, by giving consolation? Had I somehow compounded his unhappiness by inadvertently causing him shame about the loss of the hammer?

My ethical questioning occurs both within the moment I share with Emanuel and at later points in time as I continue to reflect back on the encounter and our relationship as well as on my role and responsibilities both as a human being and as a researcher in this context. This suggests a layered process of ethical functioning, something that may be inherently incomplete, as with

each pass of reflection I move closer to approximations of ethical understanding. The natural concern I would feel in such circumstances for a student in any context (South Africa, Canada, etc.) is compounded by my growing understanding of what it means for Emanuel to now be an AIDS orphan and by my uncertainty regarding the protocol and social expectations and “rules” in this particular context.

Defining ethics

At the most basic level, the term ethics denotes a philosophical position of right and wrong (and the spaces in between) in a dialectical relationship with communally agreed upon standards of conduct (Merriam-Webster, 2014). The discourse of ethics deals with a “system of ideals, values and norms that function as a regulative guideline for achieving full and decent human life, and therefore also for directing the educational practice of teachers” (Aloni, 2008, p. 149). Most people would agree that there are ideals of human development, well-being and dignity that are transcendent of religious, ideological, or national interpretations. There is however a deeply personal aspect to ethical functioning or what educational philosopher David Hansen (2012) calls the “idea of ethics-as-self-cultivation” (p. 126) or how persons reflectively attend to their relations with others. Anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995) asserts that in researching with peoples from places such as South Africa it is not acceptable to “suspend the ethical” for fear of appearing ethnocentric but that we must be politically committed and morally engaged. For “seeing, listening, touching, recording can be, if done with care and sensitivity, acts of solidarity. Above all, they are the work of recognition. Not to look, not to touch, not to record can be a hostile act, and act of indifference and of turning away” (p. 418). However, ethical boundaries as they are traversed in daily life are often ambiguous and opaque. The typical concept of ethics, contends Sara Day (2012), “depends on the often arbitrary binaries of right and wrong that, when challenged, grow slippery” (p. 208). In a similar vein, educator Clio Stearns (2013) posits that as teachers “we must mourn the image of ourselves as people who understand in any objective way what is right and wrong. We have to be honest about this mourning if we are to find the space between helpful and harmful furor that lets us see what is happening before us in the classroom [or outside of it]” (p. 86).

In this sense, an ethical approach to teaching and research is one that must be “cautious, critical yet activist” (Aloni, 2008, p. 151). For in instances where tentativeness and uncertainty are marked, these can be taken as signs towards dialogic and ethical discourse (Smith, 2011). Tentativeness also does not preclude the development of radical discourse (see Freire, 1996, p. 19). To engage with an ethical code of thought and action as a researcher and teacher is to move with thoughtfulness, self-awareness, and assume responsibility for one’s role in positive social change. Such an endeavour into ethics is not about delineating dogmatic moral parameters, but about a developing a deep and ongoing conversation between what we imagine to be conditions for maximizing human dignity and possibility and the messy, unpredictable, muddled bits of everyday life.

Ethical frameworks

Conventional codes of moral conduct in research

My understanding of ethics is one that moves beyond the conventional codes of moral conduct as dictated by institutional ethics review bodies, in my case the Concordia Human Research Ethics Committee (2012)⁹⁴ and the second edition of the Tri-council Policy Statement (TCPS 2)⁹⁵ (ethical research conduct as outlined by the national funding wing for the social sciences in Canada). These ethical guidelines for academic researchers are built on a positivist bio-medical paradigm that assumes a value-neutral social science. As outlined by Clifford Christians (2011), a leading scholar on ethics in media and human dialogue, this tradition has constructed science as “amoral speaking to questions of means but with no wherewithal or authority to dictate ends. Methods in the social sciences must be disinterested regarding substance and content” (p. 63). Generally, university ethics protocol preside over four areas of ethical policy procedures based on an abstract calculation of risks and benefits: informed consent, deception, privacy, and confidentiality and accuracy (Christians, 2011). Following this line of thinking, in their ethnographic examination of the ethics of medical research, Charles Bosk and Raymond De Vries (2004) argue that, “The ethical problems that we meet in the field

⁹⁴ All documents regarding ethical conduct for research with human populations including “Policy for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans” (2012) can be viewed on the Concordia University Research Ethics Unit website: <http://www.concordia.ca/research/for-researchers/ethics.html>.

⁹⁵ The “Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans” (2010) can be found here: <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/>.

are so complex and situations are so fraught with the moral and existential dilemmas of leading a life” (p. 260) that the researcher’s ethical responsibilities as outlined by institutional guidelines can be of little practical use in the social world. The relevance of such western-derived guidelines is also challenged, particularly in majority world contexts where they may actually ignore local ethical understandings and the needs and values of individual participants (see for example, Molyneur, Wassenaar, Peshu, & Marsh, 2005).

Community development research by Sara Banks et al. (2013) draws a distinction between the guidelines for defining researcher codes of conduct and the difficult decision-making and ethical dilemmas faced by researchers categorizing them as *ethics as regulation* and *ethics as decision-making* (p. 266). The former approach stipulates conformity on the part of the researcher to codified ethical principles and rules while the latter approach is based on the notion of researchers as active moral agents contending with conflicts between ethical principles (e.g. ‘do no harm’ versus ‘respect confidentiality’), necessitating a choice between two potentially equally unfavourable alternatives. But beyond presenting ethics as principled rule following or the dilemmas faced by individual researchers at pivotal moments in the research process, Bank et al. (2013) advocate everyday ethics. This conceptualization sees ethics as embodied in researchers and embedded in everyday practice. Similarly, the ethically important moments of ethicists Marilys Guillemin and Lynn Gillam (2004) have an everyday quality. The approach taken or the decision made by the researcher may have significant ethical ramifications, however, the researcher may not necessarily feel like they are on the horns of a dilemma. Drawing on this framework, I also recognize that ethical moments are not confined to the field but are part of the dynamic between the researcher and the research process as a whole. For example, ethical moments arise in the day-to-day decisions about representation that are made when a researcher constructs a text based on her activities. In my own case, questions of representation continued to emerge as I wrote about my experiences with participants including Emanuel and Ntwenhle and understanding that my attempts are always limited and that they as people will always exceed their representations (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012).

Feminist ethics and ethics of care

Alternatively, a feminist ethical framework recognizes moral processes and decisions as

embedded in the interactional complexities of the field, which is constituted not by a system of exterior standards, but a range of human relationships. While issues of gender are central to feminist ethical theory, there is an overarching concern for equity and dignity and as such is aligned with questions of postcolonialism and social justice. As researchers “we find ourselves confronting more than one moral claim at the same time involving different ethical principles” (Christians, 2011, p. 65). Feminist research ethics are inherently political, self-conscious, and concerned with questions of power. “Rather than privileging an abstract rationalism, the moral order is positioned close to the bone, in the creaturely and corporeal rather than the conceptual” (Christians, 2011, p. 69).

Within the feminist notion of social ethics, values of caring are central. Hamington (2004) describes care as an embodied and fundamental part of human experience that comes before any ethical theory. He offers the following definition:

Care denotes an approach to personal and social morality that shifts ethical considerations to context, relationships, and affective knowledge in a manner that can be fully understood only if care’s embodied dimension is recognized. Care is committed to the flourishing and growth of individuals yet acknowledges our interconnectedness and interdependence” (p. 3).

The capacity to care is linked directly to the corporeal or that which we know through our experiences of caring for others and being cared for. But according to the feminist philosophy of Maurice Hamington (2004), care also involves the weaving together of bodily and imaginative processes that enable us to empathize with those who are outside of sphere of experience. Cognitive and intellectual processes are inseparable from the body.

“In all research interactions, we must be careful not to imply that the meanings fashioned are simply an outcome of disembodied ‘intellectual’ interactions,” suggests feminist psychologist Maree Burns (2003). She continues, “Rather, they are a product of ‘physical’ exchanges that occur in a reciprocal manner between the researcher and participant and have implications at the ‘physical level’” (p. 230). My evolving understanding of how I can develop an ethically sufficient positioning is not reducible to the principles of least harm (non-maleficence) and beneficence as defined by procedural ethics in which the ultimate outcome of research can be calculated as an abstracted cost-benefit analysis. Instead, I conceptualize harm as both that that is

overt, such as risk of physical danger, and that which is quite subtle and stems from the interactions between myself, the participants, and the research context, such as guilt, shame, or social exclusion. By responding to the needs of the participants through frameworks of care, indigenous ethics, reflexivity, and embodied understanding, I aim to arrive at a “thicker” (Geertz, 1994) interpretation of ethical functioning throughout the various stages of research (from conceptualization to being in the field to textual representation). The kinaesthetic sense of the body and the use of the hands play primary roles in the experience of art making. The body in terms of physical presence, helps to stage interactions between the researcher and community members such as in relation to physical/material characteristics that construct insider and outsider identities.

South African and Indigenous ethics

Within South African indigenous ethics there is a strand of theory called *Ubuntu*, which means interbeing. This perspective presents an alternative position to western, Cartesian notions of human existence that emphasize reason as the basis for ethical action (Nachmanovitch, 2006). The premise of ubuntu is expressed as “a person is a person through other persons” and “I am because we are; and since we are therefore I am” (Hall, du Toit, & Louw, 2013, p. 31). These traditional aphorisms describe how to be with others. This philosophy is recognized within South African social welfare legislation and is referenced in the interim Constitution and guiding principle for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Hall, du Toit, & Louw, 2013).

In Antjie Krog’s (2003) book *A Change of Tongue*, she explores issues of race and integration in small town South Africa after democracy. She recounts a conversation with an old friend:

It appears Ghangha now lives in Bloemfontein in a formerly white suburb. ‘It’s fine, really. We had some problems in the beginning, but it’s ok now.’

‘What kind of problems?’

‘Eish. The usual. I was to be held accountable for every single thing a black person did. If a black man rapes a child or steals a million, the neighbours or my colleagues want me to explain. And if I want to know why it is I never ask them to explain when a white farmer shoots a black baby—is it perhaps because I know them well enough?—then they’re quick with this ubuntu thing: blacks stick together because of

ubuntu, you know? And I can tell you, nothing pisses me off more than whites pretending to understand or even care about African concepts like ubuntu' (p. 272).

This exchange indicates the problematics associated with assuming within-group homogeneity and the resulting detriments to communication across difference but also the danger in appropriating indigenous understandings as a non-indigenous person. Conversely, failure to recognize and engage openly with local ways of being-in-the-world may create additional fissures.

Examining education from a human rights perspective, Nathalie Piquemal's (2006) stance on relational ethics for teachers and researchers working with Indigenous communities in a North American context is helpful here. As a Canadian, my first encounter with the ethics of indigenous relations was with North American First Nations people, and so this is one way that I come to find such a conceptualization useful. Piquemal's ethics is based on the following tenets: "a commitment to difference, a commitment to reciprocity, a commitment to beneficence and respect for persons, and an ethics of caring" (p. 115). Piquemal frames her exploration of ethical principles around the central question: "What are the ethical implications of living in relation with Aboriginal people in both research and classroom contexts?" As the aspect of living alongside Aboriginal peoples is highlighted, the relational obligations of researchers supersede any contractual obligations as dictated by institutions. Commitment to difference means coexisting with the other while respecting the other's identity. Given the historical and ongoing exploitation of Aboriginal communities, researchers should place themselves not in a position of expert but of learner. The purpose of commitment to reciprocity is to recognize the ways in which participants and researchers can dialogically develop research projects that reconcile the interests and needs of Aboriginal communities and the scientific community. The third principle of beneficence and respect for persons indicates that research questions and procedures should be defined in response to the needs as identified by participants themselves. Similarly, in the Nel Noddings tradition of ethics of care, care is based in relationships that are defined by commitment and continuation in which knowledge is mutually constructed. Thus researchers should consider not only the present but consider what the research and its constituent relationships mean for participants over time.

I think, however, that it is important to realize that important black figures in South African social change movements and ordinary individuals rely on a dynamic, hybrid ethics that does not necessarily view western and indigenous ethics as oppositional. There is permeability between various understandings. For example, as suggested by educators Leon Tikly and Tim Bond (2013)

Steve Biko's conception of black consciousness contrasted an African humanism based on collectivity and a spirit of *Ubuntu* (togetherness) with the individualism of 'White' (European) civilization [...] Similarly, ideas of African socialism (*Nkrumah, Kaunda, Diop*) and of self-reliance (*Nyerere*) combined an inherently communal African ethic with a reading of Western Marxism and an analysis of the class-based nature of African societies. These combinations of different traditions not only challenge the colonized/colonizer binary but also generate the richness and diversity of ethics in anti-colonial thought (p. 426).

In a similar vein, I do not see institutional and "universal" (e.g. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC]) ethical understandings as oppositional to those of critical, feminist, and indigenous perspectives. The development of the field of children's rights is hierarchal with a distinct minority world slant. It is also a porous, shifting, and contested social space (Hakli & Kallio, 2014). Not only do I see the various positions as benefitting from a form of cross-pollination but also such a positioning reflects the grounding of my research within a bricolage or improvisational framework that is necessitated by research with the diverse communities of rural South Africa.

Ethical shifts

Feminist philosopher Ami Harbin (2012) argues that disorienting experiences are potentially beneficial to the development of moral awareness and agency. She characterizes moral agency as everyday practices of interaction with living beings, spaces, objects, ideas, and norms. We engage in such interaction via overlapping embodied habits and practices of attention, inattention, care, and communication. Harbin describes disorientation as an embodied process in which physical, affective, and cognitive factors interconnect. Experiences of shock or surprise, unease, and discomfort can all produce disorientation. They tend to be prompted by disruptions in everyday practices of embodiment, feeling that one is out of place or not at home. When these disruptions occur or our experiences of ease are threatened, we typically become

unsure of what to do next in our social worlds. This uncertainty caused by being disoriented in body may make questionable the norms that govern social interactions. We may wonder about the appropriateness of what to say, who to touch, how to look and move, and the types of emotions to express. Through corporeal disorientations we are made more aware of the complexities of interdependence. Shifting the ways in which we act and rely on others within relational frameworks can strengthen moral agency. Disorientations allow for movements in attention that can cultivate morally productive reflection and action. However, it is embodied experience that makes possible those attentional shifts. Thus “disorientations can allow for changed action not exclusively because of processes of attention, reflection and changed understanding, but also through shifts in pre-reflective experience, and especially through disruptions in habitual practices of relating to others” (Harbin, 2012, p. 265-266).

Connecting fieldwork to the concept of disorientation, social anthropologist James Davies (2010) suggests, “The conditions of fieldwork, wherever this work may occur and whatever these conditions may constitute, are invariably different from those we enjoy or endure in our most customary surroundings” (p. 79). These experiences of difference stemming from our physical relocation or changes in our subjective positioning stand out from our routinized way of life. In turn, “One’s adaptation to or, emerging relationship with, the studied community, invariably involves some sort of ethical, cognitive or emotional transformation, no matter how perfunctory or short-lived” (p. 80). Capturing this felt disorientation in the field Davies writes:

I would say that it was as if I stood in a no-man’s-land between two locations—the one I had left behind and the one I was slowly entering. From the position of that threshold I felt a terrible doubt concerning not merely the intellectual but the experiential status of my own sociocultural world [...] I felt as if I was looking at my own world through the wrong end of a telescope—how little, insignificant, arbitrary it looked, how vain in all its claims of certainty and correctness (p. 81).

It is through these inevitable feelings of unease we are challenged in our habitual practice of relating to others and our surroundings. As suggested by María Lugones (2003) in her feminist philosophical writing on oppression and resistance, disorientation can produce a “cross-reference of realities” (p. 15) as we may be made to connect to memories of ourselves and our movement between multiple, intersecting subjectivities. This awareness becomes particularly important for revealing our social fragmentation and how we may act in ways that are both oppressive and

resistant even within the same instant (p. 13). Such a shift in perspective is important when working with people who are often conceptualized by their marginalization, such as young people in the majority world. But it is also in paying attention to our disorientation in the field that our orientation is made recognizable: “we can be most likely to notice that we were at ease only when we become partially or seriously disrupted” (Harbin, 2012, p. 265). Thus, our grounding within an environment and connection to individuals around us can be made apparent when our disorientation is brought to the fore.

Introduction to emergent themes

In my exploration of the three major themes that emerged from my research, I focus on the experiences that grabbed me—disrupting my common-sense interpretations and feelings of equilibrium. These experiences also continue to have a hold me. Insights I gain from one theme help to illuminate aspects of the other themes. Some instances are significant as moments of connection and recognition, others because of feelings of discord and irresolvable impenetrability into the realities of others (Throop, 2010).

Outside in: Insider/outsider ethics

Introduction to insider/outsider roles and ethics

Prior to the reflexive turn in the social sciences catalyzed by black, feminist, post-colonial, and post-modern interpretations that gained momentum in the 1980s, ethnographic studies tended to assume a bipolar insider/outsider identity of researchers. Conventional ethnographic approaches presented the taken-for-granted objectivity and detachment of the researcher as a means of gaining accurate and neutral readings of social and cultural phenomena. Insider/outsider roles are based on socially constructed classifications such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, and nationality. At the core of a discussion of the researcher as an insider or outsider in majority world settings are issues of identity, questions of representation, ideas of knowledge, and the self-determination of indigenous people. The debate converges on the question of whether one needs to share certain traits with participants in order to be able to understand the experiences of a cultural group or community. Scholars who challenge the construction of indigenous people by non-indigenous researchers (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012) and shed light on how

ethnographic encounters operate as an extension of the colonial project (Lewis, 1973) help illuminate the exploitation of participants, the impact of researcher identity and power structures in the research process. There has been significant discussion about the necessity of the researcher belonging to the socio-cultural group that she is researching in order to accurately represent the experiences of participants. This pre-requisite is considered particularly important in communities that are marginalized. Such a line of criticism remains important as it calls attention to the western understanding of self and the world that has functioned as a subtext to ethnographic investigations for some time.

Scholars, those with background ties to the communities they are researching and those without, have demonstrated that identity is complex and that the polarized positioning of insider/outsider status is too simplistic to explain the convoluted interaction of subjectivities in the field (e.g. Geleta, 2014; Mullings, 1999; Sherif, 2001). The lines between self and other are not distinct but unclear as the establishment of boundaries between researchers and participants tends to be characterized by ambiguity and fluidity with notions of self intersecting in multiple ways that in turn affect the formulation and interpretation of knowledge (Sherif, 2001). “‘Otherness’ and ‘insiderness,’” considers sociologist Nancy Naples (1996), “are not fixed or static positions. Rather they are ever shifting and permeable social locations that are differently experienced and expressed by community members” (p. 84).

“You could be my third wife.”

Going into my research in South Africa I was confronted by a number of anxieties regarding my outsider status as a white academic from Canada. I wondered what if anything legitimate would I be able to say about young people living in rural KwaZulu Natal? How would I be able to ethically negotiate my power position in the research process? How would my intentions and I be interpreted? This questioning speaks to the highly fraught nature of belonging and the tension between interacting with existing groups and creating new ones. In the following experiential snapshots, I describe how I, together with those in the research milieu, move between the various personae of insider and outsider.

Toward the end of my first trip, two particular exchanges with Principal Mlungisi of the Vuselela Secondary School challenged my ethical functioning as a researcher. The first occurred

when I am fetching art supplies from my car and Mr. Mlungisi stops to chat. He opens the conversation by telling me that I have a good character and inquires about my living arrangements with my boyfriend, noting my unmarried status.

“What do you think of my character on a scale of five?” Both amused and taken aback, I shrug and say, “A four?” “No [shaking his head]. I would not give anyone more than a three,” he says. He then talks about how much he enjoys learning about other cultures and tells me that if I did not have a boyfriend he would propose to me. “You know how many wives I have? Two, he continues. You are allowed up to 10 (October 6, 2011).

He then explains that my “good character” makes me desirable as a wife. The following week we had another conversation:

“So what good are you leaving here?” he asks. I reply that I will be leaving all of the tools so that the children can continue to work in my absence and that it can help jump start the carpentry class he hopes to create. I tell him that I also bring snacks for the learners in my group, thinking that this was an important contribution given the food insecurity in the community. He says with a smile that I am “showing favouritism” by only giving food to certain children. This seems like a veiled jab. “You did not bring any food for me?” he continues. “Is that how they do it in your culture? In our culture when you go to someone's home the gift you give them is food.” I point out that as a guest according to local custom he should also be providing me with something to eat. “Oh, but you do not eat what we eat,” he replies (October 14, 2011).

At the time, I was somewhat defensive and brushed off his comments, concluding that he did not really understand what this “whole research thing” was about. This somewhat oppositional conversation seems to suggest that we were both looking at the other’s cultural origins with a degree of abstract strangeness, pointing to the difficulty arriving at a state of mutual cultural understanding. I wonder if with each contact greater understanding is possible or if the potentiality is eclipsed by each of our struggles to exert control over one another. In a similar sense, Mr. Mlungisi’s words revealed a fundamental query about my critical methodology as informed by CAE: as a framework concerned with the democratization of art making but that typically involves working with small, often marginalized groups, is it at once inclusive and exclusionary? His questioning raises a good point about who constitutes my “community” and who is left out. Do the teachers and principal count as part of the community? Is the principal’s voice also “marginalized”? Limitations in the research (time, space, materials) forced me to exclude not just other children but the school staff as well. What then is the ethical position when the ideas of certain community members appear to conflict with either the premise

of the research or issues of other members? And what concessions is it acceptable for researchers (particularly those employing a methodology like CAE) to make when we choose or choose not to have certain community members as allies?

The above descriptions of my exchanges with Mr. Mlungisi also highlight my role in the localized power structure. In the latter instance, I am at the top of the power structure. Mr. Mlungisi identifies my power through my mobility. Judith Stacey (1988), in her article *Can There be a Feminist Ethnography?*, articulates this aspect when she describes fieldwork as “potentially treacherous because of intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships that the researcher is free to leave” (p. 23). Mr. Mlungisi also recognizes my position of power through my ability to bring/donate/leave resources behind. And perhaps through my distaste or privileged position that allows me to reject “local” food choices in favour of ones I find more agreeable. I was also able decline his proposal where the same may not have been true if I was a woman from the community. As a prominent local figure he has high status in the community and marriage to him may mean a certain level of stability and access to resources that otherwise may be much more difficult to come by. Although if I was from rural South Africa, I would doubtless have some means of deflecting his “pass” based on greater cultural capital. Also, he might well have “proposed” to me because I am a white woman who could be counted on not to accept the proposal or fully understand what the ritual means. This assertion suggests that in this instant I had a form of racial power. However, by telling me that he could and would take me as his third wife, he was also exercising power of me. My discomfort produced by his “offer” shows that in some ways I was also victim to the existing patriarchal power system. When taken together our interactions indicate a contest for control as well as the mutable power dynamics between us that were framed by my perceived outsider status.

It is difficult to say exactly what Mr. Mlungisi’s intentions were in these moments. What I offer here is only a partial interpretation governed by my current understandings and (mis)conceptions, and does not likely tease out all of the various complex and interwoven issues at play. I do not know for sure if he was in fact kidding, knowing full well that there was no chance of my being anyone’s third wife since my social structure was obviously different from his. This was however, the second advance of this nature that I had experienced at this school (the first was made by the security guard who persistently requested my phone number so that he

could “Learn about dating white women”). Mr. Mlungisi is almost certainly sophisticated enough to have known that the proposal might in fact have made me feel more like an outsider, since it highlighted that I was not in a position to accept.

“She’s our uMlungu!”

My uncomfortable interactions with some adults caused me to want to further bolster the world that I was trying to create with the young people. The more I struggled to connect with adults, the more I wanted to retreat into those spaces where the building of relationships between the young people and me seemed to flow more easily.

After our art session, I drive and Umculi and the girls home and they yell out of the windows at passers-by, to other students they know. They crank the radio and sing along. Umculi is the first to be dropped off and as I pull into the turnaround we surprise two men who are standing, waiting. They stare into the car at the students and me. “Are there a lot of other white people who come here?” I wonder out loud. “Yes, there are others here sometimes. A lot come to study to be isangoma⁹⁶. They are strange.” “Are they just men or women too?” I ask. “There are lots of women that come to study.” I wonder with what intent these women come to study here, or whom they come to study. Borrowing the language I heard in the schoolyards I say jokingly, “So I’m not the only uMlungu⁹⁷?” They laugh at my use of the word. “You are *our* uMlungu!” “She’s our uMlungu! She’s our uMlungu!” they yell out the car windows to no one in particular (February 18, 2012).

In my current state of retrospective remove it seems that in this and other similar encounters the boundaries of race did not dissolve but were perhaps made more visible to me. However, our differences acted as an opening to something else. In referring to myself by, what at the least is a loaded term and at most a derogatory term, I was attempting to enter into what Christensen (2004) calls “children’s cultures of communication” or the inventing of a form of communication and interaction that resonated with the young peoples’ own practices (p. 170). I

⁹⁶ Traditional Zulu healer.

⁹⁷ UMlungu is a general Zulu term for a white person. However, it can also be used in a derogatory manner and references the white foam that forms on a beach, or “white scum.” During RTEP the phrase “cuckoo umlungu,” meaning “crazy white” could sometimes be heard floating through the Vukela school grounds as the white pre-service teachers or I moved about. It was difficult to determine if this was used with malice but according to my young South African friend “it is not a very good name for a white” (personal communication, February 26, 2014).

had also tried to reclaim the word uMlungu. Part of me wanted to know what they would do with the language I had chosen.

Thinking about this now, by announcing my whiteness together with words of ownership, the young people in the car had exercised their power in the context, their power to accept or reject me, and indicated that I belonged in some way to their world. Also in dealing with obvious difference our similarities were brought into relief and the superficiality of that difference was underlined. Here in the car, as when we made our art, I felt that at times we belonged to a separate world, one that remained hidden from the mainstream happenings of the environment and this belonging imbued us all with a certain strength, the strength that comes with creating a secret code know only to a few (Levinson, 2010). This is not to say that this state of being was permanent or even transcendent. However, the presence and behaviour of our group as we traversed the landscape seemed to surprise, perhaps flying in the face of some expectations and hinting at ways in which black and white could be together.

The above snippet, which relates the last time I saw any of the participants face to face, represents a culmination of connection. This was preceded by other deceptively simple acts that became larger gestures of closeness: Khanyisile reaching out wordlessly, measuring her beadwork against my wrist; the girls at Vukela touching my hair as they worked or brushing off the dust that had collected on my back; Bhekithemba making the students promise to keep me safe as we left school grounds; and the much loved toys gifted to me by little hands at Ukwenama. I was insider; I was outsider; I was neither. Through the narrative of being in the field I had chosen my protagonists and set opposite the antagonists. In many ways I had chosen sides. Here I am reminded of the words of Japanese writer Haruki Murakami “Between a high, solid wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand on the side of the egg⁹⁸.” I had chosen to align myself with the individuals that appeared marginalized in the various contexts: the youngest grades in the secondary schools; domestic workers; labourers; and women. This, however, was far from unproblematic. I was also fuelled by a desire to separate myself from “other adults” in the context as well as other whites. I wanted to push at where I saw there to be boundaries. When working alongside Alex and his fellow artisans at Ardmore Ceramics,

⁹⁸ In February of 2009, Murakami spoke these words as part of his acceptance speech for the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society, a biennial literary award. A video of his full speech can be viewed here: http://www.salon.com/2009/02/20/haruki_murakami/.

occasionally older white tourists would come through the studio tours and appear befuddled by my presence. I was not simply noticing what was in front of me but actively constructing vulnerabilities and strengths for the people around me.

Childisms

Defining childism as prejudice against young people

Writing in the American context psychotherapist Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (2012) uses the term “childism” to describe “a prejudice against children on the ground of a belief that they are property and can (or even should) be controlled, enslaved, or removed to serve adult needs” (p. 37). She argues that children are mistreated by adults due to widespread societal prejudice against young people that serves as a justification for such behaviour. Naming this prejudice asserts Young-Bruehl “could guide experts’ explorations of how and why adults fail to meet children’s needs or respect their rights [...] why children remain in poverty; why adults feel justified in attacking children” and, more generally, why “society fails to support the development and well-being of its children” (p. 6). Without searching for the underlying systemic causes for the maltreatment of children, or those that move beyond individual behaviour, little can be done to combat it.

International perspectives on child wellbeing

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the first legally binding international treaty on the human rights of children. As outlined by human geographer Nicola Ansell (2005), the convention recognizes that children have three forms of rights: provision (e.g. healthcare, education); protection (e.g. from violence, neglect); and participation (in decisions affecting their lives). Children are considered to be individuals with distinct identities; however, they are not able to exercise their rights directly. Rather, adults are viewed as responsible for children’s well-being. As explained by Ansell (2005), the Convention is a compromise between the liberation and caretaker views of children’s rights. The liberationist view proposes that children should have all the same freedoms and opportunities or self-determination as adults including the right to work, own property, vote, and have sex. Alternatively, the main tenet of the

caretaker perspective is that adults should make decisions paternalistically on the behalf of children, imagining how they would choose for themselves if they were adults. South Africa ratified⁹⁹ the Convention in 1995 (and represented its first report in 1998), marking the first international convention to be adopted by the new democratic country. Recent research in suggests that views on the country's progress are mixed. For example, geographer Amy Norman (2014) indicates that in KwaZulu-Natal there have been extensive changes to both policy and practice that have significantly impacted intergenerational relations. In line with the mandate of the Convention, South Africa has been compelled to pass laws protecting children from physical and mental violence. However, Norman also suggests that negative impacts have arisen as the Convention is "an import from an alien [western] world" (p. 38) and has made adults feel disempowered and frustrated (the value of respect has been lost in the current generation, creating major rifts between young people and adults). In addition, as outlined by children's right activist Carol Bower (2014), South Africa has continued to experience breakdowns in health, education, and justice and security sectors. In particular, the government has failed to address the full effects of the AIDS epidemic as well as create sufficient employment opportunities and meaningfully respond to intergenerational poverty, which disproportionately impacts rural children and women. Frans Viljoen (2012), a South African scholar of human rights law, points out that "as a global instrument, the CRC is the product of numerous compromises. Regional specificities are often the casualty of universal consensus-seeking" (p. 392).

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU, now the African Union [AU]) put the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) in force in 1999. South Africa ratified the treaty in 2000 (African Commission on Human & Peoples Rights, 2014). In response to the common critique of the CRC as Eurocentric, the ACRWC represented a regionally specific legislation designed to encompass realities of children living in Africa and called for the abolishment of practices such as child marriages and the recruitment of child soldiers. Apartheid or other regimes based on discriminatory practices were also denounced because under such political systems children are potentially even more marginalized. At first appearing discordant,

⁹⁹ The United States, Somalia and South Sudan are the only UN members who have failed to ratify the legislation out of 140 signatories (UN, 2014).

the ACRWC both raises the level of child protection in areas previously neglected by the CRC and places “duties” on children such as obeying their parents. However, there is an implied reciprocity between duties and rights as state can expect children to fulfill their duties only if the state first observes their duty to uphold the rights of those very children. Duties of guidance and direction are also placed explicitly on parents suggesting a relational conception of rights (Viljeon, 2012).

Ntombiyesizwe’s story

Over the course of two my visits to South Africa I was witness to several of occurrences that at the time I could only describe as expressions of childism. Sitting in the rural schools listening to the young people tell stories of their relationships with adults and through interactions that I observed, I felt a discernable disdainful attitude directed at young people, and in particular their triumphs (whether academic, social, or otherwise). While palpable, this sense of discord was (and still is) incredibly hard for me to pin down. The young people seemed to be at once invisible and a force to be subdued. At times, similar dynamics emerged within the groups of young people themselves. Girls who excelled in their classes were labelled as “witches” and harangued by their classmates until their faces streamed with tears.

The most extreme events that occurred during my field research involved a medical emergency experienced by a young woman who was in some way denied access to resources, suggesting not only negative conceptualizations of the young based on age but intersecting issues of race, gender, and class as well. It was here where the cycle of birth and death became sharply visible. At stake was the value of and power over the bodies and behaviours of young people. In these adult-child power relations the former objectified the latter, as the common humanity of the younger person seemed diminished. This dynamic appears to reflect the asymmetrical power dynamics between young people and adults as is constructed by the adult’s social and biological authority. Also at issue was the ongoing struggle of belonging, as these young people appeared clenched by a form of profound aloneness. Each was exiled to the margins of her social world by the rejection of her physical and psychological being. This severing of connection served to add to the young person’s constructed worthlessness and disposability.

One worrying incident occurred at Vukela while RTEP was taking place when a 15-year-old female student, Ntombiyesizwe, presented with a physical ailment in need of attention.

We are sitting in the small office when two of the female pre-service teachers came in. “A girl has just been brought in on a blanket, and she is not responding, and they just left her there in the middle of the staffroom,” says Tamara. Christina continues, “The other students said she fell and hit her head.” When we enter the staffroom there is a girl about 16 years old lying unconscious on a green blanket, the teachers walk around and over her as if she is not there. For a moment we stand still, unsure of what to do. “I’m a first aider, I can look at her. No one is doing anything,” says Christina. She puts on a pair of latex gloves from the first aid box and starts to touch Ntombiyesizwe softly, checking for a pulse and looking for evidence of a fall. “Ntombiyesizwe, Ntombiyesizwe, can you hear me?” There is no response except tears that are rolling down the girl’s cheeks. The teachers have started to pay attention. One of them stands over us “She won’t answer.” I stare at her with gritted teeth, but remain silent. Ntombiyesizwe is shaking now, her muscles are becoming tenser and she seems to be biting the tip of her tongue. “Does anyone know if she is epileptic?” There is no response. Christina takes off Ntombiyesizwe’s shoes. “Her muscles are so tight I can’t move her.” One of the female teachers starts explaining that they cannot do anything to help without the parent’s permission or they might get fired or sued. Someone else reports that they have called the family and said that they are one their way to pick her up. I look back down at Ntombiyesizwe and take off my jacket to put under her. I am suddenly aware of her tattered clothes. Her bare feet poke out from huge holes in her socks, which end at her ankles; they cling to her toes with only a few threads. Her white dress shirt has no hem just ripped, unravelling edges (August 3, 2011).

As no one came to fetch Ntombiyesizwe, she was placed in the back of a teacher’s pickup truck and driven first to her home where we obtained permission from her grandmother for her care (although neither she nor the other two present family members came to the truck to look at Ntombiyesizwe). We then took her to the health clinic up the road. The clinic nurses tried for about 15 minutes to revive her but could not. They concluded she was locked in a seizure induced semi-conscious state. All they could do was place a large wad of tissue under her head to catch her tears that did not stop falling, and wait for the ambulance to take her to the nearest hospital. About a week later, Tabitha and I are told by one of the teachers that Ntombiyesizwe had recovered and is doing OK. However, we did not see her again or learn more about the cause or consequences of her situation. Although I remember feeling relieved at the news, I was frustrated because I did not understand the context nor did I have a developed history that would allow me to process such incidents as part of a broader sequence of events.

Many questions arose for me out of this experience. This incident framed my understanding of how potentially dangerous it is to be a poor young person in a rural area, which in turn shaped how I responded to subsequent encounters with both children and adults. School appeared hostile. The potential role of white researchers as “great white hope” caused me to take pause. It was the three white pre-service teachers and I who attended to Ntombiyesizwe. Tabitha and I then went with her to the clinic. Compelled by what we saw as a grave situation, we became self-appointed caretakers. My sense of urgency was fuelled by what I saw as disregard by the teachers. I felt enraged but I also sensed a shroud of shame that permeated the interactions. I was ashamed at feeling overwhelmed with Ntombiyesizwe’s pain and my swift judgement of the teachers without understanding my own role in the situation. And perhaps the teachers who I had grit my teeth at also felt shame. Perhaps they had reacted the first, second, or twentieth time Ntombiyesizwe had been gripped by a seizure, but there was no ambulance coming and no medication for her to take. The event also suggested issues around class and the economic divisions between the teachers and the learners. Many of the teachers at the school had access to resources such as cars, which juxtaposed sharply against Ntombiyesizwe’s material poverty. However, the outsider identity of the RTEP group continued to be constructed in relation to teachers. They tsk-tsked and laughed at us as we left to use the washrooms at the guesthouse when the flush toilets were inoperable. Perhaps we appeared delicate and haughty in the face of something they dealt with often. This event made me question what possible power art could have in this context, as it seemed impotent. I had to re-evaluate why I was there and what good I could even attempt to do.

What I saw as her obvious distress was met with a diffusion of responsibility among teachers resulting in no immediate action from them. It appeared that the likelihood of action was reduced further because the condition was reoccurring (fellow students indicated she may be epileptic but the exact cause for her seizure remains unclear). To explain the inaction members of the school staff also generated excuses. Members of the student’s own family seemed tired and defeated by the situation. The incident occurred in a context where AIDS and HIV affect a large portion of the population and “children are dying like flies” (Walsh, 2010, p. 90). For some, the death of the young has become a routine aspect of daily life. I had only one experience with a child dying: the corpse of an infant was found in the ditch adjacent to my accommodations at

UKZN. From the fence line I could see the small body wrapped in white plastic¹⁰⁰. In my conversations with Paul Smith, he would tell of how over the years he had made several miniature coffins and helped to bury the young children of black friends, workers, and acquaintances. However, while the adults in these contexts generally did not exhibit a reaction or showed a dulled reaction, the young people (including Ntombiyesizwe's sister and classmates) did. They were visibly concerned, yet stoic, saying little with her sister staying by her side until we arrived at the clinic.

In looking again at these notes I am gripped with confusion over issues of visibility and representation. My visceral rage, which had acted as the catalyst for my own action and the documentation of what happened in my fieldnotes, was fuelled to a large extent by Ntombiyesizwe's apparent invisibility to both the female teachers and later, members of her own family. But in an attempt to make visible what I perceived to be an incident of childism, in my presentation of this event as "data" have I in fact reinscribed that which I aimed to expose? My anger at the way in which the female teachers in particular had reacted to Ntombiyesizwe's condition, had potentially masked my own objectification and exploitation of Ntombiyesizwe. Through my depiction of a sensitive situation involving a girl who literally could not speak for herself at the time and whose seized body was a site on which various forms of care and neglect were unfolding, I continue to grapple with not only what it means to intervene but also what it means to retell of such an intervention within the context of research. Janet Liebman Jacobs (2004), in her sociological analysis of genocide and mass trauma in the holocaust, describes this particular type of ethical quagmire as a form of "double vision" (p. 227), where a researcher is both a witness to transgressions against others and an ethnographic observer in search of qualitative data. A second layer of ethical complexity arises when the researcher presents his or her experiences of witnessing the suffering of others, particularly groups who have been marginalized by academic research practices. There is "a kind of observational voyeurism" (p. 233) to reporting on the lives of others, especially when dimensions of race and gender are part of the analysis. By my reporting I risk reinforcing the image of poor, young, black South Africans, and girls specifically, as victims of the neglect and abuse of black adults. In drawing

¹⁰⁰ The news report on this incident can be found here: <http://www.iol.ca.za/mercury/welfare-call-after-baby-found-dead-1.1120556#.U6R1WCjEcUU>.

attention to Ntombiyesizwe as a victimized body have I failed to disrupt the “taken-for-inevitable” (Fenwick, 2006, p. 19)?

The legacy of violence¹⁰¹ in South Africa

What is violence?

As outlined in Chapter 1, South Africa has been the site of centuries of violence and oppression, most notably as it relates to periods of colonization and apartheid but also as these forces entwine with factional violence within the indigenous communities. The legacy of physical and structural violence continues to influence the lives of present-day South Africans and is related to crime, poverty, gender-based abuses, and the HIV and AIDS response. However, here I look at the issue of violence as it takes nuanced forms in the individual lives of research participants.

As suggested by David Valentine (2003) “violence is a useful category for activism and moral argumentation: What could be more self-evident as an embodied experience? And who can tell the anthropologist to get off his high horse when he talks about a friend, murdered?” (p. 29). While few people would disagree that murder or physical assault are violent acts, in responding to his own question, Valentine takes issues with claims for “pre-cultural,” transparent and essential ethical distinctions regarding what constitutes violence. He argues that pain, suffering and violence are neither simple nor self-evident categories of experience: “violence must be understood as a complex cultural category, drawing in both the visceral reality of murder, but also a set of representations, discourses, and stories *about* such social relations” (p. 30). This “omnibus” existence of violence makes it especially difficult to define as “on the one hand it is sensual and obvious; on the other, it depends on its definition and narration by its victims to become real *as* violence” (p. 30).

In her theorizing on mourning and violence, Judith Butler (2006) stresses the importance of self-determination and our struggle for autonomy over our bodies. This reclamation of physicality can help deter violations such as racist attacks and secure freedom for “those whose bodies labour under duress, economic and political, under conditions of colonization and occupation” (p. 27). However, Butler further contends that there is another struggle, a struggle

¹⁰¹ While I recognize that the concepts of childism and violence are related, I do not position childism as equivalent to violence generally. Rather, childism could be considered a motivation or excuse for violence.

for “a conception of myself as invariably in community, impressed upon by others, impinging upon them as well, and in ways that are not fully in my control or clearly predictable” (p. 27). Perhaps in the face of violence, both overt and subtle, it is this aspect of interpersonal “impingement” or alignment with others that community art education practices can foster.

Ntwenhle’s story: Violence and young people

Ntwenhle is outspoken, highly personable, and open. She commands her environment, posing for pictures each chance she gets, smiling broadly, hands on hips. She is confident in how she carries herself, yet subject to self-doubt. She would pose questions to us asking how she looks, if she should change her hair or pluck her eyebrows. She is questioning and investigative, paying close attention to interactions between those around her, inquiring as to the meaning behind actions.

As the girls and I sit beading, our discussion of family relations turns more ominous as out of the six girls present, two of their fathers have died and Ntwenhle has essentially lost hers as he is currently serving 15 years in prison. Ntwenhle remembers returning home from school in grade 4 and her mother informing her that her father was in prison. “He had robbed the casino, but only five years of the sentence was due to the robbery charge. The other 10 years were for the murder of the security guard.” Bound and gagged the asthmatic guard suffocated and died. Building on this narrative, she states that she now wants nothing to do with her father’s side of the family. She cites alcoholism and violence as perpetual problems. She tells us that one relative, who was routinely inebriated, beat his girlfriend to death. He, however, was not charged, as it could not be proven that he was the culprit. “But we saw him beat her before.” She then tells the story of a deadly altercation between her grandfather and uncle. Intoxicated, the uncle had come into the grandfather’s house and proceeded to harass and make sexual advances towards his half sister. Reacting, the grandfather had made attempts to have his son vacate the premises, but undeterred, the uncle remained and grew more aggressive. “My grandfather had a gun, a registered gun.” The gun was quickly taken out and the grandfather eventually shot his own son in the chest and died en route to the hospital. “I witnessed it,” she says (February 15, 2012).

Here Ntwenhle expressed her own experiences of the violence that affected her life. She emphasized her role as *witness*, as *seeing* the evidence of a history of abuse and violence in her own family. These incidents are not unfolding but she carries them with her. What then is the researcher to do when events such as this are retold in conversation? The violent act itself exists in the past but is brought forward again and relived.

In highlighting the interconnectedness of advocacy and ethics, D. Soyini Madison (2012) poses the question: “What should I do with what I have witnessed?” (p. 97). Having had strong responses to what she witnessed in her fieldwork, she argues that such responses demand that one be responsible for providing an opening for others to also gain the *ability* to respond in some form: “I bear witness, and in bearing witness I do not have the singular ‘response-ability’ for what I witness but the responsibility of invoking response-ability in others to what was seen, heard, learned, felt, and done in the field and through performance” (p. 97). Thus witnessing in CAE becomes doubled. The making of art together, the creation of a space where the knowledge and experience of individual members is valued, can offer up opportunities for remembering to others. There can be an opening up into life events such as those recalled by Ntwenhle. Art making is interwoven with the telling of the self and the relational artistic encounter holds a witnessing power. Ntwenhle’s words are indicative of the omnipresence of violence and a kind of collective desensitization to its impact on individuals, and particularly young people. But it is in this context that coming together in community art making can bring about some openings and a space to discuss together the very tough sides of life. I am reminded here of the work of ethnographer Jacqueline Adams (2002) on women arpilleristas in Pinochet’s Chile, who because they had time together making textiles eventually developed together an organic understanding of concepts of democracy and their democratic rights, of which they had no prior experience.

Art [making] as described by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1997) involves powerful emotional and motivational processes. Following Maxine Greene, Csikszentmihalyi asserts that the most important things offered by a work of art is its capacity to “...‘ward off chaos without denying it.’” In other words, art helps us to construct meanings—not in the abstract sense of producing cognitive interpretations, but by producing personally relevant goals, responses, habits, and values” (p. 34). Art making can put the artist in the position of reflective bearing witness on his/her own life, not just responding or reacting to it. There is also an important question of mirroring brought up by Ntwenhle’s sharing of her narrative. Certainly part of Ntwenhle knows that all this murder, pain, and trauma is not “normal” or at least the way things “should” be, even if it has become routinized. In this situation the researcher’s distress and concern can validate the teller, signalling that such a reaction is appropriate. Perhaps this recognition may prompt the teller to question the frozen aspects of their own affect. Having

someone be upset and concerned on your behalf can remind you that the situation is in fact upsetting and that you are worth being concerned about. A dynamic along these lines can be very important in the recovery of those who have experienced or witnessed abuse or trauma.



Figure 34: Ntwenhle

“Right now I really want to take my drawing to the next level. I am also interested in crime-solving...I want to do something in the field of forensics.”

Conclusion: responding to the final question

Troubled empathy

Empathy is ““feeling with” another person” (Snow, 2000, p. 65). It involves imaginatively putting oneself in the place of the other so that you may come to have some understanding of their pain, their joy. But this is not a pure or direct encounter with otherness. My experiences in the rural South African communities and the sorting through, analyzing, and writing of the research data have required me to embrace uncertainty and delve into spaces of liminality where sameness and otherness are underscored simultaneously. To be ethical has meant manifesting partiality, doubt and unknowing, or getting lost (Lather, 2007, p. 75). Empathy is useful because it makes us willing and able to make connections and then to take action. While recognizing the possibility of connection to and understanding of other people’s lives—those points at which things seem to fall away and there is a moment of identification with some one different from me—I recognize the fragmented, approximated, and fleeting nature of this experience.

“Empathy,” writes anthropologist Jason Throop (2010), “entails the imaginative work of not only the empathizer but also the empathizee, who also participates in the process of being understood by another.” It “involves not only the experience of understanding another but also the experience of being understood” (p. 772). It is this characteristic that distinguishes empathy as an intersubjective dialogical process. As such empathy is prone to fissures and failures. Returning to my earlier story, when Emanuel told me about the recent death of his mother, I wanted strongly to comfort him, so I outlined the ways in which I could potentially offer support as I felt with his new orphan status this is what he needed. This response came partly from my own feelings of vulnerability and aloneness in the context, a feeling that I had attempted to ameliorate by being around other people as much as possible and my “adoptive” families in particular. In retrospect however, perhaps through his narrative he was trying to communicate that this event, like the other “problems” in his life would keep him from participating in the sessions. Instead of interpreting his withdrawal from social activities as his choice, as a possible way of engaging his grief, I had constructed it as a negative outcome of his vulnerable status; something, I thought, needed to be counteracted.

As suggested by Patti Lather (2009), to argue against empathy is not to reject it but to trouble the possibilities of understanding as premised on structures that all people share (p. 19). The issue is the limitations of cognitive access to other individuals and what one can experience. For such imaginative exercises, “we depend on our body as a corporeal entity to activate and use our imagination,” writes Brett Smith (2008) in his exploration of empathy and psycho-social health. “The physical matter of the body is a pre-condition for imaging others’ lives and can as such be viewed as a source of, a location for and a means by which imagination is shaped and constrained [...] Imagining oneself to be differently situated, or imagining being another *in pain* is constrained” (p. 146). In recalling my response to the death of Emanuel’s mother, “His loss is beyond my comprehension,” his pain was mostly inaccessible to me, and it was difficult for me to imagine what response he desired. An opportunity for comfort may not have been what he wanted at the time. But this partiality is often all we have. While I could see that Ntombiyesizwe was experiencing some form of physical and emotional distress, despite my best attempts I could not imagine what it would be like to be incapacitated by a seizure. However, feeling that this experience might be terrifying for her was sufficient to prompt reaction on my part.

Lather (2009) “insists on the otherness that remains outside of any reconciliation” (p. 21). A researcher must be careful not to position themselves as knowing more about participants than they know about themselves (p. 23). Such a critical interpretation posits otherness as inassimilable (what Levinas [1998] called the irreducible alterity of the Other). She calls for representational research practices that help to “organize a less bounded space where we do what we can while leaving a place for what we cannot envision to emerge” (p.21). This approach is a lesson in modesty and respect for the other and lies somewhere outside of our desire to possess, to know, to grasp. The challenge is to engage in a form of empathy that refuses to reproduce dominant ideology and social norms that construct only certain groups as deserving of empathy, but instead one that pays attention to “social, historical, gender, spiritual, and political positioning” of both the self and the other (Gair, 2009, p. 55). In this sense empathy involves a layered response in which affective, embodied, and intellectual components are enmeshed. For researchers, empathy must also always be understood in the context of specific cultural meanings, practices, beliefs, and values. To explore the empathetic process is to pay attention to

the times, circumstance and contexts in which it is possible and valued and those in which it is not (Throop, 2010).

Entwined with my own expressions of empathy is being the object of others' empathy, given my newness and limited notion of how to operate in the local systems, at least initially. Empathy flows between people and can be influenced or promoted by others' behaviour. Perhaps the announcement of me as "our uMlungu" by the young people of Vukela was in fact a gesture of their empathy, a desire to claim and protect me. In considering the reciprocal aspects of empathy, this experience begs the question is one more able to feel empathy towards others if they are in turn empathetic? As indicated by feminist scholar Jill Stean (2007) "[s]olidarity might be founded on the basis of shared principles and/or generated by feelings of empathy towards other members of the group" (p. 730). Empathic relations hold the possibility for countering the alienating and divisive effects of neoliberal hierarchies, which would position me in this context as a potential object of envy rather than empathy. However, "[a]s we become aware of the reciprocal tie between the self and the other, we also realize that there is no final reconciliation" (Banerjee, 2011, p. 119). Thus the reciprocal relationship is forever in danger of collapsing and in need of continuous work (Banerjee, 2011).

Improvisation—unfixing categories

Drawing on cross-disciplinary expertise in theatre and music studies to the sociology of race, in their book *The Fierce Urgency of Now*, Daniel Fischlin, Ajay Heble, and George Lipsitz (2013) connect improvisatory music and human rights. The authors argue that improvisation calls into being an ethics of co-creation.

The permutations of interconnection that bind people together enable a multitude of potential practices that can give rise to new lived, embodied, material realities. Those cocreated realities, insofar as they may be said to possess, invoke, or embody an ethic, emerge from the "relational contingencies" that arise out of being. Improvisation is an important social, musical and ethical practice for understanding and generating new forms of cocreation—deeply relational, profoundly contingent" (p. xi).

Improvisation was/is important to my ethical functioning both in terms of my teaching of art and my understanding of other's lives, although it is perhaps difficult to separate where one ends and

another begins, as they are bound up within the same moments with participants telling their lives as they made. In describing what I mean by improvisation philosopher and musician Kathleen Coessens' (2012) view is relevant here. She writes, "In music, improvisation is often a matter of choice. The unexpected situation is created, set up, purposely leading to an improvisory encounter between body and environment. The musician knows he/she will improvise in the next hour. But it can also resemble life, by way of unexpected moments in which even the musicians did not anticipate. Experience and expertise enhance the fluidity of improvisational acts in the arts" (n.p.).

The participants and I could not necessarily predict what we would find, the response of the materials to our hands, or the tools. The unforeseen was a core quality of our practice. This process was illuminated in my making of the paper bird with the Vukela group that was identified by T-Girl as representative of an aspect of herself. As a teacher-researcher-artist, this necessitates what educator Tara Fenwick (2006) calls "attunement to the immediate" (p. 21) and responsiveness to the unexpected. However, the process of our art making did not take place in a vacuum, as the participants and I each came with ideas and prior knowledge of what might work, or not, in a given context. Thus, we employed "a methodology that works with the contingency of everyday experiences, but that nonetheless is developed through the methodological skill and knowledge of the artist[s]" (Douglas, 2012, n.p.). The participants and I created new artworks but their emergence was not random or "out of the blue," rather the processes of production were connected to our own unfolding individual and collective histories as well as a re-appropriation or reworking of existing cultural forms. As theorized by continental philosopher Gary Peters (2009), this form of improvisation, as exemplified by creating with scrap yard materials, although positive and potentially emancipatory, is often a messy process, with triumphs that are fragile and open to failure. He recognizes the constraints of specific aesthetic situations or "a work produced within a restricted time frame, within a delimited productive space with delimited resources" (p. 10). It is here where the old and the new are deeply entwined, entangled, and engaged with simultaneously.

Psychologist Keith Sawyer (2004) speaks of dialogical interactions between teachers and students unfolding when the influence of any predetermined agenda on the part of the teacher is consciously minimized. He refers to this type of improvisatory encounter as "collaborative

emergence” for the outcome cannot be predicted in advance and no single participant can control what emerges (p. 13). Improvisation is inherently relational. Inside the improvisational moment the effects created by the intent of one performer will inspire the intent of fellow members (Nicholls, 2012). This participatory aesthetic practice as conceptualized by the philosophy of Tracey Nicholls (2012) incorporates political values and is akin to “listening trust” or an agreement between participants that they will listen and be listened to. She positions “active (participatory) listening as a way to reach a core of receptivity within the self” (p. 153). Drawing on this framework as a model for egalitarian and ethical collaborative creativity for social interactions lies “in an understanding of improvisation as a performative context in which players and listeners engage in ‘the possibles’” or an “expanding and expounding of possibilities which lie beyond current social actualities” (pp. 153-154).

Improvisation involves what Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz (2013) call “togetherness-in-difference” (p. 189). They argue “As a radical practice of alternative forms of encounter via creative means that can, sometimes simultaneously, engage dissonance and consonance, improvisation enacts solutions in the moment to the problem of how to create dialogical relations that respect heterophony and difference” (p. 55). Improvising requires responsively to others and the context. It is a working against fixed identities that resists closure to difference and change. Building trust is an important element of this form of interaction, by both the researcher and the participant. Without a context of trust or at least a willingness to act trustingly, improvisation cannot occur. Within this dynamic trust space, there also exists a degree of risk:

[L]earning how to trust via listening, responsibility, surprise—learning how to master unexpected challenges and to develop the courage to imagine differently. As a practice of preformed, embodied public trust, improvisation provides powerful examples of what it means to take risks in a way that is contingent on others [...] Trust is a catalyst of hope, because it provides a consolation from disaggregated, broken forms of social affiliation (Fischlin, Heble, & Lipsitz, 2013, pp. 240-241).

The researcher/teacher/artist must also have a developed basis of experience and expertise from which to improvise responses to events, otherwise it is simply play, which has its own value but is something quite different.

This is not to say that I was complete in my flexibility as I brought my own biases with me. However, the context demanded improvisation so I was learning to adapt, to remain open. I knew that the people I would be researching with might be facing various hardships. I also knew

that I myself might face precarious situations. However, this knowledge was based vicariously on mostly academic documents, which could only prepare me so much for first-hand encounters. Paraphrasing contemporary philosopher Zygmunt Bauman, Fenwick (2006) writes that ethical being “embraces uncertainty, lets go of rational intention, and engages the micro-interactions” (p. 17). In embracing improvisation, “we can forgo controlling intentions for a more modest stance of hope, more humble commitments. To encounter difference, to encounter the Other is to call into presence new relations, new parts of ourselves and new possibilities with learners” (Fenwick, 2006, p. 21). “One does not need to homogenize all differences into sameness in order to see relations” (Nicholls, 2012, p. 153). Improvisation prompts a reconsideration of known artistic practices and outcomes but also the ways in which environments—rural—and people— young, black, South African—are viewed. Entering into my research as an improviser required a deepening level of self-awareness so that I could resist or resituate codified ways of interacting with and seeing the Other. It is a focusing on these qualities of presence and the “insistence on the potential for individuation and singularities that allows an ethical environment in which exchange, rather than the power of pre-knowledge, is to the fore” (Midgellow, 2012, n.p.).

The development of responsive improvisatory moments involves “careful listening, embodied presence, dialogue (even if dissonant or dissident), relational thinking, empathetic and intuitive understanding blended with the skilful use of materials at hand” (Fischlin, Heble, & Lipsitz, 2013, p. 71). Improvisation or community-based art making as a form of intercultural contact can work to disrupt simplistic categories associated with otherness (i.e. race, class, gender, age, sexuality). However, the other is not erased. Improvisational art making is possible because of the varying ideas, knowledges, skills, and perspectives that each individual brings with them and calls forth, which are not attributable to singular identities but are nonetheless valuable because of their alterity. While identity categories can be determining, within the improvisational encounter the flexibility and situatedness of these constructs is underlined.

Improvisation is not inherently progressive or even desirable in all instances, yet the process points to the possibilities of creative relationally with others in other environments. It is a form of intercultural contact that originates at a ground level from within communities. It is a way of working and a method of critique that is common in marginal social locations. As suggested by Corbett (2013), “this is a kind of alternative or indigenous knowledge that stems

from a proximity to necessity; it is a particular kind of innovation, which is creative, vernacular, yet often under the radar” (p. 3).

Analytical intentions, continued reflexivity: Working through the layers

As I hopefully have demonstrated here, an important aspect to the development of my ethical functioning is my analytical training and intentions (Enguix, 2014) as a researcher, teacher, and artist. I have pulled apart and woven together my experiences to create a whole, but a whole that is paradoxically incomplete and open. I begin with my fieldnotes and interpretations of events very close to the time that they occurred. But these instances are only initial layers in the processes of memory and reflexivity. Now it is no longer possible to summon my responses as they were at those particular points in time. After this temporal distance, I am working to build a representation and it becomes a lens through which I see the experiences.

Let me look again at my opening paragraph that recounts my interaction with Emanuel. My assessments of Emanuel’s condition, needs, and desires occurred in the context of my own, perhaps overwhelming, feelings of frustration and sadness at what appeared to be an insurmountable physical and emotional distance between us. Two months after writing this fieldnote entry, I wrote about Emanuel again as part of a now discarded chapter:

The boy wears signs of poverty and grief on his body and clothes. He is what the school administration refers to as a “vulnerable child” a vague and inconsistent category related to the effects of HIV and AIDS. He recently became an orphan, first losing his father then his mother. Living in a state of limbo he is uprooted and shuttled between the homes of extended family. His devastation is so profound, all words fail description.

Here the unfairness, the brutal reality of the situation dominates. But in my attempts to communicate my growing anger at what I thought life must be like for Emanuel I had eclipsed him, his resilience and capacities, and his complexities, and was in danger of reducing him to the categories I was trying to deconstruct.

Now as I sit writing, in the remove of over two years from the day of the encounter, again I see him and the situation differently. Maybe he was trying to communicate to me something, which I can only see in this present moment. As with his other “problems” perhaps he was trying to express to me that he would be absent for a while, dealing with his grief. Could his have been

his way of saying goodbye, at least for the interim? These three layers or “differing temporally arrayed assessments, and the differing possibilities for revealing aspects of [...] experiences that are enfolded within them, are reminders of the always ongoing, necessarily partial, and open-ended nature of attempts at empathetic alignment with others” (Throop, 2010, p. 775). While dislocations in the field focused my attention within particular moments prompting potential ethical shifts in me, it is in the revisiting of these instances that new ethical imaginings are made possible. I cannot go back to Emanuel, but in going forward to conduct additional research in South African contexts, I will bring the growth in my own capacity that this research has enabled.

Bridging the universal and the particular (micro and macro ethics)

Bridging the universal and the particular involves using broader ethical discourses (whether they are derived from research ethics boards or the standards set forth by international bodies) as a point of departure for moving through the everyday ethical quandaries that research with human participants entails. As suggested by Guillemin and Gillam (2004), ethical codes and guidelines typically are not a source of great ethical enlightenment and tend to lack the specificity necessitated by real life research interactions.

In my research I am living the theoretical ideas in the field. I want my work to bring lived experience to policy making and to inflect lived experience with theoretical and political understandings. Policy is a framework for institutional practice yet policy makers must recognize how their decisions may either obscure or ameliorate on the ground realities. But how can the micro level have an impact on policy? Many of my experiences are not easily translated to the language of policy and this represents a significant challenge to the development of relevant policy in terms of ethical functioning in research contexts and more generally. I question how it can be put into place with such a seeming disjuncture.

Mobilizing CAE

Here I have offered a ‘case by embodied case’ as a model for ethical engagement in community art education research. I value an approach that is responsive and relational as I seek to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of others but also my own functioning as a

researcher/teacher/artist and a person in the rural South African context. This personal and narrative approach is powerful in that it presents an individualized representation of young people and their experience and how these stories connect to larger patterns. My use of a feminist ethical paradigm in community art education raises some questions, however, particularly in reference to concerns around how my work may reinforce the limitations that the various thematics can impose. I acknowledge that such an endeavour is not without risk. At the same time, to not represent the “truth” as I saw/see it, would do a disservice to the realities of the participants and my experience of their world.

There are additional questions of conflict between the ethics as outlined by the Tri-Council, which is reflected in the protocols of the university ethics board, and my own embodied experience. The extent to which one can and is entitled by feminist frameworks to trust one’s own embodied experience in the moment is a question that must be engaged. As outlined by ethics protocol research with children (people under the age of 18), along with groups such as minorities, homeless people, indigenous groups, and abused women are categorized as “greater than minimal risk” requiring additional ethical review and specific procedures¹⁰². In the case of children, they are positioned as at risk and vulnerable on the basis of being young, a designation that is compounded by factors such as poverty and the prevalence of AIDS and HIV. This conceptualization is problematic in rural South Africa, as elsewhere, where children may struggle to be seen despite their participation in social structures and activities such as paid work and taking care of younger children. Conventional ethics present a flattened view of individual subjectivities. Alternatively, the embodied feminist paradigms that I draw on here can offer a form of ethics that is more embedded in the social context and as such recognizes the ways in which multiple identities, agencies, and constraints may operate simultaneously in a given moment. Thus young people are never simply “at risk” but also exercise strengths and generative capacities. As suggested by Duncan and Watson (2010), these “dilemmas are not necessarily a collision between different ethical principles but can be understood as conflicts of responsibilities” (p. 53). What I argue for here is responsibility to practices that provide the opportunity to both give and receive empathy and recognition. While unintentional othering may always present a problem, practicing community art education in a way that honours subjectivity

¹⁰² See <https://www.concordia.ca/research/for-researchers/ethics.html>.

and the mutual constitution of the self and the other is a hopeful step. Community art education must actively seek to draw attention to the tensions, transgressions, and possibilities in the lives of researchers and participants as our paths intersect.



Figure 35: Emanuel

Emanuel is independent and strong. He is shy but contemplative. This awareness also permeated his art making, which was both careful and very beautiful.

CONCLUSION: ART AND HOPE**7****Begin again**

In this concluding chapter I address issues of ethical relations in the development of transnational feminist solidarity, as this provides a framework from which to approach the three remaining research questions. It is necessary to take up the ethical dimensions of social relations in any community art education research. Without such questioning there is little that can be done to combat indifference and build transnational partnerships. In this chapter I return to my four research questions and explicitly take them up. While it made sense to begin the dissertation with a question on the possible roles of art education in the South African context, at this point in my discussion I would like to start with my fourth research question: What professional and personal resources do I need to draw upon and manifest as a researcher and art educator to function effectively and ethically in these communities?

Responding to research Question 4

My choice of three embodied cases to represent the emergent thematics of insider-outsider, childism, and the continuing legacy of violence represent multiple borders and connections that intersect and cannot be neatly separated from one another. In these instances and others like them, divisions came into view: black/white; rural/urban; insider/outsider; rich/poor; adult/child. The experience of these borders stems from particular social, cultural, geographical, and temporal lived realities. However, as I continued to engage with these borders, they became more ambiguous and allowed for openings between the two identities. For me, each narrative represented a moment in which I, through felt disorientation, worked to understand how I could function ethically within the research communities.

From these retellings emerged the aspects of myself I needed to identify and harness in the creation of an ethical art education practice: empathy; improvisation; and analytical intentions. Empathy, although characterized by perennial incompleteness, is a way of responding

to and connecting with the rural community members across difference and recognizing the meeting points of our subjectivities. To employ empathy often meant a re-examination of my assumptions and receptivity to multiple interpretations of events and intentions. Improvisation allows for a way of being with the participants both in creative endeavours and in building broader relational encounters. Nisha Sajnani (2012) positions improvisational practice as an essential element of joint artistic creation. She states, “When situated as research, improvisation functions as a kind of ‘disciplined empathy,’ inviting researchers to engage in an iterative process of identifying emergent issues and to respond with a corresponding design that permits further exploration” (p. 83). My analytical intentions throughout the research process reflect a continuous reflexivity and questioning of my own positioning. In this sense there is a layering of consciousness and an oscillation between past and present.

Establishing a practice of community art education that seeks to actualize solidarity with participants requires a negotiation of and critical engagement with borders. Postcolonial feminist scholar Amrita Banerjee (2011; 2012) argues for a new critical multicultural transnational feminism in which she theorizes borders as “betweenness.” She concedes the importance of preserving and celebrating borders as a way to acknowledge and honour difference and separate individual identities. However, she goes on to highlight the dangers of the overemphasizing the separatist element of borders by denying their creative and constitutive potentials. Banerjee (2012) states,

[A] close analysis of the nature of the borderland associated with any act of dividing reveals that difference between two things also implies a fundamental connection between them. This insight heightens our recognition of the creative role of borders and their complex character, which can never be captured by simply as dividing forces (forces that “cut off,” “keep off,” “exclude,” etc.). By approaching borders through the “betweenness” relation, therefore, I stipulate a starting point for viewing *borders as markers of discontinuity* rather than mere tools for instituting division (p. 82).

This conceptualization sees divisions not as dividing lines but as permeable, dynamic, and potentially creative meeting points that both liberate and constrain. In this sense, “splitting and connection, as perpetual moments of tension in our lived experience, also become the markers of creativity and regeneration—that which enables us to transcend and transgress from the immediate and the given” (Banerjee, 2011, pp. 51-52). In community art making, and particularly that which draws from diverse artistic trajectories, processes, materials and

knowledges, we can piece together the parts of ourselves with what is offered by the other.

The ethics of working with young people

In my work it was made clear that creating an ethical research practice with young people is necessarily specific and is shaped by history, place, and ongoing relations. This approach has implications for researchers who work with the young, but particularly those who conduct research in an effort to build solidarity across national borders. The young people who appear in the previous pages clearly articulated what they felt to be transgressions and the ways in which their situations could be improved. South Africa remains a place of explicit disparity (race, class, gender). However, the young people could identify how their own experiences were different from those of other individuals even within the same community. For example, in her exchanges with me, Ntwenhle has repeatedly outlined the ways in which she refuses to legitimize her experiences of violence and negative schooling environments. Her narrative suggests that while aspects of her lifeworld have been routinized, they have not been normalized. But it is also against these realities that the young people are able to identify and create alternative ways of being in the world as well as hopes for their own futures.

An ethics of working with young people demands careful attention to the intricacies of existing interpersonal relations (to which researchers insert themselves) and what forces young people may be tapping into that help to define for them what is acceptable and what is not. To varying degrees each of the participants appeared to be struggling for positive visibility. This struggle was made very concrete by the story of Ntombiyesizwe, the Vukela learner who suffered a seizure while at school. For the art group participants, their creative practice holds the potential to bring a form of visibility, although it may be partial and create new shades of meaning to be navigated.

Questions of possibility: Responding to research Question 1

The first question I asked was: What role(s) can art education play in a South African context? More specifically, what effects can art education have when there are significant personal and socio-politico-cultural challenges, for instance, poverty, epidemic illness (HIV and AIDS), and violence? The roles of art education in the rural research sites were many and

overlapping including the creation of economic opportunity, offering potential sites of connection (between one another, other community members, and the surrounding environment), hands-on skill development and sharing, self-definition and expression, and simpler aims of providing beauty, pleasure, and release that while often transitory, are no less meaningful.

The participants attempted to create social forms that challenged their alienation that disease, violence, or poverty had engendered in their lives. It was in the act of coming together in the creative moment that was outlined as particularly important. As we sifted through photographs of our projects, the young men of the Vuselela school group found the images that depicted them working together in pairs or some sort of small team the most significant. It was these photographs that they choose to keep. Their engagement with these snapshots of past experiences points to an identification and recognition of the possibilities for future moments of creativity and togetherness.

Socio-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (2000) argues “flows” or the movement of domains including people, commodities, and ideas describe globalization. However, these flows are marked by disjuncture, which intensifies the already precarious position of marginalized peoples by producing “fundamental problems of livelihood, equity, suffering, justice, and governance.” He continues “If globalization is characterized by disjunctive flows that generate acute problems of social well-being, one positive force that encourages an emancipatory politics of globalization is the role of imagination in social life.” For him imagination does not equate to individual genius nor is it,

escapism from ordinary life, or just a dimension of aesthetics. It is a faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people in a myriad of ways: It allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries (p. 6).

Although writing about relational aesthetics, the words of French curator, writer, and art critic Nicholas Bourriaud (2002), have resonance here. He argues that the role of contemporary artists represents a shift in attitude toward social change that he sums up in the following words: “*learning to inhabit the world in a better way* [emphasis in original], instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea of historical evolution,” He continues,

the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real [...] the artist dwells in the

circumstances the present offers him [sic], so as to turn the setting of his life (his link with the physical and conceptual world) into a lasting world (pp. 13-14).

Similarly, art making with the rural communities was an exercise in our learning to inhabit the world in a better way together within our existing, intersecting realities. This ongoing process of articulating worlds, or microtopias, was hopeful yet grounded in the here and now. As described by Bishop (2004), artists employ a do-it-yourself (DIY) approach in the creation of “possible universes” (p. 54). While the participants face significant social and personal challenges, these challenges do not preclude the development of alternative futures.

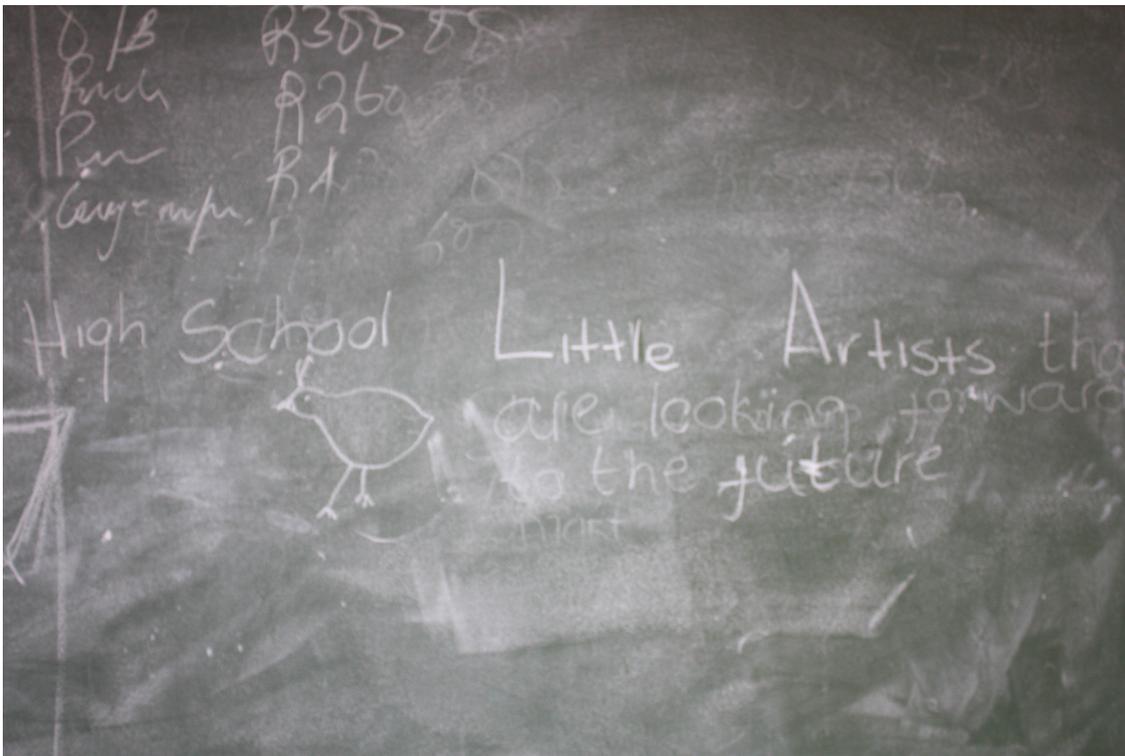


Figure 36: Writing on the chalkboard: Name of art group (Vukela)

In her description of what the young artists of Vukela Secondary School saw as the meaning of the art sessions, Monx wrote the name of the newly formed group on the chalkboard as “Little artists that [sic] are looking forward to the future.” In this sense, one significant purpose of the art making was the creation of a social sphere in which clues and pathways could be identified, giving indications of possible future experiences and social relations. In his formulation of the *sociology of emergences*, sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003) describes this

manifestation and expansion of latencies as “The Not Yet” or the “way in which the future is inscribed in the present.” He adds, “this is not an indeterminate or infinite future, rather a concrete possibility and a capacity that neither exists in a vacuum nor are completely predetermined” (p. 241).

A concrete articulation of possible futures that held particular saliency across the groups was the possibility of economic opportunities. Having money of one’s own can mean positive change for young people and their families, whom they may help to support. This desire of the participants brought to the surface an additional question on defining the roles of art education: Who gets to decide how and to what purpose art is used? Employable skills can be a desirable outcome, particularly for young unemployed people who are living in areas with high poverty levels, as is illustrated by the words of the young participants:

“If we sell things we can show that you can make money even if you don’t have a job. And then we can teach other people about how to make a business.” Making the hitchhiking sign for Durban¹⁰³ with an outstretched hand, T-Girl says we should take the money and “Go to Durban and partaay!” The other girls all shake their heads and tell her she will not be the group treasurer (fieldnotes, September 14, 2011).

While I had understood going into the research context that the role of art making as expressed in educational and democratic discourse was legitimized largely via economic imperatives, I also positioned myself within a perspective critical of capitalist and neoliberal agendas. What the above excerpt suggests, however, is that a research space must allow for divergent needs and aspirations that can appear incongruent or contradictory even to the larger research agenda. Given the larger extant relationship between art making and economic prosperity, the desire of the young people to sell their creations suits the context. It suggests that within their lifeworlds they are receiving a number of messages about art and its value, while also adding to that conversation. Such entrepreneurial activities at once participate in and reject the dominant capitalist system. If art, and particularly South African “indigenous art,” is conceptualized by policy in primarily economic terms, can young people subvert this imperative? While I think that this is one possible outcome, it is not their duty to do so. Neither is there a good rule that young people are going to be able to apply when selling their art objects. For example, how can they ensure a fair price in situations where they are negotiating with a person who holds power over

¹⁰³ As a method for indicating one’s destination while hitchhiking in South Africa, a series of hand signals are used. If travelling to Durban, the hand is moved rhythmically like a wave at passing cars to suggest the sea or coast.

them? What they can do, however, is create their own communities of practice that they can use as a tool to respond to these issues and create a model for positive social behaviour in their own small sphere. In this way, art making can strengthen individuals through relational support.

There is an imperative to listen to what rural youth see as possible futures for themselves and their communities. However, within this interpretation of the imaginative potentials of art making for young people, no inherent emancipatory characteristics can be assumed (as the historical analysis from my research in Chapter 5 will attest). Rather, it is necessary to ask what does this form of art making mean for young people in South Africa and for the country more generally? What would be a responsible use of this form of community art education? This line of questioning necessitates the recognition that the purpose of CAE cannot and should not always be instrumentalized towards social amelioration. Just because there is so very much that needs to be done in Vulindlela and contexts like it, there may be a desire for art to do more than it can. As researchers and practitioners, we may then feel defeated when art does not in fact directly take on social and political issues that must have social and political solutions.

The role of art making can be about the creation of something beautiful and the way in which this act can affect the creator, perceptions of others who are present, and engagement with the surrounding environment. Mendy of Vukela put the value of this function into words:

...some of the beads twist into lumpy patterns. Mendy is getting frustrated. "I can't do beading, I like sewing and fashion. One time I took an old shirt and cut it then put it bow on it. My mother said, 'What are you doing?! That won't work.' I told her to let me do it. And it was beautiful!" (fieldnotes, February 18, 2012).

Here in her creation and appreciation of beauty, Mendy called into being a form of freedom, an opening for a spontaneous (re)definition of materials and the self. Even in the context of socio-political struggle, art making that contributes beauty is not irrelevant. In the words of anti-apartheid poster maker, Lionel Davis:

[...] you could be painting pretty flowers, but that didn't mean that you were irrelevant to the development of young people, to the development of South African betterment...those people were just as relevant as the one who shouts "Amandla!" [power] and makes political artworks (Lochner, 2013, p. 318).

This perspective suggests nuanced and overlapping contributions of art making to social change.

Art, education, and neoliberalism

By highlighting the various discourses that operate in the rural locales and more broadly, my work represents a point of intersection between the realms of art making and education in South Africa as both domains continue to be subjects of neoliberal revisionist policy. Arts scholars in South Africa have begun to ask questions regarding the effects of neoliberalism and the simultaneous instrumentalization and devaluation of the arts. However, efforts remain disperse and communications between ordinary people, government, and academia are often fractured. The current status of the arts in education should continue to drive critique as it raises serious concerns for the welfare of young people. It is equally important to investigate how these structures are lived in daily life. It is only through looking at the realities of ordinary people that the complexities of current circumstances may be explored. We must examine the ways in which art making can both re-inscribe existing political, economic, and cultural agendas and function as terrains of resistance against them.

There continue to be questions around what the present neoliberal moment means for the role and survival of indigenous peoples and knowledges. As I have suggested here, the lack of artistic inclusion and accessibility also relates more generally to mechanisms of participation and exclusion for young Zulu people in post-apartheid South Africa. It is clear that art education and art making (both formal and informal) may play a significant role in the bridging of divisions that are still present between black/white, rural/urban, and adult/child revealing the contingency between these seemingly binary constructs. In this sense the growing of socially just arts and culture practices in South Africa and elsewhere may enable “nuanced responses to different types of alterity” (Baker, 2012, p. 104).

Questions of material: Responding to research Question 2

I then asked, what artistic materials, tools, and processes can be employed, which not only respond to the local research contexts but that are also accessible and sustainable and have meaning for participants? More specifically, can local substances such as naturally occurring clay or recycled materials be used in ways that are useful and relevant? What implications can the South African use of these materials have for other contexts? Several key sources of materials, tools, and knowledges were identified but this is in no way an exhaustive list. Rather it

can be described as an ongoing, participant-driven “needs and resources” assessment process (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). The choice of media and art forms reflected what was specifically available and easy to use. These decisions were also related to whether or not the groups had access to individuals with particular cultural and artistic knowledge. Within my own practice, I use a range of techniques mostly focusing on the three-dimensional and mixed media pieces. I tend to blend sculpture, textiles, beading, and painting, often with elements of repurposing. I used these experiences and known techniques to facilitate art making with others. While most of the materials we used came from the communities, I also accommodated the participants’ requests for items such as beads and paints purchased from the city centres. For to deny the use of such materials because they are tied to colonial and paternalistic influences, creates another problematic form of exclusion.

There were a number of factors that played a role in determining what materials, processes, and tools were taken up in each of the various research settings. As a central consideration of CAE, the interests of the participants shaped how and what artistic productions developed. The primary media reflected the creative desires of the participant groups and primarily included found materials, wood, beads, clay, and sewing. All of these pursuits could be described as “low-tech” or “indigenous technologies.” Indigenous technologies can be defined as “technologies employed by the native inhabitant of a country and which constitute an important part of its cultural heritage and should therefore be protected against exploitation by industrialized countries” (European Environment Agency, 2012, para. 1). With low-tech approaches the associated knowledge is highly accessible in that it can be transferred between individuals easily and the information is stable. Although such technologies allow for a refinement of practice and new creative forms, they resist increasing specialization and compartmentalization. For example, the basic techniques for sewing or woodworking have remained relatively unchanged for centuries. However, contemporary products reflect innovative applications of tools and techniques as well as influences from popular culture and personal desires. An indigenous technology is typically one that is associated with traditional practices and knowledges of indigenous peoples, such as pottery, which is tied to a history of Zulu artistic

production¹⁰⁴. Although more recent, the young people's application of rubbish to make items such as jewellery and toy cars is also embedded in socio-cultural practices of re-use. Thus there is an existing connection between the context and the form of artistic production.

Interest alone, however, was not enough to ensure continued engagement with a given material. Accessibility—which can further be broken down into the intersecting factors of time (e.g. season dictated what natural materials were available), space (e.g. to work, to use as storage), cost, geographical distance to a source, portability of equipment, and access to a motivational influence (typically an individual who can provide encouragement or who has knowledge and was willing to share it)—largely determined the use of a material over the course of the research and beyond. Although basically free to make, pottery production at Vukela proved more difficult to maintain as it requires a number of often time-consuming steps and the students must coordinate the collection of raw clay, its processing and firing, which occurred in different areas (the raw clay is located at the river while the kiln remains at the school).

Woodworking at Vuselela on the other hand, has continued as the time between raw and finished product can be of comparably short duration, the sources for wood are multiple (schoolyards, local mill, rubbish pits), and the tools have been kept in a stable a secure location accessible to the students (Thenjiwe's house adjacent the school). Also, Umbrella has continued to provide motivation for the group to meet. Sewing, beading, and creating with rubbish can occur in almost any location as the tools and materials can be made to be transportable. The size of the materials themselves can also be a factor when there are issues of theft within the schools and communities. If something is small enough to fit in, for example, the pocket of a school uniform (young people may not always have access to backpacks), it becomes far less conspicuous, which in turn may influence whether young people become a target for having their possessions stolen.

The ways in which the participants used the materials to create a meaningful artistic practice was not necessarily the same across groups and individuals; however, there were several overarching pathways through which meaning emerged. Taking up art making with others and participating in social exchange seemed to be important regardless of the group setting. The

¹⁰⁴ Recently, however, the term indigenous technology has also come to be associated with technologies that may not have the same historical significance and may actually be relatively recent innovations. For example, the cell phone has been dubbed an indigenous technology (e.g. Mitchell & Moletsane, 2013) because of its ubiquitous presence and use in both rural and urban South Africa.

connection to others, which was demonstrated vividly by the physical and cooperative nature of the women's sewing group, was intrinsic to the art making process. An element of this exchange was the opportunity to share one's knowledge with interested others, whether they be peers or of a different generation¹⁰⁵. Both aspects of knowledge sharing were demonstrated by the beading activities of Khanyisile of Vuselela, who not only learned the craft from her grandmother but also taught it to other members of the group. The possibility of earning money from the creation of artworks, as with woodworking for the Vuselela group, was also significant. Despite the potential for students' entrepreneurial endeavours to open them up to forms of vulnerability and exploitation, they also held the possibility of independence and respect. The opportunity to create something that held (renewed) social value had identifiable implications. For example, the dolls of the primary students or the jewellery of the secondary students became conduits through which the application of a developing skill set produced objects that were an extension of the self. Both dolls and jewellery are used with closeness to the body but in this case since the young people had also made them, there was a level of attachment and ownership that functioned as sources of accomplishment. In turn these objects produced a degree of admiration from outside sources, whether they were teachers, family members or other students.

The above interpretations of accessibility, relevancy, and meaning, suggest a rethinking of the element of sustainability as it relates to CAE and my original research question. While with some of the groups, such as Vuselela and Ukwenama, there has been a continuation of the artistic practice, with other groups it has not occurred to the same degree or at all. This has a lot to do with the relational support systems enabled, to a large extent, by the particularities of each research setting. Amongst significant factors is the ongoing support of teachers and community members as well as motivational impetus related to access to new artistic stimulation. While educational experiences can be both meaningful and maintained over time, the two factors are not always related and significant experiences with CAE can occur without the aspect of "sustainability." Sustainability as it is often used in the literature on rural development, social change, and interventionist approaches to education reform in majority world contexts, denotes

¹⁰⁵ In aligning with these values, the student and women creators reflect similar motivations and orientations to others worldwide who engage in CAE (e.g. La Porte, 2004; Morrison & Marr, 2013).

continuous and measurable outcomes¹⁰⁶ (Toman, 2006). Recent work by Simon Bell and Stephen Morse (2013) argues that sustainability is required for measurement and that without the measurement of development, development does not occur¹⁰⁷. In the context of CAE in rural South Africa, however, sustainability in this sense of the term is not necessarily the end goal. There is also a need to define sustainability within the context where CAE is performed as opposed to employing preconceived, generic ideas. Rather it may take on meanings related to self-actualization and “making a difference” in the lives of others. This is not necessarily a continuous process and is very often invisible. The goal of my research, particularly given the time constraints of conducting fieldwork for an academic degree, was to create with the participants the impetus for self-actualization. Self-actualization may occur in spurts and starts and it may only be some time later that the participants take up art making again. Or the long-term effects of participating in CAE may also manifest in different, unexpected ways that may not include taking up art activities. Also, “[i]t is not always that which sustains that has the most impact on an individual...even the most brief of engaged contact can make the necessary difference for someone” (K. Vaughan, personal communication, April 24, 2013). Sometimes it can be enough just to receive the joy in a given moment.

In a letter written to me by Sphesihle of Ukwenama, she outlined what making does for her: “Knitting keep me out of stress and thinking a lot. I lost my dad when I was 2 years old. He ran away and now I need him very much” (personal communication, May 18, 2013). Whether or not she continues with the activity of knitting throughout her life, it is clear in this moment it makes a difference to her and how she negotiates her circumstances. In his discussion of making a difference, philosopher Lars Hertzberg (2009), contends that the metaphor of “changing the world” (read visible, irreversible betterment) is often used to distinguish between simple change and *real* change. He states that “The idea that my efforts are wasted if they do not leave a lasting mark on the world, one that I can claim as my own [...] places the focus on myself as the agent of change” (p. 25). According to Hertzberg (2009) this way of seeing change indicates that the action is only meaningful insofar as the agent can control the outcome. In this sense, real action

¹⁰⁶ For example, the percentage of girls enrolled in primary education is considered to be an indicator of a country’s sustained educational development and gender equity as described by the United Nation, but it is not necessarily reflective of the quality of educational experiences.

¹⁰⁷ Sustainability measures are often presented in the form of quantified sustainability indicators or indexes (e.g. Education Index, Gender Empowerment Measure, Gross National Happiness, etc.)

and real change, is an exercise of power. Within a political context, the insistence on control constructs measurable results obtained via proven methods as what counts. However, when it comes to the development of people, control must be replaced by another form of responsibility to the other.

This brings me to the question of the implications of the South African use of the materials I have outlined for other contexts. It is plausible that the use of each media could be adapted to suit a given place, whether it is in a majority world context or not. Sewing, pottery, beading, woodwork, and recycled art exist in various forms across the globe. However, it is not so much the materials themselves that are central to CAE but how available resources are approached and explored. There is a massive diversity of human social experiences and the relationship between people and the material world varies greatly. Given the different treatment and relationship to garbage and the social acceptability of re-use in say, downtown Montreal, it is difficult to predict how, if, and why participants would take up such materials across borders. If anything, this analysis raises a number of methodological questions about art education research with communities. Given the intricacies of the rural South African context in which I worked and the specificity of the art making practices, questions concerning the implications of the materials for other locales may actually be irrelevant. The enactment of CAE involves the creation of educational and social scaffolding that enables the further development of artistic endeavours. It is more important to tap into what is already happening in a context and to capitalize on insider knowledge and skills.

Materiality

While referencing larger social and ecological justice trends in art education such as the do-it-yourself movement, craft activism, and eco art education, my research points to how an examination of the political life of materials can inform contemporary community art education practice and cultural production more generally. Focusing on materiality and thinking about the politics of materials is a necessary component of engaged art education research. Rather than creating a narrow and fixed reading of the social meanings imbued in things, political awareness is ultimately generative. Such an understanding increases the dimensionality of art making and how material reality is both shaped by and informs creative processes. Ultimately, investigations

into the history and present uses of materials can help to build a more ethical artistic practice.

However, there continues to be a gap in art education literature on the political aspects of artistic production and what it means to teach with substances or processes that are tied to oppressive social structures generally, but specifically in South Africa. Within the South African Creative Arts curriculum, while the importance of art making for cultural reclamation is emphasized and so too is the use of localized materials, the connection between the two goals remains elusive. In looking forward, I wonder what it would mean to seriously examine art making as a way for connecting people and contributing to social change in contexts that are contending with postcolonialism and have indigenous art practices: What would it look like to have a stronger connection to the complexities of materials and a foregrounded understanding of how their history can be disrupted to contest the past? What would this approach do for the meanings that both teachers and learners ascribe to art and art making?

Moving outward from here, what would it look like to engage the political, economic, and social aspects of materials in other contexts? Such an exploration requires pushing beyond a layer of superficiality and the answer of “it’s good for the environment” or “art promotes nation building” but bringing the analysis to a deeper engagement with the multiple meanings of materials—to a more textural understanding. What would it look like to explicitly connect various ideas of remake? In rural South Africa where teachers are often overworked and underappreciated and learners feel alienated, what are the possibilities for strengthening relations between local artisans and learning communities? How can this model be constructed as a viable option for the building of artistic, social, and cultural knowledges?

Questions of emergent pedagogies: Responding to research Question 3

Thirdly, I asked: What pedagogies emerge to make knowledge (artistic, social, cultural) transmittable and meaningful both within peer groups and between the learners and me? The contexts where the participants and I worked to create could be temporary and unstable. The changing nature of the environment shaped the artistic instruction and exchange of information in a way that was equally flexible and unpredictable. My interactions, particularly those with the secondary students, highlighted the unequal and potentially fraught relationships between young people and adults. All of the participants, in one way or another—whether it was overcrowding

at Vukela or teacher absenteeism at Ukwenama—were fighting against educational injustice. They may not have been organizing protests or meeting with education officials but they had an acute awareness of issues, which they verbalized. This articulation is important, as it is often the first step in making social change. In this milieu, to be relevant art pedagogy must seek ways to foreground the participants' experiences and expressions, not only as a way to acknowledge their value but also as a means of establishing connections. For me this involved a degree of letting go, letting go of my desire to control the sequence of events or direction of the sessions. Instead, sometimes I had to be content to just sit in active silence. I think what this stepping back points to is a challenging or negotiation of ownership over teaching and learning processes.

When I began to work with the young people at the rural secondary schools, I was asked by principal Nkoqo to give a motivational speech on the topic of education to the entire Vukela student body. I began the speech by speaking about how I too had come from a rural area and lived for the first three years of my life in a cabin that was not connected to commercial power, was not equipped with a flush toilet, and was only accessible on foot in the winter. I recalled how excelling in school had been my way out, toward financial independence and success. I then outlined five lessons I had learned from my experience including the lines, "Some of you have told me that you want to be doctors or actors or poets. Hold onto that and strive for excellence because mediocrity never changed the world." I followed this with "Have faith in your own abilities but be humble in your achievements. At the same time, do not fear failure because it will teach you" (fieldnotes, September 2, 2011).

I had created a narrow and simplistic understanding of education and presented it as a solution to these young people, without appreciating the nuances of the ways in which the odds were stacked against them. More importantly, I was suggesting that formal schooling was the way out, and that out, or away from the rural was the most desirable outcome. And that success or failure in this attempt was a result of individualized efforts rather than systemic forces. I felt the weight of my own words in my gut. Hearing myself say these words out loud, hearing the hypocrisy was a turning point, although I could not quite articulate the profound discomfort. I had been in South Africa for over a month, but had just begun to develop an awareness of the things that lay outside my frame of reference.

In looking back at this experience now, I ask, what does it mean to be a white, female academic from Canada and participate in the processes of decolonization and reclamation in South Africa? Here I highlight my own battle with transformation. As suggested by South African literary scholars Mary West and Helize van Vuuren (2007), there is a type of ambivalence that emerges when the residual effects of white normativity are at odds with “a personal and political attempt to move beyond race and find other ways of being” (p. 214). As a practitioner committed to critical anti-racist education, I recognize that my aims to build solidarity and my work in examining my own complacency in the very processes I seek to dismantle is inherently incomplete, as my lags in self-consciousness will attest.

As with the larger context of art education and making in South Africa (and elsewhere) that appeared fragmented, I was struck by the isolation of the young people from the local artist practitioners as well as adults more generally. Although some of the moments of contact were brief, my research brought together the young people, often in new ways, with community members Julia and Paul Smith, academics including Ian Calder, local artisan Zakhona, and members from the adult women’s group. In instances where there was adult involvement, support, or encouragement of some kind, there was an expansion of creative possibilities. Taken together, this underscores the potential of intergenerational creative practice. At the same time, these young people have created incredibly strong peer relationships, which in the context of art making, continued to develop. However, my research marks only the beginning, but has made visible gaps for others to close.

I had to continuously and purposely redefine my own understandings of what education should be. More and more, I found my methods to be at odds with the prescriptions of the South African education system¹⁰⁸ as well as the formal model I had experienced in my own life. Given that the rural schools in particular were sites of ongoing struggle over what constituted

¹⁰⁸ Even with the revised CAPS curriculum standards, by in large formal arts education in South Africa continues to miss the mark when it comes to creating appropriate and democratic educational strategies and instead promotes discourses and pedagogies that contribute to the continued marginalization of young people. For example, the 2013 national school-leavers final exam question for drama required students to describe how they might direct a rape scene of a baby, taken from the play *Tshepang* by Lara Foot Newton based on the story of the real life rape of a nine-month-old infant in a rural South African village. Severely criticized for inappropriateness and insensitively around the world, the exam question was defended by DoE representatives and described as “valid and fair.” (For reporting on the exam question, see the BBC story available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25120108>).

“legitimate knowledge and culture” (Ngwaru, 2011, p. 224), in order to support relevant ways of knowing, a connection needed to be made between localized knowledge and equitable participation. Thus my interactions with the participants and community members were based on attempts to create increased access to and sharing of information while making a “safer space”¹⁰⁹. Information was mined from my own knowledge base, those of the participants and community members, books, and images. I was working with the small communities of participants to carve out what could be characterized as a “space of betweenness” (Staehele, 2003, p. 829) as the locations where we gathered to learn (classrooms, front porches, river banks) were not fully public or private but nonetheless places where we could offer safety in the form of mutual support and commitment.

The three forms of knowledge identified in the research question—artistic, social, and cultural—emerged not as separate categories of learning, but together made up layered, interconnected, and mutually constitutive processes of exchange. As we made art, we discussed and observed. While beading or sculpting, the participants spoke about relationships in their lives, aspects of their identity and sometimes, traumatic events that had affected them. We asked questions about each other, how to make certain objects, and why certain situations were the way they were. With the younger children of the primary school, verbal exchanges happened to a lesser degree than with the secondary student and adult women who spoke frequently. All of our interactions involved observing the surroundings, one another, or the processes of producing art objects. In this way knowledge was transmitted through a variety of communication channels.

How do I then continue to shift my pedagogical intentionality and actions? I believe that this process requires a never-ending examination of my imbrication within my research context. The path as signalled by feminist author and activist bell hooks (2003) begins with a *choice* to reject racism (and other forms of hatred), however, to simply write about but not to allow anti-racist action to govern how we live our lives falls short. She also assures that in accepting “other white women comrades as anti-racist in their being does not mean that I or they ignore the reality that we all can be as anti-racist as we want to be and still make mistakes” (p. 60). This perspective suggests that knowledge is partial and evolves unevenly. While we may progress

¹⁰⁹ I use the term “safer space” rather than “safe space” as a way to acknowledge that no place can ever be entirely impenetrable to harm.

rapidly in some spheres at some times, in others we move slowly. Where our own shortcomings and blind spots are implicated, we grow and learn most slowly of all.

Ethnography

What I suggest here is a form of pedagogical ethnography that places the ethnographer as actively involved with people and creative production. There is a creative action component in the art making that I built upon and instigated. The purpose of my work was to move beyond descriptive telling, to initiate and study a practice from which there was something new constructed, as tangible materials were transformed into alternate forms. Examining the ways in which artworks are created in real time and how these objects fit into the larger processes of material production, learning, and community building allows for a view into human interactions and relationships that occur between material and social worlds. The young people are active agents in the production of meaning and items with a presence in the physical world.

Teacher preparation in South Africa

The RTEP was developed in response to the need for partnerships between rural schools and academic institutions as well as the importance of enabling knowledge exchange between beginning teachers and rural communities. Speaking as someone who worked with pre-service teachers first-hand, I ask, “What can we make with this?” in the context of teacher preparation. While tertiary institutions produce a limited number of arts majors with practical teaching experience, my research indicates that creative activity may contribute significantly to the development of future educators. I also recognize that limited experience with the arts may produce anxiety around engaging in art making particularly in educational settings. However, it is important to keep in mind that there is overlap between disciplinary knowledge and creative production finds a place in science, history, math, etc. Geographical and psychological divisions between urban and rural environments means that pre-service teachers coming from the cities may know very little about the challenges and strengths of rural communities. During my time with RTEP this knowledge gap was revealed in statements like, “I didn’t even know places like this existed.” Exchanges between pre-service teachers and members of the school community also reflected tensions between “insiders” and “outsiders” that often stemmed from negative

stereotypes.

It is perhaps in these fraught sites where multiple outlooks and experiences collide that art making can offer at least some form of a bridge. However, art should not be positioned as something that functions independently but must be integrated into social life, otherwise it becomes largely irrelevant. I would urge pre-service teachers to move beyond the walls of the classroom and explore with learners and teachers the resources that otherwise may be hidden from view. Creative activities are already happening in rural communities and can be tapped into and brought into classroom lessons, thus expanding existing artistic knowledges. This may mean going to an auntie's house, attending a local craft fair, or collecting wild grasses. It is in this explorative space that new relational connections can be made and aspects of individual and community life are brought into focus.

Rural South African art making as bricolage

I see bricolage as working at various levels in the development of artistic practices with the rural communities. There is the physical act of collecting materials and reworking them to make something new, there is the coming together of traditional indigenous art practices and technologies with contemporary modes and there is the form of bricolage that occurs when my skills, background, and social positioning meets that of the participants as we make together. While there is a real need to be critical of and counter the effects of art education practices as tools of colonial domination, to reject and demonize these practices as disturbance or contaminant is neither productive nor reflective of current sociocultural realities. By essentializing indigenous Zulu identity, “blackness is understood in terms of Africanness, and black or African identity is simply associated with authenticity, resistance and subversion, while whiteness is associated with Europe, in-authenticity, domination and collusion. This discourse denies creolization and hybridity as constitutive of African experiences” (Erasmus, 2001, p. 15). The formation of indigenous knowledge is not stagnant or isolated but “involves learning and adapting introduced and new locally created knowledge toward positive change that supports life and affects villagers’ worldviews and systems of knowing, understanding, and reasoning” (Gegeo, 1998, p. 291). In postcolonial South Africa, the space for the representation of rural Zulu voices is messy, unclear, and complicated. In this sense, it would also be of dubious utility for

me to promote and teach only quintessential “traditional” Zulu art forms.

Rather, art education must engage relevant materials and knowledges as a part of a collaborative practice whether they are traditional, contemporary, local, or nonlocal. Rural young people are part of a globalized world in which they consume and respond to art, fashion, television, and music that moves within and between national borders. Yet the young participants are also aware of the history of their country and the continuing legacy of apartheid despite being born after 1994. As argued by social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey in that very year, this movement and intersection of multiple times and places necessitates a reconceptualization of place. She states,

what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus [...] holding all those networks of social relations and movements and communications in one’s head, then each “place” can be seen as a particular, unique, point of their intersections. It is, indeed, a meeting place. Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” (1994, p. 154).

By creating hybridized art forms young people participate in a dynamic site of cultural formation and challenge the dichotomy of low and high art that is reflected in South Africa and more broadly. To be ethical, community art education as bricolage must of course self-critique and be cognizant of the ways in which unequal power dynamics can be re-inscribed. However, knowledge is formed through co-creation. The bricolage blends the various participants and me. The control of the learning does not lie with any one individual but is shared.

Irish feminist scholar Ailnhe Smyth (2001) declares, “I am *brocoleuse*, still” (p. 394). She calls for our attention to spaces as physical, concrete locations with meanings and effects but also as sites embedded with experiential and affective understandings. She states,

Clearly, this is precisely located, motivated research in which I am thoroughly implicated. It is about the place I live in, and how I and those with whom I feel a sense of connection (however tenuous and contested) survive and even flourish there; about how we resist its constraints, push back its boundaries (consciously and unconsciously) by circumventing, confronting and—I believe—sometimes, amazingly, transforming it (p. 394).

Recalling our first experiments with art making, the young people of Vukela and I reached through the locked metal gate into the “room of knowledge.” We pulled apart the pages from

dust-covered books:

They all start making things from the torn pages of the books we have collected. While there are only three students the room is incredible quiet but as each girl arrives it gets louder. Then the singing starts, in a whisper at first, then becoming louder. I have some watercolour paints left over from the teaching practicum that I have brought with me and the room explodes in colour, reds and greens spill across butterflies and tiny paper houses (September 10, 2011).

In this space as makers we worked within and against partition, fragmentation. It is here where the improvisation of the bricoleur and survival appear vitally linked, pointing to the necessity and political power of such activity. But such work is also more than that,

What we understand by “struggle” and what political activists understanding by struggle is often not the same...it is about surviving, being resilient, living, singing, and fighting. We always felt as artists we should express what was inside of us, what we felt, and depict both the inside and outside of our lives...to create with what we have, despite the conditions around us (Malange et al., 1990, p. 99).

Imaging a liveable life is part of survival and resilience, “[i]t is about moving where movement might not have seemed possible or in a way that, for whatever reason, no one could have imagined prior to its realization” (Goldman, 2010, p. 142). The young people and I were probing creatively into sites of interconnection, between inner and outer selves, others, places, and things. In those instances where multiple ideas, skills and materials are brought together, pat interpretations are resisted, and knowledge has the potential to be both restored and newly created.

Implications for fields of scholarship

This dissertation makes a contribution to transdisciplinary scholarship and the questioning of rigid, linear conceptions of knowledge. The integration of multiple theories, approaches, and methods within my community art education practice reflects the complexity of lived experience and the issues that young rural South Africans negotiate every day. A transdisciplinary turning point in art education research has been precipitated by global paradigm shifts towards capitalism and neoliberalism. South African art and design scholars Elmarie Costandius and Sophia Rosochacki (2013) point to a necessary transdisciplinary shift that is palpable in the South Africa,

Despite the transition to democracy, socio-economic injustice and inequality remain definitive and divisive features in South African society. Consequently, analyses of the notion of social transformation have been undertaken with increasing urgency across disciplinary boundaries in academe and within public, political, institutional and media discourses (p. 378).

Taking up this call in rural South Africa is perhaps more crucial than ever due to the particular intensity of inequality and the still-visible shadow of apartheid. Within this context “artistic practice must continue to be vocal and challenging, collaborative and daring in order to realize the possibility of transformed spaces of engagement” (Makhubu & Simbao, 2013, p. 302).

My use of different elements from across disciplines (including art, educational, and rural development, anthropology, history, philosophy, childhood studies, and economics) highlighted the need to explain, define, and navigate different meanings. This process recalls the concept of bricolage and as such reflects the need to work from the problem space outwards and use available understandings to move forward in new directions. Perhaps this orientation helps to explore our use of existing tools in a responsive way. In “making do” with the theoretical and practical frameworks we have available, connections can be made between seemingly discrepant domains of knowledge. Perhaps in this way, western research and epistemological paradigms can be integrated with indigenous or local approaches. To treat the two as necessarily separate may risk producing a silo effect. Building connections between the literatures and the on-the-ground experience also raises important questions around how knowledge is produced and conceptualized. There continues to be a need for work, which draws on “methodological strategies that embrace the everyday experiences of people—especially those forced to live on the margins—as epistemologically valid” (Davis, 2013, p. 27). Transdisciplinary approaches to social justice research can represent a more fluid space where the experiences of ordinary people may inform academic spheres and exchange between multiple disciplinary locations may challenge institutional borders.

I have demonstrated that an analysis of intersecting complexities of past and present economic, political and socio-culture influences is a necessary part of contemporary community art education. To do otherwise denies the struggles and triumphs of ordinary people. In looking at the logic of the issues faced by young rural South Africans, I find no easy answers to the

myriad of questions raised. However, I hope that my work gives some insight into the lives of young rural South Africans and not only the possibilities of art but also the necessity of enabling the formation of artistic practice.

South African Arts and Culture policy

As evidenced by recent documents such as the *Revised White Paper* the Department of Arts and Culture (2013a) recognises the importance role that the visual arts play in cultural production and the transformation of the country's social, political, and economic structures. However, present efforts to engage with those on the ground level remain stunted. As demonstrated by my research, the development of a social agenda within the visual arts must work from the most local level outwards and help to articulate localized realities, rural, township, or urban. Government efforts to connect communities, schools, and art practitioners such as Artists in Schools have continued, which suggests that the creative agendas of individuals and the imaginative capacities of wider communities can mutually support each other. This being said, the barriers to implementation and the meaningful participation of young people in state-driven art programming is under-articulated. Little is known about the complex, yet often subtle, ways in which creative production can be methods of sustenance and resistance. There continues to be a need to construct a rural South African definition of social marginalization and trauma but also resilience.

Little artists looking towards the future

Having experienced such concentrated moments of creativity, recognition, and hope I am still searching for a way to continue to build on this momentum across time and distance. These instances simultaneously underscore the importance of physical presence in social change research and the difficulty in maintaining it across geographical expanse. For me, this experience is like looking through a straw. At times I can catch glimpse of the lives of participants but the periphery is blurred, making my experience of their world fragmented. This process is a cycle of connecting, fracturing, and rebuilding that constantly shifts creating different relationships. When I reconnect with participants after a long period of time, we have all evolved leaving parts of our old selves behind. Research practices of transnational solidarity are about face-to-face

interactions but also about how people are held in one another's thoughts and how we move through the world with them in this way.

Moving forward and maintaining connections

While I have been back in Canada, staying in regular contact with participants has been difficult due to lack of access to workable modes of communication. While some of the participants have their own cell phones (or have access to family members' cellphones) with Internet capabilities and social networking platforms, I have only been able to maintain consistent contact with three students this way (Facebook). Having initially "friended" some of the students, their Facebook accounts have inexplicitly become inactive, showing no signs of activity for months. Others, like Ntwehle, have taken a technology hiatus so that they may focus on other things such as school work. For the last three years I have been taking on the role of a long-distance cheerleader, encouraging the participants in any way I can. The virtual exchanges that have occurred have been invaluable in helping me develop a better understanding of what growing up rural means to these young people and the ways in which art making continues to inform their lives. Regular mail is another means of connection; however, the success of this service largely depends on the distance between the recipient's home and the nearest post office. Parcels larger than a standard letter do not always reach the intended destination and are only stored at the post office waiting to be claimed before they are returned. Many of the young people have difficulties with transportation, so by the time they arrive at the post office, they discover that the parcels have started their long journey back to Canada. I have responded to this problem by creating small instructional materials such as miniature art books that can travel easily through the system. Handwritten letters are also an important means of providing inspiration and sharing snippets of our lives with one another. For me, these letters have been an invaluable source of joy and sustenance.

Vuselela Secondary School

Initially I spoke with Umbrella over Facebook, but this activity waned with no discernable explanation. I last communicated with him in February of 2013. He was continuing with the woodworking activities and the group was meeting on a regular basis. At this point

Umbrella said “☺ We are doing very wel and i thnk we have absolute no nailz we only need nailz...” (personal communication, February 22, 2013). Through my colleague Katie MacEntee, who was conducting research at Vuselela during this time, I secured a temporary source of nails for the art group. They were mostly focusing on building chairs using wood that they scavenged.



Figure 37: Umbrella

“Rise above hate! Never give up!”

Vukela Secondary School

I continue to stay in touch with Ntwenhle, Mendy, Two-Slice, and Umculi via Facebook. They are now in their matric year and are preparing to graduate. While their interest in art making remains, they have met with a number of obstacles including the loss of the various tools that were being kept at the school. The increased pressure to secure entrance into a university program in their final year of study has also decreased the artistic activities of the group. Umculi, the up-and-coming musician of the group, no longer makes music regularly. His mother would like him to concentrate his efforts on his studies instead. He does, however, still draw and continues to have artistic aspirations such as learning to create murals and graffiti art. This continued interest of the young people inspired us to create avenues of access to artistic information and supplies. For example, by networking with local artisans, areas of interest such as painting and fashion design may be explored. Also, together we have been researching possible post-secondary institutions and scholarship programs.

Adult women

I have not been able to maintain any contact with the adult women participants. My only means of communication with them was through my South African cell phone and the contact they had via Julia Smith and the local “bush telegraph” (word of mouth). I have heard from Julia that at least two of the four still reside in the same area not far from Ukwenama Primary School. She tried to contact the women on my behalf in November of 2013 but could no longer reach Vemvane or Celukwazi and speculated that their phone numbers may no longer be current or that they have moved. On one occasion in February of 2013, Celukwazi attempted to reach out to me by calling my South African cell phone that I had left with a colleague. Celukwazi asked if I remembered her and when I would be returning. Hearing of this event shortly after it occurred produced a hollow feeling of loss within me. While this moment suggests important strands of connection, it also speaks of missed opportunities and the difficulties of research in distant places, which may never be fully solved.

Ukwenama Primary School

Through email from Julia, I have received regular updates regarding her continuation

with the sewing program at Ukwenama and her interactions with Emanuel. He continues to work for the Smiths most Saturday mornings doing odd jobs. In consultation with the teachers and students, Julia and I have developed several sewing projects for each of the combined classes including buntings, pencil cases, cushions, balls, and aprons.



Figure 38: Grade 4-6 class at Ukwenama School with their hand-sewn cloth balls



Figure 39: Aprons by Grade 7 girls who graduated in 2013 (Ukwenama)

When Julia began work on these projects, she that noted her presence at the school and particularly working in the classrooms for grades 4-6, was initially met with trepidation from the teacher, Mrs. Ngongo: “At first I thought the teacher was a bit surly, but I think she’s just shy, and she thawed when she saw I was human and wasn’t there to show her up or demand the earth” (personal communication, November 21, 2012). This interaction suggests that there are ongoing issues around trust and partnership building between teachers and community members that may stem from existing asymmetrical relations of power and race relations. This may also reflect the discourse and general atmosphere around school performance that positions teachers and their lack of skills as a major precipitating factor that has produced a call for increased teacher surveillance and accountability measures. However, also suggested by the relationship between Julia Smith and Mrs. Ngongo, is the possibility of a coming together and a traversing of these tensions that still allows for the growing of artistic practices.

In May of 2013, I received a letter from Sphesihle telling me of the projects she and her fellow classmates had made with Julia. She also told me that her graduation from primary school would be taking place soon and that she hoped I would attend: “We really miss you Miss April. Can you visit us in November or December the [sic] will be a grade 7 fairwell [sic] for us” (May 18, 2013). For me, this letter and the missed phone call from Celukwazi highlighted what my coming and leaving may have meant for those I had worked with. We had found each other and

worked together for brief but intense periods of time that was then punctuated by my leaving. I wrote a letter back to Shesihle explaining that I would not be able to come because of my responsibilities here in Canada but that I would come back once I had completed my studies. This experience of receiving Shesihle's words but having to respond by denying her request created a visceral mix of elation and heaviness. It seems our togetherness lives somewhere in the future. I continue to wonder if part of me has remained perceptible for them as they have for me and if this version of me has left a palpable presence of absence (Throop, 2010). Had I created a space and then left a hole, however small?

Ongoing and future research: The "Pocket Box" Project



Figure 40: Poster for inaugural pocket box making session

In an effort to build and maintain some form of transnational exchange between the young people in the rural areas and creative communities back here in Canada, I started the Pocket Box Project. Working with undergraduate fine arts students at Mount Allison University and the Education and Community Outreach division of the Owens Art Gallery where I live in

Sackville, New Brunswick, we are developing a platform for the sharing of artistic information and inspiration. As I identified early on in my research, it was advantageous for the young people to have art supplies that were relatively small and inconspicuous as, for some, especially those in the younger secondary grades, the theft of personal belongings was a daily threat. Thus, a portable vessel that could fit in the pocket of a school uniform emerged as an appropriate device for housing art supplies. A larger matchbox served this purpose, as it is a standard form that is accessible to community member in the New Brunswick area (many dwellings are still heated with wood burning stoves or furnaces). It is also easy to reproduce using a template and recycled cardboard.



Figure 41: Pocket boxes by members of the Canadian constituent

The boxes contained a variety of art making materials including items such as recycled crayons (I melted down and remoulded old broken crayons) and coloured pencils. The purpose of these containers was to build a new form of connection between me and the participants but also connect them to young Canadian artists, and perhaps create an “art pal” form of exchange. The intention was for the rural South African recipients to create small art works and collections of items to send back to Canada, however, due to ongoing issues with postal service, this process is being reformulated. One possibility is the creation of a cell phone accessible digital sharing website where rural participants could post their work and engage in conversations with the Canadian project members.

Aside from the internet-based connections that I have initiated, I plan to return to the same communities and take up new, but related research. This will mean being there in a physical way that moves beyond a virtual presence. A physical connection to the rural sites is

required as I am dealing with the modality of art making, which is a kinaesthetic and material practice. Part of this continued exchange of knowledge is also ensuring that no sense of “homelands” or segregation is invoked for South Africans living in rural areas. It is important to actively resist the feeling of living in a schizophrenic world and being exiled in one’s own country (Green, 1989). Perhaps together we can create a third space that reflects the global space that we share, helping to reconcile geographical and psychological distance that will most likely remain. The reconciliation of distance (geographical, social, experiential) is critical to any further explorations in the domain of community art education, but also more broadly in research that takes up questions of social change at ground level.

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to respond to the question: “What can we make with this?” Operating on multiple levels, this query probes into the complexities of interpersonal relations, contextuality, and creative production. Despite the simplicity of this question it can be formulated in several ways, which reflects the multiplicity of approaches and possibilities: “What can *we* make with this?;” “What can we make with *this*?”; and “What can we *make* with this?” The processes of negotiation in becoming a collaborative “we” requires researchers to ask what it may mean to intervene in and tell the lives of others through often intimate moments of disclosure. This process requires that we fully explore our intentions and what young people might want us to do as well as what is at stake for them to be able to live and thrive. In this domain of small actions, tenuous moments, and meeting points we make and remake ourselves in relation to one another. This sphere of relations unfolds in a site of permeability between the immediate environment and outwards to larger forces, both national and international. Context is consequential and functions to help produce new knowledges as individuals work to join, extend, reorder, and modify existing cultural forms and understandings. Physically manipulating the objects and surroundings—to mould, to build, to add colour and pattern—is a form of dialogue between selves and the world.

On September 24, 2011 I wrote in my fieldnotes that, while it was not the first time that I felt I wanted to return to Vulindlela, it was a powerful moment in which something clicked:

For the first time in my life I have found a place where the skills that I have in various things like sewing, woodwork, sculpting and whatnot have taken on a new value,

something that they never had before in previous contexts.

It was a feeling that I was meant to share a core part of myself. There was a deeper purpose synthesized from my newly made relationships in this unfamiliar and beautifully evocative landscape. This research has sparked a deep-seated and unshakable commitment to the people with whom I have worked. Even with the ruptures in communication and the lapse of time, I feel a strong pull to return and continue what we started. I did not know this was the kind of researcher or person I was. I did not know what we would be able to do there together. When I first arrived in South Africa, en route to my rural destination, the car climbed through the disorienting hills. I saw the fire outside in the landscape and breathed in the charred air of the ignited grasslands. I felt overwhelmed and alien. But now, I have developed a bond with the participants and feelings of familiarity through the work and learning I have accomplished. So much has fallen away, to be replaced by new potential. I have taken this energy inside myself. I am using it to build a future program of research and engagement in Vulindlela.

Rike Sitas and Pieterse (2013) describe art as radical possibility that “offers an opportunity as a catalyst for developing critical social practices aimed at shaking up the status quo” (p. 341). To return to the words of Lovemore, “With art you can make anything. Yes, the impossible. That is art.” Art is radical in that it can demonstrate ways to solve the impossible. To engage the radical possibilities of art is to push at existing boundaries into the unknown, but to do so is not without risk. There is risk in dealing with the unknown, but risk is often essential to meaningful transformation—a transformation that is deep and nuanced (Makhubu & Simba, 2013). Even to imagine new possibilities for oneself, for one’s community is potentially perilous. For the young participants to be hopeful, to transcend destructive patterns and to mobilize and move beyond the parameters of what is commonly expected may lead to failure, harm, or loss. However, small moments of artistic and relational possibility can help to pave the way for larger positive changes. As researchers, teachers, artists, and as people, we must risk our own vulnerabilities with them. For it is in this space that hopes can be realized.



Figure 42: Sphesihle

“I think I will have to tell my schoolmate that we must open our own knitting group. And sell our knitting and make money.”

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Appendix A: Permission to conduct research, Principal

Principal:

School:

District:

Dear Sir/Madam:

We would like to request your permission to conduct a research project at your school. The title of our project is **What can we make with this? Creating relevant art education practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**. This project is led by Principal Investigator Prof Kathleen Vaughan and co-investigator April Mandrona (Concordia University) who are working in partnership with Prof Claudia Mitchell (McGill University), Prof Relebohile Moletsane (University of KwaZulu-Natal) and Prof Nadene deLange (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University). The purpose of this study is to work collaboratively with rural schools to address the issues faced by these learning communities through the development and implementation of sustainable extracurricular art programming. The project seeks to identify the ways in which art initiatives may directly benefit rural schools and further establish and maintain safe, collaborative, respectful and creative spaces. Specifically, the project aims to incorporate art supplies, tools, and processes that can be sourced locally and at little or no cost: i.e., working with what is at hand, including materials that are recycled or repurposed or the use of readily available local materials such as scrap wood, and natural clay and pigments.

In consultation with you we would like to recruit 2 teachers and approximately 15 students to participate. At a time that is convenient for you, co-investigator April Mandrona and Prof Moletsane will meet with potential participants to discuss the project. If you agree, Miss Mandrona will meet with the students at school ____ per week for approximately ____ hours for ____ weeks to facilitate art workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. These sessions will focus on experimental art making, the use of art as a means to express ideas and experiences, building social networks with others, and sourcing of local art making resources. These activities will be an opportunity for participants to express and discuss issues that they may deal with in their life and move towards possible solutions. All the art supplies will be provided to participants at no cost and they will be able to keep all art that they make although we will request to take photographs of their work. For the teachers who agree to participate, they will be invited to consult on the development and implementation of the art activities. If they choose, we welcome their input and expertise. We would like to create an ongoing dialogue with the teachers to identify how the activities can be most effective. This will involve interviewing and conducting focus group sessions with them on an ongoing basis to help determine their needs, ideas, and perspectives.

This study is part of Miss Mandrona's doctoral research to learn about the role of art education practices in rural South Africa. Therefore, the entire process will be tape-recorded; the things that the participants say during the sessions and pictures of their art may be used later in academic work, like in books, at conferences, or in journal articles. However, the name of the school and all participants will be kept confidential. The school will be provided with a printed copy of her

dissertation “What Can We Make With This? Creating Relevant Art Education Practices in Rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa” as a way of seeing the results of Miss Mandrona's work. The students will also be provided with a photograph of their artworks. Additionally, you will be informed when Miss Mandrona's research is disseminated via publications or conference presentations incorporating the participants' imagery or ideas.

Please know that all information gathered during this study will be kept in a secure location at all times and only the researchers involved will have access. The researchers will make every effort to ensure the accuracy, completeness and security of all research data.

If you have any questions about the proposed study please feel free to contact any of the researchers involved. Their individual information follows.

Thank you very much for you time and consideration.

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Appendix B: Consent form, in-service teachers

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN (What can we make with this? Creating relevant art education practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

This is to state that I agree to participate in a research project being conducted by Dr. Kathleen Vaughan and co-investigator April Mandrona of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows: To work collaboratively with rural, under-resourced schools to address the issues faced by these communities through the development and implementation of sustainable art programming and to further establish and maintain safe, collaborative, respectful, and creative spaces.

B. PROCEDURES

I understand that as a participant in the project I will be consulted on the development and implementation of art activities. We would like to create an ongoing dialogue with the teachers to identify how the activities can be most effective.

Co-investigator April Mandrona will meet with the learners at school ____ per week per approximately ____ hours for ____ weeks to facilitate art workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. These sessions will focus on experimental art making, the use of art as a means to express ideas and experiences, building social networks with others, and sourcing of local art making resources. These activities will be an opportunity for them to express and discuss issues that they may deal with in their life and move towards possible solutions. Of particular interest for this project is the creation of sustainable art practices through the use of inexpensive tools and supplies (i.e., naturally occurring, recycled or repurposed materials).

During this time we would also like to meet with you on an ongoing basis to conduct focus group sessions/ interviews to help determine your needs, ideas, perspectives and the challenges you may face as teachers in a rural school. At a time that is convenient for you Miss Mandrona will meet with the teachers for approximately 1 hour once per week to discuss feedback or suggestions you may have in relation to the art activities.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

Risks: The purpose of the research is to address issues that affect you directly in your teaching practice and you may choose what to share and what not to share. You will not be asked to discuss any topics you are not comfortable with and you do not have to share information about yourself or your friends/family that you do not want to. There is no requirement for you to disclose any personal or incriminating information during the study. However, as this will take place in a group setting, if you participate, you must agree to respect other group members.

Issues related to income, living conditions, HIV/AIDS, etc. can be sensitive and difficult to discuss. Also, knowledge about who may be affected by such issues can have serious, long-lasting effects for that person, such as stigmatization or discrimination, which may be worse outside the school community. For this reason, the sessions are a safe place, and anything discussed amongst participants and facilitators must be kept private. At any point during the study, you can refuse to participate.

Benefits: This study is an opportunity for you to help develop new learner activities together with other members of your educational community. Through this process you will be exposed to art processes that could later be used to add to your own teaching repertoire.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any point in time (up to final submission of the thesis manuscript for defence) without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation or withdrawal in no way affects my employment or any aspect of my involvement in school.
- I understand that I am not to discuss any personal information or even information on a relative or friend that may be disclosed during the study.
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I agree to be tape-recorded during the study sessions: Yes No

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 Kathleen Vaughan at 1 514 848 2424 ex. 4677 or by email at Kathleen.Vaughan@concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Kyla Wiscombe 1 514 848 2424 ex. 7481 kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

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Appendix C: Consent form, Guardians (For students under 18)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN (What can we make with this? Creating relevant art education practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

This is to state that I agree to allow my child _____ (please print child's name) to participate in a research project being conducted by Professor Kathleen Vaughan and co-investigator April Mandrona of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

A. PURPOSE (Why are we doing this?)

The purpose is to learn about art activities in rural South African schools and how art can be used to help communities.

B. PROCEDURES (What will I have to do?)

I understand that as a participant my child will meet with Miss Mandrona at school ____ a week for ____ hours for ____ weeks. Together with Miss Mandrona and other learners from their school they will have art making workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. They will experiment with different kinds of art, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about different materials like recycled objects that can be made into art. These activities will be a way for the learners to talk about and show things that are important to them in their life or things that they find hard so that we can work towards ways to make them better. Your child will be given art supplies to use for free and they will be able to keep what they make. They will be able to use different kinds of art materials and get the chance to share their creations, experiences, and ideas with others. If it is all right with you I would like to take pictures of your child's artwork for me to keep. By your child being in the study, they will help me understand how art activities can be useful for learners and their communities.

The times your child and Miss Mandrona meet at school will be audio-recorded and the things they say during the sessions, and pictures of their art may be used or written about later in academic work, like in books, at presentations, or in articles. However, their name will be kept confidential (secret) so no one will be able to tell what they said or what art they made. A printed copy of Miss Mandrona's study will be made available to your child's school. Your child will also be given a photograph of their artworks to keep.

Please know that all information gathered during this study will be kept safe and only the researchers who are part of the study will have access.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS (Are there any risks? What are the benefits?)

Risks: Because we will talk about things that affect your child directly in their life, they choose what to share and what not to share. They do not have to talk about anything that they do not

want to. However, because we will be working in groups, if your child participates, they must agree to respect other group members. Issues related to how much money people have, how they live, and sicknesses like HIV/AIDS can be hard to talk about. Also, knowledge about who may be affected by such issues can have serious, long-lasting effects for that person, such as stigmatization or discrimination, which may be worse outside the school community. For this reason, the art activities are a safe place, and anything talked about during this time must be kept secret. If your child shares information with you about other group members, this information must be kept secret too. When Miss Mandrona tells other people about the study, she will not use your child's name, and no one will be able to tell who she is talking about.

Benefits: This study is way for your child to learn about new art activities with members of their educational community like other learners and teachers. They will be able to use different kinds of art materials and get the opportunity to share their art and ideas with others.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION (Do I understand what I am agreeing to?)

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end my child's participation at any point in time (up to final submission of the thesis manuscript for defense) without negative consequences.
- I understand that my child's participation or withdrawal in no way affects their grades or any aspect of their involvement in school.
- I understand that if my child tells me any personal information or even information on a relative or friend that they heard during the study this is to be kept secret.
- I understand that my child's participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (the researcher will know, but will not disclose my child's identity).
- I understand that the data (information) from this study may be published.
- I agree to allow my child to be tape-recorded during the art making: Yes No
- I agree to allow photographs to be taken of my child's artwork: Yes No

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 Kathleen Vaughan at 1 514 848 2424 ex. 4677 or by email at Kathleen.Vaughan@concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Kyla Wiscombe 1 514 848 2424 ex. 7481 kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

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Appendix D: Guardian oral consent script (For students under 18)

“Hi. My name is April Mandrona. I’m a student at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Right now, I’m trying to learn about after-school art activities in rural South African schools. I would like to ask you to help me by allowing your child to be in a study, but before I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me.

I will ask your child to meet with me after school ____ per week per approximately ____ hours for a total of ____ weeks. Together with me and other learners from their school we will have art-making workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. We will experiment with different kinds of art, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about different materials that can be made into art like recycled objects. These activities will be a way for them talk about things that are important to them in their life or things that they find hard so that we can work towards ways to make them better. Your child will be given art supplies to use for free and they will be able to keep what they make. They will be able to use different kinds of art materials and get the chance to share their creations, experiences and ideas with others. If it is all right with you I would like to take pictures of your child's artwork for me to keep. By your child being in the study, they will help me understand how after-school art activities can be useful for students and their communities.

The times your child and I meet after school will be tape-recorded and the things they say during the sessions, and pictures of their art may be used or written about later in academic work, like in books, at presentations, or in articles. However, their name will be kept confidential so no one will be able to tell what they said or what art they made. A printed copy of my study will be made available to your child's school. Your child will also be given a photograph of their artworks to keep.

Because we will talk about things that affect your child directly in their life, they choose what to share and what not to share. They do not have to discuss anything that they do not want to. However, because we will be working in groups, if your child participates, they must agree to respect other group members. Issues related to how much money people have, how they live, and sicknesses like HIV/AIDS can be hard to talk about; for this reason, the activities are a safe place, and anything talked about during this time must be kept secret. If your child shares information with you about other group members, this information must be kept secret too. When I tell other people about my study, I will not use your child's name, and no one will be able to tell who I’m talking about.

The safety of your child is very important to us. Going to after school activities can make it difficult for some students to return home safely as they must take a different type of travel. Because of this, we will have special ways for the children to get home, such as an adult to walk with them or a walking group. They will also be given a free snack.

If you don’t want your child to be in the study, they don’t have to be. What you decide won’t make any difference to your child’s school grades or about how people think about you or your child. I won’t be upset, and no one else will be upset, if you don’t want your child to be in the

study. If you want your child to be in the study now but change your mind later, that's okay. They can stop at any time. If there is anything you don't understand you should tell me so I can explain it to you.

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me or ask a teacher at the school to call me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

Would you like your child to be in my study and talk, answer some questions, and make art?"

The guardian should answer "Yes" or "No." Only a definite "Yes" may be taken as consent for their child to participate.

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Name of Child: _____

Guardian's Voluntary Response for Child Participation: Yes No
(If "No," do not proceed with child assent or research procedures.)

Guardian's Voluntary Response for Child Participation Audi-Recorded: Yes No

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Consent form, Students (over 18)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN (What can we make with this? Creating relevant art education practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

This is to state that I agree to participate in a research project being conducted by Dr. Kathleen Vaughan and co-investigator April Mandrona of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows: To work collaboratively with rural, under-resourced schools to address the issues faced by these communities through the development and implementation of sustainable art programming and to further establish and maintain safe, collaborative, respectful and creative spaces.

B. PROCEDURES

I understand that as a participant in the project, my child will be participating in after school art programming. Co-investigator April Mandrona will meet with you after school ___ per week for ___ hours for a total of ___ weeks to facilitate art workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. These sessions will focus on experimental art making, the use of art as a means to express ideas and experiences, building social networks with others, and sourcing of local art making resources. These activities will be an opportunity for you to express and discuss issues that you may deal with in your life and move towards possible solutions. Of particular interest for this project is the creation of sustainable art practices through the use of inexpensive tools and supplies (i.e., naturally occurring, recycled or repurposed materials). All the art supplies will be provided to you at no cost and you are able to keep all art that you make although we will request to take photographs of your work.

This study is part of April Mandrona's doctoral research to learn about the role of art education practices in rural South Africa. Therefore, the process will be tape-recorded, the things you say during the sessions, and pictures of your art may be used later in academic work, like in books, at conferences, or in journal articles. However, your name will be kept confidential and not be associated with what you say or the art you make. A printed copy of of "What Can We Make With This? Creating Relevant Art Education Practices in Rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa" will be made available to your school as a way of seeing the results of Miss Mandrona's work. You will also be provided with a photograph of your artworks. Additionally, you will be informed when Miss Mandrona's research is disseminated via publications or conference presentations incorporating your imagery or ideas.

Please know that all information gathered during this study will be kept in a secure location at all times and only the researchers involved will have access. The researchers will make every effort to ensure the accuracy, completeness and security of all research data.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

Risks: The purpose of the research is to address issues that affect you directly in your life and you may choose what to share and what not to share. You will not be asked to discuss any topics you are not comfortable with and you do not have to share information about yourself or your friends/family that you do not want to. There is no requirement for you to disclose any personal or incriminating information during the study. However, as this will take place in a group setting, if you participate, you must agree to respect other group members. Issues related to income, living conditions, HIV/AIDS, etc. can be sensitive and difficult to discuss; for this reason, the sessions are a safe place, and anything discussed amongst participants and facilitators must be kept private. At any point during the study, you can stop participating.

The security of the participants is of the utmost concern. Attending after school activities can make it difficult for some students to return home safely as they must adopt a different method of travel. With this in mind, additional services will be provided for all students participating in the after-school activities. In the past, the RETP has worked with the principals to arrange safe options for students (e.g., adult chaperones, walking groups, etc.). You will also be provided with a free snack.

Benefits: This study is an opportunity to learn about new art activities and develop an appreciation for creative practices together with members of your educational community. You will be able to experiment with different kinds of art materials and get the chance to share your creations, experiences and ideas with others.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any point in time (up to final submission of the thesis manuscript for defence) without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation or withdrawal in no way affects my grades or any aspect of my involvement in school.
- I understand that I am not to discuss any personal information or even information on a relative or friend that may be disclosed during the study.
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I agree to be tape-recorded during the art making sessions: Yes No
- I agree to allow photographs to be taken of my artwork: Yes No

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 Kathleen Vaughan at +1 514 848 2424 ex. 4677 or by email at Kathleen.Vaughan@concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Kyla Wiscombe +1 514 848 2424 ex. 7481 kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

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Appendix F: Student assent script

“Hi. My name is April Mandrona. I’m a student at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Right now, I’m trying to learn about after-school art activities in rural South African schools. I would like to ask you to help me by being in a study, but before I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me.

I will ask you to meet with me after school ____ per week per approximately ____ hours for a total of ____ weeks. Together with me and other learners from your school we will have art-making workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. We will experiment with different kinds of art, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about different materials that can be made into art like recycled objects. These activities will be a way for you talk about and show things that are important to you in your life or things that you find hard so that we can work towards ways to make them better. You will be given art supplies to use for free and you will be able to keep what you make. You will be able to use different kinds of art materials and get the chance to share your creations, experiences and ideas with others. If it is all right with you I would like to take pictures of your artwork for me to keep. By being in the study, you will help me understand how after-school art activities can be useful for students and their communities.

The times we meet after school will be tape-recorded and the things you say during the sessions, and pictures of your art may be used or written about later in academic work, like in books, at presentations, or in articles. However, your name will be kept confidential so no one will be able to tell what you said or what art you made. A printed copy of my study will be made available to your school. You will also be given a photograph of your artworks to keep.

Because we will talk about things that affect you directly in your life, you choose what to share and what not to share. You do not have to discuss anything that you do not want to. However, because we will be working in groups, if you participate, you must agree to respect other group members. Issues related to how much money people have, how they live, and sicknesses like HIV/AIDS can be hard to talk about; for this reason, the activities are a safe place, and anything talked about during this time must be kept secret. Your parents, family members, teachers, and classmate will not know what you have said. When I tell other people about my study, I will not use your name, and no one will be able to tell who I’m talking about.

Your safety is very important to us. Going to after school activities can make it difficult for some leaners to return home safely as they must take a different type of travel. Because of this, we will have special ways for you to get home, such as an adult to walk with you or a walking group. I will also give you a snack for free.

Your parent/guardian says it’s okay for you to be in my study. But if you don’t want to be in the study, you don’t have to be. What you decide won’t make any difference with your school grades or about how people think about you. I won’t be upset, and no one else will be upset, if you don’t want to be in the study. If you want to be in the study now but change your mind later, that’s

okay. You can stop at any time. If there is anything you don't understand you should tell me so I can explain it to you.

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me or ask a parent, family member or your teacher to call me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

Would you like to be in my study and talk, answer some questions and make art?"

The child should answer "Yes" or "No." Only a definite "Yes" may be taken as assent to participate.

Name of Child: _____ Parental Permission on File: Yes No
(If "No," do not proceed with assent or research procedures.)

Child's Voluntary Response to Participation: Yes No

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

(Optional) Signature of Child: _____

*EVERY time the children are met with this script must be repeated and captured in the log.

Appendix G: Mass correspondence for research continuation, guardian

A few months ago your child _____ participated in a study on after-school activities in rural South African schools and how art can be used to help communities. I, Miss April Mandrona, led the art activities. I would like to continue the project and will be meeting the same learners again beginning February _____, 2012. The art making activities will take place after school _____ times per week for about _____ hours each time. The activities will last for _____ weeks.

The study will be the same as before but just for a shorter time. Together with Miss Mandrona and other learners from their school your child will have art-making workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. They will experiment with different kinds of art, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about different materials that can be made into art like recycled objects. Your child will be given art supplies and a snack for free and they will be able to keep what they make. Also, like before pictures will be taken of what they make and the times when we meet will be audio-recorded. Transportation will be arranged if needed, so that your child can return home safely from the school.

If you agree to have your child continue to be in the study you do not need to sign another form. If your child comes to the activities it is understood that they have your permission to do so.

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator Kathleen Vaughan at +1 514 848 2424 ex. 4677 or by email at Kathleen.Vaughan@concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Kyla Wiscombe +1 514 848 2424 ex. 7481 kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

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Appendix H: Student assent script, research continuation

“Hello again. Last time I was here a few months ago you participated in my study about after-school activities in rural South African schools and how art can be used to help communities. I would like to continue the project and will be meeting the same learners again beginning February _____, 2012. The art making activities will take place after school _____ times per week for about _____ hours each time. The activities will last for _____ weeks.

The study will be the same as before but just for a shorter time. Together with me and other learners we will have art-making workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. You will experiment with different kinds of art, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about different materials that can be made into art like recycled objects. You will be given art supplies and a snack for free and you will be able to keep what you make. Also, pictures may be taken of what you make and the times when we meet may be audio-recorded. Transportation will be arranged if needed, so that you can return home safely from the school.

All the same rules must be followed as before. If someone shares something during the times we meet, it must be kept private. If you do not want to participate you don't have to and once you start you can stop at any time.

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me or ask a parent, family member or your teacher to call me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

If you would like to continue to be in the study you do not need to have your guardian sign another form, but they must tell you that you can come to the activities.”

If the child attends the activities, it is understood that their guardian has given permission for them to continue with the study. However, the child must still provide verbal assent upon arrival for each activity. The child should answer “Yes” or “No.” Only a definite “Yes” may be taken as assent to continue their participation.

Name of Child: _____

Parental Permission Granted (child attends/verbal consent given by guardian to child):

Yes No (If “No,” do not proceed with assent or research procedures.)

Child’s Voluntary Response to Participation: Yes No

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

(Optional) Signature of Child: _____

*EVERY time the children are met with this script must be repeated and captured in the log.

Appendix I: Photograph consent form, guardian

*Used as adjunct to previous form C

My child _____ is a participant in a study on after-school art activities led by Miss Mandrona.

I understand that photographs may be taken of my child with their artwork. If I agree that Miss Mandrona can take a picture of my child with their artwork, I know that she may use it in her work, but she will make sure that their name is still private and that their picture is not connected to the private things they say to the group. If I do not want pictures to be taken of my child, they can still be in the study.

I agree to allow my child to be photographed with their artwork: Yes No

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO ALLOW MY CHILD TO HAVE THEIR PHOTO TAKEN.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator Kathleen Vaughan at +1 514 848 2424 ex. 4677 or by email at Kathleen.Vaughan@concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Kyla Wiscombe +1 514 848 2424 ex. 7481 kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca.

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Appendix J: Student assent script for photographs

*Used as adjunct to previous form E, F

“I would like to ask you if it is alright if I take some photographs of you with your artwork. If you agree that I can take a picture of you with your artwork, I may use it in my work, but I will make sure that your name is still private and that your picture is not connected to the private things they say to the group.

Your parent/guardian says it is okay for me to take your picture with your artwork. Do you agree to have your picture taken with your art?”

The child should answer “Yes” or “No.” Only a definite “Yes” may be taken as assent to have their photograph taken with their artwork.

Name of Child: _____

Parental Permission Granted:

Yes No

(If “No,” do not proceed with assent or photography.)

Child’s Voluntary Response to Allow Their Photo to be Taken:

Yes No

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

(Optional) Signature of Child: _____

Appendix K: Consent form, adult women

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN (What can we make with this? Creating relevant art education practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

This is to state that I agree _____ (please print name) to participate in a program of research being conducted by Dr. Kathleen Vaughan and co-investigator April Mandrona of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, Canada.

A. PURPOSE (Why are we doing this?)

The purpose is to learn about community art activities in rural South African and how art can be used to help people living in these areas.

B. PROCEDURES (What will I have to do?)

I understand I will meet with Miss Mandrona at the local school _____ (school name), _____ times per week per for approximately _____ hours each time. The art making activities will last for _____ weeks (beginning _____). Together with Miss Mandrona and other people from my community I will have art-making workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. I will experiment with different kinds of art such as sewing, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about different materials such as recycled fabric that can be made into art. These activities will be a way for me to talk about and show things that are important to me in my life or things that I find hard so that a better future can be imagined. I will be given art supplies to use for free and I will be able to keep what I make. I will be able to use different kinds of art materials and get the chance to share my creations, experiences and ideas with others. I understand that Miss Mandrona would like to take pictures of my artwork for her to keep. I may also have my picture taken with my artwork. By being in the study, I will help Miss Mandrona understand how art activities can be useful for communities.

I understand that the times Miss Mandrona and I meet may be audio-recorded. If I agree, the things I say during the sessions, and pictures of my art or me may be used or written about later in academic work, like in books, at presentations, or in articles. If I agree to have my picture taken, it will not be used in a way that can be linked to anything private that I say during the sessions. My name will be kept confidential so no one will be able to tell what I said or what I made. A printed copy of Miss Mandrona's study will be made available to a school in the area. I will also be given a copy of the photographs to keep.

If I want to, I can bring the children I look after with me (like my children or my grandchildren) so that they can make art with me and I can help to teach them. If I do, I will need to sign a different form for each child.

Miss Mandrona has informed me that that all information gathered during this study will be kept safe and only the researchers who are part of the study will have access.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS (Are there any risks? What are the benefits?)

Risks: There may be discussions about things that affect me directly in my life, but I can choose what to share and what not to share. I do not have to talk about anything that I do not want to. However, because I will be working in a group, if I participate, I must agree to respect other group members. Issues related to how much money people have, how they live, and sicknesses like HIV/AIDS can be hard to talk about. Also, knowledge about who may be affected by such issues can have serious, long-lasting effects for that person, such as stigmatization or discrimination. For this reason, the activities are a safe place, and anything talked about during this time must be kept secret. My family members and other people in the community will not know what I have said. When Miss Mandrona tells other people about the study, she will not use my name, and no one will be able to tell who she is talking about. If I agree that Miss Mandrona can take a picture of me with my artwork, I know that she may use it in her work, but she will make sure that my name is still private and that my picture is not connected to what I say that I want to remain private to the group.

Benefits: This study is way for me to learn about new art activities with members of my community. I will be able to use different kinds of art materials and get the chance to share my art and ideas with others.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION (Do I understand what I am agreeing to?)

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end my participation at any point in time (up to final submission of the thesis manuscript for defence) without negative consequences.
- I understand that the things talked about during the study are to be kept private. Any personal information or even information on a relative or friend that I heard about during the study is secret and not to be talked about outside the art sessions.
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).
- I understand that the data (information) from this study may be published.
- I agree to be tape-recorded during the art sessions: Yes No
- I agree to have photographs taken of my artwork: Yes No
- I agree to have my photograph taken with my artwork: Yes No

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 Kathleen Vaughan at +1 514 848 2424 ex. 4677 or by email at Kathleen.Vaughan@concordia.ca.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Kyla Wiscombe +1 514 848 2424 ex. 7481 kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

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Appendix L: Consent form, Guardian of accompanying children

*To be used as adjunct to form K

This is to state that I agree to allow _____ (please print child's name) to participate in a program of research being conducted by Dr. Kathleen Vaughan and co-investigator April Mandrona of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, Canada.

I understand that I may choose to bring a child/children with me so that they can also make art. If I bring them, we can make art together and I can help them to learn. If a child in my care comes with me to the art sessions they may also be audio-recorded. If I agree, pictures may also be taken that include the child and their artwork.

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end my child's participation at any point in time (up to final submission of the thesis manuscript for defence) without negative consequences.
- I understand that if my child tells me any personal information or even information on a relative or friend that they heard during the study this is to be kept private and not to be talked about outside the art sessions.
- I understand that my child's participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my child's identity).
- I understand that the data (information) from this study may be published.
- I agree to allow the child to be tape-recorded during the art sessions: Yes No
- I agree to allow photographs to be taken of my child's artwork: Yes No
- I agree to allow my child to be photographed with their artwork: Yes No

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

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

Appendix M: Verbal consent script, adult women

“Hi. My name is April Mandrona. I’m a student at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Right now, I’m trying to learn about community art activities in rural South Africa. I would like to ask you to help me by being in a study, but before I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me.

I will ask you to meet with me, Miss Mandrona, at the local school _____ (school name) ____ times per week per for approximately ____ hours each time. The art making activities will last for ____ weeks (beginning ____). Together with me and other people from your community we will have art-making workshops, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions. We will experiment with different kinds of art like sewing, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about different materials such as recycled fabric that can be made into art. These activities will be a way to talk about and show things that are important to you in your life or things that you find hard so that we can imagine a better future. You will be given art supplies to use for free and they will be able to keep what you make. You will be able to use different kinds of art materials and get the chance to share your creations, experiences and ideas with others. If it is all right with you, I would like to take pictures of your artwork for me to keep. I may also take pictures of you with your artwork. By you being in the study, you will help me understand how art activities can be useful for communities.

The times you and I meet will be tape-recorded and the things you say during the sessions, and pictures of you or your art may be used or written about later in academic work, like in books, at presentations, or in articles. If you agree to have your picture taken, it will not be used in a way that can be linked to anything private that you say during the sessions. Your name will be kept secret so no one will be able to tell what you said or what art you made. A printed copy of my study will be made available to a local school. You will also be given a copy of the photographs to keep.

If you want to, you can bring the children you look after with you (like your children or your grandchildren) so that they can make art with you. If I do choose to bring them, they may also be audi-recorded. If you agree, pictures may also be taken of them or their artwork.

Because we will talk about things that affect you directly in your life, you choose what to share and what not to share. You do not have to talk about anything that you do not want to. However, because we will be working in groups, if you participate, you must agree to respect other group members. Issues related to how much money people have, how they live, and sicknesses like HIV/AIDS can be hard to talk about and doing so can sometimes have difficult or even dangerous consequences for people; for this reason, the art activities are a safe place, and anything talked about during this time must be kept secret. When I tell other people about my study, I will not use your name, and no one will be able to tell who I’m talking about.

If you don’t want to be in the study, you don’t have to be. What you decide won’t make any difference to how people think about you. I won’t be upset, and no one else will be upset, if you

don't want to be in the study. If you want to be in the study now but change your mind later, that's okay. You can stop at any time. If there is anything you don't understand you should tell me so I can explain it to you.

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me, SMS me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

Would you like to be in my study and talk, answer some questions, and make art?

Do agree to have pictures taken of your artwork, so it can be seen by other people in things like books, articles or presentations?

Do you agree to have your picture taken with your artwork?

Do you agree to be audio-taped during the times that I meet with you, so that I may write about the things that you say, so that they can be read by other people in things like books, articles and presentations? No one will be able to tell what you said or what you made because your name will not be used even if a picture of you is used."

The participant should answer "Yes" or "No." Only a definite "Yes" may be taken as consent to participate/agreement to allow photos to be taken of them/their art work and to be audio-taped.

Name of Participant: _____

Participant's Voluntary Response for Participation: Yes No
(If "No," do not proceed with research procedures.)

Participant's Voluntary Response to Allow Photographs of Artwork: Yes No

Participant's Voluntary Response to be Photographed with Artwork: Yes No

Participant's Voluntary Response to be Audio-taped: Yes No

*If the participant chooses to bring a child who is in their care with them, continue with guardian consent and child assent procedures (if child is of the appropriate age to understand). If a participant brings more than one child, applicable assent must be captured in the log for each child.

Did participant bring child/children who is in their care: Yes No

- If Yes:

How Many Children: _____

1. Participant's Voluntary Response to Allow Photographs of Child's Artwork:

Yes No

Participant's Voluntary Response to Allow Child to be Photographed:

Yes No

Participant's Voluntary Response to be Allow Child to be Audio-taped:

Yes No

2....

Signature of Researcher: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix N: Child assent script, children accompanying adult women

“Hi. My name is April Mandrona. I’m a student at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Right now, I’m trying to learn about art activities in rural South Africa. I would like to ask you to help me by being in a study, but before I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me.

If you would like to be in the study, you can come to the school with your parent/guardian. Together with me, your parent/guardian, and other people from your community we will make art and talk. We will do different kinds of art like sewing, talk about how art can be used to show ideas and experiences, work together with others, and learn about how different things can be made into art. These activities will be a way to talk about and show things that are important to you in your life or things that you find hard so that we can imagine a better future. You will be given art supplies to use for free and they will be able to keep what you make. You will be able to use different kinds of things and get the chance to talk about what you make. If it is alright with you, I would like to take pictures of your artwork for me to keep. I may also take pictures of you with your artwork.

The times we meet will be tape-recorded and the things you say during the sessions, and pictures of you or your art may be used or written about later in academic work, like in books, at presentations, or in articles. However, your name will be kept secret so no one will be able to tell what you said or what art you made.

Because we will talk about different things, you can choose what to say and what not to say. You do not have to talk about anything that you do not want to. But because we will be in a group, if you come, you must keep secret the things that people talk about. Sometimes things like how much money people have, how they live, and sicknesses like HIV/AIDS can be hard to talk about and people can be treated badly if others find out these things. That's why when I tell other people about my study, I will not use your name, and no one will be able to tell who I'm talking about.

Your parent/guardian says it's okay for you to be in my study. But if you don't want to be in the study, you don't have to be. What you decide won't make any difference to how people think about you. I won't be upset, and no one else will be upset, if you don't want to be in the study. If you want to be in the study now but change your mind later, that's okay. You can stop at any time. If there is anything you don't understand you should tell me so I can explain it to you.

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me or ask a parent, family member to call me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

Would you like to be in my study and talk, answer some questions and make art?

Do you agree to have pictures taken of your art work, so it can be seen by other people in things like books, articles or presentations?

Do you agree to have your picture taken with your art?

Do you agree to be audio-taped during the times that we meet together, so that I can use the tape later when I want to write down the things that you say, so that they can be read by other people in things like books, articles and presentations? No one will be able to tell what you said because your name will not be used.”

The child should answer “Yes” or “No.” Only a definite “Yes” may be taken as assent to participate/agreement to have photos taken of them/their artwork and to be audio-taped.

Name of Child: _____ Parental Permission on File: Yes

No

(If “No,” do not proceed with assent or research procedures.)

Child’s Voluntary Response to Participation: Yes No

Child's Voluntary Response to Allow Photographs of Artwork: Yes No

Child's Voluntary Response to Allow Photo to be Taken: Yes No

Child's Voluntary Response to be Audio-taped: Yes No

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

(Optional) Signature of Child: _____

*EVERY time the children are met with this script must be repeated and captured in the log.

Appendix O: Introductory letter, craft specialists

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a PhD student at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada and I am working under the supervision of Dr. Kathleen Vaughan. This summer I will be travelling to the KwaZulu-Natal area to begin work on my dissertation and take part in a number of research projects. I will be working in partnership with the Centre for Visual Methodologies and Social Change at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and several other researchers including Dr. Claudia Mitchell (McGill University) and Dr. Relebohile Moletsane (UKZN). My research interest centres on the creation of relevant art programs within rural schools in contexts of great need. There are a growing number of art-based research programs, which are concerned with agendas of emancipation or empowerment. I will be investigating how art programs can be made relevant and sustainable within the communities they are intended to serve and whether this can be accomplished by using what supplies and artistic practices are already available. This may include the use of recycled or naturally occurring materials. With that in mind, I am searching for a way to gather information related to art/craft production within rural South Africa. I was hoping that you might be willing to share any advice or information that you may have and begin some form of dialogue on this subject. At time that is convenient for you I would like to arrange to ask you some questions related to local craft practices, access to materials, and production techniques. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

April Mandrona

If at any time you would like to contact me or the other researchers involved in this project please find our information below:

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Appendix P: Translator contract/confidentiality agreement

This is to state that I agree to act as a translator (English/isiZulu) for the program of research being conducted by Dr. Kathleen Vaughan and co-investigator April Mandrona of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University.

A. PURPOSE

- I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows: to work with with rural, under-resourced school communities, with particular focus on school learners and teachers, to develop and implement art activities that respond to local needs in relevant and meaningful ways.
- I have been informed that the purpose of my services is to obtain verbal consent from legal tutors of participants who may not read or write proficiently in isiZulu or English.

B. CONDITIONS

- I understand that I am to carry out the translation tasks using reasonable skill and care and that I shall use my best endeavours to do the work to the best of my ability, knowledge, and belief.
- I understand that I shall not derive any personal profit or advantage from any confidential information that I may acquire during my interpretation/translation services assigned to me.
- I understand that I may learn personal information about a participant that is private. I understand that it is my duty and responsibility to preserve and protect this privacy and confidentiality. I understand that this duty will extend after I am no longer working on this research project.
- I understand that I am not to disclose or disseminate any information obtained as a result of my involvement in this research to a third party.
- I understand that if there is any “heinous” discovery (e.g. information regarding alleged crimes, abuses, or misconduct) that occurs during a translated interaction with a consenting legal tutor it must be communicated it in full to the researcher present. To ensure that appropriate resources are made available/extended to the participant.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.
I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO ACT AS A TRANSLATOR IN
THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

If you have any questions, please contact one of the researchers involved:

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Appendix Q: Ethics certificate**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Dr. Kathleen Vaughan
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: What Can We Make With This? Creating Relevant
Art Education Practices in Rural South Africa
Schools

Certification Number: 10000454

Valid From: December 02, 2013 to: December 1, 2014

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee