Practicing change, changing practice:
Gallery educators' professional learning in times of reckoning and upheaval

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ABSTRACT

Practicing change, changing practice:
Gallery educators' professional learning in times of reckoning and upheaval

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Art museums are responding to increasing calls for exhibitions, community engagement, and institutional change that confront and unsettle taken-for-granted narratives, knowledge, policies, and practices. Grounded in my work as a mid-career gallery educator and trainer, this qualitative study asks what gallery educators' learning looks like and what motivates it. How does it shape or respond to change? Through this line of inquiry, I sought to better understand how myriad paths to competency building can support or hinder critical gallery dialogue, an ethos of social justice, and wider efforts to make art museums more representative, responsive, and relevant to the publics they are meant to serve.

This manuscript-based thesis draws on tenets of critical pragmatism, transformative adult learning, and constructivist grounded theory to analyze individual and group interviews with gallery educators in Canada and Scotland. The first manuscript examines how volunteer guides identify, navigate, and reflect on challenging subject matter in both their ongoing learning and gallery dialogue with visitors. The second manuscript focuses on freelance gallery educators' professional learning within the overlapping contexts of the coronavirus pandemic and protests for racial justice in 2020. The third and final manuscript considers the potential for gallery educators' informal professional learning to inform internal policies and procedures.

I link the three manuscripts with a prelude that highlights gallery educators' learning as they describe it and two bridging texts that situate my findings in their wider contexts. These self-reflexive texts, which address decolonial turns and whiteness in art museums, draw on additional literature and my own professional learning trajectory over the duration of my doctoral studies. I conclude with final reflections on transformation as a theoretical starting point, learning through the writing process, and implications for future research. This thesis contributes to both a paucity of scholarly research on critical professional learning in art museums and an emerging body of literature addressing the impacts of a global pandemic on museum workers.

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Chapter 1 | Introduction

Contexts and Research Questions

Art museums[1] are hubs of adult learning where educators play a dual role, facilitating learning with visitors and continually engaging in their own. As of late, this role is played out as museums and galleries are increasingly responding to calls from outside and within their institutions for community engagement and systemic change that confront, unsettle, and dismantle taken-for-granted assumptions, structures, and ways of working. As a case in point, in 2016, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) assembled a standing committee to consider options for a new museum definition. Addressing "ambiguous and often contradictory trends in society, and the subsequent new conditions, obligations and possibilities for museums" (ICOM, 2020, para. 1), a consultation process with members was put into place. In 2019, ICOM's Executive Board (EB) put a new definition[2] to vote at the Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) in Kyoto, Japan.

The proposed definition caused heated debate amongst members with strong positions for and against; in the end, the EGA postponed the vote to allow sufficient time for discussion amongst members. The EB subsequently increased the number of members on the standing committee (ICOM, 2019), and a new definition was just recently voted in at the 2022 General Conference. While this reflection and debate occurred in the international museum world, key elements of the proposed definition—such as sustainability; legacies of inequality; differing worldviews; access, collaboration, and shared authority; accountability and transparency; and exhibitions as platforms for critical exchange—speak to critical ideas and issues demanding attention from art institutions of all types and speak to growing movements to decolonize[3]

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[1] For this dissertation my use of the term art museums includes art galleries and other not-for-profit visual art exhibition venues such as artist-run centres.

2 The proposed definition: "Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing." (ICOM, 2020, para. 2)

[3] I have opted for the common English spelling in North America. That said, I include the alternate spelling, *decolonisation*, in any titles or citations from the UK.

museums. The new definition,[4] adopted just a few weeks ago, is far less explicitly activist but nonetheless includes some key notions underscoring critical museum practice, namely, accessibility, inclusivity, diversity, sustainability, and participation. ICOM's president is quoted as saying, "This new definition is aligned with some of the major changes in the role of museums today. We have been forced to change" (Seymour, 2022, para 3). Examining the weight of the terms 'forced' and 'we' is beyond the scope of this introduction, but the notion of alignment and change is pivotal to my further discussions, which consider how professional learning shapes, and is shaped by, changes in the field.

Furthermore, within a few short months in 2020, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and an international wave of anti-racism protests created a very specific and unprecedented context in which art museums were grappling with urgent questions demanding immediate and long-term individual, institutional, and sector-wide change in thinking, working, and structuring. The pandemic exposed both the precariousness of gallery educators' jobs as well as stark social inequalities more widely, a preoccupation of a growing number of educators in museums and galleries. That same year, the UK Museums Association launched the *Manifesto for Museum Learning and Engagement*, a document that positioned museums as key sites for progressive social change in response to racial injustice, the coronavirus pandemic, and the climate crisis: "These crises are interrelated. They make it imperative that we make a transformational change to the role of museums in society" (Anderson, Pering, and Heal, 2020, p. 2). Given these and other key issues shaping 21st-century cultural institutions, what can be gained from examining museum educators' professional learning?

It is within these overlapping contexts of upended and shifting systems, practices, and perspectives that my doctoral research drew on tenets of transformative adult learning, critical pragmatism, and constructivist grounded theories to examine gallery educators'[5] experiences and

[4] The new definition: "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing." (ICOM, 2022, para. 2).

[5] Depending on the location, institution, or research project, gallery educators may also be referred to as art museum educators, gallery or museum teachers, mediators, learning assistants, learning curators, engagement officers, animators, gallery assistants, guides, or docents, among other titles. Throughout this dissertation, I use the term gallery educator to refer to individuals facilitating front line learning and engagement work with the public in art museums, galleries, and other non-profit visual art exhibition venues. Unless otherwise specified, this includes both paid and volunteer educators.

perceptions as critical adult learners themselves. As a starting point, I considered the following research questions: What does gallery educators' learning[6] look like and what motivates it? How does it shape or respond to change? Through this line of inquiry, I sought to better understand how myriad paths to competency building can support or hinder critical gallery dialogue, an ethos of social engagement, and wider efforts to foster justice and equity in art museums and galleries. This dissertation has built upon a growing body of literature that situates museum educators as adult learners (Deprizio, 2016; Palamara, 2017; Tran, Gupta, and Bader, 2019) as well as scholarly and practitioner research on training among museum educators that is grounded in critical theory (Anderson & Keenlyside, 2021; Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; El-Amin and Cohen, 2018; Murray-Johnson, 2019; Ng, Ware, & Greenberg, 2017). A response to a historical disconnect between critical adult education and museums (Clover et al, 2016), my research bridges the two with a reflexive approach to examining professional learning in its many forms. This research project considers how individual and collective adult learning among educators can support wider movements for change in the museums and galleries sector, particularly as lockdown and decolonizing/anti-racist mobilizing have required an immediate and long-term reimagining of daily work and the field of art museum education more broadly.

Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; 2017) shaped the methodology for this study, and I drew on tenets of critical pragmatism to complement transformative adult learning as a theoretical framework. I opted for a manuscript-based thesis comprising three articles because this format was most aligned with my practice-focused research. As a professional gallery educator and trainer myself, the publications I find most helpful—that is, critical, thought-provoking, and grounded in practice—are accessibly written articles produced and/or informed by those teaching and organizing in the field. As a practitioner-researcher I asked questions that reflect conversations and challenges currently happening among those working in art museums, and I hoped that the manuscript format would 1) allow for quicker circulation 2) potentially inform research and activities that have already begun—however expertly or inexpertly—in many institutions, and 3) offer researched-based support for initiatives currently in the development stage. A manuscript-based thesis also kept me closer to the field; as I

[6] I have chosen to opt for the term professional learning to encompass the range of learning educators undertake while at work to nourish their practice. Other terms emerging from the literature include practice-based learning, work-related learning, work-based learning, and workplace learning.

researched and wrote my dissertation, I continually shared my research and teaching at professional conferences and peer learning events so that my work could inform—and be informed by—both academics and practitioners in the field of art museum education.

My first manuscript is based on a 2018 pilot study comprising in-person interviews with new volunteer guides at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), where since 2015 I have trained new recruits. This pedagogical inquiry with my past students as participants was an important professional learning endeavour for my growth as a trainer; it also solidified my interest in continuing reflexive conversations with other gallery educators about the learning they do to support critical practice. For my second and third manuscripts, I examined the professional learning of paid gallery educators[7] in Scotland, where I conducted my second round of data gathering via online, open-ended interviews and focus groups in 2020.[8]

Like many other researchers, I was unable during COVID-19 to pursue my data collection as planned. Scheduled conferences and events that would have facilitated relationship-building and subsequent recruitment efforts were cancelled. The university prohibited in-person interviews with human subjects and data collection was moved online. Unprecedented adaptation among gallery educators was required literally overnight, and new, critically engaged, virtual professional learning opportunities began to sprout, giving new weight to my overarching question of how and why gallery educators learn to work differently. That said, I hesitated to reach out to my colleagues – would this be the worst or possibly an ideal moment to ask them for their time? As it turned out, the early pandemic was a moment for these participants to pull back and think through their practice and the learning they do to support it, which I discuss in more detail in the methodology section and subsequent chapters.

Background: Positionality and Place

My decision to research abroad has roots in my participation in Concordia's 2018 Iceland Field School, led by Dr. Kathleen Vaughan. There, my cohort reflected extensively on learning in a country with a rich heritage in the subject matter we were exploring (textile arts).

Meeting with educators and documenting self-directed learning installations in various art museums in Iceland—(Safnahúsið (Culture House), Listasafn Reykjavíkur (Reykjavik Art

[7] As per their request, to protect participants' anonymity, their institutions remain unnamed throughout this dissertation.
[8] For clarity, when distinguishing between participant groups I use the terms paid educator and volunteer guide.

Museum), Heimilisiðnaðarsafnið (Textile Museum), and Þjóðminjasafn Íslands (National Museum of Iceland)—prompted me to reconsider my original plan to continue my research at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, where I have worked, sited my MA research, and began my Ph.D. research, and instead 'get out of my back yard,' so to speak. Seeking out a country where I spoke the language, traced my cultural lineage, had easy access to multiple cities and towns, and could tap into active professional networks, I moved to Scotland in January 2020 for a planned six months of field research. There is a rich and well-documented tradition of progressive gallery education in the UK (Allen, 2008; Scottish Museums Council, 2000), and much of the scholarly and grey literature on inclusive adult art museum education I consulted for my MA in the early 2000s came from there. While Canada[9] and the UK both have professional associations for gallery educators dating back over three decades, the UK-based National Association for Gallery Education (more commonly known as Engage) has a much larger, established, and active network, and provides ongoing training, networking, and advocacy for its members (Engage, 2022). My initial contact and subsequent membership in its Scottish arm, and its members, confirmed for me the great potential for research there.[10]

In their study of adult educators in Canada, Scotland, and England, critical adult education scholars Clover and Bell (2013) point to Canada's and Britain's similarities in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, social policy, and publicly funded institutions. As movements for decolonization gain traction around the world, both Canada and Scotland are also grappling with the legacies of colonialism; as a case in point, both countries' museum associations recently conducted broad public consultations and just released reports this year. The Canadian Museums Association is focused on the wider project of reconciliation, namely the inclusion and representation of Indigenous communities in museums (Danyluk & MacKenzie, 2022; Leduc, 2020). For their part, Museums Galleries Scotland's focus has been on empire, museums, and the portrayal of Scotland's slavery history (Asante, 2022; Museums Galleries Scotland, 2022a). In a similar vein, both are also confronting Whiteness in cultural institutions, and this has been witnessed in museum and education scholarship, cultural, activist, and mainstream journalism,

[9] Sullivan (2011) has written a short history of Canadian Art Gallery/Art Museum Educators (CAGE).
[10] Furthermore, the activities of the UK-wide Group for Education in Museums (GEM) are closely aligned with and complement those of Engage. My Engage membership led me to a training program offered by GEM, and since then, I have subsequently remained connected to GEM through a small community of practice devoted to anti-racist learning and teaching and a workshop based on my third manuscript that I facilitated at their 2022 annual conference at the Museum of Making.

workshops, public events, and protests. I explore these contexts in more depth in subsequent sections; but here I will state that I aim to do two things in my scholarship: 1) acknowledge the ongoing struggles and contributions of BIPOC[11] scholars and practitioners and 2) locate my project along a career path spent exploring the possibilities and limits for social change in museums and galleries while negotiating how I am complicit in the colonial systems that I am working to change through teaching, research, and relationship building.

Both my research and professional museum practice are situated in the privileges of my identity as a cis-gendered, abled, white settler Canadian of Scottish, Irish, and English descent. My parents and stepparents were all white museum curators, and my first visit to a museum was so early in my life that I have no recollection of it. My undergraduate studies in international development and cultural studies grounded my early reflections on the relationships between structural inequalities, cultural institutions, and critical pedagogies. It was then in 1997 that I vividly recall the most transformative learning moment for me as a young adult: *Taming Our Tomorrows*, a lecture by poet, writer, and lawyer M. NourbeSe Philip. At a rural university campus on the banks of the Otonabee River near Nogojiwanong/Peterborough, NourbeSe Philip spoke in part about how racism in Canada had rendered non-urban natural sites inaccessible to many people of colour. This was a pivotal moment for me in linking access to nature and access to museums—two spaces where I had taken my sense of belonging for granted since childhood. I followed up my BA with a practicum-based diploma in community work, which further shaped my reflections on whiteness, community outreach, feminist adult education, and anti-oppression models, demanding of me a consideration of my own identity markers and privileges vis-à-vis the work I set out to do.

My scholarly and ongoing professional learning since that time is indebted to the work of BIPOC writers proposing anti-racist and decolonizing pedagogies in and outside of museums and galleries. Scholars Sarah Ahmed, Susan Dion, Andrea Fatona, Keonna Hendrick, bell hooks, Heather Igloliorte, Yasmin Jiwani, Amy Lonetree, Wayne Modest, Porchia Moore, Syrus Marcus Ware, and Charmaine Nelson have all influenced my thinking and practice as a gallery educator, trainer, and art education scholar. Their work and writing have spoken to visitors' observations,

[11] Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. Increasingly, IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour) is also used in Canada. BPoC (Black People and People of Colour) and BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) are used in the UK, however the latter, like similar acronyms, is under critique for essentializing complex and diverse lived experiences. See Mistlin, 2021.

interpretations, testimonies, and questions, which have both challenged and humbled me during the hundreds of guided visits I have facilitated in a small municipal art gallery, a large establishment (i.e. mainstream) art museum, and an urban contemporary art space. *"Miss Emily, why are there no brown people in the paintings?"* a young primary school boy on a portrait tour once asked me. This child did not see himself reflected in his city's art museum; working on its front line, it was my responsibility to not only unpack his question with the group with honesty and clarity but to also consider for myself how I was implicated in this and other types of exclusion. As I progress in my learning, I am also increasingly sensitized to consider the potential trauma of such encounters, and I am particularly cognizant that my positionality is overrepresented in my field (Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018, O'Neil, 2020). While recognizing the limits imposed by that positionality, I have always strived to facilitate critical gallery dialogue that creates space for interrogations around representation and voice that may challenge the values, assumptions, and knowledge of the institution, my peers, and myself. My thesis research provided me with the opportunity to examine in more depth the pressing questions of the current moment and to harness this learning in my work with other educators in art museums and galleries.

Just three months after COVID lockdown began, activists organized Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in multiple Scottish cities. Renewed and urgent calls to address issues of equity, representation, and racism in art institutions there and in Canada spoke to ongoing, albeit insufficient efforts to specifically address these problems regarding learning and engagement. I am a white, settler gallery educator concerned with inclusivity and social justice in predominantly white institutions – how could my research both confront my own biases and forward critical learning and engagement in my field at such a fraught moment? My thesis project is an extension of my own reflective practice as well as the peer, self-directed, and other informal learning that compensated for the paucity of critical training I received over the first two decades of my practice as a gallery educator. Connecting with my peers in Scotland through opportunities stemming from my studies allowed me to learn more about how these issues shape their work and exchange ideas about how to move our practices and sectors forward, each in their specific contexts. In pursuing and nurturing these connections, I would come back to key questions guiding our work at the Iceland Field School: "How do I as a visitor/artist/academic engage ethically and aesthetically with the people, creatures and environments of this place?

What can I offer? What do I hope to receive?" (Vaughan, 2019, p. 14). Thus, I elaborate further on questions of reciprocity in the Method and Procedure chapter and my conclusion.

Structure and Manuscript Overviews

Following chapters devoted to my literature review, theoretical framework, and method and procedure, I will present three manuscripts – two published and one awaiting editorial feedback – based on data I gathered in Canada and Scotland. As a prelude, I will provide a brief overview of gallery educators' competency building with a focus on what participants were learning up to and during the time of data gathering, the activities they engaged in, and the ethos that drove their learning. I will also connect the three manuscripts with two bridging texts that situate my findings in wider contexts in which my research project emerged and has evolved: 1) key dates in Canada as a starting point to consider decolonial turns in contemporary museum practices; and 2) the 'dual pandemic' of COVID-19 and racial injustice as a starting point to consider whiteness and white supremacy in the museums and galleries sector. The themes of these bridging texts could have been the subjects of dissertations themselves, and so I propose them cautiously, acknowledging their gaps and limits while demonstrating how they have shaped my study and my thinking around it. These texts are written in a self-reflexive voice that draws on additional literature and my own professional learning trajectory over the course of my doctoral studies. I conclude with final reflections on transformation as a theoretical starting point, implications for future research, and learning through the writing process.

Manuscript 1: **Critically Engaging Volunteer Guides: A Study of Adult Learning in Art Museums** was published in December 2019 in the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education.* This article examined a particular area of volunteer guides' learning—facilitating gallery dialogue about challenging subject matter. The conclusions that came out of it suggested potential areas for further critical inquiry into the lived experience of art museum guides as learners with attention to their relationships to curatorial authority, institutional change, visitor experiences, and other educators. This first article focused on the *what* (challenging subject matter)*,* and my intention for subsequent articles was to direct a more pointed focus on the *how* and *why.* This didn't preclude the possibility of touching again on the theme of difficult subject matter—rather, the second set of data collection allowed me to sample key concepts from the first one and analyze them in a new and evolving context.

Manuscript 2: **"What We Need to Future Ourselves For" Professional Learning Among Freelance Gallery Educators in Scotland Through the First Wave of the Coronavirus Pandemic** was published in November 2021 in the *Journal of Museum Education (JME)*. This chapter focuses on freelancer participants' professional learning within the overlapping contexts of the coronavirus pandemic and protests for racial justice in 2020. I examine how the impacts, instability, and political tensions of 2020 intersected with the realities of their precarious employment status to inform their experiences of professional learning – specifically, their immediate and long-term priorities and opportunities.

Manuscript 3: **From Practice to Policy: Mobilizing Educators' Informal Learning** has been submitted for publication and is awaiting editorial feedback. This chapter focuses on the potential of informal professional learning to inform organizational change. I explore the meaning and value participants attribute to informal learning, the politics and possibilities that surround it, and how it informs the scope and content of daily practice. I highlight the factors and processes that facilitate or inhibit this type of learning, proposing both a tentative framework for critically engaged informal learning and key areas for post-pandemic, internal policy attention.

Significance

A review of current literature, the scholarly feedback I have received through peer review, and practitioner responses at conferences speak to the significance of my practice-driven research. Critical and activist gallery education is receiving increasing attention from scholars and art museum workers through political organizing and the publishing of case studies of programs, workshops, and strategies. At the same time, the number of empirical studies on the critical professional learning of gallery educators themselves, from their perspective, remains limited. I anticipate that my research findings and the publications this dissertation comprises have the potential to support existing projects and ongoing innovations. Its content speaks to training and other professional development opportunities, formative evaluation, mentorship and peer learning programs, internal and external collaborations, and policy shaping the work lives of educators in art museums, galleries, and other exhibition venues. More broadly, my research joins the work of others in fostering a more just, reflexive, and inclusive society—at the very least, in the sector where I have developed relationships, resources, and competencies for over two decades: art museums and galleries. This dissertation supports, and is a part of, international practice and scholarship that unsettles and reimagines institutions where opportunities for

creation, connection, and truth/storytelling are uplifted by the tangible and intangible art forms and critical dialogues that are alive in and beyond the exhibition space.

Chapter 2 | Literature Review

This research project studies gallery educators as adult learners at the intersection of critical museum pedagogies and professional learning. As such, the following literature review offers a brief portrait of English language writings on professional learning in museums, critical adult education in art museums, and the growing—yet still relatively underexplored—space shared between the two. In addition to scholarly works, I include practitioner research and grey literature to recognize the importance and influence of output from individuals and organizations outside of, or collaborating with, the academic world. Where relevant, I also turn to select literature theorizing professional learning among educators working in schools to fill gaps and situate my findings in a wider context. My selection and articulation of this literature are guided by my research questions: What does gallery educators' learning look like and what motivates it? How does it shape or respond to change?

Conceptualizing Professional Learning

While there has been an increase in scholarship studying the professional development opportunities offered to classroom teachers in art museums (e.g., Etheridge, 2020; Kraybill, 2018; Sandell & Zimmerman, 2017; Schoonover, N. R., 2021; Stone, 2013; Vatsky, 2018), I set out to address the learning experiences of the educators whose daily work happens in these institutions. Much of the growing body of literature attending to museum educators' learning covers existing training programs as examples of good practice (e.g., Chien, 2017; Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; Lachapelle et al, 2016; Levent & Reich, 2013; Meyer et al, 2016; Montalvo, 2019) and conceptual frameworks for professional development and competency building (Bevan and Xanthoudaki, 2008; Bueno Delgado, 2014; El-Amin & Cohen, 2018, 2021; Group for Education in Museums, 2021; Grabman et al, 2019; Katzenstein, P. & Koster, 2015; Murray-Johnson, 2019; Schep et al, 2018). According to my findings, far fewer studies (e.g., Bueno Delgado, 2014; Grabman et al, 2019) focus on informal professional learning—which I explore in more depth in Chapter 7.

Given the limited number of research studies on gallery educators, I have also included studies devoted to professional learning in history, science, and children's museums. Furthermore, where I identified a gap in the museum research, I also drew on relevant scholarship examining the professional learning experiences of schoolteachers, which I also explore in more depth in Chapter 7. Here I will briefly highlight three examples of such work

that offered me a point of reference for conceptualizing professional learning itself. First, policy analysts Boeskens, Nusche, and Yurita (2020), in proposing a theoretical and analytical framework to study teachers' continuing professional learning, discussed the shift in discourse from continuing professional development (CPD) to continuing professional learning (CPL). They wrote, "Professional learning is a process with varying degrees of (dis)continuity and lacks a pre-defined end point" (p. 14). The authors conceive of professional learning as a larger 'ecosystem' within which professional development – for example formalized courses or seminars – is but one component. Boeskens et al. also identify pedagogical differences between the two concepts; drawing on current research, the authors list five characteristics of CPL that distinguish it from CPD. These included:

- An active role for teachers (individually and collectively) who are considered to be reflective professionals;
- A context-based process that recognizes the importance for teachers to be responsive to the particular learning needs of their students and for schools to serve the particular needs of their communities;
- A strong evaluative dimension with teachers systematically examining the effectiveness of their own practice;
- A long-term process that is integrated into regular school life and includes systematically planned opportunities to promote professional growth;
- A process that leads to change in teachers' knowledge bases, beliefs and practice or capacity for practice (p. 15).

While I question the implication that the formality of a training course or seminar precludes the possibility of active, reflexive, and responsive learning, broadly speaking I found their conception of professional learning to be a useful one. Thus, I chose to use the term to capture the breadth and spirit of the learning I set out to examine; as such I understand professional learning to comprise a wide scope of both individual and collective learning activities related to paid and unpaid work. This includes training and organized professional development as well as endeavours such as action research, peer support, mentorship, shadowing, team teaching, conferences, conversation, and self-evaluation among others.

Second, in my attempt to further situate my interviews in Scotland, I turned to Scottish professional learning models for teachers that spoke to my practice and offered concrete

examples of learning activities such as those listed above. Education Scotland (a government agency supporting quality and improvement in education) produced the *National model of professional learning*, which focuses on dispositions, knowledge/skills, and critical self-evaluation. This holistic model proposes that professional learning should be "Challenging, and develop thinking, knowledge, skills and understanding; Underpinned by developing skills of enquiry and criticality; Interactive, reflective and involve learning with and from others" (Education Scotland, 2020). A collaborator on the development of the national model, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (2022) proposed the Professional Learning Planning Cycle, which moves through a series of stages that include planning PL, engaging in PL, anticipating and evidencing the impact of PL, and professional dialogue. The council stated, "Teachers engage in professional learning to stimulate their thinking and professional knowledge and to ensure that their practice is critically informed and current" (para. 1). This statement, along with the qualities of professional learning listed above, offered a starting point to 1) underscore the critical orientation of my project, 2) encourage participants to think beyond training and organized CPD in their responses, and 3) invite participants to consider the meaning, definitions, and ideas they attach to notions of 'critical' and 'current'—and professional learning more broadly.

Third, and lastly, I turned to the work of education scholar Jennie Reeves, whose extensive research on the impact of a CPD program for aspiring head teachers[12] in Scotland positions professional learning as relational. In my third manuscript, I draw parallels between Reeves' conception of learning as "a matter of relations" between people and museum objects, architecture and narratives. For Reeves and Forde (2004), changing practice is politically charged; as such, they point to issues of identity, power, status, and risk as they problematize simplified language of shared culture, ownership, and empowerment—language, as it happens, that also guides the promotion of art museums as inclusive learning sites. As such, in positioning what Reeves and Forde refer to as 'change/learning processes' among museum educators as inherently political, I highlight connections between professional learning and critical art and adult education praxis that consider how power and context shape learning processes – connections that I will explore in more depth in another section and the subsequent chapters devoted to methodological and theoretical frameworks.

[12] Head teacher is equivalent to principal in North America.

This emphasis also brings me back to the premise that museums are not neutral – not their architecture, exhibition designs, acquisitions, interpretations, representations, nor teachings. To assert that museum spaces, the work of museum educators, and visitors' learning are all political demands an extension of this thinking to include educators' learning in all its forms. Hence, to further flesh out my definition of professional learning initiated on page 12, I will elaborate to state that I understand professional learning to comprise a wide scope of both individual and collective learning activities related to volunteer and paid work *that is situated in time, place, positionality, relationship, discourse, and power*. Further still—as I also explore in more depth here and in subsequent chapters—viewing professional learning as relational also speaks to important connections between contemporary dialogic gallery teaching models from the last decade (Burnham and Kai-Kee, 2011; Dysthe et al, 2013; Hubard, 2015) and opportunities for professional growth that engage educators themselves in critical, reflexive, and dynamic learning with others.

Key Competencies for Educators in Museums and Galleries

One avenue through which museum and gallery educators' professional learning has been addressed is frameworks outlining key competencies for a field that has undergone a critical self-examination of its social and educational role for decades. Museum educator and art education researcher Ebitz (2005) wrote that "Art and other museums have been identified as ideal sites for discovery learning as educators over the last 30 years [and] have shifted from an "empty vessel" model of education to a learner-centred model in which the learner is engaged in a personal and social process of discovery and meaning-making" (p.152). In his study of art museum educators in the US, Ebitz asked, "What qualifications will prepare art museum educators to serve changing audiences and support their own continuing professional development?" (p.150). Focusing on the multiple and evolving contexts of museum educators' work, Ebitz identified a 15-point list of the knowledge, experiences, and skills that prepared educators for the teaching and ongoing learning their profession required of them. While comprehensive, omissions in the list reflect justice-oriented changes in the field since.[13]

[13] Ebitz's list includes art history relevant to the collections; interdisciplinary approaches to visual culture; history, theory, and practice of art museum learning, history, theory, curriculum, and practices of schools; research and evaluation on visitor experience; information technologies; marketing; serving audiences with diverse economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and audiences with special needs; exhibition development, design, installation, and interpretation; written, verbal, and visual communication; teamwork and community collaboration; supervision, program and project management; leadership, strategic planning, and advocacy; fundraising; budget management.

Two more recent publications have offered continued guidance in this regard[14]. Both works picture the current state of the field and offer useful working definitions of competencies that validated my own. In their study with museum guides in art and history museums, education scholars Schep and van Boxtel, along with heritage scholar Noordegraaf (2018) defined competencies as "an integrated set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal characteristics that a museum guide needs to effectively perform" (p. 3–4). The authors stated that "In spite of a long tradition and increased professionalization of education in museums, the profile of effective museum guides is not sufficiently clear" (p. 3), arguing that museum educator competencies are understudied compared to teacher research. In turn, their team developed a list of 44 competencies[15] validated by experts in the field and organized into four areas: 1) handling the group within the museum environment; 2) communication skills; 3) knowledge and pedagogy; and 4) professionalism. In imaging the future directions of their research, the authors proposed that competency lists could support the design of self-evaluation instruments, the development of training programs, and hiring processes.

In 2021, the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) launched an update[16] of their Core Competencies for Museum Educators. This version defines competencies as a "broad range of skills, behaviours and attributes ("competencies") required across the roles occupied by Educators" (Group for Education in Museums, p. 2), and was developed in consultations with GEM members working across the heritage sector. Its authors organized the framework according to four categories: Building Relationships (connections between people that foster individual and organizational development); Professional Practice (the maintenance of up-to-date skills); Digital Skills (acknowledging the prevalence of, and opportunities provided by, digital technologies); and Reflective Practice (ongoing learning/development informed by past

[14] One from the UK and one from the Netherlands—both countries from which important decolonial, practice-based research has recently emerged (Research Center for Material Culture, 2018; Museum Galleries Scotland, 2022), suggesting an alignment with critical museum pedagogies that is distinct from other European countries such as France (Mairesse, 2022). These studies also speak to the educator competencies that I highlighted in my thesis proposal.

[15] Three of the 44 were considered specific to art museum tours: stimulating an open attitude, limiting the input of your own knowledge, and looking carefully at art.

[16] The most significant change to the framework was the addition of digital skills, which was particularly timely given shifts to digital during COVID-19 lockdown. An emphasis on sustainability in subthemes is also noteworthy as they reflect current preoccupations not reflected in Ebitz's list. That said, while the learning context is central to GEM's framework, key terms such as decolonization, anti-racism, and justice are absent from the publication.

experience). These categories were subdivided into 15 subthemes[17] under which 139 competency statements were grouped according to three progressive career levels: Foundation, Experienced, and Leading (Group for Education in Museums, 2021).

At this juncture, I wish to point out two key facts raised by art education scholars Lachapelle, Zimmer, and Sinner (2019) in their review of museum training programs across Canada. First, three decades have passed since the national association for gallery educators published standards for gallery education training and practice and second, there is a paucity of museum education content in post-secondary museum studies programs. These factors highlight an important point of comparison between Canada and Scotland that merits future attention from scholars, practitioners, and museum/gallery associations alike looking to support Canadian gallery educators and the institutions that train and employ them.

Transmission to Dialogue: Engaging Visitors and Educators as Active Adult Learners

Volunteer or paid, emerging or experienced, a gallery educator takes up learning as an ongoing part of almost every aspect of work. That said, recent literature from an array of museum contexts has echoed Ebitz's observations to suggest that there is still important work to be done regarding the training of museum educators – namely, a disconnect between said training and the learner-centred, dialogic gallery teaching with which they are increasingly expected to engage visitors (Bevan & Xanthoudaki, 2008; Deprizio, 2016; Lachapelle et al, 2016; Martis and Fleming, 2019; Nevins, 2019; Palarama, 2017; Robinson, 2019; Tran et al., 2019). Over a decade ago, science museum educators Bevan and Xanthoudaki (2008) wrote that "unless the fundamental epistemological underpinnings of transmission models are thoroughly, and constantly, re-examined, through ongoing professional development for museum educators/floor staff, our theories of learning cannot and will not inform our practices and vice versa" (p. 115). Drawing on their work in science and history education, Tran, Gupta, and Bader (2019) more recently observed that training and professional development for museum educators still typically include a common set of features: they are stand-alone experiences, they embody a deficit perspective, are designed to convey information and are treated as burdensome by the

[17] These sub themes include Communication; Collaboration; Managing and Leading; Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum; Managing Projects, Programmes, and People; Sustainability and Efficiency; Learning Context, Audiences and Participants; Heritage Sector Context; Professional Development; Administration, Reporting, and other Internal Duties; Communication; Professional Development; Resource and Activity Development.

institution. The authors suggested that the "irony is that the sentiments underlying these features contradict the level of excellence that institutions expect in the quality of their educators' work supporting visitors' experiences. Moreover, these features do not reflect what is known about how people learn or how to transform practice" (p. 135). Writing as a museum professional working on the front lines with docents, Palamara (2017) concurred that training rarely models effective engagement strategies nor meets the adult learning needs of educators themselves.

These concerns were echoed in a museum education journal issue devoted to training, in which guest editor and museum educator Deprizio (2016) argued, "Training gallery educators to facilitate […] open ended, yet informative gallery experience requires a significant shift in how we think about trainees, how we structure training and what ongoing opportunities we provide for continued growth of gallery educators" (p. 5). Based on experience working with docents and paid educators at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (ICA), museum educator Briggs Kemeza (2019) similarly made the case for training programs that 1) comprised the same variety of learning opportunities regularly offered to visitors and 2) modelled the principles of shared authority, inquiry, and dialogue that characterize the ICA's approach to guided visits. Key strategies included peer learning activities, shadowing accompanied by collective critical reflection, and in-gallery modelling of different gallery teaching methods.

Other authors have also proposed the type of asset-based shifts Deprizio imagined; for example, museum educators Martis and Fleming (2019) employed artists to run experiential training workshops, and Levent and Reich (2013) piloted a disability awareness program that combined audience research, focus groups, and staff training. Working at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Grabman, Stol, McNamara, and Brahms (2019) integrated research and training in a similarly concurrent way, developing professional development for its maker educators through a research-practice partnership. Grounded in hands-on experience, everyday experience, and local meaning-making, the project's multiple, participatory phases focused on shared language, facilitation practices, and learner types. Based on a study at the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City, Bueno Delgado's (2014) Interactive Model of Learning Dialogue examined the relationship between professional dialogue and dialogue with audiences, wherein a cyclical dynamic between audience's comments/feedback and staff's interpretation/influence has the potential to boost organizational change.

In keeping with the participant-focused spirit of these examples, museum educator and scholar McCray (2016), made a strong argument for more actively grounding the design and delivery of museum educator training in theories of adult learning. McCray outlined the relevance of andragogy, self-directed learning, and transformative learning. Like myself, Chien (2017) employed the latter for their dissertation, in which they examined how a student training program focused on interpretative strategies impacted tour guides' learning in other aspects of their lives. To varying degrees, all these examples upset both traditional transmission training techniques and assumptions about expertise and offered useful starting points to further consider the potential impact of critical adult learning theories on the competency-building and professional growth of volunteer and paid gallery educators.

Critical Adult Education in Art Museums

Founding Director of the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1999), described critical museum pedagogy as "an educational approach that reviews and develops its methods, strategies and provision with regard both to educational excellence and to working towards the democratization of the museum" (p. 4). To this, the author included enabling new voices to be heard, critically reviewing existing narratives, and addressing relations of advantage and disadvantage. Calling for an understanding of museum learning that recognized the social and cultural roles that museums play, Hooper-Greenhill also explained why critical pedagogy had not shaped museum education discourse at the time, pointing to two important misconceptions 1) an ongoing association of museum education with school children and 2) a failure to recognize that museum education operated "in the context of the museum or gallery as a cultural organization within a contradictory and unequal social framework" (p. 3).

While Hooper-Greenhill's observations now date back more than twenty years, they speak to explanations for the paucity of critical *adult* education in art museums and galleries until quite recently. Scholars Clover, Sanford, Johnson, and Bell (2016) offered three concerns that speak to this gap: the narrowing of museum education to school programmes, pedagogy's lack of stature and status within museums, and adult educator's dismissal of museums' potential as innovative and critical learning sites. These concerns resonated with my MA research (Keenlyside, 2004), which I began in 2001; at that time, I observed that the literature on adult museum learning was largely grounded in psychology and developmental theory, with limited

attention paid to questions of equity and justice. My research thus drew on a social inclusion model (Sandell, 1998, 2002) that encompassed museum practices more broadly. At the time, the irony that I observed as a gallery educator in a Canadian establishment museum myself was twofold: well-established critical museology scholarship wasn't reflected in the curatorial spaces I was working in and, with a few exceptions, the community-oriented educational thinking, work, and organizing happening on the ground was not reflected in adult education scholarship. Time and again I found myself using critical pedagogical approaches to circumvent, with adult visitors, what I considered to be problematic curatorial (and associated marketing) choices.

In more recent years, another critical turn marked a move from social inclusion towards social justice and activist museum scholarship (Beery et al, 2013; Fischer et al, 2017; Janes & Sandell, 2019; Lehrer, 2023; Raicovich 2021; Robertson 2019; Sandell & Dodd, 2010; Sandell & Nightengale, 2012; Ünsal, 2019). This wider, ongoing shift has mirrored myriad education and engagement efforts underpinned by critical pedagogies, which I reference in my second manuscript. These efforts are consistent with increasing emphasis on cultural democracy (64 Million Artists with Arts Council England, 2018) and politicized practices, such as the previously mentioned UK Museum Association's 2020 Manifesto for Museum Learning and Engagement, which emphasized justice, activism, and participation among other priorities. Similarly, a recent manifesto for Scotland featured key issues relating to partnerships, representation, and access (Museums Association, 2021). Here I acknowledge the potential for the institutional appropriation of progressive discourse and that while publications such as these may draw on case studies from the field, they do not necessarily reflect the degree of financial and institutional support such efforts (and the people behind them) receive to do the work and push it further.

Contemporary art educator and scholar Mörsch (2011) suggested that critical gallery education "involves tremendous capacity for embarrassment…It requires a willingness to take seriously views that substantially deviate from one's own position" (p. 11). In a feminist analysis of contemporary art interpretation strategies, art historian and museum scholar Ferreira (2016) imparted the importance for educators to pay close attention to the biases in their language. Both authors speak to essential considerations for developing professional learning opportunities and the challenges or even resistance that may emerge. They also point to the ongoing yet implicit connection between critical teaching and the critical learning demanded of such a praxis.

Self and organizational reflexivity about the community and social engagement we do as gallery educators require transparency, honesty, and accountability about where we, our peers, institutions, and our field have yet to arrive. While it is important to name how current intentions build on and recognize previous accomplishments, practitioners and scholars must also acknowledge the limits of our work. For example, drawing on decades of working in and researching museum engagement, Lynch (2014) problematized good intentions amongst museum workers and called for joint reflective practice between educators and curators. This call speaks to the frontline work of museum education manager Montalvo (2019) who, in a case study of a museum fellowship program, advocated for equal parts training, mentoring, and reflexive practice. These examples point to the important connection to be made between critical engagement with visitors, practitioner reflexivity, and ongoing competency building—key elements of professional learning. This brings us back to the criticality that underscored the competency models that guided my second round of interviews – 1) national standards for professional learning among teachers that emphasized criticality and collaboration (Education Scotland, 2020; General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2022), and 2) competency building among museum educators that emphasized partnerships, digital skills, and reflective practice (Group for Education in Museums, 2021). Thus, as I built upon the critical orientation of my interviews with volunteer educators in Canada, I examined in more depth how participants in Scotland conceived of a critically informed practice, with particular attention to how their professional learning fit into that understanding. I was also keen to better understand to what extent a critical practice necessarily meant a *reflexive* and/or *activist* one.

Critical Professional Learning in Art Museums

A review of current literature on explicitly critical learning[18] and teaching in art museum and gallery education point to three distinct, albeit overlapping, areas of adult learning: 1) visitors' informal learning; 2) mediated learning between visitors and educators; and 3) educators' professional learning; this final section captures the third area of inquiry. Examples

[18] While beyond the scope of this review, I will point to literature on pedagogy and historical trauma. Simon et al. (2000) discussed remembrance as a practice of critical learning that tells *the story of the telling of the story.* They conceived of a "critical, risk-laden learning that seeks to accomplish a shift of one's ego boundaries, that displaces engagements with the past and contemporary relations with others out of the narrow, inescapably violent and violative confines of the "I", to a receptivity to others, to an approaching of others. Remembrance is, then, a means for an ethical learning that impels us into as confrontation and "reckoning" not only with stories of the past but also with "ourselves" as we "are" (historically, existentially, ethically) in the present" (p. 8). This position speaks to both professional learning as relational and the uncertainty and risk that accompany dialogic gallery teaching.

of critical professional learning in art museums that reflects a social justice-oriented, activist ethos – particularly regarding race and representation—have been the subject of recent publications in Canada and the US. Certain key writings were of particular interest to me as a trainer-researcher, as they offered important points of departure for both teaching students and analyzing data. For example, texts discussing critical training included education scholar El-Amin's and gallery educator Cohen's (2017, 2021) discussions of their student docent training program, which draws on critical literacy and conscientization to train guides to both critique problematic representations of people of colour and to draw attention to positive ones—primarily those created by artists of colour themselves.

Museum professionals Ng, Ware, and Greenberg (2017) also called for critical, collective reflexivity and action amongst museum educators. Pushing for anti-oppressive museum culture, the authors discussed professional development activities with museum educators and pointed to "…a movement afoot for a new way of 'doing' museum work that looks more critically at the institution's relationship to visitors of racialized and marginalized identities and recognizes the power dynamics operating in this relationship that are maintaining white supremacy" (p. 151). Their collaboration considered the potential of allyship as a driving force for change in museum education. Also reflecting on anti-oppressive professional development with museum educators, art education scholar Dewhurst and art museum professional Hendrick (2016) noted how quickly colleagues were overwhelmed by the task of dismantling racism and encouraged them to tap into core museum education values of multiple interpretations, personal connections, contextual information, and critical thinking to begin conversations about race.

More recently, professor of adult and higher education scholar and educator Murray-Johnson (2019) profiled a training workshop for docents and educators that supported emotional management strategies for engaging in race-related dialogue with visitors. The workshop employed the author's 8S Framework, which comprises self-awareness, sensitivity, sanctuary, solid relationships, speech, separation, shedding, and sacrifice. Murray-Johnson reported that workshop participants expressed a desire to continue exploring key questions upon completing their training, including identity and privilege, micro-aggressions, and sustainable cross-cultural relationships and solutions. Murray-Johnson also acknowledged an important distinction between formal classroom and informal gallery teaching, stating, "unlike those of us in formal classroom courses, museum educators do not have the luxury of extended weeks of time with

adult learners to establish significant trust and safe space as critical foundations to race talk. As such, goal setting is important, as is creatively strategizing for valuable informal and incidental learning opportunities" (p. 136).

Such informal learning is the focus of Chapter 7, and was the focus of equity, diversity, and inclusion practitioners Crum and Hendrick (2014), who proposed Critical Multicultural Reflective Practice as an analytical framework to "prevent educators from acting as barriers that intellectually, emotionally, and culturally separate learners from artworks while placing limits on opportunities for learners, and themselves as educators, to think critically about artworks" (p. 373). They called on art museum educators to consider the relationship between individual experiences and wider social and cultural context, underscoring links between critical reflective practice, pedagogical innovation, and well-being. Building on Schon's (1984) reflection-on /reflection in-practice, their model is grounded in equity that is built around four key interactions.[19] Dewhurst and Hendrick (2018) also called on museum educators to regularly reflect on their assumptions and develop their skills and confidence in talking about race through self-directed learning including focused research, reading or discussion groups, and ongoing professional development.

The articles and frameworks I have cited above point to some of the social justice concerns shaping the work and learning of gallery educators, consider educators' own oppression or complicity in their institution's structures, and propose strategies for addressing them. Regarding my own research project, I was curious to hear about the types of learning that participants described, and to what extent these initiatives recognized and attempted to reconcile the fact that for many, museums are sites of oppression, erasure (Minott, 2019), and epistemic violence (Vawda, 2019). With my own critical practice as a starting point, my research has focused on gallery educators' lived experience, contributing to a relatively small but growing body of research on critical professional learning in art museums and galleries at a moment of increasing activism and self-awareness within the museum field more broadly. In the following chapter, I propose a complementary theoretical framework – transformative adult learning and critical pragmatism – that that underpins the manuscript texts within this dissertation and

[19] These include: Forming an educator's critical self-assessment; Forming a critical perspective with peers; Forming a critical reflective practice in teaching; Forming a critical reflective practice on teaching.

imagines possibilities for learning that may bring about progressive change in individuals, organizations, and the field of art museum education itself.

Chapter 3 | Theoretical Framework

I am a gallery educator and trainer who continually reflects on the limits and possibilities of my work. As my review of critical professional learning underscores, the need for change in art museums and galleries is an urgent one, and I take the position that this change can be enacted—in part—from within. This is the starting point of my thesis research, which examines the myriad professional learning that fosters gallery educators' reflexivity, critical teaching, and social engagement. Here I propose two complementary theories — transformative learning theory (TL) and critical pragmatism (CP)—as a framework to analyze participants' narratives in the context of challenges and change in day-to-day work, institutional life, and the wider field of art museum education. Both theories offer a space to consider 1) change as both process and outcome and 2) how power and positionality shape perceptions, meanings, experiences, and understanding. TL and CP informed both the analysis that brings together the three manuscripts of my dissertation, as well as my overall approach to researching gallery educators' professional learning[20]. In the discussion that follows I will outline key tenets of each theory and their relevance to each other, the research question, and the work of gallery educators. But first, a few more words on my theoretical starting point to situate my position.

Critical Adult Education: A Starting Point

Critical theorist Stephen Brookfield (2018) rejected the idea that critical adult education theory represents a unified stance, instead laying out the influence of multiple critical theories on the learning and teaching of adults. Brookfield argued that certain tenets have over time become key elements of sound adult education practice, for example feminist theory has privileged voice, queer theory has centred local truth and situated knowledge, and critical race theory has brought about deeper scrutiny of the ways in which institutional and subtle expressions of racism shape both learning and education. To Brookfield's list I would add that critical disability theory offers entry points for more nuanced and radical discourse around access, and decolonial theory works to dismantle dominant ways of knowing and historical narratives.

Turning to museums and galleries, Ebitz (2008) characterized critical theories as self-conscious, self-critical, and potentially emancipatory and implored museum educators to draw on

[20] I will note here that my interpretations of these theories have been shaped by additional reading on decolonial and feminist museum practices that I completed for independent studies with Dr. Heather Igloliorte (2017) and Dr. Erica Lehrer (2018).

these theories in order to consider contexts of power and authority in their work. In doing so, Ebitz made a convincing case for the kind of professional and scholarly work we have seen in the decade since he wrote. For example, in a recent edited volume on adult education in museums and galleries, Clover et al. (2016) reminded readers that critical adult education takes on myriad names and forms in addition to critical pedagogy, including: feminist, popular, and anti-racist education, decolonizing practice and methodologies, public pedagogy, transformative and radical learning, among others. They wrote,

> Adult educators in these critical traditions share a commitment to the social purpose of the field, with its baseline values of justice, equity, transformation and change. [….] Pedagogical processes intentionally disrupt, interrogate, challenge, deconstruct, render visible and decolonize how we understand the world and each other, in the interests of positive, radical, social, cultural, political, economic, and even institutional change. (p. xii)

As such, the cultural politics of museum and gallery management, conservation, display, and education offer an incentive, rather than a deterrent, for critical adult learning, and I have discussed examples of this kind of pedagogical disruption in my literature review. Throughout my dissertation, I will draw on the work of museum scholars working from the multiple traditions named above; that said, a combination of transformative learning theory and critical pragmatism offered me an overarching framework and critical stance that spoke to the specificities of my study—personal accounts of critical professional learning within the existing structures of establishment museums.

Transformative Learning

First proposed by sociologist and adult education theorist Jack Mezirow, transformative learning (TL) (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1978, 1991) refers to an adult learning process whereby an individual experiences a shift in a frame of reference. Encompassing cognitive, conative, and emotional components, 'frame of reference' refers to the body of experiences adults have acquired over their lives. It comprises two dimensions: points of views and habits of mind (Mezirow, 1997). Mezirow described the latter as 'broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes. These codes may be cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological" (p. 5–6). TL demands critical reflection, and some authors have emphasized the role of a disorienting

dilemma (Merriam, 2017; Mezirow, 1991), or pivotal event, as a necessary trigger for transformative learning. That said, adult educator and scholar Patricia Cranton (2016) argued transformative learning can also occur gradually and cumulatively over time. While museums are notably absent among the informal learning sites Cranton (1996) discussed in her early writings on transformative learning and professional development, I suggest the idea of gradual and cumulative learning speaks to the ongoing learning that museum educators engage in throughout their careers.

Regarding its social impact, Mezirow (2008) suggested that the reflexivity inherent to individual transformation is a first step towards wider social change. Nevertheless, his work faced early and ongoing criticism that it focused on individual experience at the expense of power and context (Brookfield, 2012; Cranton 2017; Holdo, 2022). Cranton (2016) argued for a more explicitly critical transformative learning theory in which a focus on the individual does not preclude attention to the systemic. Rather, it depends on circumstance: "Individual transformative learning depends on a person calling into question her or his assumptions, beliefs, and values. Transformative learning related to social justice involves calling into question socials norms, social values, and issues related to oppression…" (p. 42). Thus, contemporary TL's dual emphasis on self and social critique makes space for multiple and diverging personal accounts of critical professional learning.

Discussing the fragmentation of TL that occurred over the years following Mezirow's early work, Cranton (2006) identified three dominant conceptions of TL. These conceptions included cognitive/rational, extrarational, and social critique. In the years that followed, adult education scholars Stuckey, Taylor, and Cranton (2014) together built on this work to unify a comprehensive transformative learning theory. Fleshing out these perspectives, the authors identified processes related to each of the three conceptions.[21] While social critique and its related processes (Ideology critique; Unveiling oppression; Empowerment) speak most directly to my research and teaching praxis and the critical pedagogies that shaped them (Freire, 1972; Giroux and McClaren, 1994; hooks, 2003), processes from each of the other two perspectives are also of relevance to my research and art museum education more broadly.

[21] **Cognitive/rational:** Critical reflection; Action, Experience, Disorienting dilemma, Discourse. **Beyond rational / extrarational:** Arts based; Dialogue; Emotional; Imaginal; Spiritual; Soul work. **Social critique:** Ideology critique; Unveiling oppression; Empowerment (p. 217).

Pointing to important overlaps in this typology, these processes include critical reflection, action, discourse, empowerment, arts based, and dialogue. Stuckey et al. also identified four possible outcomes of TL: 1) acting differently; 2) having a deeper self-awareness; 3) having more open perspectives; and 4) experiencing a deep shift in worldview. I will return to these outcomes in the Methods and Procedure section as I discuss coding transcripts and in my final chapter where I discuss the extent to which participants' learning was (or was perceived to be) transformative, and if and how they paid critical attention to the multiple forces that shape the learning process itself. Discussing transformative learning among educators, Cranton (2016) emphasized educator authenticity and proposed five related facets: self-awareness, awareness of others, developing relationships, awareness of context, and developing critical reflection. These facets also resonate with a teaching practice and research orientation that strives to strengthen the links between gallery dialogue, social engagement, and wider efforts to foster inclusivity, participation, and equity.

This begs further sub questions: How does gallery educators' learning translate concretely to critical work with their colleagues, institutions, visitors, and non-visitors alike? Tran et al. (2019) wrote that professional learning is both *for* and *about* one's practice, suggesting that it requires room to reflect on emerging patterns, shared experiences, and opportunities to practice. Here we can see important links to transformative learning, pushed further by key questions posed by Juanita Johnson-Bailey (2012), a researcher of race and gender in educational and workplace settings. Describing the intersection of positionality and transformative learning as complex, unpredictable, and potentially volatile, Johnson-Bailey asked: "Are most educators and learners aware of their social positions and accompanying privileges or lack thereof? And are they then able to enter into the negotiations and understanding necessary for transformative learning to occur?" (p. 267). In the context of my research study, this and other questions begged careful attention: How regularly and to what depth would participants challenge their own, others', and institutional assumptions about teaching, museums, exhibitions, or visitors that shape their work and interactions?

I touch on these questions in all three manuscripts, for example the volunteer and freelancer status that may limit gallery educators' sense of freedom to critique their institutions (Manuscript 1 and 2) and BLM protests as a catalyst for self-reflexivity and institutional critique (Manuscript 2 and 3). In Manuscript 1 I also stressed the need for training for volunteers that is

both intentional and self-reflexive and informed by a multiplicity of critical perspectives from within and beyond the art and museum worlds. Findings also suggested that the institutional support required by volunteer guides to examine their positionalities and confidently engage with challenging subject matter goes beyond training to include clear boundaries and shared opportunities for reflection. That said, this first manuscript did not articulate in detail transformative learning as a theory guiding my research, as I describe below. In drawing on multiple critical adult learning theories, however, I did weave the work of Patricia Cranton into my discussion of educator reflexivity.

All the participants in the first stage of data gathering revealed some degree of transformation in perspective or action in their short time as guides (a point I come back to in my first manuscript and my conclusion), and it was through the process of writing this first article that I began to consider relying more heavily on transformative learning theory moving forward. My perception of transformative learning theory as too individualistic was challenged by arguments that it is equally applicable to efforts for social change. I became more interested in transformative learning theory grounded in social critique and how as a learning theory it could inform my analysis of gallery educators' accounts of their own learning. Furthermore, the works of scholars Johnson-Bailey (2012), Moore (2021), and Reid (2014), grounded in critical race theory, considered how educators are not all faced with the same professional and learning needs and challenges. Thus, if we locate ongoing transformative learning along a continuum, I found it a useful framework to draw on when considering professional learning in the context of changing discourses, practices, and power structures.

As I moved ahead with my research, I acknowledged that my doctoral work, while critical, does not have the same emancipatory intentions as other projects more firmly grounded in traditions of critical pedagogy may present. This reflection was the starting point for searching out critical theories that best capture the scope of this research project—and the lived realities of my participants as volunteers or professionals with relative privilege in establishment museums. They are further described in each manuscript.

Critical Pragmatism

Thinking about change from within—that is, transformation rather than a full dismantling—offers a segue into my discussion of critical pragmatism (CP), which offered a complementary framework to transformative learning theory. In Brookfield's (2018) discussion

of critical adult learning, he suggests that pragmatism and critical theory share a focus on transformative change, but part ways regarding their explicit critique of capitalism. Thus, he states that pragmatism imagines that significant change is achievable in institutions embedded in this system. Here Brookfield refers to schools, government departments, and hospitals. To this list of institutions—all mandated to serve the public, however different their strategies and purpose—I would add establishment museums and galleries. In keeping with my reflections detailed above, I would also suggest that applying CP as a theoretical framework captures my commitment to engaged gallery education that is concerned with social justice, but also avoids the risk of overstating the radical scope of this project. My research and teaching practice are located within a system, with the intention of contributing to wider efforts to transform it. As I have suggested, my own and my participants' actions, observations, and interpretations are shaped by our status of active insiders and direct involvement as white professionals or volunteers in establishment museums—and the privileges of both our positionalities and said involvement.

Discussing CP's potential to inform qualitative research, ethnographer, and filmmaker Vannini (2008) outlined four key characteristics that underscore its critical orientations: the socially constructed nature of reality; the emergent nature of social organization; the situated nature of knowledge; and the progressive nature of its democratic ideology. While these categories are too vast to discuss in-depth here, certain key concepts they comprise are of particular relevance to gallery education as a practice, the importance and promise of transformative professional learning, and art education research more broadly. These include reflexivity, pluralism, inclusiveness, the power of discourse and representation, and dialogue—the latter of which I expand upon below.

Planning theorist Forester (2013) outlined critical pragmatism's concern with power, inequality, and ideology, which further suggests its resonance with transformative learning grounded in social critique. Using CP to bridge theory and practice in participatory planning, Forester positioned CP as both an analytic and practical approach that attends to both process and outcome. Forester wrote that CP is co-constructive, co-generative, and appreciates multiple, contingent, evolving, and local knowledges in ways that favour critical, sensitive listening and learning through ambiguity. These attributes speak to key characteristics of both gallery dialogue

and constructivist grounded theory, which I will discuss further in the Methods and Procedure chapter.

Political theorist Kadlec (2008) argued that CP allows for multiple voices to be heard across boundaries as well as a greater understanding of how inequality is perpetuated and reproduced in the practices and arrangements one may adhere to. Like Johnson-Bailey's analysis of transformative learning and positionality, this speaks to calls for gallery educators to consider how privilege and racism shape both their teaching strategies and their learning (Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; Mayer, 2014; Ng. et al., 2017). While Kaldec's argument is made within the theory and practice of deliberative democracy, another important parallel can be made with my research sites if we return to the first line of the proposed ICOM definition: "Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic space for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures" (International Council of Museums, 2020). In other words, my goal is to honour, contextualize, and mobilize individual and collective voices of gallery educators with the same level of energy, critique, and curiosity that I approach museum publics. This also speaks to my MA research, which focused on the experiences and perspectives of community adult educators who frequented art museums with their learners. Dialogue and equity have been at the heart of my teaching and research practice ever since.

In this spirit, CP's attention to the complexities of deliberation also merits a comparison with contemporary museum learning theory. Forester wrote that CP distinguishes dialogue (which is facilitated), from both debate (which is moderated) and negotiation (which is mediated). Forester suggested that specifying the planner's mode of practice recognizes that is it participants—not the planner—who contribute most to agreements made in the planning processes. This speaks to similar approaches in art museum education scholarship, which recognize that it is participants—not the gallery educator—who contribute most to the meaning made in the learning process. As a case in point, a parallel can be seen in two influential books on gallery dialogue that point to both the educator's role and the learning that unfolds. First, in *Teaching in the Art Museum: Interpretation as Experience*, Burnham and Kai-Kee (2008) offered a typology for modes of gallery teaching that positioned gallery dialogue in between discussion (more directed, with a pre-determined outcome) and conversation (more informal and with less depth). In comparison, in *Art Museum Education: Facilitating Gallery Experiences*, Hubard (2015) labels all group learning in the gallery dialogue but made distinctions within that

category. Hubard described three kinds of gallery dialogue, one closed and two open. Predetermined dialogue is closed, resembling Burnham and Kai-Kee's discussion; working with fixed objectives, the educator determines the subject matter, direction, and end point of the group learning process. Thematic and interpretive dialogue are both open; thematic is guided in part by a key concept chosen by the gallery educator, whereas the direction of an open dialogue, which mirrors Burnham and Kai-Kee's dialogue, is determined by the visitors.

A dialogic approach grounds the training I do at the MMFA, and the work of these and other authors (Dysthe, Bernhardt, & Esbjorn, 2013; Lachapelle, 2016) has played an important role in my work training prospective guides and teaching undergraduates in art education and museum studies. Working within a complementary, critical framework, sensitivity to dialogic processes in my research 1) shaped the approach I took with my interviews and 2) offered a starting point for analyzing the ways that participants describe their interactions with visitors and peers. In this context, CP also speaks to the critical self-awareness that constructivist grounded theory, my chosen method, demands of researchers. In research as in gallery dialogue, I listen attentively, adapt to whatever direction open-ended exchanges move in, and remain cognizant of my role and positionality. I treat my colleagues, visitors, and research participants as observers, participants, and agents of their own experience (Reich, 2009).

I suggest that CP proposes a kind of cautious optimism that speaks to my efforts at change from within that I mention above. Forester proposed that CP can "move us from a deconstructive skepticism toward a reconstructive imagination, from presumptions of impossibility to explorations of possibility, from a more passive listening to joint, co-generated problem-solving" (p.6). Once again moving from planning to gallery education and practice-informed research, what might this look like? How are gallery educators' professional learning experiences shared with their peers? What place does the imagination encouraged by gallery educators hold in their own learning? Do gallery educators necessarily move from skepticism to imagination, or do the two coexist? Is problem solving prevalent in the discourse around gallery educators' professional learning? If so, is it self-initiated or imposed? Regarding procedure, I also considered how focus groups between professional peers could offer participants an opportunity for co-generative problem solving, asking myself to what extend the focus group might be experienced as a micro-peer learning event that fostered possibility and imagination.

Participants' responses revealed a variety of institutional restraints on their learning, both positive and negative. In analyzing transcripts (and in choosing focus groups as a strategy for theoretical sampling to begin with) I also considered Kadlec's notion of confluence—a juncture characterized by complexity, flux and unstable power, where alternative perspectives are voiced and heard. According to Kaldec, two infinite opportunities arise here: 1) to exploit "cracks and fissures" in power structures and 2) for transformative resistance and creativity. "Tapping into the critical potential of lived experience under conditions of unalterable changefulness begins with the therapeutic recognition that there is no such thing as a unified field of power directed entirely by stable and fixed interests" (Kadlec, 2008, p. 69). This brings us back to the cautious optimism mentioned above, which also underscores transformative learning and much adult education more broadly. Attention to systemic inequities must be intentional and ongoing; at the same time, ideas, circumstances, and accepted ways of doing, being, and knowing are never fixed. Such is the case in art museums and galleries, where new questions and perspectives should be at the heart of research, exhibition design, and learning; where history is read, reread, and rewritten; communication is constant; and artistic experimentation, imagination, and exploration challenge the expected, anticipated, and taken for granted.

Kaldec wrote extensively on the experiential learning theory of John Dewey, who over a century ago understood experience as a subjective, ongoing, and changing process through which learners make meaning and increase their capacities. In *Education and Democracy*, Dewey equated philosophy with a theory of education as deliberate practice and acknowledged the role of contextual factors: "Philosophic thinking has for its differentia the fact that the uncertainties with which it deals are found in widespread social conditions and aims, consisting in a conflict of organized interests and institutional claims" (1916, p. 253). Dewey's attention to possibility, his rejection of dualities, and attention to learning environments speak to the future iterations of pragmatic thinking discussed above. Kaldec (2006) argued that the critical underpinnings of Dewey's work were underexamined, if not misread, by 20th century critical theorists. Kaldec traced their historical mistrust of pragmatism (grounded namely in the conflation with pragmatism with positivism and the status quo) and points to Dewey's conception of lived experience as one point of convergence with critical theory. "For Dewey, if we do not undertake a pragmatic reconstructing of philosophy, aimed at recovering lived experience as a socially dynamic reservoir for critical reflection, we will be unable to understand, much less expose,

systemic patterns of injustice and inequality plaguing our past, present, and foreseeable future" (p. 539). Applying this mode of reflexivity to gallery teaching would suggest that professional learning in this spirit is future-thinking and accountable—critically attuned the individual and institutional boundaries of our work within the shifting specificities of the current moment and those to come.

Philosopher Lamons (2016) argued Dewey promoted critical consciousness—without naming it as such—as "a way to get individuals to learn about themselves, their world, their relationship to others, and how to change the world through changing themselves" (p. 5). As romantic as this may sound, it demonstrates the influence of Dewey's philosophy on transformative learning and brings us back to the recent work of political scientist Holdo (2022) whose writing on the role of reflection *on reflection* in transformative learning also looks to Dewey. Holdo suggested that traditional transformative learning considered what may influence problematic frames of reference (perspectives and habits of mind) but stopped short of extending this critical attention to the learning process itself. He wrote, "By contrast, Dewey's relational view brings attention to how learning and re-learning need to be situated: they are processes shaped by social contexts as well as individual dilemmas (p. 8). Holdo's thinking offers a helpful compass to consider links between critical pragmatism, transformative learning theory, and gallery dialogue—a practice that requires thoughtful consideration of (and engagement with) the external factors that shape the positions visitors bring to a gallery dialogue, the relationships they construct, and the conditions for their interpretations, insights, and discoveries. The need to situate critical reflection also opens a door to discuss in more depth the relationship between these three (TL, CP, and gallery dialogue) with constructivist grounded theory as a research method, which I will cover in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 4 | Method and Procedure

As outlined in the introduction, my dissertation comprises three manuscripts focused on gallery educators as critical adult learners. The first was based on interviews with 10 volunteer guides about their experiences with challenging subject matter, the types of learning they engaged in, and the conditions for learning they required engage confidently in critical dialogue with visitors. The second and third texts were based on a second round of data collection with eight paid gallery educators in Scotland – three working full time in a municipal art museum and five freelancers with various overlapping affiliations. The second manuscript considered the full spectrum of freelancer professional learning leading up to and through the pandemic, while the second, encompassing both freelancer and paid educators, examined the potential for informal learning to inform practice and shape internal policy.

In the early stages of my research, I drew on tenets of constructivist grounded theory (CGT) and subsequently deepened my engagement with this method as I moved forward. Broadly speaking, this method shares some key qualities with transformative learning and critical pragmatism: it demands reflexivity, values lived experience, and is generative. In what follows I present a brief overview of CGT before I demonstrate its critical potential, elaborate on its suitability for critical art museum educational research, and highlight its resonance with my professional ethos. I will then draw on additional literature to situate my use of one-on-one interviews and small focus groups vis-à-vis my research and teaching practice. I also describe and explain the steps I took to recruit participants, gather data, and conduct my analyses as well as the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the second phase of my research project.

Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT)

A Brief Overview of CGT

Constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2014) stemmed from the work of sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967), who first proposed grounded theory five decades ago. Their research shook scholarly assumptions of the time by underscoring the capacity for qualitative researchers to codify and theorize their data. The various iterations of the method over the last 50 years share certain key premises: analyzing social processes through constant comparison, viewing truth as provisional, and offering tools for constructing theory (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007). Grounded theory deliberately blurs the distinction between phases of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014); drawing on both abductive and inductive

reasoning, it is a systematic method characterized by its combination of coding, ongoing analytic memo-writing, and theoretical sampling. These strategies are not conducted in a linear way—rather, they overlap, employed concurrently in an iterative process.

Charmaz's epistemological break from traditional grounded theory lay in her criticism of its objectivist orientations. Problematizing positivism and rejecting the very possibility of a 'neutral 'researcher, constructivist grounded theory (CGT):

> (1) gives priority to the studied phenomenon rather than techniques of studying it; (2) takes reflexivity and research relationships into account; (3) assumes that both data and analyses are social constructions; (4) studies how participants create meanings and actions; (5) seeks an insider's view to the extent possible; and (6) acknowledges that analyses are contextually situated in time, place, culture, and situation. (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2007, pp. 3-4)

CGT resonated with my practice as an adult/gallery educator, trainer, and researcher in multiple ways. The focus on participants' situated meaning making and the notion that knowledge is a construction brought me back to influential research on museum learning (Hein, 1994, 2004). Memo-writing mirrors my own reflective practice as an educator; I engage in reflexive writing and encourage my students to do so during their initial training and beyond. I constantly learn through teaching, am cognizant of power and positionality vis-à-vis learners, colleagues, and museum visitors, and am committed to reflexivity in my work.

Mental health scholars Ramalho et al. (2015) stated that the "[CGT] researcher's voice should not only be explicitly recognized, but also analyzed as an influential element in the resulting theory" (p. 7). These examples speak to CGT's recognition of multiple realities, situated knowledge, and researcher/participant subjectivity (Charmaz et. al, 2017) and are captured in Charmaz's (2014) claim that CGT "shreds notions of a neutral observer and value-free expert. Not only does that mean that researchers must examine rather than erase how their privileges and preconceptions may shape the analysis, but it also means that their values shape the very facts that they can identify" (p. 13). This position in particular spoke to my professional position that adheres to longstanding critiques of neutrality claims in museums and galleries; more broadly, CGT resonated with me through what I consider to be complementary qualities: rigor, openness, structure, and transparency. CGT also echoed the ways transformative learning theory influenced my work; namely, how two key outcomes of a transformative learning

experience—acting differently and having more open perspectives—intersect with Cranton's (2016) five key facets of educator authenticity: self-awareness, awareness of others, relationships, context, and critical reflection.

Constructivist Grounded Theory and Critical Art Museum Education Research

As I moved through my first phase of data collection (volunteer guides) and on to my second (paid educators), I took on the task of applying complementary methodological and theoretical frameworks that pushed my stance both as doctoral researcher and gallery educator and trainer. The frameworks I chose to blend—transformative learning, critical pragmatism, and constructivist grounded theory—offered conceptual grounding for a research approach that not only fit the context and scope of my thesis proposal but also spoke to the strategies and ethos of my teaching. With this in mind, I settled on overlapping questions begging further investigation to assess CGT's limits and usefulness for my research with gallery educators: the place it provides for participation, its commitment to action/change, and its compatibility with the critical adult learning theories that ground my practice in gallery teaching, training, and research. These concerns speak to the claim that while grounded theorists had historically ignored issues related to participation, mutual learning between grounded theory and action research can be fruitful (Dick, 2007).

In the last decade, Charmaz (2014, 2017, 2020) and other CGT scholars have pushed the possibilities for both participation and action further. For example, they have written on the potential of a critical grounded theory, which, according to cultural studies and applied linguistics scholar Hadley (2019), "highlights social processes and phenomena pertaining to the problems of power, inequality, and discrimination in all its varied manifestations" (p. 3). Hadley promoted a stand-alone method, unlike scholars/music therapists Hense and McFerran (2016), who considered critical grounded theory to be an extension of constructivist grounded theory. They combined critical tenets of participatory action research (PAR) with constructivist grounded theory as an emerging strategy for generating local theory. While the authors pointed out important axiological, ontological and epistemological differences between participatory research and CGT (such as CGT's focus on understanding over PAR's cycles of change), they also highlighted where the two converge with regard to critical inquiry. For example, CGT's commitment to reflexivity and self-critique, use of inductive reasoning, immersion in data and lived experience, and a belief that knowledge is co-constructed between researcher and

participant all mirror important elements of participatory research (and, I would add, TL and CP). Hense and McFerran pushed CGT's emphasis on context further to propose a 'collaborative reflexivity', which "raises participant's role from a source of data to collaborators who mutually benefit through opportunities to build critical awareness in the research process" (p.22). This concept inspired further consideration as I reflected on the potential for transformative learning gallery educators may experience through the research process itself. Both interview questions and theoretical sampling offered entry points to my inquiry into this aspect of participation, and I explore this in the final section of this dissertation.

Similarly, public health researchers Redman-MacLaren and Mills (2015) proposed what they called 'transformational grounded theory', which combines CGT with both participatory research and decolonizing methodologies. According to the authors, this method privileges participation, a redistribution of power, and action for positive change; "collaborative analysis at critical junctures in a transformational grounded theory study enhances theoretical sampling and strengthens decisions making about concurrent data generation and analysis" (p. 6). Both Hense and McFerran and Dick made the case that constant comparison traditionally reserved for CGT data analysis could be employed directly with participants. Dick reminded action-oriented scholars of the wealth of knowledge and strategies to be found in practitioner literature; for myself, access to this grey literature allowed me another perspective from which to consider action ethos as outlined by higher education researcher Rand (2013): process-oriented, systematic, reflective, and geared towards improvement. Rand suggests the primary link between action approaches and CGT methodology is agency—which, I underscore, is also a key concept for critical gallery and adult education.

Central to the claim that CGT can foster critical inquiry is the notion of methodological self-consciousness, which brings us back to reflexivity, a basic tenet of CGT, TL, and CP. Methodological self-consciousness involves "detecting and dissecting our worldviews, language, and meanings and revealing how they enter our research in ways we had previously not realized. Thus, tacit individualism becomes visible" (Charmaz, 2017, p. 36). It challenges the researcher's assumptions about how their research advances social justice and identifies "intersecting relationships with power, identity, subjectivity—and marginality—for both the researcher and research participants. Moreover, it involves seeing what constitutes these relationships and how, when, why, and to what extent they shift and change. We cannot assume and reify their stability"

(p. 36). This instability points to an important connection to the notions of flux and fissure embraced by critical pragmatism.[22]

Most recently, Charmaz (2020) suggested that the abduction inherent in theoretical sampling allows researchers to make important links between subjective experience and social structures: "Pursuing critical inquiry with constructivist grounded theory leads to social justice permeating the methodology, not simply the findings. Abductive inference is crucial because it demands that researchers consider all possible theoretical understandings for puzzling data […]. With constructivist grounded theory, we can blur binaries between categorizing experience and changing it" (p. 174). Health researchers Kassam, Marcellus, Clark, and O'Mahony (2020) examined the critical feminist potential of CGT through the lens of intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991), a theoretical framework for considering the ways that race and other factors intersect to shape identity and experience, and how interlocking systems of oppression "engender particular forms and expressions of violence" (Jiwani, 2006, p. 18). Kassam et al. proposed four units of analysis (reflexivity, complexity, social justice, and variability) to demonstrate CGT's congruence with intersectional approaches to structuring research questions, conducting studies, and interpreting results. While the authors focus on critical approaches to research with complex/vulnerable populations, their work also speaks to relatively recent literature applying intersectional analysis to critique, among other things, museum structures, programs, policies, and visitor engagement (Jennings & Moore, 2016; Robert, 2014).

A research stance that embraces both scrutiny and doubt, combined with axiologies and strategies geared to social action and change, suggests that CGT and critical adult learning theories are complementary. In this spirit, key elements of my chosen framework that mark the bridge between theories of transformative learning, critical pragmatism, and CGT deserve repeating: awareness of self and others, questioning assumptions and structures, polyvocality, flux, possibility, and attention to context, relationships, and power.

Key Strategies in CGT

As previously stated, CGT is an iterative process comprising three key strategies that support theorizing. The researcher *codes* transcripts and documents in two non-linear phases:

[22] This instability also resonates with diffractive practices (Hill, 2017), through which educators assume a stance of *becoming-with others*—disrupting binaries, creating new subjectivities, and embracing multiplicity, difference, and divergence.

initial and focused. Codes name actions or processes and, in the case of *in vivo* codes, capture participants' statements verbatim. As coding begins, so does analytic *memo-writing*. Here the researcher writes reflexive, analytical narratives about their interpretations to date and the research process as a whole. Identifying gaps in the data, codes, and resulting categories, the researcher then embarks on *theoretical sampling.* This involves asking new questions of both the data and participants—questions that are shaped by the tentative categories the researcher has constructed. This kickstarts anew the coding and memo-writing process until the researcher determines that theoretical saturation—within the specific limits of their research study—has been reached. Here I will outline in more depth each of these three analytical tasks; later in this chapter I will explain in more detail how they were employed in my dissertation work.

Coding

Coding in qualitative research involves attributing words or short phrases to segments of written data. In *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* Saldaña (2016) identified two main types: descriptive and *in vivo.* Descriptive codes are those words the researcher chooses to summarize a key topic emerging from a given excerpt of text. In vivo codes, on the other hand, are pulled directly from what research participants have said. These verbatim codes include common, unique, or insider terms that reflect the assumptions, actions, and imperatives that frame participants' actions (Charmaz, 2014). All codes should represent actions and processes, and can reflect cognitive aspects or meanings, emotional aspects or feelings, or hierarchical aspects or inequalities (Saldaña, 2016). Codes are not fixed. Rather, they are tentative constructions; through constant comparison they will change, develop, or decay (Miles et al, 2014). Cyclical in practice, coding is, according to Saldaña (2016), always an interpretive act: "Coding is not just labelling, it is *linking"* (p. 8). Other authors would concur: "It involves abstracting something we see in our data and defining it with a label that is conceptual" (Belgrave & Seide, 2019, p. 21). Charmaz (2014) explained that grounded theory coding goes beyond a search for topics to explicate a given phenomenon. Codes are constructed in the sense that researchers actively name data: "We may think our codes capture the empirical reality yet it is *our* view: we choose the words that constitute our codes. Thus, we define what we see as significant in the data and describe what we think is happening" (p. 115).

For Charmaz, *initial coding* is a preliminary step in conceptualizing data. "This type of coding helps to define meanings and actions, gives researchers directions to explore, spurs

making comparisons between data, and suggests emergent links between processes in the data to pursue and check" (p. 121). Initial coding should start from the beginning of data collection (Charmaz, 2014; Miles, et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016), and is characterized by its proximity to data, emphasis on action, and openness to all theoretical possibilities (Belgrave & Seide, 2019; Charmaz, 2014). *Focused coding* occurs at another level of abstraction; it offers the researcher an analytic tool to assess the conceptual strength of their initial codes by filtering and organizing the most salient ones into categories and testing them with larger batches of data (Belgrave & Seide, 2019; Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2016). Charmaz stressed that the move from initial to focused coding is not linear; the researcher is free to go back to earlier transcripts to examine, for example "topics that had been glossed over, unstated, or may have been too implicit to discern initially" (Charmaz, p.141). The strongest codes are compared to data and to each other to form categories. In turn, relationships between significant categories lead the researchers to determine the themes or concepts that underlie their theory. Determining categories requires significant critical reflection, hence coding cannot be separated from analytic memo-writing.

Memo-writing is key to examining data and the codes the researcher attributes to them. Sociologist Lempert (2007) suggested that memos offer researchers a tool to ask questions of the data: "What is this an example of? When does it happen? Where is it happening? With whom? How? Under what conditions does it seem to occur? With what consequences?" (p. 8). Qualitative researchers Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) offered a simple description of analytic memos: narratives that document the researcher's reflections and thinking processes. While grounded theory coding works toward abstract levels of understanding that lead to theory building (memos should not be descriptive, nor summarize), Miles et al. maintain that memos "offer clarity and insight, not conceptual epiphanies" (p. 99). Lempert (2007) reminded researchers to embrace uncertainty as generative, and Charmaz (2014) wrote that memo-writing requires us to tolerate ambiguity. Similarly, Saldaña (2016) claimed, "Writing *about* the problematic, the ambiguous, and the complex is no guarantee that crystal clarity will evolve, but the approach serves as a heuristic that may lead to deeper awareness of the multifacted social world, and as an initiating tactic to refocus the blurry" (p. 54). Regarding memo-writing as a heuristic echoes Forester's claim that CP also favours learning through ambiguity.

In his discussion about the relationship between coding and memo-writing, Saldaña identified multiple possible areas for reflection that include the researcher's relationship to

participants, links among codes, emerging patterns, and ethical dilemmas, among others (p. 53). These short, at times spontaneous documents serve analysis in multiple ways. Charmaz (2014) stressed the importance of capturing comparisons and connections: "Memo-writing encourages you to dig into implicit, unstated, and condensed meanings" (p. 180) and "prompts you to elaborate processes, assumptions, and actions covered by your codes or categories" (p. 171). Taking codes apart reveals both tacit and explicit meanings at multiple stages of the research process, and early memos function to explore codes and focus further data collection (Charmaz, 2014). Advanced memos, on the other hand, go deeper to shape and sharpen an argument—tracing and categorizing data, describing how a given category emerges and changes, identifying beliefs and assumptions that support it, and specifying how it informs action and experience (p. 170).

Theoretical sampling, with its rigorous, conceptual focus on categories, sets grounded theory traditions apart from other qualitative methods. This abductive gathering of additional data, Charmaz (2014) explains, happens at the point in the research process where the researcher has established tentative categories through coding and memo taking, but "too much remains assumed, unknown, or questionable" (p. 192). Put another way, theoretical sampling involves moving back and forth between data collection and analysis to advance to higher levels of conceptual precision and abstraction. New data are given codes, which are then compared with previous ones. Working with human subjects, this could involve asking existing participants new questions, observing them in other contexts, or recruiting new participants all together. Theoretical sampling could also involve studying additional documents or attending to new events, activities, or time periods (Van den Hoonaard, 2008). This process ensures that the categories informing the researcher's wider theoretical concepts have been systematically questioned and are firmly situated in the research data. Charmaz described theoretical sampling as both "a strategy to focus on emerging categories and as a technique to develop and refine them [….] Consistent with the logic of grounded theory, theoretical sampling is emergent. Your *developing* ideas shape what you do, areas you tap, and questions you probe while doing theoretical sampling" (p. 205–206).

Research Design

I chose one-on-one, open-ended interviews for my first phase of data collection because of my pre-existing rapport with the research participants. Given the relationships of trust

established over the course of their training, as well as my familiarity with them as students, I anticipated they would be forthcoming and reflective in the context of a one-on-one interview. It is important to note here that the limits imposed by time, finances, and ethics clearance that shape the work of a student researcher. As I mention in my first article, I employed what Barbour (2008) has referred to as an 'abbreviated' version of grounded theory in my initial research design—I did not return to the field to gather further data following the one-on-one interviews.

Moving forward, one piece of feedback I received through the peer review process on my first manuscript was that a focus group would have strengthened my methodology. No detailed explanation was offered but I took this advice to the next stage of data collection (Scotland) given that a focus group would open another door for theoretical sampling. Additional reading on focus group process and analysis drew my attention to complementary relationships between individual and group interviews, and given my ongoing interest in dialogic learning, I saw potential for obtaining rich data in participants' exchanges. Finally, as was outlined in my recruitment and consent materials for my second study, I hoped that participants themselves would benefit from the opportunity to share with their peers in an open-ended discussion that will allow them to focus on the issues and stories they are most keen to talk about.

My goal was to interview eight–ten participants and I opted for smaller focus groups (up to five people). This number was supported by Guest et al. (2013), who suggested that smaller focus groups are appropriate under conditions that applied to my own research study: participants are highly involved in, and know a lot about, the topic (their own learning); the topic is complex (building competence for engaging equitably and critically with visitors), and the researcher is looking for detailed narratives (personal experience that highlights meaning, value, potential and limits of critical professional learning). Before presenting the various stages of my dissertation work in more detail, I will highlight key ideas from select literature examining the role of interviews and focus groups in qualitative research.

Interviews

Interviews are common choice for data collection in grounded theory studies. Emergent and generative interactions, their combination of focused attention and open-ended inquiry mirror grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Intensive or in-depth interviews are participant driven, rely on open-ended questions and active listening, emphasize depth, detail, and meaning, and make time for follow-up (Charmaz, 2014; Guest et. al, 2013; Rapley, 2004;

Seidman 2019; Yeo et. al). According to Charmaz (2014), the two major concerns of grounded theory interviews are learning participants' meanings and exploring ideas of theoretical interest when participants share them. Charmaz suggested that constructivist grounded theory in particular attends to the construction of the interview, the participant's story and silences, the interviewer-participant relationship, and the explicit content of the interview. In addition to following up on taken-for-granted meanings, "A constructivist would emphasize eliciting the participant's definitions of terms, situations, and events, and try to tap his or her assumptions, implicit meanings, and tacit rules." (p. 95). In this spirit, sociologist Rapley (2004) reflected on their own research practice in stating "I'm not trying to establish the 'truth' of interviewees' actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts but rather how specific (and sometimes contradictory) *truths* are produced, sustained and negotiated." (p. 22). Here, given the orientation of my dissertation, I would add transformed.

Charmaz (2014) also suggested that interviews are compatible with grounded theory because they open inquiry, offer a tool for advancing theoretical analyses, and fit together as complementary data collection and data analysis methods. "The iterative process of grounded theory leads you to focus, write, reflect, and focus again while interviewing. It also fosters studying, revising, and developing your interview questions and skills" (p. 108) In this same spirit, Rapley (2004) suggested that "analysis *is always an ongoing process* that routinely starts prior to the first interview" (p. 23). Below I discuss five key interview considerations that are relevant to both individual and group interviews and touch on both data collection and analysis: probing; questioning strategies; body language; transcriptions; and reflexivity.

Probing

In their qualitative research field manual, Guest, Namey, Mitchell et. al (2013) defined probing in interviews as "inductive, unscripted questions asked by an interviewer based on a participant's previous response" (p. 34). The authors identified two types of probes: direct, which involves follow-up questions, and indirect, which favours subtle strategies for keeping the participant talking. The latter could include non-verbal signals to demonstrate interest and listening, repeating back or paraphrasing for encouragement, or attentive silence. These same authors propose that the probing in focus groups and individual interviews is very similar; the researcher —whether in the role of facilitator or interviewer—uses a probe to glean more information about a relevant point. The difference, the authors note, is that in focus groups, the

researcher uses a probe to foster the group dynamic and directs it to the group as a whole—not necessarily the last person to speak. Qualitative researchers Finch, Lewis, and Turley (2013) also discussed potential benefits, suggesting probing for details and asking participants to reflect on a different angle encourages in-depth exploration.

Qualitative research and education scholar Seidman (2019), however, rejected the term probe because of the power dynamic he considers implicit in the term. Rather, the author opted for the idea of 'exploring with participants' which, like probing, serves to ensure clarity and avoid generalizations. That said, Seidman warned that "too much and ill-timed exploration of the participant's words can make him or her defensive and shift the meaning making from the participants to the interviewer. The interview can become too easily a vehicle for the interviewer's agenda rather than an exploration of the participant's experience" (p. 86). This deliberate attention to the researcher's interventions brings us back to the different modes of practice that facilitate, moderate, and mediate decision making (Forester, 2014), as well as the typologies for dialogic gallery teaching (Burnham and Kai-Kee, 2011; Hubard, 2015) that make similar distinctions. It also points to the need for CGT researchers to effectively balance their attention between participants' stories and the search for analytic properties (Charmaz, 2014).

Questioning strategies

Constructivist interview questions are generally open-ended. They begin with *what, how*, or *why,* and can also be replaced with statements that invite participants to narrate their stories. Guest et. al (2013), stated that this helps researchers to better grasp participants' "views of processes, norms, decision making, belief systems, mental models, interpretations, motivations, expectations, hopes, and fears." (p. 5). For Seidman (2019), they provide the necessary space for participants to reconstruct their experience on their own terms. Seidman's position on the types of questions interviewers should avoid speaks directly to the training I give to future guides on how to ask questions of visitors when using a dialogic approach the museum's galleries; the following quote is remarkably close to the advice I give guides, repeatedly, over the course of the semester as they develop their questioning skills: "If interviewers want to ask a question to which they think they know the response, they are better to say what they think, and then to ask the participant what he or she thinks of the assertion" (p. 87). Otherwise, this kind of "wrong" question, according to Charmaz (2014), risks overlooking key issues and undermining participants' conceptions, concerns, and discourse, and language. Through carefully planned

questions, the interviewer is better equipped to question their own interests, assumptions, use of language, and processes.

Body language

In the back and forth of questions and answers, Finch et. al offer two reasons why body language is important: it can demonstrate researchers' agreement or disagreement with answers and indicate participants' feelings about the process. Charmaz (2014) echoed this, suggesting that in addition to tone, pacing, and wording, facial and bodily signs can reveal participants' concerns and vulnerabilities. In this context, Charmaz suggested that questions of consent should go beyond signing a form and verbal 'check-ins' to consider non-verbal cues. Like Cranton's (2016) concerns with educators' non-verbal communication in adult group learning, qualitative research specialist Yeo and colleagues (2013) discussed their concerns about the implications of the researcher's own body language. "Researchers should be alert to how their verbal or nonverbal responses may influence the research interaction or inadvertently lead the interview in an unhelpful direction" (p. 192). The authors suggest this can range from laughter or a sharp intake of breath to an expression of surprise or skepticism. Of note here is the limits of online interviews; head shots or cameras turned off, shaky audio, and delayed responses all reduced my capacity as a researcher to observe or discern gestures that may have given me more insight into participants' comments (and vice-versa).

Transcription

Documenting a human encounter has its limits, and this brings me to transcripts. Rapley (2004) suggested that "When it comes to analysing interviews […] *you should analyse what actually happened* – how your interaction produced that trajectory of talk, how specific versions of reality are co-constructed, how specific identities, discourses and narratives are produced" (p. 17). This critical approach to analysing interview data becomes a challenge if the researcher doesn't capture complexities of exchange between interviewer and interviewee in their transcript, nor acknowledge the subjectivity of the transcription process itself. Miles et al. (2014) stressed that transcription is interpretation and thus influenced by the researcher's personal values, attitudes, and beliefs

In their overview of in-depth interviewing, Guest et. al (2013) suggested researchers include detailed notations comprising non-verbal elements including body language, mood, and gestures, as well as documentation of such things as seating charts, to capture as much context as

possible. Scholars of discursive psychology Potter and Hepburn (2014) offered a lengthy, critical analysis of interviewing and explicate multiple challenges they consider to be too commonly overlooked by researchers. They call on researchers to make the role of the interview and interaction more visible in their representations of interviews. “It is ironic that as we claim to be social scientists, rather than students of literature, we have been wiping out the embodied and voiced nature of talk” (p. 7). They claim most researchers work with “impoverished” and “distorted” (p. 7, 9) transcripts that are missing what is hearable and relevant to interaction. What do they suggest is missing? “Overlaps, closing intonation, latching of turns to one another, rising and falling intonation, raised volume, stretched vowel sounds, and different kinds of breaths and laugh particles” (p. 9). While Potter and Hepburn’s call for action is tangible yet weighty, Rapley (2004), who drew attention to communicative details such as pauses, stress, and overlapping speech, offered more straightforward advice: check the transcript against the audio and re-listen to the audio while re-reading the transcript. I followed this advice, listening to each transcript as I corrected transcripts and again in my third round of coding.

Reflexivity

Finally, while I touched on reflexivity in the previous chapter, and return to it in Manuscript 2 and in my conclusion, psychotherapist Finlay’s (2014) *Five Lenses for the Reflexive Interview* merits mention here, to consider the role and relevance of reflexivity in the collection and analysis of data. Finlay proposed a typology of five lenses of reflexivity through which researchers can evaluate interviews: strategic (focused on methodology), contextual-discursive, embodied, relational, and ethical. In keeping with CGT’s methodological self-consciousness, these lenses are applied prior to, during, and after the interview. With attention to how they influence the research, “the reflexive interviewer looks through a critical lens at the process, context, and outcomes of research and interrogates the construction of knowledge” (p. 2). This typology offered me a useful tool to both monitor my role and actions as a researcher and analyse any participant responses that relate to their reflexivity as educators and learning – a point I elaborate on in my concluding discussion.

Focus groups

Guest et. al (2013) defined a focus group as a “carefully planned discussion with a small group of people on a focused topic. The group setting and group dynamics are integral to focus group data collection” (p. 2). A review of just a small sample of the plethora of writing on focus

groups from the last two decades suggests multiple authors would concur, suggesting that the importance of the group setting and dynamic applies to both data collection and analysis (Barbour, 2017; Caillaud & Flick, 2017; Macnaghten & Myers, 2004). This speaks to the critical awareness of self and others central to CGT, TL, and CP.

A focus group's social dynamic sets it apart from other data collection tools; in his pioneering work on focus groups for qualitative research, sociologist David L. Morgan (1997) suggested that focus groups "occupy an intermediate position between participant observation and open-ended interviews" (p. 2). For example, their unique social context allows the researcher to: gain insight into group dynamics of a peer group (Caillaud & Flick, 2017; Morgan & Hoffman, 2018); generate and answer research questions (Morgan, 1997); observe interaction on a given topic and acquire evidence about similarities and differences in the participants' opinions and experiences (Caillaud & Flick, 2017; Morgan, 1997; Morgan & Hoffman, 2018); study the ways in which meanings, interpretations, and narratives are socially constructed (Caillaud & Flick, 2017); and examine the intricacies and conventions of group discussions (Barbour, 2017; Macnaghten & Myers, 2004). Guest et. al, (2013) listed other key elements of group exchanges that have the potential to provide rich qualitative data: group norms and normative expectations; opinions and perspectives; reactions and responses; and problem solving and brainstorming. In a similar vein, Finch et. al made concrete recommendations for harnessing the group process, which include "making room for reflections and refinement of views; focusing on and reframing emergent issues to encourage the group to go deeper into them; highlighting diversity the group and encouraging people to explore its dimensions and causes, and challenging apparent consensus where this is led by conformity to social norms" (p. 241).

Finch et al. also proposed that focus group participants ask questions, which leads us to consider how the above-mentioned facilitator strategies (and accompanying power) can be shared with participants. Barbour (2017) wrote about the potential for participants to take on the informal role of 'co-moderators' or 'co-analysts'. This is consistent with the observations of qualitative researchers and psychologists Sabine Caillaud and Uwe Flick (2017): during focus groups participants challenge both themselves and others with varying points of view. Similarly, Morgan (1997) suggested that participants may make comparisons between different experiences and opinions within the group that offer valuable insights into complex behaviours and motivations. Given the writing on focus groups since Morgan's earlier work, it is worth noting

that none of the literature I consulted made explicit reference to positionality or the potential for microaggressions in the group context. Much like the role of open-ended questions, this issue reflects another parallel between facilitating data collection and facilitating gallery dialogue—negotiating power and difference.

This presents a point of departure to consider Morgan's (2017) claim that 'common ground' is a useful concept when reflecting on the research implications of both homogeny and heterogeneity within a given focus group. "Common ground emphasizes a mutual understanding of the issues involved in the topic, so that each participant can be reasonably sure that the others will be able to relate to what they say. Even when there is considerable room for disagreement within the group, there can still be enough common ground to carry on a respectful discussion" (p. 416). Barbour (2007) suggested that one of the complexities of focus group analysis is that discussion can occur on multiple levels and serve multiple functions. She warned against taking comments out of context and encouraged researchers to "Look at where they arise in the discussion, what other comments may have prompted these, and consider what the speaker is using the utterance to achieve; for example, providing a supportive environment for others, staking a claim to membership of a specific group, or emphasizing her or his separation from others" (p. 143).

Broadly speaking, focus groups' attention to breadth and interaction mean that they do not provide the degree of depth and detail that individual interviews offer (Morgan, 1997) but the differences between the two should not be overstated. (Morgan and Hoffman, 2018). Guest et al. (2013) reminded readers that both focus groups and individual interviews "offer the ability to drill down into the *how* and *why* of human experience, behavior, perceptions, and beliefs; with sufficient sample sizes, both can give some indication of norms and range of perspectives on a given a topic" (p. 4). Morgan and health researcher Kim Hoffman promoted a view that positions focus groups and individual interviews as complementary rather than competing methods. "The argument for combining methods is fundamentally a plea for the mutual relevancy of all research methods rather than an assertion of the superiority of any one technique" (p. 11).

Data Gathering and Analysis: An Iterative Process in Practice

As discussed in the previous section, the focal point of my dissertation research was participants' reflections on their lived experience as volunteer or paid educators. As a practitioner myself, I chose to pursue a practice-oriented research project that was grounded in—

and facilitated—reflection with educators about daily work and accompanying learning in the past, present, and future. During our meetings I asked all participants to describe and reflect on their learning aspirations and experiences. What follows outlines my procedure for recruiting participants and working with the transcripts.

Canada

At the end of 2017, I put out an open call to all my past students who had become guides at the MMFA (see Appendix A). Within two weeks, approximately 1/3 (10) of those contacted responded positively to the request, and after receiving additional information agreed to participate (see Appendix B). Participants determined the location of the interviews; once they gave their consent to participate (see Appendix C, D) interviews all took place in public spaces where we could still maintain a level of privacy. This included the MMFA, Concordia's Webster Library, and the Bibliothèque national du Québec. Between February and April 2018, I conducted interviews ranging in length from 50 to 75 minutes, nine in French and one in English. Participants answered a written questionnaire and open-ended interview questions (see Appendix E, F). They were all white and semi-retired or retired. I included nine of the ten interviews I conducted in Canada.[23]

Scotland and The First Wave of COVID-19

In 2020 I collected data via two means: one-on-one interviews and focus groups. Additionally, I conducted one follow-up meeting with three of the eight participants. Any gallery educator working with an institution in Scotland qualified to participate in my project—I was open to discussions with professionals representing myriad education and training backgrounds, career stages, job status (e.g. permanent, contractual, or casual / full or part-time) and positionalities. Given that my time, resources, and recruitment strategies were limited as a doctoral student abroad and by the pandemic, I did not focus on one affiliation group nor seek to cover a full range of professional and life experience. That said, I considered participants' demographics in my analysis. This is in keeping with research on how the identities of gallery educators shape their professional lives (Reid, 2014) and constructivist grounded theory tenets that underscore the need for researchers to be reflexive and remain critically aware of how their

[23] The 10th interview revealed my limitations as a novice interviewer. The research participant asked several questions at the beginning of the interview that resulted in an interesting conversation between us but one in which my own voice was too present. I kept the transcript with the possibility that an additional reading would offer new insight, however I determined there was not enough relevant content to include it in my analysis.

own and participants' subjectivities cannot be separated from larger questions of privilege and power—and thus, shape data collection, content, interpretation, and reporting.

I arrived in Scotland in January 2020 with the intention of completing in-person data collection by July of the same year. My original procedure involved travelling to various sites across the country to interview educators in their workplaces, but the first wave of COVID-19 required me to move recruitment, interviews, and focus groups online. Thus, the pandemic had an immediate effect on my research project. First, having submitted ethics forms[24] to Concordia's Office of Research on March 8, by March 25th I had resubmitted my clearance application with amendments that respected an immediate and indefinite suspension on in-person research with human subjects. Second, I had been scheduled to present at a UK-wide peer learning event beginning March 24. This event was cancelled following a March 23 announcement made by Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who stated, "Let me blunt. The stringent restrictions on our normal day to day lives that I'm about to set out are difficult and they are unprecedented" (BBC, 2020).

Lockdown immediately followed, with stay-at-home measures coming into place the following day. From this date on, people could only leave their homes for essential food shopping, medical assistance, an hour of once-daily exercise, or work that could not be done from home. Non-essential travel was restricted within 5 miles. Museums shut their doors for the next five months, reopening just days after my return to Canada in July 2020. Before these closures I was able to visit colleagues in three Scottish cities; this included two meetings and attendance at one networking event organized by Engage Scotland[25].

Such was the context in which I recruited participants via two complementary avenues. The first was through Engage Scotland's Coordinator, who included a recruitment message (see Appendix G) from me in their monthly newsletter, which reached roughly 80 members on their mailing list. In this message I introduced myself, the research project, conditions for participation, and my contact information for those interested in participating to contact me directly. The second strategy was contacting museum educators and managers directly (see

[24] Because I gathered data in Canada as part of a pedagogical inquiry through my doctoral course work, I used an abbreviated summary protocol form. Therefore, there is only an ethics certificate for the Scottish data gathering included in the appendices.

[25] Engage, the UK's national association for gallery education, has a head office in England and additional arms in Scotland and Wales.

Appendix H); my participation in an early Engage networking event had put me in contact with practitioners from across Scotland. In lieu of presenting my research at the cancelled Engage UK peer learning conference, I presented at a second Engage Scotland networking event, online, in June 2020. Having only secured three participants by this point, I was grateful for that important first opportunity to speak to a group of my peers as potential participants. A last recruitment strategy was an announcement on the website of Creative Scotland, the public body that supports the country's arts, screen, and creative industries.

I recruited three participants through direct contact; one person I initially wrote to passed the invitation on to their colleagues and supervisor, and they agreed as a team to participate. Their supervisor also offered to take part, but I chose to limit my research to one level of employees within an institutional hierarchy. A fourth participant responded to my Creative Scotland announcement and invited me to present my project at an online gathering of freelancers who had been meeting biweekly online from the onset of the pandemic. The subsequent four participants came to the project following my two online presentations and via word of mouth. All eight participants signed consent forms (see Appendix I), and I conducted open-ended interviews with them between May and October 2020 (see Appendix J). I facilitated a focus group in June with permanent educators and in October 2020 with freelance educators (see Appendix K). I also led a follow-up meeting in December 2021 with three of the five freelancers (see Appendix L, M, N). Interviews ranged in duration from 40 to 60 minutes, focus groups were between one and two hours, and the follow-up meeting lasted one hour. Seven of the eight participants were mid-career (two specified that they were mid-career but relatively new to gallery education) and one self-identified as early career. All were white.

It is essential to mention that my fourth interview in June 2020 deepened my researcher reflections on professional reciprocity and compensation, leading me to make changes in my ethics protocol (see Appendix O). Having learned more about the challenges faced by freelancer gallery educators in Scotland (particularly during lockdown), I subsequently proposed an amendment to offer honorariums to anyone participating in the research on their own time. I determined the amount based on the fee structure outlined by the Scottish Artists Union, and Concordia's Office of Research subsequently accepted the amendment. This decision was a response to an important moment of peer learning, the result of listening with respect and making a conscious choice to take action. This points to the work of communications scholar Tillmann-

Healy (2003), who built upon on interpretive, feminist, and queer research methodologies to propose 'friendship as method' as a mode of qualitative inquiry. Acknowledging that the depth and longevity of personal relationships between researchers and participants may vary greatly, Tillmann-Healy proposed that in any qualitative study "we can treat participants with an ethic of friendship. We can solicit fears and concerns, listen closely and respond compassionately, and use such exchanges to refine the study and direct its implications" (p. 745). The author also states, "We never ask more of participants than we are willing to give. Friendship as method demands radical reciprocity, a move from studying "them" to studying *us*" (p. 735). My fourth interviewee alerted me to an important reality in my field of practice, and while my gesture was outside the common academic model of voluntary participation and nominal gifts or honorariums, I strongly believed that this was key to demonstrating recognition of my peers' time and expertise and the economic impact of pandemic closures. My conviction was validated when within 12 hours of announcing the honorarium to one person I was contacted by four new potential participants.

Working with the Transcripts

I gathered Canadian data in person and Scottish data online through the videoconferencing platforms Teams (Group #1: three interviews and one focus group) and Zoom (Group #2: five interviews, one focus group, and one follow-up discussion). I used online transcribing software for all 18 interviews (Canada and Scotland), the two focus groups, and the follow-up discussion; for English transcripts I used Temi and for French, Happy Scribe. I listened to and edited each transcript for typos and spelling errors before emailing them to participants. At this point I invited them to read over their transcript and make any changes, additions, or omissions to their responses they felt necessary within two weeks from the day they received the transcript.

I coded all 20 transcripts working line-by-line and using gerunds. The critical framework that I chose to support my research study—transformative learning and critical pragmatism—shaped my theoretical starting point for this coding. As such, early sensitizing concepts included 1) the four outcomes of transformative learning as outlined by Stuckey et al. (2014): acting differently, deeper self-awareness, more open perspectives, and deep shift in worldview and 2) key aspects of critical pragmatism: reflexivity, possibility, imagination, and shared process

(Forester, 2014; Kadlec, 2008). I conducted one round of initial coding and an additional two rounds of focused coding for each article. I also coded my memos.

As previously outlined, I drew on tenets of CGT because of its focus on reflexivity and its recognition of multiple realities, situated knowledge, and researcher/participant subjectivity. Beginning my analysis from the start of data collection allowed me to seek out documentation and tweak my interview guide as I proceeded with each meeting and, in my second phase of research, return to participants with new questions via focus groups and a follow-up meeting. I continued this theoretical sampling by systematically writing memos after each of my Scotland interviews, as I coded transcripts, and in-between spaces of both spontaneous and deliberate reflection. I also drew on the work of sociologist Adele Clarke (2003) who developed a framework for mapping that offers a tool for both conceptualizing and reporting data. I sorted and diagrammed categories by hand to establish and clarify relationships between them. This allowed me a reflexive space to continue interrogating relationships between concepts and categories as well as my positionality vis-à-vis participants, research questions, and responses.

Follow-up

My two follow-up activities marked an additional attempt to ground my research in practice and engage participants in ongoing meaning-making that could potentially nourish their own work and reflections. These were based on the context in which data was gathered and the content of my analysis. All participants will receive a link to my dissertation once completed.

Canada | I produced a summary of findings and a list of recommendations, which I sent to both the MMFA's education department and each participant.

Scotland | Group 1 (a learning team from one institution): Along with their focus group transcript, I sent this first group of participants a summary report that could serve them in their future reflections and planning. This summary included 1) their understandings of social engagement and critical learning 2) organizational challenges and opportunities related to professional learning 3) key proposals for working differently and 4) key questions driving critical learning and new ways of working. Producing this document was a gesture of reciprocity in recognition of the time they took from their work to discuss it with me and each other. I made this offer based on their initial feedback that the interview and focus group dialogues had been productive for them. I also sent the team a link to my first public presentation on the data and my manuscripts.

Scotland | Group 2 (freelancers with multiple affiliations): As previously mentioned, I organized a one-hour, audio-recorded, online follow-up meeting with freelancer participants in Fall of 2021 to 1) share my findings and analyses with them and 2) discuss any comments or feedback they may have had about the research process, findings, and/or analysis. Four of the five participants accepted the invitation however only three were present on the day of. Participants were once again compensated for their time based on the fee structure outlined by the Scottish Artists Union. In advance of the discussion, I sent them a draft of my second manuscript.

Prelude | Gallery Educators' Learning

As mentioned in the section of my introduction devoted to the thesis structure, this prelude offers a very brief overview of competency building among participants from both data sets. It focuses on what they were learning up to and during the time of data gathering, the activities they engaged in, and the ethos that drove their learning. Some aspects of this text may be revisited in one or more of the three manuscripts to come. As I flesh out in more detail in the subsequent bridging texts, interviews with all participants happened in their different historical moments – one that drew public attention to colonial histories and settler-Indigenous relations, the other that drew attention to a dual pandemic. I interviewed volunteers on the heels of the anniversary of Canadian confederation (2017), not long after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation report (2015) in which the Canadian Museums Association and the museum sector are named in its calls to action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). I interviewed all eight paid educators during the COVID-19 pandemic, and five interviews and both focus groups took place after the police murder of George Floyd (2020) and subsequent protests for racial justice. These moments shaped both questions and responses, thus this section is intended to be a general portrait of all 17 participants' learning. It is only fair to assume the examples are not exhaustive; rather, they were culled from participants' responses at a given time and place.

Distinct and Common Ground

Other key differences included the training and expertise participants went into the work with. Volunteer guides spoke less frequently about updating their pedagogical approaches, however, they had recently come out of training that focused nearly entirely on dialogical museum pedagogies. On the other hand, most lamented their lack of confidence in art history and, unlike most of the paid educators, none of them were practicing artists. For paid educators, critical learning meant identifying and upsetting their assumptions and biases, accepting discomfort and uncertainty, championing their learning, and listening more actively. For volunteer guides, this meant learning about the historical context for artworks' production and reception and moving out of their comfort zones to learn about artworks they perceived as challenging or didn't like, appreciate, or understand. Volunteer guides more frequently referred to what they felt they still needed to learn regarding art historical and other content.

Learning What?

Paid and volunteer educators all spoke about the need to learn about newly acquired artworks, unfamiliar collections and/or temporary exhibitions. This included, but was not limited to curatorial messages, artists' biographies, and formal/art historical underpinnings of the selected artworks. As one paid, permanent gallery educator noted, they were still learning about what the collection meant to the public. This was echoed by volunteers and paid educators alike, who emphasized learning about new artists that might be of interest to a particular group of visitors, learning what is potentially contentious, contextualizing both artworks and exhibitions, learning about the learning space itself, addressing the politics of representation, and grappling with discourses around value, rarity, and 'special'.

Participants in both groups spoke about the importance of visitors feeling somehow connected to collections and exhibitions, and this included more diverse representations, anecdotes about the artist or artwork, and personal meaning-making. Learning with visitors is a key point I explore in Manuscript 3, and here it is worth sharing a statement from a volunteer guide that captures the appreciation for such encounters in recalling an exchange with a visitor after a gallery dialogue:

> She showed me all of her family pictures—like this one, with her grandmother. It was like the artwork… she said, 'this is the story of our family'. It seemed like it was good for her to talk about it, to see the sequin, this woman who looked radiant. […] But, you know, during the group discussion, I could never have guessed that this would have resonated with her on such a personal level. I was happy to know this afterwards. I was lying in bed that night and told myself I had missed an opportunity to thank her for sharing her story with me. On that day, she had given me a gift.

Paid educators expressed more confidence in facilitating dialogues about artworks they were unfamiliar with, whereas multiple volunteer guides expressed that they do not approach an artwork or collection until they are more than ready. While two volunteer guides asked themselves if they were perhaps avoiding potentially contentious artworks, another considered the importance of being intentional over time and the responsibility of the museum regarding the museum's Inuit art collection:

> This is a process that needs ongoing work. The museum should continue to offer training sessions in a similar spirit, to get people to see things from another perspective. But it's a

> ‘work in progress’ – these things don’t happen magically, just like that. There is a lot of reticence – I feel it around me sometimes.

Volunteer guides’ concerns about content far outweighed those about their teaching practices. That said, advanced training on critical questioning strategies and working thematically were both mentioned as areas for potential further learning. Paid educators all pointed to the need to stay on top of contemporary pedagogical approaches and rapid curriculum changes. Paid and volunteer educators alike also spoke to learning related to visitor needs. Examples included concrete learning such as hidden disabilities and audio description and less tangible learning around visitors’ attitudes, inhibitions, and worldviews.

COVID-19 closures marked an immediate shift to digital engagement for paid educators.[26] For permanent educators, required learning included software for creating digital resources, new social media platforms, and online engagement with school and community groups. Freelancers’ learning during this time is outlined in Manuscript 2 and included an increase in online professional development and upskilling to equip themselves to offer sessions during the pandemic (e.g., teaching on Zoom, COVID-19 restrictions for working in-person, and new logistical concerns). One freelancer also identified a shift in working with schools once full lockdown was over, which pointed to how new learning specific to the pandemic might inform partnership and service offers moving forward:

> I guess that's quite different in that when we were working in the galleries before, it was very set, like what we had offered, you know, we offer this kind of tour, we offer this kind of a session, we offer this kind of workshop. Whereas this is more like the school approaching us. And then being [asked] as a freelancer, Can you make this work? [….] And yeah, there's something really nice about the adaptability of that and the kind of open-mindedness of it as a session that you feel you can actually kind of adapt it a bit more than if it was just what we were doing before. So that's been quite nice learning from the school.

[26] Some guides also made the move to online engagement during lockdown, but this happened after our interviews. As such, I did not include their experience of this, or any other learning associated with the pandemic in my dissertation.

This scenario points to the overlap between the what and how of learning and offers a segue to a brief discussion of the activities both groups of educators engage in as they pursue the competencies described above.

Learning How?

In Manuscript 3, I elaborate on how paid educators' learning comprises a variety of activities along a formal/informal continuum. Volunteer guides described their learning as similarly varied and, like paid educators, also described a kind of dual role of educator/learner. Among all participants, most learning occurred independently or in small groups. One permanent paid educator stated that learning can happen on three levels: "research put into learning about the artwork and […] then thinking about how to articulate that research, that knowledge of the content, and then actually doing it."

Learning closer to the informal end of the continuum was common and varied, and there was much overlap between participant groups. This included self-directed research through books and online resources, visiting exhibitions, and learning while teaching. As one paid, permanent educator noted, "I actually look on every day as a learning experience. [….] there are always things to learn—even if it's from a negative experience, there is something to learn from that." Similarly, a new guide stated, "Training, sure—but at the same time, it's only once you've had an experience that you're really confronted with something … You can tell us about it, but it's not the same as living it with the visitors, you know?" Also of note were two distinct comments among paid educators, one permanent, one freelance, about engaging in chat and other forms of informal exchange:

> I've learned that I can have an idea and then once I talk it through with my team members, I start to see holes in it and, you know, maybe where parts of it that I thought would work really well, once I have discussions with people who are more experienced than me, I realize, Oh no, it wouldn't, and I have to change it—or bin it.

> There's been a lot of conversation about how those kinds of informal chatting around the photocopier or chatting while in the kitchen heating up your lunch, aren't happening now that […] a lot of people who work for places like [the museum] are still largely working from home. And there's been a lot of debate about what are we losing through not having

those conversations. But […] it's quite interesting because in a way that puts everyone in maybe a bit more of an equal place, because none of us are having those conversations.

Both comments recognize the importance of such informal learning, but also speak to the impact of COVID on informal, in-person learning practices as well as the specific everyday learning challenges faced by freelancers, which I explore in depth in Manuscript 2.

Informal learning activities more specific to paid educators were planning with co-facilitators, conferences, visiting colleagues, trialling art materials at home, and mentorship. One mid-career, paid, permanent educator spoke about their preference for visits with colleagues at other museums over attending conferences: "I find [them] useful because they're on-the-spot learning—in-depth information that you don't get from group settings, and also, it informs your day-to-day job and how you deliver that, and how you progress with that." Several paid educators spoke about their art practice, but only one spoke of artmaking as a form of reflective practice: "keeping my own actual creating practice going is another thing. […] I find it's important for me to make some time for that. [….] It reflects who you are, what you're doing. It is a reflection, and it's good to see that reflection because sometimes you're making something and you think, 'Oh yeah, that's, what's important'." It is worth noting here that while volunteer guides at the MMFA gather weekly for optional professional development lectures organized by their supervisor, they rarely work together and do not offer hands-on art activities. This may explain why this type of learning was rarely mentioned.

That said, MMFA guides do participate in a mentor program with more experienced volunteers, so it is interesting to note that learning and support from their mentors rarely came up in our conversations. Volunteers also spoke less of expanding opportunities for reflective practice, interrogating processes and procedures and new working relationships; this was unsurprising given their status in their organization and how recently they had joined it. On the other hand, likely given their retired or semi-retired status, volunteers more frequently spoke about taking advantage of more formal learning opportunities, which I discuss below.

Both paid educators and volunteer guides took advantage of more formal learning, including organized artist and curatorial talks, and training workshops. Several volunteer guides were pursuing university art history courses, which again speaks to time that may be available to them as retired people. In a similar vein, volunteer guides also spoke more frequently about the competencies they brought from their previous careers. This included, for example, working

across disciplines, intercultural communication, public speaking, teaching different levels, and client-centred approaches. Interestingly, participants in both groups lamented the loss of what they considered to be important informal learning opportunities they had once had; permanent educators spoke about regular feedback meetings with front-of-house staff that management cancelled, freelancers were mourning the fact that one of their main employers cut their access to curatorial talks for each new exhibition, and a volunteer spoke about the fact that weekly training lectures were no longer videotaped and archived for research purposes. While multiple volunteer guides spoke about the usefulness of organized group practice and peer learning sessions, freelancers reported that these opportunities had also been cancelled by their main employer.

What is the Ethos Driving Their Learning?

As I touch on in Manuscript 3, paid educators emphasized their appreciation for their colleagues' competencies, mutual support, and peer teaching, recognizing visitors' contributions to educators' personal and professional learning, and resisting complacency and the status quo. For example, one paid permanent educator stated,

> It isn't enough in a work situation to just say, 'well, that's fine', and leave it at that. You have to kind of maybe interrogate your process a little bit. I think that's what it's about. And maybe it's about the fact that we could, in a team, help to do that for each other. Maybe, in a really constructive way, have to look at what our assumptions are and maybe how the decision-making is going."

Volunteers spoke in broader terms but along similar lines, for example learning about the gaps in the collection, identifying works that facilitate dialogue with visitors about the relationship between art and power, and, as expressed by three volunteers, in particular, learning and talking about difficult histories. As one stated, "It needs to continue. It can never stop. In a way, it's a little like… you have to let go of that modesty, that shame you might have." Another spoke about her encounters with a contemporary artwork addressing residential schools[27]: "We have to address something shameful in our history—something truly sad." Drawing on her own learning, this same educator reminds visitors that the MMFA is on unceded Indigenous land. There was a

[27] Charles Joseph's (Kwakwaka'wakw) *Residential School Totem Pole* (2014–2016) was on loan to the MMFA until this year. Joseph stated, "Presenting this pole is for all Canadians, not just residential school survivors. This is my reconciliation, and my story is on the pole. The story is not just about Charles Joseph, it's about everyone who went through it. I need to tell the story in this form, but it is about survivors from across Canada" (MMFA, 2017, para. 1). I refer to the residential school system in Canada again on page 70.

sense of collective settler responsibility underscoring volunteer guides' learning that was mirrored in paid educators' discussions of their learning vis-à-vis Black Lives Matter.

One important difference I noted between participant groups was embedding learning through institutional change. For example, one paid, permanent educator stated,

> It's got to come from me first: what am I making a priority in my practice, in learning, in the role that I do? And then how can I most effectively bring that to the service, and can I champion it? Because one of the hardest things, it's not the intent, it's not your own learning. It's not even critically looking at your own either bias or what you're concentrating on. That's probably the easy part. The hard part is then bringing it to where you work and fighting for getting that to become a priority—either time or finance. So, when I think of critical learning, I've got to do my homework. I've got to really look at my practice and what I'm focusing on so that I can make a really good case as to why I think it would benefit the service."

While volunteer guides made important links between their learning and their organization, it was less about their role in helping to shape the institution's future. Rather, their concerns were centred on the need for the institution to be clear in its messaging and intentions so that as volunteers they could act accordingly in the galleries. Volunteer guides also spoke in more depth about the importance they place on diversity in its many forms, ensuring comfort among visitors, and an openness to new ideas, possibilities, challenges, and difficulties. They also spoke of a need for diversity among guides, training content, choice of artwork, artists, mediums, and anticipating diverse reactions and cultural references among visitors.

I touch on questions of comfort/discomfort in more depth in Manuscript 1, however, to summarize here, volunteer guides sought to build their capacity for creating a climate conducive to visitors' interests and well-being: assessing body language, identifying triggers, actively listening and staying attuned to visitors' comments, staying aware of one's own biases, and remaining non-judgemental. Building these competencies speaks to the emphasis the MMFA has put on wellness over the last decade, as does the following comment by a participant about her role as a volunteer guide: "It's about creating an environment where people feel comfortable enough to 'let it out', to express themselves – or that it does the person good to feel something."

Not unlike comments made by some paid educators, volunteer guides' openness related to adaptability, curiosity, embracing challenging artworks, being informed on local linguistic and cultural divides, and being ready to learn through difficulty. As one volunteer guides said,

> I'd like to have difficult groups [laughs]. I don't see how else it can work – you need the experience. We're always afraid, as guides, given the experience we've had in life, what we've done before—we're afraid of having bad experiences, but often there are good experiences.

This participant, a retired teacher, spoke with more confidence than most of their peers about confronting the unknown in practice. This is where we can see an important parallel with paid educator interviews, in which uncertainty about their role and competencies moving into the future was spotlighted in new ways. I discuss the impact of the pandemic and the wave of BLM protests on their learning in later chapters. In the following chapter, I will focus on the learning experiences of volunteers who, relatively new to their role, navigated discomfort and challenging subject matter while simultaneously developing their newly acquired competencies in facilitating gallery dialogue with visitors.

Chapter 5 | Manuscript 1

Critically Engaging Volunteer Guides: A Study of Adult Learning in an Art Museum[28]

Abstract

The role of art museum educators has shifted from presenter of information to facilitator of dialogue. But as art museums pledge to be more accountable to—and representative of—a plurality of publics and narratives, what is spoken about with visitors? Given revolving temporary exhibitions and expanded readings of permanent collections, guides play a dual role of adult learner and educator. This article asks what learning opportunities equip art museum guides to critically engage with challenging subject matter. A qualitative research project grounded in the author's reflective practice, it draws on interviews with newly trained volunteer guides. Responses suggest that guides' relationships to challenging subject matter are multilayered and deserving of both personal and institutional attention. Findings point to a need for support that includes, but is not limited to, ongoing training. This article will contribute to the growing but limited scholarship on art museum educators' learning, speaking to efforts by trainers and adult educators to foster reflexivity and critically embrace the potentially challenging and necessary dialogues inspired by art museum collections.

Introduction

Based on interviews with recently trained volunteer art museum guides, this article examines their dual role as adult learners and educators. With a particular focus on guides' critical engagement with challenging subject matter, I discuss factors that support or hinder their efforts. Research participants' responses reveal varying degrees of readiness, suggesting that the task of situating artworks in the politics of their content, production, circulation, acquisition, or display is not always an easy one. My analyses of participants' responses, suggestions for institutional support, and implications for teaching and research are intended to support the work of current and future guides. This study will contribute to a relatively small but growing pool of recent studies on the training and learning of volunteer and professional educators (Castle, 2006;

[28] Keenlyside, E. G. (2019). Critically engaging volunteer guides: A study of adult learning in an art museum. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, *31*(2), 1–16. https://cjsae.library.dal.ca/index.php/cjsae/article/view/5540

Dewhurst & Hendrick, 2016; Ebitz, 2005; El-Amin & Cohen, 2018; Ferrara, 2017; Meyer, Veneziano-Korzec, Larrivee, & Stacy, 2016).

The starting point for the article is participants' testimonies, and I have categorized their responses into four sections. "Navigating Discomfort in Learning and Teaching" looks at how participants perceive their role and highlights the tensions that guides face throughout their learning in both the research phase and the galleries. "Recognizing the Challenges" examines participants' hopes for future training and their current responses to contentious narratives and institutional practices. "Training Is Not Enough: Building a Reflexive Guide Culture" addresses both the limits of training and the relevance of reflective practice in addressing both uncertainty and resistance. "Sold on Dialogue" considers participants' comments on the skills, predispositions, and strategies they draw upon to open up learning spaces and underscores a particular set of tensions stemming from their application of a dialogical approach. The discussion that follows comprises two short sections. "Future Learning and Support" proposes areas for the development of skills, knowledge, and critical understanding among guides in their dual role. "Implications for Teaching and Research" returns to my own reflective practice, detailing possible adjustments to training curriculum and areas for future research relevant to both scholarship and practice in adult and art museum education.

Background

The research site was a large, private encyclopedic fine arts museum housing over 41,000 objects spanning six collections. In addition to a team of professional educators, roughly 150 volunteer guides conduct group visits with members, the general public, secondary and post-secondary schools, and community organizations. In 2017, these visits reached 45,000 people. Such a significant number points to the potential impact of these encounters; hence, the content of gallery dialogue should be not only accurate, but representative of, and accountable to, the vast publics the museum aims to serve.

Prospective guides complete a 12-week course offered in partnership with a local university's continuing education department. My mandate as the curriculum developer and instructor was to equip trainees to facilitate gallery dialogue. The museum is positioned as a meeting place and hub for group meaning-making and exchange, and in this spirit, dialogue offers an alternative to a transmission model (talking *at* rather than *with*). A dialogical approach is supported by decades of adult education literature stressing the importance and potential of

interaction across informal, non-formal, and formal adult learning contexts (Connolly, 2008; Cranton, 1989, 2016; Freire, 1972; Vella, 2002). Prominent scholarship on dialogical museum learning emerged quite recently (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011, Dysthe, Bernhardt, & Esbjorn, 2013; Hubard, 2015), speaking to a disconnect between museums and adult education that has been documented by both academics (Clover & Bell, 2013; Dudzinska-Przesmitzki & Grenier, 2008; McCray, 2016) and trainers in the field. For example, DePrizio (2016) argued that most adult tours are still lecture-based, and Katzenstein and Koster (2014) suggested that many guides may still revert to lecturing and rely on knowledge-based questions instead of trying to connect with visitors' viewpoints. A combination of past didactic museum visits, teacher-centred educational experiences, and the misperception of guides as expert knowledge keepers means that visitors may come to art museums expecting a guided visit of this type. In such a context, many prospective guides' assumptions about their future role and responsibilities are also challenged by the museum's increasing emphasis on dialogical learning and the co-creation of knowledge. Thus, I deliberately designed training to foster an understanding of both the *how* and the *why* of gallery dialogue. Trainees develop their capacity for critical research, an ability to adapt content, and the reflex to actively listen to their groups and welcome silent looking. Workshops model flexible facilitation and openness to myriad perspectives, histories, interpretations, and group dynamics. A combination of readings, classroom and gallery activities, guest speakers, and regular writing exercises encourage exchange, reflection, and ongoing learning from day one. Together, we also critically unpack the increasing emphasis that museums have placed on messages of inclusivity, accessibility, and wellness. This article builds on my experience both delivering the course and continually adapting its content and approaches.

The Study

This qualitative study comprised nine semi-structured interviews in which participants discussed their role, experience, and learning as new art museum guides. It was also the first step in a doctoral project grounded in my reflective practice as a mid-career adult/ art museum educator. Given that my research took place from within two institutions (the museum and the university) that have employed me as a trainer, I should state that I pursued this project with both institutions' knowledge but at neither's behest. The study drew on constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), a methodology rooted in both inductive and abductive inquiry whereby analytical categories are developed through coding, memo-writing, and theoretical sampling. In

turn, these systematic and iterative processes ground new conceptual frameworks and theories in the data itself. Because of the limited scope of this small-scale study, I did not engage in theoretical sampling through the collection of new data, but rather worked with an abbreviated version of grounded theory. While key principles of coding and constant comparative analysis guided me, the implementation of negative case analysis and theoretical sensitivity and saturation was limited to my initial data (Barbour, 2008).

According to Charmaz (2014), a constructivist approach considers research as a construction and acknowledges the specific conditions under which it occurs. It also shreds notions of a neutral observer and value-free expert. Not only does that mean that researchers must examine rather than erase how their privileges and preconceptions may shape the analysis, but it also means that their values shape the very facts that they can identify (p. 13). Constructivist grounded theory's focus on reflexivity and its recognition of multiple realities, situated knowledge, and researcher/participant subjectivity (Charmaz, Thornberg, & Keane, 2017) resonates with my practice. These key elements also speak to the notion of power and intention that Rowe (2004) suggested is implicit in understanding a researcher's positionality along dimensions such as gender, culture, and class. Two recent studies examining teacher experiences of in-class race discourse spoke to how this concern is equally pertinent in adult educational contexts. Murray-Johnson and Ross-Gordon (2018) concurred that positionality "essentially acts as a lens, and influences what one says or how one thinks and operates" (p. 140), and Tilley and Taylor (2013) insisted that "instructors/ teachers are part of the mix of difference in classrooms" (p. 417). Thus, I remained cognizant of my location as a white educator-researcher in relationship to the research participants, topic, and design. Taking into consideration the specificities of the museum's galleries as a learning site, I also considered participants' positionality as guides, noting relevant tensions within and between transcripts.

I chose interviewing as the research method out of an interest in participants' lived experience and the meaning they make of it (Seidman, 2013). All nine participants responded to an open call I emailed to 29 past trainees who had become guides. While convenience sampling within this chosen group meant that I did not select individual participants, the following demographics are largely representative of new guides: two were aged between 50 and 60 and seven between 60 and 70; all were White; two identified as men and seven as women; one was anglophone and eight were francophone. One held a college diploma, six held master's degrees,

and two held PhDs. None had completed formal studies in art history. At the time of the study, three participants had been guides at the museum for less than one year; the other six had between one and two years of experience.

Prior to their interviews, participants completed a three-page questionnaire that covered their personal profiles and basic information about their guiding experience. Participants determined the language (English/French) and location of the interviews, which averaged 40 minutes in length. I sent interview transcripts to participants for their approval and invited them to elaborate or omit responses if they wished to do so. Once transcripts were approved, I identified and validated themes through a process of initial and focused coding (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). I have protected participants' anonymity by translating French citations, opting for the pronouns *they* and *their* in place of *she*, *he*, *her*, and *his*, and using gender-neutral pseudonyms (Alex, Camille, Claude, Leslie, Maxime, Robin, Sasha, Sydney, and Yannick).

The interview and broader research questions echo conceptual frameworks in adult education and museum literature informed by critical theory. Critical engagement reflects how visitors and guides "read" visual artworks together. Lindauer (2006) suggested that critical museum visitors (I would add guides) observe the what, how, and why of exhibited objects and consider what is left unspoken or kept off display. Lindauer also asked, "Who has the most to gain or the most to lose from having this information, collection, or interpretation publicly presented?" (p. 204) The intentionality of this line of questioning echoes well-established work in critical literacy and critical pedagogy. St. Clair (2004) made the distinction between critical thinking and critical pedagogy, positing that the latter is "less interested in examining the basis for argument than showing how that argument fits within a system of educational and social power" (p. 35). In the context of art museums, we can replace "argument" with "representation" in order to consider the unique learning context of an exhibition. Here, critical museum literacy offers a framework to read the realities found in museum displays as constructs (English & Mayo, 2012). This critical approach aligns with the constructivist assumption that neither data nor analyses are neutral. "Rather, they reflect the positions, conditions, and contingencies of their construction" (Charmaz et al., 2017, p. 417). In a similar vein, Charmaz (2014) also suggested that questioning structural factors such as hierarchies and ideologies offers researchers the opportunity to bring together critical inquiry and grounded theory research.

Exchanges with participants about challenging subject matter refer not to content that is necessarily difficult to comprehend, but rather to topics that may pose a personal challenge for visitors or guides to confront and/or talk about. This also refers to histories that have been previously erased or marginalized (for example, cultural genocide in Canada). Museum scholar Silvén (2010) outlined two types of difficult museum objects whose distinctions are helpful to consider how challenging subject matter in visual art takes many forms. The first type includes those "explicitly associated with matters like taboo, unpleasantness, sorrow, loss, and intolerance." The second are "seemingly innocent things" that require a narrative to understand them fully (pp. 135–136). Returning to the importance of situated knowledge and positionality, I acknowledge that "challenging" is deeply subjective, depending on multiple factors shaped by personal experience, identity, and the surrounding contexts in which power and inequity are at play.

Findings

Navigating Discomfort in Learning and Teaching

When describing the role of an art museum guide, participants named complementary yet distinct goals: facilitating reflection, encouraging and equipping visitors to read works of art independently, piquing interest, eliciting emotional responses, and exposing visitors to different perspectives. Examined as an ensemble, their responses reflect Claude's claim that if one were to ask guides to describe their role, no two answers would be the same. The variety of roles participants described speaks to both their individuality and a potential lack of certainty with regard to past learning and current institutional messages. Considering critical engagement with challenging subject matter, some participants also expressed their limits—most of which were related to discomfort.

History scholars Lehrer and Milton (2011) wrote that difficult knowledge of the past and present forces a confrontation with "the possibility that the conditions of our lives and the boundaries of our collective selves may be quite different from how we normally, reassuringly think of them" (p. 8).[29] Camille rejected the idea that a guide should provoke, and Alex stated

[29] As a post-publication note, I acknowledge earlier scholarship that should be included here. The concept of 'difficult knowledge' (Britzman,2000; Pitt & Britzman, 2003) signifies both the representation of social trauma and individuals' encounters with it. Britzman examined the representation and pedagogical engagement with Anne Frank's diary to develop a theory rooted in psychoanalysis that positioned educators and learners alike as ethical subjects. Of key relevance here is the author's discussion of unconscious pedagogy, particularly idealization as a strategy to incite identification and avoid painful dilemmas. Britzman argued that idealization "is a substitute for

that while they believe their role is to "push the envelope," they are also careful not to push visitors too hard. Only when they believe the group will have time to treat it fully and find closure will they open up risky dialogue. Alex, Claude, Sydney, and Yannick all expressed concerns about unintentionally triggering visitors with issues that may have touched their lives. Leslie stated that they prefer asking questions related to challenging subject matter when it has already been raised by visitors. Claude returned to the complexity of questioning strategies: "Asking a question that encourages people to reflect without it being too...too deep. Gauging how far you can go with people without making them uncomfortable."

Robin and Claude have both observed guides' discomfort with grey zones. Claude suggested, "It's like we'd prefer to stay on firm ground instead of adventuring out into the sea where the waves could take us to unknown places." Adult educator Lakey (2010) labelled the space outside one's comfort zone as the learning zone in order to "emphasize that learning can happen when people venture out, take risks, entertain new thoughts, and do things that feel scary" (pp. 18–19). In this context, Lakey made the important distinction between unsafe and uncomfortable. In the context of reconciliation, Regan (2010) proposed that "disturbing emotions are a critical pedagogical tool that can provoke decolonizing, transformative learning" (p. 13). Addressing racism in museum education, Dewhurst and Hendrick (2016) suggested that educators do themselves what they ask of students: "lean into the discomfort of learning—to embrace what is challenging, new, or different" (p. 27). Lopes and Thomas (2006) pointed to an important obstacle with regard to this effort. They suggested that a common group dynamic in racial equity work is White people's expectation "that their learning should happen with as little discomfort as possible" (p. 244). This is relevant to both guides and visitors, underscoring the urgency of fostering anti-oppression in art museums more broadly as well as its relationship to challenging subject matter. These discussions also suggest an important role that museum leadership can play in cultivating accountability and reflexivity among guides with White and other privileges as they navigate their own and visitors' discomfort.

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engagement and a mechanism of control that wards off the capacity to acknowledge the profundity of loss." Furthermore, "it can neither restore loss nor allow for the working through of the ambivalent feelings that accompany loss" (p. 34). The notion of idealization presents itself as an issue for gallery educators not only among those who unknowingly employ this strategy in their dialogue with visitors; it also speaks to the competencies necessary for all gallery educators to critically navigate strategies of idealization employed by curators or artists themselves.

At the same time, guides who expressed hesitation also described how they address historical injustices and contemporary social, economic, and cultural struggles through the work of contemporary artists. For example, Yannick discusses taboos around mental health with their groups and Yannick and Sasha both engage with the complexities of shame in coming to terms with settler colonial violence. Similarly, Leslie stated,

> Yes, it's disturbing, but it allows you to grasp what the artist wants to say, or their intention...I'll admit, [visitors] are troubled, but that's probably also part of what the artist is hoping for, I suppose: for us to reflect on our collective actions.

Reflecting on their ongoing learning related to challenging subject matter, both Leslie and Claude discussed the residential school system;[30] one read from the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the other took a two-day course on the system's history and impact. While both participants commented on the difficulty of confronting the realities of this history, their responses were distinct. For Leslie, it provided the additional and reliable information they sought to contextualize a contemporary artwork. For Claude, their exposure to what historian Lonetree (2012) called "the hard truths of colonization" raised further doubts about what kind of information to share with visitors and how: "We're going to need training on this to clarify things because after two years I still have a lot of doubts."

While Sydney and Robin described in depth their attempts to unpack certain settler artists' representations of First Nations Peoples with visitors, these efforts were among the only references to non-contemporary artworks. The influence of the 19th-century anglophone art market being one exception, very few participants reported critically engaging with the challenging content or contexts of historical paintings, ceremonial or decorative objects, or museum practices—a point I return to in the next section. Here it is important to note two diverging perspectives that emerged from the interviews: for Robin, controversial subjects often lead to interesting discussions and more interaction, and Maxime perceives little difficulty or risk in approaching subject matter they consider to be grounded in fact and/or in the past.

Recognizing the Challenges

With regard to future training, participants recommended sessions devoted to both art history and facilitation skills specifically related to challenging subject matter. Camille stressed

[30] The government-initiated, church-run residential school system lasted for over a century, until 1996. Over 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to leave their families, communities, and cultures.

the importance of being prepared for a range of possible visitor responses: “It’s important to be well informed so that it doesn’t come as a surprise—negative comments or a really critical reading.” This speaks to Silvén’s (2010) claim that “‘difficulty’ is not just something that exists; it has to be detected and is contextually conditioned” (p. 140). It also resonates with the following comment by Robin: “I would say that most of us are equipped in principle but not necessarily in practice, in the sense that we may or may not be able to recognize contentious issues in a particular work.” The issue of recognition speaks to the questions I encourage students to critically ask themselves about what they relate to in works of art. These questions complement those that author and education scholar Dion (2004) proposed as starting points for educators engaging with stories of First Nations: “What did I not know before? Why didn’t I know? What is the significance of not knowing?” (p. 71).

Participants’ examples of challenging subject matter included assimilation policies, cultural appropriation, residential schools, mental health, military occupations, organized religion, explicit expressions of sexuality and gender, language politics, and sovereignty. Robin’s claim that many guides are not necessarily equipped in practice to identify potential challenges is supported by the fact that participants did not mention challenging subject matter embedded in “seemingly innocent” (Silvén, 2010) objects or images. With decorative and ceremonial objects, for example, there was no mention of issues of provenance, decontextualization, repatriation, or resource extraction. Similarly, participants made few references to historical artworks such as landscapes serving imperial agendas (Nelson, 2016) or portraits and genre paintings conveying master national narrative templates that perpetuate patronizing stereotypes and/or settler myths (Anderson, 2017).

In their discussion of a Black feminist, community-led heritage project, Clarke and Lewis (2016) asserted that the cultural and adult education sector “subjugates multiple collective narratives that challenge the stability of institutions in favour of singular authoritative (non-representational) narratives” (p. 136). Clover and Sanford’s (2016) research with women museum educators revealed a tendency to “retreat into ‘neutrality’, or presumed neutrality, when ideas or actions [were] just too controversial” (p. 130). While participants in my study stressed the importance of contextualizing artworks with visitors, most stopped short of critically addressing dominant narratives or museum practices—despite both community activism and academic research that positions museums as inherently political spaces open to contestation

(Anderson, 2017; English & Mayo, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Lynch, 2014; Ng, Ware, & Greenberg, 2017). Exceptionally, Alex spoke to an important gap, specifically the lack of Black artists and subjects in the Canadian collection, and the barrier this creates for visitors. In response, Alex has posed questions to visitors that address this absence and deliberately engaged with works by underrepresented artists in the nearby contemporary art collection.

Alex's strategies echo the critical museum pedagogy of El-Amin and Cohen (2018): "Allowing those narratives to exist, unchallenged, renders the museum complicit and allows the stereotypes and static histories that they evoke to stand as institutionally sanctioned rebukes to students' sense of belonging in museums" (p. 10). The authors drew on critical literacy and conscientization to train art museum guides to both critique problematic representations of people of colour and to draw attention to positive ones—primarily those created by artists of colour themselves. This recent example of critical workplace learning is an important model given that the omissions and stereotypes that museums exhibit both miseducate wider publics and alienate those misrepresented (Johnson, 2016). Other participants critiqued presenting modern art from uniquely European perspectives and inaccessible language on didactic panels; however, only Alex reported addressing their concern directly with visitors. This begs the question of what kind of training and other supports could equip guides to take on the challenging subject matter proposed by Trofanenko (2006)—that "an education in the museum needs to be an education *about* the museum, about how the world is re-presented, named, displayed, owned, and protected" (p. 61).

Training Is Not Enough: Building a Reflexive Guide Culture

A number of participants shed light on guides' hopes and expectations of the institution vis-à-vis critical engagement, challenging subject matter, and dialogical gallery teaching. While they discussed initial, current, and future training, they also indicated that training is not enough. All participants expressed some level of uncertainty with regard to the museum's expectations, intentions, or limits, identifying specific conditions that shape their learning and work. While Sasha and Maxime insisted that the museum should not shy away from dialogue about difficult history, Sydney expressed some doubts about how: "The sense I get at the museum these days is that it's an institution that wants to be really open, inclusive, etc. But there's a kind of discrepancy between where they want to go and where they want to take us." Claude put it simply: "Training doesn't solve everything in life." Similarly, Leslie suggested that if the

museum wants guides to critically exchange with visitors on cultural politics and social issues, it should invest in further coaching and ongoing support. Robin acknowledged some pushback among guides while also expressing faith in their openness as learners:

> Even though I've detected there's a certain reluctance on the part of the guides when faced with some of these subjects—or lack of buy-in is maybe a better way to put it—that doesn't change the fact that I think everybody is very, very interested in exploring new subjects and being well-informed on them as well.

This echoes Sydney and Maxime's cautious optimism for a recent exhibition at the museum that took a new, explicitly critical curatorial approach. It also points to the need for museum staff to work honestly and productively through any resistance that may exist among both decision makers and their volunteers, and that this work become urgent, long-term, and ongoing.

Participants' comments point to the importance of reflective practice as a key component of guides' ongoing learning. Recent research tells us that while effective professional reflection requires exposure to the widest possible range of perspectives and frameworks (Guzmán-Valenzuela & Cabello, 2016), adult educators do not discuss teaching often enough with their peers (Cranton, 2016). Participants spoke about working in peer groups to refine key skills such as questioning strategies. Few, however, spoke to specific individual or collective efforts that consider how those skills are understood in relation to content, context, and their perceptions of both. Critical adult educators have long stressed the need to ensure reflexivity when engaging in reflective practice. Scholar and activist Michelson (2015) asked, "Where, precisely, are we standing when we 'reflect' on experience, and what kind of self is contracted in the process?" (p. 52). Museum educator Mayer (2014) argued that White museum educators should interrogate their personal biases and assumptions about art, teaching, and learning. This call speaks to Nielsen's (2016) study of White educators, which uncovered few references to "reflective practices that might shed light on the underlying assumptions, cultural mores, and conventions that direct curricular, pedagogical, and social encounters" (p. 52). Ng et al.'s (2017) recent work on allyship in museums described critical self-reflection activities for museum workers that address this. Their questions flesh out identity markers and positionality, which the authors suggested is a first step toward developing an anti-oppressive approach. In this regard,

participants' comments about my focus on inclusive language and critical literacy in their initial training were revealing and bring us back to the tension Robin described:

> It's like we're walking on eggshells...People are willing to change their attitude. (Sydney)

> It's annoying, too, because sometimes it's just a question of semantics...I do think an update is necessary. (Yannick)

> You don't always agree with all of the white gloves you have to wear... Respect for others requires you to do something—at least consider it. So, in that way, it's important. (Maxime)

That these responses oscillate between openness and resistance is worth noting, speaking to Yannick's motivation for participating in the research project: to deepen their reflection. It is also relevant to Sydney's suggestion that because the conscientization of guides is a work in progress, they would benefit from learning spaces that allow for error: "There needs to be a context where we can talk about all of this freely, without having the impression that if we say the wrong thing we've made an irreparable mistake."

Sold on Dialogue

Participants described the quality and depth of visitors' personal stories, observations, and questions. In doing so, they also gave examples of how they promote gallery dialogue. Sasha stated, "I'll encourage them to reflect, but it's going to be their reflection. I ask questions, I'm not going to give my interpretation." Alex reported that they look for difference: "I like to see different opinions emerge. For me the iceberg is there, and it's not just the tip. What's underneath the water is so important." Two others mentioned how they introduce their approach to visitors:

> At the beginning of the visit I tell them—so that they don't feel like there's a recipe to follow—that you don't have to look at a painting in a particular way, that we'll all see it in different ways. (Camille)

> I often say to people, "If you hear someone go on about something for an hour and you don't participate, not only will you check out, you won't retain anything. But if there's some back and forth, it will stick." (Yannick)

As the above examples demonstrate, participants expressed appreciation for, and openness to, the multiplicity of meanings and perspectives that can emerge during a guided visit. Participants also shared their thoughts on the skills and predispositions necessary to engage visitors. Reinforced through practice and acquired through prior experience, training, and peer learning, the key skills participants most frequently mentioned were questioning strategies, non-verbal communication, and listening. In gallery dialogue, these cannot be separated. Museum educators Dewhurst and Hendrick (2016), for example, rely on the question "What do you see that makes you say that?" to lead inquiry. "At the root of this question is a belief in the value of multiple perspectives and listening as a radical act of learning" (p. 27). Alex, Camille, and Leslie all stated that they integrate visitors' comments into future visits, demonstrating that together in dialogue, educators and adult learners are well positioned to co-create new knowledge (Connolly, 2008). Leslie also stated, "With delicate subjects it's even more important, the ability to listen and then make the links."

Adult educator Cranton (2016) recommended that in order to maintain equal participation in dialogue, facilitators must remain conscious of non-verbal communication—smiles, nods, eye contact—that can unintentionally signal approval. By contrast, participants' references to non-verbal cues were grounded in their positive intentions—sending a message of openness, building a climate of trust, and reading discomfort. Alex stressed the role of body language in intercultural and multilingual learning contexts, and Maxime reflected that "at the start, a lot of things go unspoken, meaning it's in the gestures, in the way we communicate with the people around us. You need to have confidence so that people have confidence in you." Yannick, Camille, and Sasha in particular spoke to the importance of non-judgment, sharing their thoughts on the museum as a public space that encourages self-expression. Sasha stated: "You can be judged at school by your peers, you can be judged at work...but here, it's like a space that's more liberal. You can let your thoughts go." Their responses reflect both the importance they accord to the group dynamic and their perception of the museum as a site conducive to learning for all visitors. These questions of intention and perception raise further considerations about the creation of safer learning spaces, the discourse of which has had less currency in museums than

in adult education milieus. Vella (2002) listed some of the signs of a safe adult learning situation: laughter, ease and camaraderie, questions, and the teacher's invitation for comments on the process. While these signs speak to the participants' conception of welcoming, visitor-centred gallery dialogue, Vella's list nevertheless understates issues of difference and power—as did participants' responses. Lifelong-education researchers Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2000) argued that "by stripping learners and teachers of their place in the hierarchies of social life, this view assumes that we stage adult education where politics of everyday life do not operate or matter" (p. 153). Analyzing the personal narratives of art museum educators of colour through the lens of critical race theory, Reid (2014) pointed out that the "othering" that occurs through exhibition content and display can also happen between visitors. Working from a critical queer perspective, adult educator Misawa (2010) reminded us that certain socio-cultural identities are invisible and thus unseen by educators looking only for visible signs of difference. If adult educators do not consider "hidden aspects of positionality" (p. 196), it is impossible to achieve safe learning spaces.

These concerns lead us to a particular set of emerging tensions that point to the need to remain critical when training guides to use a dialogical approach. First, in discussing the group dynamics of gallery dialogue, no participants named their own positionality. Second, while participants expressed their concerns about visitors' discomfort, there was little critical reflection on it—for example, how the images, issues, or histories that trigger discomfort vary from one visitor (or group) to the next; how guides may project their own discomfort onto visitors; or how *not* addressing certain subject matter may be cause for discomfort, or even a lack of safety. Finally, while a visitor-centred approach requires guides to relinquish significant control over the content and direction of group learning, relying on visitors' leads as entry points may inadvertently allow guides to avoid challenging subject matter.

Museums are not neutral. The people who represent them subjectively decide exhibition themes, interpretive strategies, which objects to collect, exhibit, or omit, and who to consult (Gray, 2016). Within this politically charged system, guides make further choices about which artworks to open up to dialogue and what questions to ask. Visitors' comments, how guides respond, and their readings of artworks cannot be separated from the myriad sensitivities, convictions, assumptions, experiences, and power dynamics alive and well in a guided group

visit. This subjectivity was not named by participants, however, which points to the possibility that it may also be overlooked during their gallery dialogues with visitors.

Discussion

Future Learning and Support

Participants in this study proposed specific topics for further training that included identifying artworks that may provoke conflict, teaching through discomfort, and designing questioning strategies for challenging subject matter. Some also agreed that training is but one part of a bigger picture that includes clear and consistent messages, directives, and limits from the museum. This is especially relevant as the museum embarks on new, critically curated exhibitions. It should be noted that participants' commitment to their learning, the museum, and positive visitor experience was palpable in their responses. That their perspectives, perceptions, and behaviours are shaped by their positionality (as well as the predominantly White institution, peer group, and art historical canon they refer to), however, cannot be ignored. Therefore, learning opportunities should include reflexive, deliberate, and regular opportunities for guides to both practise skills and reflect critically on content and their relationship to it. Supervised and peer-led activities that focus on research and facilitation should consider challenging subject matter in relation to the museum's orientations, guides' and visitors' identities, and museum practices more broadly.

Implications for Teaching and Research

The results of this study will be used to inform training and new tools for both prospective guides and, it is hoped, more experienced ones. Participants' suggestions for new learning opportunities are complementary to the museum's current program of ongoing lectures and workshops, and some suggestions are already being implemented. With regard to initial training, I will revise content that critically engages prospective guides and builds on their existing skills and knowledge. Areas for curriculum revisions consider my own limits and privileges, and include reflexivity and peer feedback; Indigenous world views on listening and dialogue; the interplay of positionality, unconscious bias, and micro-aggressions in gallery dialogue; and advanced questioning strategies related to challenging subject matter.

Art museums' perceived, well-guarded, and yet challenged power and authority make them key institutional sites to consider the relationship between collections of material and visual culture, critical engagement, and challenging subject matter. Potential areas for further inquiry

into the lived experience of art museum guides include their relationships to curatorial authority, institutional change, visitor experiences, and other educators. This research could fill gaps in the limited scholarship on educators' learning in art museums and contribute to the work of adult education researchers concerned with the politics of representation and display, critical literacy and older learners, anti-oppression in cultural institutions, adult peer learning, and dialogical teaching.

Conclusion

Situating participants' responses in their dual role as adult learner/educator, this article has examined how, to what extent, and under what conditions guides detect, navigate, and reflect on challenging subject matter. I have asked what learning opportunities could equip art museum guides to critically engage in gallery dialogue and touched on key issues of discomfort, uncertainty, reluctance, reflexivity, and positionality—issues that are multilayered and deserving of both personal and institutional attention. Participants' responses touched on concerns about visitor well-being, "political correctness", a desire for a volunteer experience that is not unduly heavy, unconscious and deliberate avoidance of problematic representations, and visitor ambivalence to attempts at critical engagement. Some guides are open in theory but don't always recognize contentious content, or hesitate to draw attention to it for fear of acting beyond, or in contradiction to, the museum's expectations of them as volunteers. Others still embrace controversy as an engagement strategy or simply don't perceive risk or difficulty when faced with challenging subject matter.

Participants consistently expressed their commitment to using the dialogical approach they were trained to use. While participants acknowledged that both content and contextual factors such as physical space and time can limit the feasibility of gallery dialogue, they are ready and willing to put visitors' voices at the centre of guided group visits. Interview responses also revealed consistent efforts to do solid research in order to adequately contextualize artworks. That said, with few exceptions, guides' critical engagement with challenging subject matter appears in large part limited to what is explicitly addressed by contemporary artists and/or visitors themselves. Participants spoke about their engagement with contemporary artworks that are critical of social inequality, misrepresentation, and violence of the past and present. Equally urgent for critical attention with groups, however, are art objects that merit deeper anti-oppressive readings than previously allocated to them by curators and educators with multiple

privileges. In both cases, further learning and support that apply a critical framework to reading artworks and facilitating gallery dialogue are required.

As eager adult learners themselves, guides' curiosity, listening skills, and desire to exchange with visitors and each other should be met with training on challenging subject matter that is (1) intentional and self-reflexive and (2) informed by a multiplicity of critical perspectives from within and beyond the art and museum worlds. Findings suggest that the support guides require from the institution goes beyond training to include clear boundaries and shared opportunities for reflection. With this support, guides would be better placed to build their capacities beyond their prior experience, initial training, and ongoing learning. At a time when art museums are being called upon to make systemic change toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusivity within their institutions, critical workplace learning initiatives deserve increased attention. In order for gallery dialogue to be more responsive, volunteers and professionals alike must be more representative of the publics they serve. As more art museums work toward this goal, they should also ensure that all those facilitating gallery dialogue with visitors are both open and able to identify and critically engage with the social issues, multiple histories, and cultural politics of challenging subject matter.

Bridge 1 | Before 2020, there was 2017

In her seminal text *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, scholar Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk) (2012) asked us, "*How can we begin to decolonize a very Western institution that has been so intimately linked to the colonization process?*" In reflecting on this question, I directed related questions at myself: What can *I* do, as a white-settler researcher and trainer, over-represented in my fields, working with predominantly white-settler volunteers and fellow professionals in predominantly white-settler establishment museums? What mistakes have I made in the past and what can I do differently in the future? These questions were humbling, but not guilt-ridden. Rather, they set the tone at the early stage of this project, which echoed my attempts to maintain a consistently critical and reflexive museum teaching practice that could work towards both institutional change and positive everyday working relationships. My doctoral work began in 2017, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of Canadian confederation and the 375th anniversary of the founding of Montreal. Indigenous and settler activist responses critical of these ongoing public celebrations offered a fertile moment for deliberate and ongoing reflection and action on questions related to museum decolonization efforts. Since then, I've been doing so through an ongoing, iterative learning process of my own, encompassing reflective practice, professional development, and my doctoral studies.

Here I return to the thrust of my research questions: what motivates gallery educators' professional learning? How does it shape or respond to change? The text that follows fleshes out the context, content, and processes of my own learning; as such, I situate both my data gathering and my analysis of participants' responses between my practice as a trainer and gallery educator myself. Below I provide an overview of the distinct yet overlapping colonial landscapes within which volunteer and paid educators pursue their work in Canadian and Scottish art museums, with particular attention to the institutional context of volunteers' work, offering a segue to explore that of paid educators in the next chapter.

Student Experiences and Perceptions as a Starting Point

One step in my reflective practice was looking back on instances of training future museum guides that challenged my competencies and/or gave me pause for critical thought. As I did so, I drew on formative experiences that led me to my first manuscript, highlighting key issues with students that pushed me further to consider how my teaching could contribute to

decolonization efforts and shape the questions I wanted to ask of research participants. While doing group work in the exhibition space devoted to 17th-century Dutch art, one student asked me if they could talk about slavery and colonialism with their groups (while the wealth reflected in the MMFA's collection of objects and paintings was made possible through generations of human exploitation, none of this history was written about in the galleries[31]). In the Quebec and Canadian collection, another student proposed including a Kaigani Haida or Tlingit crest helmet among the works in their guided visit. This cultural belonging also had little contextual information attached to its display, so I summarized what I would expect them to learn about in addition to design elements of Northwest Coast art and the object's ceremonial significance (e.g., the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Northwest Coast, pronunciation, criminalization of cultural expression and community building through the Indian Act's 70-year potlatch ban, the location of the object in the gallery, and its dialogue with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous art). To paraphrase their response: *It's just too much; I'm going to choose another artwork.* Digging deeper, it was not the workload itself that deterred this student —volunteer guides at the MMFA put hundreds of hours into their work. Rather, it was the complexity of the object's history and in turn, the responsibility that came with facilitating a dialogue about it.

I concluded that these two cases were different sides of the same coin—in the latter case, the student expressed concerns about not knowing enough or 'getting it wrong', and the former, about the internal politics regarding content. While one expressed more previous knowledge and readiness to do the work, both expressed hesitation about addressing difficult history or proposing a critical reading of objects in their role as a guide. Both examples also point to the guides' own whiteness and the fact that these challenges existed in part due to (white) curatorial omissions. As such, guides' positionality, volunteer status, deference to the curatorial voice, and respect for the institution created a particular context that I need to continually communicate with my MMFA colleagues about. Regarding fear of making a mistake, some volunteer guides may be keen to include Indigenous cultural belongings in their guided visits but can get overwhelmed by the possibility of a mishap. From my perspective, there is some sense that the 'work' involved is perceived as overwhelming and "I can't" may be conflated with "I won't". So, it's my job to tease out with students *why* they feel overwhelmed or afraid.

[31] In 2019, the Amsterdam Museum stopped using the term 'Golden Age' in recognition of the oppressive realities of the time, including forced labour (Boffey, 2009). As of 2022 the MMFA continues to use this term.

Aside from advocating that guides have long-term opportunities to test their competencies and make mistakes among peers, I began to see more clearly the value in learning how to share my own mistakes, openly discuss possible consequences of mistake-making, and model accountability. This pushed me to examine these questions more fully, to determine to what extent new guides have similar concerns, what issues they face, what their limits, as well as capacities, are, and how revamped and/or additional training could both address the gaps and reinforce their strengths. I chose to gather data with guides I had previously trained, which ensured all participants were working from a similar starting point. It also meant I could be more critical of my own teaching strategies. Not working in a supervisory capacity at the MMFA, I am unable to monitor guides' ongoing learning once they became guides, so this first step in my doctoral research was an opportunity to return to these students to discuss their experiences and perceptions, refine my own teaching, and to offer suggestions for ongoing support and future training recommendations that were grounded in both my observations and analyses and guides' voices.

Pushing Critical Reflective Practice Further Through my Doctoral Work

One of my early projects was a 2017 independent study, under art historian Dr. Heather Igloliorte's supervision, that comprised both a literature review of decolonizing efforts in museums and an extension of my reflective practice that considered how revisions to one of my training workshops could make a stronger contribution to such efforts. As I reported then, the bulk of the literature I consulted examined key issues of self-representation, Indigenous epistemology and pedagogy, structural change, curatorial decision-making and partnerships, and the colonial systems within which museums operate. At the time, my research findings suggested little scholarly work had been done on smaller decolonizing gestures within establishment museums. Of paucity was scholarship regarding museum guides, educators, and mediators—Indigenous and non-Indigenous/settler alike—working on the front line with the public in collections and exhibitions that are not within their power to change. It is also worth noting here that a Proquest search for peer-reviewed research on "decolonization" and "art museum" covering the 30+ years between 1990–017 yielded 28 results; the same search for the 5 years

between 2018–2022 yielded 31 results, pointing to the uptick in scholarly attention to these questions.[32]

My conclusion from this literature review and workshop renewal process was that taking cues from the work of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, source communities, local groups, and artists, non-Indigenous educators—and those who train them—are positioned to support wider decolonization efforts. I state this with full recognition that training is but one small piece of a much larger puzzle. As Sir Geoff Palmer, OBE, CD, Chair of the Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums Steering Group wrote, "A single museum or exhibition that tells stories is not enough to support important change. Structures need to be embedded within institutions to support museums and galleries to reflect modern Scottish society, and to understand, explore, and share the continuing impacts of empire, colonialism, and historic slavery with their audiences" (quoted in Asante, 2022, p. 7). I underscore this same reality in Canada as I encourage future guides to: challenge dominant narratives and stereotypes; critically engage with exhibition design; correct misinformation and assumptions; address and receive difficult knowledge; acknowledge silenced histories; select artworks that speak to contemporary struggles, resilience and accomplishments; and acknowledge their positionality concerning colonial history, collection, and visitors.

While the MMFA's new guide training program was suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19, these competencies will continue to be key foci for my training pedagogy moving forward. As an example, in one activity, each student is assigned to an artwork in the MMFA's "Founding Identities" gallery[33] for independent observation and asked to then pair up with another student for the second reading of it. Together, they consider questions for personal reflection and ongoing critical research. During this exercise I asked them to consider the following questions:

[32] It is also worth noting that of the museum decolonizing scholarship I consulted, specific case studies and examples were largely limited to First Nations. I found few specific references to Métis and Inuit art, communities, or cultures. I also found no museum education scholarship related to Inuit art. As I argued in my research paper, this is particularly relevant for future research at/with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, given their growing Inuit art collection and the presence of urban Inuit in Montreal. The opening of Qaumajuq, the Inuit art centre at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2021, has seen the launch of new online resources and professional development opportunities.

[33] This gallery is "dedicated to the dawn of Canadian art in New France. It features two cabinets showcasing the ecclesiastical and secular silver of the era. Aboriginal art, early and contemporary, is also incorporated to highlight the critical and introspective viewpoints of the First Nations regarding their contact with European Canadians" (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2022).

- What do I know/recognize/relate to and why?
- What do I not know/recognize/relate to and why not?
- What should I know or understand, and why?
- What responses, information or questions does my partner have that differ from my own? Where are the shared gaps?
- What information did we not consider?
- Why would I include this work in a future visit? What difficult knowledge could come out of a dialogue about this object?

This reflexive exercise grounds our ongoing class discussions and also informs their future work, which includes choosing artworks from the museum's collection that they will use in their guided visits and determining the key concepts that link those works. I position this freedom as an opportunity for creativity and autonomy but also a responsibility. For certain students who are further in their decolonial thinking, I also remind them that this is an opportunity for resistance and activism.

As I presented to colleagues at conferences and wrote about in my coursework, single, and co-authored articles, the questions above align with the work of education scholar Susan Dion (Potawatomi) (2004), who challenged non-Indigenous educators to ask of themselves: "*What did I not know before? Why didn't I know? What is the significance of not knowing?*" (p. 71). Dion's (2007) concept of the perfect stranger, whereby settler educators conveniently distance themselves from Indigenous issues and histories, was also useful to consider. Below I include an excerpt from my work for Dr. Igloliorte (Keenlyside, 2017) in this regard:

> Iseke-Barnes (2008) describes classroom activities that help students "gain insight into their own locations and beliefs" (145). Early on, she discusses with her class the challenges of learning about decolonizing: confronting current manifestations of colonization, recognizing colonizing ideologies, and the difficulty and guilt in accepting the role ancestors played in early colonization (p. 133). In my classroom, while addressing the concept of difficult knowledge during the workshop I spontaneously told students the story passed to me of my Irish great-grandmother, Mertie Malvina Doyle, who along with her brother Ferman, moved on their own from Ontario to homestead in Saskatchewan when they were just teenagers. I told this brief story in response to students' resistance, however subtle, to the idea of confronting a personal or national

history that wasn't what they always thought it was or wanted it to remain. Dion (2004) suggests difficult knowledge creates a fragile learning environment:

> Canadians have told and retold themselves a particular story; hearing our stories disrupts their understanding of themselves…[they] willingly accept the position of respectful admirer or patronizing helper when learning about Aboriginal people, history, and culture but actively resist learning that requires recognition of their own implication in the relationship and responsible response.[…] "How do we engage teachers' and students' attention in stories that tell them who they are when it is not 'who they are" that they want to be? (p. 59, 61).

As an educator I temporarily took the focus off students to explain how the version of the story I grew up with, and which captured my imagination for years, was one of youthful independence, bravery, sacrifice, and resilience. I further explained to students that I later came to learn of the conditions under which settlers such as my ancestors were offered and claimed their 'free land', and the ongoing impact on First Nations communities a century later. "Land is more than merely a resource. What has been disrupted by colonization is a relationship to the land" (Iseke-Barnes, 2008, p. 140). As I gave this example, I encouraged students to respond; one reminded her classmates of an added layer to our nation's history; that not only was land stolen from First Nations, it was only 'given' to certain (white) settlers. Using my life as an example allowed students a first step in thinking more deeply about their own. My family hasn't lived in Saskatchewan for two generations, but I cannot separate my current social and political location from that history. I explained to students that acknowledging and acting on my privilege is not to erase Mertie and Ferman's story from our family history out of guilt. Rather, I will accept the responsibility I have to add missing information to the version my son will hear as he grows up and begins early on to understand his history, privilege, and position of power in the world, which can be used to support social and political movements towards equity and sovereignty such as land claims and pipeline development protests (p. 16).

Using the redesign of a training workshop as a case study for my subsequent work, I came to better grasp the need to infuse the entire course as opposed to one single workshop and to offer ongoing, critical encouragement to student guides.

Since that time there have been glimmers of hope – at the end of one course, a trainee in her 60s told me she had never been taught about slavery in Quebec, and that the work of art historian Charmaine Nelson, which I had introduced in class, had inspired her to learn more. Through my research, one guide discussed her strategies for addressing the lack of Black representation in the MMFA's Quebec and Canadian Art collection, while another, as mentioned, insists on reminding visitors that the museum is on unceded territories. Two other guides told me about their self-directed learning about residential schools. As I bore witness to students' interests, limits, struggles, and potential in learning, I continued to adapt, test, and revise my training content.

Learning With Peers

A further extension of this work and parallel to my first round of data collection and analysis was the co-authorship of an article in the *Journal of Museum Education* (Anderson and Keenlyside, 2021) with Dr. Stephanie Anderson, whom I had met at the annual conference of the Special Interest Group on Education, Mediation, and Museums (SIGEMM). There she presented her Framework of Canadian National Narratives (Anderson, 2017), which I subsequently added to the training reading list to aid students in thinking critically about both the narratives found in the MMFA's Quebec and Canadian Art collection/exhibitions, and their subjectivity and past learning regarding Canadian, Quebec, and Indigenous histories. My subsequent collaboration with Dr. Anderson was an opportunity to flesh out my practical application of this heuristic and analytic tool in a museum setting, and to consider parallels with her use of it in a classroom context with pre-service teachers. This was also an important opportunity for us to examine our roles as settler researcher-educators in supporting decolonization efforts in both art museums and teacher education, and what we could learn from each other.

Similarly, I also pursued my own professional development around decolonization, taking advantage of the opportunities available to me as a Concordia student and instructor. Said learning included workshops offered by Concordia's Pîkiskwêtân (Let's Talk)—an Indigenous learning series for faculty and staff. The workshops I attended covered topics such as indigenization, cultural safety, and daily life for Indigenous students. My professional learning has also been nourished by my affiliation with the Beyond Museum Walls (BMW) and Thinking Through the Museum (TTTM) projects, led by Dr. Erica Lehrer, through which I attended a Study Day on Critical Museum Visitorship (2019), and participated on a panel for the workshop

Approaches to Unsettling, Indigenizing, and Decolonizing from Within Institutions (2022). Key interventions at these two events challenged my thinking regarding my work as a trainer, gallery educator, art education researcher, and museum studies instructor, specifically my thinking around dialogic pedagogy and visitor-centred educational approaches, which follows a framework I developed over the course of delivering the MMFA training:

- The role of the guide is to foster and facilitate group learning through observation, exploration and exchange.
- Knowledge is constructed as a group and grounded in a sharing of ideas, perspectives, expertise and experience.
- During dialogue the guide invites participants to express themselves; it is their ideas and knowledge that determine in large part *what is talked about*.
- How and what learning will unfold can be unpredictable; it is not fixed from one group to the next.
- Participants contribute to this process in ways that are most comfortable for them.

I impart to students that guiding in an art museum is not about their unbridled passion for art but rather *the capacity to listen.* At the BMW event, Jaime Morse, Indigenous Outreach Educator at the National Gallery of Canada, described her work leading Indigenous Walks. As she described how she uses public monuments to discuss Indigenous history in Ottawa, she insisted it was the visitor's job to listen. At the TTTM event, Julia Lafreniere, Manager of Indigenous Initiatives at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, questioned whether non-Indigenous guides should even take on the task of mediating learning about contemporary Indigenous art.

These are but two examples of learning that demonstrate the relationship between professional learning and reflexive practice. Lafrenière's statement inspired multiple questions for me about expectations and assumptions about volunteers and professional educators, and the liberties allowed for non-Indigenous curators that may not be afforded non-Indigenous educators—and vice versa, depending on the context. More broadly, both Morse and Lafrenière pushed my thinking about how I frame dialogic teaching and the assumptions I may be making about the creation of knowledge and who the educator/visitor is. They also challenged me to accept that the work that I do with non-Indigenous guides may be considered problematic for some regardless of its critical approach and perceived as a 'settler move to innocence (Tuck & Wang, 2012). Lastly, they underscore the value of ongoing relationship building between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners and between academics and practitioners, and the conditions under which these relationships are built and nourished. I elaborate on this last point in the Future Research section of my conclusion.

Moving Further Afield

My first round of data gathering, which I discussed in my first manuscript (Chapter 5), helped me to identify areas for competency building among volunteers, and this led me to consider my own learning in this regard, to what extent other professional gallery educators were themselves actively doing so, and the wider contexts that were shaping their teaching ethos, engagement strategies, and learning priorities. In considering Scotland as a second research site, I confirmed that the museum sectors in both Scotland and Canada have national associations promoting research and public engagement with legacies of colonialism and empire (Canadian Museums Association 2021; Museums Association 2022; Museums Galleries Scotland, 2022a) and are responding to contentious public debates around decolonizing history and public monuments (Abraham 2021; Adams 2021; Angeleti 2018). In both countries, white people are overrepresented in museums among visitor, worker, and leadership populations alike (Naylor & McLean 2016; O'Neill 2020), a point I will return to in the next bridging text. Both national museum associations have recently conducted public consultations and released important reports and recommendations this year. The Canadian Museums Association's (CMA) Reconciliation Program was a response to Call to Action #67 of the *Truth and Reconciliation Report*, which called for a national review of museum policies and best practices in collaboration with Indigenous peoples (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). With their focus on the inclusion and representation of Indigenous communities in museums and cultural centres (Canadian Museums Association, 2022), the CMA just released 10 recommendations in a report that examined the extent to which museum policies and best practices have complied with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Danyluk & MacKenzie, 2022).

For their part, Museums Galleries Scotland most recently oversaw *Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums* (ESSM), addressing Scotland's histories of empire, slavery, and racism. The ESSM produced a newly published report proposing six key recommendations (Asante, 2022) and a follow-up project, *Delivering Change*, has already been launched to build upon them

(Museums Galleries Scotland, 2022b). The ESSM also oversaw a BPoC[34] youth-led research project that included its own set of recommendations for immediate and long-term change in museums, galleries, and heritage sites (Intercultural Youth Scotland & Lima, 2022). This complements the work of the UK-wide Museums Association (MA), which established a Decolonisation Guidance Working Group in 2019 to offer sector-wide guidance on how to implement decolonial practices in all aspect of museums (Museums Association, 2020). As examples of such practices, major institutions such as the National Museums Scotland and the V&A Dundee are introducing new labels and displays that make contexts of colonization and exploitation explicit (More & Bond, 2022; National Museums Scotland, 2022), and the University of Aberdeen recently initiated the repatriation of a Benin Bronze sculpture (Decolonisation Guidance Working Group, 2020). As another case in point, the charity that manages Glasgow's museums created a curatorial position dedicated to legacies of slavery & empire to work across the city's institutions (Glasgow Life, 2020). That the National Gallery of Canada now includes Indigenous artists' language on their labels and just recently created a Department of Indigenous Ways and Decolonization (National Gallery of Canada, 2022) speaks to similar efforts on this side of the Atlantic. Museum activists working at the national level in both countries are calling for human rights frameworks to guide change in the sector (Asante, 2022; Perla, 2020).

Despite these comparable trends, overlapping colonial histories (Angeleti, 2022, City of Toronto, 2021), and an understanding of European colonization as an "international narrative" (Gibbons, 2015), Canada's vast geography and settler colonial context distinguish it from Scotland (and the UK more broadly) as a social and political setting. As museum educators Wendy Ng and J'net AyAyQwaYakSheelth (2018) wrote, "Given the specific context of North America, the enslavement, migration, and settlement of all other groups was predicated on the colonization of Indigenous peoples." Thus, they make the case for intentionally centering Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) peoples and knowledges in any effort to make structural change. This reflects a framework that pays particular attention to the impacts of settler violence and Indigenous representation, land, and reconciliation (which is made unprecedently explicit in the recent CMA report). On the other hand, the MA defines decolonization on their website using intimately related yet distinct language focused on the legacies of empire and

[34] This was the term used by youth researchers on the project.

slavery, and the principles they outlined in their *Supporting Decolonisation in Museums* report align closely with wider efforts in the UK to embrace social justice, anti-racism, and cultural democracy[35]. This report also underscored the distinct experiences of colonialism in the four corners of the UK, though it is worth noting that MGS uses the MA definition in their recent publications.[36]

With all of this in mind, pursuing my next research steps in Scotland with paid educators meant that responses from the next group of participants emerged in a related but distinct context, which I touch on in the next chapter and elaborate on in the subsequent bridging text. What follows is my second manuscript, which responded to a call for proposals for a special issue of *Journal of Museum Education:* "Documenting Museum Education during Intersecting Pandemics". This chapter builds on the issue theme and considers the specificities, challenges, and opportunities of working and learning as a freelance gallery educator at this moment in time.

[35] This is also reflected elsewhere, for example the Curatorial Research Centre's (2021) *Decolonising glossary.*
[36] Of note is the following, very recent statement on Museum Galleries Scotland's website: "We previously called this page 'Museum Decolonial Practice' but recently we've chosen to stop using the term 'decolonising' unless we are talking about the repatriation of indigenous land and life, so that we are clear with the language we are using and what it encompasses" (Museums Galleries Scotland, 2022c, para. 2). While beyond the scope of my project, this is a discourse analysis worthy of future research.

Chapter 6 | Manuscript 2

"What We Need to Future Ourselves For": Professional Learning Among Freelance Gallery Educators in Scotland Through the First Wave of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Abstract

As art museums increasingly commit to socially engaged practices that require critical ways of engaging with artworks, collaborators, and visitors, what does gallery educators' ongoing learning look like, and what motivates it? How does it inform or respond to change? Drawing on research with freelance gallery educators in Scotland, this article examines these questions within the overlapping contexts of the coronavirus pandemic and protests for racial justice in 2020. The tensions, challenges, and possibilities that emerged from participants' stories reveal complex relationships between professional learning, freelancer realities, and the adaptability required across the profession. In fleshing out how such a significant and unstable moment shaped professional learning, I consider what the field of museum education can learn from freelancers' experiences. Moving forward, how can we imagine futures that foster ongoing critical learning, sustained accountability, and collective wellbeing?

Introduction

From reflective practice to training workshops, professional learning among educators in art museums is a career-long endeavor.[37] Whether self-directed or institutionally mandated, it attends to competencies that evolve with ever-changing circumstances and priorities. As a salient case in point, this article discusses freelance gallery educators' experiences of professional learning leading up to and through the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic (March–October 2020).[38] Drawing on data from interviews with educators in Scotland, I suggest that their experiences offer a useful and critical point from which to imagine change in both the content and conditions of gallery education work.

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[37] For the purposes of this article, my use of the term "art museums" refers to not-for-profit visual art exhibition venues. In the UK context, "art gallery" is an equivalent term to "art museum." Similarly, the term "gallery educator" encompasses "art museum educator."

[38] Scotland shut down on March 17, 2020. The government lifted some measures over the summer as infection rates went down, however, at the same moment as my focus group with freelancers in October, the Scottish First Minister was announcing new measures to control the virus. Thus, by "first wave" I am referring to the period between initial lockdown to this second rise in infection rates (March–October 2020).

Situating Professional Learning as Critical Practice

At the onset of my research, I turned to the General Teaching Council for Scotland, which positions professional learning as a range of activities intended to "stimulate one's thinking and professional knowledge and to ensure one's practice is critically informed and current" (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2021).[39] These activities can be individual or collective and include – but are not limited to – action research, peer support, mentorship, shadowing, team teaching, conferences, and self-evaluation. In addition to the many forms professional learning can take, the competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) developed through gallery educators' informal, nonformal, and formal learning also vary in scope.[40] With my project, I set out to examine how participants themselves conceived of a critically informed practice, with particular attention to how their professional learning fit into that understanding.

Critical theorist Stephen Brookfield (2012) wrote, "At the heart of critical adult education is the notion of critique, of looking at the shortcomings of a system, institution or set of practices and imagining a more humane, compassionate and equitable way of organizing the world" (p. 53). This speaks to a question driving my work as a scholar-practitioner: How does critical adult education (Brookfield, 2012; Clover et al., 2016; Cranton, 2016; Johnson-Bailey, 2012) resonate with the people and systems at work in art museums? Through my research, I sought to better understand gallery educators' experiences as adult learners themselves (Deprizio, 2016; McCray, 2016; Palamara, 2017) and more specifically, how these experiences shape and are shaped by critical approaches to learning and engagement with visitors. Such approaches are as diverse as their respective locations, and recent literature reflects a wide range of critical ethos and action in art museums such as: contesting official knowledge/narratives/histories (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Mayo, 2013; Debono, 2016; El-Amin and Cohen, 2018); interrogating personal actions (Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; Ng, Ware, and Greenberg, 2017); focusing on relationships of power (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Mayo, 2013; Mörsch, 2011); addressing racism (Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; El-Amin and Cohen, 2018; Haywood Rolling Jr., 2020; Keith, 2012 Murray-Johnson, 2019; Wajid and Minott, 2019); indigenizing and decolonizing curriculum (Ballengee-

[39] The Council oversees the work of classroom educators; however, their definition is equally applicable to the work in museums. See Tran, Gupta, and Bader, 2019; Montalvo, 2019.

[40] The Group for Education in Museums (GEM), for example, has organized their Competency Framework according to reflective thinking, technical skills, and relationship building. GEM is currently working towards the inclusion of digital and other skills that the pandemic highlighted. See GEM (2021).

Morris and Stuhr, 2014); and linking institutions to their local and geopolitical contexts (Mörsch, 2011).

Museum theory and practice in the U.K. has promoted criticality in gallery education for well over two decades (Allen, 2008; Anderson, 1997; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Sandell, 1998; Scottish Museums Council, 2000). Just this past year, the Museums Association's newly launched "Manifesto for Museum Learning and Engagement" positioned museums as important sites for social change in response to racial injustice, the coronavirus pandemic, and the climate crisis; at the same time, it acknowledged existing inequities in museum partnerships, collections, programming, and workforces (Anderson, Pering, and Heal, 2020).[41] In Scotland, where there are more than 400 museums and galleries across the country (Martinolli, 2015);[42] key issues of access and representation include reducing financial and digital barriers, ensuring inclusivity among visitors, workers, and leadership alike, and increasing research and public engagement with Scottish legacies of colonialism, slavery, and racism (Museums Association, 2021).[43] Professional learning that speaks to these issues is on the rise,[44] demonstrating that critical approaches can be expected to shape even mainstream art museum practice now and in the future. Locating my research in Scotland offered fertile ground to explore the relationship between professional learning in the present moment and this early, ongoing recognition of the links between social (in)justice and museums.

Research with Peers Grounded in Practice

Between June and October 2020, I conducted research with two groups of early to mid-career gallery educators working in Scotland.[45] I recruited initial participants via professional

[41] The authors contend that "These crises are interrelated. They make it imperative that we make a transformational change to the role of museums in society. This is a time that requires radical social innovation." The content of this manifesto mirrors commitments outlined in a joint statement of intent from member-driven organizations for UK museums, galleries, heritage, and archives (including GEM, Engage, and Museums Association among others) in response to BLM protests: https://engage.org/happenings/joint-statement-of-intent-for-the-heritage-sector/)

[42] These institutions receive more than 27 million visits yearly, and more than half offer free entry to their visitors.

[43] Part of the wider context for these key issues moving forward is recent UK Government policy and public debate around decolonizing history and "culture wars" (Kendall Adams, 2021).

[44] Over the last two years, for example, critical training for museum professionals offered by UK professional associations has touched on subject matter such as difficult history, discrimination, decolonization, anti-racism, Black history, sustainability, and LGBTQIA+ learning and engagement. Recent literature offers examples of on-site museum training from North America; see El-Amin and Cohen, 2018; Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; Murray-Johnson, 2019.

[45] Participants spoke to the impacts of the current moment on their immediate and long-term work and learning. Both geographical areas in which I did my research had relatively low COVID caseloads at the time of data collection and, according to the most recent census, the percentage of people who identify as white (92%) was just below that of Scotland as a whole (96%).

association newsletters and networking events, and subsequent participants contacted me via word of mouth. Prior to their participation, participants each received an information and consent form that described in detail the research project. I emphasized my own role as a practitioner-researcher in both the recruitment and data collection phase – a gesture intended to foster trust and a peer-to-peer connection between myself and participants. The first participant group comprised three employees of a municipal art gallery and the second, five freelancers with various overlaps in their institutional affiliations, working in public and private galleries.
I conducted open-ended, individual interviews with all eight participants and a follow-up focus group with each participant group; both the interviews and focus groups occurred via videoconferencing in adherence with public health guidelines prohibiting non-essential travel and in-person gatherings. All participants received copies of interview and focus group transcripts for review with the option to edit, omit, or clarify their ideas as they saw fit. In recognition of the time and labor they contributed to the research project, I offered freelancer participants an honorarium based on the Scottish Artists Union rates of pay.[46]

As key tenets of Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT), attention to reflexivity and subjectivity guided both my data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Thus, it is important here to address positionality and recognize the limits of my own cis-gendered whiteness and that of the research participants, as well as its overrepresentation in the field of art museum education (Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; Naylor and McLean, 2016).[47] As a starting point for my initial coding of participants' responses, I applied a theoretical framework grounded in transformative learning and critical pragmatism to establish preliminary sensitizing concepts (tentative ideas to guide my thinking) (Charmaz, 2014). These included acting differently, deeper self-awareness, more open perspectives (Stuckey, Taylor, and Cranton, 2014), shared process, possibility, and imagination (Forester, 2013; Kadlec, 2008). Ongoing analysis through memo-writing and further coding, which focused on thematic and conceptual links, determined wider categories through which to present my findings. The unique experiences of freelancers emerged as a pressing area

[46] https://www.artistsunion.scot/pay_rates_2021.
[47] Ninety-four percent of respondents in a recent survey of UK museum freelancers, self-identified as white: "The results suggest that routes into freelancing in the sector for people of colour – as well as support to progress, stay and thrive – are required, and echoes similar needs in the overall workforce." (Lister & Ainsley, 2020a).

of inquiry, and this article draws exclusively on data collected from this particular participant group.[48]

Professional Learning in Turbulent Times

Over a period of six months in 2020, participants shared their stories during what was still a relatively new and uncertain context that vacillated between urgency and slow reflection.[49] Institutions had closed their doors and, with increasing urgency in the months following worldwide protests, grappled with how to address systemic racism in daily work, management, and governance. Guided visits and other group learning activities ground to a halt, leaving gallery educators working from home, furloughed, or out of work indefinitely.[50] Unemployment, unanticipated working conditions, pivots to digital,[51] and renewed calls for racial justice all called into question the what, how, and why of art museum education at this time. Thus, questions related to the ways that gallery educators learn to work differently took on a new and more complex weight. Put another way, the backdrop for both day-to-day practice and the field of art museum education itself faced a significant and destabilizing shift, impacting professional learning in its myriad forms as a result.

In what follows, I first touch on key issues related to freelance gallery educators' professional learning leading up to the pandemic. After considering how the current moment – marked by lockdown and protest – imposed and inspired learning priorities, I highlight some opportunities for professional learning that surfaced because of it. Lastly, I discuss the formation of new working relationships and a small community of practice with which all participants were directly or indirectly affiliated – and how these connections spoke to both immediate needs and possibilities for the future. In closing, I pose key questions to prompt reflexivity and action in daily work, planning, and advocacy in the field of art museum education.

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[48] Both participant groups will be discussed in my final PhD dissertation; permanently employed educators' perspectives and experiences will feature prominently in subsequent discussions that will offer a deeper analysis of all eight participants' conceptions of critical practice and the significant role of informal learning in the everyday.
[49] Throughout, I opt to use the singular they, their, and them to protect participants' anonymity.
[50] According to a recent analysis of Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics, among freelancers in the sector, women and younger people appear to have been disproportionately affected (Florisson et al., 2021).
[51] This begs some consideration beyond the scope of this article; namely, how art museums will address the potential for increased digital divides within their freelance roster and to what extent the digital literacy of gallery educators could be approached as an access issue, much as it is with students and other learners.

"Chasing the work": Pre-pandemic Freelancer Life and Learning

Working Freelance Comes with Costs

Participants described their professional learning leading up to the first wave of COVID-19 as dynamic, largely self-initiated, and caught up in the realities of freelance working life. Multiple participants discussed their decision not to pursue permanent work as a gallery educator; they cited more opportunities for hands-on creativity and contact with the public as the driving forces behind that choice. In a country where freelancers are overrepresented in music, performing, and visual arts (Florisson et al., 2021), and education/learning tops the list of freelancer roles (Blanche, 2015; Lister and Ainsley, 2020a), benefits included the freedom to choose projects, having the option not to take on work, and the flexibility to pursue a professional art practice. According to participants' accounts, however, these types of benefits do come at an important cost – namely, being on a freelance roster simply doesn't guarantee work hours. This speaks to the financial risks of working with verbal agreements and no set contracts; other challenges include the uneven and unequal distribution of shifts, missing out on the informal learning opportunities that come with full-time work, unexpected staff turnovers, and competing with close colleagues for contracts.[52]

Most of these gallery educators' professional learning occurred on their own or with their peers in pairs or small groups, and comprised personal research, reflective practice through writing and artmaking, planning for sessions with co-facilitators, and the occasional training workshop. Some participants described with significant regret the loss of training opportunities (such as curator tours and workshops) that institutions had recently stopped offering to freelancers.[53]

Negotiating Barriers to Training

Participants reported that their training as freelancers is never compulsory and rarely compensated. One educator reported feeling unprotected and ultimately less motivated to pursue

[52] My focus on professional learning among freelancers through COVID-19 is situated within critical discussions of freelance employment more broadly, both prior to and during the coronavirus pandemic. (Culture Counts, 2018; Florisson et al., 2021; Lister and Ainsley, 2020a).

[53] It is relevant here to consider the potential ripple effects on professional learning of a recent class action suit in London. In 2018, 27 art educators (known as the NG27) filed the suit against the National Gallery for unfair dismissal and to be recognized employees. In 2019, the judge rejected their claim of unfair dismissal but ruled that they should be classified as "workers" – a status offering them more rights than freelancers but fewer that full time employees (National Gallery Educators, 2021; *Museum Educators at London's National Gallery Win Case Over Workers' Rights*, 2019).

professional development when their ongoing learning isn't financially supported by the institutions for which they work, while another described a sense of pressure to pursue it in order to obtain future contracts. As such, the most significant and common professional learning challenge was the time and financial demands of accessing training courses. In this context, participants often found themselves weighing the value of training with the risk of taking it on, ultimately being unable or unwilling to commit to valuable professional development opportunities. While professional associations do offer subsidies for freelancers in some cases, they are not always enough. According to one participant,

> It's like a double whammy financially. So, often, even if you think, well, I could maybe afford to do the course [...] you can't afford the loss of work as well. I often think, "oh, that sounds really interesting. I'd love to do that" – and it's just not possible.

A younger participant echoed concerns around precarity, sharing that they didn't have the financial security or confidence in their early career to give up contracts in favor of training. Considered together, these statements suggest that both early and mid-career gallery educators face a similar barrier, begging the question of how professional associations can build upon existing support for freelancer learning among educators at all stages of their careers.

"Bringing it Back to Now": Learning Priorities Shaped by a Double Pandemic

New Uncertainties, New Conditions, and New Demands

As they rode the first wave of COVID-19, participants grappled with uncertainties. In the broadest sense, they were all concerned about the future of the arts. A more immediate and tangible uncertainty stemmed from sudden unemployment and the limited communication they received from institutions that normally commissioned them for work; simply put, this meant knowing their work was on hold, but with no clear messages nor end in sight.[54] The slow and temporary re-opening of cultural institutions in the summer of 2020 meant a slight increase in work opportunities for some participants, but mainly served to highlight the need to pursue professional learning that responded to the new demands of both online and in-person teaching. This included delivering content via videoconferencing as well as learning how to safely engage visitors and adhere to public health guidelines. It required, according to one participant,

[54] This led some participants to fear they would be dropped entirely once COVID restrictions fully eased; similarly, another feared that financial imperatives cause by closures could result in volunteers replacing professional educators.

"rethinking things that you just automatically were doing before [...] revisiting everything." As another participant stated, "Everything might be up in the air tomorrow." In this context, mutual support in navigating evolving circumstances became invaluable.

Reflexivity, Responsibility, and Race

At the height of lockdown, Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests occurred across Scotland in communities small and large, and this mobilization resonated with all the research participants. While no one spoke of immediate shifts in their practice, all participants shared how such a galvanizing moment caused them to stop and consider personal and institutional responsibilities regarding race and racism. Participants discussed protesting, addressing legacies of slavery, diversifying collaborators, questioning collecting and exhibition practices, and seeking new learning opportunities.

Participants stressed that it was more relevant than ever to engage visitors with questions of race and representation in art museums, galleries, and public spaces, lamenting how lockdown closures meant a missed opportunity for them to use their platform as gallery educators to do so. While some reported increasing institutional openness to politically engaged gallery dialogue even prior to local BLM protests, no participants were receiving institutional support, advice, guidelines, or training on how do so effectively.[55] In this regard, one participant identified the lack of cohesion in content and approaches within the same institution as a by-product of freelancers left in charge of their own professional development. Speaking about their informal learning through self-reflection and small group discussions, multiple participants also expressed the need and desire for further training and dialogue with their colleagues to contextualize inequality in the present moment: "I would just really appreciate some time to discuss these issues in the context of what has happened over the last few months [...]. It feels very vital to do that."

This was echoed by participants who demonstrated reflexivity about their positionality. While some spoke in general terms about the need to confront their own unconscious biases, others were maintaining intentional, ongoing discussions with their colleagues; specifically, how

[55] It is worth noting that at the time of my focus group with freelancers, GEM offered an online 6-week training course entitled "Anti-Racism in Practice," which was offered a for second time in 2021. Engage Scotland also offered anti-racism and cultural proficiency training, led by Intercultural Youth Scotland, to groups, organizations, and individuals.

they come across as middle-class white educators, what they address with visitors, their lack of impartiality, improving access, and the need to engage with perspectives and experiences that challenge their privilege and assumptions.

"Time is a Gift or a Burden": Job Loss, Lockdown, and New Learning Opportunities

Accessing Learning Through Online Platforms

An obvious but significant learning opportunity for participants was taking advantage of online offerings. As one participant put it, "I have never done so much [professional development] in such a consolidated period of time." Being out of work and under strict lockdown meant fewer demands on their time, giving them more opportunities to take advantage of the increasing number of free or low-cost online events, webinars, and conferences. Contact with experts and colleagues from around the world was of particular interest and value at this time, as this wasn't possible pre-pandemic.

Confronting Loss, Precarity, and Frustrations

New possibilities for online learning and connections coincided with freelancers' uncertainty about their circumstances, as well as a sense of loss.[56] Thus, participants also reported on the frustrations they were experiencing. "There's a lot of anxiety among us," shared one participant, while another acknowledged that there was "A lot of stuff spilling out." Their sense of loss went beyond income to include contact with the public and their peers. Further still, expressions of frustration spoke to a wider sentiment of being left behind and, ultimately, undervalued as both freelancers and educators:

> It becomes very starkly obvious in times like this, that you are very isolated in some respects [...] It becomes quite difficult to place yourself as a freelancer in a way that you're both able to carry on but also address things that are not right. Because you can't ... what is it? Bite the hands that feed you.

At the same time, other sentiments tempered frustrations towards institutions and government: "I'm kind of experiencing the highs and lows of it, really, but trying to stay open and grateful for

[56] No participants detailed how COVID-19 had directly impacted their personal lives or finances. It is worth noting that according to a UK survey conducted during the time of this study, the negative financial impact on freelancers working in museums, libraries, archives, galleries and heritage sites was consistent across these sectors. According to the survey results, 78% of respondents experienced a drop in income between March and October 2020 compared to 2019, and 52% were not eligible for the government's Self- Employment Income Support Scheme (Lister and Marge, 2020b).

the things that can come out of it." This same participant remarked on the importance of harnessing the visceral learning that accompanied their sense of loss and vulnerability as a focal point for mutual support and critical reflection.

Fostering Agency Through Future/Forward Thinking

At the same time, a desire to move forward came through future thinking that focused on how to respond to both the unknown and the extra time that came with being out of work. For one participant, this meant thinking about their career – where they are, where they're going, and what the future is going to be like. Another's line of self-questioning considered how "work has changed now, and the jobs you did before are not going to be there in the same way. What is it you'd like to do?" One of their peers echoed this, suggesting that these and other questions shaping professional learning are not so easy to explore under regular circumstances when one is overwhelmed with work. Looking forward also meant rethinking their role, for example moving into other areas of art education, returning to school, and political organizing. They also imagined taking new approaches to finding work for themselves as opposed to relying on institutions to commission it.

"What Can We Do to Help Each Other?": Connecting with Others Through Learning and Practice

Sharing Skills and Information with Intentionality

Pre-pandemic, these freelancers occasionally worked together in pairs or small groups, but without the opportunities to regularly connect and learn on site that permanent teams have, freelancers still found themselves siloed. That said, the fact that some had self-operated as a team, however disparate, lay the groundwork for organizing a community of practice that harnessed this collectivity when the pandemic hit. In turn, this cultivated their concern for each other. As one educator asked, "How can we support each other? How can we share our skills? How can we kind of move forward?" In this spirit of practical and emotional support, another participant said, "We didn't want to turn it into a pity party;" instead, while still holding space for expressing doubts and grievances, they focused more pointedly on what they all had to contribute to help each other:

> It's been very heartening, actually. It's been really reassuring, also helpful towards each other. I think we all respect each other's skills and want to learn from each other, in a very organic way, you know, so that's been very useful.

Learning from each other included the sharing of skills, information, resources, and opportunities to support each other's work lives, decision making, and well-being.[57]

Creating New Working Relationships

In their attempts to adapt to the everchanging present and unknown future, participants built on the mutual trust and recognition they had previously established as freelance colleagues. As such, the limits and pressures of lockdown provided a push for them to pursue in more depth ideas for new projects that had already been germinating, for example, an artist collective, an education project with contentious public monuments, and work with a lifelong learning institute. As one participant suggested, the process shifted from a sense of panic about keeping their work to a shared recognition of their collective strengths: "This could be a golden opportunity for us to come together."

Another participant discussed how new projects were learning experiences in terms of logistics, focusing ideas, and the very value and purpose that grounds their work:

> The fact that we have been kind of cut off by other organizations has made us come together and go, "Oh well, why don't we just do our own thing?" [...] Perhaps that is the way to have more of a voice, is if we all start coming together [...] I think it's quite interesting how suddenly you do feel you are more important. You are a bit more powerful.

Professional Learning and Collective Growth: Suggestions for Ongoing Dialogue and Change

Gallery educators' professional learning is individual and collective, takes myriad forms, and addresses competencies that vary according to needs shaped by job requirements, life-work experience, and positionality. This learning relates to both content and approaches, neither of which can be separated from shifting paradigms and policies, nor the local and global events impacting institutions and practices in the short and long term. In this context, examining the unique experiences of freelancers' reveals some key questions that researchers, institutions, and educators themselves can reflect on regarding professional learning:

[57] As one participant stated, "In a place where there's not much to feel grounded about, it does feel like an anchor to grab hold of and hang on to at times, really. When it's changing and uncertain, and you don't know when the next wave's going to hit you, it does feel like kind of that ship on a sea metaphor [...] that if you can hang on to something when it gets rough, you feel like you can kind of get through it."

(1) How might we reimagine a professional learning model that goes beyond subsidies to support free or, further still, compensated professional development for freelancers?
(2) As gallery educators create communities of practice devoted to collective learning, what resources could be mobilized to commission anti-racist facilitators to work with small groups in search of training that is specific to their circumstances?
(3) How can art museums implement institutional standards for anti-racism while maintaining a hands-off approach to training freelancers? What are possible implications for peer learning in this context?
(4) What conditions are necessary for online communities of practice established during lockdown to continue during the post-pandemic recovery period and beyond?
(5) What is the potential for professional learning through the start-up of new and collaborative art education projects? How can it be documented, shared as such, and harnessed by peers in other contexts?

Largely, if not entirely, cut off from work life during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, these freelance gallery educators strengthened and built new connections with others outside the confines of institutions. Despite the stress and isolation of lockdown and subsequent job loss, online events, peer learning, and mutual support networks emerged, all of which facilitated information and skills sharing, the navigation of new public health restrictions and working conditions, and the creation of new collaborations. In discussing their experiences, participants identified how the precariousness of their freelance status created unique barriers to professional learning prior to and during the pandemic. At the same time, they expressed a sense of collective agency and a renewed commitment to be more accountable to their publics and responsive to the politics and inequalities shaping the world and their work. At a moment of uncertainty, these freelance gallery educators' forward thinking and organizing responded and adapted to the immediacy and activism of the moment and the uncertainty of the future that lay ahead. As such, it fostered a sense of what might be possible – and necessary – at an unprecedented time when they were confronted with both the precarity and privileges of their circumstances.

Bridge 2 | Museums Praxis, Professional Learning, and Whiteness

Museum education scholars Paula Santos, Kimberly H. McCray, Gwendolyn Fernandez & Amanda Thompson Rundahl co-edited the 2021 special issue of *Journal of Museum Education* that my second manuscript was published in. In the call for proposals, they reached out to colleagues for submissions addressing what they described as 'intersecting pandemics'—the COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racism "in all its expressions". The editors sought papers that considered how the museum education sector "(1) navigated these remarkable times, (2) understood the impact on our museum education practice, and (3) distilled lessons for the future of museum education" (Santos et al, 2021). I once again come back to my initial research questions, which sought to better understand the links between professional learning and change through the lived experience of gallery educators, particularly considering increased museum activism in scholarship and practice over the last decade. Given the unprecedented circumstances of an international public health crisis and lockdown closures, the 'intersecting pandemics' demanded innumerable changes in daily practice. They also brought about renewed calls for organizational and sector-wide change that would require substantial attention to long-standing inequalities in the field among individual practitioners and institutions alike.

In both manuscripts that drew on my Scotland data, I considered the questions posed by Santos et al, touching on questions of race and racism through participants' responses to the turbulence and retrospection of 2020. That said, neither text fleshed out in depth the question of white supremacy at the root of the systemic racism Santos et al and others have sought to tackle, nor the whiteness that shapes many educators' work, identities, and learning. Here, I build upon my reflections on decolonizing museums and offer a bridge to situate my third and final manuscript. In doing so, I also gesture back to my first one, which was based on data gathered from interviews with nine white volunteer art museum guides.

Art Museum Volunteers, Race, and Class

As mentioned in my first manuscript, volunteer guides spoke in broad terms about white people's responses and collective accountability regarding the legacies of settler colonialism. A small number also pointed to the unfortunate lack of diversity in the MMFA's guide cohort but did not explore their own white (or settler) identities in depth. This didn't come as a surprise—as anti-racist philosopher and educator George Yancy (2019) wrote, "whiteness is a site of power, privilege, hegemony, and yet, paradoxically, a site of lived invisibility vis-a-vis white people."

(p. 19).[58] Participants in Scotland, however, overwhelming acknowledged their own and others' whiteness; as one participant admitted, "I've been looking at what white privilege is because it's not something I had ever, being white privileged, really had to think about before." There are multiple possible reasons for the discrepancies between the volunteer and paid educators I spoke with—for example, generational difference, intersection of white and class privilege among art museum volunteers, heightened public awareness and visibility stemming from 2020's racial justice protests, or the fact of speaking from within a professional field that has witnessed an uptick of references to whiteness in its growing discourse on social justice and decolonizing museums. In the UK, as discussed in my first bridging text, this speaks directly to the legacies of slavery and empire in museums and contemporary representation/ experiences/ participation of BPoC people in museums (Asante, 2021; Fellows and Nelson, 2021; Museums Association, 2020; Yeaman, 2021).

Like larger questions of whether colonial institutions such as museums can every truly be decolonized, it's also been questioned whether a system such as volunteer/docent programs can be transformed into critical and justice-oriented spaces given the extent to which they are firmly grounded at the intersection of race and class privilege (Haigney, 2020). As a case in point, while the National Docent Symposium Council (a US organization that dates back 40 years and with which the MMFA is affiliated) is directing increased attention and resources to questions of diversity and inclusion (National Docent Symposium Council, 2022), the Art Institute of Chicago recently let go its entire volunteer guide cohort – comprising 82 active, primarily white docents. (Pogrebin, 2021). The apparent abruptness of this gesture was critiqued in the mainstream media and by the docents themselves; that said, curator and arts writer Zorach (2021) noted that the museum had not taken on new volunteer guides for over 10 years and had changed its education department's name to the Department of Learning and Public Engagement, suggesting a restructuring was part of a longer-term ideological shift in the works for some time. Zorach also critiqued the AIC's Docents' Council response to the move, suggesting, "Perhaps it's not expertise—or demographics per se—but the confidence and entitlement that come with privilege, that became a stumbling block to effective collaboration on the department's priorities" (para 6). Interestingly, AIC staff voted to join a union just four months later, a move

[58] It is worth noting here that I, a white researcher, did not ask them questions explicating naming whiteness either, instead asking questions that might incite them to speak of it.

that speaks to a growing wave of museum unionizing across the US (Irish, 2022). This points to moves on both continents to address the precarity of many paid museum educators' working conditions, which is arguably exacerbated by both vast volunteer cohorts in Canada and the US and a significant reliance on freelancers in the UK.

A Brief Portrait of Whiteness in Canada's and Scotland's Museum Sectors

The backdrop to my data gathering in Scotland were the two pandemics Santos et al referred to. The few years leading up to and since 2020 have seen an increase in recent scholarship from North America on whiteness in art museums (Embrick et al., 2019; Fuentes, 2021; Heller, 2018; Prescha, 2021; Sions, H. K., & Coleman. 2019; Taylor, 2021). In both Canada and Scotland, increased commentary, through cultural media outlets, professional associations, and non-profits concerned with racial justice, has also addressed these concerns. For example, O'Neil (2020) surveyed Canada's four largest public art museums (MMFA, art Gallery of Ontario, National Gallery of Canada, and Vancouver Art Gallery) and, supported by a jarring collage of management headshots, exposed overwhelmingly white leadership.

Just months after the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, activist and curator Perla (2020) wrote, "museums joined institutions around the world making public statements of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Most of the statements from museums were not backed up by a track record of anti-racist work; many were, in fact, covering up a culture of human rights abuses and discrimination that has plagued these institutions for far too long" (para. 1). Perla challenged the performativity and hypocrisy of hollow institutional gestures, citing multiple examples of Canadian museums accused of oppressive violence against visitors and employees alike. Addressing members of Canadian Art Gallery / Art Museum Educators (CAGE) in the summer of 2020, Miranda Jimmy (Thunderchild First Nation) wrote, "When protests spark conversations in the media or online, the questions flood in from all directions: *how do I be an ally in a movement that has nothing to do with me?* is often the basis for these questions. The answer: *it has everything to do with you and what you do, or don't do, in response can be the reason for the movement's success or failure*. If you are a part of the dominant, white settler society, your voice and participation hold power. These systems of inequity are created by and can be brought down by people like you" (Jimmy, 2020, para. 3).

The museum sector in Scotland also responded rapidly in the wake of 2020's BLM Protests. While the police murder of George Floyd in the US prompted protests in multiple Scottish locations, activism in the country dates back earlier; as a case in point, in May 2022 a public inquiry finally began into the 2015 death of Sheku Bayoh after he was restrained by police officers (Brooks, 2022). That said, museums have not been as quick to respond to past activism, and it has been noted that museums' public statements in 2020 did not include any names of past Black British victims (Francis, n.d.). Miles Greenwood (2021a), Curator of Legacies of Slavery and Empire at Glasgow Museums, wrote about the need for public knowledge and understanding of the role of museums in reinforcing and perpetuating racist ideologies and the impacts of these ideologies on people's lives today. As such, Greenwood (2021b) suggested museums should share the weight of contemporary anti-racist education by reckoning with their own pasts and decentring Whiteness and the West. Speaking to the limits of museum's efforts up to now, he wrote,

> The building might have been knocked down, rebuilt, redeveloped. Its displays might have been refreshed or re-interpreted. The staff might have more progressive ideas than their predecessors. They might even have a workforce, senior management and board that is ethnically diverse (don't count on it though). Empire is built into its foundations. Its legacy can be felt as you walk through the galleries. Culture is collected and categorised. The galleries about Scotland that show art of White people, by White people, for White people" (para. 3).

In light of such critique, the University of Glasgow's Huntarian Museum has produced A Declaration of Discomfort, which "only now" acknowledges that the institution is not neutral (The Hunterian, n.d.). Zandra Yeaman (2021), the Huntarian's Curator of Discomfort, explains the ethos and practices underscoring her job title: "Curating Discomfort is looking at ways outside of traditional museum authority to explore the interpretation of contested collections and to design and deliver a series of museum interventions that takes the museum out of the institutional comfort zone. Exploring white supremacy as an economic and cultural system in which white western ideals control the power of the text, the material resources and ideas of cultural superiority" (para. 9). In addition to supporting museums to do this type of work, Museums Galleries Scotland now promotes anti-racism as an explicit priority, making their process visible to the public and open to criticism. Their approach encompasses organizational

change and points to the limits of individual professional learning: "We recognise that competencies are not necessarily a sign of change; further work will be ongoing to make sure that these are used within our team's objectives, work planning, and performance reviews. [….] We recognise that training without senior-management commitment is not meaningful, and we have implemented a specific programme for our senior team" (Ragett, 2022, para. 5, 13) In addition to staff training, MGS have addressed whiteness and embedded anti-racism in recruitment, planning, communications, collections, contracts, and procurement.

Greenwood (2021b) echoed this approach, positing that curatorial, pedagogical, and programming strategies designed to critically address the legacies of empire (such as highlighting both contemporary realities and multiple experiences of these histories, interrogating the city's connection to them, and exploring the stories of enslaved and colonized people) must be reinforced with attention to restitution claims and institution-wide anti-racism policies. This type of structural change is key, given overrepresentation of whiteness that is also a reality in the Scottish museum sector; according to the latest (2011) census data, 96% of the population in Scotland identified as white, and this number drops in the country's largest cities (Scotland's Census, 2021). However, a decade later only 3% of museum staff in Scotland are BPoC (Intercultural Youth Scotland & Lima, 2022).

Returning to the special issue of *Journal of Museum Education* I referred to at the entrance to this bridging text, it is important to note that the editors wrote about the very few manuscripts they received at the end of 2020 about racial equity and justice:

> Given our field's current informal and formal conversations about systemic racism and racial equity, there are a number of reasons we believe this happened. To start, consider the layoffs museum education departments endured and the emotional toll on Black museum staff due to the uprisings over the summer of 2020. This is on top of the burden already placed on many Black and POC museum educators to consult on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our institutional systems and practices. Contributing to the literature of museum education via writing and publishing is usually done on top of regular work. It is often voluntary, unpaid, and requires time and energy. Perhaps it is not a mystery why the capacity from museum educators grappling with these issues is depleted (Santos et al, 2021)

While the geographical context for this statement is the US, I conclude with this quote as a segue to the final stretch of this bridging text and to point to white privilege in the museum field more broadly. This, in addition to the discouraging underrepresentation of Black and people of colour in Scotland's museum sector, may also speak to the overrepresentation of whiteness among my research participants.

Informal Learning About my Whiteness: Another Story to Tell my Students

My own formal and informal learning as of late comprised a 12-week training program with the Group for Education in Museums (GEM). Upon completing this training, myself and five colleagues located around the UK – four white and one person of colour – created a community of practice (Nevins, 2019; Wenger, 1998) to regularly check in, report on our activities, and offer support and encouragement to continue anti-racist self-reflexivity and professional practice. This has been an invaluable resource since that time, and we recently reported back to GEM with our reflections following our first year of meetings. It was prior to this, however, in 2018, that my informal learning on questions of white supremacy peaked. At the time, I was a board member at La Centrale, a feminist artist-run centre founded over 40 years ago.

Before I continue, I return to the writing of anti-racist educator Yancy (2019) who, in the classroom, names his own sexism to demonstrate the relationship between individuals and the oppressive systems they are complicit in—regardless of their progressive political convictions. Reading about his teaching strategies, I began to think through a second story I could tell students, to share not only a transformative learning experience about my own whiteness, but also the reactions, guiding ethos, and concrete strategies that formed my responses as a white person in the short term and moving forward. In fleshing out this experience, I also make connections to the main thrust of my third and final manuscript—informal professional learning and organizational change. I recognize that this story involved and impacted many people, experiences, and events; I have chosen to leave out details that are important but confidential and to include only public knowledge and my own personal responses and actions.

La Centrale is non-profit, non-hierarchical, and its member-only board requires the participation of a minimum percentage of practicing artists. Following months of ongoing discussions at member committee and board levels, the board hired a consultant to 1) facilitate training on race and microaggressions in non-hierarchies and 2) conduct an equity audit of La

Centrale's practices and policies. During this time, we also crafted a job description for an equity officer to implement the audit recommendations, and I wrote a protocol for entrance and exit interviews with staff and board members that I hoped would improve the integration of new people, facilitate departures, and prevent / better understand conflicts and experiences of violence. In September of the same year, the morning after I resigned from the board to focus on my studies and family, an anonymous open letter was released on social media that accused the organization of anti-Black racism. The board swiftly responded in writing to its membership and later that day, four of five board members—three of these four were white—addressed the crowd who was present for the opening of *The Ethical Etherealness of Fuck and Love*, curated by Jas M. Morgan and featuring works by Black and Indigenous artists including Kama La Mackerel, Arielle Twist, Amber Williams-King, Dayna Danger, and Sarah Biscarra Dilley.

I wasn't defensive when I unexpectedly found myself on the 'wrong side'. I was, however, profoundly saddened and shaken. Facing the public after the most intense day of my professional life, my body was speaking to me in response – it was moving into shut-down mode and I couldn't feel my arms. One of those arms was locked with my fellow board member as we walked down St. Laurent Blvd towards the gallery, and I remember the clarity of a pivotal question as it entered my mind – how many times have BIPOC artists, educators, and cultural workers passed through the entrance or exit of a predominantly white art space with a sense of dread, fear, or anxiety moving through their bodies? This embodied questioning, which I sat with myself, gave me an immediate sense of purpose and responsibility for the hours, days, and weeks that followed.

La Mackarel performed a poignant and powerful piece entitled *Truth and Punishment* that same evening. In it, without naming an individual, they referenced a previous incident of transphobia and sexual harassment they had experienced at a past La Centrale event. To paraphrase La Mackarel's refrain: *This is not a call out. This is an invitation.* This invitation was for well-intentioned white people to look in the mirror, ask themselves uncomfortable questions about their behaviours, answer them honestly, and be accountable through their actions moving forward. La Mackarel's testimony added to the complexity and tragedy of the crisis at hand and La Centrale's response to it; at the same time I was also struck by the different impacts these two activist gestures had on me; the sense of panic brought about by an open letter, and a much calmer shift towards forward-thinking action that came with this poetic work of powerful

performance art. I moved ahead accepting both, as there was much work to do the next morning; including, but by no means limited to, writing an open letter of response to the call out, attending to staff members, and ensuring any organizational discourse—both internal and external facing—pointed to subsequent action and transparency regarding our progress on questions of equity and racism—particularly anti-Black racism.

My relationship with La Centrale came to a close with a fraught AGM and two last meetings: one with the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the new board (comprising no white women and including only one previous board member) to report on the events and to demonstrate a commitment to a transition between boards that would be as smooth and supportive as possible. The second was an exit interview with the newly hired equity officer. This marked a finality to my work there; the accumulated time it demanded had already proved unsustainable and it was time to pass it on to a new board who would continue to work with La Centrale's other members toward creating a culture of true equity that adequately reflected a 21st-century feminist artist-run centre.

While my hands-on work was over, the critical reflection on the events continued in an attempt to reconcile the emotional toll of learning through crisis, document lessons learned, make meaning from failures, and take stock of the steps taken. In grappling with my decision to walk away from the organization, I also gave space to both consider the outcomes I did achieve, and the extent to which they may have laid the ground for future work. A key piece of learning from this experience was not simply that educators and other cultural workers can be complicit in white supremacy despite good intentions; this I already knew and teach future guides. I could also anticipate that years of education and experience in equity work didn't exempt me from my complicity, and I worked through how the crisis produced a conflict with the person I wanted to be in the world. What I did have to coach myself through was accepting that I could be complicit in a system whilst still making an active contribution to its dismantling. My reflex had been to harness my empathy towards those who deserved to be heard and believed. I also did my best to extend empathy and support – however awkwardly—to my BIPOC colleague on the board whose positionality, to my great frustration, too often went unnamed and unrecognized before and after the public call out. What came later was finding empathy for myself, as a person and a practitioner. I also learned about learning in this context; first, it reinforced that it was up to me as a white person to hold my white colleagues (including me) accountable in conversation.

I learned the hard way about the importance of reaching out to organizations and colleagues experiencing public callouts – not necessarily out of sympathy but to support them in a collective effort and in a spirit of shared responsibility and accountability. While we received support from individual white colleagues we reached out to, no board members from other organizations contacted us of their own accord. That said, they may well have been watching to witness how the crisis would unfold. In a similar vein, predominantly white funders and civil servants are also on a learning curve, and this drew my attention to the potential for extractive learning from underpaid, overworked cultural workers' mistakes, missteps, and efforts at reparation without offering financial support for them to do the work.

Leading up to and following this experience, however, the most important experiential learning for me was around the politics of learning from others. This was underscored by Eunice Bélidor (2019), now the first Black curator at the MMFA, who wrote about La Mackarel's performance in *Canadian Art*. Bélidor situated the performance within intersecting oppressions in the art sector and white feminisms more broadly; in her account of an anti-oppression workshop at the RCAAQ (Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec), Bélidor addressed

> a broader issue at stake for contemporary art centres: the amount of labour that is continually asked of cultural workers and artists who are queer, trans, Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (QTBIPOC) in order to educate white people. While white arts administrators and artists benefit from QTBIPOC grassroots knowledge at these types of forums, for Kama and other marginalized artists and cultural workers, the impact of participation is felt in their quality of life and mental health. (para. 5)

For me, this is the most critical message to impart regarding professional learning that imagines more just futures in museums and galleries, home to a creative, yet perpetually precarious field of practice. Empathy and willingness to both step up and step back are necessary for the self-reflexivity, active listening, and advocacy required of white people to upset white supremacy in our thinking, relationships, and professional practices.

Overall, this professional learning experience upset my self-perception and drew my attention to the relationship between institutional accountability and care for self and others, and the impact of activism in and on the visual arts – the latter of which I return to in the Future

Research section of my conclusion. Reaching the other end of this bridge that I have attempted to build toward my third and final manuscript, I come back to the words of Perla (2020):

> This type of work is not easy; it is demanding and emotionally taxing. It cannot be rushed. It requires mending, cultivating, nurturing, and maintaining relations as well as trust building and sustainability. For this to be effective, museums must devote time, effort, and resources; they must commit to structural change (para. 20).

I first learned about the construction of whiteness working in a feminist community organization 25 years ago. I called for anti-oppression in art museum education as I was just beginning in the field shortly thereafter. *It didn't and doesn't matter.* I am still white privileged, and I am still complicit in white supremacy. I am still learning, and still doing the ongoing work of building and mending relationships. My experience at La Centrale taught me more about what accountability can look and feel like, and the extent to which professional learning around race and racism demands an environment conducive to caring for self and others. As artist and anti-racist art educator Tanha Gomes (2020), my friend and colleague whose arm was locked with mine that day, would not be shy to say aloud: it requires love. Thus, we always return to the work of the late activist, scholar, and feminist theorist bell hooks (2001; 2003), for whom love is a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust.

This story offers a personal example of what can motivate gallery educators' professional learning and how this learning shapes and is shaped by change. As such, I will bring this story into the classroom with my next cohort of volunteer guide trainees, where the teaching context is particularly conducive to this kind of experimentation for multiple reasons. First, working intensively with guides (six hours/day once a week for 12 weeks) offers an opportunity to build rapport and a climate of trust as they build their competencies in facilitating dialogue. Furthermore, guides will make mistakes and face hurdles in the future; sharing my own will both model vulnerability and build a foundation for a community of practice that I hope they will continue beyond their initial training. Lastly, sharing this story in class speaks to a key objective of the course, which is to consider the role of a guide in the wider contexts in which their work happens. My story could serve as a case study for trainees to consider how they might respond to a similar situation, learn from it, and move forward in constructive ways.

As I visit La Centrale's website four years on, I can see the tangible progress that has been made. In 2018 I co-wrote a letter on behalf of the organization that expressed regret,

accepted claims, and outlined a strategy for moving forward with transparency. Seeing how things have moved from discourse to action (new policies and resources, increased justice-oriented, decolonial, anti-oppressive public events, and improved working conditions to name a few), points to the possibility for individual and collective learning to shape organizational change. In this spirit, the potential of informal learning in myriad forms and content to shape progressive internal policy is the focus of the manuscript that follows, as are the possibilities and politics of learning from others.

Chapter 7| Manuscript 3

From Practice to Policy: Mobilizing Gallery Educators' Informal Learning

Abstract

As art museums reckon with their colonial roots and ongoing exclusions, critical, if not activist, discourse and approaches have begun to inform even mainstream institutions. However authentic, intentional, or successful such efforts have been to date, this trend has resulted in exhibitions, programming, and, for some museums, organizational change that imagine individual, collective, and institutional transformation is possible. While training for museum educators that address this context is on the rise, this article looks beyond training and other forms of organized professional development to examine the impact of *informal* professional learning. Specifically, its role and value in supporting progressive re-imaginings of who art museums are for and what they can do. Drawing on qualitative research I conducted with a small group of gallery educators in Scotland during the first wave of COVID-19, I consider how informal learning could be leveraged to enact personal *and* organizational change in a post-pandemic future. In my discussion, I propose both a tentative framework for critically engaged informal learning and key areas for policy attention in art museums and professional associations. Mobilizing this data for critical analysis responds to both a paucity of literature on transformative professional learning in art museums and a lack of research and policy attention to informal learning among educators more broadly.

Background

Our Daily Work is Research. This was the title of the summary report I prepared following the Canadian Art Gallery Educators' (CAGE) 1996 symposium—a gathering documenting oral accounts of training in art galleries and museums across the country. As I reviewed the transcripts from my doctoral dissertation 25 years later, I was reminded of the CAGE document, in which practicing gallery educators valued daily practice as a site of professional learning deserving of recognition, documentation, and follow-up actions. Throughout a series of interviews and focus groups in 2020, a small group of freelance and permanent gallery educators in Scotland echoed this position, stressing the importance of the informal learning that happens in their[59] jobs. Participants spoke of their dual role as

[59] Throughout, I opt to use *they, their,* and *them* in the singular to protect participants' anonymity.

educator/learner, and their discussions of what critical professional learning meant to them pointed to the synergy between their critical learning and gallery teaching.[60]

Participants' responses inspired the questions driving this article: How can informal professional learning be leveraged to influence both personal *and* organizational change? In what ways did navigating a pandemic open new doors to sharing this learning in more deliberate ways? Finally, what learning challenges, priorities, and opportunities emerged from pandemic life? What could this mean for policy and procedures in art museums and galleries 'post' pandemic? In pursuing this line of questioning I hoped to support increasing calls for greater representation and equity among art museum visitors,[61] volunteers, and professionals alike. I did so cognizant that that being a white settler educator—and as such, overrepresented in my field (Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2018; Naylor & McLean, 2016; O'Neil, 2020)—has shaped the trajectory of my own professional learning and growth. Furthermore, given that my self-selected participants were also white, I speculate that their experiences, priorities, orientations, and discourse as learners were shaped by their positionality. As such, I considered both the possibilities and politics of informal professional learning with specific attention to its potential for shaping internal art museum policies governing program planning, decision-making processes, and organizational cultures that promote social justice and engagement. I considered how findings such as these can inform training and advocacy priorities for professional associations and internal procedures guiding the work of education/learning departments seeking to extend their reach and enhance internal and external collaborations.

This article considers the possibilities for forward-thinking praxis grounded in daily connections and encounters—be they material, conceptual, or relational.[62] As such, I consider

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[60] This teaching included, among other tasks, conducting guided visits with the general public, schools, and community groups, leading artmaking workshops, creating learning resources and digital content, facilitating community outreach projects, conceptualizing interactives, and designing public programming devoted to lectures, concerts, and performance art

[61] I recognize here the baggage and debate that comes with this term. I choose it here over other common options such as learner or participant to underscore the learning role of educators themselves and to avoid confusion with my research participants. For me visitor connotates invitation, being welcomed and served, and, under ideal circumstances, feeling at ease, if not at home. At the same time, the term visitor also acknowledges that 1) even when collections are publicly owned, the institution's gateholders control and determine access to them and 2) visitors don't have the same power or privileges in the museum space as volunteers or paid educators. I use the terms 'visitors' and 'publics' interchangeably while recognizing that neither term captures the range of positive and negative experiences that people experience in art museums.

[62] This article is one of three manuscripts from my Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)-funded PhD dissertation, which drew on critical adult learning and museum scholarship to analyze data from 17

how positioning informal professional learning as relational practice (Reeves, 2010) in the wake of a pandemic and widespread protests for racial justice offers fertile ground upon which to imagine a thereafter in which the connections between professional growth and justice-oriented change receive increased policy attention. What follows is an overview of the factors that shape and facilitate critical informal learning among a small group of gallery educators in Scotland. I first briefly review current literature and describe my study before 1) contextualizing participants' informal learning in the specificities of their daily work and field of practice, 2) fleshing out the role of teacher-learner as they describe it, and 3) highlighting both the ethos that shapes their professional learning and the intentional activities that inspire—or could further—critical informal learning in their daily work. In my discussion, I propose both a tentative framework of what I call *conscientious curiosity* for engaging informal learning as well as key areas for internal museum policy attention that could foster individual and organizational growth.

Situating Gallery Educators' Informal Learning in Current Research

I understand professional learning to comprise a wide scope of both individual and collective learning activities related to volunteer and paid work that is situated in time, place, positionality, relationship, discourse, and power. A review of English language literature[63] on professional learning in museums reveals a growing body of research on professional development opportunities offered to classroom teachers in art museums (e.g., Coffey et al., 2015; Etheridge, 2020; Kraybill, 2018; Sandell & Zimmerman, 2017; Schoonover, N. R., 2021; Stone, 2013; Vatsky, 2018). Similarly, much of the literature attending to museum educators' learning focuses on organized learning, namely training programs as examples of forward-thinking practice (e.g., Castle, 2006; Chien, 2017; Lachapelle et al, 2016; Levent & Reich, 2013; Meyer et al, 2016; Montalvo, 2019) and conceptual frameworks for professional development and competency building (e.g., Anderson and Keenlyside, 2021; Bevan and Xanthoudaki, 2008; Bueno Delgado, 2014; Ebitz, 2005; Group for Education in Museums, 2021; Grabman et al, 2019; Katzenstein, P. & Koster, 2015; Schep et al, 2018). Influential articles have also emerged in the past few years that document critical training and professional development that address

open-ended interviews and two focus groups I conducted with volunteer guides in Canada (2017) and paid gallery educators in Scotland (2020).

[63] As a museum practitioner-scholar, I included both scholar and practitioner research in my review.

the white supremacy impacting racialized publics and practitioners alike (e.g., Dewhurst and Hendrick, 2016; El-Amin & Cohen, 2018; Murray-Johnson, 2019; Ng et al., 2017).

A smaller number of recent articles on art museums have focused primarily on the informal, at times incidental, learning that happens in 'our daily work' (e.g., Bueno Delgado, 2014; Crum & Hendrick, 2014; Grabman et al, 2019). Given the paucity of such studies, I also turned to current literature examining the experiences of non-museum educators for guidance. For example, the critically informed approaches highlighted by the museum educators cited above resonate with the work of education scholar Jennie Reeves, who positioned professional learning as relational. For Reeves, this "raises questions about what those acting as educators are making of the process they are engaged in: What kind of persons and knowledge are they seeking to produce and how does their professional practice link to these purposes?" (Reeves, 2010, p. 3). Reeves conceived of professional learning as a 'matter of relations' between 1) spaces over time 2) people and things 3) being and becoming; 4) power and agency, and 5) discourse and identity. While this research on the impact of a continuing professional development program in Scotland focused on the school system, I posit that the relevance of each of these interconnected relations to museums and galleries is noteworthy. Considering, for example colonial or 'white cube' architecture; contested interpretations, acquisitions, and display; the social role of museums and emerging foci on wellness and care; questions of shared authority, 'expertise', and precarity; alternative narratives, inclusivity, and self-representation. Thus, relationality offered a relevant starting point and guide to examine the specificities of gallery and museum educators' informal learning and the meaning they made of it.

Policy analysts Luka Boeskens, Deborah Nusche, and Makito Yurita (2020) stated that "Professional learning enables teachers to develop the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to be effective educators, support their peers, contribute to the collective improvement of the profession and gain the trust, status and self-efficacy to carry out their work with a high degree of professionalism" (p.7). Proposing a theoretical and analytical framework to study teachers' continuing professional learning, the authors suggested that formal learning activities may include self-initiated or mandated courses, seminars, qualification programs, etc., while informal activities emerge from daily work. That said, they rejected the idea of a binary between formal and informal learning and instead proposed a continuum of formality. Professional learning at the informal end of such a continuum can be "characterized by a low degree of planning and

organizing in terms of learning context, learning support, learning time, and learning objectives" (Kyndt et al, 2014, pp. 2393–2394).

As reflected in the definition above, scholars researching teachers' experiences have also conceptualized professional learning continuums (e.g., Eraut, 2004; Evans, 2019; Kyndt et al., 2016),[64] and offer relevant frameworks for analyzing museum educators' informal professional learning. For example, Evans (2019) proposed three main components of professionalism, any number of which may be the focus of practitioners' professional learning.[65] Eraut's (2014) typology of informal learning distinguished implicit, reactive, and deliberative learning, situating each of them in three distinct 'times of focus'.[66] In their empirical study of 25 years of academic research on informal teacher learning, Kyndt et al. (2016) proposed a typology of 42 learning activities grouped into seven detailed categories.[67] These scholars all concur that research on informal learning is limited and that this learning may even go unnoticed by the learner themselves. Thus, given that informal professional learning has also been overlooked by educational policymakers (Boeskens et al. 2020), this article considers how to mobilize new competencies (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) that may go unrecognized, unquestioned, or underestimated by virtue of the conditions under which gallery educators develop them.

The Study

Between June and October 2020, I conducted qualitative dissertation research with early to mid-career gallery educators in Scotland. The first group comprised three educators of a large municipal art museum who were working from home due to pandemic lockdown closures, and the second comprised five freelancers[68] with overlapping affiliations. Through open-ended interviews and focus groups, I sought to better understand what a critically informed practice meant to them, with particular attention to how their professional learning fit into that understanding. Discussions covered a full range of learning activities and pedagogical approaches, and I invited participants to talk about how they think and learn about visitors, museum colleagues, community partners, and collections. I asked questions about what

[64] These authors' definitions of informal professional learning activities vary in terms of intentionality and the presence of learning objectives.
[65] Behaviour, attitudes and intellectuality.
[66] Past episode(s); Current experience; and Future behaviour.
[67] Interacting and discussing with others; Doing/Experiencing; Experimenting; Learning from others with no interaction; Consulting information sources; Reflecting in/on action; Engaging in extracurricular activities; and Encountering difficulties.
[68] Freelancers were paid for their time according to the Scottish Artists Union pay scale.

motivates and informs their professional learning, the different contexts in which their learning happens, and the challenges and possibilities of the current moment.

Participants all received copies of interview and focus group transcripts for review. I sent the first group a summary report of the points for action and change I had identified and held a follow-up meeting with the second group to discuss my findings with them. Tenets of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014, 2017) guided my study, namely simultaneous data collection, coding, and analytic memo-writing. These activities were informed by *methodological self-consciousness* which, according to Charmaz (2017), involves "detecting and dissecting our worldviews, language, and meanings and revealing how they enter our research in ways we had previously not realized." (p. 36). The position that researchers are never neutral resonated with a similar rejection of neutrality claims in art museums. Furthermore, the weight given to agency in CGT methodology (Rand, 2013) also resonated with both critical adult and gallery education praxis.

Informal Professional Learning and Daily Work

Participants discussed their professional learning in the day-to-day contexts of their work as educators in art museums, galleries, and artist-run centres. This included, for example, **learning from/as artists;** coming from diverse professional backgrounds (also a common phenomenon among museum educators in North America), participants described artist talks, pedagogical projects with artists, transdisciplinary collaborations, and their own artistic practices as important learning opportunities. Multiple participants also spoke of **evolving exhibition strategies;** namely, a move away from chronology towards curating and design that is more conducive to their existing pedagogical approaches – for example: taking artworks "off their pedestal", offering more context on labels and in publications, working thematically, critiquing imperialism, juxtaposing contemporary art and design into historical exhibitions, and curating out problematic objects. Describing a shift in mentality towards actively thinking about relevance to visitors, one participant and senior educator put it bluntly: "We can't just hang things up and expect people to come". Similarly, all participants mentioned an institutional shift they witnessed toward **dialogic gallery teaching**. This was articulated in a variety of ways, for example moving from lecturing to active engagement, facilitating learning processes rather than delivering information, provoking and teasing out ideas, working with visitors in a non-directive way, talking through artworks, and embracing unpredictability as a space for learning. For

participants, this engagement with visitors depends on **adapting with openness** to changing circumstances and unexpected encounters. Adaptability occurred both in the moment and over time and related to professional growth and improvement, visitors' needs and interpretations, departmental demands, and adapting to the changing work and responsibilities that come with both promotions and organizational restructuring.

Another key context for participants' informal learning was the sentiment that education remains low in **museum hierarchies**. This was expressed in a variety of ways, often related to an ongoing division between education/learning and curatorial, which was discussed among both groups of participants. This included, for example, exclusion from planning processes, strained or limited communication between curatorial and education departments, and exhibitions consistently coming from a uniquely curatorial perspective. Other concerns related to isolation and constraint included a lack of institutional support for shared learning among freelancers, a perceived lack of care from their employers, having to 'jump through hoops' to speak to colleagues in other departments, and a lack of freedom, space, and time to freely engage teachers through online platforms. According to one permanent educator, these types of siloed and monitored practices perpetuated through bureaucracy and institutional hierarchy, impeded informal professional learning with colleagues, partners, and visitors alike.

Social and political engagement was a recurring theme for both permanent and freelance educators. This was related to their individual concerns, institutional shifts, and wider trends shaping the field of gallery education. Broadly speaking, participants emphasized the social nature of their work and to what extent this nourished them professionally. While some freelance educators were encouraged by employers to talk about controversial subjects with visitors (including the politics of art, exhibitions, and display themselves), participants from both groups also indicated that they would be doing more if they had the support to do so. Participants all underscored how Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests were informing their thinking about their work at this time and, for some, reinforcing both the importance they attributed to equalities in their field and a desire to address socio-economic issues more broadly. While simultaneously acknowledging their privilege and limitations as white educators (and with little to no anti-racist training), both groups of participants lamented not being able to address issues of race with groups because of lockdown—due, for example, to the cancellation of group visits and restrictions on the use of the digital platforms through which the pandemic required them to

communicate with teachers and publics. The pandemic itself was also a focal point regarding social and political engagement, for example, widespread concern for the future of the arts, fear for the livelihoods of museum and other cultural workers, and the mobilizing inspired by these preoccupations.

At the same time, **lockdown** and its accompanying closures also meant that participants could prioritize both formal and informal learning in a way that hadn't been possible previously. Some participants reported that this drew attention to how intentional learning had been neglected pre-pandemic in favour of getting through to-do lists, prioritizing increasing numbers of groups, or taking on new tasks demanded of them. All three permanent participants mentioned that the pandemic allowed them to carve out space for reflecting on their professional learning with me, and the research project itself as a form of informal learning. They shared that this was a time when they would otherwise have been busy with schools and community groups. "I must admit," one stated, "if we weren't on lockdown, your email might have gotten buried under an avalanche of other requests." Another participant said, "[...] at the moment, I have less pressure, less time pressure. I don't have a million events that I need to run off to. So, it's not an inconvenience in any way."

Here we see how participation in research projects, training, or other reflective activities can get in the way of daily work—and vice-versa. The question of timing was echoed by freelancers: "I could immediately see the value in the project. I think probably more so, interestingly, because of the timing of it and that we were […] in lockdown already. And as kind of a part of what we were all doing, which was [asking], how is this going to work?" This same educator was one of four freelancer participants who were part of a larger, newly formed group of gallery educators that regularly met online to informally discuss the impact of lockdown closures and to share information, skills, and resources. Through this community of practice, online formal learning opportunities, new projects, and the research project itself, they were also **looking ahead to post-lockdown and beyond** to consider new demands on their competencies, employment uncertainty, the importance of being in relation with others, future collaborations, and leaving the field of museum education altogether (Keenlyside, 2021).

Reflections on a Dual Role

Participants all reflected in one capacity or another their dual role of educator-as-learner and their responses highlighted some key characteristics of their informal professional learning

with others, be they colleagues, partners, or visitors. For participants, ***informal learning is ongoing***: As one early-career freelancer confirmed, "What I seek to learn comes from the people that I've taught." Others expressed a personal desire to keep learning, a sense of professional responsibility to continually improve one's practice, and the belief that ongoing learning comes with the job. Furthermore, for the majority, ***informal learning is live***. This was expressed explicitly by some; for example, a permanent educator insisted that "As I'm delivering or supporting delivery, I'm always learning at the same time." Reflecting on a sculpture workshop with children, a freelancer with nearly two decades of experience reflected that "Every single time, there's something made that's inspiring and new; and it really is every time […]. I learn something new, I see something new—a new way of working, a new way of solving a problem." A sense of live learning also came out in how participants described themselves as learners ("a bit of a Sherlock" "three headed monster" (teacher, learner, performer), "a sponge at work") as well as how they work ("being spontaneous", "linking bits and bobs", and "keeping things fresh").

In discussing their dual role, participants also emphasized two-way experiences, implying that ***informal learning is shared and reciprocal*** with both visitors and colleagues. For example, participants discussed learning from visitors' comments and questions, collective inquiry in the galleries, a sense of togetherness, informal mentoring, bouncing ideas off colleagues, and advocating for new educators or acting on their concerns. Participants in both groups also discussed a willingness to share opportunities, resources, skills, research findings, and information with peers, particularly within the confines, limitations, and demands of lockdown. Furthermore, descriptions of informal learning that demanded critical self-awareness and reflection suggested that for most participants, ***informal learning is reflexive***. As a case in point, permanent and freelance educators alike spoke about the impact of whiteness and colonialism on their teaching, learning, and program planning. Reflexive learning was also reflected in participants' comments about accepting the discomfort of critical self-reflection, experimentation and pushing oneself, issues of social class, questioning their own voice, speaking in echo chambers, the need to diversify partnerships, and asking what matters – and to whom. Lastly, ***informal learning is humble.*** This came across in participant reflections on not knowing (and admitting as such), being vulnerable, making mistakes, appreciating alternate worldviews, understanding through attentive observation, and learning from collaborating artists, curators,

and educators in action. As one permanent educator shared, “There are always things to learn—even if it's from a negative experience.”

Discussion

Critically Engaged Informal Learning

For the gallery educators who participated in this study, positioning their learning as critical involved identifying and upsetting their assumptions and biases, accepting discomfort and uncertainty, championing their learning, and listening more actively. These reflections overlapped with the ethos driving their professional learning, which included valuing their colleagues’ competencies, recognizing how visitors contribute to their learning, resisting complacency, and embedding learning through institutional change. In practice, participants’ critical, informal professional learning emerged from the creation of interconnected, intentional, and creative spaces for new thinking, relationships, and practices. These included: interrogating processes and procedures; expanding opportunities for reflective practice; engaging in chat and other forms of informal exchange; and imagining new working relationships. Both permanent and freelancer participants proposed a variety of possible shifts in day-to-day practice within these spaces that would support critical learning across the institution moving forward. These included, for example: meeting with front-of-house staff for mutual feedback; periodically bringing together staff from all departments to talk over an issue; “flipping” exhibition planning (starting the process earlier in the calendar and ensuring education/learning teams are present from the start); diversifying partners; using seniority to advocate for changes proposed by new educators, formalizing debrief sessions; and feeding visitor, teacher, and partner feedback back to the organization in a more structured way.

Influence of the Current Moment

Their discussions reflected a degree of critical reflection and self-reflexivity that spoke to their individual identities and past experiences. Discussions were also shaped by COVID-19 and widespread Black Lives Matter protests (both of which occurred at the time of my data gathering), specifically the impact of lockdown on their time and responsibilities and a heightened sense of accountability regarding race and racism in art museums. These events intersected as participants from both groups expressed some pessimism and doubt about institutional responses to BLM protests and anti-racism efforts more broadly. Referring to a previous incident of police brutality in Scotland, for example, a permanent educator insisted,

"Under the lockdown, everything's sort of gone into a bubble. So, when something happens, there's a big uptake, there's a big response to it. [….] What we don't want is, say in 2024, for this to be reoccurring. [But] for us to actually say, 'Do you know something, this isn't the flavour of the month. This isn't the flavour of the year—this is entrenched in the organization.' This should be our critical thinking every time, not just our critical thinking for the moment." Another stated, "I like […] to be challenged constantly. And I feel like organizations need to do the same." Other factors shaping participants' informal learning in this specific time and place included white privilege, precarity exacerbated by the pandemic, bias and complacency in partnership and professional development, hierarchical working relationships, the potential for political engagement via in-person and online dialogue, and an overarching love for working with art, artists, and art museum publics.

Implications for Future Policy and Policy Renewal

Learning From and With Others

Examining five white gallery educators' accounts of their informal professional learning through the overlapping lens of dialogic museum pedagogies, anti-racist museum education, and the role of educator-as-learner, I considered the time and labour that educators themselves may ask of each other and visitors. This analysis offered me a renewed perspective on notions of shared authority and expertise, two-way learning, and the co-construction of meaning that many educator —including myself and those I interviewed—have held dear, and which shape participant-centred gallery teaching. What limits might gallery educators, particularly those who benefit from privileged identity markers (including, but not limited to, whiteness) need to better respect regarding learning from others? Put another way, what should these gallery educators already know, or take responsibility for learning themselves through independent inquiry or formal professional learning? How might educators avoid assumptions about the positive impacts of gallery dialogue to engage in genuinely beneficial co-learning? I'm continuing to think this through and consider the multiple tensions between positionality, professional learning, and gallery teaching. For now, I propose a *conscientious curiosity*—a reflexive and non-extractive professional curiosity informed by critical adult and museum education that:

- Makes a distinction between learning with, from, and at the expense of another (be they a colleague, artist, partner, or visitor)

- Avoids instrumentalizing, objectifying, or prying into another's experience or identity for the sake of the learning
- Defers to those impacted by the subject of the learning
- Considers the context of the learning (and the need to learn)
- Takes responsibility for subsequent learning

This tentative set of principles could support individual gallery educators and the departments they represent to imagine parameters for co-learning with visitors, partners, and colleagues that 1) are cognizant of positionality and power; 2) foster accountability, adaptability, and capacity for ongoing learning; and 3) point to areas of practice open to and in need of transformation. It could also offer a starting point for reviewing or creating internal policy; as Eraut (2004) wrote about schools, "While approaches to management development normally emphasize motivation, productivity and appraisal, comparatively little attention is given to supporting the learning of subordinates, allocating and organizing work, and creating a climate that promotes informal learning" (p. 271). Policy and procedures driven by conscientious curiosity could support such a climate in art museums whilst also recognizing the additional labour—including but not limited to emotional labour—that racialized and other underrepresented practitioners devote to its creation and maintenance.

Areas for Internal Policy Attention

Given policy can take myriad forms, I draw my understanding from the Canadian Heritage Information Network (2021), which in simple terms defines policy as "a set of statements of principles, values and intent that outlines expectations and provides a basis for consistent decision-making and resource allocation in respect to a specific issue" (para.1). As art museums resume their work following indefinite pandemic closures and the subsequent impacts on people, projects, and programs, I propose the following gestures that would benefit from policy attention—such that if put into action, they could either demand new policy or inform policy renewal:

- A departmental or organizational statement regarding a post-pandemic learning culture with a stated, common understanding of professional learning specific to the context
- A stated commitment to building bridges and opportunities for collaboration at all levels between education/learning and curatorial departments
- The creation of a professional learning coordinator/advisor/advocate position

- A digital platform dedicated to redirecting informal feedback back to management, including a process for contributions, analyses, and subsequent action-taking
- An integrated procedure for identifying, documenting, and compensating professional learning (including peer teaching) for permanent, contractual, and freelance gallery educators
- Regular consultations with educators at all levels regarding policies, procedures, and institutional norms that hinder professional learning and communication (with particular attention to those that covertly exclude or otherwise harm people historically underrepresented in art museums)
- A learner-centred system for establishing and reviewing individual and collective priorities for professional development
- Guidelines for informed, prompt, and justice-oriented pedagogical responses to current events, political crises, and social activism

Moving Forward Post-Pandemic

This article was based on interviews with a small number of white gallery educators in 2020, at a still fragile, fertile, and emotionally/politically charged moment for individual and collective learning among art museum practitioners and the associations mandated to serve them. As such, the data offer a highly situated yet relevant starting point for renewed attention to what and how diverse gallery educators learn as they question, reflect, and act from one day to the next. Having positioned COVID-19 lockdown as a catalyst for discussing, pursuing, and mobilizing informal professional learning, I also identified related, overlapping issues that shape it, among them cyclical/tokenistic attention to inequity and exclusion, siloed and hierarchical organizational cultures, and the tensions inherent in learning from visitors and colleagues. In doing so I have proposed some self-reflexive strategies for gallery educators to mobilize their informal learning into tangible foci for further action as well as areas for policy attention related to internal and external collaborations, decision-making, program planning, and professional development.

Adult educators Lisa R. Merriweather, Talmadge C. Guy, and Elaine Manglitz (2019) recently wrote, “Every action in teaching is a political act” (p. 139), and this study proposes that educators’ learning is no exception. Examining both the politics and the possibilities of informal professional learning offers a lens through which to consider its potential to inform policies that could embody critical and collaborative museum ethos, foster professional growth among

seasoned, new, and future gallery educators alike—and lead to organizational change fit for a more just, contemplative, and accountable post-pandemic future in art museums.

Conclusion | The Arrival Gate

Located at the intersection of professional learning and critical museum pedagogies, my doctoral dissertation investigated gallery educators' experiences and perceptions as critical adult learners themselves. It examined what gallery educators' learning looks like, what motivates it, and how it shapes or responds to change. Based on data gathered at important moments of museum activism in response to colonial legacies, systemic racism, and the COVID-19 pandemic, it will contribute to a fertile yet largely underexamined field of research. This last section is intended to bring my two data sets together in a final set of reflections that offers both an endpoint to my dissertation and a starting point for future work.

Transformative Professional Learning: Reflexivity as a Common Thread

Coming back to the relevance of TL as a starting point for thinking about critical professional learning and changing practices/structures, I recall the four possible outcomes of TL according to Stuckey et al (2014): 1) acting differently; 2) having a deeper self-awareness; 3) having more open perspectives, and 4) experiencing a deep shift in worldview. Using these outcomes as sensitizing concepts allowed me to consider transformation along a continuum of time, activities, and processes that were consistent will my all-encompassing approach to conceptualizing professional learning. Having examined the ensemble of participants' responses over multiple rounds of coding, I posit that participants' accounts of their teaching and learning experiences did not reflect deep shifts in worldviews. That said, I categorized multiple examples of experiences before, during, and following data gathering that spoke to acting differently, having deeper self-awareness, and having more open perspectives.

In thinking more deliberately about the research process itself as a shared space for critical reflection and learning, I collaborated in 2021 with a fellow doctoral candidate pursuing research on Holocaust educational partnerships between schools and museums. Despite the thematic and disciplinary distinctions between our research projects, we found common ground in our observations, which led to a joint presentation at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education's 2021 conference for SIGEMM (Special Interest Group, Education and Mediation in Museums) entitled *Reflexive research and pedagogical praxis: Working with teachers and gallery educators before and during COVID-19*. The starting point for this was the dialogue between us as we processed and analyzed data from our respective research projects:

> Though neither of us had focused our study on the impact of research participation, we both noticed our participants engaging in – and sometimes commenting on – deep reflection about their teaching practice. We became increasingly interested in the extent to which research projects can be reflective and reflexive spaces for educators and began to think about how researchers can create space for – and support – research participants who are open to that type of practice. As researchers, we always hope our presentations and publications will resonate in and beyond academia; for our research to have a positive impact on the communities of practice we work with, and in. Together we thought through how the research process could support our participants and their work, beyond a final "deliverable" or circulation of research findings.
>
> As a research community, we can do our part to work more iterative and intentional reflective spaces into our methodologies and approaches. Our shared reflections on these questions highlight the potential for qualitative research conducted within one's wider community of practice—even projects that are not self-study, participatory, or action research—to offer something back in a spirit of meaningful engagement and reciprocity that supports short and long-term shifts from reflection to action (Keenlyside and Kerr-Lapsley, 2021).

We drew on definitions that distinguish reflexivity from critical reflection through the deliberate linking of self-questioning to relationships, context, and action, As such, we understood reflexivity in myriad parts: understanding one's role in relation to others and questioning thoughts, assumptions, and actions (Bolton, 2003); siting individuals and activities in the context of the systems they are a part of (Walsh, 2019); and moving from internal dialogue to changes in educational practice, expectations, and beliefs (Feucht et al., 2017). Important parallels can be made here with both the outcomes of transformative learning I have highlighted above and reflexivity as a key tenet of critical pragmatism, which also informed my theoretical framework.

Furthermore, as I discussed in Chapter 2, I drew on constructivist grounded theory with particular attention to Charmaz's (2014) concept of methodological self-consciousness—a self-reflexive stance that informs how researchers rethink and redirect their inquiry process. Thus, as I moved forward with my research, I began to think more deeply about how this stance could also apply to my work as an educator and noticed how those I was interviewing scrutinized their work in similar ways. How could such a stance—intended to shape research—support gallery

educators to rethink and redirect their pedagogical practice? This question offered me a lens for rereading the interview and focus group transcripts as I considered to what extent I could frame these gallery educators' learning as transformative.

In looking at my first three transcripts from the Scotland data, I identified key moments of critical reflection and self-reflexivity that I have fleshed out in previous chapters but deserve to be reiterated here: white privilege, unconscious bias in partnership development, complacency in professional development, navigating organizational hierarchy, and the potential for political engagement via digital platforms. Subsequent Scotland interviews revealed similar areas of reflexivity including, for example, interrogating institutional messaging around pedagogical approaches, professional development, and equalities work, teaching as learning, and imagining new and renewed ways of working. From the Canada data, volunteer guides' responses demonstrated consciousness around care and connection, a capacity to think through their decision-making, openness to change, difference, and difficulty, acknowledgment of their limits, assumptions, and discomforts, and ongoing attention to the relationship between their role as volunteers and the museum's enactment of its mission.

As mentioned in my second bridging text, overall, volunteer guides showed more reflexivity regarding collective reckonings and responsibilities as well as their personal accountability to their institution. On the other hand, paid educators demonstrated more reflexivity regarding their positionality, their futures, and contemporary shifts in the wider field of museum education. While volunteer guides' responses also included elements of institutional critique, paid educators (keeping in mind their interviews took place in the context of COVID closures and BLM protests) were more attentive to injustice in their institutions and the field. Both groups paid considerable attention to their learning as it related to visitors, however, paid educators' responses paid closer attention to their peers than did most volunteer guides.

Research Participation: Supporting Professional Learning and Growth

As I advanced in my research, I came back to an early transcript of a volunteer guide who stated, "One of the reasons why I wanted to participate in your project was to keep learning, to continue reflecting on my scenarios [the documents she prepares for each artwork that includes research findings and questions for dialogue]." As I prepared my interview guide for the next round of data gathering, I deliberately included a question about why my fellow gallery educators chose to participate in my research project. Additionally, through focus groups and

follow-up discussions, I also turned my attention to how they described their experiences looking back on the project.

Why Participate?

When asked why they chose to participate in the first place, all three permanent educators mentioned that the pandemic allowed them to carve out this space at a time when they would otherwise have been busy with schools and community groups. “I must admit,” my first participant told me, “if we weren't on lockdown, your email might have gotten buried under an avalanche of other requests.” As I mentioned in Chapter 3, another participant mentioned they felt less time pressure during lockdown, pointing to the potential of participation to get in the way of daily work; this speaks to the third participant’s statement that my request was fortunately timed, “but also, I think, useful and relevant. Always good to have a bit of introspection and make you question what it is that you're doing.”

Early on in their interview, one participant captured multiple motivations for participation, in a way that emphasized moving from thought to action:

> None of us are learning if we're not sharing. I think you can take your own learning so far. But unless you're sharing those thoughts, those ideas, those experiences with other people, then it's not really learning. It's possibly more just re-evaluating or self-reflection. [....] And I think it always goes two ways. Even when it seems like it's not, even if it's an interview. I get as much out of this as you will because it's all part of the self-reflection process—and I think it's incredibly important to dedicate time to that.

This spirit of sharing, dedicating time, and the promise of a win-win exchange was echoed by the other participants, who spoke of a desire to better understand how their work and priorities fit within the organization, and how the project created a space to be heard that could result in new ways of thinking and working:

> [...] it's always useful to reflect; it gives you the chance to think about your role in a broader way, rather than just narrowly working on that one task [...]. So, I find it sometimes quite useful to do these kinds of conversations. [....] I guess I like to think more broadly in philosophical terms about why I'm doing what I'm doing and what's really key to that.

Certain freelancers also mentioned the timing of the project and where they were at in terms of their thinking. For example,

> I thought it just sounded very interesting, and I think particularly at the moment where everyone's in the position, they're kind of thinking about their careers and thinking about where they are and where they're going and what the future is going to be like. I just thought it was a really good time to reflect on those things myself. And it would be just interesting to have a discussion with you and kind of talk about different perspectives on the subject, so the research sounded really interesting.

Their colleague gave a similar response, referring to the value they saw in the project and reflecting on how the research question resonated with her professional ethos and teaching approach:

> I believe in my own learning and the investment in the learning of other people. And that's what really underpins the work I do. [….] I always valued what I could learn from the people coming in the gallery, because they'd always see it with fresh eyes. And sometimes it was just how I asked that question or how I challenged them would come up with something that made me think, 'Wow, crickey, yeah, that's great, that's amazing'. And I would go out feeling fresh about something.

Participants from both groups also stated that they participated because they had met me in advance and because a colleague was also taking part. This speaks to questions of trust and confidence that were in fact raised by multiple volunteer guides regarding their efforts to create and maintain dialogic learning spaces for visitors.

And Afterward? Participants' Thoughts on the Experience

At end of the first focus group, one permanent educator returned to the question of voice, while also speaking to their colleague's suggestion that daily work can get in the way of reflection: "Even though at times we're sort of having a moan, it's certainly—in the confines of the discussion—it's constructive. And also, I think that it's really nice to actually have the time with my colleagues; to have these discussions, rather than, 'Have you done this task?' So, it's nice to actually be valued for your opinions of what you can bring to the discussion." This echoes comments from the follow-up discussion in which participating freelancers also spoke of interviews and focus groups in generative terms. Like permanent educators, freelancers spoke of the timing of the project beyond mere convenience. As one stated, "The time we met last, which was last year, deepest, darkest kind of COVID times, it felt so good, just having conversations about work at that time, it just felt like, oh, yes, I am a professional person. And I do know what

I'm talking about, and I can have conversations around this, even though there isn't any work." Two others similarly spoke of the affirmation and recognition they felt through their participation:

> Just the fact that [our work has] been taken a bit seriously, that we are kind of important. It's quite nice, you know, that we should have something written about us, as practitioners who are doing this very good thing in all these different organizations. And we don't really get much recognition, you know, so it's kind of quite nice to be recognized as something to be talked about or looked at and that we're relevant in the world, which I thought was nice. That was, oh yeah, we are important. Yes, of course we are. We do know that, but it can get forgotten and we're often, I think the organizations maybe don't take the time to appreciate us perhaps, is how I'd put it.

> This feeling of your contribution, not just being valued, but being heard and useful and you know, something's going to come out of it. […] there was something about it, it felt like a real honour to be invited and involved. I think I'll put it down on my CV.

This last statement raises the issue of official and unofficial recognition of both participants' everyday contributions and research participation as valuable professional development; this echoes a comment from a paid educator:

> I have not done any of this on my own. There is such a spectrum of people that I have either needed support from, or ask questions of, or learned from their experience that I always…. I'm hoping that even when I'm in this job, 10, 20, 30 years from now, I will still be doing that. Because I think the more I talk to teachers, and practitioners, and artists and dancers, and academics like yourself, and other organizations and other art galleries, other museums, other learning officers, the more I can keep talking to lots of different people, the better my practice will be and the better we will all then be as a service.

Discussing how the positive impacts of reciprocal professional learning on one's individual practice can inspire moving forward collectively to the benefit of the museum's publics, their statement offers a segue to the next subsection. Here I come back to two questions I asked in Chapter 3: how could focus groups between professional peers offer participants an opportunity

for co-generative problem-solving? To what extent might the focus group be experienced as a micro peer learning event that fostered possibility and imagination?

Shared Learning and Subsequent Action

Examples of reflection in the moment came up in both data groups. For example, one participant named it explicitly, as they became aware of a generalization they had made:

> Can I just say something then, about how live this learning is, and I'm going back to maybe something we talked about half an hour ago, […] do you learn differently from adults or children, or do you prepare differently if it's adults or children? So, I had a real in-the-moment reflection […] I completely get now that actually what [another participant] said […] that adult age brackets are so hugely varied and wildly different depending on the background and the demographic and the interest of the group that you're working with. So that's really interesting, that I kind of clocked myself thinking, I'm talking about [continuing education] without maybe thinking of a different kind of group experience.

Another freelancer made an in-the-moment realization about an important gap in their professional development:

> I'm just thinking about—it's never occurred to me, but we've never done one with race or sex issues, you know like gender issues or anything. [...] because the Black Lives Matter movement has happened now it's just much more important now, actually. And I think that's maybe something... I'd never thought it, but we've never had any equalities training toward that.

Through this reflection, this participant identified both where the large museum they worked for had fallen short and that individually, they had previously overlooked this gap. Similarly, a permanent educator drew on an aspect of her participation in the project to critique accepted ways of working across departments in the exhibition and programming development process:

> Knowing in advance what we were going to talk about today was amazing because then I could prep my thoughts. I didn't have to come with brilliant ideas, really, but I could prep my thoughts. I could get into that brain space. And I think if we approach our learning for delivering our exhibitions in that manner, it would give people time to bring their best foot forward to the table. And in that way, you get everybody feeling like they have a voice.

Regarding subsequent learning and action, the three permanent educators used the research transcripts as a tool for reflecting on their practice together, and pointed again to the timing of the project:

> Taking time to consider what we focus on in our profession, the reasons we make the choices we do and the professional development we seek out, helped us to consider how our personalities and priorities can direct the services we provide to the public. We found it useful to read what each of us focused on in our response to your questions and how our responses were influenced by events going on around us. This prompted us to have a conversation about our current plans and concerns in our individual roles, and the common factors that direct how we work as a team.

As the research process ended and participants had reviewed the focus group summary, this same participant suggested that they planned to use it to launch further discussions with their team and stated that "the interview process was a great way to reflect on our practice and really bonded us in our professional ethos". Their colleague echoed this, saying that the research had given them all "plenty to think about and act on." This brings us back to a key aspect of reflexivity discussed above: moving from internal dialogue to action.

Discussions offered freelancers a similar yet distinct learning space; because these participants did not work regularly as a team, they didn't mobilize their responses into collective action. That said, they recognized the focus group as an important space for dialogue with peers and thinking through their practices. For example, one suggested that the reciprocal mood of the focus group had encouraged participants to continue the discussion longer than the proposed duration. As we wrapped up, another reflected that "I think this has really come at a perfect time in a way, because it's just been where we are we're reflecting about our practices in more focused ways." It is worth noting here that between the focus group and follow-up discussion, two freelancers began their own not-for-profit organization and a third stepped back from the large museum they worked for to concentrate on community art projects. This gestures first and foremost to the precarity of the gallery education field, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also points to the fact that this research project was but one part of a larger period of reflection during which participants were re-evaluating their practices, the conditions under which they would work in the future, and the kinds of working relationships and organizational values they prioritized.

Examining the group learning experience in more depth brings me full circle to one important limitation of this study, which was the lack of a focus group among volunteer guides. This would have not only had the potential to gather additional data; it would have also created a space that these participants expressed a desire for – a low-risk, non-judgemental space to ask questions, test out ideas, make mistakes, and receive feedback. As I reflected on where my research project could have gone, I produced a series of research questions listed below, which includes but is not limited to my work with volunteer guides.

Implications for Future Research in the Field

Situating my conclusion as an arrival gate imagines a stopover in anticipation of my future professional learning, teaching, and research. What follows is a list of possible questions that could guide future scholarship, for myself or other practitioner-scholars, depending on their experience and positionalities:

- Now that volunteer participants are no longer 'new' guides, how do they see the links between their teaching and learning? How has their relationship to difficult histories and their own whiteness grown or evolved over the past four years, in particular the aftermath of the dual pandemic that unfolded in 2020?
- How were art museum volunteer guides impacted by COVID-19 (museum closures, cancellation of on-site group visits and in-person training, digital engagement; isolation, being a member of a 'vulnerable' community)?
- How has gallery educators' digital learning impacted their practice moving forward 'post'-pandemic (new skill sets, expectations from visitors and management, new roles and responsibilities, collaborations, and pressures/possibilities of hybrid learning)?
- What can the field learn from the lived experience of digital trainers working in the museum sector since 2020? How has demand for this work and trainers' perceptions of it evolved over this time?
- What efforts have been made of late to bridge traditional gaps between education/ learning/ engagement departments and their colleagues in curatorial and exhibition development? Who or what is driving these efforts, and how have they impacted the work of museum practitioners in both fields?

- What insights can be garnered from examining professional learning that unfolds through transdisciplinary research partnerships, particularly those that bridge the work of academics and practitioners?
- As art museums grapple with calls for social justice, how and what do museum practitioners learn from public protest and other forms of activism? How might outside critique spark new forms of collaboration, self-reflection, or conflict among education and curatorial departments? Positioning these tensions as important sites of professional learning, what might be mobilized for personal and organizational change?
- Given the sharp increase in public awareness of racism and institutional efforts to diversify the art museum workforce, what can the field learn from the lived experience of racialized gallery educators/volunteers facilitating, witnessing, and navigating their white colleagues' learning on race? How has the growth of decolonizing and anti-racism training over the past few years impacted the well-being and day-to-day working lives of BIPOC gallery educators?
- What can the field learn from the lived experience of anti-racism trainers working in the museum sector since 2020? How has demand for this work and trainers' perceptions of it evolved over this time, and how has it impacted trainers themselves?
- How will new reports from Museums and Galleries Scotland (empire and slavery) and the Canadian Museums Association (reconciliation) shape professional learning among gallery educators moving forward? How might their recommendations further unsettle museum pedagogies? What could be learned by comparing decolonizing efforts in these distinct colonial contexts?
- To what extent have recent opportunities to learn (from institutional responses to COVID-19 and public protests, training, self-directed learning, and emerging communities of practice) resulted in any substantial shifts in the field of art museum education? How have anti-racism, decoloniality, and criticality more broadly been embedded into organizational fabric? What does 'embedded' look like?

This last research question brings me to La Tanya S. Autry's keynote at the Canadian Museum's Association 2022 conference, in which she referred to *the reckoning that wasn't*. To date, Autry—co-founder of the #museumsarenotneutral campaign—had yet to see a tangible impact of the widespread response to the protest, mobilizing, and public statements in support of

racial justice in the museum field. Hence, I recognize one of the major tensions in my work—designing, facilitating, and advocating for ongoing critical learning opportunities in art institutions whose power structures have long upheld precarious working conditions, classism, ableism, and white supremacy. To requote one of my students, "training doesn't solve everything in life." This same volunteer guide, when reflecting on their role in their art museum, asked, "What are the opportunities, what are the limits, and what are the possibilities?" I extend these questions to paid educators and other museum practitioners, researchers, and practitioner-researchers, including myself. I do so actively positioning myself, my teaching, and my research in support of ongoing movements to shift thinking and practice around art objects, representation, and public engagement—shifts that are part of still wider calls to upset the dominant values, assumptions, and institutional norms that have shaped culture and heritage sectors for so long.

Learning Through the Writing Process

These calls have also shaped my own learning processes. In previous sections, I fleshed out my professional learning on the periphery of my dissertation, and I give space here to consider some of the learning that came out of the writing process—to consider writing itself as a method of inquiry (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2008). Pursuing a manuscript-based thesis afforded me additional feedback on my scholarship through peer review and editing processes. Writing manuscripts was also another aspect of my research project that merited methodological self-consciousness; namely, self-reflexivity about not only the what of my writing but also the why and for whom. Doing practice-based research I always have my practitioner peers in mind; writing manuscripts demanded that I think even more deeply and constantly about audience and voice. That is, regularly asking myself, who is this for, and what voice do I want to project? My conclusion, however temporal, was that I wanted my writing to mirror the humility, political convictions, and care that drive my gallery and classroom teaching.

As I neared the end of the writing process, I facilitated a workshop at a practitioner conference, and this was an invaluable experience that allowed me to test the waters, so to speak, with my peers. To bring my writing-in-process to the field and back again served as a first thesis defence of sorts; it allowed me to share my ideas in an environment intended for critical exchange, engage with my peers' responses, and pursue the possibility of a future collaboration. The small group of participants represented practitioners at all stages of their careers and an

animated discussion ensued among them as they discussed each other's examples from the field. The workshop reinforced for me what being a practitioner-scholar can look and feel like, and what I want for my research practice moving forward.

The writing process—particularly the bridging texts, which were intended to offer transitions between my manuscripts and bring them together as a coherent whole—demanded that I continually consider the larger context of my research activities, revisit my research questions and the intentions behind their conception, and remain attuned to links between data sets, my analyses, and the locations in which I gathered them. It also required me to consider the balance I needed to maintain while writing reflexively; put another way, I needed to speak for myself without centring my subjective experience at the expense of other voices.

Unexpectedly, thinking this through during the writing process temporarily shifted my attention to my family. I have an aunt who has always said, "*You are not alone in the universe.*" Since childhood, I understood this as a mantra to keep us in check, to remind us to decentre ourselves. But it was only this year that I came to understand that it had always carried a double meaning for her. Yes, it was a call to consider the needs and perspectives of others; it was also a reminder that others are there for you. While they diverge in their intention and impact, both messages bring the individual into a conscious relationship with others, which is why I bring this mantra back to my practice. As such, I insist on its relevance to teaching and research, gallery dialogue, and museum management. It leads me to imagine a future for the field that considers myriad worldviews on being in relation, which in turn holds the promise of art museums that are more sustainable, just, and creative places for working, learning, making, and connecting.

Final Thoughts

This dissertation has examined how the complexities of specific moments in time and space—in this case, confronting the legacies of colonialism, recent growth in museum activism, a global pandemic, and widespread protest against systemic racism—shaped the conditions of research participants' engagement in research projects, the content of their responses, and the wider conditions under which they work. Not all educators are faced with the same professional and learning interests, needs, and challenges, which points to the specificity of my own and research participants' experiences as white gallery educators and adult learners. I also recognize that professional learning does not exist outside of the systems that educators work in, and that

social justice aims cannot be realized without better representation in the field, financial and institutional support, and anti-oppressive structural change.

Like many others, my research was unexpectedly disrupted by a global pandemic. Group visits and public programming in art museums moved online or were paused altogether. Institutions were facing renewed calls to address systemic racism while simultaneously putting large numbers of educators out of work indefinitely. Volunteer programs were halted, revamped, or shut down. Educators were cut off from the social life of their work, which for many was what had originally drawn them to the field. As argued by activists, practitioners, and scholars alike, COVID-19 exacerbated pre-existing issues and inequalities among art museums and the people who inhabit them—among them, the educators, both volunteer and paid, entrusted with engaging publics in learning experiences.

This uncertain and turbulent time reinforced the analytical framework I had developed early on in my doctoral project and, at the same time, forced to me reimagine the conditions under which research with my peers was to unfold. Namely, how my methodologies as an educator and museum education scholar needed to be firmly grounded in critical optimism, peer support, recognition, and tangible reciprocity. At the end of my follow-up discussion with freelancers, one participant asked me about the unexpected 'twists and turns' that I had faced as a student researcher during the pandemic. My response acknowledged the challenges, fears, and disappointments, but also stressed that it ultimately came down to adapting—which is what I do as a gallery educator. It's what gallery educators have always done. Depending on institutions, locations, and positionalities, this has been a harder task for some. As such, others will have to continue more intentionally—and more radically—as we work towards transformation in ourselves, our institutions, and our field.

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Appendix A

Invitation to Participate in the Research (Volunteer Guides)

Dear Guides,

First off, I hope life as a guide has been all you hoped for.

I'm writing to you because as some of you know I have gone back to school to do my Ph.D. I have a methods course next term for which I am working on an exploratory research project—the results of which I plan to present next Fall in Spain at the Inclusive Museum conference. I am currently recruiting participants from the current and past two cohorts of students who did the training with me.

Attached is information about the project as well as a consent form for you to look at, sign, and return to me if you are interested.

If you would like to participate, please let me know by Monday, January 15th and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Emily

Appendix B

Additional Information for Potential Participants (Volunteer Guides)

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Study Title: Critical Skills-Based Docent Training in a Canadian Art Museum
Researcher: Emily Keenlyside
Researcher's Contact Information: ekeenlyside@gmail.com

- This project is being initiated in the context of the researcher's doctoral coursework (ARTE 882) and will take place between 08/01/2018 and 31/08/2018.
- The project aims to:
  • assess training content and techniques, in particular as they relate to questions of inclusion and critical engagement;
  • identify strategies to make future training more responsive, relevant and effective;
  • contribute to collective efforts to make the museum a more inclusive and accessible learning space.
- The researcher hopes to fill a gap in scholarly knowledge about the nature and impact of workplace learning in art museums with mandates that promote inclusion and accessibility.
- This research project has the support of the Division of Education and Wellness of the Mont-real Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA).
- Thanks to participants' collaboration in this project, the researcher anticipates that it will contribute to improved future training, enriched guiding experiences, and the ongoing growth of the MMFA as a community-oriented cultural institution.

Appendix C

Sample Consent Script (Volunteer Guides and Paid Educators)

This is the information and consent form that I am required by the university's ethics office to have you read and sign before we begin. It breaks down the research project by describing the purpose of the research, what your participation will entail, and important information about how you are protected as a research participant. This has to do with things like confidentiality, risks and benefits, and the conditions of your participation. In order to ensure I have your informed consent, I'd like to go through the form together before you choose to sign it. Please feel free to ask me any questions you may have as we go along. Once we have finished, please check the box if you accept the conditions, type your full name in place of signing, and email it to me at emilygrace.keenlyside@mail.concordia.ca before we begin the interview.

Appendix D

Information and Consent Form (Volunteer Guides)

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM
Study Title: Critical Skills-Based Docent Training in a Canadian Art Museum
Researcher: Emily Keenlyside
Researcher's Contact Information: ekeenlyside@gmail.com

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would entail.

Please read it carefully be- fore deciding if you want to participate or not.

If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher or her supervisor.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to assess the impact of critical skills-based training delivered to new and prospective volunteer guides at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. This ongoing action research will focus on inclusive dialogic gallery teaching and track guides' short and longer-term applications of the skills and knowledge they acquired/developed during their initial training and a follow-up workshop.

B. PROCEDURE:

If you participate, you will be asked to:
- make available your course work for analysis and citation where applicable;
- take part in a one-day training workshop;
- authorize the observation and analysis of your videotaped guided visit;
- authorize the observation and video or audio recording of future guided visits(where applicable;
- take part in one or two audio-recorded interviews of approximately 30 minutes each
- take part in one focus group of approximately 30 minutes.

C. CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will not allow anyone to access the research data, except people directly in- involved in conducting the research.

The data gathered will be identifiable. That means it will have your name directly on it. We will protect the information by storing it on a password-protected computer and backup hard drive.

The researcher will destroy the audio and videotapes five years after the end of the study.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research is optional. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. If you decide that you do not want us to use your information, you must inform the researcher's supervisor prior to August 1, 2018, at kathleen.vaughan@concordia.ca.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

Neither the research process nor its findings will be used for performance or summative evaluation of the participants in their role as a guide.

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research

The findings of this research may be used for future research projects related to the researcher's doctoral studies.
[ ] I accept that my contributions to be used in future research
[ ] Please do not use my contributions in any future research

The researcher intends to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below whether you accept to be identified in the publication(s):
[ ] I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the research results.

[ ] Please do not publish my name in any publications. I would prefer to be addressed by the following pseudonym:

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)_____

SIGNATURE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

DATE_____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Her contact information is on page 1.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix E

Questionnaire (Volunteer Guides)

BASIC INFORMATION

NAME:
EMAIL:
AGE: 40-50 50-60 60-70 70-80
EDUCATION:
FIELD OF WORK:

How long have you been a guide? LESS THAN 1 YEAR | 1-2 YEARS | 2-3 YEARS

What collections have you written a scenario for?

What collections have you guided?

What do you recall from your initial training regarding:

- Language and terminology
- Strategies for keeping your questions inclusive
- Universal accessibility
- Cultural Literacy
- White Privilege

Are there any artworks in your scenario by under-represented artists (e.g., women, artists of colour, Indigenous artists)?
I don't know No Yes (please name)

Are there any artworks in your scenario that include under-represented subjects (e.g., people of colour, people with disabilities, Indigenous people)? If yes, which ones?
I don't know No Yes (please list or attach scenario)

Do you include any questions in your scenario that foster critical thinking?
I don't know No Yes (please list or attach scenario)

Have you ever asked any of these questions?
I don't remember No Yes (please list)

Have you ever chosen to exclude an artwork from your scenario because you judged it too difficult or contentious?
I don't remember No Yes (please name or describe)

Appendix F

Interview Guide (Volunteer Guides)

1. If you have included under-represented artists in your guided visits, are you explicit about this fact? Why or why not?

2. If there are under-represented subjects in the artworks included in your scenario, how would you describe these representations?

3. If you have asked questions that foster critical thinking, how did the dialogue unfold?

4. What are some examples of difficult subject matter that have emerged from your research?

5. Have you integrated this subject matter into your scenario? Why or why not?

6. Have visitors raised difficult history or contentious issues that you hadn't expected? How did you respond? Have you considered integrating their perspective(s) in subsequent visits?

7. Now that you are a guide, how do you see your role in fostering critical thinking or addressing difficult history / contentious issues in the museum?

8. What knowledge or tools do you have to foster critical thinking or address difficult history or contentious issues with your groups?

9. What knowledge or tools, if any, do you wish to develop to increase your capacity to do so? What other factors, if any, do you think limit your capacity to do so?

10. In what ways did your initial training prepare you?

11. What gaps do you recognize in your initial training?

12. What follow-up or ongoing training do you think could complement your initial training?

Appendix G

Recruitment message to potential participants (Paid Educators)

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS SOUGHT FOR Ph.D. RESEARCH ON ADULT LEARNING

My name is Emily Keenlyside. I'm a doctoral candidate from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, new member of Engage, and currently returned home after 6 months living in Fife. I've been a gallery educator for 20 years, most recently co-coordinating education at DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art and training volunteer guides at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. My Ph.D. studies have focused on gallery educators as adult learners

First off, I hope that you and those closest to you are well during this difficult time and that you are able to continue your work to whatever extent the circumstances allow. I'm sensitive that social distancing and the closure and slow reopening of our institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted everyone in very different ways. As a student, I have had to rethink how to approach my research as I send out this message to recruit fellow gallery educators as participants for my thesis project.

Given the current situation, I understand if you wish to focus on things other than a research project. However, if you are interested and able to talk to me about your practice and how, why, and what you learn at work, I would love to hear from you. In fact, I am even hoping that participation may be beneficial for those of us involved in but temporarily removed from the gallery education work we love; that we will find comfort and community in joining together in a discussion of professional issues at this time. Participation in the research project is voluntary, should take no more than 2.5 hours of your time, and would involve:

- a 30-40 minute online one-on-one interview
- a 1-hour focus online group

Given the limits imposed by social distancing practices, these activities will take place online using the social conferencing platform Zoom. This service is free and I would be happy to offer any technical support required. If you have another platform you would prefer to use, this would also be possible.

My research is grounded in reflective practice and examines the following questions: As more museums are committing to socially engaged practices that require critical ways of working with collections and visitors, what does gallery educators' ongoing learning look like? How does it shape or respond to changes to tools, programming, relationships, and institutional structures? I anticipate that the publications coming out of my research will support existing projects and ongoing innovations in training, formative evaluation, mentorship and peer learning programs, partnerships, and professional development opportunities for educators in galleries, museums, and other art exhibition venues.

Anyone participating in this project on their own time will be offered an honorarium of *£75 in recognition of the time and labour they have shared.* If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact me directly at emilygrace.keenlyside@mail.concordia.ca.

Appendix H

Introductory message to gallery/museum learning department heads (Paid Educators)

Good afternoon X,

I'm hoping you are well during this time of upheaval and uncertainty, and that you and those closest to you are not dealing with illness or difficult circumstances at home. As we adjust to the temporary closure and slow reopening of our institutions and the new work life that accompanies it, I'm writing in hopes that you may find some time to meet with me online regarding my Ph.D. research. I'm a doctoral candidate in Art Education at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, and recently returned home after living in Fife for the last 6 months. I've been a gallery educator for 20 years, most recently co-coordinating education at DHC/ART (now Phi) Foundation for Contemporary Art and training volunteer guides at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. My Ph.D. work studies the role and experiences of gallery educators as adult learners.

I'm at the start of the participant recruitment process for my thesis project and would be interested in talking to you about the possibility of using [institution name] as one of my case studies. Given the limits imposed by social distancing practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic, any data collection I do with people will happen online. It's my hope that participating in the research project could offer both a happy reminder of professional pleasure and a moment to look forward towards positive change. After discussions with my university and with Engage Scotland (who has agreed to support my recruitment), we determined that I would try to persevere in data collection despite the challenges, given the potential benefits to all those involved and the limited time of my residence in Fife.

My research is grounded in reflective practice and examines the following questions: As more museums are committing to socially engaged practices that require critical ways of working with collections and visitors, what does gallery educators' ongoing learning look like? How does it shape or respond to changes to tools, programming, relationships, and institutional structures? The project comprises interviews and focus groups with volunteer and professional gallery educators.

If we could meet to discuss the work that you do in learning and engagement, the relevance of my research to it, and the possibility of gallery educators from [institution name] participating in the project, I would appreciate it. Attached are my most recent publications if you wish to have a better idea of my research and practice orientations. I can be reached by email at emilygrace.keenlyside@mail.concordia.ca.

Appendix I

Information and Consent Form (Paid Educators)

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM
Study Title: *Practicing change, changing practice: A study of adult learning among gallery educators*
Researcher: Emily Grace Keenlyside, Doctoral Candidate in Art Education
Researcher's Contact Information: emilygrace.keenlyside@mail.concordia.ca
Faculty Supervisor: Kathleen Vaughan, Associate Professor, Department of Art Education, Faculty of Fine Arts
Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:
EV 2.817, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Montreal, Canada H3G 1M8
+1 514 848 2424 X 4677
kathleen.vaughan@concordia.ca
Source of funding for the study:
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Concordia University

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE
The purpose of the research is to examine gallery educators' experiences and perceptions as adult learners in their workplaces. The research asks the following questions: As more museums are committing to socially engaged practices that require critical ways of working with both artworks and visitors, what does gallery educators' ongoing learning look like, and what motivates it? How does it shape or respond to change? Findings will support existing practice and innovations in training, formative evaluation, mentorship and peer learning programs, and professional development opportunities for educators in galleries, art museums, and other art exhibition venues.

B. PROCEDURES
If you participate, you will be asked to 1) do a 30-40 minute, one-on-one audiotaped interview with the researcher and subsequently review the transcript of that interview and 2) take part in a one-hour audiotaped focus group with peers. In total, participating in this study should take approximately 2.5 hours. These activities will occur online via Zoom or another videoconference platform and only in-person if social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic is longer required by the UK and Canadian governments and as a result, Concordia University's Office of Research has lifted suspension of in-person research with human subjects.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS
You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks include:
- a feeling of discomfort or uncertainty discussing your lived experience and/or sharing work experiences with your peers. This risk is small and can be further minimized by your not

answering any questions that might make you uncomfortable or participating in group discussions if you'd rather not. You are totally within your rights to limit what you respond to.

Given the timing of the research, i.e. while the world is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, with attendant social and economic uncertainty, you may be calling into question your professional choices and may find that addressing these through the research deepens your sense of concern.

If you feel the need for support following your participation, contact Living Life, the NHS's free phone service offering psychological support for adults in Scotland (0800 83 85 87 / www.breathingspace.scot/living-life/).

This research is not intended to benefit you personally. However, you may derive enjoyment from the learning that comes from discussing your profession. You may also apply ideas that emerge during the research process that are relevant to your daily work.

Given the timing of the research, i.e. while the world is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, with attendant social and economic uncertainty, you may also appreciate the opportunity to connect remotely/virtually with peers and consider productive professional possibilities and options for change.

You will not be financially compensated by the researcher for your participation if you take part in the research project during work hours. In order to contribute to the livelihoods of artists and gallery educators, however, participants who give their time unpaid to this research project (i.e. not during paid work hours) will be offered an honorarium of *£75 for their participation.* Any public transportation or parking costs incurred by participants will be reimbursed to all participants by the researcher when presented with receipts.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will gather the following information as part of this research: your demographic and contact information; your role and responsibilities within your institution; your reflections on your own professional learning, as well as the culture of learning in your institution; any institutional documents you are authorized to share with the researcher that speak to the research question.

The researcher will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. The researcher will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The researcher will protect your information by keeping digital information on their password-protected computer and backed up on a hard drive. The researcher intends to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below whether you accept to be identified in the publications:

[ ] I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research.
[ ] Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research.

The researcher will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before November 1, 2020, when they will begin sharing the research data through their Ph.D. dissertation, public presentations, and publications.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information. You will still receive your honorarium if you choose to withdraw your participation.

F. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described (please check) [ ]

NAME (please print)_____

SIGNATURE (for online interviews please type and return this to the researcher by email)

_____

DATE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS_____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor, whose contact information is also on page 1.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or *oor.ethics@concordia.ca*.

Appendix J

Interview Guide (Paid Educators)

First, I'd like to thank you for meeting me today. It's my hope that participating in this research project during a time of upheaval and uncertainty might offer both a happy reminder of professional pleasure and a moment to look forward towards positive change. I'll start with a few very basic questions about your work and then move on to more open questions that will allow for more in-depth answers. Please feel free to pause and/or ask me any questions for clarification along the way.

What type of institution do you work in?

How long have you worked there?

Approximately how many people are part of your team?

What is your position? Volunteer or paid (please circle one)?

How would you describe yourself: early career / mid-career / late career (please circle one)?

Off the top of your head, please list any ongoing learning that your position requires of you:

Off the top of your head, how would you divide your learning for work (please provide a rough percentage for each)? alone:_____in pairs:_____in small groups:_____in large groups:_____

Why did you choose to participate in this research?

Tell me about the learning that you do for your work at the museum/gallery.

What professional learning experiences have been most valuable to you and why?

How would you describe your institution's approach to group learning in the galleries? Please describe any learning that you have been involved in related to that approach (as either learner or teacher).

How would you describe your institution's public message around access, community engagement, and equalities work? Please describe any learning that have you been involved in related to that message (as either learner or teacher).

Do you think you have sufficient time and/or resources in your schedule to do and/or facilitate the learning that you require to put that message into action? Why or why not? (If not, what would it take to provide enough of either or both for you ?)

Tell me about any professional learning that comes to mind that you'd like to do, but haven't yet had the opportunity to do.

Would you say that you engage in reflective practice? If not, why not? If yes, why/what does it look like?
What else would you like to say about the learning you do for work?

Potential follow-up questions:
How much of your learning would you say is required by the institution and how much would you say is self-motivated?

Have you had the chance to pursue any self-directed learning for your work? If yes, please tell me about it.

Describe any role your peers may play in your professional learning.

Describe any role curators may play in your professional learning.

Describe any role artists may play in your professional learning.

Describe any role outside trainers may play in your professional learning.

Appendix K

Focus Group Guide (Paid Educators)

Introduction:
I'd like to begin by expressing my gratitude for your presence here today and the time you're offering me and this project. As I mentioned during one-on-one interviews, it's my hope that participating in this research project during a time of upheaval and uncertainty might offer both a happy reminder of professional pleasure and a moment to look forward towards positive change. I hope that you'll leave here today feeling inspired, energized, and optimistic about your work and the role of gallery education in moving towards a healthier and more just world. Each one of you is bringing something unique to our exchange and will express it in your own way. I'll be asking you a few questions and do my best to facilitate the flow of discussion. If there is a key idea that you think I have missed, please mention it! We'll take 45 minutes for the discussion today, meaning I will wrap it up by X:XX. There are just a few points that I'd like to cover before we start:

First off, just a reminder that I will be audio recording but not videotaping this meeting and, in order to protect confidentiality, as the host I will not be granting permission to others to audio or video record it.

If you have any technical difficulties along the way, please just let me know.

- We'll be discussing your professional learning as gallery educators. I'm drawing on the concept of professional learning as proposed by The General Teaching Council for Scotland: 1) to stimulate one's thinking and professional knowledge and 2) to ensure that one's practice is critically informed and current.[69] Thus we will talk about whatever kinds of learning you do at work that you think are relevant to the discussion.

A reminder that your participation is voluntary.

- You are of course not obliged to answer any questions you don't want to and are free to stop your participation at any time. If you find a line of questioning problematic and want to let me know, please do so.
- I encourage you to speak for yourselves and to your own experience, as openly as you feel comfortable doing, and one person at a time.
- I will also ask that you give each other time to finish your thoughts.

I'll be posing questions that don't elicit right or wrong answers. I'll ask that we all work to protect each others' privacy by not discussing the details of our conversation today with people outside the group. Just a reminder that I will maintain confidentiality in the publication of anything we discuss today. This means that I will not attribute any remarks to any particular speaker or name any institution, but you will refer to the general ideas, questions or issues raised. That said, I will be audio recording our conversation for documentation purposes only so that I have a record to return to. The audio recording will not be disseminated in any way.

[69] *https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-learning/professional-learning.aspx*

One thing I talk a lot about with my students when they are working with each other and training to facilitate gallery dialogue is respecting the difference between intent and impact. It may not be your intention to offend or hurt someone with something you say, but if it is named, please acknowledge and take responsibility for it. I will do the same.

I recognize the time and labour you are putting into this, and I thank you again. I'll also add that you have an established group dynamic that I'm an outsider to. You likely already know each other quite well, while I'm still getting to know you. From that perspective, I'll invite you now to introduce yourself and add, if you wish, any more tips that you may have to make this space as open, engaging, and inclusive as it can be for all of you today.

Discussion Questions:

- My hypothesis for this research project is that gallery educators play a dual role of educator-facilitator and learner. Would you agree with this statement? If not, why not? If yes, how would you explain this dual role in your own words?

- Would you say that the work of a gallery educator has changed since you began working in the sector? If so, how? What learning have you had to do to meet those changes? [Follow-up: How much of that learning would you say was initiated by you, how much was initiated by your peers, and how much was initiated by the institution?]

- How do you think management could best support gallery educators' learning?

- Do your peers play a role in your professional learning—and vice versa? If so, what does that look like?

- What training priorities have you identified as of late? To what extent are they aligned with the priorities of your institution?

- Have you observed social change influencing the work of museums? [Follow-up: How has this influence shaped the way you work with groups in the gallery and what you talk about? How has this shaped your professional learning? And vice versa?]

- What does working critically with visitors mean to you? What does it look like in practice? How would you say professional learning comes into play?

- To what extent is reflective practice encouraged in your institution?

- How has your ongoing training compared to your initial training?

- What else do you have to say about how you are learning to work differently?

- Last question: How could this research support you in your work?

- That's the end of the questions I've prepared; anything else would you like to tell me?

Key follow-up questions/prompts:

"Could you say more about….?"
"What would be a good example of what you are describing?"
"What do you mean by…?"
"How do you define….?"
"How do others respond to this idea?"
"I'll invite those who haven't had a chance to speak yet to share their thoughts if they wish to do so."
"I'd be interested to know if others have witnessed something similar and, if so, how the experience was similar or different than what we just heard"

Appendix L

Invitation to participate in follow-up group discussion (Paid Educators – Freelance)

Good afternoon X,

First off, I'd like to thank you once again for participating in my research project, the time you gave to the interview, and your contributions to the generative group discussion. Given the interest some participants expressed in reconnecting at a later date for a follow-up meeting, I'm writing to invite you to participate in a second discussion. This would take place with the same group of gallery educators who were present for your focus group, be audio recorded for note-taking purposes, and last 30 minutes - one hour. It is intended as a forum to 1) share my findings and analyses with you and 2) discuss any comments or feedback you and other participants may have about the research process, findings, and/or analysis. It is entirely optional and anyone participating in this project on their own time will be offered an honorarium of *£40.* If you are interested in participating, you will be required to sign a second information and consent form. If would like more information, please contact me directly at emilygrace.keenlyside@mail.concordia.ca.

Appendix M

Information and Consent Form (Follow-up Discussion: Paid Educators-Freelance)

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: *Practicing change, changing practice: A study of adult learning among gallery educators*

Researcher: Emily Grace Keenlyside, Doctoral Candidate in Art Education
Researcher's Contact Information: emilygrace.keenlyside@mail.concordia.ca
Faculty Supervisor: Kathleen Vaughan, Associate Professor, Department of Art Education, Faculty of Fine Arts
Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:
EV 2.817, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Montreal, Canada H3G 1M8
+1 514 848 2424 X 4677
kathleen.vaughan@concordia.ca

Source of funding for the study:
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Concordia University

You have participated in the research study mentioned above and are being invited to participate in a follow-up data collection activity. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to examine gallery educators' experiences and perceptions as adult learners in their workplaces. The research asks the following questions: As more museums are committing to socially engaged practices that require critical ways of working with both artworks and visitors, what does gallery educators' ongoing learning look like, and what motivates it? How does it shape or respond to change? Findings will support existing practice and innovations in training, formative evaluation, mentorship and peer learning programs, and professional development opportunities for educators in galleries, art museums, and other art exhibition venues.

B. PROCEDURES

To date you have 1) done a one-on-one audiotaped interview with the researcher and subsequently reviewed the transcript of that interview and 2) taken part in a one-hour audiotaped focus group with peers. The follow-up data collection activity will comprise an online group discussion with previous focus group participants to 1) hear about the researcher's findings and analyses and 2) discuss any comments or feedback you may have about the research process, findings, and/or researcher's analysis. In total, participating in this follow-up activity should take approximately 1 hour and will occur online via Zoom or another videoconference platform.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain risks by continuing your participation in this research. These risks include:

- a feeling of discomfort or uncertainty discussing your lived experience and/or sharing work experiences with your peers. This risk is small and can be further minimized by your not answering any questions that might make you uncomfortable or participating in group discussions if you'd rather not. You are totally within your rights to limit what you respond.

Given the timing of the research, i.e. while the world is still experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, with attendant social and economic uncertainty, you may be calling into question your professional choices and may find that addressing these through the research deepens your sense of concern. If you feel the need for support following your participation, contact Living Life, the NHS's free phone service offering psychological support for adults in Scotland (0800 83 85 87 / www.breathingspace.scot/living-life/).

This research is not intended to benefit you personally. However, you may derive enjoyment from the learning that comes from discussing your profession. You may also apply ideas that emerge during the research process that are relevant to your daily work.

Given the timing of the research, i.e. while the world is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, with attendant social and economic uncertainty, you may also appreciate the opportunity to connect remotely/virtually with peers and consider productive professional possibilities and options for change.

You will not be financially compensated by the researcher for your participation if you take part during work hours. In order to contribute to the livelihoods of artists and gallery educators, however, participants who give their time unpaid to this this follow-up data collection activity (i.e. not during paid work hours) will be offered an additional honorarium of *£40 for their participation.*

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will gather the following information as part of this follow-up activity; any comments or feedback you may have about the research process, findings, and/or researcher's analysis as well as any institutional documents you are authorized to share with the researcher that speak to the research question.

The researcher will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. The researcher will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The researcher will protect your information by keeping digital information on their password-protected computer and backed up on a hard drive. The researcher intends to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below if you accept to remain anonymous in the publications:

[ ] I accept that my name will not appear in publications of the results of the research.

The researcher will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this follow-up data collection activity. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before November 1, 2021 when they will begin sharing the research data through their Ph.D. dissertation, public presentations, and publications.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information. You will still receive your honorarium if you choose to withdraw your participation.

F. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described (please check) [ ]

NAME (please print)

_____

SIGNATURE (please type or sign electronically and return this to the researcher by email)

_____

DATE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS_____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor, whose contact information is also on page 1.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or *oor.ethics@concordia.ca*.

Appendix N

Follow-up Discussion Guide (Paid Educators-Freelance)

1. What questions or comments do you have about these findings?
2. What questions or comments do you have about the research process?
3. What important changes or events, if any, have happened in your work life since we last met that you would like to tell me about?
4. What professional learning or collaborations, if any, have happened since we last met that you would like to tell me about?
5. Is there anything else you'd like to share with the group?

Appendix O

Ethics Certificates

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Emily Grace Keenlyside
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\ Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Practicing change, Changing practice: A study of adult learning among gallery educators
Certification Number:	30012896

Valid From: April 16, 2021 To: April 15, 2021

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.

Richard DeMont

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Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Emily Grace Keenlyside
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Practicing change, Changing practice: A study of adult learning among gallery educators
Certification Number:	30012896

Valid From: August 17, 2020 To: August 16, 2021

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.

Richard DeMont

_____

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Emily Grace Keenlyside
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Practicing change, Changing practice: A study of adult learning among gallery educators
Certification Number:	30012896

Valid From: June 15, 2021 To: June 14, 2022

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.

Richard DeMont

_____

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Emily Grace Keenlyside
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Practicing change, Changing practice: A study of adult learning among gallery educators
Certification Number:	30012896

Valid From: August 25, 2022 To: August 24, 2023

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.

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Dr. David Waddington, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee