Creating a Community of Practice: Lebanese Participants' Experiences of Moving and Adapting to Montreal expressed through Stories and Artmaking Workshops

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ABSTRACT

Creating a Community of Practice: Lebanese Participants' Experiences of Moving and Adapting to Montreal expressed through Stories and Artmaking Workshops

Rana Jreidini

This research examines the experiences of three Lebanese art education graduate students at Concordia University, Lucine, Lara and myself, who moved from different cities in Lebanon to Montreal, Canada. Its aim is to demonstrate how artistic expression and artmaking practices have enabled all three of us to assimilate several multicultural aspects experienced in unfamiliar surroundings. This led us to promoting the use of art practices in exploring and representing socio-cultural integration into contemporary Canada. It additionally presents the understanding of one's belonging to a community of practice and an informal academic learning environment. This process was developed through individual stories and artmaking workshops. Our stories are written as brief narratives, using natural tones to keep the authenticity of our voices, allowing the reader to dive into our personal experiences. The artmaking workshops then acted as an approach that bridged our stories with arts to visually represent our experiences, while investigating the importance of art as an artistic educational opportunity in promoting the visual aspect of research and representing narratives. A process of informal learning was collaboratively expressed across the participants' chosen artmaking prompts for the workshops. The choices were based on their personal explorations of moving and adapting to Montreal, Canada. This study is an in-depth inquiry designed to encourage individuals to observe and learn about moving and adapting to a new environment, and in turn inform the public about the progression of those experiences.

RÉSUMÉ

Crée une Communauté de Pratique: Les Expériences de déplacement et d'adaptation à Montréal de Participantes Libanaises exprimées à travers des Histoires et Ateliers D'arts

Rana Jreidini

Cette recherche examine les expériences de trois étudiantes Libanaises en 'Art Education' à l'Université Concordia, Lucine, Lara et moi-même, qui avons déménagé de différentes villes du Liban à Montréal, au Canada. L'objectif est de démontrer comment l'expression artistique et les pratiques créatives nous ont permis d'assimiler plusieurs aspects multiculturels vécus dans des environnements inconnus. Ceci nous a amenées à promouvoir l'utilisation des pratiques artistiques pour explorer et représenter l'intégration socioculturelle dans le Canada contemporain. En plus ça présente la compréhension d'une appartenance à une communauté de pratique et à un environnement d'apprentissage académique informel. Ce processus a été développé à travers des histoires individuelles et des ateliers d'arts. Nos histoires sont écrites comme de brefs récits, utilisant des tons naturels pour garder l'authenticité de nos voix, permettant au lecteur de comprendre nos expériences personnelles. Les ateliers d'arts ont ensuite agi comme une approche qui a lié nos histoires aux arts pour représenter visuellement nos expériences, tout en investiguant l'importance de l'art en tant qu'occasion éducative artistique pour promouvoir l'aspect visuel de la recherche et représenter des récits. Un processus d'apprentissage informel a été collaborativement exprimé à travers les sujets de création artistique choisies par les participants pour les ateliers. Le choix des sujets était basé sur leurs explorations personnelles de se déplacer et de s'adapter à Montréal, Canada. Cette étude est une enquête approfondie conçue pour encourager les individus à observer et apprendre sur le déplacement et l'adaptation à un nouvel environnement, et à son tour informer le public sur la progression de ces expériences.

نبذة مختصرة

خلق مجتمع للممارسة: تجارب المشاركين اللبنانيين في الانتقال والتكيف مع مونتريال عبر القصص وورش العمل الفنية

رنا جريديني

يتعرض هذا البحث الى تجارب ثلاثة طالبات لبنانيات يدرسن التربية الفنية في جامعة كونكورديا، لوسين ولارا، بالاضافة الي، وقد كنا جميعا انتقلنا من مدن مختلفة في لبنان إلى مونتريال بكندا. ان هدف هذا البحث هو إظهار كيف مكننا التعبير الفني والممارسات الفنية جميعنا من استيعاب العديد من الجوانب المتعددة الثقافات التي تمت تجربتها في محيط غير مألوف، مما أدى بنا إلى تعزيز استخدام الممارسات الفنية في استكشاف وتمثيل الاندماج الاجتماعي الثقافي في كندا المعاصرة. كما يقدم هذا البحث فهم الانتماء إلى مجتمع يقوم بالممارسة الفنية في جو من الراحة الأكاديمية. تم تطوير ذلك عبر القصص الفردية وورش العمل الفنية. تتم كتابة قصصنا كقصص موجزة، باستخدام النغمات الطبيعية للحفاظ على أصالة أصواتنا، مما يسمح للقارئ بالتعمق في تجاربنا الشخصية. ثم عملت ورش العمل الفنية كنهج يربط قصصنا بالفنون لتمثل تجاربنا بصريًا، بينما تبحث في أهمية الفن كفرصة تعليمية فنية في تعزيز الجانب البصري للبحث وتمثيل السرد. تم التعبير عن عملية التعلم غير الرسمي بشكل تعاوني عبر المطالبات الفنية التي اختارها المشاركون لورش العمل. كانت الخيارات قائمة على استكشافاتهم الشخصية للانتقال والتكيف مع مونتريال، كندا. هذه الدراسة هي تحقيق معمق تهدف لتشجيع الأفراد على الملاحظة والتعلم حول الانتقال والتكيف مع بيئة جديدة، ومن ثم لاعلام بتطور تلك التجارب.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to people who are currently moving and adapting to a new country.

I hope our stories and experiences bring you strength within your journey.

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Chapter 1:

Movement is a Blessing "الحركة بركة"

A well-known Levantine Arabic proverb, "الحركة بركة" translates to "movement is a blessing". Simply put, if you aim to get things done, you need to act. I chose to open my thesis with this proverb as a metaphor, where the act of relocating to another country in the pursuit of new opportunities and a more promising future is a movement and a blessing.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of my research is to examine the experiences of three Lebanese graduate students, Lucine, Lara and myself, who moved from different cities in Lebanon to Montreal, Canada. Our experiences are examined and articulated in the form of vignettes and visual representations. The study also investigated the importance of art as an artistic educational opportunity in promoting the visual aspect of research and story representations. This research offered us the ability to convey our experiences of moving and adapting to a new country. Furthermore, my research aims to demonstrate how artistic expression and art making practices have enabled us to assimilate some multicultural aspects experienced in unfamiliar surroundings. Our artmaking practices are shared as a pedagogical tool for curriculums in community art education.

This research adopted three objectives: 1) exploring how Lebanese students adapt to life in Montreal, viewed from their perspectives; 2) creating a collaborative artwork based on diverse experiences and artmaking practices (pedagogic prompts); and 3) developing a community of practice that has wider implications for community art education. My research questions include: How do Lebanese students who move to Montreal adapt to their new environment? Does a

community of practice develop through weekly workshops? Do individual stories as vignettes offer pedagogic insights on moving and adapting from Lebanon to Montreal? How does a collaborative artwork inform diverse individual reflections and yet offer communitive reflection?

As an individual who moved from the greater Beirut area in Lebanon back to Montreal, Canada, I bring an intimate insider knowledge to my research. Being the researcher and a participant in this study, I am aware of the possibility of researcher bias. However, my personal experience is of value, bringing transparency of my own experiences and understandings of the Lebanese culture allowed a trustful bond to build with the group of participants, as I worked closely with them. Nevertheless, as the researcher, I asked open-ended questions and kept a neutral stance towards the responses, thus preventing any subjective interference with their responses.

Lucine, Lara and I are currently enrolled in the graduate program of the Department of Art Education at Concordia University. Each of us moved for diverse reasons. Lucine immigrated to Canada for a better future. Lara moved as an international student, and I moved back as a dual citizen, Canadian-born and who grew up in Lebanon. Our personal experiences were examined and conveyed through a series of interviews and five artmaking practices workshops. The workshops, with a duration of two hours per week, took place at the Art Education graduate classroom at Concordia University. The weekly workshops began with an introductory meeting, followed by three workshops developed from pedagogic prompts (questions, experiences, and related topics of interest to the group) (see Chapter 4), concluding with a final workshop that focused on combining the prompts and individual experiences into one collaborative artwork. A closer analysis of this collaborative outcome provides the basis for my research. I posit that such workshops aid newcomers, in this case who share a common

origin, to contribute, learn, and collaborate through artistic expressive practices, albeit creating a

communitive atmosphere. Unfortunately, due to the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19[1], which

occurred during the workshop period, it required us to complete the last two workshops online

and limited my access to literature findings[2]. From my learning practices of community art

education, the "just-in-time approach that often requires art teachers adapt to changing social

circumstances in the moment, modifying curriculum and instructional delivery" (Sinner et al.,

2012, p. 28), allowed me to adapt to this circumstance. This unexpected occurrence allowed us to

learn more about collaboration, discussions, and art making.

Furthermore, this research is key in contributing to the literature on how the Lebanese

diaspora adapts and integrates within new cultural environments. Additionally, this research

promotes the use of art practices in exploring and representing transitions and socio-cultural

integration into contemporary Canada.

How Art Education Guided Me Towards this Research

Growing up in Lebanon with an interest in arts, I was constantly reminded how fine arts

is not recognised nor appreciated. Those recurrent reminders made me realise that if I wanted to

pursue an education in the field of art, I had to move out of Lebanon. Thinking of my future

endeavors at the age of 17, I decided to search for art degree options in Canada, especially since I

was born in Montreal. Not only did my search reveal the diverse art degrees available, but also

the plethora of art museums, art fairs, galleries, and national support for the arts. This

encouraged me to move back to Canada and explore a better option for my academic interest and

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[1] COVID-19: Coronavirus pandemic that emerged in 2019, globally impacting millions of people, forcing a complete worldwide lockdown in 2020.
[2] Literature findings: Secondary sources were used due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown as some primary sources could not be accessed.

career. My search for art degrees led me to discover the Art Education program at Concordia University in Montreal – a degree I had never heard of in Lebanon. However, as teaching art was something I enjoyed doing, especially having taught arts and crafts to young children at community centers in Lebanon, I was curious about this program. It made me realise that art education is not merely about teaching art but involved teaching the diverse artistic practices and their pedagogical applications.

Upon arriving to Montreal in 2014, I began my bachelor's degree in Art Education at Concordia University. This program allowed me to explore the endless possibilities to use art not only as a creative practice, process or product, but mainly as a tool for education. Having experienced teaching in community centers in Lebanon, I was intrigued about how art is taught in communities. Entering the community art education major gave me a whole sense of possibilities that art brings. The courses allowed me to explore myself as an artist and as an art educator, bridging my interests. This exploration was further developed from the internship practicums in different community centers, which were part of the degree requirements. Those internships allowed me to be part of diverse community centers, which encouraged me to elaborate on my abilities in formulating educational art lessons based on the specific needs of the participants and the community sites. Moreover, they guided me in becoming a better art educator that can adapt to and integrate within different socio-cultural contexts.

I completed three internships during my undergraduate degree. The first, for a duration of three months, and the other two for six-months. These internships helped me develop my own pedagogical approach. I had the opportunity to teach at a community center's afterschool program to children between 6 and 13 years old, most of whom were recent immigrants from Arab countries. This permitted me to reach out to the students by using the Arabic language

when they needed further explanation. Comparably, during my other internship, I taught adults and seniors from varying countries of origin. Both community centers included participants from different nationalities, making it essential to provide artmaking practices that allow the participants to learn, connect and collaborate with one another. This guided me to further investigate the approaches required for my participants to link their experiences, learn from one another and educate others on cultural adaptation and social integration, in this case as Lebanese individuals. Moreover, these teaching experiences inspired me to value the diversity of cultures and learn from the different backgrounds.

In addition, as a student-teacher going to those practicum sites once a week during the semester, I was evaluated and given feedback from a teaching assistant, a graduate student in Art Education. This process helped me strengthen my presence as a teacher and an individual amongst the group of participants. Linking the practicums to course assignments, we were required to create lesson plans for the learners at the community practicum sites. Accordingly, I learned how to develop educational art lesson plans based on the age group and abilities of my learners. This process helped me become confident in my teaching practices. Furthermore, as a final course assignment, I achieved a professional teaching portfolio that displays my teaching style, professionalism, and accomplishments. Moreover, I gained the strength of properly structuring materials and learning outcomes based on specific community needs and characteristics. This practice led me to establish the workshop design for my research in ways that I believed would help the participants express their experiences of moving and adapting while simultaneously achieving the purpose of my research.

Those internship experiences and interactive exchanges in community centers helped me to adapt to life in Montreal. I was able to learn about the wider communities and explore the

multicultural aspect of the city. From this continuous cycle of learning and growing as a person and an art educator, I was then encouraged to pursue my graduate studies in this field. Doing so, I continued to view the ways art impacts teaching and how we learn through art practices. Additionally, I was offered the opportunity of being a teaching assistant and in this role, I learned about guiding undergraduate students through their internship practicums, a journey I had experienced also. This role allowed me to become an advocate for international cultures and to emphasize the importance of fostering inclusion and collaboration in my pedagogical approach. In turn, I encouraged the student-teachers to explore how collaboration and communal efforts impacted the learning outcome of their learners, in part based on my own journey of learning. This process is adapted in my research, allowing us to voice our thoughts, feelings, and experiences, while collaborating with one another towards a common goal: addressing the ways Lebanese individuals move and adapt to life in Montreal.

Letting Off Steam: Expressions Through Art

Moving to Montreal was a decision that allowed me to grow and explore more than I expected. Living in a different city and country for the first time had its advantages and disadvantages. For example, having the opportunity to pursue the education I desired re-enforced my decision to relocate to Montreal. However, leaving home and moving to an unfamiliar city was a challenge at first. I began applying visual language to express visually what I was feeling without inhibition, to express my daily experiences and the effects they had on me. This figure shown below (Figure 1) was the first spontaneous abstract painting I produced upon my arrival in Montreal. This painting helped me reflect on my feelings and consolidate both my uncertainty and my positivity. I titled it "فشة خلق" (Letting off Steam), since it was the outcome of an impulsive reaction on a large canvas. The action of reacting towards my feelings led me to think

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of how people experience and react to moving and adapting to a new surrounding. It encouraged me to delve deeper into the use of visual artistic practices as a coping and expressive mechanism. Because Lucine and Lara had moved before the start of this study, they had already taken the time to reflect on their experiences and feelings. Therefore, it was essential that the workshop prompts were relevant to all, and that we agreed on our activities as a team to highlight moments that were key to us in our journeys.

Figure 1

Jreidini, R. (2014). فشة خلق (Letting off Steam) [acrylic on canvas, 30x40 inches]
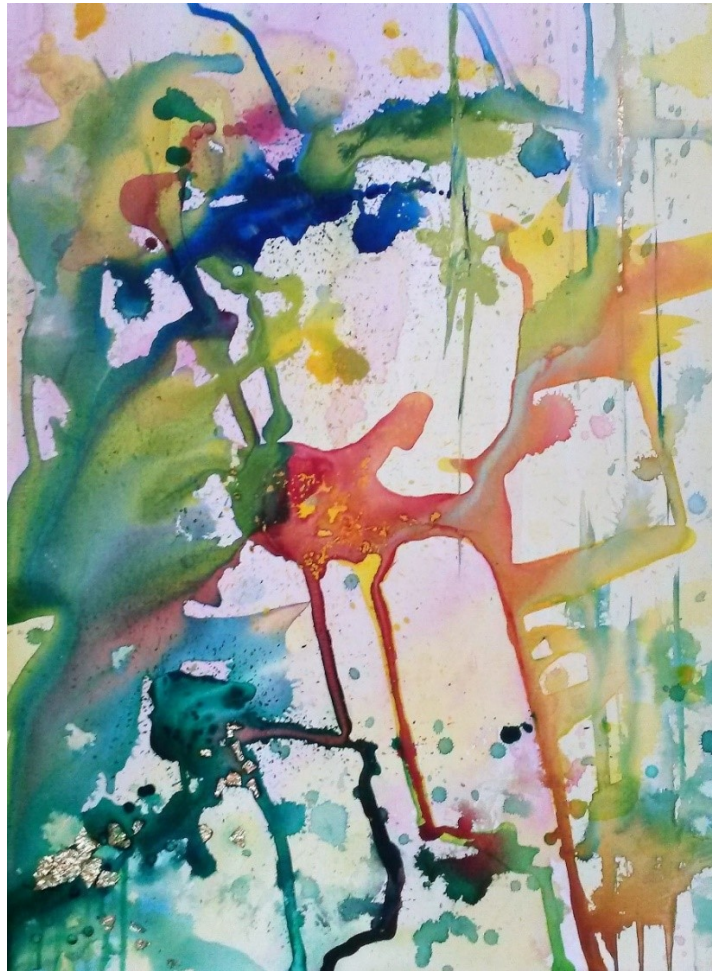
In this study, I examine multiple theoretical perspectives that guide my process (chapter 2). Specifically, I investigate ways in which artmaking can convey individual experiences and simultaneously effectuate collaboration. In this way, we collectively and individually embody a stronger sense of what it means to create a teaching and learning environment. This exploration is then developed using three methodological approaches: case study, narrative inquiry, and participatory action research (Chapter 3). From this process, individual stories as vignettes as well as artmaking workshops are developed to express our experiences of moving and adapting to the new environment (Chapter 4). I then analyzed and interpreted our processes and practices in order to understand the data collected (Chapter 5), before presenting the educational significance of visual research and stories of artists, researchers, and teachers (Chapter 6).

Chapter 2:

Exploring Theoretical Perspectives

In this chapter, I explore pertinent theories and present appropriate literature to support my claims. I review literature that elaborates on my chosen objectives and assists in understanding the adaptations of newcomers. This review centres around topics concerning (a) moving and adapting (specifically, acculturative hassles); (b) community art education; (c) collaboration (teaching/learning); and (d) movement, materiality, and objects. While there is research that addresses the causes and consequences of Lebanese immigration, there is a lack of research around the transitional process of moving and adapting to new cultures and social environments from an educative perspective. In my study, moving is defined as transitioning from one country to another, whereas adaptation is defined as acculturation.

Moving and Adapting: "Acculturative Daily Hassles"

Within the limited resources available that address the Lebanese experience, Tabar's (2009) study of the relationship between human development and immigration from Lebanon stands out. He states that Lebanese inhabitants tend to emigrate due to Lebanon's social, political, and economic difficulties. Many different factors, such as war and conflict within and around the country, and the resulting instability, insecurity, limited labour, and reduced income, force people to migrate to host countries where settlement and integration are possible. For example, western countries such as Canada and Australia, where multiculturalism is accepted, have proven to be the top destinations for emigrating Lebanese. A Statistics Canada report (Lindsay, 2001) states that Lebanese immigration to Canada is due in part to language, as most of the Lebanese population speak English and/or French (p. 11), thus allowing Lebanese immigrants to acclimatize faster than usual. While multiculturalism is accepted, all people face

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integration challenges when moving and adapting to another country. Comparatively, Yi (2018), an international graduate student in art education who moved to Canada from South Korea, described her first impressions by saying "I was overwhelmed in my first year of study by the distinctive differences in all realms of my experience" (p. 200). Gaudet et al. (2005) point out that a major difficulty encountered by immigrants is "acculturative daily hassles (ADH)" (p. 158). Daily hassles are an affective factor in acclimatization, causing individual adaptations to speed up or slow down. These hassles vary from simple daily tasks, such as taking the metro, to deep changes, such as cultural differences like moving from a country with a somewhat conservative culture, Lebanon, to one with a more liberal culture, Canada.

On another note, El-Hage's (2016) research also explores the experiences of Lebanese elders who moved to Montreal at a younger age. The author indicates that some individuals choose to immigrate because of individual needs or for family reasons, or to provide their children with a better education. My research relating to why myself and my participants moved to Montreal describes similar reasons and furthermore, explores our adaptations. El-Hage's study also mentions that with time, Lebanese people who moved to Montreal adapted and stayed, reducing links to their home country. The preservation and importance of family bonds was, in fact, narrated and visualized in the stories and workshops in my research. I believe including participant stories in my research was essential, for as O'Toole (2018) mentions, narrative inquiry is crucial in understanding people's lived experiences. Therefore, my research utilizes narrative inquiry to investigate the hassles faced by my participants when moving and adapting to life in Montreal. Moreover, O'Toole states that narratives further convey "experiences, personal identities, preferred stories, justifications and explanations" (p. 178). Narrative inquiry permitted me to collect and incorporate accounts of diverse incidents and personal experiences

into my research. My research further corresponds with O'Toole's (2018) statement that "the stories people tell about their lives are never simply personal but are told in historically specific times and settings" (p. 178). This adds to the significance of narrative production, especially since my participants moved from Lebanon to Montreal at various times. The inclusion of narrative inquiry in my study, as vignettes based on interviews and conversations during workshops, provided an understanding of our experiences of moving and adapting, thus establishing a sense of empathy between participants through shared stories and artistic expressions.

Community Art Education

As mentioned by Ulbricht (2005), "community-based art education has various definitions… [revolving around] collaboration, communication, and empowerment. If art teachers and students can clarify their community-based art education definitions and objectives, they then can envision meaningful projects and programs that are enriching and educational" (p. 11). With a community-based art education approach, this study developed a sense of community among participants and a community of practice through our visual expressions as Lebanese students in Montreal. This process allows individuals to interact, nurturing connections within social limitations and creating relationships, leading to stronger communal ties. In supporting community art approaches and building communities, Lowe (2000) expresses the knowledge of creating community by studying the relationship between community art and community development. The author points out that as a result of engaging people in a communal and artistic process, community art has a collaborative nature. Lowe adds that community art establishes a support system between individuals, actively encouraging participation. Beyond building a communitive space, community art projects encourage personal

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and collective characteristics, allowing the evolution of feelings and thoughts for an individual or group, and further permitting opportunities for creative expression. In my research, these foundational elements of moving and adapting provide conceptual entry points to promote the objective of having participants explore their experiences through communitive involvement during workshops.

The history of the community art education program at Concordia University was investigated by Vaughan et al. (2017), who recognize that community-based art education and community arts bring people together in formal and informal surroundings. They "construe community as a place, a learning group, or an ethnic or family identification" (p. 30), where educational practices are created and appreciated. The art education program was generated on the basis of "practice," requiring the completion of community art education courses combined with internships in community centres for teacher training. This grew further in the graduate studies program, as students were hired to serve as teaching assistants, and ultimately as instructors for the undergraduate courses. Having myself been a student in this program, the practice of teaching in informal settings, like community centres, has helped me with the organization and development of my workshops, taking into account the participants I work with, and my aim to create a sense of community through artmaking. Focusing on my participants' personal experiences of moving and adapting, I had to be prepared for what they would like to share in the study, their contributions, their reactions, and the outcome of each workshop. Therefore, aspects of uncertainty and improvisation prevail in my practice, suggesting the ability to adapt and improvise in changing and uncertain circumstances in the informal learning environment as expressed by Sinner et al. (2017). Furthermore, Sinner et al. (2012) express the diversity of research methodologies in community art education, "demonstrating

multi-layered, action-research projects, described by graduate students as participatory and in relation to transdisciplinary understandings of teaching and learning" (p. 30). My study uses a participatory approach to highlight participants' diverse experiences through multiple methods, such as artmaking, interviews, communications, and collaboration.

My research facilitated the exploration of participants' stories of moving and adapting to Montreal through visual representations of specific moments and experiences. These stories were developed both individually and collaboratively, thus forming a sense of community between the Lebanese participants. Similarly, Hannigan's (2012) project focused in particular on the way people combine stories to communicate issues of place, and how they, as artists, translated community narratives into sculptural forms. While using a similar approach, my research focuses on translating narratives into visuals. This conceptual approach assisted with the creation of a community of practice. The communitive contributions of the participants in my study further let them connect through visual expressions to represent artmaking during the workshops. In a self-study, Yi (2018) remarks that "the process of visual expression helped me to reflect upon and unveil my sense of un/belonging at a time when language was insufficient to express what I was feeling" (p. 201). This approach was considered for the workshops in my research, encouraging "people's lived experience and their subjectivities" (Duncum, 2002, p. 18) to be expressed in the form of an artwork, concentrating on the social practices of communicating, expressing, and belonging.

In addition, this artistic practice benefits us, the participants, by allowing us to engage in a community-based artistic activity while realizing how one's identity connects with place and space. This inspired my research by allowing participants to connect their Lebanese identity, in terms of the place and space where they used to live, to their current environment, Montreal. The

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individual stories and artmaking workshops in my research further explore participants'

identities through their experiences of being introduced to a new culture. This permitted the

creation of a community of practice, where, as participants, we represent our lived experiences

through art. Holland (2015) introduced a program that went "from 'art product' making to an

'experience' with art" (p. 44), emphasizing the creation of an "artist-student-educator

community" (p. 44). Holland's program was designed for pre-service teachers, and focused on

traditional "lesson planning" and crafts, shifting to a more communitive engagement. This

program's art education community grew, creating the opportunity to use art as a practice for

social engagement, inquiry, and change instead of simply following community needs using arts.

This assisted my research by helping me to focus not only on the visual outcomes, but by using

the artmaking workshops as an opportunity to create a community of practice. Having the

participants socially engage with the topic being investigated was an essential guiding concept.

This enabled us to express our personal experiences and stories, which would ultimately be

represented through the artmaking workshop process.

As my research addresses the experiences of various participants at different times in

their lives, it focused on the reinterpretation and understanding of past experiences from different

perspectives, as explored by Lawton and La Porte (2013). Their exploration permits expressive

and creative inspirations, involving transformative beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and emotions.

They suggest that through activities such as storytelling, social interaction, and collaborative

artmaking, adults from diverse cultures and generations can explore transformative experiences.

In the case of my research, adults from the same culture explored their experiences communally

through artmaking workshops.

Collaboration: Teaching and Learning

Given the scope of this project, I draw on Herron and Mendiwelso-Bendek (2017), who use a participatory research approach as a method of informal learning, believing in the "value and potential of self-organizing processes in community research" (p. 825). This participatory research approach is ideal for my study since participants shared their experiences and stories through narratives during the workshops, which allows for the sharing of individual knowledge. Falcione et al. (2019) define collaborative learning as surpassing the mere collection of information about the learners' involvement, in favour of gaining insights into their expectations. Considering both teacher and learner points of view, their study reflected on a past collaborative experience, exploring the characteristics and factors that resulted from recognizing their experience as a successful one. Past experiences, knowledge, and the role of the learners in the collaborative learning experience were revealed to be a main reason for the success of their research. Students working together towards a collective goal, albeit occasionally working independently, was found to be the main characteristic of collaborative learning. Nonetheless, they state that it is essential to clearly outline responsibilities, benefits, and motivations, arguing that the intended and informed methods of collaborative learning experiences will increase the amount of success from student and teacher viewpoints. The multi-layered design of my study permits the participants to take action in guiding the research, benefitting from each other's experiences of moving and adapting to their new environment. This assisted in the transition to being an "active participant" (Yi, 2018, p. 206).

The various approaches of artmaking, narratives, communications, and collaboration, developed in my research allowed me to explore Rae's (2018) perception of how connections between different aspects of the research can be recognized as "assemblages." Rae examines the

concept of assemblage and demonstrates what can be done with assemblage-informed arts-based research. The two cases Rae studied included a research participant as well as a created artwork that would be looked at during interviews (image elicitation) to further discussions, especially about freedom of expression and analytical thinking. This led to what Rae described as "developed connections" that fostered understandings and transformations towards the research topic. Rae's concept of assemblage provided me with a way of structuring my study in order to conclude with open conversations that allowed the participants to further express their thoughts on the created works in relation to their stories.

In my research, collaboration between the participants conveyed a socially engaged approach, where discussions and artmaking were combined. My work was informed by the ideas of Kalin (2018), who posits that visual arts education became practically viable through embracing forms of social practice, which go beyond simple communication and participation. Kalin describes socially engaged art, or social practice art, as terms that focus on the "relationship between artists, communities and organizations" (p. 367). This relationship is characterized by community-directed objectives and outcomes, which are based on collaboration and partnership. While art education initiated as an outreach appears to result in social good, it could create a "curriculum within societal problems and resources in order to provide services" (Kalin, 2018, p. 374) at a wider level. Art students collaborate on an issue, "using social practice as an art process" (Kalin, 2018, p. 374). My use of collaborative workshops ensured that participants, by socializing, were able to comfortably share their experiences while making art and responding to the topic of moving and adapting to a new environment. Similarly, Potocnik (2017) approaches the idea of creating artworks as a method for increasing awareness of the need for conservation and protection of cultural heritage. Learning about problems and creating

artworks based on one's surroundings builds and strengthens students' critical attitude towards

problems related to cultural heritage. In this research, as the participants come from the same

cultural background, they relate to moving to Montreal and adapting as Lebanese individuals.

The research further allowed them to reflect on their cultural heritage, mainly by preserving

family relations.

Movement, Materiality, and Objects

While asking participants to describe their adaptations, they were encouraged to explore

different visual approaches in relation to their new environment and home country. In my

research, the action of movement emerged in unexpected ways. Walking, as a method, was

implicated as a secondary resource, bringing important background factors to what took place

during the second workshop, where we used walking as performative artmaking to present the

prompt of moving from one country to another. This prompt activated discussions about different

forms of learning across the "arts/education/cultural domains" (Snepvangers et al., 2018, p. 11).

Therefore, this movement from one country to another intersected with the notion of walking, as

Snepvangers et al. (2018) express that walking is seen as an art, methodology, pedagogy, and

new practice that originates moving spaces and allows exploration of the educative value of

walking. Moving to a new country and walking in new surroundings, one's senses react to

distinctive characteristics which are unfamiliar to the newcomer. Moreover, in support and

expansion of Snepvangers et al. (2018)'s approach to walking, Miles and Libersat (2016) explore

how walking intersects with mapping in different ways. The form of mapping is reinforced in my

research because of the different reasons that an individual may move to another country. Miles

and Libersat's (2016) explanations bring diverse perspectives to the potential insights walking

and mapping generate. Walking as a form of mapping analyzes the idea of space, and this action

of walking creates connections with, on, and about the city landscape, forming a language of exploration and direction.

Walking informs my study as a secondary resource from the perspective of embodied movements to a new environment, new city, new university, and other places that emerged during our conversations. This action of embodiment in a new environment requires us to be attentive to our surroundings' objects and materials. As Blair (in press) expresses, artist educators regard "mindful walking as an embodied, lived experience as well as an art-based methodology for knowledge production" (para. 2). Following from this concept, the materials and objects that surround us take part in forming our stories, like the objects that are symbolic of our memories and the lived experiences that we constantly carry, requiring us to "examine the symbiotic relationship humans have with nonhuman objects" (Blair, in press, para. 3). Materiality is not only an interaction between object and person, it is how much the significance of the relationship with the object develops the person, as Garber (2019) discusses new materialism and how it affects us. New materialism is the importance of "working with materials and creating objects – and in living with objects, and there is value in probing their affects on thinking and doing" (Garber, 2019, p. 18). As seen in chapter 4, during my research, one of the workshop prompts was to bring objects that had moved with us from Lebanon and consequently create art to represent their importance in our adaptation.

This theoretical structure exposes collaborative social interactions through stories and artmaking workshops in order to examine moving and adapting to a new environment. From the different concepts of movement, materiality, and objects, we collaboratively decided on artmaking prompts that led us to achieve a community of practice. With the aforementioned theories guiding my claims, I explore the methodologies used in the development of my research.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

Methodological Approaches

The methodological approaches for this research blend aspects of case study, narrative inquiry, and participatory action research. This combined approach was ideal to achieve a solid case that would explore our diverse experiences of moving and adapting from narratives and collaborative participation.

This research is based on a single case study of three participants' diverse approaches to moving to Montreal and adapting to their new environment. It encourages in-depth results, as "applying the case study method allows [us] to gain a holistic and real world perspective" (Yin, 2014, p. 4, as cited in Gog, 2015, p. 38). Furthermore, the research involves a participatory action research approach through art-making workshops, informed by pedagogic prompts that directed the workshops, to "provide the participants with creative opportunities to reflect and think about their past and current experiences in a way that might not have been possible without active participation in the research process" (Kunt, 2020, p. 88). To properly combine these methodological approaches, I had to (a) specify the case of my research, (b) outline the participants' involvement in the workshops, (c) organize questions for the interviews, (d) plan how my data would be analyzed, (e) decide how my data would be represented, and (f) think of the limitations of my research. The three methodologies, (a) case study, (b) narrative inquiry, and (c) participatory action research, are explained below, followed by how those approaches were used in the research.

Case Study

    Using a case study approach allowed me to combine the diverse stories and experiences of each participant into a single case. Creswell (2013) explains that a case study is a:

> Qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. (p. 97)

    Through workshops and interviews with the participants (Figure 2), I have been able to collect different forms of materials on a weekly basis. These materials are represented in detail in the *Data Collection* section of this chapter.

Figure 2

The Case being Studied for this Research
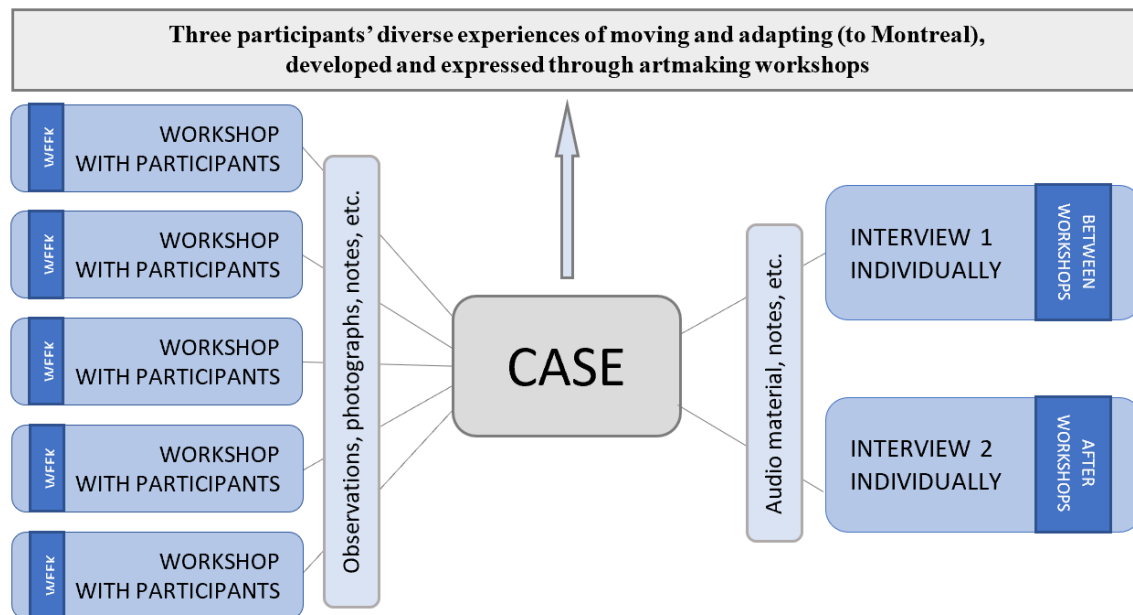
Narrative Inquiry

In addition to case study, narrative inquiry permitted me to "collect stories from individuals (and documents, and group conversations) about individuals' lived and told experiences" (Creswell, 2013, p. 71). The collected stories from the interview questions (Appendix A) and workshop conversations created "a strong collaborative feature of narrative research as the story emerges through the interaction or dialogue of the researcher and the participant(s)" (Creswell, 2013, p. 71). To present our stories as three individual vignettes, I used biographical study as narrative inquiry, where I wrote and recorded the experiences of my participants' lives (Creswell, 2013, p. 72), as well as my own. In addition, I extracted specific quotes from the workshop conversations that reinforced the experiences represented in our stories.

Narrative research methodology assisted with the combination of our stories and experiences (Figure 3) in a way that explores diverse perspectives on moving and adapting to a new country.

Figure 3

How the Narratives are Shown in this Research
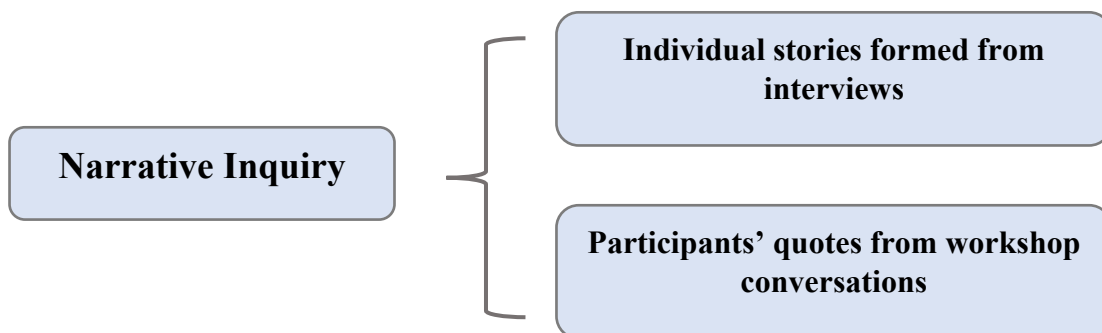
Participatory Action Research

Accompanying case study and narrative inquiry, participatory action research (PAR) methodology was also essential, as explained by MacDonald (2012):

> Using PAR, qualitative features of an individual's feelings, views, and patterns are revealed without control or manipulation from the researcher. The participant is active in making informed decisions throughout all aspects of the research process for the primary purpose of imparting social change; a specific action (or actions) is the ultimate goal. (p. 34)

Using PAR methodology allowed the participants to take part in decision making about the workshop prompts, as "the research process itself becomes an experience on 'transformation' and 'understanding' of the problem shared by the group involved" (Kunt, 2020, p. 87). As a participant and researcher, I guided the other participants' thoughts during the workshops through prompt questions which were not intended to influence their decisions, but rather to initiate conversations to ensure the aim of the study was achieved (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Description of Participant and Researcher Roles with PAR Method
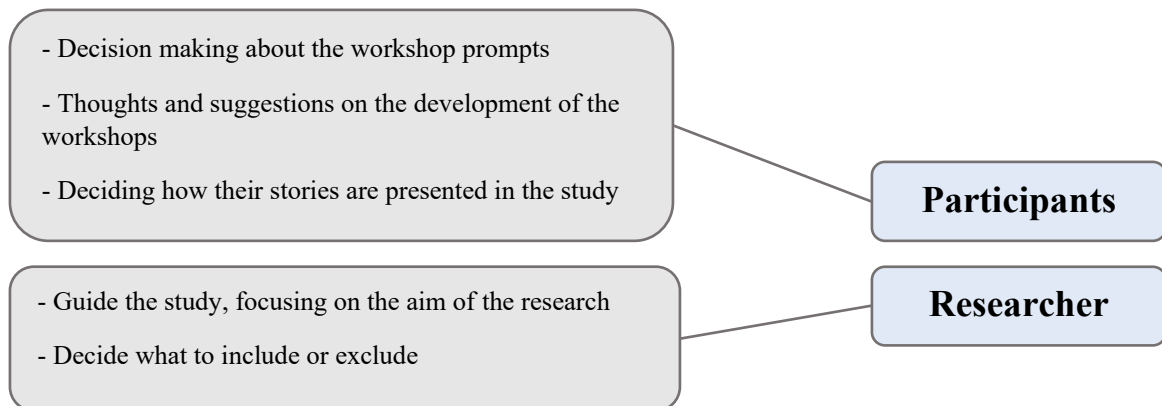
Data Collection: Case Study, Narrative Inquiry, and PAR

The data collected resulted from observations, participant interviews/discussions, field notes, and artmaking workshops. This data is composed of visual and audio materials established through individual and collaborative experiences during the workshop processes, addressed by the participants as well as the researcher. Figure 5 shows the three data collection approaches suggested by Creswell (2013) for qualitative research, which were used for this research as follows:

Figure 5

Data Collection Approaches
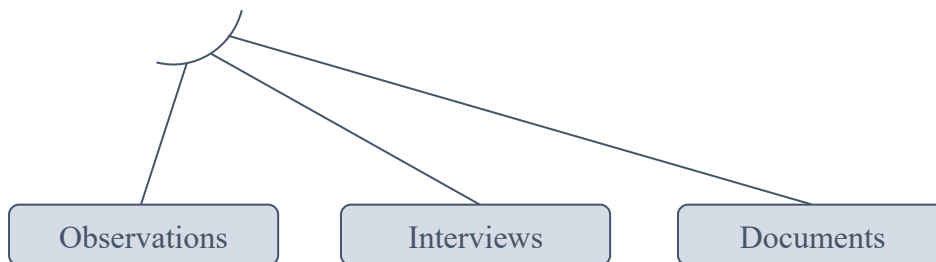
Observations. Researcher field notes were gathered by spending time as an observer as well as a participant. This took place during the workshop processes based on prompts and collaborative artworks, observing the process, practice, and product as a participant and researcher. I was constantly writing in my notebook during every workshop in order to note my observations, thoughts, and additional specific key points. My observations were gathered not only through field notes but photographs as well, as I photographed the process and outcomes of our artmaking practices.

Interviews. Two types of interviews were conducted throughout the study:

1. Two face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each
    participant separately. Questions for the first interview were about the personal
    life experiences that led them to Canada, and questions for the second interview
    were on their reflections on those experiences through the workshops. Both
    interviews took place at specific stages of the research: the first interview was
    during the workshop weeks, based on the participants' availability outside of
    workshop time, and the second interview occurred once the workshops were
    completed, to allow participants to reflect on the stories they presented in
    response to the artmaking prompts in the workshops.

2. Conversation interviews and discussions with all participants during each
    workshop. Participants were asked questions associated with the workshop
    prompts, which were collectively decided on, allowing time for individual and
    collaborative reflections, thoughts, observations, and additional comments.

The entirety of the individual interviews and specific parts of the discussions were audiotaped
and transcribed, with member checks sent to the participants for their confirmation about what
would be included in the study. Throughout the research, from the individual interviews and
conversations, ongoing contact with the participants provided them with more opportunities "to
develop ownership of the study, and reveal what it is important to share through open
discussion" (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 336).

Documents. As the researcher, I kept a journal throughout the study in order to note
personal observations as well as interpretations and thoughts that resulted from artworks,

conversations, and workshops. Additionally, I photographed and visually examined all the developed artworks.

The data collected through observations, interviews, and documents allowed the diverse stories of the participants' experiences to be individually and collaboratively represented. Our stories were generated from the first interview and were then further elaborated during the artmaking workshops.

Analysis of the Research

Analyzing multiple forms of data for this research involved "organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them" (Creswell, 2013, p. 179). These steps are all linked, forming the analysis and representation of the data (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Steps for Analyzing the Research Data
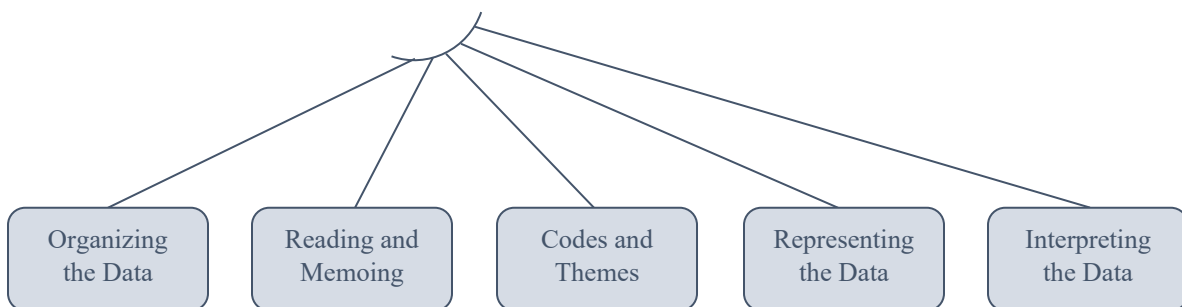
Organizing the Data. From the early stages of the research, the data was organized and managed into easily accessible computer files. Researcher field notes (observational and reflective notes) and artworks created during the workshops were photographed or scanned as

digital files. All materials, including photographs, audiovisual materials, interviews, approved transcripts, and other documents are kept in organized computer files as well as a single database storage drive, reserved specially for this research.

Reading and Memoing. While organizing the data, it was important to have a sense of all of the information as a whole. An example, suggested by Agar (1980, p.103), was to "read the transcripts in their entirety several times. Immerse yourself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts" (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 183). I immersed myself in all data sources, reading, re-reading, and memoing approved transcripts, images, artworks, and my observational notes. As explained by Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007), PAR suggests that the researcher continually reflect "on the delicate balance between incorporating and imposing knowledge" (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 340). By ensuring this balance, I explored ideas and key concepts from the individual experiences of moving and adapting and reflected on the larger transformational factors to be found in diverse categories of the data.

Codes and Themes. Following the reading and memoing stage, the data was to be described in detail, and classified and interpreted into codes and themes provided by the interviewed participants, who were considered "active participants in the research process" (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 334) as required by PAR. For this research, the transcription of the interviews brought diverse categories of information, to which I assigned different codes. The codes that emerged during the analysis from the workshops and from participants' experiences are cultural background, personal experiences, art practices, self-directed learning, studies, other experiences, moving, adaptation, family connections, timeframe, artmaking, and current studies. These codes were then reduced into four general themes that

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represent common ideas: (a) life and self, (b) education and experience, (c) moving and adapting, and (d) art education. These themes then assisted with writing the participants' stories as vignettes summarizing their lived experiences. As per narrative analysis, this categorization is also expressed as "restorying," which is the "process of gathering stories, analyzing them for key elements of the story (e.g., time, place, plot, and scene), and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence" (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p. 332).

Interpreting the Data. Interpreting the data involved conceptualizing beyond the codes and themes, as "it is a process that begins with the development of the codes, the formation of themes from the codes, and then the organization of themes into larger units of abstraction to make sense of the data" (Creswell, 2013, p. 187). The interpretation of this research was based on insights from the data and the researcher's personal views on the data. These were further combined with literature developed by diverse authors, in order to build wider understandings of the findings.

Representing the Data. The data is represented as text and chapters identifying the rationale for this research. It presents the participants' diverse stories as vignettes, as well as their experiences individually and as a team, developed from the interviews and workshop practices, ensuring "that the research has not only been rigorous but also has engaged with the multiplicity of truths and honesties that emerges from participants' stories" (Savin-Baden & Fisher, 2002, p. 192). In addition, the data was further represented in the collaborative artwork, which displays participants' explorations, thoughts, and experiences.

The Methodological Framework

In the weekly workshops, participants engaged in participant action research using prompts generated by both the researcher and the participants, through collective art-based practices. This further engaged me, as the researcher, to be a contributor, as "PAR allows the researcher to be a committed participant, facilitator, and learner in the research process" (MacDonald, 2012, p. 39). I asked the participants to provide suggestions to allow us to discuss collectively and combine our thoughts into collective prompts, since, as Sarah Pink (2008) advises, "rather than asking people to engage in perhaps complicated visual research exercises that are of the researcher's own design, it is sometimes better to learn from research participants' own visual practices" (p. 15).

Encouraging participants to generate prompts permitted them to be further involved in the research, as well as contributing their own interest in the subject being investigated. We discussed the concept of prompts while considering the individual experiences that led us to Montreal and how we adapted to our new environment, "seeking to understand the emplacement of others and the practices through which the places they form part of are continually reconstituted" (Pink, 2008, p. 3). Every week, the workshops derived conversations, experiences, thoughts, and opinions, which assisted and encouraged the participants to look forward to the following prompts. Participants' active participation further allowed their involvement in the research as "PAR involves the full and active participation of the community at all levels of the entire research process" (MacDonald, 2012, p. 39). Nevertheless, to achieve the purpose of this research, as the researcher, I provided guidelines that assisted in representing moving and adaptation from Lebanon to Montreal (e.g. interactions with people and places, specific moments, feelings, experiences, etc.) prior to developing the workshop prompts, in order to

ensure the directives and aim of the study are met. During every workshop, in person or online, we conversed about the prompt while individually representing our responses through artworks. We used different art forms, which were collaboratively agreed on, making sure they strengthened the meaning of the weekly prompt. For the final workshop, which was conducted online, we engaged collaboratively in creating one artwork that linked our individual experiences and our collaborative experiences from the previous workshops, promoting the idea of visualizing diverse moments of moving and adapting.

In association with the active collaborative artmaking, two interviews took place, one between the workshop weeks and the other after the workshops were completed. The first set of interview questions (Appendix A) concentrated on participants' experiences of moving and adapting to Montreal. Each participant's responses were transcribed and developed into individual participant stories. As for the second set of interview questions (Appendix B), they were based on participants' workshop experiences and how a sense of community among the group was created. Additionally, during each workshop, we had open discussions about how our artworks visually responded to the prompt. Specific parts of both the second interview responses and the conversations during the workshops were transcribed and extracted to provide a record of responses to the prompts (Chapter 4) and an overview of the workshop process (Chapter 5). The stories and quotes were all member-checked by email, to ensure participants' confirmation of transcript accuracy.

In order to control for the researcher bias that could result from being both researcher and participant, I attempted to follow the same process as the other participants, to achieve more accurate research results. The only challenge from this duality of being both researcher and

participant, has directed my responses to the second interview questions (Appendix B) to be part of the analysis of the participatory approach in my research (Chapter 5).

The process mentioned above contributed to the collection of a broad range of data gathered from our individual and collaborative experiences. This data is represented in the following chapter (Chapter 4) as our individual stories and responses to the artmaking workshops.

Chapter 4:

Participatory Fieldwork: Stories and Workshops in Action

In this chapter, I situate the data collected in order to display the process and outcome of this research. Data is represented as two sections: (a) our stories, and (b) our workshops. The first section, "Our stories," represents Lucine's, Lara's, and my stories, each individually. The second section, "Our workshops," is where we collectively decided on artmaking prompts to visually express moments of our experiences. This fieldwork further presents the intimate shared connections developed among us, forming a community of practice.

I - Our Stories: Insights into Moving and Adapting

To provide a better understanding of the participants, each of our individual stories are presented below as vignettes, conveying our backgrounds and experiences of moving and adapting. These vignettes are written as brief and simple narratives, using natural tones to preserve the authenticity of our voices, allowing the reader to dive into each of our personal experiences. Each story begins with a brief description of our lives, followed by our educational practices, then our processes of moving and adapting to Montreal, ending with our engagements in art education. As explained by Creswell (2013), "the narrative study tells the story of individuals unfolding in a chronology of their experiences, set within their personal, social, and historical context, and including the important themes in those lived experiences" (p. 75). Each of our stories represents diverse perspectives that led us to experience moving and adapting from different cities in Lebanon to Montreal, Canada, at different times in our lives.

Lucine's Story

I spent all my childhood in the camp.

I am a Palestinian refugee, born in Lebanon, where I spent all my childhood and lived until my early adulthood. It was not until 2006 that I moved to Dubai where I stayed for three years, after which I moved to Canada in 2009. I have a background in Theater, the major that I studied at the Lebanese University in Beirut, and this led me to work as a producer in the television field for thirteen years, in Beirut and Dubai. I also have substantial experience working with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) in Lebanon. I have assisted refugees in the Palestinian camps, working with children at-risk and adult women in conducting drama plays, films, and photography projects.

Growing up in Lebanon was amazing, but at the same time it wasn't easy. As I was born in a Palestinian refugee camp, I spent all my childhood in the camp, in the region of Ain al-Hilweh in the South of Lebanon. The camp was a great life even if it was small, although as a child it seemed huge to me. I always saw it as a very nice place, though there was no color, no one painted the walls. But it seemed joyful, because us kids, we'd play in the alleys and even on rooftops, to see the wide sky and the sea. That's because all the buildings are so close to one another, that they block those views. On the other hand, we could always smell the good food being cooked in every house, so in general, for a child it brought warmth and goodness. There are lots of small details and memories that really mean a lot to me. For example, living beside my grandparents was one of the amazing things. Then when I grew older, I moved from عين الحلوة (Ain al-Hilweh) and lived in صيدا (Saida) also in the south of Lebanon. It wasn't easy there too, because as a Palestinian and a refugee, I had no rights to study or to choose what I would like to study, which was one of the obstacles I faced. Really, we had no human rights and many other

things were denied to refugees. I couldn't even take the Lebanese citizenship, and that's one of the main reasons why living in Lebanon was even harder for me. But, at the same time, my life was there, and until now I still consider it my home. I've gathered so, so, many beautiful memories from my experiences in Saida and also Beirut, where I had then moved to study Fine Arts. All my experiences have really shaped who I have become today as an artist and teacher. So yeah, even if I'm now living in Canada, I still feel that the person I've become results from the obstacles I've faced having grown up in Lebanon.

Education and Experience: *It was like tides, all ups and downs.*

Coming from a Palestinian refugee family, amongst the limits we faced from living in Lebanon were some education restrictions. Not all fields of studies were allowed for us, and Fine Arts was one that we were allowed to study. It was only possible for me to study arts by having a connection, where someone helped me get into the program. I decided to study Theater because it's what I loved and was really interested in. I also wanted to be the first Palestinian who studied theater in Lebanon, to be able to give back to my community, which I then did by working with refugees at the camps. So, I studied Theater at the Lebanese University in Beirut. I think it's one of the strongest universities in the Arab world, especially in Fine Arts, although they had limited equipment for students to use, which I believe is a general issue at universities in Lebanon. At the time when I was studying theater, our theater courses took place in a basement – it reminded me of الملجأ (bomb shelter), where people would hide during the wars. The theater areas were really in a state of destruction. Everything was in bad condition, and very humid with no air conditioning, which made us really suffer and actually got us all sick by the end of our courses! But I should say that we had amazing professors, although sometimes we faced challenges. For example, during our fourth year into the degree, we were given an assignment of creating a short

film. Did we have any equipment? No. Did we know what a short film was or how to do one? No. We had only taken a few hours about cinema and were expected to do a short film without any direction. So, we didn't know much about it and we also didn't have any equipment, comparing to what I've seen here at Concordia now as a graduate student. We ended up having to pay for everything from A to Z to do this short film. We paid the camera operator for the equipment and recording, additional materials, everything. But despite those experiences, in general, in Lebanon, the field of Fine Arts is really, really strong and rich.

I think the reason I moved to Canada is the same as everyone else: To seek better living opportunities, especially when living in conflict countries, and Canada's immigration policies were open and easy to do this move, but still it was a step towards the unknown. For me, maybe it's also more, as I've mentioned before, I'm considered as a refugee, and I've never had, a real passport. I've always dreamt and thought of living a better life and believed that I could one day have a citizenship. Not only because I want to have the opportunity to travel everywhere, but more importantly to feel that I have a home and I'm no longer a refugee – to live a better life. Until 2008, my passport was as a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon. I felt that I really wanted to move, especially during the 2006 Israel and Lebanon war, which is when I finally took my decision and started the immigration process in Beirut before moving to Dubai. I moved just after the war, where I had gotten a better job opportunity. This move was only temporary, while waiting for the immigration process to get through. Yeah. After that, I thought about education, maybe having a child, and I wouldn't want my child to live the same way as I have, but instead to experience a better life. I moved here to Montreal in 2009 with my daughter, she was just one year and a half old. At that time, I had just separated from my husband, so it wasn't easy. In fact, it was very, very, very hard. I started from zero, with no family here and just knowing one friend

living in Canada. But yeah, I can assure you I really started from zero. It was like tides, all ups and downs.

Moving and Adapting to Montreal: *It felt like being a child again, learning how to walk step-by-step.*

When I first arrived, I was very, very, very confused, depressed, sad. Lots of bad feelings. It was the moving part, the uncertainty of things, not knowing where I was heading and other personal things. There's a lot of mixed feelings around those senses. And, especially having had a really good career in Dubai working in television, including a good salary. It felt like I lost everything all at once and came with my child to start over somewhere else. It felt like being a child again, learning how to walk step-by-step. I've been living here for 10 years and Montreal has become my home. At first, it wasn't clear to me if I really wanted to stay here or not and it took me a long time to find out. After having the Canadian citizenship, my family expected me to move back to Beirut or Dubai or to the United States where they've been living. And for one moment I felt, why not? Because, it was also a struggle for me to find a job in my career. Coming from a theater and television background, in Montreal it wasn't easy, especially to work in the television industry. You must be fluent in French and I don't speak French at all.

I started thinking and telling myself, okay, what if I try to move and try again to adapt in another country. I had two options. The first was to go to Qatar for a job opportunity and the second was to go stay with my family in Omaha (U.S.A.). So, I first went to Qatar where I had a job interview and got a very good job, also in television. But the moment I was accepted for the position, I said to myself, no way. I felt heavy. I felt sad. Inside, I really wished they hadn't accepted me and so the first thing I decided was that I didn't want the job and to live there, that is why I came back to Montreal, to my normal life. I directly went back to Montreal, it's my home!

Then I went to Omaha for vacation, but even there on vacation I was constantly missing Montreal. In both Qatar and Omaha, I always felt an attachment to Montreal as being my home and where I wanted to be. I love this city, with all the complications, with all the difficulties, that's still how I felt about it. I then insisted on staying, like there was no way for me to leave again, which always gave me strength and helped me adapt. I loved the people, the simplicity of living, the easiness of public transportation, and the city's cultural and artistic lifestyle, but the cold weather that lasts several months was challenging. Within the years, I decided to connect my life experiences and interests by founding an organization called بيت بيوت 'Beit Byout'. It provides workshops to teach Arab children art, puppetry, storytelling, drama, and about culture and language through art. My interests are what made me decide to pursue a master's degree in Art Education, to expand the possibilities and deepen my understanding in academics.

Those accomplishments of living here are what really, really, really made me stronger and made me realize that I want my daughter to grow up in Canada. I think this is the most important thing, seeing how my daughter will grow up here, in comparison to the other countries I've visited. And I would always state and feel that I'm really grateful that my daughter is living in a country where she can simply be herself and see that life can be simple, hard but simple. What also helped me to adapt really fast, were the somewhat similarities between Montreal and Beirut. I always felt that both cities were the same in some ways, because here in Montreal where I'm living in the downtown area near Saint Catherine Street, is similar to where I used to live near Hamra Street in Beirut. It's the multicultural feeling in both cities and also as they say, the cities that never sleep. You can walk in the streets at midnight feeling safe, um ok, Lebanon is not that safe, but at the same time I think there is something, I can't explain it, but it's really something related to Beirut, especially Beirut.

يمكن هيدا صعب إنو تفهموه، بس لئلي فكرة التعود كانت هيني لأني حاملي تلات أوطان بألبي. وطن ما شفتو ولا عشت فيه،

بس براسي هوي أصص حملتا من ستي. وطن وين ربيت وكبرت وفيه كل ذكرياتي. وطن حبيتو وعمبحلم إنو إبني فيه

ي. مستقبل لئلي ولبنتي

(This might be difficult for you to understand, but to me the idea of adaptation was easy because in my heart I'm carrying three nations. A nation I've never seen or lived in, but in my mind it's stories I'm carrying from my grandmother. A nation where I was raised and grew up, carrying all my memories. A nation that I fell in love with and where I'm dreaming about building a future for my daughter and I).

Art Education: *A journey to new discoveries about ourselves and the world.*

Coming from a background in performing arts, I have experience in teaching children the Arabic language through drama, storytelling, puppetry and art workshops. The organization I founded, '*beit byout'* gives the children and me a space to play, creating together an imaginary world, while learning Arabic. My teaching approach is grounded in a relationship with the students and their individual experiences, informed by the question of identity and belonging. My background in education, theater and film, has allowed me to structure diverse workshops and plays that favour collaboration, where children are involved in collective authoring.

Throughout my studies, I never stopped engaging with the community to which I belonged. I've had a lot of experience working with children and women at risk and wanted to find a balance between those experiences and my area of studies, theater. Therefore, I believed art education will help me find a new perspective to view and understand my art practice and research. For me 'Art Education' is to color outside the circle. It's like a journey to new discoveries about ourselves and the world. I am still deepening my understanding of art practice

in community settings, with the hope of positively affecting the communities I am part of and engaging more in projects that can help their needs.

Being in the Art Education graduate program at Concordia has provided me the opportunity to critically engage by learning with and from my colleagues and faculty members. Through conducting a research and writing a thesis, I am hoping to gain a better theoretical grounding for my teaching approach.

Lara's Story

It was challenging, but now Montreal is becoming a part of me.

I was born and raised in Lebanon. It was not until 2019, at age 24, that I moved here to Montreal to pursue a master's degree. I have a BA in Fine Arts from the Lebanese American University in Lebanon. Before moving to Montreal, I decided to study interior architecture as I always had a passion for different kinds of arts. I completed almost two years of the degree, before I decided that I would prefer completing a master's degree in a field that would allow me to explore my artistic self. This eventually led me to find the MA in Art Education at Concordia University here in Canada, where I also happen to have family members who live here, making this move an easy decision.

I had a great childhood growing up in Lebanon and studying there. My high school and university experiences were great, and I made lots friends along the way. Apart that, as I mentioned my passion for arts, I was fortunate to learn other interests. I learned the piano, painting, and dancing the tango and salsa – I did so many arts activities. So, I consider my experience in Lebanon as a great one, which I'll always be grateful and thank my family for. The only thing I wished could have been a bit different was my studies at the university level, with maybe some change in the Fine Arts curriculum. This simplified program of basic visual arts is what made me realise that maybe there is no future in this field in Lebanon. This is what also made consider other study opportunities in Canada for higher education. But no matter what, I still love my country so much.

Education and Experience: *I wish I learned more.*

If only we could have more art classes that were taken more seriously. When I was at school, we only had art class once a week. You would think we learned something, but not really, it was more like an hour to fill in the schedule. It wasn't important like other subjects. When I was very young, it was all about copying what the teacher drew on the board, like a rabbit or a vase, so very, very simple tasks nothing more. We would also do some crafts, like decorating a wooden frame and place a picture in it. Nothing more than basic arts and crafts. The older we got there was a bit more of painting and drawing added to the art class, but if you did your work good or bad, it was fine, you won't fail the class. However, during the last three years, before graduating high school, we had the option to choose between theater, dance or art, which was drawing and painting. I always chose drawing and painting because that's what I loved doing. But what we did was not much, we only had one assignment to complete per year! One assignment! Really, one painting per year. We didn't learn about art history, or specific art techniques, other than basics on how to draw and how to mix paint. At least we then had it exhibited in the school's art gallery space where our parents could come and see our works. This was at school, but even in the extracurricular painting course I was registered in, it was not much different. It was also once a week, and we also learned how to draw, more like how to copy drawings and paintings. We literally would choose one painting that we loved from the internet, print it and copy it. Really, we would have to copy it exactly how we saw it. Other than that, as usual we were mainly taught how to use and mix acrylic paint but nothing else in terms of painting. As for drawing, we would learn to draw not only with a pencil but also using charcoal and pastel. The good thing I got from this class was more time for me to make art, which was a coincidence, as it was only because my brother was registered in karate classes in the same area,

so I would make art while waiting for him to finish. I got to spend this time waiting while doing something I love.

I really enjoyed having this extra time to make art and despite not learning much. The instructor in charge of this class was the one who encouraged me to continue pursing art at university level. However, my first choice was nursing, and I actually started a nursing degree before realising that it was not for me. Maybe I thought nursing was a better choice because of my experiences in arts and the constant discussions of people saying that it's impossible to have a career in the arts field in Lebanon. But I then decided to transfer and complete a BA in Fine Arts at the Lebanese American University. I was excited. It's something I love. The program was full of art courses. There were painting, drawing, ceramics, sculptures, printmaking and perspective courses. For example, we had different drawing courses; one on drawing still objects and perspectives, another on drawing figures and having live models. Also, several painting courses, but those didn't really advance our performance skills. Every instructor taught us almost the same thing, like the basics of using acrylic paint on canvas. It didn't feel like I was learning something new or exploring other mediums like gouache, watercolor or oil paint. Also, our instructors were more focused on fostering modern arts, which is maybe why they wouldn't include other technical aspects in their courses. So, we didn't learn different techniques. It was basically again the basics of art but for a higher level of education. I mainly had to learn all by myself. In general, I enjoyed the courses, and some instructors were very encouraging, but I think there is a lack in the curriculum, I wish I learned more.

Once I graduated, I told myself, okay, now what? I felt like it's true, there is no future in Fine Arts here in Lebanon. So, I decided to stay at the university and pursue a second bachelor's degree in Interior Architecture, because I felt that this might help me find a job in the future. But

then, two years into it, I didn't feel happy. I thought, do I want to finish this degree to get it done? Or would I rather complete a master's degree? That's when I stopped studying interior architecture and since Lebanon doesn't have much choices for master's degrees in Fine Arts, I automatically started looking for Master of Arts programs in Canada because I have family living there. I have my aunt living near Montreal and my uncle in Toronto, so it wasn't a hard choice for me to know where I wanted to go. Plus, my senior professor in fine arts was an MFA graduate from Concordia University, so he encouraged me in looking into the programs available at Concordia. That's where I felt Art Education would combine my interests in arts and how to teach. I saw myself as being an educator of arts and an artist.

Moving and Adapting to Montreal: *I've faced some challenges but I'm thankful for my family and friends.*

I then moved to Montreal during summer 2019. My brother travelled with me and spent almost a month here, but for him it was just a summer trip. For me it was the beginning of a new journey, but I didn't notice or feet it, until he travelled back home. Reality hit me then. That's when I kind of felt lonely. I would think, okay, I wanted to come here for a better career opportunity, and this is my chance to explore this opportunity. I was living with my aunt for the first few months and having my brother here with me was different. When I was in Lebanon, I didn't see my aunt and her family, unless they visited, which wasn't very often. But it was nice to have family in Canada. I wasn't alone. My aunt really helped me adapt, she always supports me and made me feel home. I felt like I was home. This feeling really helped me and kept me strong and positive. Especially having my cousins around, I wasn't alone. Also, to help me feel like I was home, I filled my schedule with several activities just like I used to do in Lebanon. So, I registered myself in piano classes, and got a gym membership where there is a swimming pool,

in order to keep training since I used to compete with the varsity swimming team at my university in Lebanon. Those are things that were part of my routine in Lebanon, and I didn't want to lose them. Those really helped me keep busy and going swimming allowed me to relax and enjoy 'alone time'.

At the same time, I started facing some challenges. When I started university, I had a long way to reach Concordia's downtown campus from where my aunt lives. She lives on Isle Perrot, which is at least an hour away, at least! I had to take buses, the train and the metro to reach campus. It was very hard for me, especially when I had long days on campus, and it was even harder once winter started. Also, I wasn't used to public transportation, I was always driving in Lebanon to go to the university or elsewhere. I started driving when I was 18 years old, and I've been driving since then, and now I feel like, oh, I'm missing something. The first three months in Montreal, I was even trying to convince my dad that I needed a car! Really, not having my own car and using public transports instead was the hardest thing for me. This was a huge change, but now I'm getting used to it. So, eventually during mid-December I decided to move out from my aunt's house and live a bit closer to campus. I still use public transportation but for less than an hour and using only the metro, which is much better. At the same time, not having a car to drive directly to a destination has allowed me to explore places and observe differently. And now, if I get disoriented, I will just explore the area and get to discover more of Montreal.

But then came other challenges. Once I moved, I realised how much more responsibilities I have. When I lived at my aunt's, I helped with the house chores. But now, having my own space, I'm doing so many things alone which I never did, especially when I was living with my parents. I never thought about what I will have for lunch, because my mom always cooked daily

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meals. I rarely did laundry, cleaned my room or changed my bed sheets. It was all new for me. Now I am learning how to manage my time and taking on those responsibilities while studying. I feel like I've reached this adulthood timing. In Lebanon, I was very dependent on my parents. Now I'm looking forward to being more independent. I've started a part time job, to help with my expenses, because I'm still financially dependent on my parents. I really want to be more independent. Especially with the economic situation in Lebanon now, I never know if and when they will be able to transfer me money. But I also want to be more independent for me, it's something I want to achieve.

Apart the challenges, the friends that I've made in my Art Education courses have really helped me adapt. Since we're mostly all international students that just moved to Montreal, it's like we are all adapting together and are always there for each other. If I'm not busy working, or studying, I have friends to have fun with and talk to. Also, since we are all studying Art Education, even when it comes to studying, we help one another and support one another. In general, yes, I've faced some challenges but I'm thankful for my family and friends here and in Lebanon, who have really helped me make this move easier and continue to help and support me. They are always here for me.

At the moment, I am working on my art journal. It's like a diary of what I'm doing daily in Canada, as Montreal is becoming a part of me. This is really helping me unfold my days. I'm also sharing it on social media for my family to follow along how I spend my days. So, it's keeping my family and friends updated on my daily life.

Art Education: *I want to be able to share my knowledge and understanding of art with others.*

I started to enjoy making art around 11 years old, when I was taking painting classes. I used to love working with acrylic paint. Once I started university, I had a bit of difficulty choosing my major, until I decided to get a degree in Fine Arts, which is when I grew to explore more art mediums. Throughout continuous explorations of different art mediums, I discovered that I loved printmaking and photography, and recently grew an interest in embroidery art. Moreover, I use glow in the dark paint in almost every artwork I create. It has become a personal touch as part of my signature.

I think that 'Art Education' is a very broad area, relating to making and teaching art to learners in schools or communities, as well as preparing art curriculums. Considering community settings, one could mention several, it could be in senior homes, art hives, afterschool programs, or even teaching art workshops during public events or for private groups. As I love visual arts, I want to be able to share my knowledge and understanding of art with others. Since I am also a very social person and love being around people, I wouldn't like having a routine or an office job. I think that making and teaching art do not allow one to fall in a routine. There are always new projects to explore and create, and new students to meet and work with.

The Art Education graduate program at Concordia University is beneficial to me, because I will be gaining experience and achieving a higher degree in my field of interest. I am meeting new people with the same interest, as well as professors who guide and help me towards my career, giving me an important insight on community art, which I am currently discovering as part of my exploration. It has also provided me opportunities to work as a researcher and teaching assistant, which is a great way to start building experience in this field.

Rana's Story

Montreal was always a part of me, but now it's my other home.

I'm Lebanese Canadian, born in Montreal but raised in Lebanon. Growing up I had a strong interest in the visual arts, but I was constantly reminded that art wasn't appreciated and there were no opportunities in this field in Lebanon. So, once I completed High School in 2014, I decided to move to Montreal to pursue my education in the arts field. I then received a BFA in Art Education from Concordia University and decided to pursue this area of expertise as a Master of Arts degree also at Concordia University.

I loved growing up in Lebanon. I have lots of memories there. The best for me was being with family, a whole lot of family. Three generations always together, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, we were always gathered. We'd go on day trips around the country during the summertime, and we always had big family lunches every Sunday. I'll always cherish those times. Other than that, I spent my days between school and activities. My school was great, I was in an international program, there were students from Lebanon and abroad, so it was an international atmosphere. Then afterschool and during the weekends, I would do activities and sports: horseback riding, dancing, piano, and girl guides. But once I moved, of course things changed.

Education and Experience: ***Art is not a subject made for a career.***

I moved to follow my dreams somewhere where it would be possible. Back in Lebanon, art classes were taken like any other classes, but were not given the same importance. We had music, drama and art, which is considered visual art. My school was generally supportive of the arts. They did small school art contests and would also encourage students to participate in

university-lead art competitions specifically organised for schools all around the country. I always participated in those art competitions; I think I always looked forward to them because I'd have the chance to put more time and effort in an artwork that would make me proud. My greatest interest were the visual art classes, but I perceived them as an art hobby class due to their lack of significance, especially in high school. When we were younger, in elementary school, we learned about some artists, types of art styles and a few art techniques such as color mixing. We also did some crafts, as candleholders and papier-mâché. We used to complete small artworks that were exhibited in the art classroom and within the building by the end of the year. The older we got, we continued learning, but not as much as I would have wished. And so, as a person passionate about art, I taught myself. I feel my instructors kept encouraging and guiding me personally more than other students, because of my interest, and I'm grateful for that. But I always believed that art can be a subject that everyone can learn from and a subject that could be taught in different ways, which proved to be true as I found later in my studies. I could have learned much more about art at school, like about art history, artists, new techniques and especially how art affects our lives. We could have learned how art builds up motor skills with the use of clay, paint or drawing, and furthermore how art may help in expressing one's feelings and emotions with the use of colors and textures. But as we grew older and got closer to graduating from high school, it was like a given from the Lebanese society, a general consent that art isn't that important, instead we were expected to focus on our other subjects. This generally comes from the assumption of Lebanese people saying, 'art is not a subject made for a career'. When I decided to study fine arts at the university, I was constantly asked: What would you do with such a degree? Will you be able to earn money? And I'm so grateful for my parents who never thought that way and instead always appreciated art encouraging me to pursue what

I'm passionate about. Even later, when I decided to continue my studies and apply for a master's degree, some of my close surrounding in Lebanon didn't think it's even possible. Again, asking me questions like: What is there to research about? And here I am doing research on how art can connect people and visually represent experiences of moving and adapting to a new country. I believe arts have a big role in life, and that's why I wanted to pursue being an artist and art educator and try to make a difference in convincing the Lebanese people how art should be interpreted.

That's why I was intrigued by the Major in Community Art Education at Concordia University. It's not only about teaching art, or as people might think how to become an 'art teacher'. It's much, much more. It allows you to explore teaching your art skills, whichever form of art it is, and furthermore how to use art in teaching or guiding bigger projects. For example, one thing I'm very interested in, is the impact of collaborative artworks to create a sense of community and learn from one another. Being in the program made me learn and grow my understandings about art and education, in a way I probably would have never learned in Lebanon. When I was first applying to study Fine Arts at universities in Lebanon, I wanted a more specified major rather than a general Fine Arts degree that would simply introduce the visual arts.

Moving and Adapting to Montreal: *I never felt like I couldn't belong here.*

Being born in Montreal, it was always a part of me somehow, which is why I decided to move back here. It was my decision to move to pursue my passion, and also stay and live here. I arrived in Summer 2014 at the age of 17 with my mother who travelled with me to help me settle in. My apartment was already rented from abroad, without me knowing how it looked like. Nor had I seen the neighborhood or my university. I don't think I ever even looked on the internet. I

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had really no idea. I arrived to an empty, unfurnished apartment in a very nice neighborhood of downtown Montreal near the Mount Royal Park. The first thing I did was buy some furniture to feel more at home. My mom and I were assembling furniture day and night, which was actually very fun! Other than that, I spent my days exploring my surroundings and spending time with family. Maybe I should mention that my first landmarks were city art installations, but that's another story. Also, having extended family members here in Montreal made things much easier whenever I needed anything, especially since my cousins had also moved to Montreal to pursue their studies and are living in the same building! We were again living very close to one another, just like in Lebanon. I also had some high school friends that also moved to Montreal at the same time, so it was great to have each other, and I am grateful to that. Things were very smooth and easy to get used to. I started using public transportation, getting to know street names for directions, and I was walking like I never did before. In Lebanon, we only have public buses – although it's not the safest, but unlike here, even though the streets are named, in Lebanon we use visuals and store names for directions. So those changes were good ones arriving to Montreal. I then started university. I was enjoying my courses and continued exploring what's in and around the city – the parks, restaurants, museums, and galleries. But of course, I constantly miss my home, family, friends, and hobbies. Since moving, I stopped continuing my hobbies, as I felt uncomfortable with everything new around me. Although the only thing I really wanted to continue was horseback riding, being around horses or animals in general is so comforting to me. But living downtown Montreal with no car, ranches are very, very far. In Lebanon it wasn't far from my house, as I lived between the city and the mountains. That's something I miss about being in Lebanon, the way things were easier, because I had grown up there and gotten used to my surrounding. Here in Montreal, everything was new to me, being located in the heart of the

downtown of a major urban city. Even if I was born here and I have visited the country several times, it's not the same as moving to stay and live. You need to be open about the different way of living, getting to know the culture, and mostly accepting and adapting to the differences. Coming from a multicultural family and having visited different countries around the world since a young age, this has helped me belong and appreciate the multiculturalism of Montreal. I never felt like I couldn't belong here. But I for sure needed some time to adjust to this change.

Having my mom by my side was the reason I was able to settle in easily and smoothly. She was with me the first six months of being in Montreal. After that, we travelled to Lebanon for the holidays, and then I came back to Montreal alone. I think that's where it became harder. Saying goodbye to my parents, being alone, sitting on the airplane window seat looking outside and just getting further and further from my family and my home. Then I arrived to a very quiet apartment. It sometimes didn't feel like it was really happening. At the age of 17, I had to start taking care of myself on my own and manage my time and budget. It wasn't too hard; it was just a matter of adjusting being on my own. By the end of my first year of living in Montreal, I had become a new person and continued to grow year after year. All this came from my experiences of daily life responsibilities, like cleaning, grocery shopping, cooking, managing my expenses, doing important calls, managing my time between courses and a part-time job and most importantly making time for myself to relax or go out and have fun. And I've been asked many times: How do you have free time to have fun while doing your own chores and studies? Giving myself time to do things that make me happy, like hanging out with friends, going shopping or painting at home, was always important and offers me moments to stop thinking of other responsibilities, giving my mind a break. I didn't mind everything that I had to manage, and it wasn't hard, because I've helped my mom with some of those responsibilities before and even

more importantly, I've learned from her. It was more about doing everything on my own. But from doing all this I became more responsible, mature and confident.

Now after 6 years of living here, I've become very comfortable and sometimes even more comfortable than when I go back to Lebanon. I remember that first time when I returned to Lebanon, I urged my father to change my ticket just to have more days in Lebanon. Now that is different! Montreal is a city where you are able to be comfortable, adjust easily and be yourself. But Lebanon will always be my home, I grew up there and I wouldn't have wanted it any other way, but that doesn't mean I can't have another home as well.

Montreal is my other home.

Art Education: *I have had opportunities to grow and learn from experiences and others.*

I have always been interested in painting and am currently exploring the fluid transparency created with acrylic paints. I consider myself a self-taught artist, constantly developing my work. My favorite surrounding and inspiration is nature, which is why my artistic practice is an ongoing process to develop a personal style that depicts the colors found in nature. Apart of this, I have continuously taught arts in community centers in both Lebanon and Montreal, which have strengthened my passion of teaching.

Combining those passions of artmaking and teaching, is what encouraged me to pursue studying art education. Art education has enabled me to create and teach art lessons, emphasizing on creative artistic practices and stressing on learner collaborations. I believe 'Art Education' combines teaching and learning art processes, engaging us to develop a community sense, learn about cultures, address issues, and more, through art.

From the Art Education graduate program at Concordia University, I have had opportunities to grow and learn from personal experiences working with others. From being a teaching and research assistant, working with a team, presenting at conferences, and conducting a community-based research, are all experiences that contribute to my career path in achieving to become the art educator I desire.

II - Our Workshops: Movements to Collaborative Artmaking as a Community of Practice

The workshops, in which all three participants gathered at the Art Education graduate classroom at Concordia University, occurred for two hours per session over five weeks. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last two workshops had to be completed online. Further details about how each of the workshops were developed are provided below. These workshops acted to bridge participants' stories with arts by visually representing their experiences of moving and adapting. Moments represented in the stories are mirrored in the responses to the workshops, forming essential connections that display the essence of our personal experiences. Across a collective decision, every workshop had an individual prompt requiring us to visually represent experiences using a specific art medium to reinforce the concept of the prompt. Figure 7 offers a brief overview of the workshops and their concepts.

Figure 7

Brief Workshop Descriptions

Workshop 1
- Meeting with the participants
- Sharing a bit of our stories together
- Discussing and deciding the prompts and how we want to visually represent our stories

Workshop 2
- Prompt 1: (Why?) Why did we move to Canada?
- Represented through body movement
- Discussion on the workshop outcome and upcoming prompt

Workshop 3
- Prompt 2: Meaningful objects
- Represented the objects that moved with us and their stories using clay
- Discussion on the workshop outcome and upcoming prompt

Workshop 4
- Prompt 3: Daily hassles
- Represented the daily uncomfortable changes using collage
- Discussion on the workshop outcome (online workshop)

Workshop 5
- Collaborative artwork
- Visually and collaboratively combining our individual and shared experiences
- Discussion linking the participant stories and workshop experiences (online workshop)

Workshop 1: Introductory Meeting

The first workshop was based on understanding the research topic, how it would be developed through workshops, and the role of the participants and researcher. As the researcher and a participant in this study, it was crucial to explain my roles to the participants. As the researcher, I guided the research process to make sure it did not shift from the focus of the research case, and simultaneously, I participated in my research to add my insights to the study. Additionally, since I used participatory action research (PAR) as a methodological approach, I was required to mention the role of the participants within this research methodology. Using the PAR methodology ensures that "the role of the researcher in PAR shifts from being an outside expert coming into a community to extract knowledge, to the one providing the necessary methods for the participants for a process of knowledge co-production" (Kunt, 2020, p. 89). Therefore, being a participant in this research necessitates collaboratively making decisions with the researcher on the weekly workshop prompts, resulting in combined knowledge. As the participants were not familiar with the PAR method, this further encouraged them to be part of this study and to be considered in the development of the workshops, instead of merely following specific directions.

Since the three participants are graduate students in Art Education, we already knew one another, which is why it was comfortable to communicate with each other. In addition, since the three of us come from Lebanon, we had the ability to communicate in the Lebanese Arabic dialect. This natural transition between languages occurred mainly when we shared our personal reflections regarding each prompt, and as the Lebanese dialect contains English and French words, it was easy for us to communicate in different languages. For this reason, there was an automatic comfort to discussing the research topic and sharing personal stories and experiences.

This led us to instantly discuss ways that the prompts would allow us to share our experiences of

moving and adapting to Montreal as individuals who had been raised in Lebanon.

Collaboratively, we began suggesting ideas to describe our experiences, as a natural process.

Through this process, we questioned, (a) Why did we leave Lebanon to come to Montreal? (b)

What helped us adapt to this movement? (c) How did we experience this change? From these

questions, we decided on three prompts that would allow us to reflect on moments from our

experiences and the ways to represent these prompts using art mediums.

The three prompts were the following:

1. ليّ؟(Why?)

   Leaving Lebanon and coming to Montreal required movement. Therefore, we decided

   that body movement representations would be the artmaking component.

2. Meaningful Objects

   When we move, we tend to carry objects that convey a part of home, and have a profound

   meaning to us. Since objects are felt and touched, we decided to use clay as the medium

   of artmaking.

3. Daily Hassles

   When arriving in a new environment, we encounter daily changes that are uncomfortable.

   To express these daily changes, we decided that collage technique would allow us to

   combine the different hassles experienced.

   These prompts reminded us of our chronological experiences and allowed these moments

to be represented visually. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to ensure the workshops

remained focused on the action of artmaking, which was captured through photographs, and on

sharing reflections by conversing about our personal experiences, which were audio recorded. It

was my intention to have each artmaking workshop develop an action-reflection approach that would then lead to a collaborative artwork, combining our individual and collaborative experiences.

Workshop 2: ليه؟(Why?)

The second workshop was based on the first prompt: ليه؟ (Why?), Why did we move to Canada? Why did we leave Lebanon? Why did we make this decision? This prompt was titled as " ليه؟ "(Why?) in Arabic because it is a common word constantly used in everyday language. This prompt was visually represented using movement, as discussions revolved around moving from one country to another. Furthermore, as moving in the form of walking has become part of our daily life in Montreal, using walking as part of our performances reflected our adaptation to the city. Performing body movements emphasized our feelings and resulted in expressing the reasons behind moving to another country. To capture the diverse moments, these movements were performed individually and collaboratively in front of a video camera (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Conversations with the Camera

Based on the prompt, each of us had three to five minutes to individually perform our movements in front of the video camera. While waiting for our turn, we each had to focus and

reflect on real life moments that would later be expressed through movements. Certainly, there were several repetitions, intervals to observe and review the captured output, times to decide whether including specific objects would result in a better understanding of the movement, and especially time to reflect on what the resulting movement visually creates and expresses. Each of us addressed our take uniquely, through abstract or literal reflections on expressing the prompt "Why?". Below are the stories of Lucine, Lara, and myself in response to the prompt during the visual recordings and the shared reflective conversations.

Figure 9

Lucine Performing Her Individual Movements

We did not perform our individual movements in any particular order, we based turn-taking on whoever was ready, allowing each participant to take the time needed. For instance, Lucine (Figure 9) entered the allocated performance space very quietly carrying a stool with her, as if she was coming to narrate a story to the audience. She sat down, had a silent moment, looked into the video camera, and began sharing the obstacles that caused her to reach the decision to move from Lebanon to Canada. All her emotions were clearly observed and sensed through her facial and body expressions, and most importantly through her tone. The way she was seated, with her back straight and chin up, showed confidence, and her changing tone reflected of all her feelings. Lucine, coming from a background in theater, was very comfortable speaking to the camera. As for Lara and I, standing in front of a camera was a more challenging moment, resulting in abstract performances.

Here are the main reflections shared by Lucine during this workshop, responding to the prompt "Why?":

"دايما بسأل حالي ليه الواحد بيكون بدو يترك بلدو تايروح يعيش ببلد تاني . أكيد في كتير أسباب . بفتكر مع الحال بلبنان ، الناس بتفضل تِنتإِل لغير بلد . لئِلي ، ما كنت مفَكرا بهالشغلي كتير ، الأرار إجا بالصُدفي . لما أدمت للهجرا لكندا كان وأتا حرب ال 2006 و هايدا خلّاني فِكِر بحالتي . خلِئِت ، كبِرت و تعَلَّمِت ببلد حبَيتو و تعلِّئِت في ، لكن كان نائِصني ألأل الحؤوء ، يلِي لِئِلي هيِ إنو يكون عندي جنسيي . هايدا كان السبب الرئيسي يلّي خلّاني هاجر ، تايكون عندي جنسيي ، باسبور و بلد إنتمي لِئلو ويخليني حِس إنو شو ما صار راح يحميني . كان أرار كتير صعب ، لأنو من الآخر كل حياتي كانت بلبنان . عَيلي ، صحاب ، إحساس بالبلد وريحتو ، حتَّى الطُّرَآت و كِل التفاصيل يلَي بحبا ما كانت تخليني أرِر إذا بِفِل أو لأ . ع كِل حال بس ناخد الأرار ، منكمل في .

السبب إني خترت مونتريال هوٍ إنو بيشبه لبنان بكتير إشيا ، أوَّلا تناينائُن متعدِدين بالثَّقافات ، ولأنو كان سهل انو أِدِم للهجرا لكندا . مع إنو كان عندي شغل ، و حياة منظَّمي ، لكن أرَّرت إنو هاجر في عمر ال 33 . ما

بِتأسَّف عها الأرار . أكيد بِشتاء لإشيا عن لبنان ، خصوصا الإشيا الصغيري مِتل أكل الزيتون و شرب الشاي عالتِّرويئا بطبيعة لبنان .

بحسْ إنو الأوضاع شجَّعتنا ناخد هالفرصا و نِستغِلا".

I always ask myself what makes someone want to leave his country and move to another one. Of course, there are many reasons. I suppose that with the situation in Lebanon, people would prefer to move somewhere else. For me, I hadn't thought about it too much, the decision was mostly by coincidence. When I applied for immigration to Canada there was the war of 2006 and that's what made me consider my particular situation. I was born, raised, and studied in a country to which I was attached and loved, but still missed the minimum right: which for me is to have the nationality. That was the main reason that made me want to move, to have a nationality, a passport and a country that I could belong to and feel that no matter what happened it would protect me. It was a very hard decision, because at the end, all my life was in Lebanon. Family, friends, feelings, smells, even streets and details that you like are all things that make you unsure of leaving or not. Nevertheless, once you take the decision of what's better, you go with it.

The reason I chose Montreal was that I found similarities to Lebanon, primarily that both are multicultural, and because it was easy to apply for immigration to Canada. Even though I had a job, and an organized life, but still decided to move at the age of 33. I don't regret it. Of course, I miss many things about Lebanon, especially the small simple incidents as eating olives and having tea for breakfast in Lebanon's nature.

I feel that circumstances allowed us to seek this chance and take advantage of it.

(Lucine, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

Figure 10

Lara Performing Her Individual Movements

Lara, on the other hand (Figure 10), came into the space placing chairs one by one behind each other in a straight line. Through intervals, she would look at a chair, pause and think for a moment, then push away that particular chair. She pushed every chair away, one by one, in no particular order. Each chair represented an obstacle that she had faced, which made her want to move from Lebanon to Canada. Her actions of pushing away were done with actual

strength and serious facial expressions, as if she was defeating every obstacle she faced. It was as

if Lara was taking her time to consider the actual obstacle in her mind before undertaking an

action, thus performing more that just a descriptive movement. Furthermore, considering the

physical function of a chair as furniture to sit on and rest, it seemed that in this case the seats

brought discomfort, rather than the ease they are intended to offer.

Here are the main reflections shared by Lara during this workshop, responding to the prompt

'Why?':

"أررت إنى هاجر لَهون ، لأني كنت محتارا بيلّي بدي إعملو في حياتي . درست "الفاين آرتس" و بعد ما

تخرَّجت حسيت إني ما تعَلِّمِت كفايي . بلبنان ، ما كنت عارفي شو أعمل بهالشهادي ، ما كان في أي فرصِة

شغل . فدرست "انتيرير أركيتكتشر" لَسنتين بس حسيت إنو ما كان هايدا يلّي بدي أعملو . و بلَّشِت إفهم إنو

بلبنان ما في أمل ، ما في مستأبل ، المعاشات تعتير ، و ما في حدا آدر يلائي شغل منيح . عرفت إنو بإيت

بلبنان راح ضل عند أهلي وما فيني إتِّكل عاحالي . متل كل الشباب بلبنان تِئريبا مش لاقيين شغل و عايشين عند

أهلن . أساساً من الحالي الاقتصادي الفاشلي يلّي كانت بلَّشت تبيِن بها الوئت .

وصِلت لِلَحظِة تفكير؛ عمري 23 سِني ، و ماني عارفي شو عمبعمل . بئيت إسأل حالي ، شو هو يلّي بدي

أعملو عالمزبوط؟ بخلَص شهادة ال "انتيرير آركيتكتشر" ، يلّي ما حبيتا ، أو بأدِم لدرجة الماستر؟ و هون وقت

الّي أررت أدِم لدرجة الماستر بالفاين آرتس في لبنان ، بس ما لئيت بروجرام حبيتو ، فأررت أدِم برَّات البلد .

حكيت مع أساتذتي ياللي خَبَّروني عن جامعة كونكورديا ، خاصة إن أستاذ مِنّن خرِيج جامعة كونكورديا . و

هيك فكرت روح عا كندا لأنو كمان عمتي و عمي عايشين هونيك . هلّأ أنا هون تلميذي انترناشونال بالجامعة ،

عمبدرس يلّي بحبو و بتطلع لِيَلي راح يكون فيني أعملو بالمستأبل .

لإلي ، الدرس و مستأبلي كانو هِني يلّي خلُّوني إنتئل لهون".

I decided to move here because I was confused about what I wanted to do with my

life. I had studied Fine Arts and even after graduation I felt like I hadn't learned

much from it. In Lebanon, I didn't know what to do with this degree, there were no opportunities. So I decided to study interior architecture and studied for 2 years before I decided that it wasn't what I wanted to do. I started to recognize that in Lebanon there was no hope, no future, the incomes are bad, and no one is able to find a good job. I knew that if I was to stay in Lebanon, I'd be staying with my parents, without being independent. Just like most of the youth in Lebanon who don't find jobs and depend on their parents. Principally with the bad economic situation that was starting at the time.

I reached the instance where I was reasoning: I'm 23 years old, and I don't know what I'm doing. I kept asking myself, what do I really want to do. Should I finish the degree in interior architecture, which I wasn't enjoying, or should I go for a masters degree. That's when I decided to apply for a masters in Fine Arts in Lebanon, but there was no program that I liked, so I opted to apply abroad. I talked to some of my instructors and they informed me about Concordia University, especially that one of them was a Concordia graduate. So I thought, I shall go to Canada as I also have my aunt and uncle living there. Now I'm here as an international student, studying what I love and looking forward to what's to come.

For me, it was really the studies and my future that made me want to move here. (Lara, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

    After Lara, when it was my turn to perfom my movements, I experienced difficulties in representing "Why" I moved here from Lebanon. I was constantly asking myself, "How can I represent my reasons?". That is when I started walking in a random patterm, but always towards the camera, pausing and looking back (Figure 11). The more I walked, the closer I would be to

the camera, constantly pausing, looking forward and backward. The random continuous

movement represented my thoughts on the obstacles in my way and that I had to get around,

softening their corners. The forward movement to the camera illustrated the growth of the

obstacles every time I got closer to my destination. As for my forward vision, it describes what I

was aiming at: a better career, more stability, and open opportunities, in contradiction to the

backward views represented by every obstacle I have overcome. I kept a very neutral facial

expression, because moving from your home country to another is never an easy decision, even

if it is for the better.

Figure 11

Rana Performing Her Individual Movements

Here are reflections I shared during this workshop, responding to the prompt "Why?":

"كنت بعدني مخلصا الصفوف الثانويي ، وكِنت عارفي انو بدي أدرس فاين آرتس ، ومع هيك ، ضليت فِكِر بيّلي أحسن لئلي اذا بدي مستأبل بهال المجال . شو راح يكون مستأبلي اذا ضليت بلبنان ؟ الفن و الرسم تعلمتُن لوحدي و بتشجيع من أهلي . شى غريب إنو معلمة آرت قالتلي هونيك نهار إنو درس الفاين آرت ما راح يوصِلني لشي . بَيي يِلّي بدَرَس بجامعة بلبنان ، و يِلّي كنت راح أدرس فيها لو كنت بأيت بلبنان ، كان بيعرف بروجرام الفاين آرت و مع هيك شجعني أدرس في كندا لأني راح إربح فرص و خبرات أكتر. شو يِلّي بيوضَح عن مجال الفاين آرت بلبنان ؟ شو يِلّي الواحد بيفهمو ؟

لما كنت بلبنان ، كنت حاسي كأنو في حيط إدامي ، ما كان راح يخليني أِدم لإدَام . دايما في حدود ، خصوصةً في الآرتس . ما فيني اتخَطَى هول الحدود ، من دون واسطه أو ضربة حظ . فبلشت أِدم عاجامعات بكندا ، خصوصةً إني خلِئت في كندا ، و هيدا هيَن علِيَي إنو إرجع لهون . أكيد ، صعب لحداَ ياخد أرار تا ينئُل . حسيت إنو بدي إيجي عاكندا ، بس بنفس الوقت ما كنت آدري أِرر .

كان عمري 17 سني ، بس أخدت هالخطوي يِلّي حسيت إنًا أحسن لئلي".

I had just completed high school, and I knew I wanted to study Fine Arts. However, I kept thinking of what would be better for me if I sought for a future in this field. What would be my future if I stayed in Lebanon? I was mainly a self-taught visual artist, through the encouragement of my parents. Incredibly enough an art teacher even said to me one day that studying Fine Arts would take me nowhere. My father, who also teaches at a university in Lebanon and to which I would have gone to if I had stayed there, knew about the Fine Arts program but still encouraged me to go abroad stating that I'd gain more opportunities and experiences if I went to study in Canada. What does all this reveal about the Fine Arts field in Lebanon? What should one understand?

Being in Lebanon, it felt like there was a wall in front of me, through which I

wouldn't be able to advance. There are limits, especially in arts. You can't pass those

limits, unless through connections or tough luck. So, I decided to apply to

universities in Canada, especially since I was born in Montreal, which made it easy

for me to move back here. Of course, it's hard for someone to take the decision to

move. I felt that I wanted to come to Canada, but there was always uncertainty.

I was only 17 years old, but I took this step and did what I believe was best for me.

(Rana, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

Once we had individually completed our movements, we decided to represent our

connections by moving into the same space all together (Figure 12). We each walked into the

space, arbitrarily entering from different angles. This randomness of walking directions allowed

our eyes to meet, guiding us closer to one another, establishing connections. As three individuals

who moved from Lebanon to Canada at different times, we each had diverse reasons for moving.

However, Lucine, Lara, and I had faced similar obstacles to moving. During our reflective

workshop conversation, we agreed that our main and common reason for moving was to build

and look forward to a better future.

Figure 12

Collaborative Movement

As participants who would be engaged together during the coming weeks, this prompt allowed us to discover more about one another. This workshop also allowed our growing relationship to develop, bringing us closer as individuals, educators, and artists. Observing our individual movements, connecting through a collaborative movement, and listening to our individual stories as part of the reflective conversation of the workshop all contributed to that growing relationship.

Workshop 3: Meaningful Objects

This workshop was based on the prompt: Meaningful Objects. What are the objects that moved with us from Lebanon to Canada? What significance do they hold? What is so special about them? The workshop required each one of us to bring several sentimental objects (Figure 13) that we had transported with us to Canada the first time we left Lebanon.

Figure 13

Our Objects

In order to individually create visual tangible solids, representing the objects that moved with us, we opted for clay as a material to represent this prompt, to easily sculpt using our hands and simple tools (Figure 14). The purpose of the artwork was not necessarily to recreate the objects, but rather to tell the story and the significance of these objects.

Figure 14

Tools Used for Clay Sculpting

It was not until we sat down around the table, carving and molding the clay (Figure 15), that we quickly embarked on a conversation sharing the stories, meanings, and emotions behind our objects. Gradually those conversations became the essence of this prompt.

Figure 15

Artmaking in Progress

The further we worked on our artmaking task, the more profoundly our conversations developed. Discussions that were exchanged related to the stories behind the objects, with participants controlling the extent of details shared. Due to strong similarities between stories and the reasons specific objects were selected, the stories exchanged formed bonds and connections between us. This result reflects Garber's (2019) statement that "in art education, outcomes of making (often involving the senses) may result in a handsome object… as well as the development of skill or procedural knowledge. But for many educators… these objects are not the real goal. Rather, they are focused on the learners and what they gain from the interactions of making" (p. 13). For example, from some specific objects, we discovered that we all had taken dance lessons in Lebanon, carried pictures in our wallets, and had stories about a stuffed toy, even though the object in question was only brought by one participant. Likewise,

we all had a piece of jewelry given to us by a family member; such objects, that are worn daily, tend to lose their individuality and are perceived as a part of us.

As we progressed into details of our objects and their stories, parts of our conversations became very personal. As a researcher and a participant, I had to continually consider the limits between private and public information to be dispersed, on what is permitted to be shared, and if there is a limit of what to share in a study. The awareness of our conversations being recorded felt almost non-existent. We fashioned an atmosphere where we felt comfortable, allowing our conversations to develop and evolve naturally. We were laughing and having fun, coming into the workshop without any thought of what to say or not to say. This reinforced the concept that "new materialist pedagogy can result in deepened learning and, indeed, social engagement" (Garber, 2019, p. 18). Additionally, building on the previous workshop, these discussions and artmaking practices became the essence of the development of our small community.

During this workshop we shared stories about our objects without necessarily discussing every object in detail. Instead, our intentions were to listen to what the participant would like to share about the object. We mainly reflected on the ways specific objects facilitated our adaptation to a new environment. How much can an object reveal?

Figure 16 shows the selected objects that Lucine brought to this workshop. What are the objects she chose to share stories about? How did they help her adapt to her new environment after moving?

Figure 16

Lucine's Meaningful Objects

"من وأت اللي حملت محفظه، أول شي فكرت فيه انو أحمل فيها كمان صور. و من وقتا بلشِت جمع صور عيلتي و لأصحابي. غالباً كانت صور باسبور لأنو إياسن كتير منيح. هول الصور كانو بيخلوني كتير مبسوطه، كأنن كانو بيعطوني الأوي و بيخلوني حس إني مَني وحدي. كأنو لمَّا تاخدوهن معكو وين ما رحتو، بيشاركوكن رحلتكو".

From the moment I carried a wallet, the first thing I'd think of was to carry pictures in it as well. Therefore, with time I started to collect pictures of my family and close friends. Usually they would be passport pictures, because they are of perfect size. Having those pictures made me feel very happy, as if they gave me strength and made me feel I'm not alone. As if when you take them wherever you go, it's like

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they are part of your journey. (Lucine, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

"هايدا الوشاح (الفولار) كان لأمي. جايبتو من روسيا و كانت دايما تلبسو. عطيتني ياه من وأت اللي سافرت لدبَي أبل ما ايجي عا كندا. حملتو معي كل الوأت. هايدا الوشاح (الفولار) بيعنيلي كتير، دايما بلبسو تاحس حالي منيحا و تاإتذكَر نصايح إمي. بيعطيني الأوي وبيذكرني بان الناس ياللي بحبن دايما معي حتى لو ما كانو بذاتن موجودين. كأن إمي بتحضنْي لما بلبسو".

This scarf was my mother's. She got it from Russia and always wore it. Since I traveled to Dubai, before moving to Canada, my mom had given it to me. So, I've had it with me all along my journey. The scarf means a lot to me, I always wear it to feel better and remember all the advice my mother gave me. It gives me strength and reminds me that those you love are with you even if not in person. It feels like my mother hugs me when I wear it. (Lucine, 2020, shared communication during the workshop)

It was clear that these objects meant a lot to Lucine, in her experience with moving and the way she adapted. She always felt that wherever she went, these objects contributed to keeping the presence of loved ones close to her. Lucine was also wearing a ring that was originally her grandmother's: she wears it daily, and it constantly reminds her of her grandmother and stories from the past. Objects carry lots of meanings, and when moving and adapting to another country, such personal objects help us realize that similar to us creating new stories and memories, those objects continue doing that with us.

Based on Lucine's objects and stories, her main clay artwork is a figurine with memories and stories attached, as pebbles that are dragged and collected along the way (Figures 17 & 18).

Figure 17

Lucine Working on Her Clay Artwork

Figure 18

Lucine's Clay Artwork Closeup

Figure 19 shows the selected objects Lara brought to share. What are the objects she chose to share stories about? How did they help her adapt to her new environment after moving?

Figure 19

Lara's Meaningful Objects
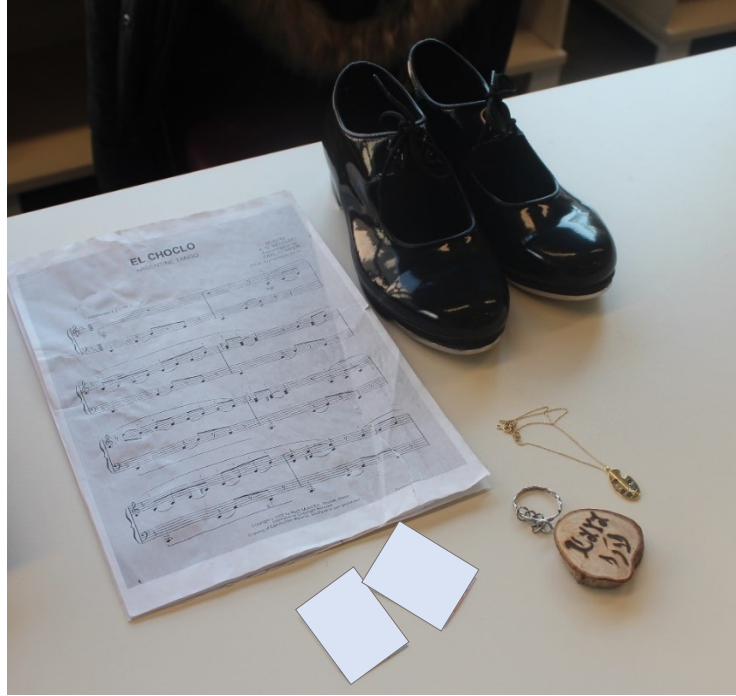
"الصورتين لأعز صاحباتي، وهني توم. هول الصور بيضلو معي، وكل واحده منن كمان عندا صورتي.
باعرفن من زمان. ضهرنا مع بعض فى رحلات كتير و دايما كل الوقت لبعض، و حتى لهلأ دايما عا اتصال.
كل ما باتطلع عا هالصور، باتذكر انى مانى وحدى بهالإنتقال. صاحباتي متلي، هني كمان فكروا بياللي لازم
يعملوه لمستقبل أحسن، حتى لو كان بالدرس في الغربه".

The two pictures are those of my two best friends, they're twins. These pictures are always with me, and they both have my picture. I've known them for a long time. We went on many trips together and are always there for each other, and until now, we are always in touch. Every time I look at the images, I'm reminded that I'm not

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alone doing this transition. My friends are like me, they also thought of what they should do for a better future, even if it was to study abroad. (Lara, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

"أحذية التاب دانس، اشتريتن تا إتعلم هايدا النوع من الرقص. صاحباتي التوم كمان اشتروهن، لأنا دايما بنعمل زات الشي. ما اتعلمت بعد التاب دانس، ولكن باتأمل اتعلمو. وكمان، نوتات موسيقى البيانو ل الشوكلو، هي أطعة موسيقا كنا بنرقص عليها في صفوف التانجو. جبت النوتات معي تا العبها عالبيانو، متل ما كنت باعمل في لبنان. بتذكرني بهول الأوقات وبتعطيني الراحه".

The tap-dancing shoes, I bought to learn this dance style. My best friends also bought them, because we did everything together. I still haven't learned tap-dancing, but I am hoping to. Also, the "El Choclo" piano music notes, is a music piece that we used to dance to in the tango class. I brought it with me to keep playing it on the piano, just like I did in Lebanon. It reminds me of those moments and brings me comfort. (Lara, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

Lara had objects that linked stories together. Having her friends' pictures with her all the time clearly gave her comfort. Like Lucine, pictures keep her company, giving her the feeling that she is not alone. Lara also wears an art palette necklace daily, as she stated:

"عقد باليت الرسم هيدا هديتني ياه إمي. دايما بالبسو. بيعنيلي لأنو عم بدرس الآرت ادوكيشن و بيذكرني بانو دايما في أمل بياللي عامبدرسو هلأ".

This art palette necklace was given to me by my mother. I always wear it. It relates to me studying art education and it reminds me that there is hope from what I'm currently studying. (Lara, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

Based on Lara's objects and stories, her main clay art piece represented herself and her two best friends, showing that their bond is strong and inseparable (Figures 20 & 21).

Figure 20

Lara Working on Her Clay Artwork

Figure 21

Lara's Clay Artwork Closeup

Figure 22 shows the selected objects that I brought with me to this workshop. What are the objects that I chose to share stories about? How did they help me adapt to my new environment after moving?

Figure 22

Rana's Meaningful Objects

"بيي عطاني فرش الرسم هول، ولكن مانن أي فرش رسم. كانو لعمتي ياللي كانت راهبة و فنانة كتابة أيقونات، و كانت دايما تعطيني الوحي في أعمالي الفنية. ما عمري استعملتم، ويمكن ما عمري راح استعملن. جايي من عيلي بتقدر الفن، بيذكروني انو دايما أعمل ياللي بآمن فيه، و هيدا السبب اني انتقلت هون".

My father gave me those paintbrushes, but they are not just any paintbrushes. They belonged to my grand-aunt who was a nun and an icon artist, she always inspired me to make art. I've never used them, and I probably never will. Coming from a family that appreciate art, they remind me to keep doing what I believe in, which is the

reason why I moved here. (Rana, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

"هذا الكلب الصغير من القماش اسمه بلاتو، معي كل الوقت من لما كنت صغيري. كنت دايما باخدو وين ما رحت. فا بالسفر و النقله الكبيره ، كان لازم ييجي معي، لأن اشيا متلو بتساعد انو جيب شأفه من البيت و ذكرياتي ياللي كبرت فيها. حملت هول الذكريات معي تا إتأكد اني ما تركتن و إنو راح يضلو دايما شأفه مني".

This little plush dog is called Plato, and he's been with me ever since I was a little girl. I always took him with me wherever I went. So, traveling and making a big move, he had to come with me, because objects like this help you bring a little piece of home and memories of growing up. I carried those memories with me to make sure they are not left behind and that they will always be a part of me. (Rana, 2020, translated shared communication during the workshop)

I believe we transport objects not only to have them close by, but mainly due to their sentimental value. They carry the memories and the stories we like to keep with us on different parts of our journey. Furthermore, objects preserve links with our past and provide us with strength moving forward. Some of these objects become a part of us: in the same way that Lucine and Lara wear a piece of jewellery that means something to them, I also always wear a ring that was given to me by my mother. It belonged to my mother, which inevitably makes it more important, because she inspires me to be a better person no matter where I am. We do not always realize why we brought an object with us, or what that object represents to us, until we reflect on it. When I was packing to move here, I did not think of why I was bringing these objects with me, but I knew that I had to bring them. It is only when I moved to my new environment that I reminisced about the stories carried within these objects.

Based on my objects and stories, my main clay art piece represented the story behind the paintbrushes: my grand-aunt and I, whose endeavours to pursue her own beliefs inspired me to pursue my own career ambitions (Figures 23 & 24).

Figure 23

Rana Working on Her Clay Artwork

Figure 24

Rana's Clay Artwork Closeup

Workshop 4: Daily Hassles

This workshop was based on the prompt: Daily Hassles. What are the daily discomforts that we face once we move to a new environment? How do we find comfort despite these daily hassles? Do they help us adapt? There are so many daily changes or differences when living in new surroundings. The purpose of this workshop was expressing and discussing our "acculturative daily hassles (ADH)" (Gaudet et al., 2005), all those little daily obstacles that we encountered during the early stages of our adaptation. We had chosen to visually represent this prompt with a collage, as collage allowed for different fragments of our adaptation to be merged onto one surface. This workshop took place online: due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown that occurred, the workshop had to be approached differently, as we could not meet in person. We created our collages separately at home, and afterwards we met online to share our work and thoughts on the prompt. I also asked each participant to send me a reflective response on their creation through email, as the recording of our conversation was not as clear as when we met in person. These responses were written in English, which is why there is no Arabic writing included in this prompt.

Creating the collages separately and sharing our works online brought limitations to this workshop, such as the inability to meet in person, the conversations shared in the moment, and the inaccessibility of materials. The main limitation was that occasionally we had to share our discussions through text messages, thus eliminating all emotions and body language. Similar to finding means of comfort to compensate for our daily hassles when we moved to Montreal, we had to overcome the daily hassle of being in a lockdown. Nevertheless, it allowed us to observe and participate in a different type of collaboration, discussion, and artmaking. Once the

individual collages were completed, the participants sent their artworks, including a description, to me by email. We then shared images of our artworks, while having an online conversation.

Lucine and I expressed that the acculturative hassles we had experienced were no longer considered hassles because of factors that meant more and helped us realize that. However, Lara expressed that her daily comforts in Lebanon were replaced with daily hassles in Montreal. This brought an "understanding of the role of ADH in adjustment by examining its relation to discrimination and identity" (Gaudet et al., 2005, p. 158), based on how each of us perceived these daily differences and discomforts.

Lucine's collage (Figure 25) was made using scrap pieces of cardstock, paper, and markers. Observing her collage, I immediately perceived a resemblance in concept between her drawn figure in the collage and the clay figurine she had created in the previous workshop. They both show a figure constantly travelling with accumulated memories and experiences.

Figure 25

Lucine's Collage
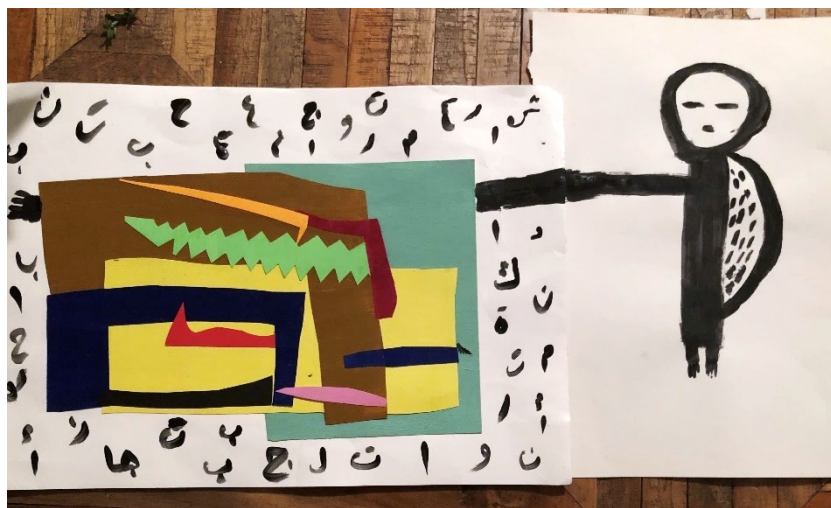
This collage represents my daily hassles in Montreal. This is how I see myself,

carrying my memories and my past on my back, extending my hand to another paper

that reflects my daily hassles, which also relates to my daily life. Coming here,

everything was new, starting with one layer over another, over another. The big and

small pieces of colored cardstock represent my bed, my house, my neighbourhood,

the metro, the park, and the city. Everything that was new. The white space around

characterizes the snow, which I grew to enjoy. I then included the Arabic alphabets

to conceptually represent words whenever you combine letters. Some of those words

helped me face my daily hassles such as: friends, love, daughter, colours, shops,

trees, etcetera. (Lucine, 2020, response through email communication)

In contrast, Lara created her collage digitally (Figure 26), combining images she searched

for on the internet. Observing her collage, I connected parts of her participant story, such as

transportation and eating home cooked meals, directly to her collage.
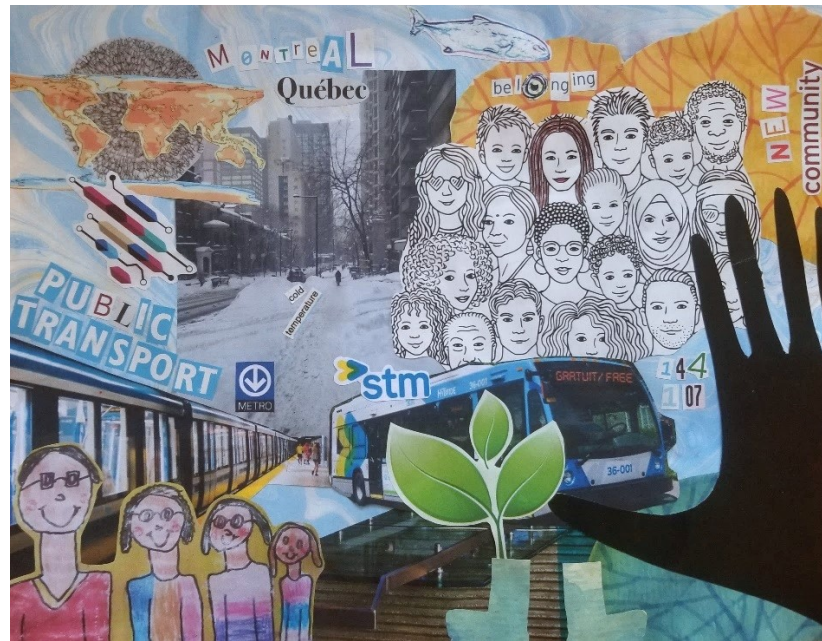
Figure 26

Lara's Collage

In my collage I wanted to show my daily hassles in Canada as a Lebanese

international student. The two main hassles for me were the weather in winter and

the transportation. In Lebanon, generally, we do not experience extreme winter

weather conditions. As for transportation, I had my own car in Lebanon, whereas

here I must manage with public transportation. I also miss the Mediterranean Sea for

its openness and easy accessibility. Other daily hassles include being away from

family, since my parents and brother are still in Lebanon. In addition, the picture of

the zucchini meal, which I love, reminds me of coming home to a warm meal

without ending up ordering fast food like McDonalds. Finally, I included the

"Bonjus," a typical Lebanese brand of juice, usually drank with a 'منقوشة' (dough

topped with thyme or cheese) for breakfast, versus the coffee and donut I get from

Tim Hortons. (Lara, 2020, response through email communication)

   My collage (Figure 27) is composed of personal images combined with pictures and cut-

outs procured from magazines and the internet. Just like anyone who moves from one country to

another, I experienced daily physical and emotional hassles from being in a new environment.

Like Lara, my daily hassles included extreme cold weather conditions and public transportation.

In Lebanon there is no proper public transportation, everybody has a car. The very few buses we

have drive on the main roads with no specific stops and will not serve suburbs. In comparison,

living in downtown Montreal, public transportation to go anywhere is easily accessible. My first

impression considered it a hassle, but it is more of an adjustment, similar to the winter weather:

once you are well-equipped, it is easy to adjust. On the other hand, adjusting to emotional hassles

is more difficult. The hardest hassle upon arriving in a new environment and being far from

family is to fit in, make friends, and gain the feeling of belonging in your new community.

However, as Montreal is a multicultural city, it was easy to feel comfortable and adapt to these hassles.

Figure 27

Rana's Collage

Analyzing the three collages, I searched for details that could be investigated: details such as facial expressions on Lucine's drawn figure and my representation of a multicultural community. While Lucine's drawn face was neutral, the faces of those in my community looked happy. Lucine used colours and shapes, with layers of colours for the different elements and representative cut-outs for the shapes, whereas on Lara's collage, the images are placed next to each other, contoured by a shadow that makes them appear as individuals. I am the only one who placed small details, such as the boots, the plant, the fish, and the numbers. As the researcher, I question: Do these details need to be explained further by the participants? Do we let the viewer explore and interpret alone? What do these details suggest? Do they need to suggest anything? I

believe it is the participant's prerogative to decide what needs to be explained and interpreted from the artwork collage, emphasizing (or not) the importance of details.

As each participant created their collage separately from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop's process was different from the previous ones. Each participant created their artwork at different times, and it was not until we had all completed the work that we shared our outcomes. In contrast, meeting in person to create the artworks at the same time would have allowed participants to share materials, and moreover, the conversations would have probably inclined and inspired our artmaking practice.

Workshop 5: Collaborative Artwork

This fifth and final workshop focused on a collaborative artwork. This artwork combines our individual adaptation practices and our collaborative experiences from prior workshops. Like the previous workshop, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this workshop had to be conducted online. As the researcher, I had to find an online platform that allows simultaneous collaboration on one artwork. Aggie.io (https://aggie.io/), a collaborative painting application, was selected, as it allowed us to work separately and simultaneously on the same surface. With this application, we could instantaneously follow each other's pen and paintbrush design marks and join all our concepts into one.

For a smooth start, I suggested beginning the artwork by inserting images of ourselves taken during our first workshop. This first introduction of images offered us a starting point on which we would elaborate. The aggie.io application provided the ability to assign every participant a separate layer to work on; however, we still could draw on each other's works, thus combining our thoughts. Figure 28 displays a full screenshot of the online site we used, showing

superimposed layers created in order to achieve one collaborative outcome. Even though the application also provided a chat area, we still opted to have a group phone call in order to converse freely, and to allow for the sharing of voice tones and slang language. This also gave us the ability to share our ideas and thoughts, our understandings of different parts of the work, as well as to link and build on our ideas as a team. Furthermore, being able to listen to one another allowed us to feel like we were working together, rather than just working on a screen.

Figure 28

Screenshot of Online Collaborative Artwork Experience
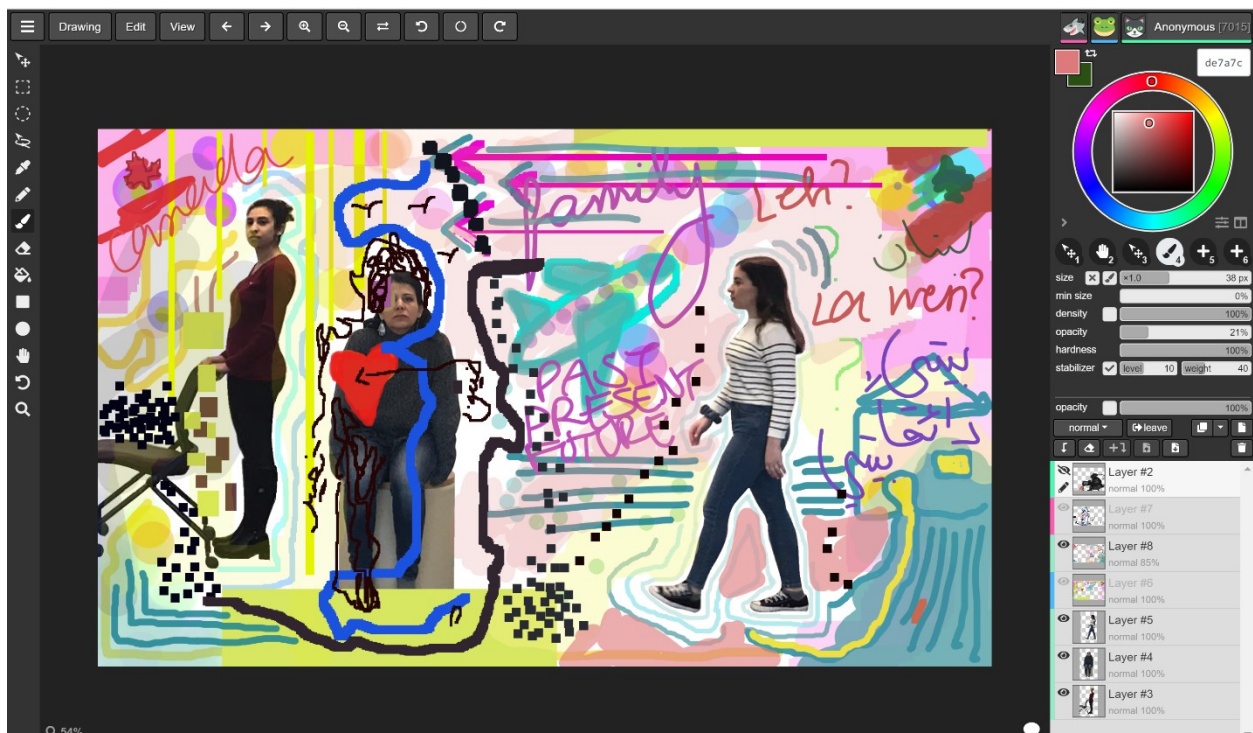
Digital drawing and painting were not familiar mediums for any of us, as they are not a part of our individual artistic practices, so it was apparent that we were uncomfortable with this process. This discomfort correlates to our initial experiences of moving and adapting, during which we required time to feel more confident and at ease. However, as we were exploring the

possibilities of this creative practice together, using unfamiliar tools, it became a fun, interactive experience through which we encouraged one another. After all participants had completed their shared input to the collaborative artwork, we chose to view every contributor's layer invidividually (Figures 29, 30, & 31) in order to distinguish personal touches and comprehend how they all connect.

Figure 29

Lucine's Created Layer
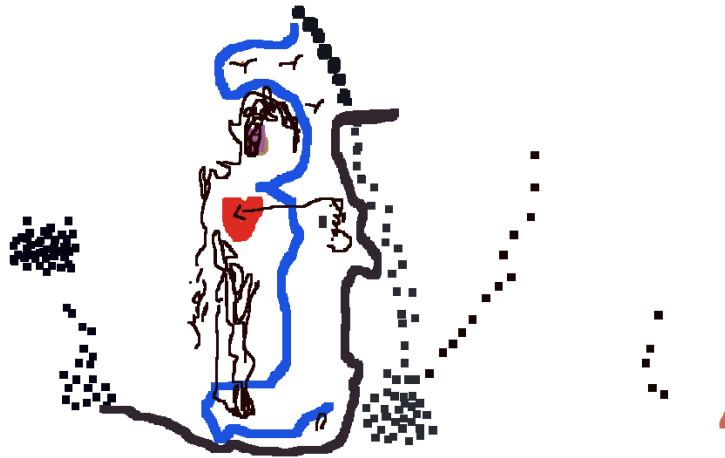
Figure 30

Lara's Created Layer

Figure 31

Rana's Created Layer

Once separated, individual layers initiated a group discussion on the symbolism of our drawings and their association with our experience of moving and adapting to our new environment. For example, (a) the plane would indicate travel and relates straightforwardly to the act of moving, (b) the house suggests the fact of leaving home behind, (c) the heart refers to the love of family and friends we left as well as to the love for our new environment, and (d) the arrows represent directional forward movement. Additionally, (e) both flags, the Lebanese and Canadian, symbolize our dual belonging, and (f) the keywords, family, past present future, حنين (nostalgia), تغيير (change),لا وين (where to),ليه (why), and بيتي دائما بيتي (my home is always my home), express feelings and experiences. When it comes to colours and shapes, (g) the black markings refer to the uneasiness of moving as well as to objects and memories we carried, in contradiction to (h) bright colours for positive connotations. The discussion ended with agreement that adapting to a new environment is an everlasting, ongoing process.

Overlapping the layers and perceiving them as one combined artwork highlights the

significance and value of our collaborative practices through the workshops. Building up our

small community throughout the previous workshops enabled us to collaborate in creating this

concluding collaborative artwork, which expresses and displays our individual stories as one

combined narration. To sum up this collaboration, the image of a camera was added in the lower

right corner, in order to capture our shared moments and to immortalize them in just one frame

(Figure 32). This workshop implemented teaching and learning opportunities in community art

education through the process of creating a collaborative artwork using an unfamiliar digital

technique. Furthermore, this "activity of coming together to do art also resulted in the

development of collective identity" (Lowe, 2000, p. 377), as our group shared aspects of moving

and adapting between the same geographies.

Figure 32

Completed Collaborative Artwork

Chapter 5:

Analysis and Interpretations

Analyzing the Stories and Workshops

The stories and workshops developed connections between the three participants, as "our engagements have been characterised by regular, informal, face-to-face meetings, conversations and workshops, responding in a fluid way to specific needs and circumstances" (Herron & Mendiwelso-Bendek, 2017, p. 830). With the three participants having moved from Lebanon to Canada, we all had encountered this issue of moving and adapting to a new environment. Furthermore, with the three of us being art education graduate students at Concordia University, we value the method in which such research is conducted in art education. As a researcher and participant in this study, I acknowledge my positionality, which is expressed by Creswell (2013) as "the concept of reflexivity in which the writer is conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to a qualitative research study" (p. 216). Thus, I brought intimate knowledge to this study by comprehending and having experienced reasons that Lebanese people move out of Lebanon. However, I opened space to the participants to comfortably share their individual opinions and experiences, and for us to consider our differences, disadvantages, and personal privilege. This allowed us to share and connect our experiences as a team, creating our own community of practice in the process.

From the participants' engagement in this research, their individual stories as vignettes and their artmaking processes during the workshops were developed. The participants' stories and workshop outcomes then served as data to determine the success of the research. Due to the multiple procedural phases in this study, I analyzed "the multiple sources of data to determine evidence for each step or phase in the evolution of the case" (Creswell, 2013, p. 199). The data

results were analyzed by observations, interviews, and documents as mentioned in Chapter 3. The participants' stories, as part of the data, served mainly to recognize the diverse perspectives of individuals who moved from Lebanon to Montreal, Canada. With this data, I agreed with Hannigan (2012) that "narratives play an important role in human construction of Place and identity" (p. 137) and furthermore, extending the understanding of moving and adapting to a new environment. The stories were written based on the interview transcriptions and member checked after the completion of workshops. As for my own story, I noted my thoughts and responses to the questions in written form, as though I were being interviewed.

From the transcripts, I developed a thematic matrix, displaying themes and codes to organize my findings (Table 1). Following Gog's (2015) suggestion about the importance of having an analytical approach to practical findings (p. 39), I recognized how the themes and codes that originated in the participant stories later emerged during the artmaking workshops. This analytical process has been specifically defined for this research, as Gog (2015) states:

> No statically defined approach how to analyse case study can be seen as an
> advantage of case study research because it allows adapting and developing an
> analytical strategy for each case study which is most appropriate and highlights the
> purpose of the research study. (p. 39–40)

Since the participant stories were not finalized before the completion of all the workshops, the relationships between the individual stories and the workshops were genuine. The workshops were meant to allow us to reflect on our experiences and revive specific moments by visually representing them through artmaking practices, therefore, the themes and codes inevitably presented robust connections between the narratives and the workshops. This course of action formed an assemblage, generating open conversations in

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each workshop, allowing us to create artworks in relation to our stories. Table 1, shown

below, displays the themes and codes developed in this research.

Table 1

Themes and Codes (Derived from the Participant Stories)

Themes	Codes	Definitions
Life and Self	- Cultural background	Brief description of cultural background
	- Personal experiences	Comments related to personal experiences while growing up in Lebanon
Education and Experience	- Art practices	Learning arts in Lebanon
	- Self-directed learning	Experiences of being self-taught
	- Studies	Studies at school and university
	- Other experiences	Additional comments on lived experiences
Moving and Adapting	- Moving	Why and how it was decided to move to Montreal, Canada
	- Adaptation	What assisted the process of adapting and how it felt
	- Family connections	Connections with family that facilitated moving to Canada
	- Timeframe	The year of moving to the new environment and the reason of moving during this time
Art Education	- Artmaking	About personal artmaking practices
	- Current studies	Comments about studying Art Education

The participants' experiences of moving and adapting to a new environment, providing "informal, cooperative, and enriching group experiences" (Lowe, 2000, p. 364), permitted the themes and codes that initially developed from the participants' stories to re-emerge during the workshops. For instance, the "Art Education" theme, revealed within the stories, justifies individual participant experiences through artmaking practices, covering a "reflection-in-action model, [where] the symbols are best learned when placed in the context of usage, in this case the actual creative endeavour" (Tarr, 1996, p. 297). Furthermore, the connections formed by the participants' social engagements through artmaking mirror a "social practice as the art has a function and social value, while being based on social interaction" (Kalin, 2018, p. 369).

Workshop 1: Introductory Meeting

During the first workshop group conversation, the themes "Life and Self" and "Education and Experience" arose. We shared a bit of our "cultural background", "art practices", "studies", and "personal experiences" of growing up in Lebanon, which I considered to be the codes for this workshop. These codes, which were essential to uncovering the basis of our decision to move to another country, define our personal backgrounds and lived experiences before moving to Montreal, Canada. Sharing our experiences was essential to form connections and identify the differences between our stories. Most importantly, from this interaction, we were able to get to know one another on a deeper level, and as Hannigan (2012) mentions, an essential way for people to know their identity is by connecting their past, present, and future: these connections develop from memories, stories, and discussions (p. 137). From this workshop, it was evident that our participatory conversations were becoming an essential part of the research.

Workshop 2: ليه؟ (Why?)

       The second workshop predominantly represented the code "moving", which is the main reason we are currently in Canada, defining why and how we each decided to move. Each participant moved from Lebanon to Canada for diverse reasons, further associating the workshop with the code "personal experiences", where our lived experiences are important factors in the decision to move. Each participant had the opportunity to reflect on the reasons "Why" they decided to move and the causes that initiated that movement. Responding through performative movements, we followed Miles and Libersat's (2016) considerations of walking and mapping as a "symbolic language of navigation, thus creating opportunities for embodied awareness of distance, time, movement, and direction" (Miles & Libersat, 2016, p. 351). Consequently, each participant's story was represented by movements, relating to the act of walking, and the reinforcement of diverse navigations that lead a person to move to a different country, connects to the form of mapping.

Workshop 3: Meaningful Objects

       The third workshop was characterized by two codes, "moving" and "adaptation". Bringing objects that moved with us to support and assist our adaptation was the focus of this workshop, which revolved around the integration of "new materialism" as a concept. Using Barad's (2007) definition, "new materialism involves objects, materials, language, and social aspects of our lives not in a predefined sense, but as 'intra-actions'" (Barad, 2007, p. 139, as cited in Garber, 2019, p. 10). Accordingly, each participant visually and tangibly represented their objects' stories using clay while conversing about the stories behind these personal objects. This conversation led us to expand on our feelings towards these objects, and how much meaning they carry as objects that were meant to move with us and to guide towards adaptation. This notion of "intra-actions" brought the "inseparability of people, objects and their

interactions" (Garber, 2019, p. 11), recognizing the importance of objects in our lives.

Furthermore, the clay object resulting from the artmaking process added another meaningful

object to our adaptation.

Workshop 4: Daily Hassles

The fourth workshop defined the code "adaptation", through the daily hassles we

encountered while trying to adapt to a new environment, defining what assisted our adaptation

processes and how we felt throughout this process. The artmaking in this workshop was to

individually create a collage representing our hassles and how we tried to adapt while facing

them. According to Gaudet et al. (2005), daily hassles are obstacles encountered by people who

move to another country: referring to them as "acculturative daily hassles" (ADH), the authors

state that "the experience of ADH acts as a door-keeper to adjustment" (Gaudet et al., 2005, p.

166). Furthermore, necessitating to find ways to adapt from the hassles encountered, as we

decipher and interpret the new surrounding.

Workshop 5: Collaborative Artwork

The fifth and final workshop included all the presented and defined themes and codes

(Table 1) simultaneously, as participant stories and workshop experiences were amalgamated

into one collaborative artwork, thus having the participants "go beyond simply compiling their

contributions" (Falcione et al., 2019, p. 1). We individually contributed to the art piece while

contemplating our individual experiences and making connections with one another.

Analyzing the Participatory Action Research Approach

Having the participants involved in the decision-making about workshop prompts (PAR

approach) invited them to ponder specific moments throughout their encountered incidents that

assisted their moving and adapting. As the PAR approach maintains that "the participation claim

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in research needs to be investigated in different spheres such as 'building relationships and mutual understanding', and 'sharing control over research process'" (Sjöberg, 2018, as cited in Kunt, 2020, p. 88), the workshop prompts were collaboratively suggested ideas, allowing every participant to relate to the various concepts.

To further analyze the participants' perspectives on using the PAR approach, here are Lucine and Lara's responses to the process:

> I've worked with others collaboratively, but never as a participant that is involved in the decision-making. I felt it helped me share my experiences more openly. Usually when someone does a research, the participants would be like followers. However, this time I felt that the responsibilities were equal. We had the power to work as a team in your research and this is something that I have never experienced. It felt great that we were all discussing and taking decisions of what we wanted to do. In a way it helped me see my experiences in the eyes of others. It connected us as a group, and I loved this process. (Lucine, 2020, interview 2 transcript)

> For the decision-making of the workshops, it was really nice that we were able to interact and decide together on what we're going to be doing. It wasn't like an assignment for us, instead we were all thinking together, and we were on the same page. (Lara, 2020, interview 2 transcript)

The collaboratively decided on prompts were then coupled with an art medium that we felt would blend easily. There were three prompts, which were used during workshops two, three, and four. The first prompt, ' لِيمَ؟(Why?)', was based on the first phase of our journey and why we decided to move, so performing body movements was the art form agreed upon as an art

practice for this workshop. The second prompt, 'Meaningful Objects', was based on physical items that moved with us, assisting in our transition and adaptation to a new environment. The use of clay as an art medium was agreed on, in order to create something visible and tangible. The third prompt, 'Daily Hassles', was based on the diverse physical and cultural disturbances that one encounters when moving to a new environment. Collage was used as an art medium to visually superimpose our daily hassles.

The artworks created during the workshops were not intended to have a perfect outcome, but instead, were intended as a process of expressing and reflecting thoughts and ideas through art. Engaging through artmaking practices allowed us to appreciate each other's artworks and to develop deeper conversations and connections, accomplishing an "action-reflection cycle" that was defined by McNiff (2002) as "consisting of four steps of 'planning, acting, observing and reflecting'" (McNiff, 2002, as cited in Kunt, 2020, p. 89). This process further reassured me that the artworks would successfully visually represent the prompts, as we constantly discussed and shared our thoughts, allowing the participants to communicate "their situation, experiences, concerns, challenges or obstacles in daily life" (Kunt, 2020, p. 90). Having an art-based approach also served to produce art as data representation.

Here are Lucine and Lara's thoughts on how the art-based workshop prompts assisted them:

> The prompts helped me reflect on my experiences. It made me feel that adaptation
> alone is not just in your mind, it's much more. It's about the body, the reactions, and
> facing the outside world. For me the movement workshop (Prompt 1: 'ليش(Why?)')
> was very strong, not because I'm coming from a background in theater, but because
> it helped me reflect on the heavy feelings of moving here. The clay workshop

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(Prompt 2: 'Meaningful Objects') made me feel more grounded, as we spoke about the next step of moving and starting to adapt. Using our hands allowed emotional feelings to become quieter and calmer, which made me reflect on how we started to adapt to our new environment. The collage workshop (Prompt 3: 'Daily Hassles') also continued the reflections on our adaptation, putting all the pieces and experiences together as if you are building yourself. However, if it wasn't for the coronavirus COVID-19 lockdown, it would have been nice if we had the chance to participate in the collage prompt together in person. (Lucine, 2020, interview 2 transcript)

Additionally, Lara stated how the prompts helped her as an individual who recently moved to Montreal:

The prompts really helped me draw on my experiences of moving and adapting from Lebanon to Canada. I was able to reflect on what I had before and what I have now. I'm still getting used to living here, but I'm happy where I am now. For example, during the objects workshop (Prompt 2: 'Meaning Objects'), I was wearing my necklace, which I hadn't thought of as an object that moved with me, so it really emphasized on the fact that I brought this object and how important it is to me. I've also always liked using art as a medium to translate what I'm thinking of or what I'm doing. Thus, these workshops really helped me focus on the points that I had in my mind about my experiences of moving here and adapting. (Lara, 2020, interview 2 transcript)

All the participants were fully engaged in the workshops as well as the ongoing conversations, which founded strong bonds between us. These discussions were essential; as

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Hanley (2019) says, "in a conversation a speaker uses body language, facial expressions and hand gestures in addition to words, vocal variation and so on. These semiotic apparatus might reinforce the speaker's verbal message" (p. 420). The conversations, which were mainly in the Lebanese Arabic dialect, allowed us to comfortably express our viewpoints and thoughts. Arabic being our language of origin was inevitable, as El-Hage (2016) stated in his research on Lebanese immigrants:

> Saisir la parole dans la langue d'origine a été pour nous incontournable et très heuristique, nous donnant accès à un univers de pratiques et de sens (comprenant une attention particulière aux expressions, métaphores et proverbes) à la fois très singulier et socialement situé. (p. 31)

> Grasping speech in the original language was for us essential and very heuristic, giving us access to a universe of practices and meanings (including a particular attention to expressions, metaphors and proverbs) both very singular and socially located. (El-Hage, 2016, p. 31, online translation)

Discussions involved not only conversation about the prompts but also covered other topics, which permitted us to create our small community, developing conviviality and trust among the group. We were all aware of the tough experiences Lebanese people go through, as well as the wonderful moments. We would quickly understand and relate to an event, agreeing with one another even if we had not experienced that moment. The main differences between us were the reasons we moved, the period in which we moved, and the path we undertook in order to adapt.

Reinforcing my research observations, here are Lara and Lucine's thoughts on participating in the workshops with other Lebanese individuals:

> It felt more than a community, it's like we were a small family. It was really nice to know and share the different point of views and common points between us. We have different experiences, like the age and year we moved here, so it was nice to listen to other stories of adaptation. In some ways, it made it easier for me to adapt, because I know I'm not alone as others have also experienced this transition. Also, speaking the same language while sharing our experiences was very natural and brought us closer to one another. Since we don't speak Arabic all the time here in Montreal, it was mind blowing for me to be able to talk Arabic as part of this educational research. (Lara, 2020, interview 2 transcript)

Lucine pointed out the intuitive connections that naturally developed among the group:

> Since we are all coming from Lebanon, we had lots of similarities. Even when I hadn't mentioned something yet, I felt that Lara for example would continue and mention it. Even if we hadn't experienced the exact thing, it could still be similar in a way, especially because we are coming from the same country. It was easy to get to know each other, because we know from where we come and can relate to one another. (Lucine, 2020, interview 2 transcript)

Conceptualizing the Data Interpretation

Data interpretation was comprised of obtaining further information beyond the codes and themes to provide a greater explication of the data (Creswell, 2013, p. 187). Based on the results

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of the research analysis, the research questions were answered. My questions were: How do Lebanese students who move to Montreal adapt to their new environment? Does a community of practice develop through weekly workshops? Do individual stories as vignettes offer pedagogic insights on moving and adapting from Lebanon to Montreal? How does a collaborative artwork inform diverse individual reflections and yet offer communitive reflection?

This research had three qualitative methodological approaches, combining case study, narrative inquiry, and participatory action research (PAR) to provide an effectual outcome, adding an art-based approach not as a methodology but instead as a technique for data representation. The case study approach allowed me to search for several moments from the data, permitting pertinent meanings to emerge (Creswell, 2013, p. 199). As for the PAR method, it was the incentive that permitted growth within our created community, which subsequently became self-sufficient, having the PAR component disappear (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p. 336). Merging these two methods together to develop the participants' stories and workshops established a strong understanding of how we three Lebanese women in art education experienced moving and adapting to our new environment. Furthermore, the processes of the workshops created a self-organized community bond among the participants, generating a community-based learning atmosphere. Community-based learning integrates learners with the engagement of a community, addressing community needs and eventually developing positive social changes, as advocated by Herron and Mendiwelso-Bendek (2017), who state that

Community-based learning emphasises the importance of the learners' own daily-life experiences, the identification of opportunities to learn from these about local decision-making processes and to engage with and shape the views of agencies and other actors that impact on our lives. (p. 829)

The collaborative artwork engaged with this understanding by visualizing the three participants' reflections on their lived experiences represented by overlaid layers. These layers provided importance to individual and communitive reflections, because participants worked concurrently on the same surface. The collaborative outcome revealed a shared process of social adaptation.

As a result, the research objectives have been achieved, as (a) Lebanese students' perspectives of moving and adapting were explored, (b) a collaborative artwork was created based on participants' diverse experiences and on workshops we participated in, and most importantly, (c) a community of practice was developed, with wider implications for community art education.

Chapter 6:

Limitations and Educational Significance

Limitations of the Study

Within the results of the research, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study. This research did not focus on 'immigrant' experiences, but instead on individuals who chose to move to Montreal. However, it relates to the same ideas of immigrating to another country. Therefore, with available research based on Lebanese individuals' reasons for immigrating and statistics of why it is easier for them to immigrate to Canada, there is a lack in the literature on their adaptation processes. Based on this limitation, many non-immigrants such as international students, expats, and other people coming from Lebanon who decided to move to another country for diverse reasons, have also had to experience moving and adapting. This research explored the diverse situations of people moving from Lebanon to Montreal, Canada.

On the other hand, having three participants take part in this study displayed in-depth personal experiences but limited the general outcome of Lebanese individuals' transition and adaptation processes. As stated by Creswell (2013) that "having enough information to present an in-depth picture of the case limits the value of some case studies" (p. 102), due to the fact of the limited number of participants. However, these limitations serve as an opportunity for further research on this topic. Ideas that emerged from this research are: (1) to explore a larger group of participants; (2) participants that moved from different countries to the same one, (3) using art, as a process of adaptation, from the moment people arrive to their new environment.

Other limitations were also faced during the participation of the workshops. Having participants studying in the same program, led them to constantly discuss their course of

education during the workshops. This assisted them to better connect as colleagues but took away some valuable time from connecting as Lebanese individuals who were sharing their personal experiences. Further interruptions due to off-topic discussions would also occur during shared conversations and experiences related to the research. Additionally, another limitation that related to the participants was finding a time where everyone was available to meet. During our first meeting, all participants determined a fixed weekly schedule for the workshops; however, every coming week changes had to be made due to participants' preferences, causing the workshop timeframe to extend due to missed weeks. This limitation is due to the small number of participants in the research, as it was essential to have the three participants present at the same time to achieve the purpose of the research. However, having a small number of participants was a benefit to the connectedness and decision making with one another.

Further limitations were encountered by technical difficulties. During the second workshop, the movements performed were captured by a video camera, as I wanted to capture more than still images. The different videos recorded were meant to create a short clip in order to visualize the movements, however, the complete videos taken were not screening on a computer without interruptions of stopped motions. Having only tested short clips on the camera itself, I assumed it would display the same way when transferred to a computer. This taught me, as a researcher, to always test equipment until the final required outcome without assuming results. In this case, the video camera was borrowed from the university, and as I have used their equipment before and felt comfortable and familiar working with it, it was essential to pre-check the full functionality of the process.

The most notable limitation that occurred unexpectedly was due to the worldwide outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19. This took place right after the third workshop,

disrupting the following two workshops, which had to be completed digitally and online. Having them online was a challenge as it disengaged all conversations that occurred and developed, contrary to the way they would have if we met in person. In-person workshops inspired us, participants, as we shared our stories while engaging in the artmaking process. Communicating through voice calls and messages made it impossible to identify an individual's facial expressions or body language. In addition, when we participated in artmaking practices together, we were inspired by each other as we managed to observe and distinguish each other's creative approaches. Moreover, due to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, I no longer had access to written documentation from the libraries, limiting theoretical readings and responses within my study in ways I had not planned to undertake.

The limitations mentioned do not mean that the study is not dependable or that it cannot be validated. To ensure the accuracy of the research study, I followed Creswell's (2013) techniques for validity assessment which are: 1) *prolonged engagement and persistent observation* in the field, developed from the trust and connections with participants through the collaborative workshops; 2) *triangulation,* using multiple sources, approaches and theories to validate evidence, such as finding evidence that clarify a perspective or theme; 3) *Clarifying researcher bias* from the beginning of the study, explaining the researcher's experiences, biases and approaches that influenced the analysis; 4) *Member checking,* as the researcher enquired the participants for their accuracy and credibility of the findings, interpretations and conclusions; 5) *Rich, thick description* which "allows the readers to make decisions regarding transferability" (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988, as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 252) allowing them to transfer data to other settings "because of shared characteristics" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 32, as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 252). Additionally, PAR states that

knowledge must be established and conducted in collaboration with people as the 'knowers' of local proficient knowledge (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007) in which they combine together to "share experiences through a dynamic process of action, reflection and collective investigation" (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2001, p. 74). Using the PAR method was beneficial as it brought intimate research moments within the shared narratives, artmaking workshops, and conversations.

Educational Significance

The educational significance of my study is specific to a single-case study of Lebanese individuals who moved to Montreal and enrolled in art education graduate studies. From their experiences, I inquire about bridging today's multicultural world, beginning with an exploration of adaptation to a new country. This study is an intimate, in-depth inquiry that was designed to encourage individual participants to observe and learn about moving and adapting to the new environment, and in turn inform the public about the progression of a process on transition and adaptation experiences. This research further presents the understanding of one's belonging to a community of practice and an informal academic learning environment, as expressed by Herron & Mendiwelso-Bendek (2017) that "informal learning is the main vehicle used within these projects to articulate and enhance the community groups' expressions of issues of most importance and concern to them" (p. 829). This process of informal learning was expressed across the participants' collaboratively chosen artmaking prompts during the workshops, based on their explorations of moving and adapting to a new environment. Throughout the research, participants were encouraged to engage in this process of decision making as "such opportunities include learning about local decision-making processes by taking an active part in them, or developing narratives about daily-life experiences and using these to build the capacity for new actions within communities" (Herron & Mendiwelso-Bendek, 2017, p. 827). Therefore, this

research promotes participants' contribution in sharing their lived experiences to develop new approaches for building a community sense through artmaking practices.

Employing art as a tool for investigating one's experiences of moving and adapting to a new environment conveys an artistic educational opportunity in promoting the visual aspect of research and story representations. The workshops, based on art-based prompts, considers pedagogical principles of generating knowledge and building adaptations through visual representations. On the other hand, the creation of a collaborative artwork allowed the combination of both occurrences of moving and adapting within similar geographies, to emerge from multiple perspectives explored during the artmaking workshops. Garber (2019) indicates that as art educators, "we have been circling around the intra-actions between learners and materials and between learners and facets of the world around them" (p.13), which is why the vignettes from the participants' individual experiences and the artmaking workshops further impacted the connection of the participants' involvements to the wider field of art education. Additionally, the research intends to bring an "understanding of cultural heritage and enhance its role in education" (Potocnik, 2017, p. 286). I believe that readers will react to the stories and artworks, while those who faced similar occurrences will relate to the personal lived experiences, memories, thoughts, and expressions towards the subject of moving and adapting to a new environment.

This research supports the findings of Hannigan (2012) in turning stories into community art as well as the value and contribution of community arts in our everyday lives, as Hannigan (2012) mentions that it "represents how art can be a reflection of society, a response to society and therefore part of constructing Place" (p.147). This further establishes a stronger sense of how art acts as a tool that encourages the combination of visual representations within subjects of

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knowledge or concern. As the research promotes the absolute association of the participants'

stories with the artworks derived from collaborative learning practices and conversations, it is

further backed by Hannigan's (2012) findings, which state that, "the narratives of the

participants' notions of Place and identity were derived through the project, from memories,

from imaginative thinking, factual information and shared dialogue" (p.136). Doing so builds

stronger connections that are established between the individuals, creating a sense of community.

The significance of this approach further demonstrates parallels with Falcione et al. (2019)

which states that "the group component of collaborative learning consists of communication and

the sharing of information within the partnership, in addition to group cohesion and

commitment" (p. 2). Communication during this research was a significant factor as we spoke in

multiple languages. This brought a different depth to the understanding of culture, as most

Lebanese individuals are trilingual, speaking Arabic, English, and French; therefore, I believed

that representing this part of the culture in my research was essential. Consequently, the findings

were kept in their original language followed by English translations. This approach will allow

readers to immerse deeper into the Lebanese culture.

This research has contributed, through the engagement in community and collaborative

art practices, in the understanding of what Lebanese individuals face whilst moving and adapting

to Montreal, conveying "breadth and depth of sensory experiences that contribute to life…

assisting students in comprehending and engaging the cultural forms and practices encountered

on a daily basis" (Bolin and Blandy, 2003, p. 247).

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Appendix A

Interview 1 Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself, your background and where you come from.

2. What was it like growing up in Lebanon?

3. How was your educational experience, especially in the arts field?

4. Why did you move to Canada?

5. Did you move alone or with others?

6. How did you feel when you first arrived?

7. Do you consider that you have adapted to your new environment?

8. What allowed you to adapt and how?

9. What are you doing to assist in your adaptation?

10. How would you describe living here in comparison to Lebanon?

11. Tell me a bit about your artmaking practice.

12. Why did you choose to study Art Education?

13. What is Art Education for you? (Give your own definition)

14. Why did you want to become an artist and an educator?

15. What do you understand by "Community Art Education"?

16. How is the Art Education program at Concordia beneficial for your career? Explain.

17. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix B

Interview 2 Questions

1. Did the pedagogic prompts, of the workshops, help you to reflect on your experiences of moving from one country to another?

2. How did you feel to use art to express your experiences of moving and adapting?

3. Did the participatory action of generating prompts for the workshops help your understanding of moving and adapting?

4. How did you feel to participate in a workshop with other individuals that also moved to Canada from Lebanon?

5. Did you find any similarities and/or differences between yourself and the other participants?

6. Do you consider yourself still adapting or have you fully adapted?

7. Being in the Art Education program at Concordia, did it help your adaptation?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C

Ethics Certificate

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Rana Jreidini
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts \ Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Creating a Community of Practice: Adaptations from Lebanese Students to Quebec through Art-Based Collaborative Experiences
Certification Number:	30012479

Valid From: January 29, 2020   To: January 28, 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.

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

Note: Title of project has been modified during the research process.