GRAVITAS IN EXPERIENCE: CHILDREN'S ARTMAKING PRACTICE IN SCHOOL

By

Russell Zann Vandiver

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Under the direction of Dr. Tracie E. Costantino

ABSTRACT

This paper is about children's experience of artmaking in schools, and ways that this is a becoming space where ideas and images emerge in new and unexpected ways. The relationship between child and artwork will be analyzed many ways, since it is in this middle ground that art is believed to occur. A rhizomatic framework is used to cover many angles from ontology and postmodern theory to explore this dynamic, infinite space, including metaphysics, aesthetics, hermeneutics, phenomenology, rhizoanalysis and deconstruction. The idea is to not reduce but to complicate in a constructive process, similar to how imagination is used in art. With this attitude and perspective, this research is an assemblage consisting of a strange dimension of ideas including, conversation, aesthetic experience, intentionality, Truth, play, body knowing, encounter, event, rhizome, lines of flight, nomad, assemblages of desire, self/other, as well as our notions of encompassing, transitional, intimate, mute experience, agreement, gravitas, and charisma all looked at as multiplicities. This qualitative research was conducted in a public, urban elementary art classroom during the 2012-2013 school year. For this study the young students were taught lessons on imagination and nonrepresentational art and created sculpture, paintings and drawings using non-traditional tools or media in unorthodox ways, not beginning with preconceived ideas or knowing where one is going or where one is going to end up. The children, ages 5 to 11, were encouraged to look at artmaking not at reaching representational beauty by any means necessary, but to view artmaking as a journey and an open, joyful process where new possibilities happen and imagery falls apart and new ones appear, where the end

product is not as important as what one learns on the way. Each inquiry, a question of questions, looks at ways artmaking is a conversation and how encounters of self and other are constituted in language. There's no understanding where there is no language, yet Gadamer says that we can never fully say what we intended (1960/2004, p. 548). I will argue that, through artmaking, art says more that we could ever say and can lead to a beyond where anything can happen. Experience, an assemblage of quiet, non-linguistic, aesthetic moments causes many ruptures in pedagogy and how children are believed to learn best. Yet, education continues to privilege experience, like they are sensing something they do not yet know. This text assumes that pedagogy has a lot to learn from the visual arts; but this is not a move towards a new discourse; art always has a way of speaking for itself.

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INTRODUCTION

Today in many art classrooms sit children who seem distant, preoccupied, and underwhelmed, as evidenced in their unwillingness to participate in class discussions, group work, and artmaking, to engage with art materials, their art teacher, and peers. It is most apparent in art classrooms acting as communities, where the majority of the students, along with the art teacher, are excited to get art materials out and make stuff and celebrate what they made together. Yet, those Other children, those immune, those who rarely have success artistically and have ceased to try, those who find the language of art foreign and alien, and those children who do not like school are still valued members of the art classroom community. We are not talking about marginalized kids or rebellious types necessarily -at least they demonstrate intensity at times, but those students who have little to no desire to explore and to learn about art. This paper is about these sorts of children who have not yet discovered the value of being educated in the arts, or the pleasure of mixing colors, building a sculpture, throwing a pot, or completing a great painting. As an art teacher, these 'lost' children trouble my practice, and I want all my students to have positive and productive experiences during our allotted time together. These children are experiencing while in my class, but there is no evidence that it is in accord with the present inquiries, or aesthetic in nature.

Gravitas has something to do with this, I will argue. It is presented as something mysterious and powerful, and our experiences are warped and changed by its influence. Experience as I understand it, is shaped by Gravitas which holds experiences together, and stops them, and eventually houses them (indirectly). Human beings have brief, minute, flashes of freedom from this oppressive and learned force, and these liberating pauses are manifested in

aesthetic experiences, when we can experience our experience. In our experiences, I will claim, we return to our Self. To 'return' means one has once left and has now come back. In other words, an encounter with a work of art is an encounter with our selves, in that the beautiful tears us away from the world and we gravitate back home. Gravitas -that which pulls us from beyond the border, greets us the moment we return to our selves in experience. This is good on one hand, since not returning to our Self in experience means we have entered into Schizophrenia, or into a coma, deep dream, or died, perhaps. Yet, our Self is mysterious and powerful too and when combined with Gravitas they make a toxic relationship. The word I will be using is Charisma; typically as we grow older we begin to adore those encounters with our Self more and more. We fall in love with ourselves and we begin to desire our Self encounters, and find comfort in them.

However, children are not there yet. They are still discovering the world; they are still learning language. How can a child fully understand anything with their limited language and experiences? (Are adults capable of full understanding?) Children do not know who they are. From observation, it seems a child is someone who learns, plays, makes mistakes, is curious, and yet sometimes one who is codependent, mischievous, restless, insatiable, messy, noisy, nervous, insecure, fearful, but usually loyal and trusting. Children often desire stability, entertainment, attention, companionship, but detest strict rules, judgment, and chores –children can be a living paradox! A child's being is play -they can still imagine, and often embrace this ability to elude Gravitas. For this research, children's artmaking was looked with all this in mind. What's going on when a child paints a picture? What is that trigger, that compromise, doing or not doing there? And, how are artmaking and art materials rupturing that? To understand the complexities of children's artmaking practice in school, we must first study aesthetic experience

closer. Next, we will compare the aesthetic experience to hermeneutic conversation and the rhizome to learn more about how young artists navigate their work.

The playful aesthetic experience

Do children experience art making differently than adults? Why do some children respond to the art classroom environments differently than other children? Art educators create art spaces to elicit reactions in students so aesthetic experiences separate from normalizing school experience. This is necessary since art asks of its students differently than other disciplines. Perhaps art class can be experienced on a number of different levels, or planes, not just degrees, but by qualities. Are the planes of experience less distinct by a roaming imagination and lower or displaced self (under the constant loom of authority, i.e., strict parents, time tables, educational routines, etc.) or a greater or lesser will? How does learning art educational content restrict or change experience and contribute to representational thought? A common problem in art educational practice is keeping children involved in their work in order for a dialogue and transfer to take place. All art educators will eventually have students in their classroom who don't seem to connect with their work, and this phenomenon can take many shapes and have different causes. At times, it can seem that a whole class is distracted, and why might they be? Is art just not their 'thing'? Is it nearly summer? Is the art teacher dull and boring? Still, what does this have to do with a living creature reacting to its environment, as Dewey states as the criteria for the aesthetic experience (1934/2005, p. 45)? Chris Schulte, a Deleuzoguattarian scholar and art educator, says that children will "find their own entry points" to the material the art teacher presents (lecture, Sept. 2012). This is reassuring, yet there still remains a population in many public schools that resist the art environment, curriculum, and experience that other

students cherish. If what John Dewey, American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer, is saying is true, that experience is how we react to our environment, and that art is the freest and most universal form of communication (1934/2005, pp. 45, 282), then how can art education change its discourse and environment to ignite integrated experiences in children? We could start by not emphasizing content knowledge, rules, and closed systems of knowing with our youngest students and let them form their own understandings from multiple exposures to a wide variety of artmaking experiences. This requires the art teacher to be creative in designing a curriculum and space to create these visual, emotional, and pedagogical happenings. Also, teachers need to understand how their art room, posters, tables, and work spaces, for example, are at work teaching. Young children are often heralded for their confidence and cunning in art making, especially in lower elementary grades. When that confidence fades, did the language of art they learned become unconstituted in their daily life, or now slang or profane? If so, art educators could help children create a new art vocabulary, one that is more interchangeable and grows in relation with their shifting everyday experience. Could it be a matter of attunement (Latta, 2001a) and how art and aesthetic qualities are experienced in different styles and kinds, degrees and intensities? Judith Davidson (2004), art educator and scholar, is not even convinced aesthetic experience takes place in many elementary art classrooms since many of the experiences are representational or blatantly imitational. Many factors are at play constructing and destructing the potential of a quality art program, many that are beyond the art teacher's control: lack of time, poor materials, regulated routine, noise, hunger, poverty, and a general miserableness in certain children. Many more are present and they compound to construct whole, moody communities of children and teachers and programs.

When speaking of her research Davidson says, the "study of arts in elementary school reveals that school art seeks to locate itself someplace between the poles of expressive freedom

and taut technical mastery. Unable to provide immersion in 'real' art experiences, it opts for exposure to information about the arts and short experiences with art materials. The result is a potpourri of art experiences that could be called *appreciation*" (2004, p. 208).

Perhaps we could look at different sorts of experience, not in a hierarchical or metaphysical way, but possible kinds; not to design a formula or assign numbers, but to deconstruct and then reconstruct experience. It is my sense, and from its overused status in education journals and documents, the word *experience* has lost much of its original meaning, in that it has been over-assembled. One plane of experience, for example, could be the broad experience of taking an evening art course, and the variety of activities that harmonize loosely together to form a learning event. This kind of experience endures over weeks and months, but is perhaps homogenous due to the student looking forward to the following week, so that the experience never fades completely away but stays in their higher tiers of consciousness. How unique in proportion to one's life an experience is, the longer that experience seems to linger. For example, an experience of belonging to a guild that meets once a month could comprise such a large, encompassing experience. This kind of experience achieves solidarity through both reflection and looking forward, and could be described as a personal epoch, era, time, etc. A second plane could be the transitional experience of shifting from one distinct experience to another, such as switching classes, and leaving a science class -walking to a locker -down the back hall -entering the art room, and that sense that one has left one world for another. Thus, the anticipation of a better experience can be an experience in itself.

Another plane could be the momentary "wow" experience of seeing something beautiful appear or something interesting move across our field of vision. This is a shorter, and more intimate experience when we are jarred out of a larger experience and enter an intimate space of vision with an "acute sensitivity to the nuances of movement" (Latta, 2001a, p. 45). Another

plane, for example, could be the conversational experience of doing, like when an artist gets 'lost' in their work during creation. Here, the creator transitions more slowly into this new experience, yet the dialogue gains more momentum the longer the problem continues and more materials are used and the more efforts are made. This might be mistaken as focus, except the artist is not forcing themselves into the relationship, any more than simply picking up a paintbrush, as much as they are mutually connected with a material, person, and form. Dewey makes special note of this plane of experience, the "artist has his problems and thinks as he works. But his thought is more immediately embodied in the object...The artist does his thinking in the very qualitative media he works in, and the terms lie so close to the object that he is producing that they merge directly into it" (1934/2005, pp. 14-15).

This is a pedagogical gesture at looking at some forms, dimensions, and planes of experience. I will argue that experiences are rhizomatic, in that they exist only in relation (as Dewey suggested), but that they are linked by a multitude of the micro experiences of *mute experience* and *agreement*. Agreement, in keeping with experience as being in relation, is more at acknowledgement, and acceptance, and a willingness to incorporate whichever thatness, into one's ideology, conversation, and artwork. Agreement is not always an experience, since it involves recognition and perception and can end (Dewey, 1934/2005, p.54). Yet, usually experiences of agreement are actualized back into the macro experience and leads to the next mute experience. The larger type of experiences covered above is a sampling of *encompassing experience*, *transitional experience*, *intimate experience*, and *conversational experience* (the focus of this research). Dewey speaks of another called "direct experience" that "comes from nature and man interacting with each other. In this interaction, human energy gathers, is released, dammed up, frustrated and victorious. There are rhythmic beats of want and fulfillment, pulses of doing, and being withheld from doing" (1934/2005, p. 15). Later, I will

discuss the notion of *echo experience* related to image, words, and language. And many other planes exist; I would argue it is infinite as the same thing is experienced different ways by everybody –even the same individual experiences the same object different ways each time since we are not the same people from one day to the next. The experience of marriage, doing the dishes, going fishing, having a yard sale, buying pants, counting change in a hurry, installing a printer, mixing hot cocoa mix, reorganizing a bedroom, having a crush on a teacher, cashing a check from your dad, killing ants, playing with Legos, pulling hair out of a drain, eating a candy bar, reading *Tropic of Cancer* for the seventh time, being hand cuffed, driving a nail, making mashed potatoes, speeding through a yellow light, picking out cereal, trying on clothes in an unsupervised changing room, sitting through a bad movie, hanging curtains, hanging up on a telemarketer, re-remembering how to tie a tie, finding a cool rock, losing your keys, consoling your grandma, coming up with a new password, sneezing, trying to get superglue off your fingers, finding a gray hair, filling a tank of gas, tasting Play Dough with the tip of your tongue, researching about deadly spiders, making a baby smile for a picture, ordering pizza, going to Lowes, opening a door, dropping a hint -all these of course being style differences, but they come in different strengths. Ultimately, could we not construct all these mini-experiences and call it the experience of one year of life on Earth, or the Earth experiencing the human race?

John Dewey mentions briefly in *Art as Experience*, in a way that only Dewey could say, the conditions where aesthetic experience is not possible, in a "world of mere flux, change would not be cumulative; it would not move toward a close. Stability and rest would have no being. Equally is it true, however, that a world that is finished, ended, would have no traits of suspense and crisis, and would offer no opportunity for resolution. Where everything is already complete, there is no fulfillment" (Dewey, 1934/2005, pp. 15-16).

Until now, it might seem that everything is an experience. Yet, the two "worlds" that Dewey mentioned are possible on Earth, and I will argue, have elements that plague the art classroom on a daily basis. Are we ever free from experience? What seemed like a lovely ideal of having experiences, now, somehow feels captivating and inescapable. Then are we free if we cease to be in relation and cease to respond? Jacques Derrida's (1974) *deconstruction* might ask, "When are responses not related to experiences?" "When are we not in experiential relations with our environment?" "Why has Experience become so privileged in education literature?" "What is the discourse of Experience?" We will now take a quick glimpse at how some of the notions, thus far mentioned, such as conversation, play, non-linguistic, body/mind, and experience are being used in education research.

Elizabeth Ellsworth (2004), artist and scholar, in her book *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, and Pedagogy* studies the effects that spaces have on learners. She uses her expertise in architecture to understand how designers construct places and how children use them as spaces.

She describes being in beautiful interiors that construct aesthetic experiences where, "my self and what I know are simultaneously in the making, my body/brain/mind is participating in an event that exists outside the realm of language. As a nonlinguistic event, the experience of knowledge and self as simultaneously in the making can even be said to preexist cognition" (p. 2).

This relates to our earlier discussion on conversation, and how her self and what she knows are in relation, except she is describing a nonlinguistic event. This could seem to rupture our notion on hermeneutical conversation and how that relates to artmaking, instead conversation is replaced by event, which is more performance than dialogue. We could find our line of flight

here with the transition from words and dialogue (conversation) to body and performance (event) and how this can help us understand the experience part of children's artmaking practice.

The body/mind dualism is something to be explored in art education, since it is not known, fully what the body knows and how it is capable of helping us learn. Ellsworth points out that some educators are paying more attention to the possibilities of the body, students are no longer "simply brains on tripods" (2004, p. 23), but she critiques education's current "focus on the relationship between the body's development and the brain's functioning" (p. 23). The body is looked at as something that interferes with cognitive function, and students become subjects for a psychiatrist's intervention who want to "slow some bodies down through medication or pedagogical strategies aimed at increasing attention spans" (p. 23) in an effort to make students more docile. Yet, other professionals in schools have targeted the body, those who are "concerned with the relationship between nutrition, student achievement, and free lunches. Others are concerned with the pedagogical needs and interests of students with differing physical and mental abilities" (p. 23). She feels bodies are looked upon as additions, in a separation of body and mind, where we are our minds, first and foremost.

Our bodies experience in nonlinguistic terms, not things typically calculable or very useful in many educators' minds. In this way, "body knowing" can change the way we look at learning, movement in the classroom, organization of spaces in the building, the exterior places of the property, and how some children learn (consider for example, the over-diagnosis of ADHD) and experience. One could imagine how other disciplines could benefit in researching the body's potential; 'the arts' are becoming increasingly marginalized in the age of standardization, but are ahead of the game as Ellsworth points out. As Ellsworth (2004) explains, "[f]ew of these domains of knowledge encourage investigation into 'experience' understood as the non- or prelinguistic ground on which meaning, images, knowledge – and selves -are formed" (p. 2).

Educators could begin this investigating, as Ellsworth's book urges us by designing classrooms so they become another teacher in the room! Some questions for a teacher to consider might include, "What is our classroom teaching our students?" "How does the structure and design of my classroom, such as the tables and chairs encourage and inhibit thought?" "How is my classroom a social space and how is the furniture arranged to invite and discourage socializing amongst my students?" "What does the placement of my desk within the space of the room say about where we fit in our curriculum?" "Where, in relation to the students, are the books (if there are any) and how are they arranged and accessible to be read?" "Is there a space for a student to have some alone time?" "What are the posters and visuals in my classroom teaching my students about the subject matter, our curriculum and aesthetics?" "How are both natural and artificial light placed and used in my room?" And very important to Ellsworth, would be a question such as, "how is my room organized to allow for bodily movement?" Are there places to sit comfortable on the floor, without being in the way of foot traffic?" These are only some of the objects in a typical classroom and many more exist that can aid and hinder thought, such as the placement and visibility of a clock, how big or small letters are written and in what style on the board, and the overall coloring of the room and how crowded or blank the walls are. Thus, children learn a lot from the design of one's classroom, resources, equipment, and furniture by the evidence in student movement, socializing, and perhaps, spirit, attitude, and willingness to take risks in their work.

The experiences of pedagogical places and spaces can have a profound effect on how children think, learn, perform, and make art. With increasing attention being taken away from content knowledge of art, and more being placed on Visual Culture, for example, it is opening a new space for research into how children experience and interpret their environments, since experience can only take you so far. Similar to how Latta is using her concept of "aesthetic

play," to unite the conversation and aesthetic experience into an encounter, Tracie Costantino, scholar and art educator, also works with Gadamer's hermeneutics and Dewey's aesthetic experience to develop her notion of *nonlinguistic thinking* (2007, p. 1). Costantino sets out in her article *Articulating Aesthetic Understanding through Art Making* to connect the experiences of the art classroom, art making, and art museum to language and understanding, but opposed to only articulating experience. Instead, Costantino discusses what she calls nonlinguistic thinking to the "art making and art experiencing equation, along with qualitative reasoning, visual thinking, and imaginative cognition (2007, p. 1). She contrasts her notions, that have unfolded from many years of working in art education and in art classrooms, with Gadamer's views on aesthetic experience, "defined hermeneutically as interpreting or constructing meaning of a work of art" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, Costantino, 2007) and Terry Barrett's idea that "to interpret a work of art is to understand it in language" (Barrett, 2003, p. 198). Further, Costantino explains she chose Gadamer and Dewey since both think of the aesthetic experience as a constructed event, and 'meaning-making' occurs in between self and other, child and artwork and child and media. Dewey contributes that the aesthetic experience is constantly changing and moving; in fact the experience depends on it (1934/2005, pp. 4-5). How a child paints, for example, or molds a piece of soft clay in the soft gaze of their attention, the dexterity of their fingers and the intuition of their movements, and the flow of their imagination compliment Dewey's notion of the *aesthetic experience*.

Talking to strangers

When a painter approaches a large white, gessoed canvas, with readied paintbrush in hand a conversation often commences. However, in this conversation the artist and painting surface are rarely equals, and this varies from different artists and surfaces. For some this is more like a confrontation than meeting a new friend and what ensues involves violence, usually incited by the taunts of the pure, unscathed canvas, or by the doubts, fear, and desires of the painter. Yet, typically a dialogue is exchanged during the painting process with the surface, besides those artists who make and prepare their grounds. Some artists often feel inadequate, unprepared and ill-equipped in the face of the new surface, and the larger and blanker it appears the more it exposes inconsistencies in the confidence of the painter. Even the prepared paints, the choices of colors, begin to look like bad decisions, like how in a conversation one might curse or slur their words. How might artists come into a conversation without being overbearing? How might they prepare a surface that supports their language, so that the process is less like an assault and the canvas, or the artist, less like a victim?

A canvas is a multiplicity in that it is not just a surface for a painting; this fabric existed before it was constituted in traditional artmaking practice. Even today, canvases serve in different capacities, beyond fabrics and textiles, constructing jobs and a livelihood for the laborers who operate the machines that weave it or in the factories that produce canvas. The point here is, conceptually, a canvas brings with it a long history of language, and can speak many ways. Are there not other uses for canvas, i.e., shoes, tents, tote bags, floor covering? This is only an example as some painters are not concerned with the canvas-ness of their surface, and instead it becomes a vehicle to get somewhere else. The way a painter approaches a canvas, or any surface, can have an impact on how he treats his materials, and conducts his work, which

in effect can change the resulting imagery. A better conversation and understanding between artist and surface can help to level the ground to allow for more movement and willingness to experiment.

But what kind of conversation are we referring to here? Canvas and the materials of the plastic arts cannot speak like artists do, and artists do not typically talk to themselves out loud for long periods of time in the studio or carry on conversations with inanimate objects. Boyd White talks about this in his *Aesthetic Primer* (2009), how "objects and ideas cannot be said to respond in the same manner as people after all. Nonetheless, an idea responds to the extent that it strikes a chord in our thinking. Similarly, if we think of an artwork as the cared-for, there is a sense in which it responds to our attention through the provision of the mirroring capacity" (White, 2009, p. 128). The conversation during artmaking, between artist and artwork, is usually mute in the audible sense, but continual and changing in an internal and constructed way. Thus, we have plenty to deconstruct, i.e., acquaintance, talking, word, statement, mutter; however, our inquiry calls on a deconstruction of conversation, as a dialogue in-between.

Being a painter myself, and when thinking of the conversations between myself and my becoming artworks, it is like we are learning a new language together. In this way, the canvas and painter are not able to translate the ideas that arise and are introduced, so together the two teach each other. Not many people find pleasure in talking with someone if one knows where the conversation will lead and what will be said, word for word, like copying another artwork. The size of the canvas helps to create the scale and together they begin to construct the scope. The canvas becomes a window where the artist finds their presence in the plane of the dimensions. The edges of the work guide some of this and the artist responds, not as Cezanne often mimicked the geometric dimensions of the canvas in his mountains and rooftops and began to see a horizon framed in its finiteness. It becomes the painter's job to stretch this enclosure and

open a space large enough to place the content, and big enough to allow for the form and new ideas to enter; hence artist and canvas enter into an event together in relation.

Heidegger's conversation with a Japanese scholar (1954/1971) has qualities likening to the experience of making art. Both men entered into their conversation with vastly different language and horizons and are in a continual and shifting state of learning each other's concepts and understanding each other's experiences that required interpretation on both parts to move through the conversation. In *A Dialogue on Language: Between a Japanese and an Inquirer*, we have a chance here to learn how a conversation from two very different contexts merged, and how they expanded the horizon in each other. The conversation, on aesthetics, phenomenology, hermeneutics, being, and language, can offer us a way to look at aesthetics and how diverse cultures experience art in their unique way. Their conversation, like many conversations that produce art and understanding, begins with a problem that will involve both parties working together to solve.

The Japanese inquirer presents to Heidegger an "incapacity" in the Japanese language to look at aesthetics as the Europeans do, and how their language lacks "the delimiting power to represent objects related in an unequivocal order above and below each other" (Heidegger, 1954/1971, p. 2). Heidegger retorts that he questions if it is "necessary" or right for the East to look at their works of art this way, yet the Japanese scholar senses that in the modern and growing technological age, it is inevitable (p. 3). How does technology prevent or help us see art objects on a level field, one where some are privileged over others?

The Japanese writer points out to the reluctant Heidegger a course he taught, where the Japanese scholar's mentor attended and brought the class transcripts back to teach with in his university -which is where his initial question was formed. Heidegger's responds that transcripts are "muddy sources"...and the college course was "most imperfect...Yet there was quickening in

it an attempt to walk a path of which I did not know where it would lead. I knew only the most immediate short-range perspectives along the path, because they beckoned to me unceasingly, while the horizon shifted and darkened" (p. 6). Heidegger, whose work uses phenomenology and hermeneutics, is modeling how to respond and navigate a conversation to keep the conversation open enough that it circles and has a better chance at reaching agreement or understanding. This reminds me of the artistic experience of making an original, experimental, and non-representational work of art, where immediate and far-sighted decisions are made and the endings unsure or not conceived and entertained. This also brings up a question of how language can limit experience.

Their conversation brings to light many differences between Eastern and Western ways of knowing, that can give us much to ponder as we work through this research. On the topic of clarity during a conversation (or artmaking, in our case) the Japanese inquirer informs us that in Japan they do not find it "strange if a dialogue leaves undefined what is really intended, or even restores it back to the keeping of the undefinable" (p. 13). At one point, the inquirer stops Heidegger to ask him what he means by *foreward* in phenomenology, since the inquirer is having difficulty finding the right word. Heidegger answers with an interpretation of the root fore-, "into that nearest nearness which we constantly rush ahead of, and which strikes us as strange each time anew when we catch sight of it" (p. 12). This could be a tie-in to a number of phenomenon and processes in art, such as how the rhizome moves to the next connection(s), or the aesthetic experience of creating a work of art. Also at play in conversation, both speakers take turns attending to each other's responses in an exchange system not always limited to words and language, but with the body through gestures, that the other speaker notices and takes into account to assess the comfortableness and mood of their speech partner.

Their conversation, such as on the topic of hermeneutics, discussed the mysterious nature of language (pp. 50-54) and what it conceals from the speaker, writer, and reader and how to interpret or work around with what is hidden so that it can emerge in its own way. I will argue this is how the experimental artist works and responds to the actions of his hands, accidents and mistakes, but also their resistance when the work begins to take representational turns, which could threaten change. Heidegger, in a similar way voices the essential aim of conversation, "the one thing that matters is whether this dialogue, be it written or spoken or neither, remains constantly coming" (p. 52). Same thing in experimental painting -once the painter begins to look at elements in his work as right or wrong, and resorts to 'fixing' it, is a way of moving backwards and the experiment has stalled as the painter begins to look at his work objectively. Heidegger warns of the tendency of aesthetics to turn artworks into objects, and thus "fit for exhibitions and museums" (p. 43). This could prove to be a hint on how to treat a surface (and canvas) and not entering into making a work of art with the assumption that a work of art will be made or an image achieved. How would a child approach making clay sculpture, if they knew beforehand it would explode in the kiln?

We will return to Heidegger's and the Japanese scholar's co-researcher in the conclusion of this thesis. For now, this can be an example of a conversation between two people from different worlds and understandings who came into the dialogue on an equal level. Their tone was of a calm intensity, alert disinterest and angled gaze, careful not to cross the border and answer to Truth which would ultimately end the experiment. Their dialogue became a riddle at times, lucky if any of what they brought in their conceptual suitcase translated closely to the other's understanding, and when it failed their attitude and willingness to continue the conversation saved them and their philosophical work from traps.

Speechless

Philosophers and scholars have often discussed the notion of internal dialogues, as between an earlier self and a later self (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 427), as sometimes as a purer unconscious form of speech, (Gadamer, 1960/2004, pp. 203-204), as utterance and that which relates to "inwardness" and the "soul" (Heidegger, 1954/1971, p. 35), referring to an inability to fully say what we intended to say (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 548). As Gadamer explains, in "the presence of the overwhelming presence of works of art, the task of expressing in words what they say to us seems like an infinite and hopeless undertaking. The fact that our desire and capacity to understand always go beyond any statement that we can make seems like a critique of language" (p. 402). Yet, this tension between what we want to say, but cannot, and how we learn to communicate our thoughts and articulate, is akin to a large piece of what education is about; the "confluence of the internal and the external dialogues informing each other on a contentious basis restores spirit as integral to teaching and learning" (Latta, 2001b, 47).

"One of the Latin roots of conversation is *conversari* meaning 'to dwell with.' This suggests that conversation entails an entering into and living with a context and its participants. As such, conversation is not only a means of interaction and a way of thinking, but also a type of relationship with one's surroundings" (Yinger, 1990, p. 11).

Hans-Georg Gadamer talks about the open-ended nature of a "genuine" *conversation*, and likens it to an "event," as something active and shifting (Gadamer, p. 138, Latta, 2001b, p. 16). Margaret Latta, an artist and scholar, uses Gadamer's hermeneutics and aesthetics as an approach to research for their possible contributions to pedagogy, employs Gadamer's hermeneutic style in educational events, and many self/other encounters found in the classroom. She studies how these encounters can lead to understanding, especially in the curricular sense. Latta aims to do

this through play, a concept whose importance can be traced in the arts back to Schiller's (1774) discussion on play in the middle space. Latta's pedagogy, then, explores the movement between student/subject, discipline/curriculum, subject/curriculum, student/teacher and others. The research looks at how these poles talk or interact with one another, and she relates this to having a conversation, involving language and its benefits for learning in education today. She is drawn to the potential of play, such as the playing with ideas in the classroom, and how this can help children make new connections to the subject matter and connect it to their everyday lives. Subject starts the conversation, according to Latta, but only as a theme, and not something to create an early obstacle and inhibit further learning. Since education is supposed to end with something being learned, she argues that the process of learning through play is valuable too, perhaps more valuable. Here, the teacher presents the subject in a site that promotes open thinking, and the students work with the subject, often in small groups. Since students often come into upper level inquiries with little to no prior knowledge, they make great participants for this sort of qualitative research, since as Gadamer teaches, one cannot reach understanding if one brings prejudices into the conversation (1960/2004, pp. 277). Children do not always understand everything they encounter, and this trait becomes a thrilling potential for experimental artmaking. The students are to enter play with alertness and an open mind expecting the unexpected, with sensitivity to the movements of developing ideas. Latta refers to this as *aesthetic play*. Latta compares conversation to play, the "to-and-fro movement created has a spirit of its own...It becomes a conversation...in which we forget ourselves and enter into a relationship" (Latta, 2001b, p. 15). Perhaps, we need to teach children how creating a work of art with pastels, for example, is a dialogue, and a form of play. We could focus on process, and less on the end product. This extends to the images we show, since studying art almost always is

a study of finished work of art. Perhaps, we could show more images on the process artists go through to create a work of art.

Latta calls the space between art students and their work of art, and between art students and their medium, a dialogue, sometimes "these dialogues are tactile, occurring between participants and materials being handled. Sometimes these dialogues are visual, occurring between participants and all that is being viewed" (p. 31). Many conversations take place during every art class since the teacher, the students, the student's art work, art classroom visuals, subject matter, for example, all have a 'voice' and some speak louder than others. Desire and power can rupture these threads, and since teachers typically have most of the power in a classroom they are in a unique position. "Daily, teachers are confronted with moments that ask them to simply provide the right answer, offer the best solution, and specify the steps for students to take" (p. 20). Art teachers could shift the power back into the child's hands, rather than restate rubrics or give concise 'right' answers, and help them come up with ways to enter a new experience with the media, surface and subject. These are pivotal moments, and 'educational moments' where the child gives up all their power to the art teacher. At this point, the child's aesthetic experience has stopped, the spell is broken, and so the teacher could help the child start a new conversation with their work, since by this time, their former conversant has left.

Gadamer (1960/2004) says, in a genuine conversation "the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner....no one knows in advance what will come out of a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like an event that happens to us" (p. 385). In a conversation it is important that we do not force our desires onto the other speaker, and instead allow them to speak what is on their mind concerning ours. This is especially the case in a genuine conversation since the other speaker is responding to us. This requires listening and patience. Such is the case in an experimental painting, when the painter makes a mark. Each mark brings

a possibility to change the nature of the space, in that it is a multiplicity and undefinable, even after it is put into the picture. That mark is only constituted once the painter constitutes it in their mind as a suitable mark and something to build upon. The painter's mark, shape, line is like making a response during a conversation since a mark is a response to the last mark -no matter how it looks, or as Elliot Eisner, art educator and curriculum reformer says, "the individual takes his or her lead from the work. The work, so to speak, also speaks, and at times it is the artist who listens. The work in progress begins to look more like a conversation than a lecture" (2002, p. 78).

After a brushstroke is made, the painter listens to the surface by sitting or stepping back or pausing to see how that last mark or series of moves fits into the space of the painting. The canvas speaks by answering into the artist's mind, in the artist's internal dialogue. In Bakhtin's (1981) model, the artist would be the future self in that we are in a constant state of constructing ourselves and this side of our internal dialogue would be our next move, mark and brushstroke. The surface of the canvas, then, would be the former self, in that it speaks from our past experiences with artworks of this kind. It is debatable whether a surface can have an opinion, but I will argue it can, especially in the case of the traditional squared surface, such as a piece of paper or any traditional shape. This opinion, stance, or desire, then would be to speak to the artist in a language of tradition, cultural and historical, and how squared surfaces are normally handled by "experts" in the past. In this way, surfaces have spoken to artists differently throughout time; one only needs to look at how the ancient Egyptians handled the flatness of their temple walls. Eisner comments along these same lines on how an artist uses inner speech in the artistic process, when "one works on a sculpture, language may come into play to help think through the problem, to consider alternatives, to reflect on what has been done and what needs to

be done. Internal monologues -inner speech, a form of self-regulation -are ways of dealing with complexity in the safety of one's private cognitive life" (2002, p. 81).

Gadamer writes, an "encounter with a great work of art has always been, I would say, like a fruitful conversation, a question and answer or being asked and replying obligingly, a true dialogue whereby something has emerged and remains" (Gadamer, 1960/1985, p. 250). I sense that both Gadamer and Latta are leaning towards a politics of care, and how engaging in a conversation asks both speakers to construct the experience so that one speaker does not lead the talk down a path it can't recover. We saw this in the conversation between the Japanese scholar and Heidegger. Since the conversation was spoken in German, Heidegger's native language, he had a larger responsibility to remain aware of the flow and direction, like the easy gaze of a confident artist.

What this deconstruction on conversation can teach us about children's artmaking experiences in schools is to notice all the relationships in this process, since the word "artmaking" can be plugged in for the word "conversation," in translation. However, it would not be a deconstruction if we did not at least ask questions like, "when is artmaking not like a conversation?" "When are those non-conversational artmaking experiences appropriate for school?" Or, "when are we not in a conversation with a work of art or material?" "When is it ok to talk about Truth and sabotage the dialogue from continuing?" "Is it ever a good idea to force your desires and power onto the speech partner?" "When in a conversation is it alright to mutter, roll your eyes, whisper, speak in tongues or Pig Latin or riddles, shout, accuse, be sarcastic, tell a joke, turn it into a forum for propaganda, ignore and lie?"

The conversation between artist and surface is one of the most fundamental in artmaking, and perhaps overlooked and underestimated. Since each object, element, and idea are multiplicities, the ability to engage in a conversation is all around us. How are we ever lonely?

Conversations, or rhizomes, are more complicated than a face to face chat, they are aesthetic and constructed, and require a sense of responsibility, care, patience, agreement, awareness, and care if they are to last long enough for something unexpected to emerge. Could we apply these same ethics to artmaking -responsibility, care, patience, agreement, awareness, and care? John Dewey writes, since "art is the most universal form of language, since it is constituted, even apart from literature, by the common qualities of the public world, it is the most universal and freest form of communication" (1934/2005, p. 282).

Gravitas in experience (part one)

The aesthetic experience is a confrontation with infinitude. First, we are alone, then we're never alone, and finally…forever alone, all in a moment. "Experience is limited by all the causes which interfere with perception of the relations between undergoing and doing" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 46). "You can be motionless, but be in the state of undergoing, an outside comes inside, then outside…" (R. Siegesmund, personal communication, July, 27, 2011). Art is one way to create such an experience, and Dewey argues that aesthetic qualities in works of art are the very component in what separates art from other material (1934/2005). Gadamer says that a "work of art would seem almost by definition to be an aesthetic experience that means, however, that the power of the work of art suddenly tears the person experiencing it out of the context of his life, and yet relates him back to the whole of his existence" (1960/2004, pp. 60-61). How are we shut off in our own skin, like this…numb and dumb, why don't the stars and galaxies make more sense, how could we get lost while standing still? I know this man, he is I, that the spilt paint on the canvas and smeared oval become my head. One quality of human being is that we have the capacity to have deep and dimensional, sense-laden experience. Why did he paint

my skin opaque, is that what I am, to me? I found you dead, on a wall...me-DEAD! ...On the wall! Our selves are displaced in these rich experiences, and this separation has the danger of becoming nostalgic, home-sick, curious, turned around, and arrested by charisma. Soon -we all will be on the wall, alive hanging, moving in the present, re-dying, or worse hung. Art does not present, not there...not where, we hang, we must not cross the threshold –our selves are not enough (remember?). The artist recreated me, for himself, to recycle through time. How does he know me, who told him? Man is imitation, I guess.

The science of life; islands to grow our laurel, instead, thrown out into the streets, by the mode of *Bildung*! -where all we sufferers become educators, artists, geniuses! We can now no longer be satisfied by the pleasure of work and living for the sake of living, no sex, no art, no God, no fun –living gray, even, spice-less, repetitious, stale lives. Now everything is art, everyday life is now one continuous strain of art activities, i.e., the art of sweeping the porch, the art of praying, the art of making rice, the art of cutting your toenails, the art of saddling a mare, the art of confusing your students, the art of toasting bread, the art of folding a towel, the art of staying positive, the art of sharpening a pencil, the art of asking forgiveness, art of tying a shoe, the art of stretching out a paycheck, the art of getting out carpet stains, the art of calling in sick, the art of growing tomatoes, the art of organizing books, the art of keeping mosquitoes away, the art of packing a suitcase, the art of taking a nap, the art of hiding in a crowd, the art of forgetting. Now everyone is an artist, and is employed by factories, diners, hotels, clinics, orphanages, five and dimes, casinos, boarding homes, soup kitchens, bait and tackle, department stores, schools, while studios and museums are reserved for business execs. The gravitas of science and measurement *-quan* looms where the artists once worked and art is beginning to look more and more like advertisements, to get more people out of their homes and into the stores.

Why have families when you can survive alone in style? Beauty, beauty -perfume in the eyes, we do not need you, that is the beauty of it.

Art is art when it creates an experience. We do not thaw art, it awakens in us –'art' is nothing, until we activate the shared mediation between art and viewer. Art is fluid in this space and un-objectified from its gilded frame -APPEAR! (like you were), yet grounded in context "stretch[ing] out of the past" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 119). "Beauty is indeed the sphere of unfettered contemplation and reflection; beauty conducts us into the world of ideas, without however taking us from the world of sense, as occurs when a truth is perceived and acknowledged" (Schiller, 1774/1967, p. 53). Thus, a work of art is suspended in the "middle state," where "beauty weds the two opposed conditions of feeling and thinking" (p. 32). "[A work of art] is neither true nor false, neither right nor wrong in any narrow moral sense. It is a 'piece of art' and must thus be judged by its own standards that are alleged to be intrinsically aesthetic" (Grondin, p. 268). We must not be a "cold spectator" (p. 3) as described by John Dewey in Art as Experience, or a dumb scholar exercising our senses and not our mind in the aesthetic experience, drooling, drifting into a coma, and passing away pathetically before a canvas. When you meet your spirit, will you stare through it like a killer, or lovingly inquire? "In art man encounters himself, spirit meets spirit" (Gadamer, p. 52). During an aesthetic experience we can be outside our selves and can see it in its appearance of spirit and what it left to be desired, we learn about our selves in ways that no other experience can create.

Spirit is found in the span between artist and viewer, in the middle state of Schiller (1774), and in the play and distance of Gadamer. Dewey refers to play in this phenomenological space as impulsion, more towards force and awakening, than passivity (1934/2005, pp. 3-5). Art comes in different strengths and gravitas where beauty is engaged, though never scaled, no numbers can count around its circumference, where to assign a name steals a name from

something else. "[W]hen confronted with a work of art...Something overcomes us, strikes us, makes us rethink, rediscover our experience, yet we cannot perfectly say what it is" (Grondin, pp. 269-270). "There are no origins but there are fundamental issues that seek to us and draw us out of ourselves. What are these? Why do they pull us out of our everyday activities and cause us to pause? Why can we listen deeply to one thing and then dismiss something else so easily" (Freeman, 2011, p. 550).

Gravitas is the mode of beauty, the ignition, inertia, and animator. Gravitas initiates the event through movement either through pull, lure, and seduction in man's desire, interestedness, or attractedness. This is not mere trickery, quite the opposite. Art 'speaks' through gravitas, and re-introduces language. Is art the pre-utterance gravitas of the logos? Intuition is pre-function of gravitas. With beauty there is always something we don't understand, something we cannot count, and something we will not QUAN. With gravitas, it is never a glance, and so much catches our eyes in our everyday life! Gravitas is a gaze, and to gaze is to interpret with care and regard. "[T]here is something in our experience of the beautiful that arrests us and compels us to dwell upon the individual experience itself" (Gadamer, 1986, p.16). We loom in the image -its beauty, because it matches our inner dialogue and the things we always mean to say and the things we thought before we had the words to say it. But, we stay here because of respect -morals, if you must -and sometimes out of self-respect if too distant. In this sphere, gravitas finds its being in Charisma. Charisma is also a spirit of beauty, which is another matter. Charisma is design bestowed in life and in all its movements, manifest in our being and Self. Gravitas is Hermes! Charisma in experience, doctrine of qualities -thirst, libido, logos by design...Hermes -Kalon! (Is God's being only housed in his Word, or in all His creations, even us?)

Gravitas is not the place we are at, or we can ever go. Gravitas as beauty then is also art as assemblage; once we finish a work of art, we lose it to the viewer, and it no longer speaks the way it did, and it now speaks beyond a border. Where does this threshold lay? In artmaking it is in the actualization and representation and agreement. It is a variant of Deleuze's (1987) notion of *rupture*, is it does not happen during a process -it is merely aesthetic work there; the line is crossed in representation. The pull more apparent by the viewer and easily felt by the artist in artmaking of experimental and abstract art; we essentially lose it to another dimension. It never leaves, it is something we lose. This Other, or next, is so close, it feels like home, which is lost too. Gravitas is the encounter of something we don't know, something we don't fully understand; it is something we will never know, and some will only understand. Gravitas' mode is questioning in processes and during experience; is it The Question, sometimes. It is not a noun, or a verb; it could be both or something else. Gravitas seems more like a way of being, an attitude, a style, kind and sort -Spirit! In this way, it has an aesthetic nature, something to be experienced, not held, bought, stole, but something to behold or given. Gadamer says there's something holy in a work of art (p. 474). While gravitas is at work and play in the phenomena Gadamer is describing, this will be called this Charisma, a more transcendental and metaphysical notion that gravitas. Charisma is the divine mode of visual discourse; Charisma the powerful, mysterious, and beautiful. Charisma is powerful in many ways, for one how it holds our gaze; mysterious how it holds our wonderment; and beautiful in this way. Charisma is good and positive in nature.

Where is this research leading us, and which way is it going? This study is not linear, though I will encourage you to read it through in the order it is presented here. This text is not inductive or deductive, not intentionally reducing theory or working of one theory. Instead, the text is rhizomatic, and works, as we will argue, like the aesthetic experience itself. This research

is an undergoing of ideas, where each section can predict the next, but if other lines intervene the space and we shift this text succumbs and becomes a series of book reviews. Our apologies, but in experimental artmaking and research, if sections become errors, we turn them into trials. Yet, a larger force is threatening to rupture this study: subjectivity. We simply cannot let this come back to us, to (I). Everything is an experience. "In other words, experience is not subjective in the sense that 'I have' an experience. When we think of experience as a question of sensation, we remind ourselves that we do not have experiences. We are experiences. The 'I' of an experience does not precede the experience. It emerges from it, or, as Massumi puts it, 'the personal' (our sense of self and identity) is the 'grand finale' (Massumi, 2002, pp. 190-191, Ellsworth, p. 26) (there is no doer before the deed). If we let it, this thesis could be a failure in the sense that nothing new was learned in the end. We have learned a lot on the way, but as an experimental text, to end in representation, an imitation of an imitation, or a definition of a definition, or theorizing a theory would to have fought in a war for your country, and after winning the battle where many lives were sacrificed, we burn the flag. Our task then will be to null or change subjectivity during conversation or during artmaking, if not before a word is spoken or the first mark is applied. The answer of answers is not to become an actor playing the role of the stranger, but to conceive the other's being as alien, to which teaching our language to them is nearly impossible, and a waste of time, but where the two of us create a new vocabulary together not solely based on the experiences of either's past world, but a vocabulary to explain the space where the two meet. This opens a greater task than eliminating the self in speech and artmaking, that of coding the experience of another who comes from an unknown and distance place, and creating a language for each to discuss the void between. This will not require acting, we can be 'ourselves' -no guises, no corrective glasses, no masks to breathe through, no trickery; the Other is confused enough. This battle begins with representation, (I) is no longer enough, or

our experiences that, always already, the alien cannot process. No mirrors, no vanity, no vanity mirrors, reflection is death; do we not we reflect enough? It is time to construct; not to reconstruct ourselves, but to construct ourselves in relation to the next Other-Artist-Warrior-[?]-

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section is a brief and abbreviated overview of the major theorists in aesthetics, hermeneutics, phenomenology, and a few of their contemporaries and critics, in a move to further complicate our understanding of language, experience, phenomenon, and interpretation - all of which I will use in my analysis of children's artmaking practices in schools. Yet, by going back to the original sources, a move that is more genealogical than nostalgic, I desire to discover linkages and pathways to better understanding the notions of gravitas and charisma, which could take the first roles in discovering more about the human compulsion to make art, and it's connection to beauty and desire and spirit.

Language, image, and understanding

Hans-Georg Gadamer fought for art's truth claim in *Truth and Method* (1960/2004) presenting how ontology opens the space for a dialogue between artist and viewer. His hermeneutical framework becomes more of an arena of play than a methodology, since only some artworks speak to us, and all present themselves un-translated. This phenomenon becomes the ontological path into aesthetic experience for Gadamer. "Every work of art, not only literature, must be understood like any other text that requires understanding.... This gives hermeneutical consciousness comprehensiveness that surpasses even that of aesthetic consciousness. Aesthetics has to be absorbed into hermeneutics" (p. 157). The way to understanding is blurred or fragmented in these dimensions, especially with works of both representational and non-representational art and viewers with limited language, such as with young children. By nature works of art are hard to interpret, so many cannot break the surface,

an "unclear interpretation must be termed sensory or aesthetic" (Grondin, 1994, p. 56). Through the gaze of the aesthetic experience understanding can occur with works of art. Hermeneutics is most often defined within language, so why then does Gadamer spend much time in *Truth and Method* on aesthetic experience of works of art? Perhaps, the aesthetic experience is an exemplar of everyday experience that John Dewey and others have alluded to. "Furthermore, the act of understanding is more like an aesthetic experience than a technical, methodical, and controlled activity" (Schwandt, 2004, p. 41). Gadamer states that the relationship between language, experience, and understanding is the central hermeneutic task. Why focus on art and aesthetics? It seems Gadamer late in life found aesthetics as a path to frame universals, and uses the experience of art to help describe the hermeneutic experience, and how aesthetics plays a role in understanding.

His research has not been without critique and some have questioned his attention to the aesthetic experience in this way, especially as it pertains to the art object and to the question of truth in art works. Is art a lie, like so many claim, and Pablo Picasso so famously declared? Many will agree that through reflection, the truth claim of art over space and time is suspect, yet all experiences contain some degree of the aesthetic, so in this way the experience of art is universal; yet meaning is always, and ultimately, unknown and unique to each artwork. If art is a lie, then we are conversing with a liar? Then, should artists and viewers come into a conversation with art with the attitude of a detective, and not so agreeable? This claim and more will be discussed below, including Gadamer's critique on Kant's critique, Gadamer's hermeneutics/aesthetics hybrid, critique of the critics of Gadamer's aesthetics, word and image, and gravitas in experience.

One could argue that *Truth and Method*, and the last half of Gadamer's life was spent studying experience, namely the experience of art. "Analysis of the notions of aesthetic

experience and historical experience is the leading motive of [Truth and Method]" (Nordenstam, 1984, p. 23). He was not the first, and will not be the last to spend half a lifetime on this inquiry. "In the first part of [Truth and Method], the positive task Gadamer sets for himself is to clear away the obstacles preventing an understanding of the truth of art and tradition (Bilen, 2001, p. 69; Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 283). He finds his way back to the beginnings of modern aesthetics and to Immanuel Kant's treatise on judgment. In *The critique of judgment* (1790), Kant frames the aesthetic experience as privatized and subjective, focusing on the sensory, while Gadamer adds cognition, and moves away from subjectivity to the contingency of history for a shared and deeper meaning. "Kant's reflections on the topics of *taste*, *aesthetic play*, and the *sensus communis* serve as irritants that lead Gadamer to recast them in a less subjective fashion" (Makkreel, 1997, p. 152). Gadamer never dismisses Kant's notions, only that they disable ontological faculty, namely the aesthetic consciousness he traces back to the Enlightenment. "Through 'aesthetic differentiation' the work loses its place and the world to which it belongs insofar as it belongs instead to aesthetic consciousness" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 76), i.e., if a painting from an unknown artist, and whose historical and cultural background cannot be attributed, how is understanding going be reached from those who view the artwork?

"Whereas a definite taste differentiates -i.e., selects and rejects-on the basis of some content aesthetic differentiation is an abstraction that selects only on the aesthetic quality as such. It is performed in the self-consciousness of 'aesthetic experiences.' Aesthetic experience (*Erlebnis*) is directed towards what is supposed to be the work proper-what it ignores as the extra-aesthetic elements that cling to it, such as purpose, function, the significance of its content" (Grondin, 1998, p. 50).

Instead, Gadamer promotes his notion of *aesthetic non-differentiation* that is required for a whole understanding that extends beyond the initial, sensory glance. Gadamer argues that

"works of meaning can only be understood rightly in their contexts" (Nordenstam. p. 23) but context is used here not in reference to an artwork's original context, but more about the context of the culture, politics, ideas and time in which it was created, along with information on the artist. We could think of Gadamer's interpretation of context in terms of its social dimension, and the role it once played. In *Art as Experience*, John Dewey argues against the segregation of fine art from its original context, in museums as such. He points to an earlier time, one before his, when local art was more accessible and blended in with the society that shaped it (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 7).

Gadamer describes the aesthetic experience within the sphere of the human sciences as 'extrascientific' (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 252). "The experience of art illustrates a mode of experience that surpasses the methodological limitations of science" and the scientific method (Makkreel, 1997, p. 152). "Gadamer develops a critique of the experience of art that points to inadequate consequences of the subjectivist theories of aesthetics. This theory of aesthetics has found its consummation in the concept of aesthetic understanding as the re-experiencing (*erlebnis*) of the artist's original creative experience" (Bilen, 2001, p. 73). Gadamer criticizes Erlebnis as a type of differentiation by which the artwork is moved from the world, and is valued for its aesthetic qualities only. Instead, Gadamer uses Hegel's notion of *Erfahrung* found in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) that exacts truth from subject-matter through a "mediated hermeneutic experience," away from the immediacy of Erlebnis (Bilen, 2001, p. 60). "The model for Gadamer's aesthetic Erfahrung is the idea of play as a public performance that encompasses its various participants" (Makkreel, 1997, p. 153). Thus, Gadamer looks at art as more presentational (*darstellen*) than representational (*vorstellen*), and likens it to an event, as found conceptualized in Erfahrung (Davey, 2011, p. 4). "The experience of art should not be falsified by being turned into a possession of aesthetic culture, thus neutralizing its special claim.

We will see that this involves a far-reaching hermeneutical consequence, for all encounters with the language of art is an encounter with an unfinished event and is itself part of this event. This is what must be emphasized against aesthetic consciousness and its neutralization of the question of truth" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 85). He looks at art as performing, moving and never complete until a viewer or speech partner engages it and ask questions.

"To avoid the subjectification of aesthetic judgment, Gadamer argues that the event of the aesthetic experience occurs in the exchange between viewer and the work -not simply the viewer and not simply the work...There is a dialogue between the work of art and spectator that displaces the subjectivity of the experience" (Vessey, 2000, p. 71).

With Gadamer, art becomes art during the interpretation, and the viewer and artwork meet in the middle as one "the experience of the work of art includes understanding, and thus itself represents a hermeneutical phenomenon-but not at all in the sense of a scientific method. Rather, understanding belongs to the encounter with the work of art itself, and so this belonging can be illuminated only on the basis of the mode of being of the work of art itself" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 87).

The distance between the viewer and the work of art becomes an arena for play, or rather in-between, placing the being of a work of art in play, which is presented during the event of understanding via the aesthetic experience, "the work of art is actualized only when it is 'presented' (p. 157). The displacement of subjectivity in interpretation is a way of dissolving the wall of self/other so that we can experience in relation, not beside. Gadamer refers to the space between self and other, viewer and artwork, artist and artwork as play. "[T]he work of art is play -i.e., that its actual being cannot be detached from its presentation and that in this presentation the unity and identity of a structure emerge" (p. 120). In this regard, if a museum director takes a master sculpture out of an exhibition space and puts it in a crate in the museum archive, the

sculpture no longer is art. Dewey has similar thoughts, "A work of art no matter how old and classic is actually, not just potentially, a work of art only when it lives in some individualized experience" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 113). Art only lives during play, thus a work of art is play (Gadamer, p. 120). Could this notion then, apply to any object, or material, such as artist's materials?

"Every performance is an event, but not one in any way separate from the work -the work itself is what 'takes place' (*ereignet*: also, comes into its own) in the event (*Ereignis*) of performance" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 141). He also relates these notions, such as play and performance to written expression, "it is universally true of texts that only in the process of understanding them is the dead trace of meaning transformed back into living meaning" (p. 156). Understanding is contingent on the openness of the circular gap, distance, space, or field during interpretation, the "more it remains open, the more freely does the process of understanding succeed" (p. 499), and one way to achieve this is through play. For Gadamer, a work of art becomes a special speech partner in dialogue, "it addresses us in the sense that it has something to say in a way no other medium can approximate… it speaks to our cognitive and moral sensibilities and brings them into play" (Grondin, 1998, p. 268-269). Because of the nature of art and the play of the hermeneutic process, art "always contains the possibility of revealing something new to us" (Vessey, 2000, p. 72). Could we then say, the opposite occurs? How do artworks tell us about ourselves? Possibly so, since reciprocity takes effect and the meaning is positioned in-between viewer and image, not on either one side, "defining play as a process that takes place 'in between' (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 109). If this works, then we can learn about our lives through play if we know what to 'listen' for.

In *Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics* (2004), Michael Kelly challenges Gadamer's art truth claim that we could ever experience truth in art (p. 104). Kelly thinks Gadamer "draws an

unwarranted conclusion" from "the truth about the ontology of art that art itself has truth content" (p. 105). Even Jean Grondin, in *The Overcoming of Aesthetic Consciousness and the Hermeneutical Truth of Art* (1998), argues that Gadamer's work contains two conflicting positions: a rebuttal of aesthetics, and a reliance on the aesthetic experience of truth (p. 267). "Gadamer's own aesthetic theory is more subjective than he would have us to believe...he is not always careful or consistent" (Kelly, 2004, p.115). Kelly presents three notions in Gadamer's aesthetics that he feels fall short. First, speaking on *wahrnehmen*, "Gadamer links the notion of truth to that of perception. Second, that a work of art is 'true' in that it "exists and that it is what it appears to be" (p. 106). In *Relevance of the Beautiful* (1986), published long after *Truth and Method*, Gadamer writes, in "its irreplaceability, a work of art is no mere bearer of meaning -as if the meaning could be transferred to another bearer. Rather, the meaning of a work of art lies in the fact that it is there" (p. 33). This problematic statement, seems to be referring the dimension of meaning in a work of art and confirms that artwork is a multiplicity, precious in multiple ways and meaningful, but not only meaningful. The third art claim of Gadamer's that Kelly points out as improbable is how we remain open to what the art work 'says.' Boyd White writes that "the truth of our aesthetic encounter is not fixed... truth is an ontological endeavor...there are limits to the formation and recovery of meaning, and ultimately, of truth. Encounters with the particularities of any artwork compel us to recognize this fact. Each artwork speaks on its own behalf" (2009, p. 133). The critiques on hermeneutics do not stop here, and never will, until our philosophy stops writing about chatting with objects, artworks that come to life, and consulting our souls. In this way, hermeneutics and with its use of play, become a good discourse on imagination, in a world where there is a lack.

Gadamer claims in *Truth and Method* that he will uncover and "liberate" the truth from experiences of art. Grondin claims Gadamer did not make good on his promise until years later

in volume 8 of *Gesammelte Werke* (1985), published thirty three years after *Truth and Method*, when Gadamer argues that the aesthetic experience strikes us in such a way as to be more convincing than a logical argument ever could. Art makes us open our eyes it reveals something to us of existence and of ourselves. This revealing is the truth aspect of the aesthetic experience (Grondin, 1998, p. 269).

Grondin summarizes his essay with, "[w]hat is experienced in a work of art -and which can be called truth since it reveals something that is there -is also a self-encounter, an encounter with oneself...So the experience of truth is one which implies our questioning selves. No metaphysical self is implied here, of course, only the notion that we are for ourselves a question" (p. 270).

This points back to an earlier question of, what does a master painting 'get' out of a conversation with its viewer, if they are in fact in an equal conversation? The artwork receives the encounter of our self in exchange for its truth. How much is a 'self' worth in 'truth' currency, is perhaps another ontological question? The hermeneutic circle, then, is an economy. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer describes this as transformative experience for the spectator, the "work of art is not an object that stands over against a subject for itself. Instead the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it" (1960/2004, p. 103). Likewise, the viewer gives the painting 'life' and engages it and the painting becomes art, without us painted artworks are paintings and nothing –besides matter. "[The experience of art] possesses a mysterious intimacy that grips our entire being, as if there were no distance at all and every encounter with it were an encounter with ourselves" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 95).

David Vessey, in *Gadamer and the Body Across Dialogical Contexts* (2000), argues that the encounter with a speech partner, or "human bodied interaction", involves more when

confronting art, such as body language and gestures (p.74). "Our attitudes are expressed in our gestures, postures, and facial expressions in ways art works are necessarily oblivious" (p. 74). In response to Vessey's ideas, we will need to look no further than with process and expression in the sphere of visual art. The artist's selection of specific media and how that medium is applied can be a form of thought, or thinking through the materials. "A painter must consciously undergo the effect of every brush stroke or he will not be aware of what he is doing and where his work is going" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 52). For example, charcoal drawings can exhibit dramatic, high contrast and emotional mark making, or charcoal can be used to render soft tonal changes of water and sky. So, could it be that only art experts can read art's language in the way necessary to best un-conceal its meaning? Do philosophical texts still contain truth if only a select few of the population can understand them? "In the case of face-to-face dialogue with another person, there is a greater amount of information exchanged; we can read their body language and be in a better position to understand what is being said" (Vessey, 2000, p. 74). Or, one can learn to experience art in such a way as to trace the artist's journey. The textures of the paint become language; the chisel marks in the marble, and such. The layers of paint, prep to finish, gloss and surface, colors stacked, covered, erased, scratched through, glazed -become a novella of a strange text or forgotten language.

John Dewey describes this in *Art as Experience*, for "to perceive, a beholder must create his own experience, and his creation must include relations comparable to those which the original producer underwent. They are not the same in any literal sense. But with the perceiver, as with the artist, there must be an ordering of the elements of the whole that is in form, although not in details, the same as the process or organization the creator of the work consciously experienced" (p. 56).

If one is viewing a large scale abstract painting, this might involve the viewer to walk and twist their head to see it all and to follow the artist's movements. Richard Siegesmund referred to this as having a "mind-meld with the artist" (personal communication, July, 27, 2011). Grondin says to "[read] a painting," is to "follow in one's own dialogue the lines it only sketches, the world it makes us enter into" (1998, p. 270). When one is in a conversation with a work of art, we are in a sense conversing with the being of the artist and the emotion and conditions that undertook its construction or when, as John Dewey says, "an aroused emotion does not permeate the material that is perceived or thought of, it is either preliminary or pathological" (1934/2005, p. 55).

Some believe Gadamer's use of art and the aesthetic experience was to loosen the grip the scientific method has on truth, and to re-conceptualize aesthetics into hermeneutics; "from the question of the truth of art we found our way into hermeneutics, where art and history were combined for us" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 482). About the experience of art Gadamer writes that his philosophical work is "concerned with truths that go essentially beyond the range of methodological knowledge" (p. 272). He says that his focus on aesthetic experience was "no accident" and it was an "attempt to survey the full range" of the hermeneutic question, since the meaning of the art experience "cannot be exhausted by conceptual understanding" (pp. 574-575). In this way, art's possibilities goes further than the likes of language's, seemingly, finiteness.

Gadamer closes the *Afterword*, in *Truth and Method*, with the topic of contemporary art, and indirectly defines art in several horizons. Art "documents a social reality only when it is really art, and not when it's used as an instrument" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 580). *Truth and Method* ends with beauty, radiance, and light in the aesthetic experience, "[t]he beautiful charms us, without it being immediately integrated with the whole of our orientations and evaluations" (p. 480). "When we understand a text, what is meaningful in it captivates us just as the beautiful

captivates us. It has asserted itself and captivated us before we can come to ourselves and be in a position to test the claim to meaning that it makes" (p. 484). This is not to say that Gadamer believes art has to be beautiful, he does not, and his vision seems more open than Immanuel Kant's selective eye. In this way, Gadamer is relating to the issues many contemporary art works present to us, such as: ugliness, banality, incompleteness, art of the insane, disabled, and children, copyright, propaganda, mass production, art factories, to name some. "The sharp division between the beautiful and what has no share in the beautiful is, moreover, a fact that is well established phenomenologically. Aristotle, in *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 BCE), says of "well-formed works that nothing can be added to them and nothing taken away" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 476). Art or "well-formed works," in this classical view, privileges beginnings and ends in the artistic process, and does not take to the view that artmaking or viewing a work of art is a conversation, since it would be over before the dialogue starts.

In the closing pages of *Truth and Method* Gadamer is well beyond proving if art speaks truth, "it is no longer a question, as it seemed in the nineteenth century, of justifying the truth claim of art and the artistic, or even that of history and the methodology of the human sciences, in terms of theory of science. Now we are concerned, rather, with the much more general task of establishing the ontological background of the hermeneutical experience of the world" (p. 479).

Gadamer doesn't seem to focus anymore on proving that art demonstrates truth, instead he focusses on making sense of the experience of it (Bilen, 2001, p. 72). By Gadamer bringing in the aesthetic experience into hermeneutics, it seems he is saying that what is felt through experience is enough to know that art is speaking; rather than whether we can interpret it or not. What remains then, is learning how to use hermeneutics to interpret art's muttering and construct meanings. All this is based simply on how all works of art are different, and if there is something universal in their difference. How will we ever learn the language of each artwork we

encounter? Leave it to John Dewey for some hope concerning this hopeless task. "In the end, works of art are the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that can occur in a world of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience" (1934/2005, p. 109). Could it be that art is beyond truth? Instead of us learning the language of each work of art we encounter or make, perhaps art is trying to teach us a language beyond language; a new 'language' not one based on symbols of speech, but one more multifarious and based on aesthetic qualities, each its own multiplicity, where each quality is a language within its self.

If I have a critique of Gadamer's inquiry into the aesthetic experience, it is that he seems to presume that art is textual, and only briefly touches on how art and images are specifically tied to language. Now we will borrow some excerpts from Dewey and Fleckenstein to fill some of this gap, and additional insight, "[a]ll language, whatever its medium, involves what is said and how it is said, or substance and form" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 111). Hermeneutics shares parallels with artistic principles, such as balance, unity, variety, and proportion. Some artists work much like Hermeneutists when they lay down a color or a line and respond with their next move with a relation to the whole, or form. Even Gadamer calls hermeneutics the *art* of interpretation. In Kristie Fleckenstein's *Imageword* (2003), she explores the relationship of imagery and pictures, usually mental, in the sphere of language and claims imagery and words are inseparable. "Aristotle tells us that images are the precursors, and the necessary ground for deliberate thought. Without images, there is no possibility of thought... we would [be] unable to create textual meaning for ourselves and for others" (2003, p. 12). This raises an interesting question on where experience resides, on the outside of ourselves in relation and in response to our environment like Dewey talks about, or within. Fleckenstein explains that "[t]hought, meaning, and texts are all infused with imagery" (p. 12). Here, Fleckenstein is referring to mental images as conjured

by reading and engaging the text, not viewing illustrations in a book. Yet, it could be argued that the written word is a visual, typically a colorless black and white patterning, of typed words and symbols. Yet, handwritten letters and such come in many forms, inks, and styles. She also speaks on visual culture and the overflow of sensory material and immaterial. "Our waking and our sleeping lives, our social and private lives are punctuated by the chaotic flow of images, those that we see, smell, hear, feel, and taste" (p. 12). In this way, she is arguing that everything is visual, similar to our earlier argument that we have a continual and un-separated chain of experiences of various natures, planes, degrees, intensities, and styles. Are the things we read, as well as sense, besides what we see, visual experiences since they bring images to our consciousness, and unconsciousness? "Imagery and language are inseparable in meaning...Infused with double logics and double being, image and word are mutually constitutive, mutually creative, hence, imageword" (p. 30). This raises more questions, concerning the experience of artworks and how visual experience of language-such as Fleckenstein is pointing to, creates an echo experience in our consciousness. My notion of *echo experience* could be compared to how some conversations spiral or corkscrew, rather than form a circle. The viewer engages an artwork in conversation, which results in a dialogue that carries with it words. These words then form other images, not found in the artwork, such as images of childhood, fantasy worlds, the Apocalypse, in landscapes, for example, or family resemblances, sexual desire, envy, in portraits (for example), all of which carry a large portfolio of pictures, blurry photos, glances and peeks each presented or recalled in various conditions. Some overexposed, fragmented, in motion, backwards, distorted, and so on, that unfold on themselves and somehow disappear as if escaping behind mountains in echo. Same with learning, how it "always detours through memory, forgetting, desire, fear, pleasure, surprise, rewriting. And, because learning always takes place in relation, its detours take us up to and sometimes across

boundaries of habit, recognition, and the socially constructed identities within our selves. Learning always takes us up to and across boundaries between our selves and others" (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 55).

Do images belong with words? Is this their nature? Then, how is language, in relation to the logos, different from images? In the hermeneutic tradition, a co-dependence exists between the two. For our inquiry on children's artmaking, and the possibilities of making non-representational art, it now seems like words along with inner imagemaking bring representational images in to our conscious. In what capacities does language carry representation, then? We may have a bigger problem on our hands than previously known. Will the children be able to free their art experiences from what they carry into the art room, and the fears and desires that await them after class? How severe will children's memories, distractions, and premonitions effect experimentation and pleasure in the art room?

Gadamer says, "experience itself seeks and finds words to express it. We seek the right word -i.e., the word that really belongs to the thing (or experience) so that in it the thing comes into language" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 417). An additional problem could lay with expression and the need compulsively to say something. But, to whom? "The issue about the relationship between art and language is... finding the appropriate words to open the content of aesthetic experience" (Davey, 2011, p. 15). Gadamer writes about experience and how it "is not wordless to begin with, subsequently becoming an object of reflection by being named, by being subsumed under the universality of the word" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 417). "We cannot name the world without imagining the world, but we cannot imagine the world within naming it. Such a circular, contradictory dynamic is at play" (Fleckenstein, 2003, pp. 32-33). In art, and in this present study with children, this dynamic will be shown as constantly moving and changing nature, like an artist in- and re-corporating a mark into an assemblage of marks -the name of each

mark is always already different. Hermeneutist Melissa Freeman, speaks in this way, "like art, language isn't a representation or imitation of a thought or an event; it affects us in numerous ways and invites numerous questions" (2011, p. 549). It seems Freeman's word "questions" will be interchangeable for our word dimension in a later section, and how one plus one will equal *n*, and *ith* and degree of the root equals change in nature. "The ability of artworks to bring things to mind and to hint at unseen meanings is reason to claim that in its speculative capacities, art functions essentially like a language" (Davey, 2011, p.15) Dewey confirms this notion, "objects of art are expressive, they are a language" (1934/2005, p. 110).

"Textual imagery enables a system to say what cannot be said with words, what cannot be uttered within the constraints of the discourse itself, but what must be said for that discourse to survive. To mean, to communicate, and to connect requires that we situate ourselves at the point where imagery and language meet" (Fleckenstein, 2003, p. 14).

Is art the manifestation of the innate visions in our head? Images have been shown to be like words, and vice versa. When are words not like images? When are images never like words? The former seems more probable, given what this study is constructing. Gadamer talks about how we never can really say what we intend to say. Some visual artists admit that their art looks like it was intended. Theoretically, without expression a "work of art" is a collage of art elements, like food ingredients, its how those parts are construed under what attitude and might and grace that an artwork becomes a meal. Gadamer asks, do "we ever arrive at the point where we understand what really is? These two-total understanding and expression adequate to it" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 548). Art and language, while both succeed in some ways and fail us in other capacities, are the expression of the soul and are beyond truth when together, but the seam will always show.

Theorizing experience as rhizomatic

Gilles Deleuze is one of the most prolific and influential French philosophers of the last half of the twentieth century. Along with other postmodern thinkers, such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, Deleuze is often considered on equal level of importance. Perhaps his greatest gift, along with his co-author Felix Guattari, is creating a new vocabulary in which to discuss new ways of understanding and new ways to think. While some of these philosophers' ideas overlap, there's something unique about Deleuze's language; the way he writes is an embodiment of his philosophy. The structuring or non-structuring of his texts and his terminology, sometimes recycled from biology and other sciences, are appropriated in new and unexpected ways that are rhizomatic.

This section is an academic attempt at a rhizoanalysis of children's art making practices in schools. This question of questions contends to experience, the often turbulent experience, of a child making a work of art. Experience, always already a multiplicity of sense reactions, seems like a natural topic with that of assemblages. Yet, I will mostly describe the experience of another, not from a perch, but from a distance which alone will trouble clarity. In this is a dynamic relationship child-artwork; the child is not placed into a center position, but their being is middlized in the experience through their action. Yet, 'work' here is not only a pun and coincidence, but indicates the nature of creation. There is no doer before the deed; the artist is an artist only when making art, or 'working' on art. 'Working' is also used here since the children in this rhizoanalysis are performing experimental art. In other words, the students do not necessarily end up with a finished piece of art, so we will now avoid the verb "to create," when referring to children's practice in school art since this term is much too loaded for our purposes

here. I want to remind the reader that words are two dimensional; be careful not to over-read this text.

This part of the thesis will have sections conceived away from what is typically called paragraphs; those self-contained areas where concepts unfold and are repackaged, becoming breaks, holes, fail safes, and wasted space. Instead, they will be organized into *moves*; think how music is created, or transitioning seasons. Moves are being used here, instead of move-ments, which implies arcing, and endings, or moves of the past tense, recognized in reflection. The moves will not be assigned a number, thus becoming a chain of singular numbers such as : "move one," "move two," "move three," and "move four," but will be multipliers of the multiplicity, "*xn*" and "single move," "*xxn*" and "double move," "*xxxn*" and triple move," and "*xxxxn*" and quadruple;" the further it grows out as we move from tracing and representing, the closer we will come towards constructing new pedagogies. Since all multiplicities are different and come in different dimensions, we are assigning multipliers as a way of acknowledging that rhizomes greatly expand in size with each conquest; yet no mathematical formula is suitable for predicting such growth. As important as the moves themselves, are how the rhizomes move and their lines of flight detour from ruptures that threaten or trouble, as these are traceable and valuable for this sort of research question, since children move and connect with unique entryways. We all do. Multiplicities have a beginning, or at least start from somewhere; where is not as important. Rhizomes begin when these singular multiplicities join and, usually, continue to join other, and both, multiplicities and rhizomes. A map and plane of consistency are littered with points. To rid the universe of points, joints, turns, pivots, spots would entail us going blind, losing our eyes or vision, and other sense organs, and it is not worth that. Who needs philosophy if one can't experience?

Why not do away with periods in writing altogether, too? Deleuze always used periods. There are many lines of flight, not all ideas move on the same thread, which would be metaphysical. In this sense paragraphs, chapters and even commas and periods demonstrate how lines are segmentary, like thoughts in written expression. Except, this is a moving philosophy, we should also be aware and beware of beginnings and how sentences always begins with a Capital Letters, implying we must be constituted before we finish the thought! Since this paper is housed in academia, please understand how this writer's agency is suspect and will choose to follow the basic rules of grammar. From here we shall move into theory; this academic journey commences first through the thawing archives, journals and texts of Winter-Spring... This will be our spring.

(I) am done, enter _we_...

In the singular move, not to imply the number one, our "first move" (xn), will be to lay out and offer an interpretation of several key concepts that might play as key questions in this rhizoanalysis; plus, present those concepts that we sense comprise Deleuze & Guattari's concept of the rhizome. Since there are so many, and so many more, we are selecting multiplicities pragmatically; similarly as artists select a medium from the media at hand. This is, nonetheless, a pedagogical document; there will be achievements and conclusions. These concepts, mostly from Deleuze's work and the ones he wrote with Guattari, should prove useful for us, but not limited to: the *rhizome*, *lines of flight*, and *assemblages of desire*. Like all Deleuzian notions, they are interchangeable and rise where they will, if they so choose or if we so desire. Researchers impose or project a certain amount of our own desires into a text; words do not write themselves, nor do lines of flight move by an anonymous force from above or below. Just

because lines move, doesn't mean they leave, in the sense they leave us behind, like a racing horse trainer who times how fast his horse can complete the track. Instead, we find our presence in the mix alongside, we will document the experiences and actions of the children as they perform, since our transcribing is artmaking too. It is improbable the wall of self/other dualism will be demolished, but it can be lowered and leveled in clarity and transparency. In this way, self/other becomes self_other, creating an invisible wall or space that is impregnable due to kinds, styles, and intensities. This is the distance we talked about earlier. A researcher must try to form a rhizome with their inquiry no matter how untranslatable or strange their language might seem. Nothing is sure, but by conducting a rhizoanalysis we are removing the walls that divide us from the other and emancipating those trapped in containers, so that we can begin to rehabilitate the oppressed into more open structures.

"xn" will also introduce rhizoanalysis, a process of processes, and how the concepts we discussed above work in it. The purpose here is to work out the concepts with this inquiry, so that we can begin to compare Deleuze's ideas to the thoughts of his peers and some, seemingly, unattached theories, as to create a smoother vista for our questions to gain speed. All this is allowed for by our now leveling field, due to blasting-down mountains and filling-in canyons to extend our horizon. "xxn" will discuss desire, power, experience, and aesthetics, as we move towards approaching children's artmaking as a conversation. By setting such a stage, we can trace similarities and some differences in the theories and come into our own conversation with the texts. This double move is 'double' since our first move never ended, and should now gain more speed as we move from the singular, yet omni-voice of Deleuze to other voices, ideas and wordings.

All this should provide an entryway into "xxxn" involving the multiple implications these notions can have on pedagogy, curriculum, and art education practice. Here we will look at

Deleuze & Guattari's notion of the nomad in light of teaching school art and life in an institution, and the desires at work in these structures. This will lead into an in-depth conversation with a recent text that uses Deleuzian theory in a pedagogical setting, not in a move to rhizoanalysis into tracing, but to gain a better grasp on how another Deleuzian scholar used this philosophy in the classroom. The "xxxxn" move is a rhizoanalysis of children's art making experiences, where we begin to trace out their experiences and ours, in keeping in the context of Deleuze and Guattari's theory. This could threaten the whole rhizome we are constructing. Our attempt to avoid this trap will be to only study children's art making that involves imagination and non-representational imagery. How will we take subjectivity away from these children in these moments? How could we ever? If we can, would that jeopardize Art, or art practice? We 'know' ourselves, but how do we come to 'know' what a child experiences? We do not exactly, so this will involve the researchers documenting alongside the working children and looking for evidence in their process. This could call for us researchers to imagine too; how else are we going to move beyond what we think we can know, but cannot? We could settle for 'understanding,' how do (I) know? Is a rhizoanalysis ever complete? All this said this text is an introductory to one qualitative research inquiry; what other way could we go from here, this rupture, but forward.

xn

In 1987 Deleuze and Guattari introduced the notion of the rhizome and how this can help "uproot" (p. 25) the tree of epistemology, and other hierarchical systems of knowledge. This visual concept explains how it is possible to travel in all threads, inquiries, and problems, and those of any and all disciplines, institutions, and dogmas without ending at home or at rest.

These hostages of Positivism are especially targeted as being stratified and grounded and centered, and likely to continue gaining power if an intervention is not put in place. Yet, the rhizome does not just tackle, contend, deal and challenge powerful systems, but goes beyond. This concept can, sometimes inadvertently, manifest in mass undergrowth that choke out the established vegetation of national parks, manicured lawns, walled gardens, shaped hedges, and flower-lined borders of civilization until the weeds are mistaken for flowers, and the flowers weeds. Yet, the rhizome does not necessarily kill off all trees and bushes in its vicinity and paths, but joins the older plants extramaritally, until the garden is overrun and the terrain begins to look like nature again -not man's pathetic struggle to control nature. Rhizomes are not malicious, they uproot because they will, anything in their horizon is subject; a " rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). Everything within the context is entertainable which becomes this more complex in variety. This sort of thinking takes a lot of work, and vision is farsighted as the obstacles nearest are drawn by lines of flight. When we encounter something that exists in a struggle, such as "social struggles," the rhizome could be susceptible to the energies that multiplicity exists with, through and by. In this way, the rhizome is social and sensitive to the immediate environment, since the environment opens up as new lines are constructed. It connects between the loci of power that it encounters, detouring the monoliths either through elusive and cunning dexterity, or rupturing at impact and drawing out lines of flight as an escape route. Rhizomes grow betwixt the eldest roots, not by rule, but by attractiveness, and we will argue aesthetic qualities. Often it is more desirable not to connect to the deep roots and stay free and live in the non, the difference, the 'negative' where there is room to breathe. Rhizomes are selective like artists are, and other desiring *n*'s. Connecting to one of these static structures would be to join that structure, and be

absorbed or incorporated, and hence die, such as how someone copying a master painting becomes a copier, and not an artist, until the copier stops tracing and begins constructing a map (an original work of art). Imagine the bending style of movement the rhizome performs; the close shave, squeezing through, slipping by, always careful not to idle or impasse, or touch the cursed. Rhizomes are not shy, stealthy or happy-when-unnoticed - quite the opposite, though multiplicities may be. Moving in such a way as not to hit walls or brush up next to high-friction, coarse surfaces is not the same as walking along the shadows of a wall for cover. The rhizome exists above and near the surface; it can feel the heat of the day. This theory flanks will to power, and past the will to live, towards a will to thrive.

Though multiplicities start from somewhere, these points of origin are now and forever redundant when a rhizome is formed, since it has changed in nature, and will most likely meet other points in a continuum of new beginnings. The rhizome then, is different than a tall standing plant reaching up to the heavens for 'light,' with subterranean root systems continually sucking moisture and nutrients from the soil below. With those verticalities, origins are the upmost importance since their origin is their source of sustainability. Once high enough, the sun plays a larger role in the life of the plant through the will to flower. In these structures, over and under these conditions, the tree forms a special bond with their ends, usually to the point where invisible borders are created to protect these sacred poles now reserved for worship. This is self-depreciating, without the cloud-reaching tree trunk and mass of foliage of leaves there would be no need for a huge underground enterprise laboring to feed the massive overage. The rhizome has the best of both worlds, in that it occupies the middle space without living an existence of sub-servitude. The rhizome is a mode of knowledge, a movement and a shift with all sides free and moving to the next. The next might not be agreeable, but the rhizome will find its own door, or move to the next. Perhaps we have privileged the verb *to move forward* too much, so far, or

have not worked it out enough. One can turn and travel back-ways and still be moving 'forward,' as long as the rhizome is not traveling backwards down the line it started (though it will, if that is what it takes). From here, onward is the presence of the rhizome. "Rhizome is an anti-genealogy," (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21) not to retraced steps, or fall back, but to move onward.

xxn

Rhizomes have their being, not only in the onward, but in all the connections that comprise and construct the assemblage. The term 'rhizomes' is used here instead of a "rhizome," a form of singularity, since a rhizome is never one, but consists of connected multiplicities which become assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21). We prefer to use an extension of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the assemblage Deleuze calls the *assemblages of desire* (2004b, pp. 399-400). Foucault is to power, as Deleuze is to desire. Lines of flight are not created from their own free will, but created by desire and affect. Desire plays into this discourse like the drone of an orchestra, in the vibrations and reverb off the walls –it is everywhere, driving and powering, sometimes in a nondescript way, especially in pedagogy, for example.

Deleuze's notion of *desire* is often related to Foucault's notion of *power*, "power formations swarm amongst assemblages of desire following one of their dimensions" (Deleuze, 1994a, p. 61). Power and desire are hard to rupture in this intensity, and hard to decenter once a defined core is formed. Yet, Deleuze states that power follows one of desire's dimensions suggesting a space or break exists between these assemblages since power and desire still exist in difference: power_desire. I sense that this has implications on all forms of expression, how desire expresses

and power expresses, as two different multiplicities. However, for our inquiry, we will look at the assemblages of desire in pedagogy.

In Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Preface to Derrida's Of Grammatology* (1967), she critiques philosopher's presence in written expression, and the desire and "longing for a center" that "spawns hierarchized oppositions" that have plagued 'the history of Western philosophy' (p. lxix). Jacques Derrida is insistent on pulling us away from such traps and enclosures through locating the power formations in language, especially written language, how power creates formations through expression. He calls for a deconstruction of these texts become aware of the metaphysical mechanisms that are at work to enclose and privileges meaning (1967, p. lxix). Derrida reassures the romantics and sentimentalists, "the total absence of the subject and object of a statement -the death of the writer/or the disappearance of the object he was able to describe - does not prevent a text from 'meaning' something" (Derrida, 1978, pp. 92-93). Meaning now is reserved for the viewer, not for the world; art resides in the aesthetic experience of the viewer. Derrida leads into a discussion on Husserl, and his idea that the subject's presence does not escape their intuition in mode -writing, speech, and art. Subjectivity in bloom! Derrida makes his way to the frontlines of language, the written word, and to the subject and object, signifier/signified, dichotomy that form the basis of structuralist, hierarchical thought. Enter Lacan, who says, it "is not only man who speaks, but...in man and by man it speaks … his nature becomes woven by the effects where the structure of languages, whose material he becomes, is recovered" (Lacan, 1966, pp. 688-689).

Both Deleuze and Derrida discuss *sense*, and Deleuze nonsense, and how this logic plays into experience and meaning making. Deleuze says that sense is the very moment of becoming (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 25). Derrida says that we "must conclude that sense in general, the noematic [knowable] sense of every experience, is something which, by its very nature, must be already

able to be impressed on a meaning, to leave or receive its formal determination in a meaning. Sense would therefore already be a kind of blank and mute writing which is reduplicated in meaning" (Derrida, 1978, p. 117). Derrida's deconstruction calls for a postponement of meaning of a written expression until the parts are taken apart; how a mechanic will take apart an engine to locate an over-compensation in the motor or find a leak. The verb "*defer*" comes from the French word *deferre*, is translated "to bring down" or to "bear." Perhaps, Derrida is not suggesting just putting meaning to the wayside, but remove it from its privileged height in the metaphysical sense, and carry it along. Meaning, then, is contingent on "sense" which we will relate to G. W. F. Hegel's notion of *sense* as pertaining to the logic concerning what is right and what is wrong. Yet, for our rhizoanalysis, our understanding will come from Deleuze's notion of sense, whose presence appears in the event (2004a, p. 25). Like Derrida, Deleuze speaks to sense and meaning, and how truth "always relates to sense in a completely proportional relation... Sense is the production of truth. Truth is only the effect, the result of sense" (Olsson, 2009, p. 110). Deleuze also dissolves the binary between sense and nonsense, since nonsense opens ways we reach sense, and there remains a presence of nonsense within sense" (Deleuze, 2004a, pp. 78-83). This idea opens a door for the abstractions found in artwork, not excluding scribble and inviting accidents.

Derrida urges us to defer meaning, opposed to ontological methodologies such as Hermeneutics and Phenomenology, but we will argue there is more similarities than not. Spivak continues this argument and summarizes, the "goal of Lacanian analysis is to draw out and establish the 'truth' of the subject" (1967, p. lxiii). She also provides a concise Jacques Lacan quote, no "language can speak the truth about truth, for the grounds of truth are that which it speaks, it cannot found itself in any other way" (Lacan, 1966, pp. 867-868). Is he speaking of redundancy, reciprocation, or irony? In this case, as the philosopher (or artist) makes truth

claims and spells them out in a text, the words drop off from behind as the sentences are written; like an artist who creates a graphite drawing of a pencil, or paints a picture of a paint brush, or chisels a marble sculpture of a quarry ending with a joke or a definition of a definition? Pedagogical researcher and author, Margaret Latta speaks to sense-making as opposed to meaning-making while in the creation of a work of art "the experience of art making.., is an experience that absorbs me in process. It is an experience that relies on dialogue and participation as a means to sense making. It is an experience that has to be felt and lived through as a whole" (2001b, p. 3).

The idea is to work with notions and to hold off judgment as long as possible; apparently some philosophers struggle with leaving their ideas open and resisting the enclosing sphere of orthodox thinking, that Brian Massumi compares to the experiencing of "deja vu without the portent of the new" (Massumi, 2002, p. 191). Perhaps we have met a rupture. It is a good thing that our research inquiry is not limited to thinking and written expression, but involves the body, experience, aesthetics, and artistic expression. We will now look to seemingly contradictory theories and philosophies in a new line of flight.

Hermeneutics will be utilized as the interpretative style, and art making will be conceived as a conversation. This naturally brings language to the fore, creating many compelling pedagogical and ontological questions of what a child is and why we create art. How we are using different philosophies to understand experience could be seen as a fusion of horizons and a conversation on one hand, and an extending of our horizon and context on the other, as our discourse meets that of education. Hermeneutical conversation will help to connect ours and their discourses into one; we feel Gadamer's philosophy can help us smooth and iron the wrinkles in a less violent and diplomatic way. This said, we must avoid letting the hermeneutic process circle, and indirectly grasp the parts we are trying to emancipate. I will use hermeneutics

to open and loosen and widen the space, but when it tries to prematurely circle back, such as with meaning or Truth, we will dismiss the "I" conversant before we lose all momentum forward. It might prove more helpful to spiral the moves so that it creates circular movement without completely returning to the ending or beginning. This could be tricky. Conversation and artmaking –though I claim that they are interchangeable, they are not a perfect switch. Conversation deals with language and that can be containing, and containable -artmaking is likewise, but artmaking also deals with the nonlinguistic.

Margaret Latta who works on these same kinds of threads, senses that aesthetics are at play with virtually all self-other conversations, such as those between people, or between person and artwork or text. Aesthetics, and the attention to the qualities, plays into these many questions and she refers to this as "aesthetic play," "...finding an inbetween position requires my willingness to dwell in situations, to become conversant, I need a receptive, open attitude concomitant with a questioning vigilance" (2001b, p. 14). However, she is describing her experiences of working as a teacher-researcher in a noisy classroom, whose conversations are far removed from the quiet, still, and intimate solo read of a text. "Living and breathing, in situations as researcher...I cannot separate out all that comes to bear on each moment. Being in the moment I am at the juncture of the movement between self and other. In this sense my inquiry is phenomenological, although a hermeneutic co-presence lives and breathes within this immediacy as well" (p. 14). Latta's aesthetic play compliments Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome and how it "connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states" (1987, p. 21). I find it helpful to connect this research and ideas and to begin thinking of them not as a cohesive document grounded in logical, linear history, but as an assemblage, not forced together through appropriation or signification, but grouped aesthetically.

Art possesses a dynamic, rhizomatic capacity to connect different languages, peoples, contexts, and ideas. Remember Deleuze and Guattari's poignant example of a rhizome with the wasp-orchid rhizome, whose initial connection happened aesthetically and through experience (1987, p. 10)?

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The art teacher naturally becomes a sort of *nomad* and margin walker who exists on the perimeters of the State education system and State Apparatus (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 24). Artists and art teachers have often taken to such outsider roles as this, or appointed by their school and communities as Shaman! Yet, many times the structures themselves have produced these positions and gaps for educators of the arts, and curricula outside the reach of standardization. Though the art teacher is loosely tied to State curriculum, and whose subject is not represented on standardized tests, is in a unique position to ask the important questions, such as, "Where do our students fit into this structure?" "How do our students play into this model?"

In the article, *Walking through Walls*, written by an Israeli architect and postmodern scholar, Eyal Weizman offers another type of nomadic movement, one more aggressive, sometimes more creative than the average nomad. He discusses how the military solved various problems trying to infiltrate a crowded city with little space to maneuver and with streets too narrow to drive tanks. The article describes how walls were reconceptualized and how equipment and strategies were designed to blast down the walls or see over them. Brian Massumi makes a poignant point that walls are built by power (1992, p. 6). Education is overcrowded with walls (and not all of them are of the invisible type). Why are art rooms typically at the end of a school building, or in some cases detached in a separate building or

usually near the gym or band room? Why are Board of Education buildings isolated, sometimes closer to an urban environment or downtown rather than spread out in each office of each school. Why do some BOE's look more like banks or doctor's offices? In this structure, the separated and privilege BOE becomes the core, and the individual schools in the middle ground function as a norm. The school administers take on nomadic qualities as they circle on the border of the BOE core. The students comprise the norm, along with the academic teachers. The arts exist on the margins, and can even be felt by the students, who feel like school outsiders, like band kids, art club members, one-act play casts, expressive dance teams, pushed to the furthest reaches and dusty corners and broom closets of the school. Standardized test scores have become the capital in our education system, it can effect funding, who gets hired or re-hired, who gets to stay, who has to leave, who gets recognition. This creates walls of all dimensions in every public school, walls that effect voice and movement. It is problematic for the Nomad Art Educator; how we infiltrate a strict system of barriers without hurting the ones we are trying to liberate, similar to a postmodern military that needs to push down walls without pushing it down on civilians. In our horizon, it is possible to get caught in the cross fire, like the children in our classrooms. Do we pull the children out to the margin (nomad students) and train them into soldiers to fight alongside us? If not, the children will remain obstacles and hostages in these power structures.

The nomad works differently than those inside, since they live in a smoother space with virtually no guiding landmarks except the borders of the establishment, that are in a constant state of curving away to one side. "The space of the nomad thought is qualitatively different from State space. Air against earth. State space is 'striated,' or gridded. Movement in it is confined as by gravity to a horizontal plane, and limited by the order of that plane to preset paths fixed and identifiable points. Nomad space is 'smooth,' or open-ended. One can rise up at any point and move to any other. Its mode of distribution is the nomos: arraying oneself in an open

space (hold the street), as opposed to the logos of entrenching oneself in a closed space (hold the fort)" (Massumi, p. xiii). Outside this structure is 'otherness' or an anonymous, un-gridded void. This is a hypothetical space, in that we are never free from structures; even the nomad typically does not stray too far from the wall. Since the nomad is free from the enclosure, they exist as an individual, or an individual multiplicity, safe from the nameless, clone-like herd of the norm. The nomad thrives in a wide open vista away from the artificial lights of civilization, yet the ugly glow of city can be seen from the corner of their wild eyes. The power core calls from within the borders of the structure, will the nomad answer?

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the *nomad* helps to conceptualize teachers as those "who refuses the established power relations and sets off a certain kind of 'bricolage' in the educational processes" (Olsson, 2009, p. 39). Liselott Mariett Olsson, a Deleuzian scholar and author of *Movement and Experimentation in Young Children's Learning: Deleuze and Guattari in Early Childhood Education* (2009), employs a pragmatic treatment of such notions of the rhizome, lines of flight and assemblages of desire in an educational setting. We will now present how she navigated this pedagogical space with her class, in an effort to witness Deleuzian philosophy at play in a preschool classroom, not far removed from the structure of many art rooms around our country. Much of what she was capable to do was due to a restructuring of her classroom and the institution she worked in. The roles of the teacher and the purposes of the preschool and institution were also conceptualized as shifting and changeable, and under a constant state of construction. The school is not seen as a micro-world cut from the milieu, but one where the outside world produces the preschool and the preschool produces the world. As parts of an assemblage, where in the institution of this school these children are considered a part of the political environment "rather than targets for political intervention" (p. 15).

The entire population of the school, including the young students are equally involved in the practice, consisting of mostly experiments and working through various constructed problems, that become events and encounters. Subjects are constantly being made, "a becoming subject, and this subject is much more than an individual subject; it is totally unique and singular subject that is never repeatable" (p. 127). The preschool becomes a place of active construction of knowledge with all participants. The learning process is a multiplicity, with many different approaches to content knowledge: "aesthetic, ethical, political, and scientific," which are organized "in projects" (pp. 11-12). The schooldays are described as "intense" and "unpredictable" (p. 11) and challenge the ontological notion of what a child is. The children are reconceptualized away from the image of the "competent child," since its believed that this involves predetermined notions that create prejudices in the educators, and could work against their desire to "imagine the child in more open and complex ways" (p. 13). Instead, they promote the becoming child, children who are viewed as in a state of "perpetually becoming and not being defined once and for all...To work practically with this perspective, the focus has become less about the individual child and more what takes place in between the children" (pp. 14, 44).

The curriculum is ignited through *works in projects*, since with any content of knowledge; problems are embedded in the difference and translation, or application. This could be compared with how art teachers organize their lessons into 'projects,' and how many different media are used during the course of the year, and the new language each brings. The children are a part of the construction of the problems throughout all stages, notably in the initial stage along with their teacher. The idea here is that the problems never cease, but flow in the next inquiry and it usually takes a whole team to create such an enterprise. Their curriculum could be best explained as the art of constructing a problem (pp. 16, 182); the teacher plays a greater

importance in this curriculum which "consists of a much more complex, rigorous and up-to-date approach to learning and knowledge" (p. 183). Within the projects the teacher/researchers "need to study carefully the content of knowledge at stake and they can be helped in [widening] the perspectives on the content of knowledge through cooperating with other disciplines" (p. 17). The teacher does not bring a set of objects for the students to meet, but presents problems - constructed with the help of the students, to initiate the project, with an emphasis on the inquiries the students seem the most interested in at the current moment. The open ended nature of the curriculum and the student-driven, problem-based projects create opportunities to "go beyond establish problems, to reinvent them and add new ways of understanding them," always promoting multiple solutions, as to not end with recognition and stopping the process of exploration (pp. 17-18). After reading this text, it seems the teacher must be a researcher, expert, documenter, facilitator, presenter, stage hand, photographer, recorder, "collective experimenter," and a good listener (p. 180), as well as smart, thrifty, sharp, energetic, empathetic, sensitive, resourceful, innovative, encouraging, creative, alert and responsible for all the duties that come with managing a classroom.

Olsson investigates possible contributions from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and how these philosophers help us think differently; their "philosophy of relations, creations, and experimental empiricism" become a theoretical resource to help "regain movement and experimentation" in the preschool (p. 23, 51). Continuing to try to free their curriculum from the 'pre', Deleuze and Guattari's "redefining structures as open-ended and unstable assemblages" proves helpful (Patton & Protevi, 2003). The researchers use much of their philosophical work like a 'tool box' borrowing old ideas and using them in current problems as they arrive. The researchers feel that working in ontology creates the spaces they are looking to construct in the preschool. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the encounter is useful with their

focus on the conversations of their students and their interpretations of the problems they encounter, away from the truths and universals, trees and roots of epistemology. Deleuze and Guattari's pluralist empiricism, that accounts for thought created through encounters, helped the researchers "focus is on the new, the interesting and the remarkable, instead of the controlling of parameters as well as the expected outcome" (p. 28). Their rhizomatic theory hints at our place in the curriculum, a construction, without falling into one single method out of convenience, availability, or routine, but one's process who balances pragmatics, and promotes openness and compromise. The root of the word "methodology" is *meta*, which means "the road"... "Method, then, in its original presence means 'along the road;' a method that forms as the construction of the problem moves along" (p. 121). Such methods are assemblages not borne or prone to reduction and narrowing down to one idea, and certainly not resembling the scientific method of Positivism. A method, or rather an approach and attitude, could be used here to create rhizomatic movements in-between theory and practice. "There can never be resemblance between theory and practice, they are both practices but not of the same sort" (pp. 98-99). "According to Deleuze, a theory always, sooner or later, runs into a wall...they sort of [transform] each other in a reciprocal relationship, sometimes in a very violent way" (Olsson, pp. 98-99).

Much of the researcher's methodological approach involves the Deleuzian notion of the encounter and how it creates thinking. She reconceptualizes the researcher as one who actively invents instead of observing at a distance and projects their own desires onto the curriculum and students. Deleuze and Guattari's definition of desire, as the unconscious production of real, vastly differs from the definition that desire is created in what we lack (2004b). "Instead of looking for what the child is lacking or needing, the teacher can now look for what the child, through desire, is producing... When desire is defined as lack or a need, the teacher takes the role

of an authority and a judge, supervising the children and judging them against predefined categories of normal development" (Olsson, p. 99). The teacher becomes an aware listener trying to hear the languages of desire in their student's conversations, especially those that can impact momentum. "Teachers can then arrange situations where it is possible for the children to continue to exercise their desires within everyday life in the preschool" (p. 99). "According to Deleuze and Guattari desire is always assembled; it takes place in between people. We never desire an object; we desire the object in a complex network of relations" (p. 100). Thus, teachers start listening to the dialogues between their students during these movements at what desires they are producing since "children are always after something...even [their] oddest expressions are never random;" (p. 102) children are producing sense constantly.

Deleuze's notion of the *event* helped the researchers theorize the happenings of the preschool, and how the movements within the experiments connect to language, since "events are expressed by linguistic propositions. Linguistic propositions are normally thought of as that which gives us access to what is true or false in the events in which we take part" (Olsson, p. 106). This leads us to Deleuze's notion of sense -that which concerns what is true and what is false, and what Deleuze calls the fourth dimension. "Sense is the very border of things and propositions. Sense is the very moment of becoming," and nonsense is a way we reach sense (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 25). This logic "seems to be a promising way of approaching young children and their learning processes, since the experiences from practices show that young children very often use language without making sense and nonsense into each other's opposites" (Olsson, p. 114). The concepts of sense and nonsense in the event have implications on the teachers to "go for a hunt/experiment with the pedagogical documentations, so as to find and construct what sense is being produced in the events. Do not be blinded by what seems to be

obvious truth but leave truth to be produced by sense...Look instead for and construct the verb-form in the events; focus on that which is coming about" (Olsson, p. 119).

Olsson's research can be used in art education practice and can help to look at artists and communities of practice as assemblages that are responsible for movement and experimentation in our art practices, whether molding a clay sculpture, setting up an art pedagogical space in our art room, or designing a curriculum. "Assemblages of desire concern how desire sets off as little machinery and takes place in between people", and where the "distinction between individual and the society no longer becomes meaningful" (Olsson, 2009, p. 54). Lines of flight and movements in "belief and desire are impossible to predict, control, supervise or evaluate according to preset standards," (p. 76) and the assemblages of desire can be used as an "alternative way of understanding the relationship individual/society in order to account for movement and experimentation in subjectivity and learning," and creating "new realities" (p. 134). 'Belief' here is used in conjunction with what we know through the senses and through our body. Thus, the concept of assemblages of desire involves not just conscious thought, but bodily thought too, especially considering Deleuze and Guattari's use of Spinoza's concept of affect, or the potential of the body. "Affect concerns a body's potential and the Spinozian idea of the fact that we do not yet know what a body can do," (Olsson, 2009, p. 76) which extends to the fact that we do not yet know what children can do, or what they experience during art making. This helps to explain the mysterious and reactive nature of children during the construction of problems and how they work through the projects. "When our body is being restricted in its capacity to act, we feel passivity, sadness, dissatisfaction etc. When it is extending its capacities to act, we feel intensity, joy, satisfaction etc." (Olsson, p. 152-153).

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *lines of flight* help to further describe the diverse and unpredictable moments of the art making experience. The lines of flight "run like a zig-zag

crack in between the other lines-and it is only these lines that... are capable of creating something new" (Olsson, p. 58). However, the lines can take other courses and shapes, many variations and are constructed in different styles and intensities which can affect experiments and research. Rigid lines can excite fear in the experimenters and make them stay with what they already understand, and in this sense fall back on assumptions (Olsson, pp. 86-87). "Clarity is the danger of the supple line;" (Olsson, p. 86) how teachers, for example, might make value judgments on what they think is best to perform in an experiment. Power is very harmful in all lines of flight and can sabotage experimentation, since variables can be manipulated at will "to guarantee the expected outcome," (p. 87) a real threat in this age of standardization. Another concern surrounds the possible severing or segmenting of lines, since this could lead to destruction and violence when the violated or interrupted lines are re-appropriation, and how in education this could mean the individualization of the students (Olsson, p. 88). Understanding how lines of flight are powered through desire and affect can help art educators begin to understand why children make art, and what a child is.

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We will use rhizoanalysis as a way of analyzing texts that allows us to see our questions in the middle, towards constructing a new map and new questions. Since parts of our question include the experiences of children, and since experiences are a form of representation, the findings will first be traced to let the ruptures appear and to find new entry points for unforeseen connections. This will help to smooth the space between our ideas and findings and stretch the bubble to allowing for more movability. We will utilize Deleuze and Guattari's rhizoanalysis to open paths of understanding by linking and folding the findings with texts other than those

typically used towards developing new understandings and questions regarding children's art making. With the visual arts in mind, we must be careful how we put rhizoanalysis to work, since Deleuze and Guattari make sure to point out that the rhizome is "unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography," since the rhizome is "not the object of reproduction...It is a short-term memory, or antimemory" (p. 21). However, they are talking more about art as interpretation, and how the graphic arts are illustrative and bound in language. Drawing can be an interpretation of reality, but not always, I would argue. Photography is more apparent, how the photographer is not in full control of his medium; does the photographer take the picture or does the camera? Nonetheless, the photographer interprets in how they select and frame through the lens. A photograph is always a picture of the outside and the artists are reducing reality to its most essential or aesthetic representational constituents. Nonetheless, interpretations are tracings.

We will attempt to flank this position in how our children are making art, in paintings and sculpture. These young students will be prompted to set out working on piece of art, not producing traditional images in classical themes or using another artist's style or technique, but using their imagination and experimentation to create unexpected imagery. The works are not guaranteed to become non-objective works of art, only abstractly assembled. After the child makes their first move, in the form of a mark, the process has begun and they are on their own. In art, lines are called "moving dots" or "moving points," and any masterpiece begins with some initial mark or gesture. Yet, 'initial' does not mean "one." The artist's mark, i.e., brushstroke and chisel mark, are multiplicities on the move, before we have time name or categorize it, the artist and their mark have 'created' a rhizome. The child also forms a rhizome with the medium, and in some cases the media is a rhizome, and these multiplicities create an assemblage. "Multiplicities are rhizomatic" which is why rhizomes grow in dimensions when new connections are made; rhizomes are two or more multiplicities, so when a rhizome connects to a new multiplicity it

gains in amazing ways since multiplicities exists in various "determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 8). When connections are made it brings implications and consequences, and each not only has the capacity to make a new, expected experiences, but each potentially changes the game. In art, it is comparable to an artist working on a collage from a mass of magazine cut-outs; each piece glued on not only can change the dimensions of the negative space (the 'unused' or empty space of the artwork), colors, form and textures... but each cut-out alone is a multiplicity that brings with it a horizon surrounding the context and time which it was first produced, printed, inking technologies, decay, styles and tastes of its origin, odor of the paper, toner, or bacteria -such as mildew and the subject of the image -the visual representation. All this is filtered through the prejudices and interpretations and understandings of the collage artist -who is, at least, a multiplicity 'themselves.'

"The wisdom of the plants: even when they have roots, there is always an outside where they form a rhizome with something else -with the wind, an animal, human beings (and there is also an aspect under which animals themselves form rhizomes, as do people, etc.)" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 11). We think the concept of the rhizome and rhizoanalysis works well with our questions since plants do not rely on language to react or understand or reflex on those reactions. In this way, plants become a good concept to begin understanding body knowing, as it relates to how children navigate in their art making experiences, which include moments of mute experience, or "pre-linguistic experience". This experience does not simply cut off in the moments once thoughts come into the artist's cognition, even those unsubstantiated and gibberish, but transition out rather slowly, usually. Mute experiences are rhizomatic in that they restart each time a quality is encountered, and when dealing with a work of art, can be in the hundreds, or so depending how disinterested and attentive the viewer is. It becomes a movement of examination how the eyes move to see the next part, then muteness starts and transitions into

clarity, and this phenomenon is recycled each time a new sensation and quality is reached. In this way, a mute experience lasts a second, more or less. What many philosophers call experience is an assemblage of fathomless pure experiences, and included is this assemblage are fathomless mute experiences, which are not equally distributed with its complimentary, experiences of agreement.

Our primary task will be to develop children's art making into questions. With this in mind, our inquiry involves many lines, including abstract, non-representational and art making as an event. I sense that representation will be one of the ruptures in this rhizoanalysis, since it threatens map making. What is in place to help the children stay clear of representational thought while they construct their work of art? Some unlearning might be called on for this. Are we capable of non-representational thought? Unless the children work through a continual succession of purposeful mistakes and accidents, this trap could be unavoidable. We are representational beings, constituted through millennia of evolution and a life time of socialization. Is our survival instinct too great and deep to uproot, since it also resides in our bodies? Human beings have always relied on representation to recognize food sources, suitable shelter, tool pragmatics, choosing a mate to sustain the race; we use our eyes to know how to survive. None of us would exist if our ancestors did not have the ability to see with clarity what is edible, or dangers of drinking contaminated water and other poisonous substances, the instability of the immediate environment, to identify and watch guard for predatory animals and attacking warriors. Humans are programed to see and know quickly, since in our beginning decisions were made with decisiveness and directness; we learned to live with our decisions or else. An integrated body-mind artmaking experience (Dewey) might be in store if we are to escape representational tracemaking.

Hermeneutics was brought in to look at artmaking as a conversation between artist and artwork. One approach could be to eliminate the "art" from conversants, artist and artwork, creating a conversation between "-ist" - "work." This removes the beginning of both from being rooted in the long history and methods of art, and begins the conversation at the middle. Another way would be to not think of an artwork is coded in a strange or alien language, rather than a common tongue we think we 'know' or can be easily translated beforehand. At the top of the paper, we cautioned to referring to artmaking as art, and instead voted for conceptualizing it as work. And since the artist is constituted in the creation of a work of art and not before (there is no art before work or play), perhaps this should become less about a conversation about the child and the artwork and more about a conversation between the media and the imagery, for example.

By abstract art, we are reaching beyond the standard contemporary experience of viewing an artwork composed of art elements in a nontraditional format. Abstract art can have parts that resemble that which are found in our world, yet be arranged in a non-linear and illogical and distorted way. This is sometimes referred to as Avant-garde art. These works can have recognizable parts, but they may be in a non-sensible ordering. Deleuze already noted that nonsense is the path to sense, so we should proceed down this line with caution. By non-representational art, we are referring to something much larger to which abstract art is a part. Non-representational art appears to have no connection to everyday life and the things we encounter, such as people, things of natural world, man-made objects and symbols. A non-representational artwork can be referred to as other-worldly, purely aesthetic, or formalist. All this is contrasted with representation art, such as art in traditional fine art formats such as still life, landscapes, portraits, or in classical thematic works such as historical painting, genre scenes or monomedia classical materials such as marble, bronze, and oil paint; fine art is typically historically obedient to canons and long traditions of processes.

How can we begin to understanding children's art making? Olsson found Deleuze helpful in this way, to look at what was encountered at school as events. We can put the aesthetic experience and hermeneutic conversation back in the toolbox, and begin to look at these relationships and happenings as pedagogical events and encounters. How then are non-representational events different from other events in artmaking? These events do not privilege beginnings, but focus instead on how artists work with media, responding to the any number of problems and accidents that occur, and how the form of the artwork takes shapes in surprising, unorthodox ways. A rupture could emerge when the child begins to rely heavily on recognizable shapes, structuring, patterns, or begins to associate words to parts of the work. This could be avoided by taking the ownership away from the artist and strip them of the rights to declare something that is not theirs and something beyond their control. If the student tries to 'fix' anything, this could be a sign that they have begun to work from a preconceived notion and have developed a sense of what is right and what is wrong in their painting. The children will be discouraged to name a part or anything in their work that comes about during the process, and will be encouraged to make continual changes and additions during the allotted time. In this way the creation of the work of art is a performance, and the more experimental this performance and event, the closer it becomes rhizomatic. In this art, each mark is sure and unsure, and the edges of the canvas are never enough and too much. Does the artist always bring something to creation from their past experiences? This art is not autobiographical in the sense that the artist is working from personal narrative. Our youngest students, with little to no art education, could prove to be our best subjects, not as a control group, but because this style of art seems to require a deferment of self. This is ironic, since this study comes from and concerns a problem in art education; could we art educators be preventing student artists from finding new directions and unexpected surprises in their work?

"My sense is that it is through the relational space (no matter how cramped and porous it may be) that exists between representational and non-representational qualities, forces, desires, actions, analysis, models, practices, processes, materials, subjectivities, etc., that makes them both possible. We are afforded non-representational elements because of the relation that they share with elements that are representational" (Schulte, personal communication, Nov. 28, 2012).

Chris Schulte, a Deleuzoguattarian scholar, closes the door on unconstituted non-representational forms in art, simply by stating that without representation we could never understand non-representation. Thus we can never escape it, much like we can never escape metaphysics until we stop using its language. We only know non-representation because representation taught us what it is not. Yet, this opens up another space (and closes another) in the form of an encounter with representational and non-representational art.

In the near future, we will begin to trace children's art making experiences as part of this research, and representing the children's experiences in words. Schulte again states his concern for a reciprocal effect, "the problem is that the tracing is an iteration of representation, a technological effect that governs representation and is produced by it as well" (personal communication, Nov. 28, 2012), where each answers the other forming a circle, where nothing new is produced. Tracing is contrasted with mapping, which is constructive and productive and "resonates with that of non-representation. The map does not represent, mimic, or mirror the world, it constructs it" (Schulte, personal communication, Nov. 28, 2012)! Abilities, desires and many other things will come into play while the teacher-researchers document, collect and represent the children's experiences in words. In this sense, the researcher will be participating with the children in constructing these events. How will we then, ever escape the imitation of imitation of imitation...? It seems we are moving backwards from Deleuze and Guattari's famous quote, "the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, 'and...and...and..." (1987, p. 25).

"Tracings and representation will always exist, but the question is for how long? How long will it take for you and the children to put these representational forms back on the map, connect them to something on the move, something indeterminate and unexpected, something that will uproot them from the soils that desire them, the child, art, pedagogy, knowledge, being, etc., to be whole and to be stable, to be predictable and in place" (Schulte, personal communication, Nov. 28, 2012).

Even though this rhizoanalysis ends here, temporarily, with many more questions than when we started, our sense is that we need to null the children's desire before their artmaking experience, and this is where Deleuze and Guattari's rhizoanalysis could help.

CHILDREN'S ARTMAKING

The clamoring of imagination, the buzz of creativity, the purr of craft, children make avant-garde music and art like animals. The will to create presents itself in the body-mind of the young. What is all this noise about? What is being produced? Deleuze says desire is not the longing for something we do not possess, but the "production of the real" (2004b), the desires that constitute. There is no desire but assembling, so what do we want? What do children want? What do we want from them? Curriculums are fueled by desire. Curriculum nowadays, so politically coded and often times opaque, offers little space for improvisation, or improve-vision. Where does the child's autobiography fit in this institution? Art teachers give children the opportunity to try on new identities and to write their stories, always incomplete and changing. Art is an autobiographical safe place where children can try many different identities. Identity is never fixed, and more unstable in children. This is not negative, or a sign of lacking, since identity excludes the Other and creates a totalizing container, unity, and closes the circle. Art students can play the evil villain, the Romantic hero, the mad scientist, and the princess, whatever (the art teacher can play the robot, the clone, the slave, the punching bag, the script reciter, and the test giver). There is no escaping curriculum, just as there is no escaping structure. It would seem that art provides a break from this in academia, especially seeing children who enter the art classroom like they woke up from a bad dream. If only they knew they were walking into another structure. Most kids do not notice it though, since they are not being forced to memorize stuff or count. They do not realize how using mediums is a form of thinking, or how their working imaginations are achievements of mind, or how a drawing can be formally assessed. Learning is easier in experience, under a spell, and the minutes and hours melt away unnoticed -art classes always seem to fly by. There is something to be said about the

aesthetic experiences that are created in many art classrooms in public schools, in this age of standardization. We can witness children becoming victims of routine and rote and detached from experience and hope, in their everyday school days. The art classroom is the break and the breakaway from the tight spaces of public schools.

For the authenticity of this qualitative research, I worked with elementary school children to gain a more complete knowledge of how students react in these kinds of environments with these sorts of inquiries. I, as the art teacher, try to 'be there' with the students during the whole artistic process, instead of a distant voyeur or inverted scholar, who is hardly present. This means that the teacher changed roles during each class period from curriculum planner to teacher and presenter to researcher and participant, and back to curriculum planner. Projects and lessons are composed to open the children's perspectives, to inspire them, and to give the students the agency to brave the shifting, unconventional ways of artmaking, such as abstract works of art. I studied non-representational forms and ways of artmaking to explore the possibilities of imagination. Non-representation artmaking and imagery was problamaticized as a mythical achievement, though not of the realm of unicorns, Frosty or trolls, but one that I believed possible to reach in our classroom, in the allotted time. This sort of attitude seemed plausible and doable with the students, if only they could will it, and will it on cue, and will it consistently. I argue that non-representation is only possible in the natural world, i.e., light, color, and is not possible in our classroom, mostly due to the limits of our art media and the low budget art materials of our department. One example is the insufficient range of paint colors and pigment we use that cannot reflect spectral color. Nature critiques itself! This is an universal problem with pigments, but it is more extreme in many public school art classes, lucky to have the basic eight color set! We can now argue that we can never say what we intend to say (Gadamer) because our materials fail us!

Non-representation is presented to the young artists as the ideal of abstract thinking. Many experts argue that all art is abstract, and positively in the sense that art is the interpretation of the artist and artworks are illusions. Are these beautiful interpretations secondary experiences or can the artist create in the primary experience by finding their presence during artmaking? Are no thoughts original? It might be wise that young artists not think so. If thoughts are viewed only as linguistic, then yes, since our language is comprised of recycled words and meanings that span time and territory. Also yes, if we are creating a new language; no, if we are creating new vocabularies. If yes, we are still trapped in the structure of language, thus representation, yet never stuck in our heads. We are not always inside, or inside the moment, but are both. Our bodies are thinking and being throughout the artistic process, and more so with certain art media. 'Feeling' is better used here, and will replace "thinking" with relation to our sensitive body. Our bodies know what our minds cannot visualize, such as those things we desire, and desire to know.

Composing the following nonrepresentational art activities for this research was a way of deciding which variables to isolate, though none were wholly resolved. I doubt that no representation art exists, but when working with hundreds of small budding artists, it is easy to forget reason in the light of possibilities. I sought to free the children from the constraints of having to work under a defined subject matter. Subject matter was problematized throughout the whole process and the children were constantly discouraged to create their own subject matter, by defining what occurred during artmaking. Some children embraced and appeared to achieve this self-restraint, but many complained of the urge to make a picture. Others struggled to conceptualize abstract works of art, and some found them ridiculous, pointless, ugly, boring, and random. This created a challenge for me as the teacher in creating assignments that would not become science experiments, but were loaded with possibilities and multiple stopping points.

Meanings and ends, and intentionality were not vocalized by the teacher as proponents of abstract art, and were presented as redundant. More attention was given to the attitudes of the working students and keeping a positive and buzzing atmosphere in the room.

The surface and edges of the paper were not used as a border to define the composition, but reconceptualized as an entry into infinite space. Specific media were chosen to assist the children in layering and making changes fast. Some ordinary mediums were used in more tactile and physical different ways. The lessons were arranged so that each subsequent lesson was far different from the last. Yet, the projects share some commonalities –all attempted to be open-ended and open-beginning-ed, so that new and unexpected experiences could occur. By "new and unexpected" we are not referring to totalizing relations or cures for cancer, but discoveries that are new to the individual child. What might be usual, old hat, drab, ugly, the same for us, might be new and unexpected for a child, who has never experienced such a thing. Thus, the playful middle was emphasized and reinforced throughout the journey since many directions, turns, detours, can be taken during artmaking. For these changes to take place in the classroom and transformatively in the students, I had to make changes in my attitude and awareness-level and quality, and repress curricular desires and old routines for a new pedagogy.

Curriculum and pedagogy are not typically conceptualized interchangeably and their distinction is important for our current inquiry. Pedagogy is how we teach. Pedagogy is an art form, a multi-dimensional art form, and can take on a metaphysical form or possess a higher metaphysical stance. Ellsworth (2004) calls pedagogy a "clumsy and obscure word" (p. 43), yet we will argue that it is 'clumsy' if in the wrong hands and 'obscure' in its omnipresence, because it is everywhere like grass and bricks. Like art, Pedagogy lives in conversation, movement, process, and in the middle. Curriculum, on the other hand, is what we teach. Curriculum is what shapes that form known as Pedagogy, and also includes 'who' shapes these forms. In this sense,

curriculum is an object. Pedagogy sang louder in this series of nonrepresentational lessons than had previously been experienced in other units, since the very nature of pedagogy is the abstract openness found in art. Ellsworth illustrates this connection, pedagogy "like painting, sculpture, or music, can be magical in its artful manipulation of inner ways of knowing into a mutually transforming relation with outer events, selves, objects, and ideas" (2004, p. 7). The nonrepresentational projects dealt more with aesthetics and the attention to qualities as experienced and met during experimentation. The dangers of representation we felt during the art projects are like some dangers in Pedagogy.

"Regarding pedagogy as experimentation in thought rather than representation of knowledge as a thing already made creates a profound shift in how we think of pedagogical intent or volition -the will to teach (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 27)....The will to teach then becomes thinkable in terms of a distributed, emergent desire to innovate, design, and stage materials of expression and conditions of learning in which something new may arise" (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 28). The division of Pedagogy and curriculum is superficial and only separate in language. Both are present in a graceful teacher who participates with their students and is present during their constructing and solving problems. Categorizing curriculum against Pedagogy is ultimately an over-scholarization of what comes naturally when caring people meet to create something new and unexpected.

Children are perfect subjects for transformative research since they are still learning boundaries and do not have a firm footing in spacetime or expertise in laws and facts. How can art teachers attend to children's natural openness? Could we create a curriculum that is more about process and play, away from the business of mass-producing products? What new metaphors could be formulated to displace the factory and business models, without founding another oppressive establishment? Are these systems too embedded in this generation's

conscious? If so, perhaps we can put these habits under erasure, since to break free of these forces, one would need to blast down most of the public school buildings and construct new places of pedagogy, and where children could help in the reconstruction. Even still, a whole new structure would be made, but one where whole communities were involved. Pinar can be helpful, like Ellsworth for Pedagogy, for using recent theories to re-imagine curriculum.

"Since the 1960's...In the post-reconceptualization period (see Pinar, et al. 1995, chapter 4)... We have focused on how ideas generated in other discourses-such as phenomenology or postmodernism or aesthetics-might help us understand the curriculum as a multifaceted process, involving not only official policy, prescribing textbooks, standardized examinations, but as well the "complicated conversation" of the participants. We have reconceived the curriculum; no longer is it a noun. It is instead a verb: *currere*...A shift from the focus on social engineering and the business model to the project of understanding, which involves the concept of curriculum as conversation" (Pinar, 2004, pp. 18-19).

Pinar distinguishes curriculum as an "extraordinary complicated conversation (Pinar et all, 1995, p. 848) ...employed to refer to more open-ended, sometimes rather personal and interest-driven, events in which persons dialogically encounter each other" (Pinar, 1995, p. 186). In a profession that privileges public speaking and the teacher's ability to communicate the standards into everyday language, many educators are not apt or capable to hear the silent conversations of all the ideas, materials, media, and students. A higher register of openness is required to attend the full value of this chatter, and the public school art classroom can be the perfect forum to see and hear Pedagogy, curriculum and learning at play.

The present study is conducted at Pine Bluff Elementary school in Grovetown, GA, a suburb of Augusta -the second largest city in the state of Georgia. Many of the students are from military families who work at Fort Gordon Air Force base, also located in Grovetown. During

the 2012-2013 school year the school consisted of 965 students Pre-k through 5th grade. Each student has art once every six days for a 45 minute period and Kindergarten for 40 minutes. This school has been in operation since 2007 and only a small portion of the population has attended since Kindergarten due to our high transient rate. In 2010 our school was rezoned and lost forty percent of our student body. The demographics are balanced around 50% minority, and we have a small group of non-English speaking students.

For this research all the grade levels are given projects to complete each week, though the instruction varies from grade level, experiences of the children, and mood of the art teacher. In a conscious attempt to control some variables, instruction for each class and grade level included default content (the only exception is the first experiment, where only second through fifth grades received similar instruction). Each year the art teacher assigns an over-arching theme, comprised of six to eight units. Each unit features one master artist, usually a historical artist, whose work is presented on a LCD projector during daily slide shows. Slide shows generally consist of four to six artworks, chosen by the teacher from internet sources. Ideas and imagery and historical backgrounds of those artists typically provide the initial inspiration for the art making lessons. Each unit has three to five artmaking projects, each incorporating a different media, but consistently includes at least one lesson on painting and sculpture in each unit, and ceramics and printmaking, or a special media such as paper mache. A succession of budget cuts over the past six years has led to dwindling art supplies, and the use of more-expensive media has been absent for some time.

This year's theme for visual art at my school is "Art NOW," and encompasses many of the current and contemporary trends, artists, media, and spaces in the world of art. Last year ended with Andy Warhol and Pop Art, so this year is looking at post-Pop art. Claus Oldenburg and Jasper Johns -both living and current artists, are featured this year as artists whose Pop art style

has evolved since the 1960's. Neo-Pop artist Jeff Koons led off this 2012-2013 school year and succeeded in getting the majority of the children excited about art. Several times the class broke out into spontaneous applause when viewing the works, "Balloon Dog," "Puppy," and "Split-Rocker." Eventually our discussion led into an aesthetics critique on kitsch art. This was a term the students took to very quickly; especially the female students who noticed kitsch elements in their clothing, such as those bought from Justice or Aeropostale clothing stores. Now, six months after presenting the word 'kitsch' to the children, this word is still being used amongst the students, both the negative and the positive perspectives and references of the term. Next, the students studied the career of Claus Oldenburg that covered his soft sculptures of the 1960's to the large scale, corroborative public works of today. Many students were vocal in their preferring Oldenburg's newer, more-slick pieces, over the simplified canvas-covered, thinly-painted, vintage works. My research study begins with the final lesson of the Claus Oldenburg sculpture unit, with a ceramic project. This lesson was developed as an initial motivator into our journey into abstract art, since pottery is rarely used in our classroom (due to the size of our student population and our small art budget). As you will see, the lesson does not go straight to nonrepresentation, instead it becomes an introduction to nonrepresentational thought and an exercise in using imagination to make new, unexpected clay sculpture.

Experiment One

I announced to the children that they are embarking on a two month journey into experimental art. The title of the first lesson was *Imaginary Monsters*, a clay assignment for grades second through fifth. With Halloween being one week away, I took advantage of the children's interest and anticipation of this holiday. I did not tell the students what they would be

making on the next visit, except that it was a pottery assignment. The students were given a forty five minute period to construct the form and an additional forty five minute period -after the teacher fired it, to paint the sculpture. Unlike the typical art period, no slide show was presented, and the class opened with an immediate, ten-minute teacher demonstration. I sat on the carpet with a piece of cardboard on my lap, a clay ball, and a cup of wooden modeling tools. Students sat, crouched, or stood around me. The following is an abbreviated example of the dialogue delivered to the young students:

Today artists we are going to create an imaginary sculpture out of clay! With Halloween next week I thought it might be fun for us to make monster heads! (Every class erupted with some version of applause, sometimes clapping, after announcing the title of the lesson) *I think this can be a perfect way for us to use our imagination during this holiday. Now, I don't want you going into this project with a preconceived notion of what you are going to make, i.e., zombie, Dracula, etc., because that is not necessarily using your imagination, and is making something that other people have already made many times. Besides, some of you have not had enough experience with clay yet to make a detailed, three-dimensional rendering of a classic monster. In a way, what we are doing is better, and more artistic -we are going to attempt to create a new monster from our imagination!*

Monsters are the Other. (Along the way, I used hand motions to help students understand these concepts) *By "Other," I mean, they are not human, like us. In this way, there are countless varieties of monsters that we can design and even more we can imagine! So why bother copying some other artist's monster? I think you'll see how clay, as a medium, can help us create an imaginary monster. We are calling this project an "experiment," since we are all doing our own thing, there's not one answer, and hopefully each of your projects will look completely different. Since there is not one method, we are going to take the first several*

minutes and... (The teacher paused dramatically, and then proceeded) *...play with our clay! In fact, the first 'step' of this assignment is for you to play with your clay!* (After teaching this lesson the first day I decided to add a short demonstration on how one can "play" with clay) *I want to remind you that clay is dirt; clay comes from the ground. Clay is also very cheap; it is one of the cheapest materials...it's dirt! We need to stop treating clay and perhaps art in general, like it's some precious object -something that we are scared to mess up. Besides, how can you "mess up" something experimental that comes from your imagination and that you are making up as you go? You can only mess up something if you have a preconceived notion of what it is supposed to look like –that's why we are not going to sketch or plan our monsters first! Before we start, I want you to know that it is ok if you don't end up with art today. Remember, this is an experiment, and we are not sure what is going to become of the clay ball we start with –"art" if we are lucky!*

In the modified lesson, I demonstrated ways to play with the clay. Students were shown how to splat the clay on the cardboard tray and stretch, twist, ball it back up, wedge, and roll the clay back out. Sometimes I would tell the students to "disrespect" their clay and even punch it, or squeeze it through their fingers –this seemed therapeutic for many students, especially those that seem detached in the art classroom on a normal day. Some students gave suggestions on other ways to disrespect the clay, and a few tried to stab it while it was in my hands! In these moments, I would laugh with them, instead of redirecting the behavior. Sometimes these demos felt more like a ritual, and the classroom a community, the teacher felt like a kid, and the children like children.

After I showed some ways to play with the clay, (*Step one*) they began the project demonstration. *Step two: make a clay ball.* Students were shown several ways to arrive at a ball form. *Step three: pinch a 'waist' area near the middle or bottom of the clay ball to create a*

neck. Step four: with your hand holding the form around the neck, knock the form on a flat surface, so that the sculpture has a level base and stands up on its own. After this, you are on your own; however, I will briefly demonstrate how an artist could create a monster from their imagination. (I improvised and did different things during this final section of the lesson, but there were several skills that were always taught). *I want to show you several ways to move clay around, please understand that this is an example and not the only way to make it.* (Two fingers were pressed into the middle of the head to make sockets) *Here's one way to make three-dimensional eyes, next you can borrow clay from the bottom of your sculpture, roll them up to make two eye balls, place them in the sockets and overlap the eyelids over the top and bottom of the eyes.* (An Appalachian Face Jug was used as an example to show how the potters created facial features) Here I demonstrated how to add detailing with clay tools, by incising pupils and veins in the eyes. *I want to show you how easy it is to pull clay off the head form without changing the head form too drastically.* The art teacher used three fingers, in a pinching position and pulled a horn from the crown of the head. Sometimes, the teacher would say, "*no, wait, I don't really like that, I want to continue messing with it, and maybe I can find a better way*" and would show them how to push the horn back into the head form, and I took this opportunity to show the students how to use a clay knife to blend the cracks and corrections over seamlessly. *I also want to show you how to stretch the face and make a mouth, or mouths!* I proceeded to show them various ways to further work-over the form, but each demonstration was different.

Students were given a half pound of clay to use and a cardboard tray to put their project on, and clay tools handy at their tables and some water. I reminded the students to begin by playing with the clay. I worked my way around the room and played with the clay with them and tried to help the students loosen up and become more comfortable and familiar with the strange material. At this point I began my discourse on resisting the urge to "name" their sculpture while they

were making them. I explained how naming their artwork could halt imagination and the ability to make further changes, since they are stuck making what they categorized by naming it. By naming an artwork an agreement has already been struck by the artist and the object that the conversation is in serious jeopardy. By leaving the artwork "open" it could improve and enter new places the artist never expected. Sometimes I jokingly threatened to "smash" anyone's clay project whom I overheard naming it! On several occasions, some kids were heard actualizing and I smashed their project hard on their cardboard in a mischievous, but humorous way! The kids seem to enjoy this, and it got others' attention to the danger of arresting the imagination through recognition. It also further helped to create an aggressive mood and flexible attitude in the children. After five minutes, I cued the students to begin making an imaginary monster. (Some were shown how to moisten the clay with several drops of water first, since some were beginning to crack and split from the play session) This left the students with twenty five minutes to complete the sculpture. During this time, I continued to help the young students, not with decisions, but with different ways to model the clay.

3.1 These 5th graders are using pinching methods (*Right*), as well as score and slip (*Left*) and clay tools in various ways to achieve texture and details.

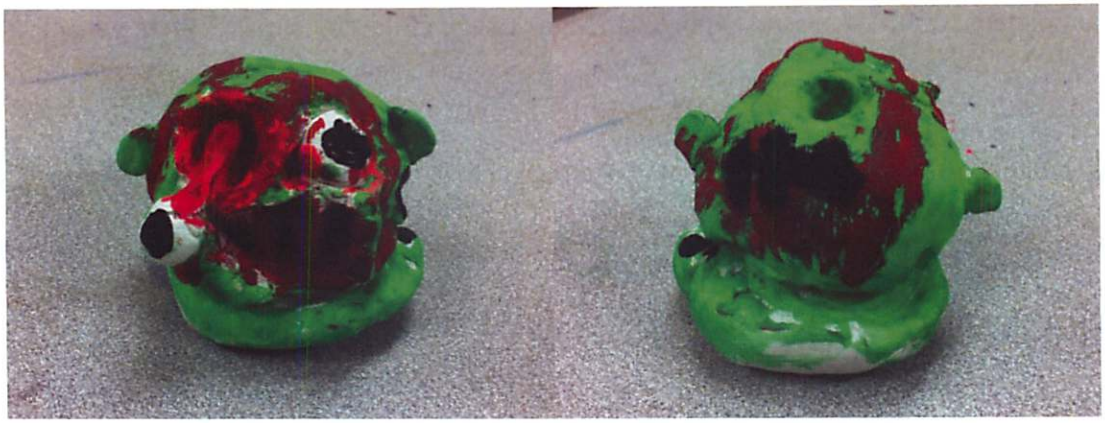
On the following week the students were given the opportunity to paint their monsters. In preparation I bought some florescent acrylic paint to supplement the regular paint color set. I reviewed the original inquiry that monsters are the Other, and thought the children could use some other-worldly, such as neon colors, to paint their creation. No demonstration was given during this session, but the students were reminded to not hurry and to paint all the white areas (bisque). I offered one method -painting the monster in a solid color, preferably a light tone, letting it dry, and painting details, patterns, textures on top of the first layer. Very few students went this route and many of them developed a way of their own and did the painting as they saw fit. As the week progressed, more student examples were around the art room to be used for ideas, particularly how the new paints could be layered, mixed, and combined in design. I reminded the students that the experiment is not over just because it had been fired, and that the monster can be vastly changed in new and exciting ways with color and paint, if they so choose.

3.2 Here are some 5th grade students painting their bisque ware with acrylic paint.

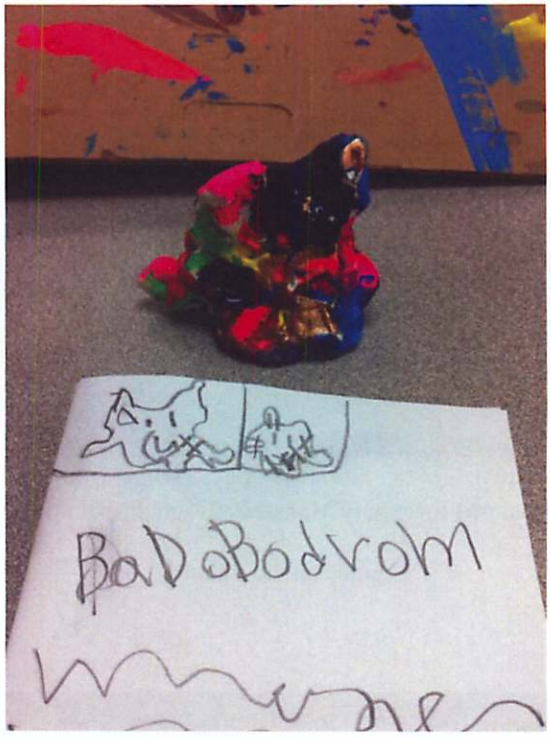
Completed examples are posted below. Many of the children "named" their sculpture after they got it back to take home. Some students asked if it was alright to give it a name now. Several students vocalized that they have chosen never to give it a name, and will refer to the artwork as "It" or "Thing" or "Monster!" The naming phenomenon seemed to resonate with the students, and some days and weeks after this project, students were heard bringing back this debate of the power of a name and using words in conjunction with works of art. This brings up an additional debate on whether we can truly understand our creations and works of art if they do not have a name, or are not associated with words and language? Is "art" Art after you can describe it?

3.3 Here are some clusters of painted Imaginary Monsters, 2nd grade examples on left, 4th grade in center, and 5th grade on the right.

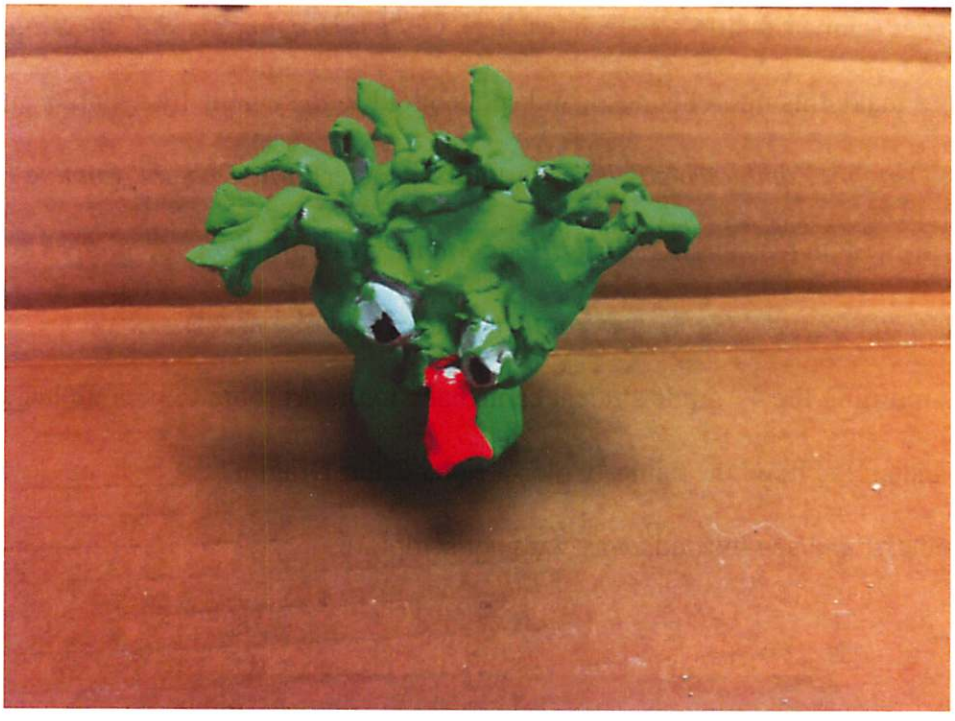
3.4 Additional student examples from 3rd through 5th grade.



3.5 This clay sculpture was created by a 4th grade boy, who after he painted it titled it "*Brain Damage*."



3.6 This sculpture was named "*Badabodrom*" by the 7 year old boy that made it. He gracefully articulated its name to me and some of his peers, and I asked him to write the artwork's title on a sheet of drawing paper. The student also drew his character, and brought it to show me.



3.7 The 5th grade female student who made this monster named it "Grandma Medusa"

One of the highlights features a fourth grade girl who did not want to name her Imaginary Monster because she does not feel that any artist "has the right to tell people what to think" by naming their artwork. However, she was curious in what other students and her peers thought it should be called. She requested I ask the rest of the art classes that day what they thought her sculpture should be titled and she left the sculpture with me for the trial. I made a chart for the other art classes to suggest and write names for her monster on. Several classes came to art that afternoon later that day, and here are their suggestions. In Kindergarten: *Rexsaurous*, *Rior!* (this boy's response was interesting in that he thought its name should be a sound, and I told him that names are made up of sounds), *Christmas* (Christmas break was 5 weeks away), *Christmas Boy* (a boy's response who was sitting by the boy that said "Christmas), *Matoe, Lugie*, *Froggie*, *Henry*, *Princess*, *Brandon* (the name of the child's older brother), *Joseph*, *Nacho* (this child said it was the name of his dog), and *Vandiver* (my last name). First grade's responses were: *Stinky*,

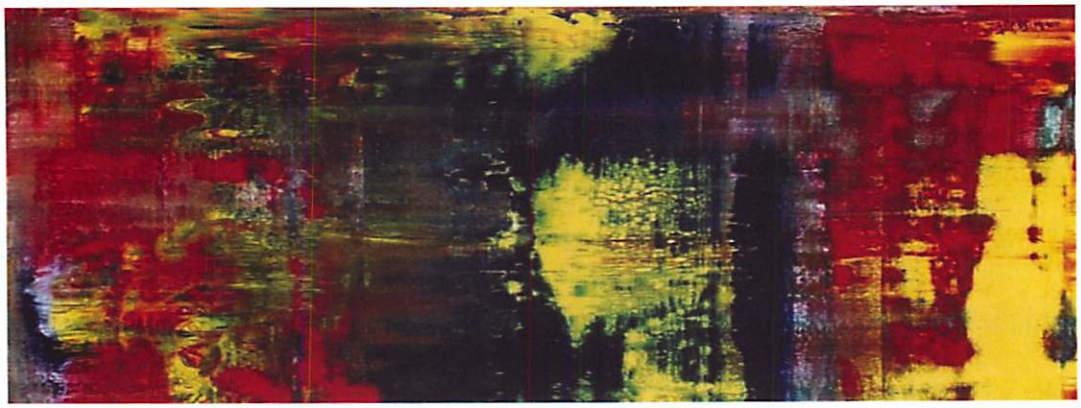
Mrs. Harshbarger (name of child's speech teacher), *Golden Dragon*, *Trash Can*, *Santa*, *Dixatdo* (child seemed to make this up in his head, and spoke it out loud syllable by syllable, and helped me to spell it), *Dragon*, *Zombie Head*, *Jake* (cartoon character), *Mr. Dragon*, *Bumble Bee* (Transformer, printed on his shirt), *Monster Foot*, *Monster Bob*, *Robot 296*, *Snail*, *Big Foot*, *Color-a-rama Color Dragon*, *Gary*, and *Hootie* (name of school mascot).

The next morning the 4th grade student came back to the art room to pick up her sculpture and to see the lists. She liked the name "Color-a-rama Color Dragon" the best, but kept her vow to leave it nameless, and she hurried away with her sculpture.

3.8 Here is "~~Color-a-rama Color Dragon~~".

Experiment Two

In the third unit, featuring the art of the German artist Gerhard Richter, we continued in our experimental vein. Here we left Pop art and entered a more abstract and non-representational realm. I told the class we were fixing to begin a series of two-dimensional experiments. Recently, the word "play" was introduced into the dialogue and some children still struggled to understand what 'play' had to do with art. These next projects were viewed as a way to begin conceptualizing play for the students. The class began by viewing the later abstract works of Richter, which is the first official time they have studied non-objective works and held classroom discussion on these kinds of works. The slides were received with mixed reaction, but a general positive one. The process Richter goes through to make the paintings was discussed and the squeegee tool he developed to achieve some of the effects. Mainly, I was trying to refocus the children on art-as-process, and away from the by-any-means necessary attitude to creating a finalized image. One explanation that seems to help students understand is explaining how the artist could have continued adding colors, since an abstract work is open ended and the artist can go longer making changes. This conversation entered into why the artist stopped where he did. Some students were interested in why Richter made these paintings and what influenced them. Slowly, a past-present-future dialogue formed and one third grader looked at a Richter painting and concluded "some artists use the past and pretend they can see the future." Some students thought the artworks look easy to make, and some believe that Ritcher does not put much thought into making his abstract works of art. I found some photographs of the same paintings as they are displayed in the museum so the students can get a sense of the large scale of the works, and this seemed to win more young Ritcher supporters.



3.9 This work titled, *Abstraktes Bild (809-4),* by Gerhard Richter (1994) gerhard-richter.com, was one of the more popular works with the students. Students took turns discussing what they saw in the work. I started this discussion by saying I saw the profile of a yellow-faced girl with long black hair.

Our lesson was to create an abstract, non-objective work of art using chalk and water on a large sheet of drawing paper, also known as the "wet chalk technique." I explained that since these experiments were more about the process of making art, that the teacher demonstration was to show ways to create, and not what to make. The teacher first showed them how to spray the water on the paper and to aid the paper in saturating the water evenly, using their hands. We used recycled spray bottles from cleaning products to apply the water. Once the wet paper was flat on the table, with the air bubbles and creases removed, I demonstrated some abstract mark-making. First, I closed my eyes and made some accidental marks in red chalk. The red chalk glided across the painting somewhat like a paintbrush stroke -but with a sharper-edge, and gritty texture from the dust. The students said the marks looked like "Chinese letters," or "claw marks." Next, it was explained how an artist could respond to these initial marks, through color-relationships and additional marks, and other ways. Typically, I responded by laying down some black or orange lines around the red ones. I also showed how to re-moisturize the paper with more water and we experimented by adding too little and too much. The kids sometimes liked the effects made by spraying a lot of water since the colors and lines began to melt and do new,

unexpected things. In one class I showed the students how to peel the paper up to re-start on the back, and as the paper was lifted to be flipped over, the colors bled down the paper in an interesting way. Later that period, some students tried elevating and tilting one end of the paper up to play with different gravitational effects. Rarely did other classes discover this trick on their own since some did not know it was ok to work on the back, however many experimented spraying the water sideways to splatter the color. The demonstration usually ended with me blending the lines and edges together with my fingers, with the addition of more water. This seemed to get the students more motivated and excited to start.

This assignment ended up being a hard class experiment for me to manage. It usually started better than it ended, in both an aesthetic and control sense. With the morning classes on the first day some students used dark colors too early in the period and after ten minutes could not do much else with it. At lunch, I decided to modify my demonstration by including a short talk on managing color, with attention to value and color mixing. In the first several days of the experiment most of the projects took on a line-based look, with the appearance of some ancient code or hieroglyphics -which many of those students were proud of, but the unity of the classes concerned me. Was I stunting the children's natural tendency to play with materials, by focusing too much on imagery during the demonstration? Does the name of the class "Visual Art" carry politics and tradition into the art classroom practice as evidenced in student's artworks? Should "Art" be put under erasure?

To counter this dangerous trend, in the following demonstrations the teacher began showing the classes how to apply chalk other ways, in an attempt to curve the privileging of *The Line* from the experiment. The use and effects of the water began to be emphasized. After these changes, a better range of variety from student to student, from art experiment to art experiment, was observable. We concluded that The Line was too rigid and had too great of a boundary

potential to enforce the structure of our compositions, and framed our play. In the slide shows for the final groups, I began to talk about how traditional art tools privilege The Line, i.e., pencils, chalk, woodblock gouges, pen, paint brushes. We were also reminded that 'man' made these tools, the same tools we were criticizing! Are artists tools a way to control the mark? Richter proved perfect for this argument and his use of the modified squeegee to pull and scrape paint across his wall-sized canvases. We concluded that, perhaps, in order to run a good experiment in art one needs a new instrument or technique. By now, late in the week, the spray bottle would have to take that role in the interim. As the week progressed, and the art progressed, the water and spray bottle slowly became the focus for the experiment as the clarity of the dangers of using traditional tools in experimental, non-objective art and the controlling nature of The Line and mark making unfolded in our hands.

3.10 These three photographs show student's initial marks and how each is treating the space differently. The pictures in the *Left* and *Center* are 4th graders, and the student on the *Right* is a Kindergartener.

The art from this wet chalk project are varied, especially those of the later classes -too many to fully discuss here. The fifth grade students usually made the most eye-pleasing pieces, which is not always the case with other assignments, since they are the last period of the day. To dry the artworks, the students laid them out in the front of the room on a long piece of butcher

paper, since the wet drawing paper was too soggy to store on a drying rack. This indirectly allowed for the students to see their classes' progress side by side with other grade levels.

The students were reminded many times that this experiment is not about where the painting stops, and that making art happens when you are engaged in a *conversation* with the aesthetic elements and form during the process. The younger students seemed to understand this concept better, along with *play*. The tactile qualities of rubbing their fingers in the wet slippery chalk seemed to captivate many students, sometimes quieting those children who are known to talk a lot. They seemed to enjoy rubbing their hands over the surface of the paper and moving the chalk, which quickly became greenish brown or muted violet if a lot of colors were applied or over-mixed. This was sometimes contagious and whole tables of students would join into this ritualistic behavior by repeatedly, seemingly carelessly, caressing the slippery surface of the paper. However, these sorts of happenings were satisfying to see, more so than the students carefully constructing images, since this experiment is about learning and making art on the go and being present in the construction. Elliot Eisner discusses how artists think through the medium, and how it "requires an understanding of the potential possibilities and limits of the material with which one works" (Eisner, 2002, p. 80). By being present in the construction, we are referring to the openness and awareness of creating a work of art like one creates maps, and being able to move with the rhizome as the rhizome moves and makes new connections.

Eisner also has something to say about this. "Not all the consequences that flow from the process of painting or drawing can be predicted, and when what emerges is found attractive, the artist may very well take his or her lead from the work. 'This passage of color looks promising. I think I will alter this so that it works with that.' Part of the joy of painting consists in the micro discoveries that the work in progress makes possible....these micro-discoveries provide for surprise, and surprise is one of the rewards of work in the arts" (p. 78).

3.11 These three pictures were taken 10 minutes into the experiment.

3.12 More works in progress.

Songs would sometimes break out spontaneously between students, songs and melodies that felt to match the rhythm and speed of their work. One third grade student, looked up with a smile on his face, and said "I don't even know what I'm doing!" laughed and lowered his head and went back to work. Yet, choices were being made constantly, as students chose colors from the chalk tray and made various marks to certain parts of their work. One student whose work had become monotone, messy, and brown said "I'm just mixing the colors and making it look

disgusting!" I took note of this response since the student intended to test the aesthetic boundaries of art making, since he was rebelling from the political space of the public school art room and the Georgia Standards for Visual Art. Yet, there was something attractive about the swirling streaks he was making with both of his hands, and at one point it looked like angel wings, then it morphed into a mask, and then an ancient symbol.

Many new techniques were observed that were not taught during the lesson or preconceived by me that the students were discovering. For example in one 4th grade class students began wetting their fingers with water and rubbing their fingers on the sticks of chalk -a different color for each finger and dabbed their fingers on their paper. Other students folded their wet paper in half and let the two sides print together, and unfolded it to see the effects. Some would retry the experiment with new colors. Several students worked collaboratively, taking turns helping each other. While one held an edge of the paper up the other spritzed it with the spray bottle and played with the melting effects. One five year old student was even observed throwing chalk bits at his art work and creating a skipping pattern!

I jotted down several comments from this class, such as the dialogue from a student who ended up with a curious mottled green shape in the middle of his paper. "This is what you call a zombie heart," he said. A child who took a short break to wash off his blackened fingers passed back by hurriedly and said "excuse me, mad artist coming through!" One young lady told me, "I've never made this much of a mess before!" A young gentlemen who was getting a lot of attention from his peers for his progressing artwork, was using stylized marks in black chalk on a neutralized orange background. One of his friends said of the piece, "it looks like an alien language."

3.13 This 5 year old, who takes medication every morning for his ADHD, was observed taking a handful of chalk sticks and rubbing them together on his paper, and announced to his friends what new and unexpected colors appeared.

3.14 These three nine year old students are running their own mini-experiments. On the *Left*, the student lifts one side so the wet chalk cascades down. In *Center*, this student applies extra water and abandons her chalk and uses her fingers to experiment with the pigment. On the *Right*, this female student is rolling her artwork up. She was the only child observed trying this.

A larger phenomenon was occurring during these art experiments: new stars arose in the school art community. Some children that are typically quiet and docile stood up out of their

seats and were assertive and dramatic. The loud loquacious students would get lost in wonderment and would quiet under aesthetic spells. Some hyperactive students, who are notorious for aggravating their teachers and peers, and tended to rush through their work, thrived in these experimental conditions. They would make an image just to water it over, dissolve and erase it, and start over, their hands working at rapid speed. The boundaries of representation were diminished and these students worked with a renewed vigor. From a distance their movements sometimes appeared haphazard, but on closer inspection they moved like composers, orchestrating a symphony of chaos. The art room was turned upside down this week, and the students never felt more at home.

3.15 These are some 4th grade completed experiments left to dry on an orange cloth.

3.16 These are 5th grade completed wet chalk experiments.

Experiment Three

Our second project to coincide with the Richter unit was a painting experiment with watercolor. The students viewed selected Gerhard Richter paintings, all non-representational abstract paintings. In the class discussions many students still sought to relate the visuals to their everyday life, by saying what they thought Richter's paintings looked like. Child after child walked to screen and began their response with "it looks like...," and pointed to a blot of color, a

cluster of lines and textures, a smear of paint and told the class that it looked like such and such, often fantastic or silly, which reverbed similar responses around the room, such as giggles, sighs, additional hands raised, and mercy smiles. For this slide show, and partially in reaction to last week's discoveries, I began to guide the dialogue with more intensity. Most of the paintings chosen featured areas where paint was dripping and where the artist left the painting's construction to the elements, chance, and luck. I talked about how in these cases the artist is not in full control and lets the paint fall where it will. In Richter's case, this was done for many reasons, but the one the teacher highlighted was how the runny colors melted with the stable ones to create new colors and blends, many perhaps unexpected.

3.17 *Untitled*, (1996) Gerhard-ritcher.com

3.18 *Untitled*, (2009) Gerhard-richter.com

This lesson, titled *The Rhizome*, involved water color and drinking straws, and the students dripped and blew the paint around with a straw to make an image. The high concentrate watercolors were stored in various squeeze bottles -whatever I could find, and each table of four students had seven to ten colors to choose from. The students worked on regular-sized sheets of sulfate drawing paper; despite my fears, this size was plenty big for a thirty minute art making session. Beforehand, I experimented on various types of paper testing their durableness, tooth,

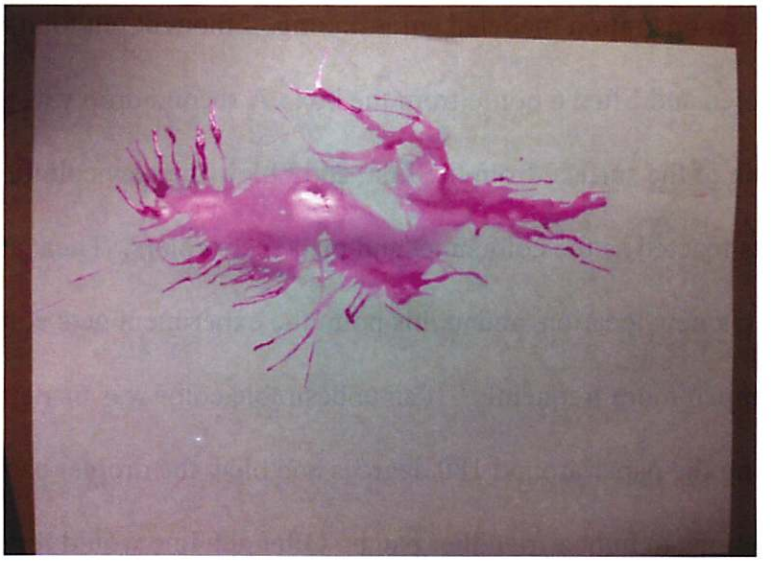
absorption, brightness, and cost. Copier paper was too absorptive and immediately soaked up all the paint. Butcher paper was too slick and not absorptive enough and the colors took longer to dry and seemed too light after dying. Sulfate drawing paper seemed the best -the thinner the better, as it allowed the droplet to stay wet and on the surface and moveable; the movements were recorded instantly into the shallow tooth. The subtle texture of this paper also seemed to allow for better control and direction changes than the glossy paper.

I sat crisscross on the floor with a piece of cardboard as a backer and the day's supplies as the children gathered around. I introduced the project as a playful experiment where anything could happen. I presented a mini-discourse on drawing and the dangers of representation, and how this project eliminates drawing and manual mark making, since no tools touch the paper and since the artist's hands will not be used. Some students were witnessed brightening up after this, as if the authority of drawing ability and representation had been oppressing them and this was a day of liberation. I also briefly mentioned the concept of the rhizome, and how the rhizome grows, or rather multiplies across space. The students were urged not to visualize their sheets of paper as a flat surface or a wall, but as an open space that stretches out from the artist's perspective. Later in reflection, I wondered how many of my students have the ability to see in this way and how many try? It was explained that the rhizome grows not because it has to or should, but because the rhizome cannot be called a rhizome if it does not grow! (Hence, we would have to call it something else) By the end of the week I introduced the discussion of the rhizome earlier in the lesson and during the slide show, since I sensed some were too eager to make art to have the focus to understand during demonstration time.

The artmaking demonstration began with dripping one dot of watercolor on the paper, but avoiding the center. The students were reminded that the initial drip does not hit a wall or a floor, but is dropped in the middle of infinite white space with air on all sides. I began with a

strong short blast of breath through the straw at close range, but to one side of the droplet. (This was practiced beforehand to learn how to create a splatter effect, like a mutant octopus, without paint leaving the form, but forming blob with many arms) I paused after the *first move* to conceptualize with the students how the artist is in control with the direction of the media, and yet not in control with the dimensions, much like a rhizome. In other words, the artist could blow the paint drip to the right and splatter it to make many trails and arms, but the artist was not in control with how many arms were created and the nuances and quality of each line. The *second move* was intended to show the students how to further a cluster of lines forward, so I demonstrated a hard, but steady breath, and the lines spread out further, but unpredictably as they stretched along became more individual. The *third move* was to return to the main drop area and blow in a different direction, which was done with a different technique of a steady hard breath but the straw was shaken side to side rapidly. Often, in this part of the lesson, I continued working on the experiment while the students found their own narrative and developed their own understanding. Sometimes the *fourth move* also featured how in control the artist could be with focus and determination. It was left to the individual students to find their balance of will, intention, energy, interestedness, disinterestedness, and gravitas. For example, I pointed to a nondescript line and told the students where I intended the line to travel. Sometimes the question of why they intended to control the line blossomed, and usually the answer concerned principles of design, often balance and variety. I, as artist/teacher/researcher, proceeded to lower my straw right behind the end of a line with a bead of watercolor left at the end, and with a medium/steady breath to help the mini-droplet onward with force. I intended one arm to wrap around the edge of the paper; I blew the line out, but turned the paper as it neared the corners and tried to circle around the perimeters of the paper. Many students were amazed how long and tiny, a seemingly insignificant arm of watercolor paint could go, shake, take on a character, live through fragility,

never waste a step, stay colorful under the oppressive force of the Other, dance, become a kid again, fly, run without legs, toy with physics, roll with the punches, ignite, never look back, break the horizon, break the structure, light the dark, until it was too wasted, dry, old, tired, depressed, bankrupt, spent, arrested, locked up to move, take a step, leap, to cross, decide, choose, speak up, or enlist. The aesthetic experience held the air in the art room without bond, people's lives no longer mattered in that they were instantly forgotten in the moment the watercolor line was upstarted and continued forward with such precision than any anticipated - the wonderment spectacle baffled the mathematicians, scientists, humanitarians, Buddhists. How dumb is man, that he can be so easily dazzled with a weak, spiny, underdog, colorful wet spot and hold man in hypnosis, weak and vulnerable to Capitalism and the Media, Hurricane insurance, termites, and debt. It was revealed that these experimental lessons all involved the aesthetic experience and the joy, realization, escape, awe, Truth, empowerment, that each delivers effortlessly.



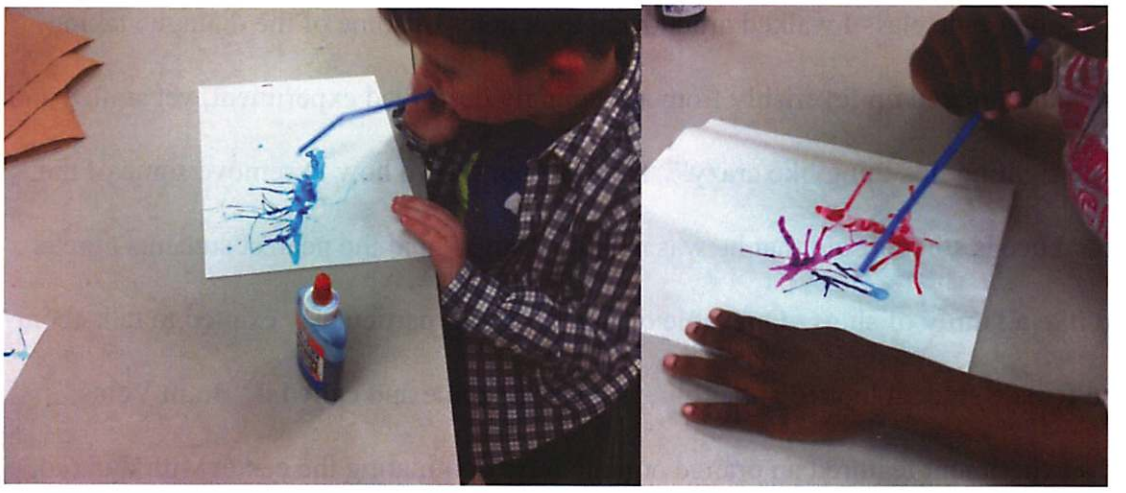
3.19 In one 1st grade class, as I was demonstrating how a single drop of watercolor could become something fantastic, a child yelled "I see a dragon! Look!" and another child agreed and the class made a fuss. I did not see it, until one boy told him to turn the painting around, and I quickly took this picture.

At this point in the demonstration, four minutes or so in, I presented the bombshell and irony: not only are we going to try making art without using our hands, drawing ability, or representation, but we are not making art today. This caused some students to frown, others turned pale and looked around for their peer's reactions, distant sighs were heard, and several raised eyebrows expressed. This ordered an explanation on how "art" is being conceptualized in this project, which further emphasized that students were not required to design a composition or pursue beauty and order. I said, *This is an experiment, and in an experiment the researcher is trying to learn something he does not know. If an artist knows how to design and how to make beautiful art objects, how to draw, paint, sculpt, then what new things does the artist learn? By controlling the movements of our breath and by using a non-traditional tool, such as a drinking straw, and letting the watercolor initially hit the paper on its own, then we are allowing for accidents to happen, and we are in a new position to react and not plan the end before we start.*

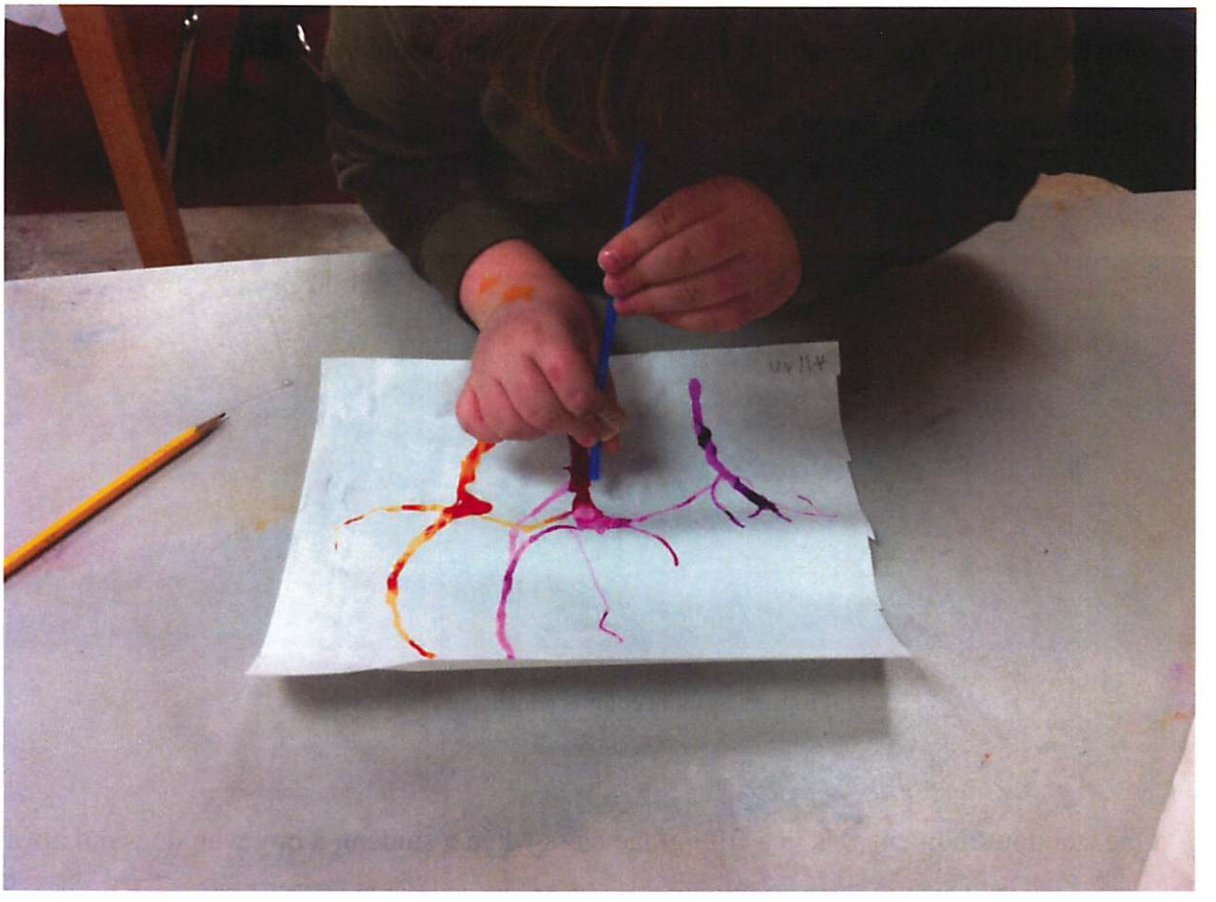
The rest of my demonstration modeled color mixing. I thought out loud about my next, and second, color choice and lifted a bottle from the box. A second drop was placed on the paper on the other side of the surface from the first, and I blew the new color towards the first assemblage. Students reacted as the colors met and made new colors. Then, a third drop was placed on the paper in a new location, and at this point the experiment gets complicated and unexpected things happen more frequently. If an undesirable color was made I demonstrated a line of flight by turning the paper around 180 degrees and blew the droplet back down the same line, or changed directions to hunt a friendlier patch. Often the line would fork and turn into a multi-armed force that could maneuver and join other lines or crash through others if the force of my breath was increased.

For this lesson the teacher demonstration was nearly as long as the art making, since the experiment typically did not take a long amount of time. Normally, the students started quietly and carefully and spent the first five minutes learning the new medium and tool. The students' personalities began to show and the artworks became more diverse and took on different purposes. Some gave in to their design sense and attempted to control the lines, forms, and colors towards an aesthetic whole.

Some took the drops too far, sometimes accidentally applying to much watercolor, and their experiment became more unmanageable. If this problem became more paramount I would stop the class to show how to use napkins to dab the watercolor to soak up the unwanted puddling. Some students struggled to make the paint move, and even complained of lightheadedness! These children were assisted to find a range and appropriate style of breath to make the paint respond.



3.20 These two photographs show children starting their straw painting experiment. On the *Left*, a 5 year old boy spreads out a blue dot of paint. On the *Right*, a 7 year old girl works with three spots of blue, red, and magenta.



3.21 This Special Needs student, who typically has a hard time drawing, controlling a pencil, and rarely leaves his seat, stood up and worked hard on this experiment the whole period. He thought these lines looked like slugs!

In one second grade class I walked around and took notes of some of the dialogue taking place. A male child looked up feverishly from a seemingly destroyed experiment, yet smiled and said, "I've been fighting this thing like crazy!" He was then shown how to remove some of the paint. A special needs student said that he was making "slugs," and the nearest students agreed that it looked like a family of slugs. One table of four girls was particularly excited to talk about their art. One female student looked at her blue, spidery rhizome and called it "Brain Veins." The next girl's experiment featured an orange organic form dominating the center with thin red, blue, and green lines waving about, and said her painting looks "like a fish exploding." The teacher was intrigued with these two comments from these specific female students who have not been observed making violent or gross imagery before, or talking this way. A third girl at the table, who by this time had used all the available color choices and seemed to be slowing down said wittedly, "this is what happens when I get too artsy!"

3.22 Progress as more color is added and played with.

One standout moment was in a fifth grade class when a student, a boy who does not always seem interested in art, and has been diagnosed with ADHD, began to get attention from students

around his work area. I went over to investigate and found this male student purposely mixing colors on his artwork without using the straw. The boy looked up and said, "I just made red"!

"Huh, really? But you might remember we studied the three primary colors and red is one of them, so what colors are you mixing to make red?" I replied.

The boy seemed not to hear me, or understand. "Watch!" the child urged, and he picked up a bottle of purple and dripped it on his paper. Next the child selected the orange bottle and dripped it into the purple spot and after he mixed the two, he appeared to make red!

Other students in the room, some who know more about the primary colors and the implications of this discovery, got very excited when they viewed the miracle. A few questioned how this could be. Instead of going into a discourse on color theory or begin explaining printing ink technology and the colors, Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black, or how the orange is neutralizing the small content of blue that is mixed into the purple -thus resulting in a red orange color, the teacher decided to say nothing and to act perplexed. Several students who could not take this as a new Truth and not ready to rewrite the art books, walked over to the boy's table and used the same bottles on their own papers to experiment; their results were the same.

3.23 These photographs show the boy retrying the experiment to make red, this time with most of the class observing for validity.

Much like the repetitious nature of research, the rogue researchers tested the boy's theory and they too collected similar results and drew the same conclusion. By now, ten minutes or so later, the classroom was still buzzing about the red discovery and I decided to expand the inquiry further, and said "If purple and orange make a red, then could there be mixtures that make blue?" One could almost hear their minds thinking.

One child spoke out, "Yes!"

"What two colors, then?" I retorted.

"Purple and green!" the child nearly yelled, but then repeated his response in the form of a question after he saw my serious face. "Purple and green?"

I asked, "How did you come up with that? Have you tried it yet?"

"No," he paused, but then his eyes lit up again and said, "Why don't we all try it!"

Over half the class joined the bandwagon (the others continued to work on the rhizome painting and seemed glued to their work). A few kids blurted out quickly that they thought they had made blue. I rushed over to investigate the first child, but found their experiment was not over, and leaned over to experience the possible discovery with the student. The child excitedly stirred, lifted up his straw (which had been everyone's new mixing tool!) and put more of the colors interchangeably (variables) into the study to see what happens. I sensed that many of the others had yet to find blue magically appear, as some of those got up to see why the teacher was so interested in that one student's experiment, like checking for current research. I motioned others over with their hand. Even I was excited! A moment later the child began to add more violet and the mixture looked bluish black. We looked up and said, "We made blue!"

An onlooker said, "That's not blue, I don't see blue!"

"Yeah, this dark color is bluish!," I replied.

One child, one who most of the class looks up to, said "Wait, let me see," and he snaked his way through the huddle to the front. I did not reply, but with the straw took a scoop of the mystery color to a clean, white part of the child's paper and spread it out. Some kids yelled "He made blue!"

"Yeah, it looks kind of blue!" I told them. I explained that blue could be found if you first play with color mixing to find the right formula. In this kind of research, it is experimental because you are not sure going into your project that you are going to find what you think is possible. By increasing the purple, after stacking neutralizers on the green, and vice versa, the boy tested his hypothesis and was right. After a while, a student said, "but what about yellow, do you think it's possible to make yellow?"

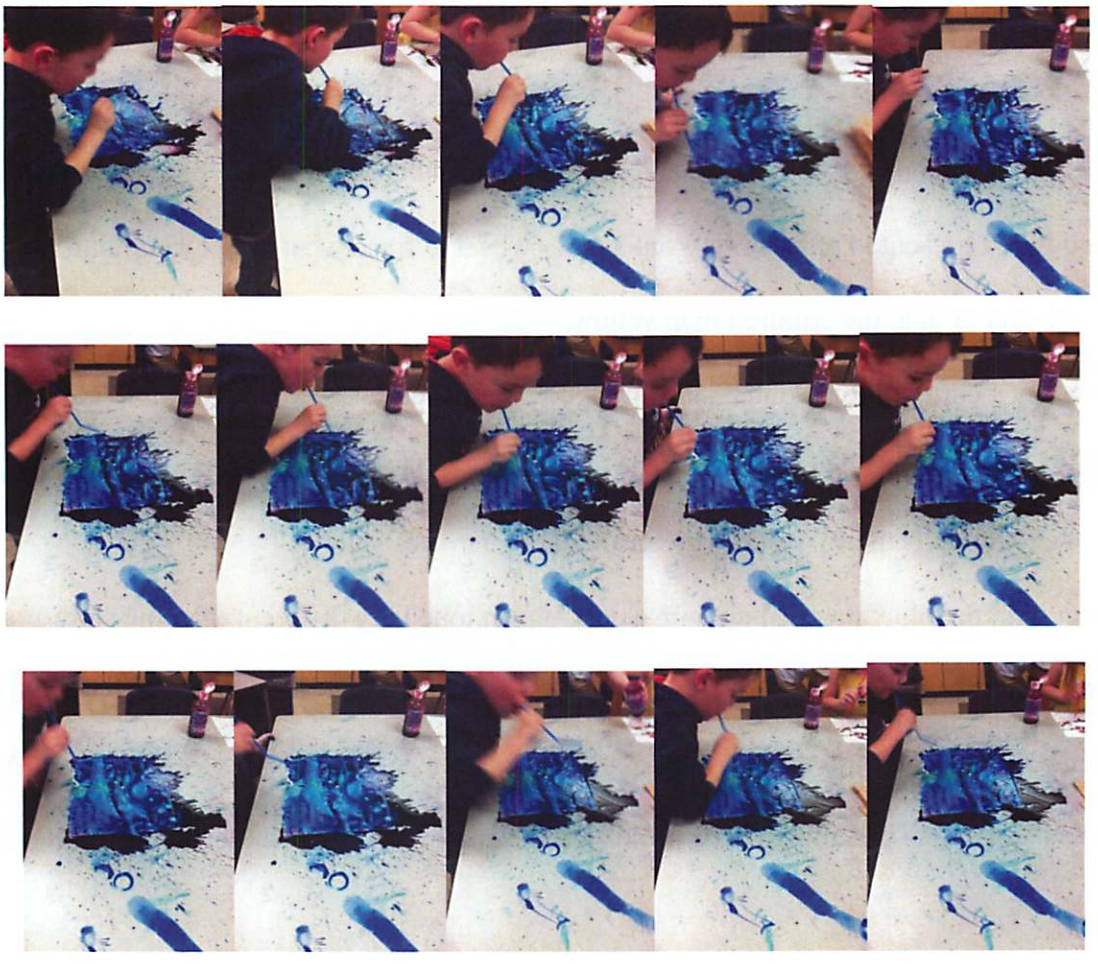
"It seems that it takes two secondary colors to make a primary color (if our hypothesis is correct). So maybe our research could help us predict the two colors that hypothetically would make yellow," I presented after pulling out a color wheel to trace what already had thus been discovered, and to help the children map yellow.

Quickly a child blurted, "Green and orange! Green and orange makes yellow!" Several immediately had a puzzled look on their face, and likewise in my expression, half-acting. One student said, "no way, there's no way green and orange makes yellow!"

"But with the blue, it ended up with a dark bluish tone very different than the store-bought blue paint, and even the red, wasn't a store-bought red, it looked more fiery....So, I bet orange and green could be mixed to make a kind of yellow, but we don't have time," I concurred. Much of the class had begun picking up their projects and cleaning up. The task of discovering yellow

seemed more difficult and I assumed the research team would be cut short by the report's due date -the end of the class period. Soon, on a new day the team will assemble to assemblage.

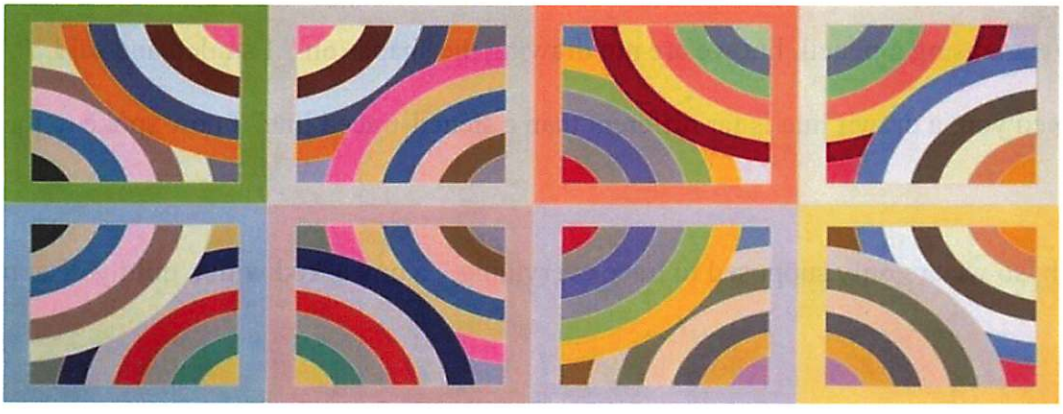
With these lessons I found less 'early finishers' and students complaining of not knowing what to do next. Also, there were less students complaining of 'messing up' or requesting a fresh piece of paper to start over, or students secretly throwing their progress away. It seemed the student artists took more accountability with the direction their work was going and some more-critical students were observed laughing at the unpredictable transformation of the work. Several did not take the experiment seriously, and I redirected this behavior and gave them permission to experiment with the media, not artmaking. The younger groups did not vary in successfulness as in past lessons and seemed to enjoy the novelty of blowing paint around with a straw. I warned the Kindergartners not to suck the straw, since paint does not taste good!



3.24 This sequence shows a 5 year old boy trying to solve a problem when too much blue paint fell onto his paper.

Experiment Four

After Christmas break we started a unit on the art of Frank Stella, first with the works from his Protractor series, and continued with our discussion on abstract art. Students responded positively to these images and especially his use of color. Some had trouble understanding how these could be paintings, due to their hard edges and lack of marks. Others were impressed by other qualities in Stella work, such as the large scale of his pieces, complexity of the designs, their perfection, the unorthodox shapes of his canvas, the repetition and pattern, the geometry, and their newness. Our next experiment was announced: *Abstract Stencil Drawing*. The students gathered on the floor for a short demonstration and I further introduced the assignment.



3.25 *Tahkt-I-Sulayman Variation II*, Frank Stella (1969) WikiPaintings.org

Beforehand, I cut out many stencils out of poster paper, in various geometric shapes. The shapes were parts of circles or curves, in homage to Frank Stella's work. I demonstrated how to copy a stencil without undercutting the mark. Since stencils have been used in past assignments,

I could put more emphasis in mentioning the quality of a stenciled line, the thinness and sharpness and evenness of tone. A free-handed line was drawn on one side of the paper so the children could observe the difference in line quality. The drawn line seemed slightly uneven, as if my steadiness and control, had for a split second, faltered. This line was compared to the mechanical quality of the stenciled line. It was announced that this project had several rules, or constraints, one being that drawing was not allowed. I received some twisted faces as children differentiated stenciling from drawing. This distinction might seem trivial to the reader, but at this moment with these students, it created a tension necessary for learning.

A girl responded, "Then what are we doing?"

"You are only to stencil your shapes on your paper," I replied candidly.

"Are we gluing them on?," she asked perplexed.

"No, we are going to stencil the shapes onto the paper with a lead pencil, we are not making collage," I explained.

Another spoke up and said, "But we are drawing the stencils on, right?"

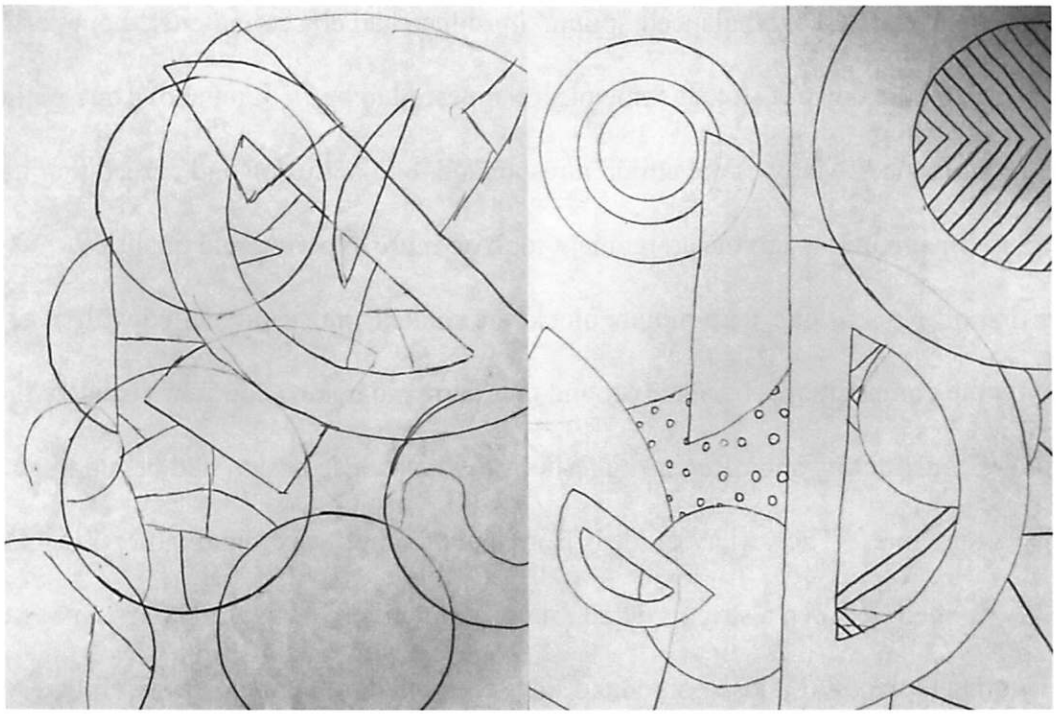
"We are using a pencil, but we are not drawing the shapes on," I smiled and said. "As I just showed you, a drawn line is far different than a stencil-traced line" I now spoke to the whole class.

"Oh, so we are only supposed to trace everything," a boy asked with a mildly disappointed look.

"No, not necessarily; I would hope not!" I said. In this particular class, and with others, these dialogues lead into a discussion on how creativity can be involved in using stencils to make a piece of art. I discussed how shapes could be aligned mathematically into geometry and arranged pieces of stencils together to create an orderly design. I shifted the pieces to show how a design could be created in a more chaotic structure and stenciled a less-orderly design onto the

paper to offer another mixed and balanced option. I produced an eraser and erased out parts of shapes that overlap other shapes so that some pieces appeared to be floating above and below the ones in the middle space. Many of the children responded to this illusion and agreed that it is a good way to use imagination, and the assignment took on more experimental qualities.

In the first of two sessions, a 25 minute block, the students mostly stenciled with pencils and worked on the composition. I walked around the room and helped children visualize the space they were constructing and offered suggestions to kids whose design had begun to get confusing by all the lines. The variety of ideas from child to child was remarkable. The classes were typically divided between a strict ordered, often symmetrical, design to designs made up of scattered or jumbled pieces. I chose not to take sides with one or the other, for several reasons. Despite being concerned that some students using a mathematical, juxtaposed style might not be thinking of the surface as a space of dimension and are conceptualizing the piece of paper as a wall, many of these students were displaying a skill in structuring intricate compositions. Several students working in a more loose fashion seemed to take their experiment too far by overlapping so much that their artwork became indecipherable. These students were reminded that this design would be in full color and could be difficult to color in our limited palette of color pencils. Some turned their paper over and restarted the experiment on the back based on their trial. Others erased or bravely continued to work with the tangle of lines and planes.



3.26 Several stenciled abstracts, both by 5th grade students.

The following week the students were presented with more slides of Frank Stella's paintings to warm them back up to art after a week-long break, and to bring the study of color closer. This week's discussion centered on designing with color and the importance of color in modern art. I asked the students to visualize Stella's work in black and white, and to compare that visualization to the brightly colored ones on the screen. (Later in the week I added a black and white slide of one of Stella's paintings so the students could contrast them) Some students concluded that Stella's art only became art once bright paint was used, and this created a motivation to color their own stenciled designs. More interesting was a discussion in one class on whether 'coloring' (with color pencils) was "drawing"? It was concluded that coloring in shapes was not drawing, but tracing something already established. Several students called out the teacher for titling the lesson (which was written on the dry erase board) "Abstract Stencil

Drawing," since drawing was not allowed. I privately smiled at this and was glad this paradox was exposed and was at work teaching children, and the title of the lesson was left un-changed.

3.27 These are some completed examples from 2nd-5th grade children.

Experiment Five

For the next and final project we created three dimensional, *Abstract Relief Sculptures*. It was presented as the finale and all that was previously learned, using one's imagination, exploring nonrepresentation, using untraditional tools, playing with color mixing, conceptualizing drawing, would cumulate in this art form. I compared it back to the straw lesson and how the rhizome stretched out into space, not across the paper necessarily. Now, the assemblage of the sculpture will be a rhizome constructing towards us in real space. The students were to locate their selves through their perspective with the distance of their relief, and

map the conversation. I likewise mapped a two to three week lesson on abstract sculpture, and prepared by cutting square cardboard "back boards" and gathering pieces of scrap material. Many of the items were located in the school recycle bin, mostly snack boxes and or broken-down cardboard boxes. Items such as tin foil, wire, egg cartons, Styrophome tray pieces, craft foam, card stock, and found objects were collected. Some cardboard trays that the students previously used to paint their imaginary monsters were cut up for scrap due to the colorful paint drippings, which looked similar to graffiti and Grunge textures.

In the first session, I held a slide show of four Frank Stella's sculptural works that Stella considers paintings. The art was introduced as cutting edge, and revolutionary. Stella calls this type of sculpture "an exploding painting," and I used this insight to start the conversation. Each of the four works were an assemblage of pieces, sometimes wood and metal, with a wide variety of shapes, yet all featured part of a square as one of their focal points. I explained about traditional art formats and framing, and how art is typically displayed in museums, since many students have not visited an art museum before. For the younger classes, the dialogue lead to me asking, "Why did the painting explode?" By looking at the pieces, the students reconstructed them into narratives or explanations. In the Kindergarten class, the students seemed to enjoy talking about the elements more, especially the strange shapes. To those who spoke up, the abstract sculptures made perfect sense, and they were eager to share their stories. It was interesting how the kids would move from shape to shape, piece to piece, and connect an absurd action to the next and create these dialogues. Equally interesting is how the audience, listened and seemed entertained by their peer's account of the alien encounters, a burning house, fruit cocktail, wild west shoot-outs, crashing airplanes, a farm, two volcanoes, a lizard wrapped around a tree branch, a girl holding an umbrella, somebody who just spilled a lot of French fries,

a melting birthday cake, a parking lot for surf boards, a ghost in a rocking chair, a light bulb in a jail cell, and other fears and desires.

The older students were held in a discussion on the qualities of the sculpture, how it was constructed, and searched for a conceptual framework to understand the artworks better. I sometimes talked about how Frank Stella is a New Yorker and how pieces of his sculptures might be influenced by his environment. With the older groups I stopped the slide show momentarily and pointed to a watercolor of a realistic rabbit painted by Albrecht Durer, and asked the class to say what it looks like. Most of the class said "bunny," and others said "rabbit and several said "hare." I then directed the classes' attention back to the Stella sculpture and began a discussion on the differences between Durer's rabbit and Stella's abstract sculpture.

3.28 & 3.29 *Young Hare*, Albrecht Durer (1502) (WikiPaintings.org) vs *Jerdon's Courser*, Frank Stella (1976) (http://simonjanes.wordpress.com/tag/frank-stella/)

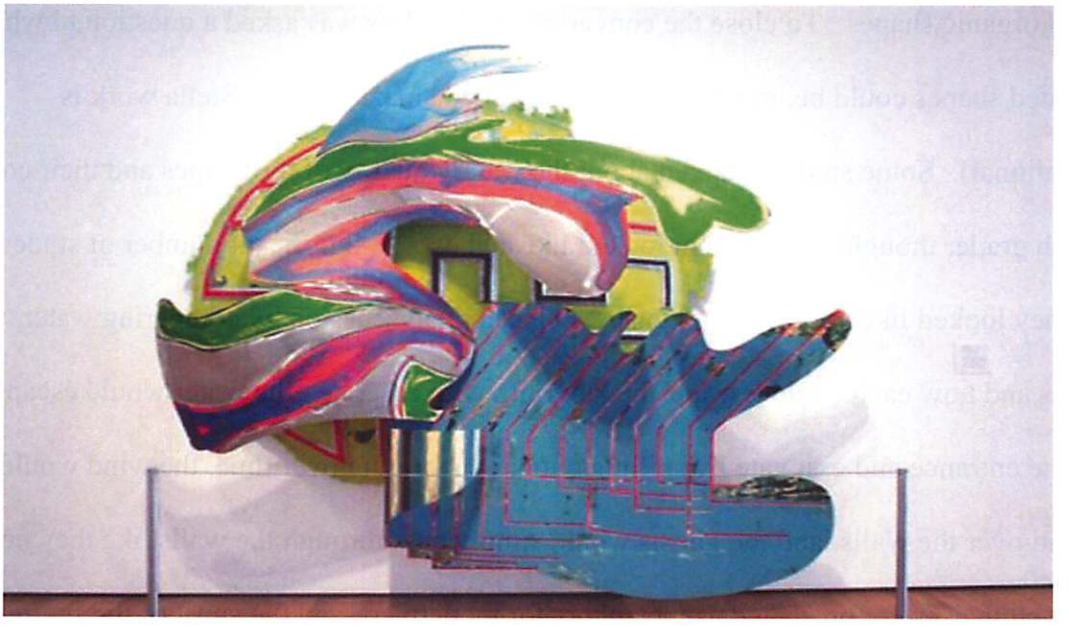
I made the point that everybody in the room could look at the same abstract artwork and could get something completely different from it than the next person. In the Durer piece, he was describing his experience of a rabbit. I argued that Durer had to have at least seen a rabbit to

have painted a rabbit in this fashion, on the details of the hair alone. Thus, when viewing a work of highly representational art, such as Durer's rabbit, we can in some sense re-experience what Durer saw and felt, if we can trace the rabbit in a similar way. On the other hand, when confronted with a highly abstract work of art such as Stella's sculpture, the experience of the artist creating the work is virtually untraceable. Instead, the artwork creates a unique experience in whoever views it, based on the Self of the viewer. I argue that young children are in a special position to experience works such as these due to their forming and unsettled selves and unresolved aesthetic values, and can have very detailed and unprejudiced experiences with the abstract works. In this sense, nonrepresentational artworks are imaginative and open, and have an "infinite capacity for innovation, change, break, renewal, which will infuse the otherwise repressive system with the disalienating excitement of the new and the 'unknown', as well as of adventure, the refusal of conformity, and the heterogeneities of desire" (Jameson, 1984, p. xx).

The art making began with students selecting recycled materials and a backboard to glue the pieces on. I instructed that the project be completely abstract, and students were to cut most of the pieces themselves; pieces could be stacked or attached in such a way as to jut out into three-dimensional space. The square backboard is something to be escaped! The elementary artists had a twenty five minutes block to begin constructing their abstract relief sculpture. Most of the students worked in a fever to secure the desired pieces, tin foil and egg carton fragments were the best capital, and to build their artwork. With the younger grades, we started by cutting one free form shape together. This was a good entry point into the process, and I demonstrated how to cut an original, organic shape by "taking a trip with the scissors" around the sides of the scrap. It helped the children take ownership of their art and to look at the scrap materials not as ready-mades, but something to be modified. With the older students this prompt was used with students having trouble knowing where to start the sculpture. For five minutes I worked around

the room to motivate students and to make sure they had ample supplies. Next I worked at one of the two resource tables cutting up materials for scrap and servicing passersby's needs, and announced the arrival of new materials. I reserved different materials so that they could be introduced into the repertoire, to act as motivators throughout the period. Several student's works in progress were selected by me each period to show the class the direction those students were taking. The class was reminded to be aware of aesthetic qualities during the whole process, and not to merely make three-dimensional forms.

For the third, fourth, and fifth grade classes, the word "escape" was introduced as the "word of the day" and was conceptualized earlier in a viewing of Stella's wall sculptures, where we viewed one of his sculptures -mostly comprised of three major pieces and painting in bright green, blue, and pink.



3.30 *Wheelbarrow*, Frank Stella (1988) (http://www.thecityreview.com/momaubs.html)

In the center, overlapped on edges, is a maze-like pattern. Students urgently raised their hands to get a turn to share the connection between the term "escape" and the artwork. I

sometimes talked about how traditional two-dimensional surfaces are rectangular-shaped and framed, often in elaborate gilded frames. I moved into a discourse on how abstract art is a break, or an 'escape' from historical painting, portraits, still life, etc. The Stella sculpture was presented as futuristic and an attempt to 'escape' looking to the past for content, such as stories, references, and representation; instead, it finds its being in the present and looking forward. The sculptures, then, are escaping the frames that encourage us to think one way about subject matter, the borders that define the composition, the displaying in a highly ordered and structured museum space, the flattening distortion of the wall as the two-dimensional forms into real space, the psychological effect of perceiving an artwork as complete, the titling of a piece of art, and the geometry and restriction of the straight edges of a canvas. I reminded the students that this is one way of interpreting this sculpture and that the "maze" pattern does not mean that the artist intended it to be a maze. The two shapes that covered part of the maze, were complicated free forms and organic shapes. To close the conversation, the class was asked a question to what the two invented shapes could be, in relation to the so called "maze" (if this Stella work is representational). Some students talked about the watery quality of the shapes and their color. One fourth grader thought one of them looked like a ghost. A significant number of students thought they looked like stylized wind gusts. I closed the discussion by comparing water, wind, and ghosts and how each could 'escape' the labyrinth with ease, i.e., the water would escape through the entrance and exit gate by spilling out or evaporating over time, the wind would blow around and over the walls, and the ghosts would simply pass through the walls like they never existed. All these were presented as metaphors for modern art, and the spirit of the future.

In the second session, the students were given a brief slide show on selected colorful Stella sculptures, since the students would be painting their pieces that day. Three sculptures were shown that emphasize color and the students were encouraged to consider how color is working

for the sculpture, helping, hindering, masking, embellishing, confusing, clarifying, telling, obscuring, and so on. One element that unfolded in each of the works was Stella's use of movement, usually created by several dominate lines through his maze-like sculptures. In one second grade class on the final day of this research, one autistic child, who visits art with an aide, raised his hand and was called on to approach the screen. The boy did not say anything but took his finger and starting at the top left corner of the sculpture traced a line through the work. His finger slid across the top shape that terminates near the "S" line, and from this curvy line, his finger gracefully flowed and connected to the adjacent shape, whose terminal end points to another weird shape that wraps around the right edge of the sculpture and exits back near the top left.

3.31 *Talladega*, Frank Stella (1980) http://poulwebb.blogspot.com/2011/08/frank-stella-part-2.html

Many of the students were dumbfounded by the boy's discovery, and believed that he cracked a hidden code in the art work. Suddenly the art seemed more accessible and open, and

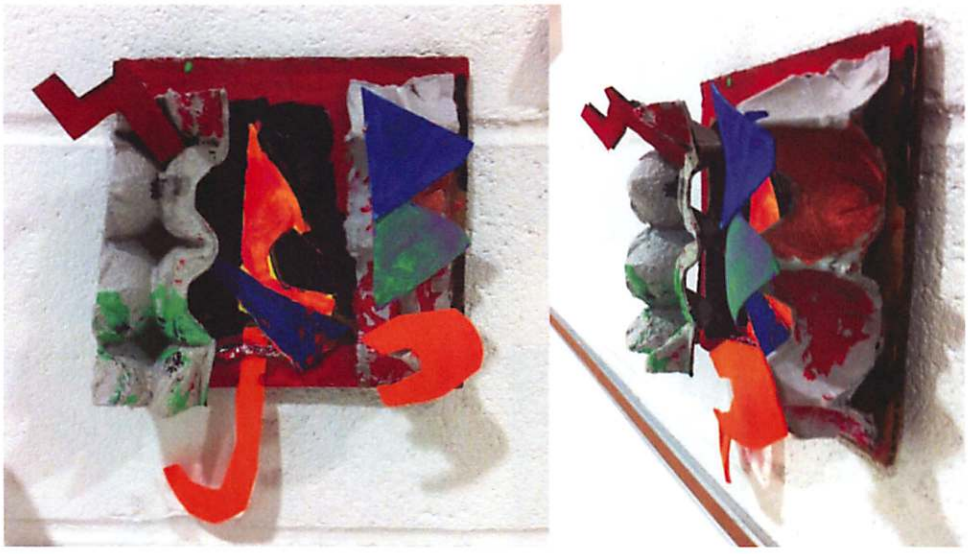
unified and friendly. Many hands shot up in the air to have a turn at speaking. I chose a boy in the back of the room who for the first time in my memory has raised his hand (and rarely speaks to his classmates), and he walked awkwardly to the front of the room. He had a wise look on his face, like he now understood something that he never had, and with the help of the autistic boy, worked together to solve the meaning of abstract art. I picked up a pen and wrote down what the boy said:

"Sort of like what (autistic student) just said... There's no out. There's no in. It's everywhere! You never know what's coming! Look! This part is childish!" he said pointing the lower middle of the sculpture, and then he bent forward, almost touching the screen with his nose.

"It's scribble scrabble!" he recoiled. Some of the students in the room leaned forward to have a better look.

"They made it look like something, but it is really nothing!" he said as he shrugged his shoulders, pointed to the "S" line in the center, and begun to walk off... He looked at me and asked, "Maybe a snake?"

I looked at the boy with raised eyebrows and simply replied, "I don't know," and then repeated in with a more serious expression, "I don't know." I turned off the projector and told the art class that the discussion will pick back up where we left off in the next session.



3.32 This was created by a 9-year old student. The photo on the *Right* shows the three dimensionality of her sculpture.

3.33 This piece was created by a 10-year old student, who used tin foil, egg carton, foam, paint, and bits of card stock scrap.

3.34 These are from a school exhibit, and include student examples from Kindergarten to 4th grade.

This field research revealed some promising findings concerning children who seemed detached in the art classroom. This section mostly highlighted those children's experiences and work. These types of children are the real focus of this research, since they are ruptures in the art classroom. Are they immune from deep and pleasurable visual experiences in the art classroom; are they resisting the school environment, too snide to be that vulnerable, blind to the qualities other people's experience, or just looking the 'wrong' way? I played with many different art activities to construct ones where tensions were turned and reversed, in attempt to problematize the culture, politics, psychology, and climate of the art classroom, where the oppressed could play the hero and the genius, where the voiceless could have a say, where the arrogant will have their confidence checked, where breaking rules is encouraged, where the teacher could no longer help the child through to the end, but could only nudge the student foreword, a place out of control, unpredictable, where one simple change or mistake can rewrite history, a place that is everything and nothing at the same time, whose presence is always already a step forward, and whose back foot is a mirror. These are terrains to be mapped where gravitas is confused and

selves are in the making, not left behind and distanced, but a place where the teacher does not have all the answers and is in the experience *with* the art students. In this space, the teacher also surrenders some control over to the young art community, to form their own structures and to work toward building new ones. "[Thought] is free in its creations not when everyone agrees or plays by the rules, but on the contrary, when what the rules and who the players are is not given in advance, but instead emerges along with the new concepts created and new problems posed" (Rajchman, 2000, p. 38).

CONCLUSION

Gravitas in experience (part two)

Within this thesis, one practical research inquiry is how to create aesthetic experiences consistently in the art classroom, since this helps to create avenues to other horizons. Aesthetic artmaking is experimentation, in how one searches (mute) and comes to a finding (agreement); the root *experiri*, means "to try." This links two crucial topics in this paper: ex-peri-ence (experience) and ex-peri-ment (experiment). The Latin prefix *ex* means "out of," "from," and "utterly and thoroughly." So, encouraging students to try, and try their best, is a start towards the possibility of encounters, events, play, aesthetic experience, conversation; since, when making a work of art it creates the movement necessary for entering aesthetic artmaking with graceful intuition. Play is the ideal, and teaching students how to 'play' with media and tools aesthetically. With this comes a certain amount of values, or to answer the question "why" professional artists sometimes play with their ideas and materials, for example: as part of the process, studio habits, compulsions, and pleasure, and how this is a form of artistic thought. To set in motion seems like a fundamental first step for pedagogical purposes, i.e., to encourage, to push, to assist, to lead, to facilitate, to coach, to walk with children towards learning. The Latin root *peri* means "about" or "around". I will add, "Within sight" or "within knowledge." Within horizon can be inserted here in relation to phenomenology. Metaphysics is too far above to be experienced fully, so our experiences become a game of distances and maneuvers -not heights and atonements; gravitas is always at work, and not necessarily below either.

The micro aesthetic experience is thus far explained as having two distinct halves, though not unconnected: mute experience and agreement. I have chosen to focus on these two

phenomena since they seem best at explaining and studying artmaking as both aesthetic and *conversational experience*. "Mute" because it does not involve language, and certainly no speech, nor even inner-speech. Mute refers to the inability to talk, but that does not mean the inability to communicate, which is like thinking before you ever had a chance to say it (Siegesmund, lecture, Aug, 2011). Nor does *Mute experience* mean you do not experience cognition, quite the opposite. Mute is not being used here in its noun form, experience is typically conceptualized as a verb and mute is the adjective. By definition, *mute* as an adjective has three meanings, "expressed without speech" -especially because words would be inappropriate or inadequate, "lacking power of speech," and "unable to speak because of hereditary deafness." Thinking linguistically points to an entirely different experience. Nor is mute experience nonsense in the way that agreement is sense, and never in noun form. Mute experience is ever moving, shifting and changing and rhizomatic. Like a rhizome mute experience is not a noun, since there is no judgment, categorization, footing or context. As an interjection, nonsense is the expression of disagreement. This expression implies that nonsense arises in a subjective experience, from an inner-presence. Do we find our presence in language, always? We argue our presence begins in mute, and reaches full presence in speech. Mute is chosen over 'disagree,' or 'disagreement,' to show that the two halves are not necessarily in conflict with one another, or the same kind of experience. Disagreement also includes language, and enough linguistic awareness to disrupt an aesthetic experience and distort the boundaries. As such, disagree/disagreement could prove to be a clue to understanding the shift from mute to agreement as changing in dimension, one infected with semiotic codes.

Agreement is being conceptualized for the second part to the aesthetic experience, rather than the "experience of agreement," since agreement sometimes corrupts, is hasty and judgmental, and prone to endings. Nor is the term "agree," being commonly used since it

implies a personal, subjective decision; we are using agree-ment. The suffix *-ment* refers to a result from an action, and satisfaction, a state, a being present. Agreement includes outside forces that influence this judgment, metaphysical pressures, fear, or a forceful attitude and disposition. This notion also nods towards thinking of the aesthetic experience as a conversation involving language, and how two speaking partners can bring the presumption of agreement, or pre-agreement, into a conversation. "Ment" also refers to a system and how our thoughts -free in mute, are structured into language during agreement. Yet, agreement comes in different speeds, character, genetics, class, and degrees and time lapses. With weaker agreement-that never escape experience, those end in another mute experience rhizomatically, by way of self-questioning and curiosity, for example that can invite the next mute experience to pop up in a new and unexpected part of our vision and mind, like sparking gunpowder. Experiences either end or we die, so eventually some version of agreement is reached and the process terminates, and the next begins and disorientation, and the feeling of being lost. Experience, or life, never ends and arguably continues during sleep as our bodies' experience. The aesthetic experience ends all too quickly and frequently.

Agreement is not being presented here as a negative phenomenon, it is not. It can be comforting and pleasant to *know* and recognize what we see, but a limitation of the human condition. Often during an aesthetic experience agreement comes and goes, sometimes hardly noticed, as we recognize small details, only to move to the next detail to explore and assimilate, depending on our mood and gravitas (such as the importance that illusion holds for us). Research shows that cognition increases during aesthetic experiences, especially those that hold a "personal relevance" with the viewer (Vessel et al., 2012, p. 66). This could suggest that aesthetic experiences can be stronger with artists during artmaking due to the intentionality and subjectivity in creating a work of art. If an artist is creating an object with the care for

conceptually, visually, and emotionally, that artist can have a more-engaged conversation with their work in progress, and a positive and productive experience.

Neuroaesthetics is the new field (Shimamura & Palmer, 2011, p. 299) of empirical research and scientific study of the neural bases for the contemplation and creation of a work of art (Nalbantian, 2008, pp. 357-368), for a better understanding of the aesthetic experience at a neurological level. Qualities encountered during (i)aesthetic perception are processed by the visual areas in the brain such as the V1 cortex, and these signals from V1 connect to various other centers in the brain (Zeki, 2001, pp. 51-52). This is not to imply that there is one source for all aesthetic processing in the brain, but believed to involve a network of specialized centers (Cela-Conde, 2004, pp. 6321-6325). The prefrontal cortex, a region of the brain located right behind the eyes, is widely understood to be activated during the experience of beauty, and something attractive and pleasing. If a painting is deemed ugly by the viewer, then no further structures are activated past the gate-like prefrontal cortex (Kirk et al., 2008, pp. 1125-1132). This research extends to all beautiful stimuli, not just art. Yet, because art often carries a social dynamic, representational and sentimental imagery, deep-rooted symbolism, tradition and cultural values, a myriad of emotions are well-sprung during an aesthetic experience. Emotions activate entirely different areas of the brain, and can spring up rhizomatically and separate from the prefrontal cortex! Several intriguing research articles that magnify the complexity of how emotions play neurologically during the heightened experience of the beautiful, are Cupchik (2009) and Kawabata & Zeki (2004), as well as additional information about the visual sensory mechanisms Blood & Zatorre (2001), Vartainian & Goel (2004), Jacobsen et al. (2006), Di Dio & Gallese (2006), Ischizu & Zeki (2011), Lacey et al. (2001), and Salimooor et al. (2011). This seems to open the door for more research into the physiological changes during the aesthetic

experience, and how the body experiences a work of art. It also opens the door to studying social satisfaction within experience.

Gravitas in experience (part three)

While the child makes art a dialogue ensues, one between child and their medium, various colors, textures, some tactile and mistakes, shapes, historical traditions, subject matter, and the child processes these utterances and interprets them. Even a smell can conjure images or words after a non-linguistic second. Yet completing a work of art is made up of hundreds, or thousands of these non-linguistic, mute experiences, as well as many interpretative experiences, or agreement. What art creates, like no other experience, is a higher assemblage of trace-like infatuations with qualities, the aesthetic side of experience. It could be understood that all experiences are aesthetic experiences since qualities attract our attention. In other words, there is a minute, but multifarious silent amazement, or mute experiences, where we are dazzled and re-dazzled, and our minds are stimulated. Yet, in these mute graces something is working, something not always in agreement: our body. Our bodies are sometimes free, from you, and us, and our cognition. Could our bodies be responsible for enacting the transition from mute to experiential agreement? When are our bodies obedient to the situation and to our mind's wishes? Are mute experiments the moment when body un-becomes, and the mind becomes the Other, and the transition to agreement when mind switches (back to the privileged side?) and the body is in check (agreement). Ellsworth lists some "noncognitive, nonrepresentational processes and events" that can be experienced in pedagogy, such as "movement, sensation, intensity, rhythm, passage, and self-augmenting change" (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 6). Art creates these experiences like no other, since so many dimensions are involved.

The child artist is an assemblage, and as the student works through a painting, they select colors, tools, and make design decisions, each a rhizome and each a dimension. In this rhizome, of many dimensions, each becomes that circular experience of mute-agreement. A rhizome is experience, not an 'experience,' or "experiences." Since we will assume everything is an interpretation, even the cold touch of snow, or time, or light (seemingly universal experiences), that rhizomes as we know them, can know, is only an experience from our personal view. Those interpretations, or agreement, and those moments of presence in the body (mute), exist in experience, and are rhizomatic and can rupture. The animal in us is more powerful than the social mind, how it can turn reason off with the next beautiful thing. Whether that is an evolutionary consequence is redundant for this research and during this moment we live -we live inside and out of our minds in a dimension-full of inner-blinks. And, we are never idle, (even our bodies know to and how to operate our organs) our minds play and toggle each stimuli. We exist in a constant state of responses; interpretations make up the rhizome-moving experience of functional living; we awake from the mute and to the next visual experience is inevitable and unconditioned, yet usually welcomed.

Enter the anarchist poet, the drunken king, the saint. Any conclusions drawn are death in the sense they were never alive, yet always lived. Should we narrow it all down, into one sentence? Do we need more origins of truth to be later hunted down like the Fountain of Youth by our thirsty descendants? The expansiveness and the desire to escape the confusion and chaos of this qualitative research carry the message, and carry the warning. To answer is to succumb to the Other, and doing so is to trade with another extreme. What currency is transferable, exchanged, loaned, and borrowed? Instead, we acknowledge the Other, never subserviently, but conjugally in passing. Nothing is safe or sacred, however everything becomes safe and sacred when the binary all/nothing is established, and earth/air, world/space, particle/universe, and

matter/vacuum. Certainly, it is no surprise that Deleuze and Guattari, considered revolutionary with their quasi-philosophy, only in actuality re-structured structure. Don't we all? But, at least now we know what we are up against, instead of what we are up against, and under, and above. Do not be discouraged, philosophy always comes to this and we can still have fun with it. Besides, there is no freedom, never was, never will, except the elbow room we make for ourselves on the floor, the plots we reserve, the warehouses we clear. Meaning still means something subjectively, but there is not enough room for it in this research, we haven't much room for our selves! What Deleuze and Guattari offer us, is more about how to navigate through a crowd, beat an obstacle course, and solve a maze, to dance, by using methods like lines of flight (1987, pp. 3-25) and other techniques and devices. Who likes people breathing down your neck? What Deleuze and Guattari conventionally ignore is why we want to move from the bed that took us so long to make. One reason, could be that we are theoretically dead, stuck, and dead stuck, obsessing on geometry. If so, in respect to this pedagogical inquiry, we are no longer *teachers*, since we have been teaching the same lesson over and over. Now with the creation and definition of these new polistic binaries the boundaries are more distinct, languages are forgotten, whole new vocabularies are created, and new revolutions are in the making. Thoughts can be freed to a level surface, but man's emotions and desire will always be hierarchized and stratified, and distorted with globe effect. Maybe this has something to do with the schizophrenia they feared in a Thousand Plateaus, and the balance that can never be achieved through perception, only mere thoughts, if any. Could this then be one reason artists are schizophrenic, our minds are open, but our emotions bubble? Deleuze and Guattari later tend to it with their assemblages of desire, and attempt to turn the will to power to progress towards actuality. Was nostalgia ignored, and how memories persist in our thoughts good and bad?

Now the question becomes is anything a representation? Yet, since everything is simulacra, so is there such thing as representational art? What does representational art look like? In Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulations* (1988), we are freed and emancipated from the real! Simulations do not belong to a place, or rely on the past or any substance; it is a "map that precedes the territory (Baudrillard, 1988, p. 166). In this sense, 'representation' does not mean "real" anymore, instead it becomes imaginary and "disappears with simulation...With it goes all of metaphysics" (p. 167). Gone are also reflections, since the 'real' is produced from "memory banks and command models" and can now be mass produced until it is now *hyperreal*, Baudrillard's notion that everything we think we know and think we understand are merely interpretations (pp.166-167). This also eliminates the "true and false," since these metaphysical structures are holding together illusions. Thus, the question of whether non-representational art is possible is preceded by the question of whether representation is possible. Baudrillard calls *nonrepresentation* "pure simulation," as it "bears no relation to any reality whatever" (p. 170). He warns us that "when the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning" (p. 171). This crisis creates a desire in our psyche to produce the real (p. 171, also see Deleuze, 2004b). Also gone is the ability to create illusions, since illusions reflect the real (if there was ever such a thing). Where does this place *the arts* and the production of artworks? What is *art*? "What society seeks through production, and overproduction, is the restoration of the real that escapes it" (p. 180). Are we fighting a losing battle? Short answer: no, since the creating of a work of art is a pleasurable experience where, we will argue, the *real* can be glimpsed at. We know what the real looks and feels like aesthetically. When John Dewey describes the undergoing of the aesthetic experience is he referring to two parallel universes or planes? However, that real is not one or singular, but Beauty which is experienced aesthetically in many dimensions of space, our body-mind, optics, attitude and personality, and subject matter,

style, and contexts. The 'real' question is whether to inform the children that the real does not exist?

Likewise with Deleuze and Guattari, how the subject/object goes away, since we are all an assemblage; we are all joined by a thread at least. Why do we care about the real so much, or the truth for that matter? Is anything real -can we ever know anything, or is everything constructed, and everything an interpretation? Everything is part of an assemblage –by how we experience without end, but in an uneven chain. If our minds are in a constant state of change and movement, how is solidarity possible? There is no real self, since we are always producing ourselves? It seems the time to place the concept (and word) 'real' under erasure. Would doing so change the world? Yes. Every word is a structure and organizes people in thought and by thoughts, so many times over in infinite dimensions we, our selves are a conceptualization. This realization causes many to look up and far out. When did our description of the world go so wrong? How did we get so far from materiality? How are these structures producing us, why do we assume it is from the Other? The controls are in our hands, and paintbrushes, controls that were constructed by like-people before us. Does it matter who made the controllers of the control, since the machinery is updated and modified daily? Instead, we are all stuck in structures, stuck in text, stuck in the world -we can bend and stretch the binary-created bubble though. Hypothetically, if free from structure, we would still be subject to gravity, or desire. Perhaps gravitas is the only 'real' felt relation, or the only thing Real. But since most of our tools are in language we can never break from our bubble to see the real world, only and always peering through the soapy sheen of the bubble, so we understand by experience and interpretation (all images, mirages, and fabrications). Everything is interpretive, even water, for example. Thus, nothing is authentic outside ourselves and everything is a description; everything is a description of a description.

I will argue here that Art exists partially outside language, and thus outside structure, and the bubble, cage, purse, beaker. Jacques Derrida once said, "there is nothing outside the text" (1967, p. 158). In other words, "words rely on other words for meaning. We know, however, that a single color can have thousands of subtle variations, each of which is discernible to the eye, and each of which will have a slightly different effect upon our responses to it yet we could not begin to name those differences. So the designating capability falls short in this example" (White, 2009, p. 116). The viewer's attention would inevitably be drawn to words (gravitas), always already in adequate in relation to the other words, especially when experiencing of the colors themselves (p. 116). "Then, in regard to Derrida's famous statement... meaning exists largely outside the text. The student's primary foci are on their experiences, not on a self-enclosed linguistic system" (White, 2009, p. 117).

Many philosophers talk about an insidedness and outsidedness. We will wed this concept with conversation and how when someone leaves the outsidedness to enter into a dialogue with the Other. This creates a new idea: the Other is the "insidedness." Margaret Latta talks about this when making a piece of art, "art speaks, how it draws you in" (2001a, p. 50), and in our formula, when one transitions from mute experience into agreement. In these moments we exist outside our selves, and we go through a state of transference into hermeneutic connection. "Getting to that space between self and other, self and world -a place that is neither self nor other bit the reality of relation -requires a "with-drawl from oneself" (Rajchman, 2000, p. 87, Ellsworth, p. 31). This can be related to Bakhtin's notion of *answerablity*, (1924/1990) such as the unfolding in an artist's interaction with content, material, and form, which are interrelated and cannot be understood apart from each other. "Bakhtin conceives content of what work is about, matter as the concrete and abstract materials out of which work is constructed, and form the relationships in work between self, content, and material" (Latta, 2001b, p. 61), and

answerablilty as derived from a fundamental reciprocity between these points. Bakhtin (as cited in Latta, 2001b, p. 65) also explains how outsideness makes this possible. "Outsideness speaks to his interpretation of the self as a fully embodied self, a self that is constituted interdependently with the other...Outsideness is experienced through this interdependence realized at boundaries where one comes up against or comes to meet another. Each needs the other" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 138).

Brian Massumi likewise speaks on this, how the "self in the midst of an experience of transitional space is in the immanent relation that is change itself. It is 'simultaneous and consubstantial' with the 'outside,' with others, or with events. The self in transition is participating in the 'unfounded and unmediated in-between of becoming' (Massumi, 2002, p. 71). Ellsworth responds to Massumi's idea, the "self who has participated in the transitional space is not a separate entity, but a 'differential emergence' from a 'shared realm of relationally" (Massumi, 2002, p. 71; Ellsworth, p. 34). She also relates this to education and students, if "teaching is about thinking and complying; if thinking is, as Gilles Deleuze and D. W. Winnicott suggest, a confrontation or encounter with an outside -an encounter with the unthought; if thinking is that space outside the actual that is filled with things in the making; if the unthought is a sea of possible desires waiting their chance, their moment of actualization" (Grosz & Eisenman, 2001, p. 61), then pedagogy puts us in relation to that outside. For pedagogy to put us in the relation of thinking -it must create places in which to think without already knowing what we should think. It must create for us a relationship to the outside, to others, to the world, to history, and to the already thought in a way that keeps the future of what we make of that relation and what we might think is open and undecided, and make it impossible for an artist, designer, architect, or teacher to anticipate what form learning will take or how it will be used. Unwilled learning maybe, but it would also make it impossible to conjure learning. You cannot give

someone the experience of learning self; yet, we are capable of designing places that elicit profoundly moving experiences of encountering an 'outside' and the power which we attribute to 'masterful' teaching and to 'pedagogical masterpieces' (Ellsworth, p. 54). She further explains, "thought is able to confront us from the only place where it can confront us: from outside the concepts we already have, outside the subjectivities we already have, outside the material reality we already know" (p. 55). Do our bodies only know and our minds are becoming?

We can say that we work on the surface of the outside of an inner dimension. We are always at a distance from the inner, on the boundary of the Other. We assess the Other; we seek to expose the Other. When we create a work of art, we are often outside ourselves, not necessarily in confusion, but working with what we have in the present and in the now. Latta uses Dewey's idea of felt difficulty (Dewey, 1910, p. 72) to describe an art teacher's desire for their students to "take a leap of faith" from being on the outside to being on the inside. "Emotional commitment is needed [and] experiences...that thicken the plot, the content being explored... [and] to draw them to a depth and complexity of the subject matter" (Latta, 2001b, p. 21). She offers another John Dewey idea of "explication of drawing as drawing out, extracting with the subject matter has to say in particular to each of us in our integrated experience" (1934/2005 p. 96, Latta, 2001b, p. 21).

In John Dewey's *Later Works* (1925/1988), he discusses his notion of the *body-mind* (p. 191) and seeks a "means of identifying the deeply connected paths of knowing, where body and mind intersect and become entangled. In his discussion of the 'body-mind,' Dewey describes learning as emerging through experience, that is action within the world in which we live, action related to solving problems and meeting ends, and through that action, building new structures of knowledge and understanding. Dewey asserts that the body-mind is not simply the acknowledgment of the sensory input that goes to the brain, but is based upon the interaction of

subject within a complex and challenging environment" (Davidson, 2004 p. 198). Judith Davidson in *Embodied Knowledge: Possibilities and Constraints in Art Education and Curriculum* (2004), further explains, "the body is at once an instance in time (rhythm, the thread of excursion) and space itself (where the expression takes place)" (p. 202). Ellsworth notes that the mind/brain/body is an assemblage (2004, p. 4) and that... students are not simply brains on tripods" (2004, p. 23). She critiques the current educational system's compulsion to normalize students and "the need to slow some bodies down through medication or pedagogical strategies aimed at increasing attention spans," and the increasing interestedness with the "relationship between nutrition, student achievement, free lunches [and] with the pedagogical needs and interests of students with differing physical and mental abilities" (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 23) She argues that this attention is further dividing the mind from the body and that the visual arts provide a site for the re-fusion of the parts.

"Thought is predicated upon our knowing and to engage with what cannot, solely through cognition, be known. Aesthetic practices and experiences provoke precisely such engagements and, to the extent that they are provocative of thought, they are crucial to understanding pedagogy...this is a challenge, as Kennedy puts it, to explore 'affect and sensation as ... "depth" or an "intensity" which is felt primordially, in the body, but beyond subjectivity' (Kennedy, 2003, p. 29; Ellsworth, p. 25).

Some children choose to work with a more detached attitude in the art room, and these students often distract other students in the class. These students refusal to get involved or engaged in art activities does not always mean these students are not interested in art and visual culture, but that the current conversation is in a different language i.e., the medium, topic, theme, technique. Disinterestedness is one defense and attitude on one's part to not get sucked into discourse and dialogues where one is not equal with their partner. "Unpredictability seems

essential in order to respond to newly discovered relationships, determine ways of working and responding, attend to modifications derived from these discoveries, or trust intuitions. Kant (1790/1952) acknowledges these subjective responses as the determining ground of the aesthetic. He roots these resonances in immediate, sensible particularities, with his notion of *disinterestedness*" (Latta, 2001b, p. 43). Do not confuse this with uninterestedness, for Kant disinterestedness assumes involvement, participation, and contemplation"...and is "a paradoxical term, embracing impersonal objectivity and intense personal participation" (Latta, 2001b, p. 41). Gadamer claims the aesthetic experience is not disinterested, and that art "assists us in the aesthetic formation of our world to the extent that we willingly and fully participate in dialogue with the artwork. Willingness is key here." (White, 2009, pp. 130-131). Gadamer says, art "can never be divorced from the con-geniality of the one who experiences it" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 21), and our intentions, hopes, desires, and nature become a part of these aesthetic conversations.

Gravitas in experience (part four)

Charisma finds its presence in sensation and form, and holds us intimately in mute experience and agreement simultaneously. It is different than sexual attraction, but to cherish the Self as Other, when our Self is in the position of the Other during mute experience. Gravitas is interested, because it is unconscious desire; all stimuli which we react to and which engages us conduits gravitas. What is it -that draw, that lure, that nondescript tug in the qualities that makes us wonder and then makes us wonder too much? Do we seek the source of our desire, as a basic human need? Usually, but gravitas is at work in all human transactions and movements about the world. In art, it is the drive to seek beauty and aesthetically pleasing imagery, pleasure that feels good and wakes us up to our selves. Is gravitas impersonal, and outside ourselves?

Perhaps, it is largely beyond our given powers. Does gravitas have a spirit, a personality, a mind? That remains to be seen, or sensed. Whatever it is, it is close kin, but not an absolute synonym, for *intrigue*. Gravitas works in many ways, in any dimension we encounter, and seems inviting, rather than a cold or evil force. This is especially true in visual art; gravitas is more like a friend and a guide, but not a messenger. Its being is the message itself, since gravitas exists and only exists during an exchange, i.e., conversation, artmaking. However, it is improbable to translate a coding as ancient and alien as this, many try and have always tried, but leads to guessing and mis-interpretation. Is gravitas beautiful? Yes, if beauty is something felt, since it has beautiful attributes. Gravitas is beautiful to some, not universally, as gravitas is only seen by humans in mirror image, or felt reciprocity. The invitation of gravitas is always in coming to us from ahead, and never alongside-or we would perpetually spin in place (rarely are humans perfectly balanced on the right and left sides of the body-mind). What is frustrating to many is the source of gravitas is never reached; though at times it feels right in our grasp. Gravitas leaves, generates, enters beyond our horizon. Could horizons be combined to reach gravitas? On paper, it is debatable at best, but few will argue the fusion of horizons gets us a better interpretation of the Message (a perfect translation being Truth).

In a way, we are never our self, since we live in a state of beckoning -our nerves, doubts, fears. The urge to escape this uneasiness becomes so intense that blatant desires are formed-the intense need. Desire needs to produce the real, and that real is not possible under gravitas, since we are not free from its contingency. Gravitas does not reach us in mute experience, in that flash of prelingual wisdom. In these moments, we find our self as the Other, not living as image and simulacra, but something unique and the potential of becoming real. "To recognize one's own in the alien, to become at home in it, is the basic movement of spirit, whose being consists only in returning to itself from what is other" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 13). Agreement is a return to our

social Self, but there is a trigger in the aesthetic experience that initiates our self-fusion in agreement with gravitas. In the return to the self in agreement, we see charisma in our Self, that lures us back, not in a narcissus kind of way, but a re-discovery of Self as interesting and beautiful. Our charismatic Selves possess qualities that appear new, and some that are always there lurking beyond the borders of our perception, blurred by desire and will, however from this momentary outsidedness, we see life for what it is: living. Charisma then, is to inquiring to know –yet, we can only know what is real, the Law, and Truth, something by agreement we have forfeited. Would never leaving mute experience drive us mad? Do we desire to stay in mute, prelingual experience? Do you, if not, then why? Answering this might be a clue to what is triggering the igniting of gravitas in each of us (always subjective)! The reasons are of course, different for everyone. Yet, how controllable is that trigger, and how long we stay in speechless wonder? Do certain people have this ability? We argue artists do, and will argue that is a reason we have art education for children. Beauty is alone valuable, how it leads the way out to where we find our selves. Though beauty is not confined to angels, marble statues, ocean sunsets, a lover's eyes, crystal blue skies, golden trinkets, stained glass; its infused in all experiences of everyday objects at hand, such as the yellow-green, waxy surface of a banana and its violently ripped off end, and belly button or in the sleek, perfect, Modern, self-important beauty of a laptop, or the cherry red, bold graphics, raw aluminum top, with the pull tab mechanism and metallic polish of a Coke Cola can, or the warm Chestnut, machine-sawed edge and complicated wood grain of the kitchen table this writer's Coke, banana, and computer is sitting on. During the average awakness, our minds are in a steady process of entering mini-experiences with all that we cross paths where we enjoy, and then bounce back into reason. Is there joy in reason? - not really, but there is much joy in perception, since experiences garners pleasure. A line will not be drawn in the sand, here in this paper, but such distinctions are important for the promotion

of artist-knowing and what artists can teach us, and what children can learn through artmaking, and with children being artists.

The understanding of Gravitas in experience is its intentionality, but is presented in a language that avoids metaphysics or a pre-outsidedness. It is difficult to dismiss the metaphysical nature (and perhaps being) of gravitas, without completely framing it in a metaphysical tradition since language, and especially theoretical language are embedded and entangled in this spirit and belief and assumptions. If you might find yourself disoriented as side effect, consider yourself lucky. Metaphysics is the subject, escapable by numbness or denial - one can resist, but we are always its agent, contingent on its being felt. It can be seen blurring farsightedly in the straight line ahead. Death waits there too and a staircase ascending to something or nothing. Yet, metaphysics is a space, comforting and ego-centered, answering to the longing to belong to something, like your "regular" seat at a local restaurant. It is also where presence is, and where the Other stops, or started, and always too important to dismiss for long as horizons are attractive. Could Metaphysics be the *trigger*, the rupture? If so, and if metaphysics and our language that bears its presence cannot be completely surpassed, we could try to trick or elude it.

To name the center is delusional, since it is what is at play and work that matters with human activity. Gravitas is the mode and quality of a center. "Successively, and in a regulated fashion, the center receives different forms and names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metanymies...It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable presence -eidos, arche, telos, energeis, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia, transscendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth..." (Derrida, 1978, pp. 279-280). Gravitas is both experiencable and unnoticeable, due to its numbing consistency. Could

the predictability of gravitas be re-conceptualized as obedience? "Thus it has always been thought that the center which is by definition unique, constituted the very thing within a structure which while governing that structure, escapes structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, with the structure and outside it" (Derrida, 1978, p. 279). Gravitas is that which pulls us from beyond the border, and exists outside our horizon, yet as Derrida points out, the center or horizon is relative. This is how, during the aesthetic experience, we experience our Self as the Other and we escape the structure of Human Being. The insidedness of gravitas depends on the degree of its importance, which shifts, in us. The distance of it can differ by our invitation during experience. Plato believed that prophets, mediums, Shamans, poets, artists, and nomads are the only ones truly fit to interpret (Grondin, 1994, p. 22), since they are on the margins of both insideness and outsideness, and sometimes cross at will.

There is no present as is universally understood, the seconds of the clock move faster than we experience an experience. Mute experience is a glimpse of the future; agreement is a re-grounding in the moment that already passed. One illustration, for example, is walking and how one foot steps out *foreward*, and transitioning period where our back leg pushes off the ground, lifts, and steps ahead of the Other. Should we teach ourselves to sidestep? Is this what D & G refer to as a leveling a forest? Our horizon is half created by unconscious forces (Gravitas) that mimic natural forces (gravity) and oppress us in structures, such as language, power, and desire. In every moment we can make it different, as the past and future are within our grasp. Though we walk backwards to agreement, we are still walking foreward, since experience is rhizomatic and we progress by nature, and ground is covered. We have entryways to the House of Being (Heidegger, 1971, p. 5) through the mute experience of experience and it is deemed beautiful.

If we cannot escape this generator, and every moment of free, futuristic vision is followed by historical and social knowing, then perhaps we can work with the two. But, earlier we mentioned a third space, a transitional space, where one leg lifts and swings from the background to the foreground to gain the lead, our minds travel outward to agreement, with the realization that we breath, rely on water, have families and such. Describing that trigger is worth something, but finding this place as a space to better our lives is invaluable and that space in the present and that place is balanced between our will and Gravitas. Before agreement comes that trigger of *compromise*, where we shake hands with nature, we sense our abilities, our position in society, and our lucidity. Emotion triggers compromise and the senses are appropriated into thought and agreement. Humans are caring creatures, even when we do not care -it is an awareness that caring belongs. Agreement is a sense of belonging.

All this talk is turning these nonrepresentational forces into objects, like an abstract artist producing a painting or sculpture from abstract thought. In turn, this whole thesis is corrupt. This brings to light and issue our human condition of materiality and belonging to the Earth. Representational thought is hardly avoidable. The paradox is that we need to say things that we cannot say, or ever fully know, such as our experiments with nonrepresentational art with children. The best way to communicate these experiential knowings is through work, movement, and play -and sadly we will not go beyond working, moving, and playing. Art is the expression of the experiential knowings. The products of Art are reflections of these expressions, since media are outside ourselves, and are interpretations of interpretations. The aesthetic experience is the horizon and 'game' that Gadamer refers to, "what holds the player in the spell, draws him into play, and keeps him there is the game itself" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 106).

Gadamer describes in detail about the playing field of the aesthetic experience, the "playing field on which the game is played is, as it were, set up by the nature of the game itself and is

defined far more by the structure that determines the movement of the game from within than by what is comes up against -i.e., the boundaries of the open space -limiting movement from without" (p. 107). "[T]he structure of movement to which it submits has a definite quality which the player 'chooses.' First, he expressively separates his playing behavior from his other behavior by wanting to play...Play is really limited by presenting itself. Thus its mode of being is self-presentation" (p. 107).

This could be useful for understanding for artmaking and artworks. Since we desire to play, and with what Deleuze said about desire being the unconscious production of the real (2004b), the player (or artist) desires to make, to work, to construct, to create. The game ends when the artist finds his work representational, and even if the artwork is abstract, it represents what an artwork should look like from the artist's pre-understanding. Or in highly non-objective, formalist work of art, it too is representational from the artist's perceptive since they *chose* to end the game and call it completed. Choosing to play is the compromise, and agreement being when we meet the other players -who also choose to play subjectively. Choosing to play is to leave the outside for the inside, but this could be viewed as being subservient, or deciding to join the team, buying-in, longing for acceptance, naïve hope and taking a chance.

Compromise is deciding to return to Earth and coming back to the ground, and this is enacted by gravitas weighing and placing importance on what is left to be done. Boyd White senses that morality contributes to compromise, a "quest for beauty, rather than being a refusal to confront the ills of the world, would seem to exemplify a desire to right the wrongs and to celebrate that which one seems to be right" (White, 2009, p. 140). And if we dwell in compromise, we never can know what is right; all we know is what we feel. (We have already said too much). Desire is gravitas in the sense that it makes us think, along with fear. With desire comes the emotion of hunger and want. We are torn between two realms, pleasure and

will to power, such as in the aesthetic experience. "Art is then described as the supreme will to power, which, giving form to chaos, is the 'creative experience of becoming' (Spivak, 1967 p. xxxiv). Does the pleasurable aesthetic experience end in death, the death of meaning, reason, accountability, reputation, position, -those things created by structures. Must we always hold the ticket, the bag, the key, the hammer? If we stay in mute experience we will never fully understand, or connect, or love-only enjoy? Mute experience has its euphoria, and forgetfulness (just as agreement has its warm milk), but it leaves more to be desired. Humans are desiring beings. We are insatiable and want to experience life and experience cold water on our hands, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, sand between our toes, the quasi-burn of hot sauce, a sad movie, the smell of the street after a summer rain, and kiss our lover's neck, hold a baby, drive too fast in our car, get a love letter, dance in a club, pick fruit, take a day off from work, touch our pet's fur, see a child smile, and when we do not have those sensations frequently we crave crisis, drama, and danger. We desire life and hope that life continues, and that we have enough to eat, safe places for our children to grow and socialize and become better people, to provide for our families, to have a voice, travel, and help others.

Yet, there is always something unknown about experience, something felt but unthought - this helps us work through the mini-experiences of agreement and press foreward exploring. "Experience, normal or clinical, is never fully intentional. No matter how practiced the act, the result remains at least as involuntary as it is elicited...The personal is not intentionally prefigured. It is rhythmically re-fused in a way that always brings something new and unexpected into the loop. The loop is always strangely open" (Massumi, date, p.191, Ellsworth, date, p. 26). This mysterious and sometimes confusing space we find ourselves in, like the experience of enjoying being lost, can be used in pedagogy to help children learn to problem solve, think creatively, and communicate better. "The qualities and design elements that seem to constitute their

pedagogical force invite sensations of being somewhere in between thinking and feeling, of being in motion through the space and time between knowing and not knowing, in the space and time of learning as a lived experience with an open, unforeseeable future" (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 17). How can we produce the real if we do not fully understand things? This 'not knowing' is what education is built on. Gadamer also speaks of an enigma in the aesthetic experience that we argue is gravitas in experience, "there is something in our experience of the beautiful that arrests us and compels us to dwell upon the individual experience itself" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 16). For example, this can be compared to "hang time" in the sport of basketball, and the mysterious ability to leap in the air and momentarily appear to hang suspended and defy and cheat gravity and scientific logic. Is there another force at work, another force at play? We will argue and lean towards 'at play,' since this unknown force is more graceful than the monokinetic pull of gravitas.

Gravitas in experience (part five)

Children making art in schools exist in a middle space, in the trigger, in the compromise, nothing is set and gravitas has a stead grip on their movements. How does art in schools play into this? Where is the gravitas in children's artmaking in schools? One area to research is desire, and how the desires of public school, art programs, curriculum, art educators, and the children interact and whose desires are contended with and privileged, and whose are ignored or oppressed. It seems in a public school environment non-representation is impossible, there is always a compromise with learning ends, art-as-product, grades and report cards.. How can we stretch this horizon; is a fusion of horizons in order? It could help to think of these mega-powers as possessing not only a horizon, but possessing a dimension of multiplicities. All this

considered the art classroom is an assemblage comprised of many dimensions connected in countless rhizomatic ways, but not all ways. What are these ruptures that prevent harmony and graceful eco-environment in the art classroom? Gadamer might answer "prejudices," and that each member in pedagogy brings in some pre-understanding. Ideally, the art classroom would be a place where new vocabularies are created by everyone-together, and where the teacher is displaced into the role of "student" alongside the children, and the school becomes a forum and a site of protection, inspiration, and space for conversational artmaking. How could this ever occur in an art classroom? We argue with non-representational artmaking, and reconstructing the disparate, "prejudiced" individuals -teachers and students, in a community. Basic social structure and some boundaries are necessary, so no one gets hurt, or lost, but the power structures need leveling and restructuring towards a more open, non-stratified, larger space.

When this research began this researcher secretly hoped to find the One main reason we make art -the existentialist answer to 'why we make art' question. Or, how viewing a work of art is more of a universal seeking, in that we are looking for something that the artist who painted it, and the artists who painted all the artworks in the museum, feels like we do and know. While we seek the 'why' question, this recent philosophy concerns the 'how's.' This research is about the 'whys,' naturally, we don't focus on one theory because we are describing a dimension of dimensions. It was a phenomenological question that underscored the topical movements. Some reasons we make art, recognition for effort, skill, vision, release of emotion, once trapped, creative release, peace, understanding from others, pay homage, to try out new paints and tools, its enjoyable... Since we sense we are trapped in structures, routines, which make us more spiritual and seek that which we cannot rhizome-God, beauty, justice-that which seems free-those things of the sky and *ku* (Heidegger, 1954/1971, p. 14-15). We create art to get something back, there is a payoff. We also get on the inside, since we exist on the outside due to binary

Self/Other. In school arts, an art teacher needs to be aware that children create crafts, color and, and make other 'creative' projects in their academic classes, and art concepts are misconstrued or assumed. As aesthetic experiences lead back to the Self, the "'self' is what emerges from [the] learning experience" (Ellsworth, 2004, p. 2). This is not a redundant enterprise, but a space for learning new things about our abilities, talents, personality, desires, morals, and our position in the community. "This transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting" (Foucault, 1994/1997, p. 131)? In this sense, art education is transformative education and visual art is a rupture!

Children are discovering how things are by making art. Each child has a different way of knowing, and prejudices they bring into artmaking from their daily lives. Children create art with the purpose to explore, to please their teacher and parents, and to contribute to the world. "Students have to enter into learning as a problem to be explored or a new adventure, to belong to the subject matter" (Latta, 2001b, p. 40). To them art is love, a gift, a message, and children are Hermes. To create is to construct something positive, something that adds to the world and makes the world happier, beautiful, and a more loving place. To make something beautiful is to make something good and that 'good' spreads to whoever is lucky to experience it. If desire is the unconscious production of the real, then one motivation to make art is the construction of the good, and to choose to resist evil, fear, ugliness, confusion, and lies. Children seek to through artmaking to establish a new governing mechanism and structure to give pleasure, that color, pattern, and balance, that is blessed to them during artmaking and beginning to better understand, back to the unknown future. In the art classroom the compromise between art teacher and student is care. We join together to be a part of making something beautiful. However, children

while art making are not only demonstrating care, but are showing love, in 'unconscious production of love"-desire, if we relate it to Deleuze.

Gadamer says that "coming to an understanding can only succeed on the basis of an original agreement." (1960/2004, p. p. 569). Does an artist enter into creating an artwork with the understanding that an artwork *will* be made, if only the artist wills it? Will carries with it desire and power and determination and inclination and purpose. What if they choose a disagreeable medium -one that speaks a language the artist does not understand, or cares not learn? Is art an imitation of man's will? "The experience of art making.., is an experience that absorbs me in process. It is an experience that relies on dialogue and participation as a means to sense making. It is an experience that has to be felt and lived through as a whole" (Latta, 2001b, p. 3). Whatever it is, art gives us a mysterious gift; and we artists are giftmakers. The gift is the message, and sometimes the warning, but something we carry away and something that is passed on. Maxine Greene says art gives us something to live for, it "offers life; it offers hope; it offers the prospect of discovery, it offers light. Resisting, we may make the teaching of the aesthetic experience our pedagogic creed" (Greene, 1995, p. 133). Gadamer says art offers us the divine, "a work of art always has something sacred about it" (1960/2004, p. 144) "[T]he experience of the beautiful, especially the beautiful in art, is the invocation of a potentially whole and holy order of things, wherever it may be found." (Gadamer, 1986, p. 32). Is there a moral obligation to create art (Kalon)?

Still, artists are giftmakers and giftgivers, and our experience of making art brings to life a more deeper and intimate experience, which starts with the hyperreal, prelinguistic affect of mute experience. Mute experience is the experience of *fertility*. Fertility is rhizomatic. Mute is selfless (outsidedness) and giving. The mode of mute experience is to populate with rhizomes, to populate with dimensions, to populate the Earth. The return to the Self in agreement is

initiated by Charisma, the Charisma of the Self, that lures us sexually back to the world of fear, desire, death, sense, language, and reason. When fertility crosses into agreement, it changes dramatically, and appropriates gravitas to different ends -our will to populate is so strong we are willing to die, over and over again, just for the opportunity. Compromise, during the 'trigger,' is to settle down, white-off, put-off, frigidity, saltpeter, bundling board, divorce, a hot shower, the menstrual period, and chastity belt, contraceptive and the last wall of defense. But gravitas pulls relentlessly, and habits, conditioning, comfort, forgetfulness always already fails us. The loop to conceive over and over again compulsively, and automation, libido, sexual desire, and the longing and bitter wait for climax, ecstasy, rapture is hardly experienced, and never fully until the End. Because these plateaus are not sustainable, and come in short blasts, we continue to dabble and toil in the Arts to find this power.

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ENDNOTE

As a researcher, I find it helpful to associate my research and ideas and to think of my work not as a cohesive document grounded in logical history, but as an assemblage, or a cluster that is gathered and not forced violently through appropriation or signification, and instead grouped aesthetically. This research is an attempt to work with field findings and some problematic philosophical notions to better understand what is at work during both artmaking and experiencing a work of art, and how artworks and works in progress are working, communicating, and experiencemaking. The world has enough data, so what we need are new ways of thinking and working with all the data that is collected (It is not the object, so much as what we are doing with those objects). This said, texts will never be enough to explain the world. "It is impossible, perhaps even undesirable, to tell everything (Jackson, 2003, p. 705). We argue that the creation of a work of art is in excess of the artist's intentions. So too, is its reception. Kofman (1988) describes a particular paradox of creative worlds where "the author plays out knowledge without processing it, and because of that he makes a work of art" (p. 41). This was experienced throughout the writing of this paper, i.e., the feeling of being out of control, saying too much, framing the sky and objectifying the undefinable. Yet, many artists do this, and try to do this by painting what cannot be seen; "the artistic calls into being both affective states of knowledge and ignorance and the work of thinking about them...A quality of this conflict is deferred and there is experience before understanding"(Britzman, 2006, p. 110).

This Applied Project offers much to think about, and like all good research it offers more to research and study! The goal was to open up a space for discussion on the benefits of the

aesthetic experience on learning, and as it opened, more seemed to fill the space. "I hope that a writing strategy informed by such documentary practices will leave me and this book's readers with the problem of 'what in the world to do with it all' (Massumi, 2002, p. 19, Ellsworth, p. 13) because that, as Massumi suggests, is where our experimentation begins. The problem of what to do with it all spreads the potential for surprising and unexpected futures for pedagogy" (Ellsworth, p. 13).