Salvaging Practice from the Remnants of Twentieth Century Art Education in New Zealand

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Digging about in a pile of the New Zealand teacher journal, Education, I came across an article from 1965 by Doreen Blumhardt.
Thank you to Lily and Martin for your love and your patience when you wanted my attention and I was busy. Thank you to the rest of my family for adding to the richness of my experience of research, especially my mother who was very brave in starting a degree in fine arts while I worked on this thesis and my sister who proved that going to the other side of the world to further an academic career was a possibility. Thank you to my supervisors, Jean, Elody and Robert for providing a challenging and supportive intellectual space where I could safely explore art education practice. Thank you to the art educators who I have spoken with and engaged with through their writing in order to better understand their practice.
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ABSTRACT

As the title of this thesis suggests, this is a project of salvaging practice from the site of 20th century art education in New Zealand, engaged in through research practice and its materialisation into text. Through exploring this site I ask what makes art useful to educational practice, using the voice of an embodied artist/researcher? The 20th century answers to this question range from developing a visual literacy that can be applied to the image-saturated world of mass media to the liberation of human potential through arts-based inquiries. My project includes the critical interrogation of these positions, contextualised within an argument that value in the practices of art comes from the contextual and contingent disciplinary understandings of art.

Whilst the predominant logic of the research is founded in a theoretical hybridism of art and education, using the methodologies of art practice and narrative inquiry, each chapter represents a different way of thinking about the initial proposition on the value of art practice, using representational forms that are integral to their epistemologies. In the pursuit of the value of art practice, I have explored a number of rich art educational contexts. These have included investigating multiple depictions of the phenomenology of teaching and learning art as well as piecing together constructions of historical art education practice and the representation of both of these in academic discourse throughout the 20th century. The complexity of these contexts demands complex and multidimensional analyses.

The significant findings of this text are the recommendations for recognition of the embodied nature of art learning, whereby art meanings are actively constructed within thinking and working, albeit contingent, bodies. This is a position that is undermined by a textualisation of culture that positions bodies entirely as discursive abstractions, removed from their phenomenological existence. I find that the re-examination of the significance of material effects to individual subject bodies re-inserts positions from which to speak on the value and ethics of art education, however, contingent subjectivities mean that an ethical art pedagogy needs careful consideration. Examining critical and emancipatory practices in art provides a guide for how this may be achieved.
Chapter one

At the beginning of each chapter I have included a brief narrative. This is the first. I am using the narratives to help contextualise each chapter within the wider context of the thesis, revealing some of the connections to previous or later chapters and providing support for their location.

Making codes

In writing this narrative I have returned to the extensive notes I made throughout my research and rediscovered a relevant extract from Bourdieu (1993). Writing on the perception of art, Bourdieu states that “…when the code of the work exceeds in subtlety and complexity the code of the beholders, the latter lose interest in what appears to them to be a medley without rhyme or reason, or a completely unnecessary set of sounds or colours” (p. 225). Since this thesis claims to be an embodiment of art practice in 20th century art education Bourdieu’s claim has significant bearing on the way this work is received. He suggests that in order to increase the readability of a work the disparity between the codes and the capacity of the reader to interpret them needs to be lessened. The artist (or author) must intervene in the process by providing the codes which will allow the reader to enter into the work and take them to somewhere new. To not accept this responsibility provides a legitimacy for the reader to bring to bear only what they already know. Here I see connections between the ethics of art and education. In chapter 8 I write about the ethical responsibility of the educator in creating a context in which learning can occur. By providing codes for understanding the methodology of my research, this preface has a role in a critical pedagogy, intervening in the relationship between the reader and the thesis. Meeting their pedagogical responsibility is identified by Herda (1999) as a significant task for researchers who are concerned with an ontological orientation to research. Through engaging directly with phenomena, research enters “…into moral and political discourse with a historical understanding of the issues at hand; risking part of one’s tradition and current prejudices…” (Ibid, p. 86). Faced with these challenges it behoves researchers to take others along with them.
The ground of the research

Taking an ontological orientation means that research starts from the ground\(^1\). The ground I work in is art education in the 20\(^{th}\) century, and this is the context from which I have selected materials to assist me in my research task. I have drawn from thinkers, artists and art educators whose own work was forged in the material conditions of the 20\(^{th}\) century. Immersing myself in its remnants, I have been engaged in a process of salvaging what is useful. In the 20\(^{th}\) century theorists such as Barthes (1984, 1987) and Baudrillard (in Williamson, 1996) put into question the notion of value. Baudrillard suggests that in a relativist world there is no location from which to argue usefulness. Current critical theories, in particular feminist praxis\(^2\), problematise a relativist position and re-acknowledge the body as a legitimate site from which to make judgements. In this frame, bodies are not seen as inert unified matter, but situated and contingent materialisations. This is the space I claim for the subjects of this work, and of the thesis as work itself.

Mode of inquiry

Art education in the 20\(^{th}\) century has been inherently inter-disciplinary, forged from understandings and practices of art and education. The relationships between art and education, however, are often fraught and seldom straightforward. For example, art education research has generally followed the established methodologies of educational research\(^3\), and it is only recently that art educators are starting to question the limitations of conventional social science models, predicated on scientific method (see Bamford, 1999; Flood, 2000; Sullivan, 1996). While Sullivan adopts a qualitative research method as a form that more adequately represents the interests of art practice, Bamford contests the adoption of educational research methods *per se*. She suggests that art educators should claim their own space in the construction of ‘new’ research methodologies founded in artistic and creative inquiry that have recently been promulgated by educational researchers\(^4\). What interests me about Bamford’s claim in the face of the discussion on arts-based inquiry currently occurring in educational research, is that from the position of an artist/educator “practices are highly complex in art as they are not always indicative of a clearly stated purpose or underlying theory” (1999, p. 29). While educators try to construct an arts-based method for educational research, artists are
themselves challenging that the notion of either research method or theory can be applied unproblematically to art practice. There are currently, however, people who are extending notions of both art practice and other cultural and social science theories and methods to develop paradigms for art research. I think that the crucial part involved in finding an art education methodology from which to make representation to value is to recognise the specific situation in which the value is embodied, and to bring the discourses within that situation into dialogue with each other. For example, I have used historical materialism and hermeneutic phenomenology through theoretical representations and in practice in chapters 5 and 6, looking at the significance of subjective interpretation (or meaning making) within material contexts. From the examination of particularised contexts, descriptions can be made of the types of practices that foster valuable understandings.

**Materialising form**

In the process of researching practice, I have been engaged in a process of materialising practice into written form. This is not undertaken without considering the contested nature of text that should be seen in the light of the contingent subjectivity and embodiment invoked above. Feminist art historian Marsha Meskimmon (2000) claims that “as a process of materialization however, matter negotiates the chasm between subject and object reinstating knowledge as a performative activity which takes place between ‘knower’ and ‘known’” (p. 301). The use of first person narrative in the text reveals the performativity of subjectivity. I am not unified and omniscient, through invoking myself I am coming into being. Moreover, text in a hermeneutic sense is not the inert fixation of discourse or authorial voice, but “…a proposed world” (Herda, 1999, p. 88). Text, therefore, is a body that reveals the world, not predicated on the intentions of the author, but through the engagement of the reader. It is dislocated from the reality that was its origin and makes possible new realities, and is always fictional. This concern is echoed in contemporary post-minimalist sculpture, where Ostrow (1997) claims that through giving form to “…patterns of social behaviour and cultural narratives…” (p. 17) sculptors are situating the relationship between “…experience, the means of representation and their reception” (Ibid) at the centre of the work.
Similar concerns are apparent in educational research methodologies that maintain narrative as a means of understanding phenomena. “For us, life – as we come to it and as it comes to others – is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17). Clandinin & Connelly claim that the temporal nature of narrative is key to its use as a mode of inquiry. Using a narrative form makes representation to the temporal nature of experience as well as its historicity. Scott and Usher (1999) claim that in biographical text “the past is organized in terms of the present...” (p. 124), consonant with the hermeneutic position that engagement with text for both writer and reader is the temporal unfolding of new possibilities and interpretations. This is a theme I have highlighted in the construction of this thesis, it is predominantly organised on the basis of a self who traverses time. The notion of time in the thesis, however, is not unproblematic. While time within a scientific frame is measurable and discrete, the phenomena of time can be variable and fragmented.

There are many models for this type of work in narrative inquiry, action research and feminist methodologies, however, the thesis itself is a significant departure from the conventional form of a thesis. The APA publication manual (2001) I refer to for my citation and referencing styles describes the sections of a typical thesis consisting of preliminary pages, introduction, method, results, discussion, summary, references, appendices. While there is some reference to the conventions of thesis writing within this work, these conventions are not the predominant logic that structures the thesis. I have structured this work on the embodied understandings of myself and my participants, derived from research and analysis within multiple domains, but most particularly in art and education. The experience of being in the world, for example, subject to sensory, temporal and socio-cultural regulation, provides a unifying structure in which the thesis codes of the APA form only a small part.
Rewriting research as sculpture: or methodology from a position of autobiographical art practice

There is a great responsibility in being first. The beginning must introduce themes without saying too much. It must also engage a sustainable interest. In this chapter I introduce ideas about research methodology, philosophy and subjectivity that pervade my investigation. I do this while revealing myself as both author and persona, contingent but stable. I am asking my readers to venture into my writing with the promise that it will say something to them about the value of art practice, art practice in curriculum that is. Art doesn’t reveal itself all at once, it is a practice with layers. The act of stripping is less like peeling an onion and more like an intricate dance of veils, a body which magically and mysteriously reclothes itself at the point of denudement. Linear text has a physical beginning and end, but read as hypertext the moment of total exposure never eventuates either. These unfinished and perhaps enigmatic statements are made with the intention of preparing a reader for what they may encounter in my work, and how I would like it to be read. How would I like it to be read? Firstly I think it may be useful to point out that my writing doesn’t conform with traditional genres of academic research. But secondly I think the act of writing the first point may be redundant because it is evident in the forms of writing I use. And thirdly I think that my explanations and interjections serve as narratives that reveal the metacognitive structure of my work. The writing becomes its own commentary on how it has been structured in the way it has, chronologically as well as conceptually, thus revealing more of itself. It is itself a project of practice,
formulating words into artefact from the multiple possibilities open to us within our regulat-
tory structures of communication and representation. Form and content are inextricable in
both art and text. They are irregular and harmonious, discrete, dialectic and dialogic.

*Changes to fonts represent multidimensional approaches to the construction of meaning.* In
writing this beginning I am looking backwards in time, and stretching behind me I see inter-
play between academic and fictional genres of writing, interruptions by imagery, the construc-
tion of a whole from an infinite number of fragments. It’s like making art. But only *like* mak-
ing art. The pulling together of disparate threads, fragmented memories and flashes of interest
at first backwards glance appeared to be entirely the same process as my activity as a sculptor,
both occurring over an expanse of time. After more prolonged reflection, the differences
seemed subtle but still apparent. I have encountered different rules in each type of practice,
that can be broken in different ways. For example, the crime of plagiarism is qualitatively
different from the crime of forgery, one can occur with the click of a mouse or “C, the other
may require immense skill recreating the master’s hand. Because my bilingualism in art and
education is not yet complete, recognising that cultural misunderstandings may arise results in
a certain amount of fear and uncertainty about how my work may be received, in either camp.
Cross cultural dialogue and translation, however, have become significant frames for ap-
proaching my work. I think about the relationship between art and education like the “border
studies” advocated by art educator Elizabeth Garber (1995) who writes about developing
multi-cultural understandings in art education. Through immersion in the culture of the
other, “we must work to develop new ways of thinking and valuing that are influenced by our
interactions with the culture we are coming to understand” (Ibid, p. 223).

The subtle differences have become the most interesting to me. I think of them as the differ-
ence in inflection between the compressed “inquiry” accented in American and the convoluted
“inquiry” hissed between the teeth of a New Zealander. Do they really mean the same thing? I
am currently most prone to believe that meanings are embodied in the cultural contexts of the
selves that construct them. Therefore meanings are both fluid and particular. Meanings change according to the perspective of the viewer, or ‘self that makes sense’, but not in a relativistic sense. Because they are also specific to the context within which the self is embedded, a context that both constrains, through historical, material and ideological conditions, and allows for the agency of its subjects through their individual engagement within it. Meanings change over time, not just from an individualistic interpretative frame, structural categories themselves are culturally constructed (Wolff, 1999). Thus categories such as ‘race’, ‘class’, ‘gender’ and even “self” are not unified and essential, but are categories applied from within cultural frameworks and understandings. For example the concept of ‘woman’ changes according to your vantage point within a cultural context; if you’re a woman, if you’re a maori woman, if you’re a poor maori woman, if you’re a poor maori woman with a degree in sociology. This understanding has the potential to reduce structural limitations to linguistic mindgames, where language defines meaning, and potential meanings are multiple and unrestrained. While there are threads in cultural theory that privilege a relativist reading of social structure, Janet Wolff (1993, 1999) claims that the significance of structural and sociological analyses to an understanding of culture is that while structural categories are cultural fictions, we experience them as real. For me, this understanding of culture re-ignites the primacy in understanding material conditions of selves for ascertaining value and making judgements about the role of art practice in curriculum. How do we experience the socio-cultural contexts of which “we” are part? What potential do “we” have for making them better suit our needs, even when “we” are contingent? These are questions that get lost in the textualisation or abstraction of culture unless cultural texts, including the body, are regarded as material manifestations of culture and abstraction is viewed as a process of the mind within a thinking body.

While many contemporary authors make reference to the relationships between materiality and text, I find Karl Marx’s (see 1887/1970, 1973) writing most helpful in understanding the relationship between the abstract and the concrete. He concretises his thoughts into examples that I feel I can touch. Diane Elson (1979) writes on Marx, suggesting that his conception of the relationship between form and its constituents was less a process of mechanised determination and more to do with transformation. Labour is the transformative element that changes
one form into another, rather like a process of crystallisation resulting in a structural change of a chemical compound. She suggests that the abstractions that underpin understanding, must become concretised in order to be grasped. They must be formalised; however, in the process of formalisation they are transformed. I suppose within a capitalist framework the structural limitations of capital exchange dictate the transformation, although it seems to me that in the case of an artist engaged in art work, the transformations could occur strategically. Marx’s (1970) analysis of commodification provides a compelling explanation of the relations evident in the contemporary art market, yet there are still plenty of examples of artists who work in the borders of hegemonic culture or are situated between compliance and critique. There are many artists who work in isolated sheds or community networks and bring their work to the attention of others through cooperative galleries, or art societies or under their own volition. I am interested in these artists and how they manage to construct complex and multidimensional understandings of their art practice for themselves. This is important in an educative sense if you want to create an art education that encourages multiple and expansive understandings of art practice. The complexity of this process requires a multidimensional approach to analysis, and thus, I draw from both material and interpretative traditions so that culture can be understood as both socially defined and subjectively determined. Looking at the problem from a hermeneutic phenomenology, Ricoeur’s (1991) work reminds me that discourse is also an embodied act, an activity of a body that speaks. Artists are constructed by culture, but they are also in the process of constructing culture, constructing the fictions of themselves and others. In the case of the research this thesis represents, I have a privileged position as the self-conscious artist and researcher who has made sense of art practice within the historical, social and cultural context of New Zealand education. Enough sense to construct an artefact or document, with enough openings for new senses to be forged.

I had an art day at the weekend. It started before lunch with a visit to a large group exhibition of contemporary art. I should have been before, it was an exhibition of my peers, artists who travelled the same route to art education as me, through the Christchurch College of Education. Some of them you may find in this thesis, although they are usually disguised in layers of fiction, obscuring their identity to maintain their privilege of privacy. I even had a short piece
of writing in the catalogue of the exhibition, hashed together leftovers to meet a two-week
deadline. But typically I left my visit to the last day of the exhibition. I sometimes think I
function at quarter the speed of ordinary life and live it perpetually trying to catch up. Speed,
now there's a theme I will develop in future writing. After the exhibition, I went to the museum
where my interest was caught by photographs of Ground Zero in New York. I had not been
able to conceive of the massive physical scale of the cascade of metal, concrete and glass
until I saw those photographs. Art makes life more real. From there I went to the Arts Centre
and looked at a woman's solo show of paintings, paint spread so thinly it suggested that she
couldn't commit the expense of materials to the large scale of the canvases she used. I zipped
through the gallery but she caught me at the exit door and we chatted briefly about the cheer­
ful, pixellated drawing her five year old grandson had sent her via email. I would also love it
if it had come from my grandson across cyberspace. Finally I landed in rural Christchurch,
welcomed by chickens, at the opening of a gallery of raw edged and roughly sketched clay
sculpture and pots. The art work I saw that day was incredibly varied in both style and tradi­
tional notions of skill, however, for me the most significant and profound feature of the day
was my awareness of how the art I encountered was mediated by culture. Or should that be
cultures, because there were certainly subcultural and multicultural texts to be read in each of
the art contexts.

As I made sense of the critical mass of my art engagement, it was not “I alone” making sense
or meaning. It was a me who had been one of these art teachers. A me who, although from its
outskirts, could pick which of these artists were part of the local fine art elite; a me who
recognised which historical artists the large abstract paintings referred to; a me who not only
understood that New Zealanders like to be seen as sophisticated in their artistic endeavours,
and usually refer to their colonial origins with critique or nostalgia, but also believed in the
storyline; a me who shared a complex understanding of cultural identity, shared multiple
identities, with many of these artists; a me who saw myself beyond the boundaries of my
flesh, and part of cultures or amalgamations of selves and recognised myself (myselfs)
through my difference from others, not always a flattering angle. I think there is a compla­
cency that develops when working from within your own cultural framework. And although it
terrifies me, it needs to be fractured now and again. My mother would say “it keeps you edgy”.

**CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH**

Recognising the construction of self through and within cultural settings highlights the cultural embeddedness of the practices with which I and other artists engage. This includes research as well as art. I think the most significant point I’d like to make here is that practice (or research method) is embedded within context (or research content). This is something I know from my understanding of ethnographic and qualitative research practice, but more fundamentally to my practice it is something as an artist I’ve always known – it’s a kind of cultural more, sometimes spoken and always transmitted amongst its citizenry, regardless.

Since moving into research, there have been many times when I’ve found myself unenthusiastic by debates surrounding research methodologies. *It’s just one of those slight differences between art practice and educational research*. In particular I remember sitting in on a discussion of the value of qualitative research practices as a more truthful representation of reality than quantitative methods, and becoming more engrossed in the angles of parts on the overhead projector than the words spoken. Approaching research from art practice, I seemed to automatically operate on the assumption that the way you did something would unquestionably affect the outcomes or results, and that rather than arguing for one way or another of working, methods could be employed when they are fit for purpose. I still work from that assumption, only now I’m writing it into the open, showing its logic. Imagine that you want to make a sculpture that conveys an idea of great gravity and mass. How would you go about achieving this? You can’t make the sculpture out of the polyester resin or polystyrene used to construct the Santa Parade floats or faux rock landscapes at the hot baths. Their fake mass is not deceptive enough to be undetectable and what you’d end up conveying would be the illusion of heaviness, a subtly different concept. So to really achieve the sense of gravity you seek, you’d need a heavy and dense material. The material you choose would create some limitations on how you could use it. Stone is very limited in the way it can be worked. Concrete has greater flexibility since it starts out as a fluid, but its successful application is still
rule bound, requiring structural support, correct ratios of ingredients and proper curing. Even though both of the materials may convey a sense of mass, your original intention, they also bring something different to the finished product as well as demanding different methods of application. The earthy physique of a lump of granite that requires repeated, forceful blows to make the slightest dent on its surface is quite different from the synthetic disposition of concrete that can be poured into shape. Materials have their own natures, wilfully dictating the rules of sculptural practice. As a sculptor you become familiar with these, working with their limitations until you find the cracks that allow you to break them, pushing on the limits of their materiality, rending openings for your agency and creativity. In some ways this project started with sculpture; in my undergraduate training as a sculptor I learnt the hunt and kill of knowledge. While not all sculptural practice is research, exploring how meaning is pursued in sculpture reveals something about the construction of a research practice founded in a knowledge of sculpture. To research art from the inside, by adopting art methods of inquiry, may reveal more about how art concepts such as intention and creativity operate in art practice than would be apparent through the application of non-specific research methods taught in research methods courses, in isolation from their contexts of inquiry.

Later in this thesis I refer, more fully than now, to a paper by Elliot Eisner (1991) entitled *What The Arts Taught Me About Education* that makes some attempt to explain how his background as an artist and his art understandings have impacted on his understanding of education. One of the most significant lessons I have learnt as an artist is that form and content cannot be separate, they feed each other insatiably. Evident in my example of constructing a sculpture to convey an idea of mass is the idea that the way of working, the form it creates and the meaning of the work are interrelated and indivisible. Thus the cleanly printed, nicely tabulated thesis, including my own, speaks volumes, without my having to read a word. Its form is inseparable from its content and it tells me about its research method. In the thesis described by the APA reference manual (2001) the author is hidden behind a screen of Cartesian subjectivity, severed from the ‘I’ of the author’s body who drinks decaffeinated coffee instead of the peppermint tea the doctor ordered, watches ‘B’ grade horror flicks on Sunday nights and prefers to sleep between white cotton sheets with no polyester. The author makes
recourse to universalising discourses that instruct me in how I must behave (as an academic researcher), or who has misbehaved (in educational research this frequently seems to be teachers). Rationalities underpinning art are varied; e.g. liberal humanist holism, Christian religious dogma, modernist avant garde. Even scientific method plays its part in the geometric precision of the painter Frank Stella or in the mathematically precise sculpture of Sol Le Wit, although I think it is unlikely that many would believe this is the fundamental force of art. Throughout my work I make deliberate attempts to demonstrate differences in philosophies or modes of thinking through differences in form, giving them material form. This is evident in the chapters of this thesis, which are drawn from different disciplinary traditions. At the beginning of each chapter there is a brief explanation of where they have come from and their significance to the overall form of the thesis. My position is that all philosophies and ideologies have phenomenological significance.

My thesis is a hybrid child, an interdisciplinary beast, developed from ongoing dialogue between art practice and educational research. There has been recent attention in educational research on the significance of using narrative and biographical modes of inquiry in educational contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Scott & Usher, 1999). This interest follows the work of theorists of mind who suggest that human knowledge of truth and reality is mediated by cultural products that shape the way we make meaning (Bruner, 1990, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Bruner (2003) argues that narrative is the primary structuring device through which “...we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings...” (p. 44). As such it is of crucial importance for educators to investigate how narratives of reality are constructed, not in an abstract or textual sense, but by minds embodied within physical and cultural settings. Of even more significance to the construction of this thesis, Bruner asks how in the construction of reality, narratives are cobbled together in order to create wholes (or new bodies?). He suggests that in the sciences, wholes are constructed from general principals, “...by relating particular findings to central paradigms...” (p. 56) and building theories by cumulative effect. It is much more difficult to understand how narratives are accrued to form coherent cultures, histories, traditions and autobiographies, however, Bruner suggests that it is the stories that we share that locates and constructs us within social histories. In the profes-
sional lives of teachers, Connelly & Clandinin (1999) suggest that it is the narratives shared between teachers that make up their professional identities. In chapter 6 I include some of these stories because they are materialisations of how mind constructs reality through a narrative mode.

Like other feminist art education researchers I pervade my text (see Flood, 2000; Greene 1995; Grumet, 1993) appearing in and out of focus, popping up here and there like the jack-in-a-box sculptures of Jenny Dolezel, peering though carved holes in bronze or stone like Barbara Hepworth’s figurative works. Australian textile artist and educator, Adele Flood (2000) writes about the place of personal narrative in art research. Flood claims that it is “...through narrative discourse that we can discover purpose and direction in human affairs and make individual human lives comprehensible as wholes” (Ibid, p. 4). She draws from Ricoeur (cited in Flood, 2000) in perceiving the written text as a structuring device, turning fragments of biography into a construction that elicits a range of meanings from the selves who engage with it. The narrative form especially provides examples of how meaning is constructed from the realities of human lives. The interactions of characters within narratives make direct representations to the embodied relationships of selves within which meaning and understanding are developed. My concern is that the 'I's and 'you's of narrative text will act as access points for readers and writers to become entangled in and grapple with the construction of meaning taking place in the context of the text. More specific to the issue of art research, Flood suggests that autobiographical and biographical narratives have a particular relevance to the way that artists and craftspeople express their understanding of their work, in particular the creative endeavour. Her analysis serves as a reminder that creativity is an act that is embodied within the contextual relationships of selves and other matter. The constructed nature of text, and the way that autobiography reveals its 'constructedness', also
reveals the purposefulness of human activity. Creativity is revealed through narrative form through its very nature as a creative act. As a textile artist, Flood uses metaphors of fabric craft in her writing to reveal her own purpose. She weaves stories, finds common threads and stitches together fragments of life thus revealing the interrelationship between the forms of expression she uses and the content of which she speaks. Her linguistic metaphors are underpinned by profound understandings of her craft, which drive her motivation for engaging in research. In agreement with Flood, I think that using forms of research and writing which are embedded within my context of inquiry, make more expansive representations of the ways artists make meaning within the cultural contexts of art. The 'I' of this text is a sculptor; drawing analogies, moulding concepts into physical form evident in the the various texts, and confronting art viewers with themselves through engaging them with the other. The physical presence of sculpture functions like the body in space, a marker for the contingent self. Wolff (1990) claims that even when the self is constructed through language and discourse, it is still subject to the conditions of the material world. Pain is still inflicted and exuberance felt. Her writing expresses a desire to preserve the significance of the phenomenological in the construction of identity and subjectivity.

What can art add to a discussion on the role of the material in the construction of self? Art theorist William Dunning (1991) suggests that within the tradition of western painting there has been an oscillation between depicting the illusion of space (e.g. tonal modelling in classical roman painting or the experiments in mathematical perspective of Brunelleschi and Alberti in the Italian Renaissance) and asserting the two dimensionality of the picture surface (e.g. iconic, outlined images of medieval painting or the flat canvases of the modernist avant garde). Whether pictorial space is recessive or flat, it is always about the physical relationships between the painting, its existence in the world and the selves that encounter it²¹. The illusion of
space, such as in renaissance perspectival projection, makes the painting a window that, through revealing the vantage point of the self, acts like a mirror reflecting back how the distant and knowledgeable subject makes meaning through vision and difference\textsuperscript{22}. By presenting an illusory and pre-constructed view of the world, it constrains understandings of reality making them extrinsic to a living, moving body. \textit{In a one-point perspective view of the world it is only when I stand perfectly still, holding my breath, my beating heart frozen, and with one eye shut that I am the subject of reality.} The self-conscious flattening of the picture plane illustrates the trickery inherent in such a window. You are left uncertain about the reality that you see through the window of the picture plane, thus emphasising the material reality of the painting as an object, as well as your subjectivity (as a self who makes sense) and objectivity (a materially locatable self like the painting). Art educator Dennis Atkinson (2001), writing on visuality in drawing, claims that “what we see is given meaning within established ways of seeing which are structured not by physical laws, but by sociocultural conventions” (p. 67). The notion of ‘visuality’ implies that ways of seeing are in no way physically pure or truthful in an essential sense, instead they are enacted through subjectivities. That is, enacted by selves who are physically locatable and mediated through socio-cultural contexts made up of art processes and products, both conceptual and material. While I think the discourse of visuality is very useful in developing an understanding of how vision constructs reality, care needs to be taken not to overemphasise the significance of the visual to developing art understandings. What I understand to be the hegemonic discourse in contemporary New Zealand art education confines understanding in art to visual literacy. While this varies somewhat from a discourse of vision as truth, it still obscures the relationship seeing has to the body. In visual literacy, vision is determined at a spatial distance, not embodied within. It is also constrained by a set of linguistic rules, or grammar, that are defined externally to the logic of embodied art practice\textsuperscript{23}.

My understanding of sculpture is that it also speaks of physicality, perhaps more openly than painting. Engagement in sculpture is an embodied encounter between oneself and the presence of art work (in all its multiple meanings) within a temporally and physically locatable sculptural context. In the second half of the 20th century, minimalist sculptors such as Tony
Chapter One
Rewriting Research as Sculpture: or writing philosophy from a position of practice.
An autobiographical/narrative account of the relationships between sculpture, art education, research and philosophy. (Fundamentally an explanation of my methodology).

- It introduces what I mean by self and the role this is to take in the thesis, a constructed and contingent self who is both culturally and individually defined.
- Describes the self (I) and her interaction within an art education context as the overriding methodology of research practice.
- Will more clearly describe the actual things I did as part of this research e.g. observations, interviews etc.

Smith and Carl Andre were engaged in reducing the sculptural object to its bare essentials. In removing all references to other objects in their minimal forms Smith (cited in Fried, 1998) claimed that all that was left was a physical presence to be encountered by the viewer. That a sculptural object can be stripped of signifiers has since been challenged by art theorists and semioticians, everything refers to something else. It is this cross signification or intertextuality that, in part, forms the context for an art work’s interpretation. Yet it remains that sculpture is a physical encounter. Encounters with sculpture are, at least in part, sensory experiences; walking through an installation, feeling the texture of a fibre work, relating the scale of your own body to that of a statue. Interpretation is also an embodied practice, situated in the relationships between selves and other bodies, and thus a sculptural methodology demands the manifestation of thought into form. Engagement in a sculptural context is engagement in the contexts of many forms, bodies or selves. This reminds me of educational theories that position learning within contingent socio-cultural contexts. Learning is situated within a context altered by time, shaped by the forces of nature and society and interpreted through culture (both difference and sameness).

During the last few days, in between important parallel thoughts arising in the context of an education conference, I read a book about the most well-known woman artist of the Italian Renaissance, Artemisia Gentileschi. The writing was sometimes clumsy, there were excessive details about food, but the words flowed easily, the story interesting enough to carry me along. It described a culture of painting, crushing small stones of lapis lazuli to make blue pigment, the scent of turpentine, the application of thin layers building up the curve of a sweeping arm or arch of a foot. While this was the view of the world I glimpsed in several of the conference presentations which referred to art in education or arts research, the book was
much richer in describing the phenomenological experience of being an artist. It led me to consider refining my thinking about what it is like to think as an artist in the world. Enculturated by my experiences, most particularly my reading experience, I flew home over the patchwork landscape of rural New Zealand with the eyes of a painter. Grids of soft green pasture were interrupted by the cursive snake of a river, single units scratched out by tractor and plough and aquaculture complexes linked a turquoise blue pool with a muddy brown pool and an acid green pool. Jean Lave (1993) suggests that learning is not a distinguishable or discrete process of knowledge, we become knowledgeable through ordinary engagement in the social, cultural and historical contexts in which we are situated.

Knowledgeability is routinely in a state of change rather than stasis, in the medium of socially, culturally, and historically ongoing systems of activity, involving people who are related in multiple and heterogeneous ways, whose social locations, interests, reasons, and subjective possibilities are different, and who improvise struggles in situated ways with each other over the value of particular definitions of the situation, in both immediate and comprehensive terms, and for whom the production of failure is as much a part of routine collective activity as the production of average, ordinary knowledgeability. (Lave, 1993, p. 17)

Mariane Hedegaard, Seth Chaiklin and Uffe Juul Jensen (1999) suggest while viewing development within collective practice or activity could be interpreted as deterministic, where understandings are constrained by their social contexts (for example, social expectations), their view concurs with Lave that there is actually a great level of indeterminacy in how individuals may develop. Working within a frame of activity theory Hedegaard, et al. claim that the social practices of a context provide frames of possibility within which individuals develop differently. There is also a reciproc-
ity between the context and the individuals who are embedded in the fabric of that context, they make up the context of which they are a part. How profoundly we become knowledgeable is dependent on the quality of our engagement in collective or cultural activity and of the context itself. I believe that in working towards educational goals, where the activity is consciously focused on fostering learning, there is a great collective responsibility to create rich and meaningful settings. The level of enrichment invested in the context will contribute to the profundity of learning that takes place there. In the case of New Zealand curriculum, government policy has centred on providing a broad and balanced curriculum to enrich the understandings of individuals. In general classroom practice each curriculum area remains discrete, with the occasional semblance of interdisciplinary inquiry in studies of “topic” or “theme”. This multi-disciplinary approach to understanding does little to acknowledge the way understandings are built upon each other, and instead encourages either fragmentation (such as the fragmented curriculum of the secondary school) or trivialises disciplinary knowledge (such as the general curriculum of primary education).

An enriched context would support the development of higher order thinking within its sphere of interest, by providing the forms and content that are complementary to higher order thinking within that domain. Within a single context individuals share tools, bringing their experience and ways of thinking to bear on the cultural meanings developed within that context, by individual selves and others. Activity theorist Peeter Tulviste (1999) claims that engagement in different types of activities and settings will provide individuals with “...different semiotic means or tools provided by the society, and by using different tools, they would think in different ways” (p. 69). Within any activity context there is an infinite range of possibilities for participation, understanding and action, however, the specific features that enrich that context, materially and conceptually, gives shape to the types and depth of meanings developed within it. For example, an art room that is well resourced with art materials, art images, texts about art, source material to draw ideas from, as well as teachers and students steeped in art culture creates more opportunities for engaging in art learning and building on what is already known than an impoverished art room. The reciprocity between my understandings of the practice of art teaching and learning and my practice as a researcher of art education, and
its advocate, means that I have a responsibility to present the complexity and richness of my context of investigation in order to foster deep and complex understandings. This responsibility has informed my way of carrying out research, and led me to investigate contexts enriched with art education practice, selecting art teachers engaged in critically informed practice and drawing from a wide and diverse range of theoretical and art sources.

I keep thinking about those beautiful aerial views of humanity scored onto the landscape. I think I need to spend some more time amongst artists.

WHAT I ACTUALLY DID

When I started this project I was still quite firmly entrenched in the art education community. I had left behind a position as an art teacher, and embarked on a change of direction undertaking postgraduate university study. It wasn't really a change in the sense of a left-hand turn at a perpendicular intersection, it was much more fluid. My interest in art education research simply emerged from the fertile context of my professional life. No, I can't even say that. There were multiple intersections between who I was and the ground of art education. My love of knowledge and ideas, personal passion for art making and submerged interest in science also played a part. While there was more than an identification with my professional life involved in my decision to leave art teaching and take up research, being engaged in art education, really thinking like an artist and a teacher, and working with art educators was extremely significant. I was a member of art education professional organisations and spent time there discussing artists, teaching and art education policies. I sat in the staffroom with other art teachers absorbed to the point of obsession in the intricacies of life in the art room or the latest exhibition in town. It was because of the people I became part of, and connected with, that I didn't feel like a beginning teacher for long. I worked in a network of relationships spreading out from myself, overlapping and transcending institutional, physical boundaries. The ties that formed in my short time teaching were strong enough to lead me to the start of doctoral study. I can feel them weakening now (November 2002) as I near completion and my
attention drifts to other areas of education practice, but in those first few years after leaving teaching they were strong enough to form the basis of my methodology, to allow me to explore art education from the inside.

My exploration of art education as systematic research began when I was teaching. I attended an art education conference in Dunedin, a joint venture between the national associations of New Zealand and Australia, and it rekindled my passion for the art of ideas. I had found a level of intellectual discourse operating in art education of which I wanted to be part. I could see my enthusiasm for a half hour seminar on Australian curriculum development in the arts and a paper about the relationships between Vygotsky and artistic cognitive development was somewhat different from the interests of the other young art teachers. As they attended life drawing workshops and learnt about putting together bursary painting programmes I realised that my interests in art education were not going to be met in the art room. The conference was a taste I liked enough to give up a permanent job with steady income and take up postgraduate study in education. I'm writing about this time because I think it is relevant to what has subsequently become the ground of my research. Yesterday afternoon I was one of a group of three people who were asked to explain our research interests and methodologies, whether we undertook qualitative or quantitative research? At the time I was glad that the conversation ended before it reached me because I think I would have struggled to explain that I did neither, although thinking about it now I'd say, "I do art research". What this means to me is that art inquiry and cognition arise out of engagement in the contexts of art. Therefore art as a form of research arises out of engagement in those contexts. This premise has formed the basis of my research practice which has been founded in my participation in the relationships, products and practices of, predominantly school-based, art education. Therefore this project has no particularly definable beginning other than the official enrolment date, it having arisen partly from a previous Masters study on the intersections between the identities of artist, teacher and woman of a group of beginning art teachers, partly from my active involvement in the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators as a committee member and publications officer, and partly from just knowing and talking to other art educators. While this day to day working process expanded into a deliberate doctoral research inquiry, it was
still based in a combination of small scale interpersonal relationships, examples of classroom teaching practice, and written and verbal dialogue with policy initiative and critique. This appeared to me to be the way that an artist would go about research, although I think that it is important to point out again that not everything an artist does is research. It's just a way of working, embodied, embedded, sometimes premeditated, often open to accident but always purposeful.

Flood is one of a number of art educators who is pushing on the boundaries of research practice to develop research methods that are in equanimity with art practice. Discussing the way theory in art is tied to the interpretative frames of practitioners of art, art education researcher Graeme Sullivan (1996) claims that "...multiple means need to be pursued to capture this complexity..." (p. 224). Sullivan makes use of qualitative research practices to capture the complexity of artists' practice, whereas I have seen my research practice as an extension of my art practice. Thus it is difficult to describe my practice in the terms required of a conventional description of educational research method. Some of the practices that have formed this project and are those most similar to educational research have included; participant observation of a professional development course for primary teachers, interviews and ongoing dialogue with a group of five teachers (one primary, four secondary), historical research into art curriculum in New Zealand, collaborative planning and teaching of a four week art unit in a year 7/8 class in a full primary school. These were perhaps the most visible practices although not always the only significant ones. There was also the time spent in my office cutting up photographs and graph paper and putting together collages that attempted to overcome a dislocation from art practitioners. There were the conversations I had with all sorts of people about the significance of art in schooling. And there were the endless, noisy debates in my head between me and the authors I encountered in my reading. The following section represents my research practice, but includes only some of the deliberate and incidental approaches to my project of art education research. I would like to think this entire thesis is an explanation of the process that I have undergone, with more examples to be encountered along the way.
20-10-01

I'm not sure that I could say it's a general theory, but there seems to be a peculiar density when artists put their effort into words. I think it might have something to do with the way meaning is condensed in art works. I don't mean that meaning is actually condensed in the art works themselves, like a textual mine waiting for extraction. Meanings as I've already suggested are socially, culturally and subjectively defined. But art works make up part of the cultural landscape from which meanings are derived. I suppose in this sense I am thinking that the words in this thesis function firstly as a manifestation of art work and secondly as translations into different genres, or representations. The first of these points refers to my intention to create art out of words. The second one suggests that I find there are enough differences in genres (or disciplines) to provide explanations through their own forms rather than translation into another. There are always changes in meaning when you slip from one form into another. Do you know how hard it is to find a book on art research methodology?
Participant observation in an art adviser's professional development sessions for primary teachers.

**Target Group**
Primary teachers of Years 1-3

**Course Aims/Content**
This was a course of five sessions developed for existing primary teachers to extend their programme planning in art education. The course consisted of three sessions that were 3 hours long and two sessions that were 2.5 hours long, between February and October 2000. During the sessions I observed the instruction given by the art adviser, interacted with the teachers and participated in some of the learning activities.

**Session 3: May 4, Education Centre, Seminar Room**
- Sharing ideas, student work
- Knowing about Art activities
- Resources: Books/Videos/National Library/Robert Mc Dougall Gallery/
- planning school visits

During the sessions I observed the instruction given by the art adviser, interacted with the teachers and participated in some of the learning activities.
Collaboratively teaching a class of year 7 and 8 students in a suburban full primary school in New Zealand.

Working with the class teacher I planned and taught a unit of work that took four mornings across a four week period towards the end of 2000. The motivation for the unit was derived from an art competition offered by a local children’s art gallery focusing on "My Place". The children were engaged in a range of drawing and printmaking processes and were encouraged to look at the work of other artists.

And he does it because he always done it when he does it only in times allocated to doing it and the start he put in is the effort the teacher requires of him at the time. And so he's come, and it works with and doesn't say they need to get past that these are models, but they've got their own individual abilities that they're working to as well. There are different reasons why you are doing art or their artistic the way it does. They need to be critical of their artwork, their artistic work. And the amount of time he actually spends on it. In order to reach their abilities.

The amount of time that their limit of them is probably too long. For others they can handle it better, being used to it. Long time when they're not used to concentrating on something.

Some things I've been teaching this term is 20 minutes bites. Even the 30 minute maths sessions set their expectations up. But every five minutes or quick fire questions, and you do your teaching time and you set them to their work and then 10 minutes tidy up. Your last 15 minutes you go through marking what they've done, tidying up and sending them off to their next lesson. So really their focus or concentration time is only 20 minutes. And some of them they only just start thinking after 20 minutes.

R - like today I spent a bit less time being involved and spent a bit of time standing back today to have a look at what was going on probably for about the first half hour they’re just flat out working and after that some of the boys started losing that concentration.

M - they just reach their limit.

R - they can’t sustain that sort of concentration level.

M - but they’re not taught to sustain that concentration level either because the whole infrastructure for this level doesn’t allow that. If you went and did interchange at a full intermediate they would have an hour on maths, they’ll have an hour on English, they’ll have an hour on art, they’ll have an hour on each of the curriculum areas. But they do so much throughout the week - so they have 2 maths sessions a week maybe 3 rather than 5. So what needs to happen is to alter the timetable for those units and increase their...

R - but you think it would depend on what you were doing some things require more time than others.

M - well if you have your own class all the time then you would. You’d get through you’d see that 60% of the class were coming off task because they’ve had enough and then you’d stop it and get them to tidy up then you’d move it to your next thing. And you’d be flexible with your times like that but when you’ve got an interchange environment, which is trying to be intermediate based but also trying to be high school based and it hasn’t quite met both needs, um you don’t have that - you have a set amount of time to do something and sometimes it’s not enough. Other times they’re really highly focused on what they’re doing and they’re lapping up everything and then you’ve got to stop them just as they get going.
Ongoing dialogue (both formal and informal) with an amorphous group of approximately 5 art teachers who I believe are involved in critical approaches to art room practice.

Informal discussion with art teachers who I had met in my professional involvement in the art education community led me to talk to several teachers who had been engaged in critical approaches in their teaching. This resulted in both semi-structured interviews and unstructured conversations. Their voices are present throughout the thesis.

The Practice of Art

Is art making redundant of theory? Can we separate practice – as artists we need to do it ourselves?

Art as process, art as product. Kosuth – understand art as product. Within the context of art education? Should I be training children or teaching them art?

Practical art education

"Child art" – the child instinctively creates – (what's wrong with creativity)? Is creativity an antithesis to technological determinism? Is it a child's end?

The Arts Curriculum as a rigorously evaluated system –

Practice in an economy of knowledge

The rhetoric of the global economy – information bits are the new commodity – but is information knowledge?

This rhetoric serves as a warning, a call to arms. Are we going sit back and accept technology? As artists, with creativity as our tool, we have a potential to rewrite the meaning of knowledge.

As teachers we can write new meanings for our students –

Research is a practice (commutations of strange). Research is also pedagogical.
Historical research on art education curriculum in New Zealand.

"In 1945, Dr Beeby convened a conference in Wellington to revise the old art and craft curriculum, which had not been altered since 1929, and out of date with the new concepts of art in schools. Gordon Lovie, who had been head of the art department at the Dunedin Teachers' College, was one of those on the revision committee. Dr Beeby recognised his capabilities and in 1947 appointed him the first National Supervisor of Art and Craft for New Zealand. His brief was to embrace primary, secondary, and Maori art education.

Barrett '48 p103

On the 1945 Tentative Scheme:

"Not only does it recognize the various levels of art ability but also allows for eight styles of presentation at each level of ability; it looks at the school population as being composed of widely differing personalities, each entitled to its own most natural means of expression up to the limit of its ability. Previously the trend was to emphasise the realist style and to attempt to force all children through this channel."

Elwyn Richardson (Moutere School Project) was "using creative achievement in the arts as a basis for teaching other subjects."

Thomson '88 p940

and four of schools only making roof knowing about it.

of teachers.

"Many had only a superficial knowledge of art processes; how they could help teach art. Standard knowledge base can be the curriculum, which has no way to encourage discussions and materials, no way to cultivate creative attitudes when it may be said that for too many low standards of many excellent teachers in primary schools. We need our practices to help child's, expression and creativity in a broad humanistic and perspective. These children, wide imagination, will create statements, which demonstrate and expression for his high, permeates KG."
Exploring the interconnections between contexts of practice and fictional narrative.

Mel opened her eyes at the sound of the alarm clock and she was relieved that today it was still the school holidays. Tomorrow was a new term and she remembered that she’d set the alarm to help prepare her for the next ten weeks of early mornings. She would have liked to have gone back to sleep but her head was already spinning with ideas she had for her art room. For the last few days she had been engrossed in an account of the art and crafts based curriculum of Oruaiti School in the 1950s. It was a detailed description of a programme that developed from the interaction of children within their environment. Mel’s attention was captured by the way they dug up clay and experimented with its potential for pottery. The curriculum literally arose from the ground. She wanted to trial something similar, instead looking for ways of manufacturing natural paint pigments and dyes. Mel remembered her grandmother’s favourite saying. “Everything old is new again.” She smiled fondly thinking of the family matriarch’s faith in tradition but could understand the poignancy of her words.
Notes:

1 Which is the locus I claim for this research in chapter 5.

2 See the work of Butler (1993, 2003); Harraway (1997).

3 This is evident in the conventional methodological practices of most of the authors found in the American Art Educator Association’s research journal *Studies in Art Education* and the Australian Institute of Art Education’s journal *Art Education*.

4 For more on arts-based inquiry and methodology see chapter 8. Also refer to the work of Diamond & Mullen (1999) and Higgs & Titchen (2001).

5 In the UK throughout the last 10 years there has been a developing interest in art practice-based research methodologies coinciding with the proliferation of tertiary art programmes and doctoral study. An example of the literature is Gray & Pirie (1995) who say;

   We have no wish to ignore the raft of existing scientific and Social Science methods – indeed many can be appropriately used. Social researcher called themselves social ‘scientists’, adopting and adapting some of the methodologies of science: although they made a great step forward in advancing research in their fields, in our opinion they have not gone far enough. We must be brave enough to propose, use and validate our own procedures, or else our research will never be released from the grip of the ‘scientific method’, and will never be a powerful mode of disciplined inquiry (p. 18).

6 See Butler (2003) for discussion on performativity or the ‘act’ of negotiating discourse as contingent, embodied subjects.


8 As a treatise on contingent embodied practice, origins in this thesis are constructed and problematised rather than essential and whole.

9 See Bourdieu’s (1990) work on practice. He suggests that human agency or action is constrained within regulatory contexts, yet operations within this frame are still open to creativity or indeterminacy through “regulated improvisation” of their subjects. This has some consistency with a Marxist frame of determinacy and free will, see Marx (1970) and chapter 4 of this thesis.

10 See Kosuth (1993) on the dialectic between representation and manifestation, “…art is manifest in praxis; it ‘depicts’ while it alters society” (p. 117).

11 In this narrative Garber (1995) is representative of a tradition of understanding culture within education through developing bicultural understandings. Examples from New Zealand include Smith (2000) and Glynn (1998).

12 The contingency of subjectivity, including the self of this autobiography is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

13 This has been investigated by many post-structuralist and structuralist writers, including Barthes (1984) Foucault (1995) and Baudrillard (in Williamson, 1996). I use Marx in this case because of the materiality of his argument (discussed in detail in chapter 4) and its relationship to temporal unfolding (historical materialism) which is congruous with this project.
“A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before” (Lyotard, 1999). The self of the author is not an essential and unified entity, but contingent on its position within a cultural nexus. This, however, does not preclude the self from some level of meaning making, even within a postmodern frame.

Within the hermeneutic frame of text, meanings are actively constructed through engagement with the text (see Ricouer, 1991), however, as an author ‘I’ have naming rights over the ground of research. There is an ethical responsibility for the researcher/author to create a context that makes visible that privilege, and problematises it. See chapter 5.

A wider analysis of relationships between art practice and research methodology is provided in chapter 8.

See Daignault (1992) on curriculum as art.

Art educators have traditionally found relationships between works of art and language, however, they have also made claims that the borders of convention need to be crossed in order to cement their relationship. In New Zealand in the 1960s art educator Tovey (1964) claimed that through art and craft we explain our ideas and feelings “...without writing or saying a word. For the sorts of things that we say in drawing, painting, design and craft work can never fully be said in words alone” (p. 5). More recently Grierson (2000b) states that ‘the art student constructs ‘reality’ speaking meaning through art. If ‘reality’ is already prescribed through inherited ‘rules’ of art, then articulation of difference may be silenced” (p. 3-4). I suggest that a thesis built on an ethical relationship between educational practice, art and social science research should not be limited by any code, but be engaged in continual dialogue. See chapters 3 and 8.

This position is developed progressively throughout the work. Theoretical representations of phenomenology are presented in chapters 4 and 5, and are manifest in more concrete forms in chapters 2, 3, 6, and 9.

See Bhabha (1994).

For a more detailed discussion about the materiality of art, see chapter 5.

Baudrillard (interviewed in Williamson, 1996) suggested that within the current “state of things” (p. 311), the metaphor of a mirror (reality) should be replaced with a screen (simulation). While within Baudrillard’s analytical space there is no opportunity for evaluation, because no-one can stand outside of the screen (i.e. in reality), feminism has played a significant role in rehabilitating the significance of the body as a site of reference from which to make evaluations. See Bordo & Moussa (1999), Butler (2003), Jones (1998), Meskimon (2000), .

See chapters 4 and 5.

See Barthes (1984), Biro (1990), Saussure (1966).

See Krauss’s (1981) Passages in modern sculpture for an account of how sculpture is a bodily experience even when its forms become increasingly abstracted from the human body (i.e. typified in the minimalist movement of the second half of the twentieth century). While minimalists used this experience to question the nature of representation, Ostrow (1997) argues that contemporary post-minimal sculptors are engaged in re-evaluating embodiment, particularly in relation to the body of the viewer, rather than contesting it.

Socio-cultural understandings of education have developed from the work of Vygotsky (1978) on the interrelationship between development, learning and context and Leont’ev’s (1981) work on the relationship between social activity and consciousness.

See also Bamford (1999) and Sullivan (1996).
Chapter two

Chapter two provides an art context for materializing the research inquiry of this project, a context of sculptural immersion. While it includes documentation from the very beginning of the project, I started to put the pieces together midway through my writing when it struck me how far removed my work was from art practice. I needed to find a way of making sculptural practice evident, more than is possible through academic or even poetic forms of writing. My aim in this chapter is to make manifest and represent the complex relationship between art inquiry and art content, and how they are mediated through the agency and construction of an artist as well as through external structures such as social conventions, historical traditions and physical limitations. While the framing device of the alphabet refers to the structural constraints of language (its rules and temporality), as letters removed from the context of words they also provide unlimited potential in how they may be reconfigured. There is also creative potential in the associations that may be made between letters and what they signify. For example, A is for apple, artroom, aroha or awchhhh. With the inclusion of visual images, the capacity for constructing new meanings continues to expand even though the meanings are constrained within a range of limitations, e.g. the alphabet structure, the thematic links to other ideas within this thesis, the meaning of art education research and practice within wider educational research and so on. There is constant ambiguity between the constraints of the form and content and the possibility of exploding their meanings. This chapter is text laid on top of scanned images of text interrupted by scanned images of photocopied text. They are layered with scans of photographic images, drawings and photocopied pictures. Where does meaning reside? Somewhere in the mix of it all.
I am making a cushion in multiple layers. The first layer is made from a piece of printed floral cotton that my mother-in-law recently gave me as she pared her belongings down to fit into her tiny new flat. The second layer is made from a transparent white fabric that is a remnant from the net curtains in my daughter’s room. It forms a loose fitting cover over the previous layer. The third layer is my needlework whose detailed stitches transfix and transform the two other layers. As I write this I am thinking about my words as stitches, both decorative and functional. I am drawing them together from established conventions of language, working within the traditions of the craft of ideas yet exerting some artistic control in the patterns that they make. My mind and hand are directing the order of stitches and words. Cushions and written texts are the material products of my thought, but the question that I am starting with is how is a cushion more than the thought that conceived it? I am starting from a position of materiality and an engagement with practice. However I am prepared to look for a relationship between the abstract and the material that is complex and difficult. I also suspect that it will be a relationship in layers.
b is for body

Allan: “The value of art education is that students are constantly asking their own questions. They are working through processes of research, decision making and generating their own ideas that they don’t seem to do in other subjects. Which is not to say that any decision is as good as any other — there are better and worse decisions. Better ones are informed by conventions and a sustained working process. The best art students seem to motivate their own work practice.”
Salvaging Practice from the Remnants of Twentieth Century Art Education in New Zealand

Since completing my PhD proposal in July I have started to collect data relating to my topic in a number of ways including interviews, participant observation, policy analysis and historical research. I have also been continuing my reading of both recent and established theory related to my topic. I see the collection of ideas as an ongoing process throughout my study and have consequently started to work on my thesis as I accumulate material. I anticipate that I will continue to work in this way next year.

I meet regularly with my supervisors both individually and as a group and have found their support and advice to be extremely helpful. They have provided guidance through discussion of my ideas, advice on research methods, suggestions for further reading and written feedback of my work. They are currently working on securing technical equipment within the department to enable me to work with both text and images in my thesis.

- c is for curriculum

It appears that in the current climate of postmodernist doubt, practice is being presented as a secondary outcome of art education rather than a central concern. It appears that in much of the debate surrounding The Arts curriculum development, practice has been seen to have had its day through its association with 'debunked' theories of both child art and the authority (autonomy) of the artist. However the current debates also appear to be removed from the practices of teaching and learning in art education and pursuing agendas of what Kosuth (1993) has termed, secondary theory. Primary theory is embedded within practice and secondary theory is theory about theory (Ibid. 248-9). My heart is with the first.
periodical Student Opinion, is witness to the fruits of this unique and self-elected staff undertaking. In his introduction to the magazine W. J. Scott, principal of the college writes, "Between the beginning and the end of this unique venture 27 members of the staff had a go at doing things that the stiffening joints and subject-narrowed minds of most of them were quite unused to (I call this venture unique because, so far as I know, nothing like it has ever been done before by a whole staff). If they were like me when we assembled on Monday morning for the opening session of film-screening, painting, and writing, they must have been more than usually sentient and appreciative; but the induction was managed very skilfully, and the barriers between each of us and our fellows were already beginning to breakdown before I had to leave.

What the intangible results have been or will be, only those who participated fully in the activities can say, and they can speak only for themselves. But to justify them in their undertaking they have the example of Socrates, the greatest of men, and the precepts of Moses, one of the wisest and wittiest: "Ease of mind and ability to unbend," wrote Montaigne in 1590, "are most honourable and fitting in a strong and generous soul... Not anything more remarkable in Socrates than the way he found time, in his old age, to take in dancing and the playing of instruments that he thought this time well spent."

Mitchelltown School, situated in an old decaying area of Wellington city, was not available to us at the beginning of the project. Every fortnight throughout the winter a group of students moved in. This block of time devoted entirely to the arts brought many students a chance to become absorbed in artistry for its own sake, and the great joy of creating for themselves. The school is set on a hill surrounded by trees, at the end of a valley of old tumble-down houses, sporting television aerials which reach up out of bushes, pollen, corrugated iron, and rotten wood. This environment made an exciting setting for our creative work.

A couple of weeks ago, we began with films such as Snakes of the Living Arts of Japan, or The Quest, followed by music or poetry readings. The motivation programme consisted of a reading of the film Coventry Cathedral and the reading of poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay—the words of which Britten set to music. This period of exposing students to the best-quality films, poetry, and music was an extremely important aspect of the warming-up work and set the stage for the day. The activities of the first week were always directed to a set timetable, which ended up with a morning in which all of us worked in and around the valley, writing, painting, and making sound pictures. The actual experience of walking around in the narrow streets observing and speaking with its inhabitants, and generally feeling the atmosphere, was invaluable.

In the afternoon the whole group came together again and shared the work they had done. Every night students were asked to engage in something concerning the arts—listening to music, observing rhythms and patterns of nature, or studying some fine masterpiece, thus fostering a deep and growing involvement during the whole period of the course. At the beginning of the second week, students met in small groups to select a theme, to discuss and plan activities for the week. Some of the sound pictures, they promised, would paint the scene, for they had taken to the idea of a whole day to lend atmosphere to the film themes... I am not in a position to comment on inner personal individual...
anyway I think this one is really interesting (points to second question on interview schedule). How do our beliefs about art and education affect our programmes, because I find as a teacher that I completely teach out of who I am and it’s not just out of an education that I might have had. But out of what I personally took out of that education and what I developed myself and what my thinking is and what my interests are at the time or what I feel really comfortable with and what I feel I can do and I don’t really teach things that feel alien to me or outside of me. I sort of internalise things first, before I teach I’m like a the mother eats the fish and then regurgitates it for her children for her children it’s not something that I just sort of pass on at a distance from myself. So I think that my beliefs about art completely affect what I teach and like that even though I make my own, take my own position in relation to the curriculum, it’s always ever only that. I think that would be the same for everybody. It’s only your own understanding of what it means as a teacher you have to pull in the curriculum to it to some extent, don’t you? But how one does that I think is really, really, really personal. How it’s interpreted and how it’s developed. I think that’s really interesting because that depends on what ... like I think my education was really eclectic, and for a number of interrelated reasons. First of all I go back to the perceptions of the body I have mentioned (all else being equal), to stylist theory of embodied subjectivity, I have to say that of the body as locus of a “disintegrated” and extended expressive marker of the subject’s place in relation to their own nature and culture—in the practice of “living” thus emphasizes the implication of living (and dying) of society itself with all of its apparent historical and sexual, and other apparent or unconscious identification. This highlights both the artistic and the philosophical project—-aspects that, I am arguing, are deeply mutually implicated in the profound shift in the condition of subjectivity that I am “performing” here (through both constitutive of the condition of postmodernism. Second, I also make note of the broader history of “performing visual arts, I focus in this book on a particular moment that emerged into the visual artwork in a particularly systematically sexualized and gendered way. The work that I focus in this book on a particular moment- from the 1960s to the mid 1970s was labelled “performance works” by several contemporaneous writers who wish to differentiate it from a conception of “performance art” that implied that a performance must actually be performed, most often in an explicitly theatrical or overtly sexual manner on the part of a visual artist in front of an audience: in works such as those of Yves Klein, and Vito Acconci, Yves Klein, and the recent enactment of the artist's body, the privacy of the studio, the way that work experienced subsequently). In this way, I see body and I think that will emerge
Salvaging Practice from the Remnants of Twentieth Century Art Education in New Zealand.
PhD research
(a talk to Canterbury Art Teachers’ Association)

What have I got to do with you? To be of use – the ambiguity of my position as an art educator researcher. Relationships between theory and practice, product and process, form and content.
Exploring these concepts in multiple forms. Can you have a thought without a body? Binary thinking of machines – people don’t deal with information as bits. (Lytotard) Kosuth “our reality is located in our work”. An implied physicality.

Theory is a Practice

Embodied theory – thinking about thinking as work (technologist – Lyotard but Diane Elson talks about this process as transformation (as in crystallisation - a change of form - e.g. clay has some relationship to its form) not a direct relationship – almost something mystical and beyond reach that cannot be broken down in order to be understood) – expending energy on an object – no separation between the mind and body – at the atomic level it is all a form of energy (Lytotard). Role of theory in New Zealand Art Education – minimal sustained research in art education – seems to occur in reaction to something rather than develop its own pathways. For art education to survive development needs to become internalised – teachers as researchers.
Research is a practice (connotations of doing, rather than theory which seems alien and strange). Research is also pedagogical.

The Practice of Art

Is art making redundant of theory? Complexity of art making problems - theory cannot be separated from practice - as artists we know this – how well do we know it as teachers?
Primary vs. secondary. Art as process, art as product. Kosuth – artists understand art as process, art historians understand art as product. Within the commercial world art is commodity is it commodity in schools? – should we be training children to see art as product or process?

Practical art education

“Child art” – the child instinctively creates – (what’s wrong with creativity? Is creativity an antithesis to technological determinism). Bill Barrett and Gordon Tovey – child centred and developmentalist. Was the assumption really that art is created internally with no relationship to the external? John Dewey and relationship between an organism and its environment. Dewey and Bruner underlying developments in School Cert. and Art Syllabus – cognitive and social development through application of artistic skills. But these traces get lost – (no sustained theory again). Socially constructed art education – art experience is experience of the senses not of art! Who is the subject in this theory – there is none – an I that is dissolved.
The Arts Curriculum as a rigorously eclectic mix of theory – relativist - what is of value?

Practice in an economy of knowledge

The Rhetoric of the global economy – information bits are the new commodity – but is information knowledge? This rhetoric serves as a warning, a call to arms. Are we going sit
“Are there any good feminist painters or do sculptors do it better?
Could you do knitting in a painting folder?”
(Followed by a discussion on Rosemarie Trockel’s knitting)
h is for history

1945 - an art scheme for primary schools; later
1937 - meeting with Limer & Denning
1963 - Wellington Teachers College lecture on Art
1969 - U.C. Art Council founded

"...the child will acquire many expression abilities to express ideas and feelings, to represent things seen and feel..."
My Place - Printmaking

i is for inhuman

Aim: by using a range of drawing, printmaking and collage techniques, informed by the work of other artists, show understanding of art processes by developing a series of art works, one of which will be suitable for submission to the COCA ArtZone competition “My Place”.

The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum: Visual Arts

Achievement Objectives - Level 3

1. Developing Practical Knowledge in the Visual Arts
   Students will apply knowledge of elements and principles to make objects and images and explore art-making conventions, using a variety of techniques, tools, materials, processes, and procedures.

2. Developing Ideas in the Visual Arts
   Students will generate and develop visual ideas in response to a variety of motivations, using imagination, observation, and invention with materials.

3. Communicating and Interpreting in the Visual Arts
   Students will describe how selected objects and images communicate different kinds of ideas.

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

1. Develop a series of drawings that interpret 2D and 3D visual material suitable for intaglio printmaking procedures.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of multi-colour polystyrene and mono printing techniques through art practice.
3. Through the ongoing process of art making and verbal communication, demonstrate awareness of how artists use formal relationships (e.g. light/dark, hard/soft) and subject relationships (e.g. thematically linked ideas) in the development of composition.

Unit Plan

Pre-Unit Activity: Drawing Homework Sheet

1. Using pencil and crayon explore a range of mark making techniques.
2. Draw three objects that represent their home using mark making practised in 1.

Lesson One:

1. Introduction - Who I am. What we are going to do.
2. Demonstration - making your polystyrene block. Show exemplars. Show prints by other artists. Full instructions on OHP.
3. Students to make first block (may practise their images on paper first).
4. Demonstration - Inking up and printing in ochre (at least four).
5. Students to carry on with working on block and printing.
6. Demonstration - Second colour prints (third colour prints for extension).
7. Clean up.
Lesson Two:

1. Reiterate process learnt the previous week.
2. Carry on with polystyrene block printing.
3. Demonstrate making a shaped-block.
4. Students will make shaped blocks and print them onto paper.
5. Clean up.

Lesson Three and Four:

Throughout the unit, teachers to circulate amongst students to reinforce techniques, creating an environment of ongoing dialogue through questioning students about their decision making and relating students work to the teachers' exemplars, other students' work and the work of other artists.

Materials

polystyrene meat trays, white paper (A4 and A3), pencil, crayon, ball point pen, rollers, photocopied images, scissors, glue, water based printing inks (e.g. ochre, Bordeaux red, dark blue)

j is for judgement

Artist Models:

Ben Nicholson - Paintings and collage compositions, mark making, composition. Ralph Pace,
The Visual Arts

The visual arts comprise a broad range of conceptual, material, and dimensional forms through which we communicate, learn about ourselves, and make meaning of the world. They involve people in making objects and images through which ideas, experiences, and feelings are made tangible. The visual arts link social, cultural, and spiritual action and belief and inform our relationships with other people and our environment.

Much of our experience of the world is visual. Visual experiences promote a variety of ways of describing and responding to the world and involve people in investigating, making, and interpreting art. People use the visual arts for particular aesthetic, spiritual, and practical purposes— for example, to construct and decorate their environments and to comment on their beliefs and values.

The visual arts stimulate thinking and feeling. They are characterised by established conventions and methods of inquiry that are founded on the traditions of the past. They can also reflect the innovations of contemporary times by communicating information, promoting inquiry, expressing ideas, and presenting us with challenges to evolve new art forms and technologies.

Painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, photography, film and video, computer-generated art, performance art, and combinations of these forms are some of the visual arts that reflect the traditions and modern-day expressions of cultures and societies. Their forms and processes enable us to tell stories about ourselves, to express our personal and collective identities, and to participate in the local and global community.
The danger in using the term 'language' to analogously account for art works is that it has led some of us to approach art education theory with a linguistic model in view. This, according to Hagberg (1995, p. 31), can 'shape, perhaps to a greater extent than is often realised, our consequent conceptions of the communicative, expressive, and meaningful dimensions of art'. (Bracey, 2001, p. 4)
At the beginning of the twenty-first century, through the development of *The Arts Curriculum* and debate surrounding its implementation, art education in New Zealand appears to have been disassembled into a series of fragments removed from their historical context; e.g. child art, progressive education, theory, practice, modernism, postmodernism. The Ministry of Education have turned this fragmentation into a policy for curriculum development and called it 'rigorous eclecticism'. However this position, which on the surface recognises all aspects as having equal value, also reduces the possibility to judge one position over another and obscures the material consequences of how art education is actually experienced by art teachers and students. It has enabled economic imperatives to dictate curriculum initiatives in the guise of “the postmodern curriculum”.

*m is for meaning*
I learnt scholarship in the evening. I learnt the pleasure of being part of a small select group meeting after dark. I learnt the pleasure of intense night time study while at home they watched Coronation Street and dipped chocolate biscuits in their cup of tea. At 14 I was hand picked by Joshua Klein to join the group of boys studying chumosh (the torah in book form) on Tuesday evenings in the Board Room of the synagogue complex. Joshua was an American with a PhD and was in Auckland for a short time to stop our export apples from bruising. He became involved in the Auckland Hebrew Congregation instilling a passion for religious scholarship in their young and able Jews. What he instilled in me was a passion for any kind of deep, concealed world of knowledge. They have appeared in my life in pools of darkness and now my idea of thrill seeking is finding that small, excruciating bubble of light in the dark of a rainy night.
I'm granting to physics theory that technological-scientific development is, on the surface of the earth, the present-day form of a process of negentropy or complexification that has been underway since the earth began its existence. I'm granting that human beings aren't and never have been the motor of this complexification, but an effect and carrier of this negentropy, its carrier (Lyotard, 1991, p. 22).
I tend to pick artists that I really love. To study, to look at and I tend to try to find artists models who are working with subject matter that is very close to the environment that we are living in out there. Because we’re in the countryside so I tend to try and use landscape artists or lady flower painters or Claudia Pond-Eley. I try and find things that have some relevance to those students so that they can access their own experience through it. So we do stuff about trucks and cars and buildings. I try and use stuff that are very much in their world. And lollies and Thiebaud is amazing. I try and use stuff that actually has some connection to them so that they can perhaps connect with things the way I connect with them. And I suppose I just use my enthusiasm to try and fire them up too. My own particular passions, artists I’m really into at the time.
He thinks that the role of the artist models in art is to expose students to art wider than their own experiences. As a teacher you are providing them with your own experience as an artist, which can be good, but as the sole model it produces a very narrow conception of art. He refers to Giacomelli (a photographer) and shows me the images. He is interested in the body of work — he sees them as bodies of work not just individual artworks. He says there are some very rough images but very strong. Giacomelli uses a camera to capture life directly in front of the lens. He talks about this as a process rather than the production of photographic products. Smoke is a film where a tobacconist sets up a camera and catches fragments of life. He enjoys working with students. Art is a subject where there is a lot of interaction between individual student and teacher. He enjoys making connections between the work of students and other artists’ work — tracking down an image or artist who is just right for the problem a student is working with — does this at Yr 9 as well as Yr 13. But it is also very exhausting — curriculum decision making is personalised to the needs of the student unlike most other subjects. He enjoys seeing the work that students make, particularly those who use art as a way of understanding — seeing a boy in yr 9 who could show the way siapo cloth drapes over a table cloth in such a sophisticated way — with a single line. A special needs boy who works away very intensely at some very strange drawings but you can see his logic in them — he enjoys seeing the progress these students make.
What's wrong with happy-faced suns?

Looking at multiple ways of representing the Sun: What does the sun look like? What does it feel like? What does it make you think about?

Getting children to ask their own questions.

To the sun more than a happy-face?

Kosuth (1991) p5

"If man's natural vision could see molecules or distant planets, surely his consideration of reality would be much different. The level of our perception of the world around us is arbitrarily arrived at by our vision..."

r is for representation
As John spoke, Mel's drawing took over two days of her diary. She added the portable screen, a low table and John's right leg and arm. As she worked the soft folds of fabric around John's elbow in sticky blue ballpoint pen her thoughts coagulated on the cemetery around the corner from the school. "Statuary, classical statuary - angels, and water bearers - must tell Sharn." The people around her started shifting about.

Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863
Oil on canvas
t is for technological

Where did her first circular scribbles come from? The developmental theories of Viktor Lowenfeld on children's drawing would suggest that they are innate and progress along a logical and predictable path. Lowenfeld refers to the possibility of exceptions within his order, but his theory seems incapable of explaining or incorporating exceptions. I feel that there are too many exceptions in the world to justify applying normative theories of development. A theoretical schema that makes more sense to me would suggest that the circular scribbles that Lily made along with many other children at around about her age were not defined by her development in a linear or predictable way, but through the complex interaction of her ability to hold and manipulate a pencil and the nature (see t is for nature) of the pencil itself. The particularity of the marks come about through the action of using the pencil. This kind of understanding is what Jerome Bruner refers to as "knowing as doing." Within his rubric action upon things (e.g., circular scribbles with a pencil) may latterly be informed by knowledge (e.g., Lily's recognition that the letter 'o' has a circular shape) and consequently Lily names (or intellectualises) her pencil scribbles '6's. This idea should be familiar to artists, where it is part of common lore that tools help to shape the form, content and therefore meaning of art works. A face drawn in the fine, hard lines that are sometimes characteristic of the use of a pencil create a different meaning from the same face drawn in thick, soft lines of charcoal.
M - it's good learning for them - the kids getting quite a lot out of it - in one sense they say they know how to do printmaking - but they don't really know how to do printmaking - they think what they've been taught previous years is printmaking -

R - But even that, even if you know how to do something, just because you know how to do a technical skill does that mean you're doing?

M - Well that's right - they've got this thing that they've done it once they don't need to do it again - the kids are quite resistant to repeating things or doing things that they perceive as being repetition of what they've done previously.

R - So you think that's because of the emphasis on the product?

M - yeah certainly. It's in reading that they have to produce products, they have to show that they know certain stuff at level 4 maths and its very specified what it is that they're expected to know. They need to know that 3 x 8 is 24. And they need to know those formulas - its just the way those type of subjects are taught.

R - well all subjects. I was thinking about Lily and that sort of reification of her art works - and she's really reluctant to go back to her paintings and change them. And yet when I was teaching her at home - like just starting out - we'd do something one day and like three days later I'd get her to paint on it again. But now she's into the formal education stuff it's like the sacredness of the child's art work.

M - Yeah its all just outcomes based and the same when you get them to write the idea of them going to rework a text the kids just don't like doing it - they'll write it once and then think that's it - so they'll do a draft which means to them they'll write down without really, maybe they'll do a brainstorm and then they'll write it in sentence or paragraph format - then they'll check it for spelling and all they'll fix is spelling and maybe some grammar, but to go over it and to make the whole thing more sensible isn't on - they just want to go from that very pre-draft process onto the computer and then for them it's published once it's on the computer. They assume the computer's gonna pick up all of their errors. Which it doesn't and so at that point they don't think they need to proofread it any more. To get them to go back and redo it again you're fighting an uphill battle.

R - it starts really young doesn't it starts with early childhood education.

M - and it just goes right through just the whole emphasis on product. Rather than on the process. And the parents are wanting to see what their kids can do and they're looking at the finished product - because they think that the finished product is the beauty. Rather than going through the process of doing it - so all the encouragement is to do something well and that's your presentation rather than to go through the process of development, learning how to do it and improve it and make it better. So you're fighting parents on it as well and you're fighting teachers who have been in the trade 20 years. You're fighting the Ministry and their emphasis on product and discrete units - and breaking everything down - despite where the curricula are supposed to be integrated and so forth.

R - This unit in some ways is problematic because there's an end point and there's a competition - but in other ways it's quite process orientated the fact that they're doing all these different processes and they're cutting them up and they're probably not used to having to rip into their own art works until put them up and reassemble them.

M - No.

R - which I think may be challenging them in that way - in terms of developing process but on the other hand I am really aware that yes they do have to have a finished outcome.

M - but also they start out with 4 blank pages, one image, they multiply it four times and then for the first colour - and for the second one, they really should modify their first print and then modify it again and see which one they like the best and then go and start doing it for their second colour and just go through that same process of modifying. They just don't do it...
The children seemed frightened of drawing - (I needed to get to the girls help them with drawing but didn't) - individually showed some drawing strategies - would have devoted more time to drawing - they needed a background in drawing to do this better although once I showed a couple of them some tricks it worked better - a lot of them wanted to work from my image - for reassurance? Strategies include - putting in the easy lines, work it like a jigsaw puzzle, look for the rounds, tracing, doing a rough drawing first - draw around the meat tray so that you're working on the same size and format.

Printing demonstration 1 - remember to make 3-4 prints in yellow - you can never, never make these prints again. Some students quite slow, held up with drawing. Anxiety - a lot of anxiety about drawing - his one is better than mine. Need to develop those strategies - and it's okay to trace. Some tried to make up the images out of their head - mostly it didn't work although one girl did manage to make a well balanced composition (touching all 4 sides) with a combination of simple images (wavy grass) from her head and shells from the image sheets.

2nd drawing - too quick - needed to do an example of printing too and show some reflection on the printed image and decide whether it needed improving or not. Did a printing demonstration for two pupils and then they taught the next lot and so on. Next time get them to look at the prints and decide whether the blocks need more work etc.
2nd drawing - too quick - needed to do an example of printing two and show some reflection on the printed image and decide whether it needed improving or not. Did a printing demonstration for two pupils and then they taught the next lot and so on. Next time get them to look at the prints and decide whether the blocks need more work etc.
Defining the values of art education through metaphors of literacy and reading restates the intention of the curriculum to confine art education to not only a linear form of understanding but also to a student’s interaction with the visual world – or objects defined in space. Art education has been defined in terms of the readability of art products. Again this is contrary to what practitioners of art understand to be of value in art. The artist/philosopher Joseph Kosuth is concerned that at work in art endeavour is a rationalising force that values the observable and measurable at the expense of the less tangible qualities of art. Kosuth claims that artists conceive of art as an ongoing process not a product (1993). It is the authorities of art (e.g. critics, historians, and curators), working in the idiom of words, who conceive of art in terms of art products or art works. It is the art authorities, those who have control over how art is seen and understood, who enable the shift from understanding art in multiple ways to valuing art in a single way. In the current curricula...
R: so I might actually talk more about the grid next week...

M: yeah if you have time...they've got a lot to do to get it finished.

1. Art is marginalised in the school curriculum – timetabling pressures impact on the quality of art education. Need sustained time.

2. The reification of the art product starts very early in education – practice, because it is time consuming and costly, becomes invisible and undervalued. If the outcome is valued over the process does that explain why only the ‘innately talented’ who can achieve the glorious product are allowed access to art?

3. Encountering my own assumptions about the relationships between vision and art! In this unit I have assumed that representations of what is seen are more valuable than children’s conventions of drawing (e.g. suns with happy faces). What is wrong with happy faced suns? Also – is the modernist grid a more useful way of organising a page? How do you teach outside of modernism?

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ART

Preamble

The aim of the School Certificate prescription in art is to present a course of studies leading to the attainment of certain objectives which it is hoped will be basic to the teaching of the subject at all levels in secondary schools.

Objectives

1. To develop students’ perceptual awareness so that they may perceive and interpret the environment in original and versatile forms.
2. To stimulate the students’ creative imagination so that they may examine and express in the appropriate media attitudes, feelings and discoveries about people, places, objects and behaviour.
3. To develop students’ personal technique so that they may with skill, sensitivity and versatility select and utilise processes and materials.
4. To develop students’ critical faculties by directed consideration of their own art, and by reading about their own and others’ work, and be able to provide some argument to support their preferences.

These four objectives should be seen as interacting and inseparable. They underlie the essential essence of art, which is to help us as individuals understand and come to terms with our environment.

The examination may be taken by any student who has shown reasonable aptitude and interest in the subject, usually after a three-year course.

Prescription: Basis of Working

A student who studies this subject is presumed to have some aptitude and some experience. Aptitude has been defined in the prescription under four headings:

1. perceptual quality
2. creative imagination
3. personal technique
4. critical faculty

The concern of the course is to provide the student with adequate experience to develop such aptitudes effectively. Experience can be considered in terms of quality and variety. Quality of experience will depend largely on the depth of study, richness of resource material and critical sensitivity. Variety of experience will consist in the range and diversity of activities and processes explored.

Perceptual quality may be defined as the capacity to perceive environment in original and versatile terms. It is a capacity capable of development by effective teaching. The intention of such teaching will be to put the student in the best position to extend his mind and imagination with purpose and comprehensiveness.

Perceptual quality may be developed by requiring the student to record reactions to the environment by observing such qualities as: tonal range, linear direction and dimension, spatial relationships, textural alterations and effects, scale contrasts, functional effects, expressive sensation.

To demonstrate recognition of these and other visual and verbal terms extends the environment to include problems which require the metaphor expression of nature and character. To achieve aesthetic proficiency students must be able to search for techniques for hard, soft, intense, planar, regular, irregular, abstract and concrete textures and groupings, and be aware of the possibilities of a fold, groove or line in the composition.

The development of the critical faculty may be determined by the student’s own experience and judgement about their own work and others’ work. This can be developed by encouraging pupils to:

- compare and analogy with;
- explore functions of;
- determine origins of;
- discover influences on the forms they observe.
z is for zone
Art education in New Zealand is currently facing an uncertain future through the New Zealand Curriculum Framework's construction of a generic learning area called 'The Arts.' The Arts, consisting of music, dance, drama and drama, are the last of the seven essential learning areas in curriculum development. Critics of the middle programme, the decision to move that reinforces the subjects in schools. Following the final curriculum statements for the previous six learning areas, 'The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum: Draft (1999)' was released into schools weary from reform. Consequently, the draft statement received little attention from schools, their communities, or the national media. However, those engaged in education in the arts recognise that the Draft Curriculum Statement has significant implications for students, teachers, and also, some claim, the arts infrastructures of New Zealand. Research undertaken by professional associations in the existing school subjects of art and art history has found that on the most fundamental aspects to the curriculum development, specialist and generalist teachers of art are in agreement. There are too many differences between 'The Arts' disciplines for them to be effectively taught within a single curriculum document.

Art Education: Junior Classes to Form 7: Syllabus for Schools (1989)

Aim

The aim of art education is to enable students to learn to make art books and to develop an understanding of the actions and relationships of art in cultures and in society.

I haven't finished my cushion in multiple layers. It sits in the dark bottom of a wooden corner cupboard, amongst the paraphernalia of sewing (cloth, threads, buttons, beads, hook and eyes, scissors, needles, pins) and my other abandoned projects. I did finish another cushion, now sited amongst the plumped up pillows in the guest room. It is made up of scraps of sheer fabric, shot through with beautiful gold and copper threads, jewelled and tooled with beads (old and new), hand stitched, machine stitched, layered, frayed, textured, and tactile. As I write this I am thinking about my words as stitches. I am thinking about them hand sewn along frayed edges of cloth, tightly machined zigzags, or tacked through beads sometimes hanging in loose loops. Words are one material element of thought, but they also take multiple forms. The more that I embrace art (as an ontological way of thinking as well as a discipline) the more variety of forms are available to me. Considering the diverse configurations of energy in the phenomenological realm, increasing rather than decreasing the possibilities of representation still seems to me to be a worthwhile educational goal.
Notes:

1. When I started putting together this collection of images and texts I had been reading and engaging with the work of Johanna Drucker (1995, 1998) who is both an artist working with the medium of words and a writer who writes about art. I enjoyed the way she crosses disciplinary boundaries, exploiting the conventions of writing to fashion her art, and her articulation of the struggles involved in a project of that kind. I also became fascinated by the flower paintings of Piet Mondrian (Shapiro, 1991). Painted in both his early and late career, they sit outside the dominant narrative of his art, that is, the linear trajectory from naturalism to abstraction. Shapiro suggests that the late flower paintings were pumped out as a source of revenue, but I find it hard to believe that such beautiful paintings didn’t have some other deeper relationship to the condition of his life and work.

2. I went to a seminar presented by Australian education researcher Bronwyn Davies where she spoke about her research project in a Japanese kindergarten, exploring how the children made sense of Australian children’s picture books that transcend conventional constructions of gender. I noted: “Japanese love of comic books - facial expressions can be read to such complexity that words are unnecessary”.

Rereading (in April 2003) this chapter two years after I started to write it, I wondered whether I should change its structure and tighten it up to reveal more clearly a central premise. My writing has developed throughout this project, as I become more certain about what I want to say, and chapter eight is evidence of how tightly my recent writing argues a cogent premise. There are two issues that have prevented me from making substantial rewrites to this chapter. Firstly, I wondered whether a more specific focus on a critique of a binary and linear depiction of art education history would actually defeat itself by obscuring the contextual and subjective nature of historical inquiry? I decided that my intention would be better served through retaining the text as an active and self-conscious construction of multiple interests and embodied historical understandings. And secondly, this chapter, as do the others, serves as a marker in time relative to the types of understandings I was grappling with. I have consciously constructed this thesis to represent my developing understanding or research journey or practices of salvaging practice, looking for intertextual relationships between pieces of writing and ordering them on that basis rather than framing them before they occur.

In the previous two chapters I introduced my investigation into art practice by using my own practices as both autobiographer and artist as a way of formalising my understanding about how disciplinary understandings arise through engagement within socio-cultural settings. This chapter continues to explore the subjective construction of art knowledge, but widens its scope through introducing some of the significant subjects of New Zealand art education from the late 19th century throughout the 20th century and the contexts in which they were embedded.
I have already begun to explain the significance of a contingent self located within a socio-cultural context to my formulation of art education. Thus in this chapter, even before I flesh out the complex philosophical considerations underlying this stance, I am preparing to launch into a narrative of how art curriculum has been embodied in the practical truths of people’s lives. This includes my own life, as I am significant in that I am the first ‘self that makes sense’ or author of this narrative. As an author and as a researcher I am engaged in the purposeful activity of coming to understand the role of art practice in education, as might others who read this text. I think there is a lot more for me to say about the relationships between purposeful activity within a setting and what constitutes both the setting and the meaning derived from it. Nevertheless, because the material world and its practices are my base line I feel it is important firstly to address how the premise of the contingent and multiple self is both constructed through and invested in the construction of art curriculum in practice, before my more explicit explanations of subjectivity and subjection in subsequent chapters.

This is an embodied history of New Zealand art curriculum. It does not attempt to be exhaustive but aims to represent the way that history shapes and is shaped by intersubjective, interested and multiple selves. One of the issues that I have been grappling with is how much determinacy there is in art education. It seems quite clear to me from historical evidence that there is no justification for interpreting art education in entirely open and unrestrained ways. People’s judgements and acts occur within traditions, ideologies and social structures, and some of these will be described in this chapter. While these limiting factors can be seen entirely as constraints on what is possible, there is also a creativity or indeterminacy to working within historical and social forms. Each context is experienced in individual and multiple ways enabling the development of an infinite, although pertinent, number of meanings. For example, a historical event reinterpreted in the present has both a consistency with and distinction from its original sets of meanings. Many of the historical events described in this chapter can be read in this
light. I have interpreted them according to my contemporary understandings to show their usefulness in making sense of the present and looking forward into future developments for art education.

INTRODUCING BODIES

In his PhD dissertation written in 1981, Ray Thorburn’s description of the schism in art education between art as the expression of a single unified self and art as a subject or body of knowledge tells of a prevailing relationship between the body of flesh and body of art curriculum. Thorburn tells me what I, as a knowing subject of the art curriculum, have already experienced. Through its social and extrinsic construction, the body of art curriculum is caught in an intractable dilemma of both requiring yet denying the body of flesh. I will tell you about Ray Thorburn and his connection to me in a moment, but first I want to highlight his problematic for you. Does a body of knowledge exist in its own right or does a body of knowledge exist through the interaction of interested bodies of flesh? Thorburn’s study would suggest that throughout New Zealand art curricula, art has been variably seen to exist either innately or socially (externally) with little interaction between the two.

In my encounters with art curriculum I have also been variously constructed as innately or socially knowing. At kindergarten my teachers told my mother that I was talented in art, at primary school they told me I had a talent for painting and at secondary school I was taught the rules for passing the art exam games. I have also been constructed as lacking. Every year of my primary schooling I was passed over for the semi-finals of the Auckland Savings Bank’s poster competition. At university art school I discovered the disadvantage of my gender and as an art teacher I became incensed at my marginal position in the school’s curriculum. In my own mind, it is the physical body (my own degenerating and irregular flesh) that is testament to the construction of identity, subjectivity and discourse. The historical fluctuations of art curriculum are written into physical flesh. Some of these writings become visually apparent Number One. The dirt ingrained in cracks on the side of my fingers is a writing of my engagement with the land. I stood outside in the Christchurch winter and hand built a shelter of mud in the face of
The dirt ingrained in cracks on the side of my fingers is a writing of my engagement with the land. I stood outside in the Christchurch winter and built a shelter of mud in the face of the massive production of the University of Canterbury Law building with its smooth granite facings. I wheeled a barrow (borrowed from the grounds staff) through the construction site, past diggers and cranes, and with my spade made a tiny dent in the mountain of earth excavated for foundations. I wheeled the barrow back to my building site on a hill between the construction and the art school (where my work was dismissed by authorities as the folly of a romantic.)

Number Two. The dirt ingrained in cracks on the side of my fingers is a writing of my engagement with the land. When I was seventeen, my bleak and angst ridden paintings of war and land ownership became thicker and darker with a mixture of sandy paint and smears of shoe polish as I neared the end of my last year at school. The polish stained my fingers black. I carefully nurtured the stains which marked me as arty and interesting. The position of senior art student in my school was a privileged position and later, as an art teacher I encouraged its privilege. I told incoming third form students of the "specialness" of the art room and pointed to the examples of senior students, similarly smeared with paint and ink, asarty and interesting.

Although I have been subject to the discourses of art education, I have also played my part in their construction. I have perpetuated its traditions as well as made spaces for the agency of others. As I engage in the practicalities of my life from multiple subject positions, my body of flesh experiences the discourses of art education in tangible ways. After two appointments with students this morning, I returned to the Macmillan Brown library where I had on reserve a copy of Ray Thorburn’s (1981) dissertation. Prior to the recent submission of their PhD theses by several students at the University of Auckland, Ray Thorburn has been distinguished as the only New Zealand art educator with a doctorate in art education. The voice in his work is as close as I can find to a written authority on the historical art curriculum of New Zealand and I have sought out his work before when inquiring into school-based art education.
On this day the customary silence of the research library is interrupted by the Maori graduation ceremony taking place outside. As I read through Thorburn’s descriptions of art curricula and listen to the poignancy of the waiata coming through the open window, it is impossible to separate my multiple physical locations (e.g. library, university, Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand) from my multiple identities, intellect and emotions. The art curriculum that Thorburn describes could not have happened outside of its particular social context, but also not without the particular involvement of the bodies of its subjects in their physical environment. As I listened and read in the Macmillan Brown library, I thought about how my research into art education is impossible to disconnect from the time and space which it inhabits. Art curriculum is intricately related to its time, not only of practice but also interpretation.

In the time that Thorburn wrote his dissertation, art education sat even less comfortably in the New Zealand academy than it does today. In his dissertation Thorburn said:

Apart from a survey undertaken by S. M. Williams, Acting National Supervisor for Art in 1942 to ascertain the nature of art activities in schools, there has never been a systematic study of art in New Zealand schools until the I.N.S.E.A. [International Society for Education in Art] Curriculum Project described in this chapter. Art and art education do not feature largely on the academic scene, in fact art education does not exist as an academic discipline in the universities. (1981, p. 38)

Prior to Thorburn’s dissertation the presence of art education in the tertiary sector had been confined to a small amount of graduate research and a handful of fine arts and design courses offered at universities and polytechnics throughout the country. Since then it may be claimed that art education has had a small renaissance at the tertiary level. The market reforms of the late 1980s led to a proliferation of tertiary art courses, and the dominance of the two university art schools (Elam School of Fine Arts - University of Auckland, School of Fine Arts - University of Canterbury) was challenged with many fine arts programmes being offered at polytechnics and private institutions. The increase in tertiary art education and the way it has been constructed reflects a change in the motivation for its provision. For example the Design...
and Arts College of New Zealand, a private tertiary education provider, describes the value of their fine arts programme in terms of career prospects and usefulness to industry. The following is an excerpt from their website:

The Faculty of Fine Arts challenges students to think laterally through a variety of visual and technical problems, thus provisioning them for a professional career in the arts industry.

Today, creative people with artistic skills, who are good at lateral thinking and problem solving, are employed in a wide range of interesting, dynamic and often provocative jobs. (http://www.designandarts.co.nz, retrieved 04/05/01)

How closely can the reasons for making art be allied with the reasons for economic prosperity when the economic benefits of art seem at best precarious, especially for artists? As employment opportunities decreased with the economic reforms of the late 1980s more people were directed into tertiary study and this heightened the demand for practical art programmes. My experience of a university art school in the early part of the reform period was as a venue for the children (mostly daughters) of the middle classes to develop their accomplishment in art. It was not generally a place for those consciously seeking first or subsequent career opportunities. However, tertiary art education seems to be an appealing option for students who do not experience achievement in conventional academic education. As an art teacher I remember the 7th Form Dean approaching me. She asked me to let a student into my bursary sculpture class whom I had encountered in the 6th form practical art class. To enrol as a fulltime student he needed one more subject and, with a poor academic achievement record, he was running out of options. I was concerned that he had exhibited little skill and interest in art practice and suggested he take art history instead (in the current secondary curriculum art history is a stand alone subject that often has no prerequisites). Unhappy with this answer the Dean implored me to take him in sculpture because he had nowhere else to go. He ended up two classrooms along with my colleague who taught painting. I wonder how many students end up in the numerous tertiary art courses because they have nowhere else to go? In future
investigations of art education it may be useful for me to find out. The art room is an attractive
venue that promises the fulfilment of dreams of creativity and self expression, discourses of
skill and knowledge take a secondary position in the selling of practical art education as evident
in the publicity material of tertiary art courses.

Imagine studying at a school where you’re treated as a person instead of a number.
Where you’re given plenty of room to work while your creativity is given room to
grow. Imagine working with talented artists who are eager to share their ideas with
you. Dream of the work that you would create. Imagine yourself here...at Wanganui
Polytechnic. (http://www.whanganui.ac.nz/finearts_site/finance_index.html,
retrived 06/05/01)

Not as significant as the increase in practical art programmes, possibly because as a theoretical
subject it challenges some of the misconceptions of art as personal development, art education
has also developed some status as a discipline in New Zealand universities. I see my own work
in art education as part of its development. In a Ministry of Education background paper to the
development of The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, Jan Bolwell (1995) identified only 2
stage three papers specialising in art education offered at New Zealand Universities. She had,
however, overlooked the art education programme offered at the University of Canterbury from
stage two to honours level. My knowledge of this programme stems from my material location
in the University of Canterbury and more particularly, my location in the Canterbury School of
Fine Arts in the early 1990s. Here I resisted continuing beyond a compulsory stage one paper in
art theory and taking part in the debates about art education. At that point in my life my only
relationship to art education was as a student, and it was not until I had shifted positions from
art student to art teacher to art education researcher that I attempted to pick up the thread in
their honours programme. By then my conception of art education had developed from my
experience, knowledge and practice as an art educator and I struggled to make sense of what I
was presented with. I was told that this course would provide me with a structure from which to
make sense of the whole of art education (without which I was deficit?). I was told to remember
that this course was about the theory of art education (because I kept using examples from
practice?). I was told that he was a practitioner, once, like me (but not anymore?). But I couldn’t separate the theory from the practice of the class and I discontinued. Because of this rejection I was forced to find friends in other places, and here I continue to sit struggling to make images out of words in the Education Department of the same university. Coming from an undergraduate education where I was either too terrified or too cynical to ask for help, I was amazed by the generosity offered to me by an education department lecturer in the form of a crumpled, white plastic bag full of articles and newspaper clippings that held almost everything I needed to know about unit standards assessment for my research project. Practices like this reacquainted me with the educational aspects of my discipline.

To overcome what sometimes appears to be an acute isolation and dislocation from the authoritative academic discourses of New Zealand art education, I have taken to making art works in a space devised for the wordsmith. My collages of photocopied texts, graph paper and scanned photographs on ten by ten centimetre squares represent my similarity to the people who are not here, i.e. art educators. This is one way that I attempt to develop both intelligent and physical connections between my work and art education as it exists outside of me. I am also engaged in a process of excavation. Excavating New Zealand art education history I have found the thesis of William Barrett from 1948, Doreen Blumhardt’s descriptions of practice in the 1950-60s, Ray Thorburn’s writing in the 1970-80s and the recent academic papers of Janet Mansfield (1995, 1999, 2000) and Elizabeth Grierson (2000a, 2000b). At this time, as I write these words in May of 2001 (now July of 2001 (now September 2001)), 69
I am aware of several more people throughout the country writing and thinking about art education using the methods of academic inquiry, some of whom I have talked with. The pieces of art education are still as scattered and disparate as Thorburn suggested, and picking them up and piecing them together is a difficult task. There are few written texts to chart, and much of the history of New Zealand art education exists in the ephemeral minds and bodies of the people who have lived it.

It is at the level of primary and secondary education that most people encounter art education and it is its inscription on the bodies of the art achievers and failures of primary and secondary schooling that is the site of art education’s greatest mass. In the public schooling system, art education has played its part in constructing children as knowing or not-knowing individuals. In the early 1980s my sister liked art even though she was generally considered an awkward and unenthusiastic student. She wanted to continue with art in the fourth form but her art teacher advised her that she was unwelcome in the art department. My sister tells me now that she interpreted this as a deficiency of talent. Having seen her recent adult drawings I suspect the motivations for curtailing her involvement in the secondary art curriculum were about the exercise of pedagogical control over the non-conformist student rather than a reaction to her innate inability in art. I believe that it is in the absence of significant analytical inquiry underlying the development of New Zealand school-based art education, that hand-me-down knowledge becomes the basis of school art practices. It is against these practices that children are measured to ascertain their ability, achievement and deficit. ‘School art’ is a colloquialism used to describe the myths and rituals (stories and practices whose theoretical bases have been forgotten) that pervade art education practice. The art teacher says to the children, ‘Don’t use a rubber, it’s cheating. Tracing stifles creativity. Don’t copy the work of others because you think it’s better than yours.’

The art practices in primary schools have since the 40’s (sic) been pre-occupied with the child-centered model and the notion that art was a natural mode of expression for the child’s innermost feelings. Whereas secondary education has paid more attention to the cognitive development, adopting the artistic model and lately
has incorporated the historical-critical model encapsulated in the examination structure of the senior high school (Thorburn, 1981, p. 37).

Whether they privilege the expression of the unified self, or a social construction knowable only through the mind, these dominant discourses of policy and practice in school-based art education can be read as maintaining a separation between the mind and the body. The discourses of the child-centred art education of the primary school and socially critical/intellectual aesthetic art education of the secondary school have been set up as polar opposites that reinforce the dualism prevalent in the mind/body split. As a beginning art teacher I heard child-centred art education scornfully referred to as a project of “hands on - minds off” education. The phrase appealed to the intellectual in me who positioned herself as knowledgeable about art rather than emotionally or physically invested in it. From the position of the knowledgeable art specialist, the primary programme can be seen to nourish the naivété and artlessness of children, left alone in their unthinking bodies. As I become more invested in the educational aspects of art education, I am more consistently concerned that without an admission of the significance of the body in the secondary curriculum, its students are unjustly restricted and excluded from knowing about art from their multiple subject positions. Their individual selves, which their bodies represent, are constructed as objects to be contemplated by the unscrupulous, singular social mind. Difficult or unconventional bodies which present a challenge to the qualified intellectualism that underlies the secondary art programme face exclusion. It requires a certain regulation of thought to eliminate from art endeavour the spontaneity, emotion and sensuality that are located within individual subject bodies. It also requires a certain physical prowess for the mind to sufficiently take control of the body to achieve its ends.

Although I think of art education as considerably more complicated than the polemic of mind and body, and with considerably more discourses restricting and extending the performance of its interested subjects, I find the mind - body division of art education pervasive enough to use as a basis to explore the history of art curriculum in New Zealand. Yet despite its articulation as a schism, I would like to suggest that the problem of mind and body in art education in practice
has also been one of exception, disruption and even cohesion. To describe the mind and body as opposites in this debate is to undermine the multiple and varied ways that bodies experience and shape the art curriculum. Looking at art education as an embodied practice would position the mind within a body, thus reaquanting knowing about and making art, which I think would sit comfortably with Thorburn’s (1977) intention to bring together the cognitive and expressive qualities of art.

CONCEPTUALISING ART EDUCATION AS EMBODIED PRACTICE

Last year I had the opportunity to watch the local school art adviser, a very experienced secondary art educator, working with a group of generalist primary teachers. In an earlier discussion she had suggested that when she worked with primary teachers, she felt that they made an implicit assumption that art education was related to art practice and that consequently she had to provide them with plenty of hands-on activities. At one particular session the formal programme for the evening was divided into three parts. The first part of the evening enabled the teachers to share examples of children’s art work and some art education resources they found useful in curriculum development. The second and third parts focused on some practical exercises, first in drawing and then painting. From my observations, the emphasis on art making and the production of art works seemed to satisfy the expectations of the teachers. In the sharing session the teachers discussed children’s art work by describing the types of materials and the procedures used in practical activities. At the end of the discussion, art materials and resources were distributed for the drawing activities. The teachers appeared to become fully engaged in the art practice sessions and attempted all of the activities set for them. The noise level of the room dropped as they started to involve themselves in the problems of tone and mark making. The art adviser became the only significant voice in the room. The primary teachers were engaged in the practice of art making and while the problems seemed challenging to them, they were not outside of their expectations of what constituted art education practice.

What has been characterised as the problem of practice, that is the division of the mind and the
body, arises when art making is perceived as something removed from the context of the cultural and social meanings of art. An article from the school advisory service criticises the pedagogical and curricular approach of “...letting students just do art...” without “…empowering them by giving them some knowledge, skills and strategies from which they can make choices, problem solve, learn about the art world and develop their strengths” (Anderson, 2000, p. 16). Despite its emphasis on doing, how was knowledge being developed at the professional development session I observed? As an art educator the types of activity I saw them engaged in were so familiar to me and as a researcher the lack of discussion so impenetrable, that for a short time as I watched, I wondered what value there could be for me in attending this session. Picking up a brush for just a short time, however, changed my perspective of what may have been occurring in the room. As I started to take part in the painting activity, I remembered what I had been saying to myself and in my writing for quite some time. Learning in art is not necessarily attached to words. The teachers were working on art problems and solving them in art ways, which are not necessarily verbal ways. Through my own participation, I became more observant of the activity that was going on around me. The primary teachers experimented with the application of paint to the surface of their paper by using their brushes in multiple ways; i.e. dabs, blobs or sweeps. They dabbed white paint next to daubs of blue exploring how the different tones of the sky could be constructed through layering the paint. They examined the marks that they made with a dry brush and compared them with the marks of a wet brush. Then the teachers cut up their paintings and reassembled them, making recognisable landscapes out of their experiments in paint. Through comparison and analysis the teachers were examining the relationships and discrepancies between forms, textures, tones, colours and subject matter that underpin the traditions of Western painting. The art adviser had created an environment in which these art ideas could be explored in art ways of working. As the teachers worked, the art adviser continued to talk about techniques, using art terminology and discussing the art works of well-known artists like Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet. Holding up several landscape paintings she pointed to the texture of their backgrounds and the qualities of their brushstrokes (i.e. heavy, soft, fine etc.). Using discourses of practice, she also introduced them to artists they were less familiar with, introducing them by discussing the hard edges of New Zealand artists Bill Sutton and Rita Angus, and the softer
the practices of art. Using the pedagogy of the art studio is a “real world” approach to art education. Studio practice is a significant way that artists learn for themselves and from others. This is also a pedagogical approach with a great deal of historical significance in New Zealand art education, whether you examine the tertiary, secondary or primary sectors.

Digging about in a pile of the New Zealand teacher journal, Education, I came across an article from 1965 by Doreen Blumhardt. Her name was familiar to me from the one seminal book on New Zealand art education written in the 20th century; Ray Thorburn and Peter Smith’s Art in...
Schools: The New Zealand Experience (1978). Blumhardt’s short article described some incidents that I discuss shortly in this chapter that occurred when she was the head of the art department at Wellington Teachers’ College. This article led me to look more closely at Blumhardt and the role she has played in shaping the art curriculum into a curriculum of art practice. She was appointed as the first primary art adviser under Clarence Beeby’s direction of the Department of Education in the 1940s. This time has been characterised as the pinnacle of the progressive child art movement in New Zealand. The curriculum developers of the recent arts curriculum (2000) claim that during this period art education focused on the instinctive expression of the child’s self at the expense of teaching art skills and knowledges. Their critique of child art education claims:

...that expression and interpretation are complex processes and involve more than permission to be spontaneous and creative... Expression requires knowledge about feeling as well as sophisticated knowledge of intellectual, technical and formal skills. Without knowledge and personal investment, self-expression can become trivial, in Langer’s words, symptomatic rather than artistic...(Foley, Hong & Thwaites, 1999, para 1.1)

Their critique, and its embodiment in contemporary art policy, may serve to reinforce the difference, or as Thorburn suggests, schism between the mind and the body in art curriculum. Perhaps an alternative approach to understanding ‘child art’ discourses in the curriculum is instead to incorporate its multiple stories into the ongoing nexus of art education discourses. Acknowledgement of the context and environment of the child art movement in New Zealand, as well as its foundations in theories of the psychology of art, reveals its social as well as individual dimensions. Blumhardt may have advocated creativity starting within the individual, however in her methods as an art educator she introduced educators to the social practices of art in a similar way to contemporary art advisers. As National Advisor in Art and Craft, Blumhardt provided intensive, week long professional development courses for up to thirty teachers at a time. “They painted, worked with clay, made puppets, learnt to do some elementary weaving and bookcraft...” (Blumhardt, 1992, p. 49). She held a session for headmasters and school
inspectors where:

Through being involved, they began to realise the value of art. They found themselves so engrossed in the art and craft activities that they could lose some of their inhibitions and they enjoyed the experience of painting and making things with their hands. (Blumhardt, 1992, p. 49)

It was in the interest of art education to find allies amongst educational decision makers. Blumhardt's work advocated for the values of an art education through more than just public oration. She actively demonstrated the value of art education through introducing general educators to not only the individual experience of art making but also to the culture in which artists are embedded. Blumhardt invited them into the community of art practice. At her sessions, school and Department of Education officials learnt the value of addressing art problems through engagement with art practices as a basis for implementing and evaluating art programmes in their schools and regions. Blumhardt's work can be seen as the development and extension of a community and environment for the practice of art in the school curriculum. Prior to Blumhardt's appointment there were very few teachers who had specialist knowledge of art education. Art supplies had all been imported from England and during the war years were impossible to source. Through her interventions, local companies began to manufacture supplies and equipment for primary art programmes so that in 1945 the Department of Education was able to supply regional Education Boards with;

...large quantities of powder or liquid tempera colours, hog-fitch brushes, brown-paper rolls, coloured chalks, pastels, and large sheets of manilla paper 20 in. by 25in. Each school will have sufficient art materials to allow every child a piece of brown or manilla paper at least once a fortnight. Some children may prefer to work on a half sheet at times rather than a whole one: this will make the supply go further. (NZEG, 1945, p. 197)

*Remember the big fat crayons at primary school that got warm in our hands and rubbed off the*
edges of paper onto the table. Remember the pungency of the purple methylated spirits that we poured onto tables and rubbed with rags to remove the crayon from the table tops. The art materials themselves signified an approach to schooling and thinking that was something new for teachers and students. In the same issue that their allocation was gazetted, Blumhardt provided an article for teachers on the organisation of the use of their new supply of art materials. Recommendations on putting paint into separate compartments in a rack and creating easels to provide vertical work surfaces thereby allowing children “...greater freedom of movement...” (Blumhardt, 1945, p. 199) may appear to have little relationship to contemporary art education practices on understanding art in its social context, however I would suggest that providing teachers with such an elementary knowledge and understanding of painting as working on vertical rather than horizontal planes should not be taken for granted. The art education practices of Doreen Blumhardt’s time should be seen in the context of what came before, considering their consistencies as well as inconsistencies with previous practices and discourses, as well as in the light of the practices that followed them.

In some respects Blumhardt’s recommendations represented colossal changes to the culture and environment in primary schooling compared with the work children undertook to meet the requirements of the first drawing syllabi where little had changed between 1878 and 1929. The earliest of these syllabi focused exclusively on drawing as a means to develop a body of efficient and innovative tradespeople for the new colony. Children were progressively instructed in freehand outline drawing (copied onto slates from the blackboard), copying shapes (from the blackboard and charts) into their drawing books, outline drawing from three dimensional shapes, practical geometric drawing and practical perspective drawing (NZG, 1878, p. 1311). Robert Lee, a school inspector for the Wellington Education Board, commented in 1890 that “amongst the dull work of a school which damps a pupils taste for learning I may instance...much freehand drawing...” (AJHR, 1890, E-1B, p. 16). In 1928 a revised syllabus made some claims to develop the expressive ability of students in response to the humanistic ideals pervading educational thought throughout the western world and gradually becoming entrenched in New Zealand. The Syllabus of Instruction for Public Schools (Department of Education, 1929) was significant in suggesting that teachers had the freedom to deviate from
the prescribed courses and offer individual programmes, as long as they were of equal merit to the recommended programmes. Teachers, however, still had to provide students with the means to pass proficiency examinations (which were not abolished until 1936) which focused on the prescribed syllabus content. From inspectors' reports it appears few teachers took up the offer of autonomy, instead adhering to the syllabus recommendations. In drawing the gazetted syllabus stated “...that definite instruction shall be given in the drawing of natural and fashioned objects, in design, and in instrumental drawing, in so far as it affects design or handwork, so that the pupil may gain sufficient mastery over the technique of the subject to enable him to use drawing as a means of expression...” (NZG, 1929/1, p. 39). In my process of excavation I have also uncovered the Masters thesis William Barrett wrote in 1948 on the 1945 primary art scheme. In it he criticised the 1929 drawing syllabus because although it claimed that individuality and self expression should become a feature of art education, the syllabus did not explain how this was to be achieved. It only prescribed formal art activities such as “…methods of shading, training in relative proportions, perspective and foreshortening…” (Barrett, 1948, p. 16).

Barrett is more familiar to me as Bill Barrett whose name I, as publications officer, published in the August 1997 Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators’ (ANZAAE) newsletter as the contact for an organisation called The Beeby Foundation for Visual Arts Education which was set up that year to promote art in the curriculum. One of the objectives of The Beeby Foundation is to “…emphasise the value of qualities of imagination, creativity, perception, visual communication and thinking fostered through Visual Art Education and the positive aspects of this emphasis for business and the community” (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators, 1997, p. 6). This modern day objective has a consistency with the art education practices underlying the art education reforms of the 1940s, although it is also reminiscent of Minister of Education Robert Stout's recommendation that drawing become a compulsory subject because “with the aid of drawing we may hope to see our manufactures become more artistic” (NZPD, 1885, p. 115). Stout claimed that drawing underpinned all 'technical-science' education and would ultimately lead to more vibrant and innovative tradespeople, designers and manufacturers. Although as Barrett suggested, how drawing might
achieve this was not starting to be mapped out until the reforms initiated by the Director General of Education C.E. Beeby, appointed in 1940. “In 1945 Dr Beeby convened a conference in Wellington to revise the old art and craft curriculum, unaltered since 1929, and out of date with the new concepts of art in schools” (Blumhardt, 1992, p. 51). Up until the 1940s the art education practices of the classroom had more to do with developing technical precision than creativity. The new art education of the 1940s, epitomised in the tentative primary art scheme (1945), focused on three interrelated elements, “...opportunity for self-expression, appreciation of beauty, and the acquirement of skill” (New Zealand Education Department, 1945, p. 3). In order to achieve these three objectives, the syllabus prescribed two forms of art instruction; Design work and Interpretative work. What I found surprisingly different from my common knowledge of this period is that the first seems to make quite substantial reference to art as a form of knowing. Thus design work required developing an understanding about the functional and decorative purposes of art works.

Design work includes all types of rhythmic decoration, lettering, poster designing, simple geometrical drawing and the construction of sketch-plans, simple perspective and architectural drawing...It is important to remember in design work that the techniques have little value in themselves; their value lies in the practical use to which they can be put, and in the opportunity they give for the appreciation of beauty, and the appreciation, in everyday life, of design which is good because it is suitable.

Interpretative work is valuable chiefly because it gives opportunity for expression beyond what can be expressed in words. It is in young children a natural mode of expression by which they can state their ideas and feelings, their sometimes unconscious attitudes of mind, and half-remembered emotional and intellectual experiences (New Zealand Education Department, 1945, pp. 3-4).

What appears to be remembered most significantly about this period of art education is an apparently coherent vision of intuitive expression of the inner self. This belief is certainly
evident in the recent arts curriculum development (described in greater detail in the next chapter). What strikes me, however, is that the divisions evident in the 1945 document and the actual practices of the time can also be interpreted as representations of different interests. Multiple subjects and subject positions were implicated in its development. Thus there was a multiplicity of interests in the art education of the time including: functional and decorative design, self-expression, craft and technical skill. Carol Henderson (1998) describes the tensions between the art education visions of Doreen Blumhardt and Henderson’s father, National Art Supervisor Gordon Tovey, appointed to the Department of Education by Director General Beeby in 1946.

At times Gordon [Tovey] would return from work furious and angry, usually when he thought people were manipulating things towards their own ends. He was capable of making fast judgements, and once they were made they stuck. He formed the opinion that Doreen Blumhardt who, at Beeby’s request, had attended the first Unesco Conference in Paris, was taking undue credit for the development of child art and craft in New Zealand. Invited also to an international exhibition in Mannheim, Germany, Doreen arranged the inclusion of exhibits of New Zealand primary children’s art work. While Gordon was pleased to have New Zealand represented, he gained the impression that she again used the opportunity to place undue claims on her own role. His reaction was known by family and head office staff, but he said nothing to Doreen, who was mystified by Gordon’s manner: ‘When I got back from overseas and got such a cold reception I was at a loss to know what had happened’. (Henderson, 1998, p. 111)

This fraught relationship shows how many different interests shape the practices we may take for granted. Distanced by time, the practices of the 1940s need to be examined carefully to make sure that we do not iron out the differences, as I think Thorburn was doing by using a binary analysis. Blumhardt was primarily a craftsperson, her specialist area was ceramics. Tovey, whose interest was in the Fine Arts, regarded her approach to art education as excessively structured (Henderson, 1998). On his appointment his only concession to her work was that he
...thought teachers would accept his painting theory because of the confidence built up by the accomplishments of those fairly structured craft activities! (Smith in Henderson, 1998, p. 93).

While there were philosophic differences between their approaches, Tovey's appointment over Blumhardt also brought them both into conflict. Up until Tovey's appointment Blumhardt had been operating primarily on her own. My great-grandmother was a working mother in London in the 1920s after divorcing her gambler husband. My grand-mother brought up her baby daughter however she could; after her husband died in 1944. My mother flew me and my sister to the other side of the world in 1974 where she left my father and brought us up in hairdressing salons. What was life like for Doreen Blumhardt in the Department of Education in the 1940s?

While both figures are credited with playing pivotal roles in the construction of New Zealand art education, Tovey's contribution is significantly better documented and more widely acknowledged (see Henderson, 1998; Mane-Wheoki, 1999 and compare with McLeod, 1991). Based at Waterloo School in Lower Hutt, Blumhardt demonstrated her pedagogy to many teachers through in-service courses, but it was Tovey who developed the national art advisory service that had his art advisors visiting teachers in every state primary school.

The 1945 scheme also shows a multiplicity of interests in art education. The preface to the art scheme identifies four training college lecturers in art brought together to develop the new scheme (Jim Edgar, Roland Hipkins, J.A. Masterton and Gordon Tovey). Tovey chaired the committee, however differences between his ideas about art education and at least one of the other members, Jim Edgar, must have caused some disunity in the development of the document. When Tovey was appointed head of the art department at King Edward Technical College in 1936, his then colleague, Edgar, expressed concern at Tovey's leadership towards a student-centred curriculum (ibid, p. 57). Edgar appeared more in favour of an aesthetic approach to art education. Perhaps he was responsible for aspects in the Design work sections of the document that emphasise the appreciation of beauty and design that is "fit for purpose."

I am finding it increasingly difficult to fit the 1945 document into Thorburn's analysis of a binary division in art education. Although this document does appear to represent art education as a means of both personal expression and as the development of an understanding of
aesthetics as an autonomous body of knowledge, as the document itself states, there is also a triad of relationships operating here: self-expression – aesthetic knowledge – development of skill. And despite each successive generation’s insistent differentiation from what has gone before, these three relationships, among others, play parts in many of the national curriculum statements associated with developments in art education. The early drawing syllabi had particularly limited concepts of aesthetic knowledge and self-expression, however, as the earlier quote from Stout regarding the significance of drawing to artistic manufacture also suggests, in some senses these concepts did underwrite the policy. The 1899 syllabus stated that “…drawing is partly for the eye and partly for the hand; but it ought also to do something for the brain that keeps them in relation” (NZG, 1899, Dec.18, p. 2304). The intellectual (or ‘knowing’) dimensions of drawing instruction are reiterated by making reference to connections between drawing and intelligence/understanding. Perhaps the concept of self-expression was least evident in the actual drawing syllabus of 1899, however it was apparent in the rationale that had seen a recent inflation of the value of drawing instruction. In the 1890 annual report of the Minister of Education it can be seen that drawing had the largest increase of student numbers (4433 additional students) of all primary subjects. The interest in drawing instruction, at that time, was predicated on the desire to develop an innovative and artistic body of trades-people who would build the infra-structure of New Zealand. Stout believed that instruction in drawing would assist in the transformation of mundane workers into creative artisans. Although in a more embryonic state I think there is some consistency here between the intention of the 1899 syllabus and the later 1929 syllabus. Both prescribe rigorously formal drawing instruction with the intention that development of technical skill will enhance self-expression through art forms (in 1899 this meant trades or crafts). What neither of the syllabi offered was an explanation to the teacher of how technique would become expressive art.

Even the 1945 document has difficulty in explaining how the relationship between self-expression and technique can be taught in the classroom. “…It is difficult to teach it without imposing a series of tricks and techniques, the imposition of which on younger children will hamper the spontaneity of their expression” (New Zealand Education Department, 1945, p. 4). Teachers were advised to only occasionally guide the observation of the child. This is all the
more interesting considering the way Blumhardt was already developing her pedagogy of immersion. Perhaps the curriculum developers needed to pay closer attention to existing practice? The 1961 Art and Crafts syllabus was more forthcoming and provided comparatively extensive discussions on creativity, self-expression and aesthetic appreciation in its appendices. Here it was stated that children require skill only when “…children see their need for new ways of expressing their ideas and learn these new ways through deliberate experiment” (Department of Education, 1961, p. 14). Teachers were required to foster an environment of creativity so that children would seek out new ways of representing their ideas and develop new skills to achieve this. At the centre of this policy was the assumption that each child was a unique individual. Children’s progress in art education was, in part, measured on their ability to produce work that demonstrated individuality. Here the autonomy and authority of the (child-as-)artist was preserved. Art products, representing the expression of a single self, were evaluated on their differentiation from the work of others.

What was also assessed was the effect that immersion in art practice had on the development of individual children. Beyond a notion of the unified and autonomous self that has been presented as a distinct philosophical assumption of child-centred art education, through immersion in art
practice children had the opportunity to rewrite themselves. The Art and Crafts in the Primary School (1961) syllabus stated that it should be clear that, "...when children paint, model, or undertake any other artistic activity they are dealing with the material of their lives, and by expression of this kind they become aware of themselves and their own abilities, attitudes, and relationships and also move towards a better understanding of the world they live in and the people they live with" (p. 16). For the children involved in an art education where they were examining their identity and its intersection in the world around them, was the potential for art practice to actually change who they were in multiple and varied ways. The syllabus (1961) provides an example of two images produced by 10 year old Maria.

The picture, "Cypriot Girl", is by Maria, aged 10. Maria was born in New Zealand of Cypriot-Greek parents, but they were thinking of returning to Cyprus, and Maria, through her parents and relatives, was much involved in the Cyprus "troubles".

The picture, quite unlike those she draws about her New Zealand background, seems to express something of her apprehension about her future life. It was made when her interest in Cyprus was at its height and her grandparents were in a position of great difficulty. Evidence that the mood of the picture is not accidental is provided by the consistent cheerfulness of her other work, of which there is an example on the same page, and by the evident satisfaction she got from this more sombre work. (Department of Education, 1961, p. 16)

The theoretical orthodoxy of the time appeared to be that Maria could resolve some of her anxiety about Cyprus through her engagement with art. Art had a cathartic function. Through expressing her "...thoughts, feelings, and fantasies..." (Ibid, p. 11) Maria would be enriched as a person and she could free herself from her "emotional blockages" (p. 16). This is the doctrine that has been handed down to me as part of the art teachers' lore of the child-centred art curriculum. However there is an alternative reading of what was happening to Maria, also based on the clues the syllabus provides. Through her engagement in art practice, Maria was examining her multiple identities, as both Cypriot and New Zealander. According to the
syllabus the pictures represent two different moments in Maria’s life, a moment of cheerfulness and a moment of pensive reflection, however I suggest that they also represent different and multiple Marias. Maria’s representation of two different figures has been constructed through a complex nexus of relationships with family, school and the world she lives in. Maria reinvents those relationships through art making and draws them together in a singular self who, only existing in a single moment of time, affects and is affected by the production of her art works.

In the moment that Maria exists as a singular and unified artist she also reinvents herself through her art. As the analysis in the syllabus and my own shows, she is both subject and object of her art work. The art works as products, are themselves continually being reinvented, both by Maria and selves outside of Maria. Maria and her paintings are multiple entities, constructed through ongoing practices of reflection and relation undertaken by multiple selves.

Elwyn Richardson’s book *In the Early World* (1964) is a relatively comprehensive documentation of how immersion in art practice can be transformative at the level of self within a primary school curriculum. Richardson described the interest-based curriculum developed during his time at Oruaiti School, a two-teacher school in Northland, from 1949-1961. Here he encouraged children to engage with their immediate environment, initially through crafts like pottery and printmaking, developed an expressive language programme and ultimately encouraged children to find their own arts idiom. Throughout the book Richardson described the processes that the children undertook and the environment in which they worked, in a systematic and empirical way. He described the children and their practices, identified their products and gave descriptions of his own pedagogical practice.

I found that one of the best ways of starting off a new technique such as wood carving was to start to make something for myself. Very soon I would have as many as genuinely wanted to work in that material. I began the making of small ceramic brooches in the same way. (Richardson, 1964, p. 69)

Richardson noticed that the children, as they self-selected activities and became engaged in their work, became more involved in making critical appraisals of the outcome of their work.
He actively encouraged reflection by having an area of the classroom where finished work was discussed at the end of each day. Richardson suggests that the development of the children's discernment was evidence of a greater sense of the value of the arts activities they were involved in. "It appeared therefore that creativity involved values, but if values go unrecognised among a mass of inferior work there is no growth" (Richardson, 1964, p. 195). His discussion appears to conflate moral values (as in values education) with aesthetic values. Richardson seemed to believe that the children in his class were intrinsically becoming better people through developing an aesthetic discernment. Or that, through critical judgements about their work, as it was manifest in art products, the children were developing or, in the biological metaphor of the time, "growing". While I think there is a problem in describing the change that occurred as necessarily for the better, a critique that is perhaps more significant to Richardson's account is that the relationship between the children, their immediate environment and the products they made was only part of what formulated the learning occurring at Oruaiti School.

In this book, Richardson only makes brief references to the significance of the social interactions that formed the particular learning context of the school. He mentions a visit from potter Barry Brickell where, "the children and he sat amongst the pots and talked about pottery" (Richardson, 1964, p. 32). In a later text Richardson (1979) takes up the theme in greater detail, elaborating the social context around the Oruaiti experiment and the roles played by the people who were part of it. He writes about the technical assistance he received from the art advisory team established in the late 1940s by National Supervisor of Art and Craft Gordon Tovey. Tovey also visited the school on several occasions and on one of these brought Beeby. Advisors John Melser and Bert Whitworth assisted him in the development of the language arts programme. And as well as Barry Brickell, another well known New Zealand potter, Len Castle gave help with kiln construction and pottery criticism. In Richardson's 1964 text there is also a brief mention of the two junior class teachers, Eunice Foster and Cherry Raymond, whose contributions in printmaking and language must also have been instrumental in developing the culture of the school. On a wider level, other projects were being undertaken in the area, including the Northern Maori Project "...which led more to drama, Maori cultural crafts as well as..." (Richardson, 1979, p. 2) some of the subjects Richardson focused on. Despite the resistance he felt from some of the school inspectors, Richardson's work was accomplished in a
social environment where progressive educational ideas were allowed to flourish, as evidenced by Beeby’s visit and the influence of the art advisory service.

In the foreword to Richardson’s *In the Early World*, educator John Melser claims that “children recognize themselves in and through the things they make” (1964, p. v). The children in Oruaiti School were making more than just pots. They were engaged in the construction of dialogue, activity and social practice, and their engagement with these less tangible products was as transformative as their engagement with art products. The art rich environment of Oruaiti School was a context that required the children to examine, interpret and reflect on the material and discursive fields they inhabited, and through this process, find multiple reflections of themselves.

‘I’m not quite sure about this pot, Derek. I felt it was going well when I was making it but now that I look down on it from a different angle, I’m not so happy. What do you think about it?’

‘I don’t like it,’ said Derek, but then we expected that from him.

‘Oh, a bigger lip would fix it. Here, let’s have a go!’

‘Not on your life, this is my pot. Anyway I think I know now what I should do. I will build it higher and then a lip’. (Richardson, 1964, p. 205)

‘Now this person is a real potter. I can see that at once. He knows the feel of clay and has done as much with this piece of clay as I think he could have done’. (Barry Brickell discussing a child’s pot in Richardson, 1964, p. 32)

Here children were engaged in the reconstruction of themselves as potters as they worked with materials, talked to each other and saw themselves reflected in the images ‘of what a potter really looks like’ created by Barry Brickell. I see a consistency between this vision of education with more recent situated learning theory that suggests that there is actually no difference between learning and changing behaviour through engagement in social activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1993).
Similarly complex practices of art education in the 1950s to 1960s can be seen in Blumhardt's work as the head of the art department at Wellington Teachers' College from 1951. While Richardson (1979) claimed that Tovey's interest in his work quickly declined, Blumhardt appears to have had greater interest in the Oruaiti experiment. From 1964, influenced by the work of Richardson, Blumhardt led students and staff at the college in two week immersion courses in the arts. Here was another opportunity for her to work with people influential in the way art was valued in schools. For the first week, participants were directed by staff members in “...writing, drawing and making sound pictures...” (Blumhardt, 1965, p. 7). They were encouraged to participate in the arts in their own time too, and evenings were spent listening to music and studying art works. “At the beginning of the second week, students met in small groups to select a theme, to discuss and plan activities with a view to presenting their work to the whole group at the end of the week” (Ibid). By immersing students and staff in an environment of art practice, it was expected that the students and staff who participated in the programmes would reinvent themselves through their engagement with art. However, once again in accord with the predominant philosophies of the times, the transformation was supposed to occur to singular and unified individuals. The principal of the college, Walter Scott, claimed that for the 27 staff involved in the programme, “what the intangible results have been or will be, only those who participated fully in the activities can say, and they can speak only for themselves” (cited in Blumhardt,1965, p. 6). Yet even though Scott’s notion of self was clearly one of an autonomous, knowing, Cartesian subject, does that necessarily mean that the activity or practice was equally constrained?

I believe that the complexity of the relationships and connections that occurred between selves during these immersion experiences cannot be understood within a single framework or as the result of a single consciousness. Some of the complexity that occurred during the primary
teacher education courses is recalled by Blumhardt in the following excerpt:

'They all came from very different backgrounds, some from very conservative schools. We would send them out to interview people in the local area or talk to wharfies or truck-drivers. These young students — many of them only 17 — went forward hesitantly. But they went. When they came back, they would write about the experience or paint something they had encountered or dramatise it. We made instruments — clay pipes, drums, box lyres. And we did basic bookcraft — layout, illustrating and binding...'

Each year, groups of students spent a week at Curious Cove in the Marlborough Sounds. 'That was another marvellous experience. We all went camping together. As well as drawing and painting and writing, we’d swim and waterski; the students got to know each other and the staff as people. Arthur Barker, head of science, always came with us. I loved botanising with him; he had a comprehensive knowledge of plants and the marine ecology of the Sounds. He also had a wonderful collection of classical records and took up weaving later in life. Arthur enjoyed working with wool and always took his knitting over to the Sounds with him'.

(Blumhardt cited in McLeod, 1991, p. 25)

Blumhardt's descriptions represent a web of relationships that extend far beyond notions of understanding art education as a dyadic relationship between self-expression and social construction. Evident in just the small excerpt above can be read multiple discourses such as; social stratification, expressive theories of art, progressive educational theories, comparative analyses of art and science, craft practices, technical proficiency. Being in Blumhardt's space of art education involved examinations of the intersections between self and selves, identity and discourse. Blumhardt's practice as an art educator was further complicated by the way she blurred participating in art education with initiation into an art culture. Examples such as the regular invitations to her house extended to her students "...to discuss design and see her ever increasing collection of pottery, painting and weaving" (Ibid, p. 20) show how Blumhardt drew
students into the practices of art. From my temporal location, the complex nature of the art
education that was occurring in the 1960s demands a complex analysis beyond the kind of
binary thinking typified in Thorburn’s schism.

The triadic relationship between knowledge-self-technique evident in the 1945 tentative
syllabus, is one part of the evidence that art education has been constructed from a web of
relationships rather than what has been seen as opposing discourses. And rather than
the triadic relationships representing a linear and coherent path throughout history, I am
proposing that there is both coherences and divergence in the way that these concepts have been
historically constituted. In a linear account of history, the drawing syllabus of the late 19th
century may be primarily understood to be a means of developing the industrial and economic
potential of colonial New Zealand through technical skill. However, underpinning the inclusion
of drawing in the curriculum was also a concept of self-expression. Within the historical context
of the times self-expression was valued in artisans who had innovative styles of manufacture in
their products. However, in the 1961 syllabus the drawing was outlined as a means of developing
both aesthetic design and design that is fit-for-purpose. This has some similarities but also
significant differences from self-expression in the 1961 syllabus which stated that self-
expression is “...the increasingly controlled statement by a person, in his own personal way, of
what he thinks or feels about something” (Department of Education, 1961, p. 11). More
similarly to the 1890 version, the 1961 document also claimed that the purpose of art and craft
was to enable the individual to resolve their thoughts and ideas through their personal form of
expression.

In 1977 Ray Thorburn criticised the child-centred art education movement that had held sway
since the 1940s. He claimed that its practice had resulted in little more than “...spewing pints
of paint on paper in an endless orgy of self-expression” (p. 3) and quite clearly differentiated
it from the more sensible consideration that art must also be recognised for its intellectual
components. Thorburn discussed how the theories of Dewey and Bruner brought together the
cognitive with the intuitive. He claimed that following their ideas, what was required in art
education was a balance of “…emotional and intellectual development through the practice of
the development of study followed the artistic form, with the exception of a visual model from the books
university of Waikato. Therefore, students in the programme were not only exposed to the artistic
methods of Waikato University students but also to Waikato University staff and staff from
other institutions as well. The programme was designed to provide students with a broad range
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bringing together the two threads that had been divided; internally and externally motivated theories of art education. And I agree. What he had to say does sound sensible and despite the twenty four intervening years since he wrote his 1977 paper, I can see its merits for a contemporary art education. I like the idea of an art education that is materially located in the interactions between the mind and body. His description of an art education that uses practice as a means of developing cognitive ability as well as creativity has underpinned much of my recent writing on art education. But through the process of excavation, what I have found is that the apparent divide between mind and body was less pronounced than Thorburn claimed. When historical contexts are explored for the interactions between interested individuals and the social structures and contexts of which they are part, multiplicity of interests are evident. In the case of art education, were the differences between Thorburn and Blumhardt’s vision of art education really more marked than the similarities?
Notes:

1 Which again is supported by Bourdieu's (1990, 1993) and Marx's (1970, 1973) analyses of the relationship between structure and creativity.

2 See Engels-Scharzpaul (2001); Grierson (2000a); and Mansfield (2000). While Mansfield's thesis is concerned with curriculum, its substance is policy analysis unlike the classroom-based research of Thorburn. The other two theses are not directly concerned with art education in school settings. In current New Zealand art education research the actual site of art teaching and learning is a fundamentally under investigated. Current writing on school reform suggests that the relationships of power within schools resist changes imposed from the outside (Miller, 1996; Tyack and Cuban, 1995). To have a material effect on practice, rather than a purely representational role, researchers need to engage directly in contexts of teaching and learning.

3 For more on market reforms in the tertiary sector of New Zealand see Olssen (2002); Patterson (1991).

4 As stated later in this chapter, discourses of naivete and intuitive art practice have been embedded in art education since the experiments in “child art” in the early 20th century (see Viola, 1944 and Dengler, ) which were closely allied with experiments in educational psychology and stage development theories (Lowenfeld, 1947/1970; Piaget, 1961/2001). I also think it is worth noting here that privileging an intellectual or disciplinary approach to art education has been symptomatic of conceptualising art education as a practice different from other educational practices. Chapter 8 proposes rebalancing the equation so that education and art come into dialogue with each other.

5 For some interesting discussions of art studio pedagogies as sites of embodiment and emancipation see Garoian (1999); McKenna (1999); Urso Spina (1999-2000).

6 Under Beeby’s direction, the Department of Education implemented many progressive reforms including strengthening subjects like art, physical education and music (Alcorn, 1999). Blumhardt’s recruitment in 1941 as an art specialist and demonstrator at Waterloo Primary was part of the new scheme of subject specialist training for primary teachers developed by Beeby.

7 Richardson’s experiment at Oruaiti was centred on developing a curriculum based on children’s interests (particularly in expressive arts and craft) and how they were shaped within their environment. Oruaiti was taken up by the Department of Education as an experimental school,
given the consonance between the school’s practices and the state’s policy on child-centred curriculum (Richardson, 1979).

8 Descartes’ Discourse on Method (1968) has been seminal in Western philosophy in representing the self as unified and autonomous. There are many contemporary critiques of this notion of subjectivity including those of post-structuralism (for example Foucault, 1982), feminism (for example Bordo, 1999) and phenomenology (for example Merleau-Ponty, 1962).
Chapter four

Having presented some of the complex relationships underlying the construction of historical art curricula, I now shift to a contemporary construction illustrated in The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000). This curriculum document defines the state’s current philosophy for art education in this country, that is within an ‘arts’ education framework where ‘the visual arts’ is one of four strands along with music, dance and drama. The philosophy of the document is described by Francis Kelly (1999), Senior Manager of Learning and Evaluation Policy with the Ministry of Education, as rigorously eclectic, drawing from multiple perspectives of art and educational practice. The foundation document of the curriculum The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum: A Background Paper (Foley, et al., 1999) brings together the multiple perspectives but fails to create cogent links between them, fulfilling its eclectic criteria but not demonstrating much rigour. Without its own strong philosophical framework, art education is at greater risk from the imposition of dominant notions of development. For art education this has meant a reduction of its substance as it becomes redefined as ‘visual art’ education, reducing the significance of embodied engagement in art practice.

I wrote this chapter while I was coming to terms with the redefinition of my discipline from art to ‘visual arts’ education. It interrogates the curriculum document’s predominant focus on developing critical visual literacy, from the point of view of the embodied practices of critical artists and art theorists. I think the earlier versions of this chapter dichotomised the relationships between visual literacy and embodied practice, which was something that I had not intended. Since recognising the inconsistency, I have modified the text to introduce the idea that visual understanding is an aspect of an embodied understanding. This is built upon in chapter five.

The individual is, in fact, the meeting between an I that is cracked and a Me that is
dissolved. Shall we lay bets that the crack and the dissolution within the subject together define the sensuality of sense? That leads to an aesthetics that problematizes the subject instead of excluding it or placing it in the center, aesthetics that does not exclude emotion without reducing everything to it either (Daignault, 1992, p. 209).

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Introducing embodiment as the basis of art education

*The Role of ‘Body’ in the Relations of Art*

**Visible Art**

**VISIBLE ART**

In some respects Thorburn’s ideas were inscribed into art education through the art syllabus of 1989. The content of the syllabus was divided into three parts; sources of motivation, making art works and knowing about art (Ministry of Education, 1989). Through its explicit references to art as a body of knowledge, the document took up Thorburn’s desire to shift art education practice towards inclusion of the intellectual development he saw lacking in most school art curriculum. How effectively the document actually shifted classroom practice is unknown given that Thorburn’s 1981 INSEA study was the last major survey of art education teaching and learning in New Zealand (the few studies of practice since then have had very limited terms of reference, focusing on national curriculum and assessment development, its implementation or professional development towards implementation).1 From the very limited anecdotal evidence I have collected from teachers and students who worked during the time of the 1989 art syllabus, myself included, I believe that change was variable. Some teachers in both sectors wholeheartedly embraced the new policies from the beginning, in many cases in primary education there seems to have been little impact at all, whereas many secondary teachers seem to have been absorbed into the programme as they became more familiar with the ideas they were increasingly surrounded by. There was extremely little documentation of the process of art curriculum implementation throughout this period. In general, there appears to be less written about actual art education practice in the 1980s to mid 1990s than just about any other period,
perhaps reflecting that this was a time of increasing economic rationalisation and ultimately new right educational reform. Teacher communities were submerged by a deluge of policy reform and venues and vehicles for professional engagement ceased. There was the demise of teacher journals like the Department of Education’s Education and the NZEI publication National Education. Professional development programmes were focused on implementation of the reforms. Consequently, I believe New Zealand is well overdue for another in-depth survey of the art education practices of its teachers and students, including documentation of what is left of its recent past.

Since the 1989 syllabus there has been another overhaul of national curriculum, which according to Francis Kelly, Senior Manager, Learning and Policy in the Ministry of Education was underwritten by a philosophy of ‘rigorous eclecticism’ (Clark, 1999; Kelly, 1999). What Kelly implies is that many of the interests and ideas that have informed art curriculum in New Zealand in the past (some of these I discussed in the previous chapter) have a significant role to play in contemporary curriculum. This may be the case in practice, and I have seen evidence that contemporary teaching practices still have a consistent relationship with their historical origins. Yet the actual policy contradicts this claim. While arts curriculum developers (Foley, et al., 1999) identified a number of art education philosophies that have been significant to the development of art education in New Zealand and internationally (including progressivism, modernism, Discipline-based Art Education, the arts and cognition) their preference is clearly identified as postmodernism. Their fundamental interpretation of this seems to be the textualisation of culture. What is transferred from the background paper to the curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2000) is the conceptual framework “...based on the understanding that the arts are languages, from which literacies may be developed” (Foley, et al., http://www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/curriculum/concept_e.php, para 5). The idea that art is a language is consistent with the new focus on ‘vision’ as the dominant mode of engagement in art education. The focus on linguistic knowledge arrived at from the distance of visual investigation represents a tremendous shift away from the historical traditions of art education as fully embodied practice. Where is the self in the visual arts?
With the development of the arts learning area, initially in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993), art education was redefined as visual art education. Since then the notion of vision as a means to acquire knowledge has become the defining difference between art and the other three disciplines it shares a curriculum document with. In the history of New Zealand curriculum, art education has variously been known as drawing, art and crafts and art and design. Most recently it is denominated as 'the visual arts' to differentiate it from the other arts of music, dance and drama that for the first time shares a curriculum document with. The move to conflate the arts subjects within a single document has been criticised, particularly by those who fall into the visual arts category primarily because of fundamental disciplinary and philosophical differences (Best, 1995; Mansfield, 1999; Boyask, in press). The 'visual' modifier has now become the dominant discourse of art education activity and identity in this country and, although the term was initially derived from Ministry of Education policy directives, art educators have themselves begun to define themselves within the frame of the visual world (see Grierson, 2001). In the education practice of schools and the school advisory service, informal and formal, the term 'visual arts' has become a modifier, a label, a way of locating the groupings between music, drama and dance, known as the performing arts, has exacerbated the difference between art and the other arts disciplines. The visual arts strand of the arts curriculum defines art through a paradigm of vision which, as I shall address throughout this chapter, functions as a philosophical separation of the mind and the body in its sight. Alternatively the performance aspects of music, dance and drama clearly locate them within bodies, and consequently reinforces the discrimination between mind and body which appears to pervade New Zealand's contemporary art education.

The draft version of the arts curriculum stated that the portion of the generic curriculum statement now known as the visual arts, "...are the arts that we see" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 58). In a short article published in an art education newsletter I wrote that a curriculum space named the visual arts was an impoverished art space. Where were the arts that we touch and hear and smell? Where were the arts that we think? Since the Ministry of Education (2000) in the art department library that had recently been set up in my institute and I wanted to work with the consultation on the draft, the actual phrase that equates the visual arts with the arts we see has
been omitted from the final curriculum document, yet its sentiments remain. To insist on art
crunstrued within a visual paradigm is to insist that art is entirely knowable through the dis-
tance of sight. It undermines the role of the body in the relations of art and, for the art student,
reduces the art pleasures of the flesh. I am concerned that the national curriculum proposed by
our political leaders to meet the needs of the knowledge economy will not hold many spaces for
the sensuality and physicality that I value in art education. I also believe that a singularly visual
mode of understanding, with its pervasive temptation to separate the mind from body, has
outworn its usefulness. Art and art educators have long been questioning an innate relationship
between vision and art. In New Zealand, for example, William Barrett (1948) drew from Viktor
Lowenfeld’s studies of the drawings of blind children to argue that drawing was developed
either visually (the drawer relates themselves to an external object) ‘or’ haptically (through
bodily sensation) (see Lowenfeld, 1939/1959). From this and similar studies Barrett developed
art personality profiles, representing normative, but specifically embodied ways of negotiating
art understanding. The unity and universality of visual representation is challenged most re-
cently in postmodern, postcolonial and feminist critique. Drawing from a range of critical
theories, I take the position that whether art education is focused on making art works or ana-
lysing visual texts, understanding in art is always an embodied understanding. These are the
ideas I pursue in this chapter: how do discourses of vision and embodiment rephrase the an-
wers to what is of value in art?

Visualising Art Curriculum

Story line - Part One: In 2001 the three art teachers at Horatio High School implement
the visual arts aspect of the new curriculum. In this department they try to distance
themselves from discredited theories of ‘child art’ (see Viola, 1944) and essentialist
classifications of development (see Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1970) that they perceive have
reduced art education practice in primary schools into a marginally valued frivolous
orgy of making. What they do is serious. Increasingly they see that art is becoming
marginalised in secondary schools despite its representations in recent past national
curriculum and assessment policy as an academic and therefore worthwhile endeav-
our. The current practical implications for the art curriculum at Horatio High include; the
disestablishment of the Year 9 core art programme to make way for the new dance and
drama programmes, the joint time-tabling of the Year 13 printmaking class and sculp-
ture class under one teacher, a recommendation that the design programme is amal-
gamated with the technology department's graphic design course, a reduction of hours in the one part-time art teaching position from 16 to 9 hours per week.

In a deputation to the school's curriculum committee, the Head of Department promotes the new visual art education that has been outlined in The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000). In visual art education children become visually literate by learning how to read art works as cultural texts. She tells the committee that the virtue of art practice is that it is a means of communicating children's understanding about the visual world that they live in. Through reading and writing cultural texts (what used to be called knowing about art and making art works (Ministry of Education, 1989)) children are developing visual literacy. They translate visual representations into visual knowledge and back into visual representations. She tells the committee that minimising the art programme will have immense repercussions for the artistic and cognitive development of their students.

Advocating for art practice in education has become an unfashionable endeavour. Practical art education is associated with the progressive education movement, and characterised as a 'hands on-minds off' art education that privileges doing over knowing (Anderson, 2000; Foley, et al., 1999). As I have suggested in the previous chapter, developers of The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000) are critical of how progressive philosophies have been developed into existing art education practice. Alternatively, the arts curriculum writers claim that theirs is a postmodern curriculum, which occurs in an era of rapid change and discontinuity (Foley, et al., 1999), and through which students will develop "...appropriate critical skills and understandings as they analyse and question the parameters of visual arts practice" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 71). Rather than offer a postmodern solution as they claim, this sentiment, and many others in the document, seem to reiterate modernist and linear art practices. Art is defined through a set of rules which structure and define art outside of the individual experiences of art students. Students develop proficiency in art by becoming knowledgeable about the conventions (or grammar) of art. In the arts curriculum statement appropriate thinking, understanding and engagement in art are confined through a metaphor of literacy to the limitations of a language. Speaking at a forum on the arts curriculum, Michael Peters (2000a) is critical of its philosophical assumption that defines art in terms of a language-based model.
That is, it is asserted that the arts are ‘structured like a language’, art is assimilated to the status of a text or text-analogue that implies it can be ‘written’ and ‘read’ and ‘performed’. The model implies that there is a set of ‘rules’, a kind of grammar that can be learned, by learning the rules. Knowledge of these rules then becomes the basis for generation of new art forms (Peters, 2000b, para 5).

Art educator Erik Forrest (1984) wrote on the inadequacy of a language model for art teaching and learning claiming that despite art fulfilling some of the functions of a language, all of the rules that apply to languages cannot be transferred to an art context.

The concept of language includes the notion of structure, both the deep innate structure predicated by Chomsky and others and the surface structure of discrete components, syntactical and grammatical rules for sentence construction, and systems of symbolic logic that control truth, falsehood, validity, reliability, and so on.

(Forrest, 1984, p. 28)

He argues that art does have structures and rules, and like language they are not essential but are culturally and contextually bound, yet art differs from language in that its meaning is integral to its physical embodiment. For example, art meaning is tied to medium. How much of its original meaning changes in a translation from a photograph into a painting? The form of art education described in this chapter as *Story line - Parts One and Two* is my fictional account of the philosophy of the arts curriculum and how it may impact on pedagogical practice. It is based on evidence provided by a survey of art educators engaged in implementation of the curriculum. Their opinions and experiences were documented in an Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators (1999) research report and expressed concern at the speed with which schools were rationalising their art programmes to accommodate what were essentially two new subjects, dance and drama. This was especially significant for secondary and intermediate art educators who were being forced to compete with other arts teachers for time-tableing and resources. There was also a significant concern that the language and philosophies underlying the change
had not been derived from the existing practices of art education. Several of the art teachers specifically mentioned that the section in the existing art syllabus concerned with students and artists' 'sources of motivation' was entirely absent from the arts curriculum. A secondary art teacher responding to the ANZAAE questionnaire expressed concern that in the aim of the arts curriculum there was;

Not enough emphasis on making and experiencing within the art (visual art especially). The way in which these are stated are open to interpretation where students could get away with virtually not making art at all.

Teachers asked where were the students in the visual arts?

In the arts curriculum document, education in visual art occurs when a student becomes knowledgeable through their assimilation into externally delineated and visually appropriated structures of art. The art student's practice is a reformulation of the language of art into instances of signification or meaning compatible with what is already known about art. In the case of a language-model of art, the subjectivity of the artist is located in the student's participation (consumption and production) in socially sanctioned and institutional knowledge. Embodied understandings like self-expression in art become paradoxical. The subject is located outside the body, is in fact precluded from the body, and is distanced from the objects it scrutinises by the distance of sight. The body, in its role as a mechanism for the assimilation and communication of ideas extrinsic to its physical, emotional and spiritual functioning, is also objectified. Students, as subjects, are distanced from the physicality of art processes and therefore prevented from taking ownership of them. In Story line – Part One art products (outcomes), objectified and critically scrutinised through visual literacy, are presented as the locus of meaning in art. Their meanings are socially constructed, external to the phenomenological self. Mind is not connected to or embedded within a body and the physical pleasure of making and experiencing art 'things' seems to have been almost forgotten.

The following is an excerpt from a conversation with a secondary art teacher, and although she
talks about ideas (or issues) as the point missing from a visual art education, what I have taken 
her to mean is that what is missing are the ideas or issues that are important to her students as 
embodied, knowing subjects. She highlights the modernist process inherent in existing school 
art prescriptions that privileges an art that is understood externally to the individually embodied 
experiences of each of her students. It is the same process evident in Story line - Part One.

Art Teacher - definitely - I think that's how it came about. For example bursary where you need 
to show that you understand an established area of practice - so that's stylistic and you need to 
show your ability to generate, develop, regenerate. I mean there's nothing even there in the 
existing prescription that addresses “can conceptualise ideas or issues” - it's all based around 
that. That's the interesting thing about art education as opposed to art practice - because peo-
ple out there making art are coming at it, to me, from the opposite standpoint.

Interviewer - So they're structuring it themselves?

Art Teacher - Yeah - or they're making it about ideas or issues they're not making it about tone 
or line. Or formal, I mean that's a part of it, but it's integrated. If you see what I mean. I find 
that quite disturbing when I really think about it, in terms of how we're approaching art educa-
tion. I mean we've got the artist model studies and as we develop the curriculum and things 
there's more emphasis on that, which is good – or theory, but then I think there should be as 
much room for the kids' input into what, there's all this education theory about starting from the 
individual and working out, I mean how else do you do it? You don't get there by studying 
Diebenkorn's grids. This forty year old white American male. How old is he now? Ninety? 
Dead.

Interviewer - I think that relates to...

Art Teacher – I mean if you looked at English or music, all of their starting points are them-
selves.
As it continued, this conversation appeared to support an art education that encouraged students to locate practices of art within their own bodies through uncovering their own motivations in relation to the practices of other interested and embodied subjects (artists). This is a different rubric for art education than from one that promotes art existing wholly outside of the art student. Within this art teacher’s model of best practice the art student/artist is simultaneously knowing about art and known by others as knowing about art. Performance art, in particular what feminist art theorist Amelia Jones (1998) terms ‘body art’ is a somewhat radical example of the role that the knowing and embodied subject can play in the relations of art. In a bid to re-examine the position of the female body in art Jones examines the genre of body art, where body artists are engaged in exploring how their own bodies intersect in the discourses of identity and subjectivity through the negotiation of categories such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity. Through re/presenting their own bodies in performance art works they start from themselves not necessarily in a naive and individualistic way, but with the potential for examining the nature of ‘self’. Selves exist in relation to each other. By performing themselves, body artists make visible the interestedness of art practice that is under threat of concealment in a wholly visual art education.

I am suggesting that, when presented as to highlight the position of the body- as locus of a “disintegrated” or dispersed “self,” as elusive marker of the subject’s place in the social, as “hinge” between nature and culture-in the practices I address here. The term “body art” thus emphasizes the implication of the body (or what I call the “body/self,” with all of its apparent racial, sexual, gender, class, and other apparent or unconscious identifications) in the work. It also highlights both the artistic and the philosophical aspects of this project- aspects that, I am arguing, are deeply intertwined and mutually implicated in the profound shift in the conception of subjectivity that I am “performing” here (through body art) as constitutive of the condition of postmodernism. Second, while I tangentially make note of the broader history of “performance” in the visual arts, I focus in this book on a particular moment in which the body emerged into the visual artwork in a particularly charged and dramatically sexualized and gendered way. The work that emerged during this period—from the 1960s to the mid 1970s was labelled “body art” or “body works” by several contemporaneous writers who wished to differentiate it from a conception of “performance art” that was at once broader (in that it reached back to dada and encompassed any kind of theatricalized production on the part of a visual artist) and narrower (in that it implied that a performance must actually take place in front of an audience, most often in an explicitly theatrical, proscenium-based setting). I am interested in work that may or may not initially have taken place in front of an audience: in works—such as those by Kusama, Schneemann, Vito Acconci, Yves Klein, and Hannah Wilke that take place through an enactment of the artist’s body, whether it be in a “performance” setting or in the relative

a universal truth, vision can be conceived in the service of the knowing and disembodied subject. Jones's work helps illuminate how the regime of vision in art is related to the Cartesian notion of subjectivity that has underpinned western thought since the Enlightenment. In his discourse of scientific method Descartes (1968) presented his own subjectivity as the sole locus of truth. Truth being arrived at through a process of fragmentation and linearity. The Cartesian subject is implicated in the movement of modernism, which in its purest forms is also concerned with fragmentation and progression, that has been the dominant organisation of art and its relations since the nineteenth century. Jones claims that the "... I of the subject was a disembodied 'eye' turning all bodies into objects" (Jones, 1998, p. 37). Within the paradigm of Cartesian logic, whoever possesses the eye is all-seeing and all-knowing, and except for disruptions from feminist movements, is exclusively male. The conventional history of art is documented evidence of the objectification of women under the gaze of the master artist/knowing subject.

The emphatic contours of the girl's body are drawn and redrawn, shaded and heightened. The solidity they imply is offset by the amorphous forms of her skirt and her surroundings. Interestingly, the strokes applied within the outlines of the Pink Dancer's left limbs do not conform to body contours but instead are straight hatches that seem independent of the forms they overlie. Similar strokes may be seen in the fabric between the girl's legs. The predominance of long vertical strokes has a flattening effect, and heightens the viewer's awareness of surface" (Auckland City Art Gallery, 1989, p. 26).

Figure 4. Edgar Degas. Pink Dancer 1896.
In 1989 Edgar Degas’ *Pink Dancer* (1896) was exhibited at the Auckland City Art Gallery in an exhibition entitled *The Reader’s Digest Collection: Manet to Picasso*. Featured on the front cover of the catalogue it typifies an art that, sanctioned by art historians, is valued in popular culture for its decorative and formal properties (Auckland City Art Gallery, 1989). Its appearance on place mats and diary covers demonstrates its universal visual appeal. When examined, however, from a position of feminist inquiry, the formal elements which are described in the above excerpt become a screen which obscures the more sinister content of a passive and unknowing girl (turned away from the gaze of her onlooker) objectified by the long vertical strokes of phallocentric desire.

Art education’s reconstruction as visual arts education has not been accompanied by an examination of how vision is critiqued as a universalising discourse within the practices of art. The association of vision and art has been brought under critical scrutiny by feminist art theorists; artists and art historians and their work provides a significant base for my critique of its unquestioned translation into art curriculum. In the late 1970s and 1980s women such as Griselda Pollock and Mary Kelly troubled the male gaze of the master artist and sought to own the ‘eye’ and represent ‘women’ as active producers of culture rather than its passive reflections. Pollock claims that through visual representation the master artist of the mid-nineteenth-century (the mid-nineteenth century has especial significance to her thesis because it was a time that typified the polarisation of gender) created “the myth of woman” that has perpetuated in fashion magazines and media images of contemporary times (Pollock, 1988, pp. 121-2). She claims that rather than portraits (the documentation of the presence of an individual) of real women, representations of female bodies are fanciful representations of male desire. However, as well as providing a critique that disrupted the oppression of patriarchal representation, Pollock and Kelly were part of a faction within feminism who, critical of what they considered to be essentialist feminist art practices, claimed that the representation of the female body in modern art is always fraught with either an inherent phallocentrism or its inversion. Within the critique of an essentialist feminist art genre, visual representations of women’s bodies were another symbolic representation of generic categories of ‘woman’. Feminist artists were increasing the visibility of ‘woman’ but were not furthering knowledge of women. In spite of their critical intentions.
concerns were raised that feminist performance artists like Carolee Schneeman and Hannah Wilke whose naked bodies were the raw materials of their work, were reinscribing female bodies as the objects of male desire by merely making visible the conditions of women’s lives rather than by engaging in a sustained intellectual analysis of the conditions underlying their existence (Pollock, 1998, p. 165). Despite the specificity of her investigation (the visual representation of women) there is a theoretical consistency in Pollock’s critique and the visual arts component of the arts curriculum (2000). Although Pollock critiques conventional and stereotypical notions of representation, there is an assumption underpinning both her work and the arts curriculum that the phenomenological world is a series of texts to be read with the eyes and critiqued by the mind. Art is work of the mind separated from the body which it inhabits. Pollock and the arts curriculum writers both make appeals to postmodern theory, however it is their insistence on knowledge through sight that sees them re-encapsulated into the discourses of modernism.

CONTEXTUALISING VISION AND EMBODIMENT WITHIN MODERNIST ART PRACTICE

Art critic and high modern champion Michael Fried’s seminal discussion and dismissal of minimalism (literalism) as non-art (from Art and Objecthood originally published in Art Forum in 1967) derogatively describes the relationship between minimalist installation and viewer as ‘theatre’, “…and theater [sic] is now the negation of art” (Fried, 1998, p. 153). Fried’s account of installation as theatre is predicated on a viewer’s physical encounter with the mucky ‘human’ presence of minimalist art works. As minimalist Tony

Figure 5. Tony Smith, Die, 1962
Smith stated, “I didn’t think of them [i.e., the sculptures he ‘always’ made] as sculptures but as presences of a sort” (Smith cited in Fried, 1998, p. 157). Fried describes Smith’s six-foot cube *Die* (1962) as a surrogate person (1998, p. 155-6) and dismisses this type of work as non-art because of its physical, experiential and sensorial properties. In contrast he upholds the pure aesthetic pleasures and self-containment derived from visual comming with high modernist abstract painting of the same era. The ‘bodiliness’ of Antony Caro’s constructivist sculpture is also praised as it is only knowable from a clean, safe and visible distance. In high modernist art, form and content are objective truths that are passed from omniscient creator to knowledgeable viewer. In the presence of a minimalist art work the vision of its viewers becomes troubled as they are confronted with the physicality of themselves (viewer) and others (art works). In this respect minimalist art represents a shift away from the dominant modes of understanding and representation in modernism. Unlike the abstract painting Fried applauds, minimalist art refers to something other than itself.

What I also find interesting is that despite the physicality implied in the minimalist work, the artists were still concerned with preserving the spectator’s physical separation from the work. They intended that their art would be experienced through the conceptual contemplation of physical space, or understanding the body through the mind. The following quote from minimalist Robert Morris exemplifies the minimalist concern with spatial distancing:

The better new work takes relationships out of the work and makes them a function of space, light, and the viewer’s field of vision. The object is but one of the terms in the newer aesthetic. It is in some way more reflexive because one’s awareness of oneself existing in the same space as the work is stronger than in previous work, with its many internal relationships. One is more aware than before that he himself is establishing relationships as he apprehends the object from various positions and under varying conditions of light and spatial context. (Morris cited in Fried, 1998, p. 153)

Morris’s viewer encounters the work as it would another body in space and hence it is trapped within the dilemma that philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1991) suggests underpins the
Cartesian subject. The mind is separate from three-dimensional space and therefore is foreclosed from knowledge of space and matter. In some senses minimalism rewrote the rules of modernist art practice. The viewer was permitted a stake in the art work whose meaning had previously been regarded as ubiquitous and unassailable. Although with its acceptance of the pre-eminent Cartesian thinking subject, divided from the space it contemplates, minimalism enabled its reincorporation back into the universalising discourses of modernism. Lyotard (1991) describes this as a rewriting of modernity where “modernity is constitutionally and ceaselessly pregnant with its postmodernity” (p. 25). The postmodern moment represents a moment of disruption from the regimes of modernity and modernism, however the fabric is instantaneously repaired (as this passage is also reincorporated into this text?).

In the tradition of minimalist sculpture, feminist artist Mary Kelly inserted “…the physical presence of the viewer…” (Kelly in Iversen, 1997, p. 39) into her work and rewrote modernity towards feminist ends. Her concerns regarding the relationship between vision and the objectification of the female body required a deliberate strategy regarding its visual representation. For Kelly the visually rendered female form became an illusory image of the wholeness and subjection of women. It was also a presentation of the female body objectified in the interests of male desire and autonomy. She sought to escape the modernist trap of female representation by expunging the body from view. The location of Kelly’s body is marked by its absence. Kelly’s art work resolved to distance both its male and female viewers by replacing the visual image of the body with its traces; “…gestural marks, found objects, imprints, traces, moulds…” (Iversen, 1997, p. 41). By removing its prey, man’s vision (and subjectivity) is to be thwarted. Woman is to be positioned away from the dishonest mirror of the male eye. Practices of a pseudo-science (e.g. glass cases, diagrams, labels and formulae) serve to emphasise a seemingly objective relationship between viewer and art, however by using the conventions of installation and through their physical engagement, viewers are also obliged to examine their own interpolations in the work. The meaning of Kelly’s art is constructed at each encounter, as are the issues of sexuality and gender relationships that underlie its content. “For me, masculine and feminine identities are completely contingent, not pregiven” (Kelly, 1997, p. 143).
According to Amelia Jones (1998), Kelly's gendered identities also appear to be founded on the relationships between the knowing subject and its encounters in the visual realm. The visual erasure of the mother in Kelly's Post-Partum Document (an art project that explores the relationships between mother and son informed by the work of Lacan) and its apparent disinterestedness allows the work to be read for its formal qualities (i.e. light and space) as much as its feminist content. Kelly claims that in Post-Partum Document she uses a scriptovisual form of representation to present the "...decentered, socially constituted subject of a mutual discourse" (Kelly, 1996, p. 23). In the contemplation of form and interpretation of content, viewers are invited into the art work through their eyes and ultimately their intellect where they are faced by the visual absence of the female body. Kelly's subject exists outside of the phenomenological body and her body's absence is also known through vision. Kelly's work appeals to the mind to know the body that is missing and her postmodernity is also rewritten into the fabric of modernity.

Kelly put Pollock's (1988) critique of feminist essentialism into art practice. In discussing the early work of Kelly, Margaret Iversen claims that Kelly "would argue that the kind of feminist art practice which offers 'empowering' iconic representations of the woman's body risks delivering up the female spectator to identifications with an ideal mother, an illusionary mirror image of herself as whole, self-sufficient and autonomous..." (1997, p. 38). Consequently Kelly's art work of the late 1970s and 1980s entirely erased the visual presence of the female body. The female body was instead characterised through its visual absence in order to resist its fetishisation as an object of male desire. Whether you talk about visual presence or visual absence, however, there is still an insistence that objects become known through visual scrutiny. Insistence on a visual paradigm for understanding in art, is to abandon many historically important rationales for art education. Embodied practices, such developing skill, practising art making, evaluating art works, self-expression and creativity are undermined as legitimate ways of coming to know art. Emotional and spiritual engagement in art practice is discounted because a sense making self who feels and believes has been expunged. While some embodied art education rationales have operated as oppressive and exclusive discourses, privileging those who were perceived to have 'artistic talent', I do believe that they require reappraisal to examine...
their liberatory and inclusive potentials.

In her examination of the female/feminist body, cultural theorist Janet Wolff recounts examples of the resisting female body being reincorporated into existing oppressive structures of representation. “Its pre-existing meanings, as sex object, as object of the male gaze, can always prevail and reappropriate the body, despite the intentions of the woman herself” (Wolff, 1990, p. 121). Wolff claimed that although it is difficult to reinstate the female body into feminist representation, it is not impossible and in 1990 presented the development of a critical and feminist body politics as a challenge for future cultural production and analysis. In the case of art education, this may mean re-examining the physical and emotional presence of the body in art practices as well as its visual representation in art products. It requires an informed intentionality in art engagement, where artists and others who make meaning from art are cognisant of the cultural contexts within which their meaning making takes place. A naïve reading of the body would only take place within a context of naivety, i.e. within a culture of naïve meaning makers. This context would be difficult to create within the dominant ideological structures of 21st century capitalist and global culture.

In reinstating corporeality into feminist art, Jones’s (1998) analysis of the relationship between an art work and its audience problematises relationships based on the body as purely a visual ‘image’ (a criticism which she suggests has been directed against early feminist art). She reinserts the excised body into feminist representation by claiming that its excision was colluding with oppressive ideals of modernism by insisting that art (and women) can only be understood through a visual paradigm. Jones argues that much of the feminist body art of the 1970s, discounted as essentialist by the feminist analyses of the 1980s, can be reinterpreted as quite clearly antithetical to “…the modernist logic of formalism…” where “…the body of the artist - in its impurity - must be veiled, its supplementary hidden from view” (1998, p. 35). Feminist body art makes visible the dangerous, the delectable and the unclean female body. However Jones claims that understood for its heterogeneity rather than just its formal (visual) properties, body art is also invested with a potential to rewrite the relationships between selves. She argues that the relationships between feminist and critical body artists and spectators goes beyond the
visibility implied in modernist art practices and is based in a multiple, interested and embodied intersubjectivity. Within a purely visual paradigm, the eyes, like the rest of the body, are in the service of the consciousness. In the contemplation of art they perceive light and dark and measure spatial distances. They enable knowledge at a distance where selves exist in isolation from each other. However, visual knowledge of the self (mind) and other (body) always remains incomplete. Lyotard (1991) claims that it is the separation of thought from matter inherent in the Cartesian subject that has foreclosed the potential of a mind to know its body. Within Cartesian logic “the union of soul and body remains an intractable enigma” (Ibid, p. 38). Despite its claim for unity and autonomy (I think therefore I am) knowledge of the Cartesian body obtained through thought and aided by vision, always remains incomplete. An object (body) is never wholly visible from a single vantage point and the extension of an object into three dimensional space requires the recollections of an imperfect memory (Ibid., p. 21). The Cartesian knowing self (mind) is always limited by its partition from the space which its body inhabits but in which it cannot exist.

In her bid to distance feminist art practices from modernism Pollock replaced the modernist concern for materiality (true meaning embedded in matter) with a feminist materialism (textual analysis). The “...textual is...discovered as material, existing not as a discrete, spiritual phenomenon (e.g. the embodiment of creativity or the human spirit as in many conventional art theories) but functioning within economic and social institutions productive of both commodities and ideologies” (Pollock, 1988, p. 162). In an attempt to break with notions of essential or universal meanings and invoke contingency, she has reinvoked the Cartesian dilemma between mind and body. Her feminist materialism depends on an intellectualist engagement with art products to determine the social relationships that underlie production. Female representation is a text to be read with the eyes, and understood through logic. Pollock calls upon Brechtian distanciation⁶ as a means for the spectator to become engaged in the cultural production of the spectacle. However, by insisting on the social construction of meaning and knowledge she has also given up the physical pleasures of making and making meaning from engaging in art.

Knowledge gained in the application of a single, interested self (body and mind) is discounted. She has called on the mind to know the body, yet by distancing the body her cultural engage-
ment is intensely limited by the mind’s exclusion from phenomenological space.

Flashback: The Arts curriculum developers claim that the postmodern curriculum (the philosophical rationale for The Arts curriculum statement) values art outcomes. “Postmodernism places art works in the context of their social, cultural, political, philosophical and historical settings and locates them as texts to be interrogated” (Foley, Hong & Thwaites, 1999, para 1.4). These sentiments, reiterated in the emphasis on “Literacies in the Arts” in the arts curriculum statement, appear to be inflating the theoretical or ‘knowing’ aspects of art, at the expense of physical and emotional engagement in art.

Rather than following the Cartesian tradition, Jones (1998) claims a position for body art within the traditions of phenomenological and postmodern feminism where selves are understood as interrelated, contingent and reciprocal. The single self is constituted and reconstituted in the continuous interaction with other selves. The postmodern subject is constructed through discourse, and is both subject and object (Wolff, 1990; Martusewicz, 1992; Foucault, 1995). As Foucault (1982) suggests, there are two dimensions inherent in the notion of the subject, that is, “...subject to someone else by control and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (p. 212). The contingent subject of postmodernity is regulated on both counts, through its own self-knowledge that is constructed through its situation within the contexts of many selves. Butler (2003) claims that feminist and phenomenological views of the body locate it as a historically and culturally situated “…continual and incessant materializing of possibilities” (p. 393). The embodied subject positions of art maker and art interpreter are constructed through dialogue and together they “are collaborators for each other in consummate reciproc ity” (Merleau-Ponty cited in Jones, 1998, p. 41). At the same time they are objects separated by the flesh that is not separate from their individual selves (Jones, 1998, p. 41). It is extraordinarily difficult to disassociate body art from the bodies who engage in and encounter it, and to apply to it the clean, formal and disinterested analyses of modernist aesthetics. Jones’s account of body art puts into question its implicit representation of a unified Cartesian subject and she claims that seen outside of this frame it can help to serve similar interests to those espoused by feminist artists such as Kelly; “…activating the viewer, positing sexual and gender identities as
fully contingent and intersectional with class, race and other aspects of identity, etc...” (Jones, 1998, p. 22). It can also achieve this without the enforced isolation and limitation of selves that occurs in the erasure of the body of both artist and viewer. Kelly’s art work served to deconstruct the representation of female bodies through their absence, however the female body in everyday life cannot (or must not?) be expunged. How is a woman to present her actual body as a site of critique when it is distinguished by its presence? Wolff (1990) suggests that although the body is constructed through discourse and language, and therefore can be deconstructed through it, the world behaves as though the body does actually exist therefore the inherent tension between the essentialist category of ‘woman’ and multiple bodies of women should be maintained. “Any body politics, therefore, must speak about the body, stressing its materiality and its social and discursive construction, at the same time as disrupting and subverting existing regimes of representation” (Ibid, p. 139). The female body in art can serve as a marker to reiterate the ambiguities between the unified and differentiated female self, by raising questions about the subject position of viewer and viewed. When not dichotomised against the body, vision becomes part of the problematics of embodiment. Donna Harraway (1997) suggests that technologies of vision must be scrutinised for their positionality, by asking:

How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for? Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinded? Who wears blinders? Who interprets the visual field? What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision? (p. 289)

Body art is one representation of the way that art becomes muddied with the problematics of life. As well as incorporating the bloodless aesthetics of high modernism, motivation for participating in art can become entangled with the forces that characterise human existence; making meaning, relating with selves (our own and others) and physical sensation. An embodied art expands the possibilities of knowing and understanding, and visual art situated within a body becomes part of this enabling discourse. I develop this idea in the next chapter when I discuss the subjective and embodied nature of vision. Situated outside of embodiment, visual art risks being a discourse of exclusion, operating closure on what can count as legitimate art knowledge.
Story line – Part Two: At Horatio High School the members of the curriculum committee have decided to go ahead with the disestablishment of the core art programme. The Year 9 art programme will now be exclusively an elective programme. After considering the Head of Department’s appeals, the curriculum committee ruled that because visual literacy was already accounted for in the English curriculum which all children would be exposed to, there was no obligation for the school to offer a core art programme. Children would instead elect to study two of the four disciplines from the arts curriculum statement (i.e. music, dance, drama, visual arts). If they select visual art, they will be taught for 2 hours a week for half of the year. The Head of Department tells the other teachers how despondent she is about the change. “What will happen to our successful young artists who cannot communicate through writing at all?” she asks.

The Year 13 programme has also been reduced, the art teachers decided that rather than attempting to teach two disciplines together they would offer printmaking and drop the option of sculpture. Perhaps because it is known as a difficult subject to teach, very few schools offer sculpture and the teachers have heard some recent rumours that it may soon be removed from national assessment. The part-time art teacher, who is also the sculpture specialist, has decided that it is now time to leave the school. She has always valued teaching sculpture because it gave her and her students the opportunity to explore the physical and performative qualities of art, by making art works that operate beyond a two-dimensional surface.

The department has managed to keep Year 13 design in the department. The art students have consistently performed better in national assessment than their counterparts in the technology department’s graphic design course, however the two departments have been brought closer together. Because of the resignation from the art department and a roll reduction at the school, the graphics teacher will now be teaching in the junior art programme. He has a background in carpentry and spent some time working as a sign writer. A further shortfall in the art teaching staff will be filled by a history teacher who did art history as part of his degree.

To return to the concern raised at the beginning of this chapter, I believe that ascribing the title of ‘the visual arts’ to the practice of art education in our schools is reducing rather than expanding the possibilities for our students. Art referenced to the visual world is only a partial depiction of art practice, and there needs to be careful consideration about whether this is the frame through which art educators should position themselves. Through adopting and accepting the name ‘the visual arts’, is art curriculum being discursively defined to exclude the possibilities of knowledge about the dimension which bodies inhabit, reiterating the authorised rationalisation of the body’s separation from the mind? The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Minis-
try of Education, 2000) lacks a rigorous and coherent philosophy. Without its own clear philosophical foundation, art education is susceptible to influence from other disciplines that may or may not have compatible interests. An idea that I pursue in the following chapter is that the rationalisation of a mind/body split is in complicity with another type of rationalisation, i.e. economic rationality, thus furthering the interests of global capital rather than the interests of the individuals who present themselves in the art room.

The subjective nature of visual knowledge could be made more explicit through re-situating vision within contingent and reciprocal bodies, constructing visual understanding as an embodied practice. In her reappraisal of an embodied art practice, Jones (1998) claims that body art "...highlights the fact that the body is both insistently 'there' and always absent (never knowable through vision), that, in the words of Jed Perl, 'wholeness is an illusion, an ideological trap'" (p. 32). Body art is a very particularised form of art practice. While some of its practices are too close to the obscene or are too intellectually inaccessible to be translated easily into school art contexts, it does provide insights into the possibilities of sense, sensuality and sensibility offered by a more embodied art education. That is, an art education that takes account of how it is shaped by the interactions of students, teachers and artists. Jones also warns of the traps invested in a regime of visual art. An art predicated solely on vision reasserts the sense of autonomy, authority and individuality (in its worst senses) of the artist that seeks to regulate and control the female body (the teaching body), the bodies of her children (students) and the feminised body of the artist which may threaten the existence of the knowing male artist/critic (mind) of modernism. In the present age, visual literacy has become the solution to the dilemma's of an excess of visual stimuli delivered through new technologies. With a history of the critical examination of visual culture, artists and art educators should be ideally placed to take up this challenge. Their critiques of visual culture, however, have been centred around the hegemonic and objectifying quality of visual representation (Forrest, 1985; Pollock, 1988; jagodzinski, 1997; Jones, 1998). Art educators should be immediately wary of describing art knowledge solely through a paradigm of vision. Visual literacy as a dominant discourse of art education closes down possibilities for embodied understanding, investigation and critique, only enabling a dichotomous polemic between the mind and the body as its other.
Notes:

1 For recent research see Mansfield’s (1995, 2000) policy analysis of The Arts curriculum. A range of other studies have arisen during this round of curriculum development, the largest of these include the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educator’s (ANZAAE) investigation of the perceptions of art teachers on the draft curriculum (ANZAAE, 1999) and NZCER’s evaluation of the professional development in support of the implementation of the Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (in process).

2 For more on the erosion of teacher professionalism under the neo-liberal reforms see Locke (2001).

3 In this chapter Jones’ (1994, 1998) work on “body art” is used as the source material from which to make a case for re-situating art meaning within particularised, although contingent, art bodies. While Jones’ work is one of the primary materials worked upon, I am not suggesting that her work is necessarily the origin or locus of these ideas, she makes representation to the work of others, however, hers is a very cogent example of how these ideas can be used in practice. Other examples of the theory situated in art practice that I have found useful include work by Meskimmon (2000) and Bolt (2000). Like Jones’ they are both engaged in projects of practice that make use of the theoretical representations from both feminist corporeal theory (for examples see Butler, 2003; Haraway; 1997) and postmodern conceptions of subjectivity as both subjective and subjected (for example Foucault 1982, 1995).

4 For example the avant garde painters and their progressive disintegration of mimetic representation (Arnason, 1988).

5 The examples used in this section relate predominantly to sculpture rather than other art forms. Ostrow (1997) claims that during the high modernist period of the mid-50s through the 70s, “sculpture came to be located at the intersection of the Modernist pursuit for essential form and the philosophical investigation of the relationship between mind and matter” (p. 5). As such it provides the richest site for exploring discourse around representation and materiality and for salvaging a contingent subjectivity.

6 Pollock appears to be advocating for a distanciation that frees the viewer from identifying with the images they are presented with in visual representation. In this argument representations of the human body become mirrors in which the viewer is reflected as whole and complete. This illusion of completeness inhibits their agency (1988, 163-5).

7 In 1937 New Education Fellowship lectures, Austrian Arthur Dengler introduced New Zealand educators to Cizek’s experiments in “child art”. Cizek’s work was focused only on those he perceived as artistically talented. For a more contemporary example of exclusion in art education see Kaufman (1989) who argues that art transcends utilitarian experiences and therefore must not be mixed indiscriminately with everyday life.
Thus far, I have suggested that art practice is a product of its cultural, social and historical contexts by describing specific contexts of art embodiment and practice. In this chapter I take a closer look at embodied art practice by excavating the theory surrounding the construction of subjectivity and practice in art. The chapter was started several years ago while I was developing my understanding of the nature of practice in art, following a trajectory of Marxist thought on the product/practice dichotomy.¹ Since then I have refined my thinking to consider how the mind within a body, rather than an abstract concept of mind, would construct the notion of practice. This led me to examine interpretive positions on thinking as an activity. Recently I have started to re-examine the shift that according to Roland Barthes (1984) was occurring in the 1970s between discourses of work and text, and how they might be reincorporated within an embodied notion of art. All of these layers of understanding are evident in this chapter as I try to address the issue of reacquainting the body with the historical and disciplinary understandings of art.
WORK of art: embodied art education

REACQUAINTING THE MIND AND BODY

One of the questions that endures throughout this project is what is the relationship of art product to art practice within an embodied art education. While the relationship between product and practice is a problematic that has been fiercely debated in art and art educational theories, many recent writers claim they have found resolutions (for example Jones, 1998; Sullivan, 2001; Wolff, 1990, 1993). What appears to be common to their analysis is the breakdown of dichotomous or binary thinking. Product and practice are reincorporated into an ongoing nexus of relationships, whether that is the socio-cultural contexts described by Sullivan or the discursive cultural and social structures of Wolff. In the previous chapter I began an argument where I challenged discourses of vision in art when they are fragmented from an embodied frame, recognising the embedded nature of visual understanding within both bodies and socio-cultural contexts. This chapter builds on that idea by developing theoretical rationales for reacquainting art (including the visual aspects of art) with the body. With the shift from a Newtonian universe built on mechanical principles and spatial and temporal integrity, to Einstein’s universe where space and time are only stable in relation to the constant of the speed of light, the whole notion of practice (temporal) and product (spatial) as stable entities is put into question. This has enabled a plethora of relativist theories of culture, art and education to take prominence in redefining the role of art in education. Thus meaning has been shifted out of inert bodies (art works and the bodies of artists) and their mechanized activity. Within art theory this shift is evident in the linguistic turn from art work to art text, the differences described by Roland Barthes (1984) in his 1971 paper From work to text not as “...argumentations, but enunciations, “touches”, as it were, approaches that consent to remain metaphorical” (p. 170), but latterly to become more of a substantive division between a discursive locus of art meaning and a locus within art bodies. Thus there are relationships be-
tween the tensions within a work/text dichotomy and the mind/body division within Cartesian
philosophy.

While I uphold the shift towards a discursive construction of meaning, I also think there needs
to be a substantial acknowledgement of the role of a material self within that meaning. Mean­
ing making is driven through the phenomenological experience of being in the world, in its
material, affectual and conceptual senses. Reincorporating subjectivity within a body as well
as locating it in the discourses between bodies, means that art does not need to be either
deterministic (the self has no agency) or relativistic (the self has an entirely free-will). By
bringing together the mind and body the subject becomes reattached to the agency lost in a
socially constructed self, thus becoming an active participant in the contexts and structures
that form its own subjectivity. While constrained by limitations of context, the subjects of art
have potential to shift discursive meaning through strategic interpretation. For example, I am
increasingly coming to the belief that the value of art practice lies within itself. This makes it
incredibly difficult to argue for its continuance as a core subject in school curriculum at the
expense of other equally valid domains of knowledge, particularly from the position of gen­
eral education. In the Einsteinian universe, the value of art education cannot be measured
against a constant of liberal humanist development of the whole person. A broad and balanced
education could consist of many things, there is no particular reason for art to be included
unless the argument is a strategic one. This should be launched from within the practices of
art, by the embodied subjects of art education, because those invested in art are also invested
in its value.

MATERIALITY

One of the lessons for philosophy from recent science, illustrated in Jean-François Lyotard’s
(1991) book The Inhuman: Reflections on Time is that there is no division between the phe­
nomenological body and thought. Physics offered a temporary resolution of the philosophers’
problematic on the relationship between mind and matter. Lyotard claims that in modern
physics, bodies (in the sense of all that has been classically understood as matter) are a very
compressed form of energy. Bodies exist in waves and vibrate at particular frequencies in the same way that light and heat energy exist at particular frequencies on the electromagnetic scale. Within this model thought is the vibration of a wave of energy (i.e. the body). "The continuity between mind and matter thus appears as a particular case of the transformation of frequencies into other frequencies, and this is what the transformation of energy consists in" (Ibid, p. 43). Differences in thought occur through differences in frequency or occurrence, and thought, unlike the body which through its wavelength has no spatial dimension, but does have a temporality. Therefore a common ground for comprehending the relationship between body and mind is not space, as classical physics and philosophy have suggested. While a commonality between mind and body is the dimension of time, modern physics claims that neither of these dimensions are essential nor unified domains. Like the Cartesian subject, the spatial realm of Newtonian or Cartesian mechanics has been presented as unified and complete, where matter is distinguished by its extension into space (breadth, width and length) (Ibid, p. 37). The rewriting of matter as energy puts into question the unity of space and opens up the possibility of spatial and temporal transgressions. Boundaries between material forms become ambiguous. A pre-eminent and autonomous human subject is also questioned when consciousness is embedded in the vibrations of all matter (a form of energy). Human consciousness can only be differentiated from the consciousness of a stone by the increased complexity of its vibrations, through the differences in frequency. To remove the human body from the unified space that has positioned it as object (unknowable by the mind from which it is separate), is to permit a knowledge of the self and its other (an understanding of the stone as the same as and different from itself).

The outcome of this science is not to deny the phenomenological body, but to legitimise its condition as neither separate nor substantially different from the mind. It also provides a basis for locating an embodied meaning not only in physical or spatial bodies themselves (modernist materiality) but in the motion, interaction and transformation of bodies at all levels (e.g. quantum, atomic, molecular, phenomenological). The body seen through this model has apparent similarities to the interrelationship, contingency and reciprocity in Jones' (1998) analysis of the subject in body art. Seen in this light, embodiment in art is not innate meanings
embedded within inert, unified matter, it is dynamic and relational and its meanings are multiple. The boundaries between the body of art producer, art product and art receiver become ambiguous and paradoxical. There are also interesting parallels in the significance of temporality. Although body art exists in a spatial mode, its meanings become more expansive through their temporal unfolding. The art producer and art receiver, marked by the presence of their physical bodies, are constructed and reconstructed in their continual dialogic engagement. The self is self and selves at the same time. This appears to be a slightly different subject from the contingent self in the feminist art practices of Mary Kelly and Griselda Pollock even though it owes its form to the same tradition. The dynamic subject who is constructed through social relationships is evident in the critical theory underpinning much of the art and art historical endeavour of the twentieth century. It was from this tradition that art was reconceptualised from a collection of inert products to a discipline of practice. Pollock points to Raymond Williams's Marxist writing in literary criticism which signals the shifting emphasis away from works of art as objects, and conceiving art (literature) as an ongoing practice.

Politics and art, together with science, religion, family life and the other categories we speak of as absolutes, belong in a whole world of active and interactive relationships....If we begin from the whole texture, we can go on to study particular activities, and their bearings on other kinds. Yet we begin, normally, from the categories themselves, and this has led again and again to a very damaging suppression of relationships. (Williams cited in Pollock, 1988, p. 4)

The practice in the title of my thesis comes from this Marxist tradition within modern/post-modern art inquiry. Understanding art as cultural practice refers to the recognition that art works not only arise out of the social milieu in which they are made, but that there is a continual exchange between art production and socio-cultural context that determines the nature of art and also society itself. Art becomes entangled in the normal practices of life. And artists are distanced from a view where they are reified as creative geniuses who exist outside of normal social life that has been the dominant image of an artist since the Romantic era of the 18th-19th centuries.
Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its purposes, its own meaning. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment, under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land. (Williams, 1993, p. 90)

While it is the dynamism and contingency of practice that I wish to salvage for the new century, it is an embodied practice (a practice that does not dissolve the subject) that I am speaking for. The art practice evident in the work of Williams, Pollock and Kelly exists as a set of social relationships, comprehended by the mind yet distanced from space. Their artist/subject, therefore, is contingent but is also immaterial. This discounts individuals from constructing meaning directly from their experiences in the material world. Meanings become subject to the rules and structures external to selves who construct them.

As a genitor of embodied practice, the socially constructed practice of Marxist and neo-Marxist art history is a useful ground to explore. It has also led me to examine the possibility that Marx’s own writing may be more closely allied to an embodied notion of practice than some later analysis would allow. In the second half of the twentieth century, study of the work of Marx (in particular Grundrisse, Marx, 1973) rewrote the disciplinary boundaries of art historical study so that biological terms such as creation and reception became replaced with the language of political economy (Pollock, 1988, pp. 2-3). Marx’s examination of the relations between production, consumption, distribution and exchange, led to a reformulation of the relationship between art maker, art appreciator and art work (art producer, art consumer and art product). Thus it was understood that the production of art produces the consumption of art and therefore continues to drive production. “The object of art - like every other product - creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty” (Marx in Pollock, 1988, p. 3). Social theorists such as Adolfo Vazquez (1973) and Janet Wolff (1981) determined that the production of art was an outcome of the social, political, economic and institutional relationships of the time and hence provided a catalyst for a new school of inquiry called the ‘new art
history'. This showed a departure from the typical art historical inquiry which implicitly accepted the relationship between artist, art work and art appreciator as, "...a gifted individual creating out of his (sic) personal necessity a discrete work of art which then goes out from its private place of creation into a world where it will be admired and cherished by art lovers expressing a human capacity for valuing beautiful objects" (Pollock, 1988, p. 3). Questioning the inherent individualism underpinning the conventional history of art and rephrasing it as an outcome of a particular social and historical nexus formed the basis of critique for feminist and critical art practice. The socially critical and feminist art theory that developed from Marx, and added greater complexity to his analysis of class, described the relations governing cultural practice as multiple. Categories of analysis such as race, gender and sexuality provided a more complicated illustration of the way that cultural production was driven by social and structural imbalances of power.

The effects of a socially critical art education on practice and policy in New Zealand were particularly evident in the 1980s to 1990s with the insistence on an art education embedded in recent and established art practices. The socially critical art education, written into the bursary art examination prescriptions and the Art Syllabus of the 1980s (Ministry of Education, 1989), has underwritten my own art education from school student, art student to student teacher. Within this rubric, I became knowing about art through my engagement with the existing practices of art and by extending my understanding through the development of my own practice. Consequently art products of my own and others were only useful for their ability to generate new practice which would further enrich the cultural (not physical) environment. In order to practice art, I was required to understand that art existed outside of myself in social and institutional relationships. Underlying this concept of practice are also assumptions that the phenomenological and subjective self of the artist is illusory and that art can only be known by the mind of the artist/subject. This analysis can be expanded to one of gender, excluding the feminine from the masculine realm of ideas. If art is located in social relationships it can only exist as an abstraction, without a material basis. On this singular path of practice I found my own pleasures of and purposes for participating in art increasingly unsatisfactory. Where was an art I could touch?
What I do consider of value in such practice, is its potential to dislocate art practice from a constrained and constraining three dimensions where meaning is embedded rather than embodied in matter. The dissolution of product presents the possibility of an art locus of meaning outside of the forces of economic, cultural and patriarchal rationalism. Rather than existing in a unified space, an art comprehended as practice is unified only in the prospect of taking place over time. Meanings are fluid and contestable. This dynamic and transformative power of practice can be associated in history to Marx’s particularly relevant, notion of labour power, and sociologist Janet Wolff’s (1993) explanation of art as a social practice. It can also be seen in artist and philosopher Joseph Kosuth’s (1993) concept of work (which for him constitutes our reality). In an examination of art practice, Kosuth describes the tensions between processes and products in art: “Artists experience art as a process. Art historians experience art as a series of ‘masterpieces’” (Kosuth, 1993, p. 219).

For Kosuth what is of value in the practice of art in contemporary time is located in the fluctuating relationships between artist and the art material of ‘meaning’ or ideas. Artists are involved in a process of deriving meaning from the socio-cultural context in which they find themselves and, through art production, developing and adding to their culture. He also suggests that at work is a rationalist force that works in opposition to this practice by inhibiting the artists’ intended meanings from reaching an audience. The ‘masterpiece’ is constructed by the authorities of art (e.g. art historians, critics, curators) in whose interests it is to present the meanings of art works as fixed and unassailable. The master artist who is valorised by history is in service to the structures of cultural, financial and intellectual prestige. “In our present so-called Post-modern time the traditional historicist rationales of art have increasingly become a process of market validation rather than historical understanding” (Kosuth, 1993, p. 246).

Despite a regard for practice within the discourses of dissent, contemporary society invests heavily in product. Kosuth points to artists increasingly allowing the market’s need for consumables to dictate their practice. History is mined for forms which are stripped of traditional cultural significance and reconstituted as decorative elements to help sell art products. The rationale for this type of artistic production is evident in the Marxist analysis of capital-
ism, where art works are conceptualised as commodities. "Considered simply as physical objects, commodities are objectifications of concrete not abstract labour" (Elson on Marx, 1979, p. 133). When considered in a materialist sense, commodities are valued in terms of their actual usefulness (Marx terms this their use-value). Within a capitalist framework, the value of a commodity is abstracted from its use-value and valued in terms of its value of exchange on the market.

If we make abstraction from its use-value, we make abstraction at the same time from the material elements and shapes that make the product a use-value; we see in it no longer a table, a house, yarn, or any other useful thing. Its existence as a material thing is put out of sight (Marx, 1970, p. 38).

Within capitalism commodities become increasingly mass produced and increasingly abstracted from the labour of their production. "...The more generalized commodity production becomes, the greater the regulation of labor and the more society becomes organized on the basis of an accounting system founded on labor" (Mandel, 1976, p. 14). Art, when recognised as a practice not dissimilar from other human practices, is subject to the same constraints of capitalism. Under capitalism the value of art is measured by its exchange-value in the market place rather than its use-value to the subjects who engage in its practices (for example the artists who make it). This locates the value of art further away from the site of the subject and in an external, objective and inscrutable system of commerce where the rules are constructed without consideration of human needs. Moreover the art market, through the modernist desire for novelty and innovation, is made even more inaccessible by offering art commodities at exorbitant prices which are intentionally contrived to mystify or estrange. Compliance with the art market and its authorities results in art works that are constructed apart from the selves who engage with them. Art works are described and inscribed with meaning through production processes outside of the relationship between an artist, their means of production and their consumer. Meagan, a secondary art teacher, laments what she perceives is an increasing constraint on subjectivity in relation to art and creativity. Meagan - "Honestly I think there is such disgusting, the whole way that we are going is where we hand over to experts to do everything for us and so instead of singing we put on a CD. And I think that art is very much
In the afterword of the second edition of Janet Wolff’s (1993) seminal work *The Social Production of Art* (originally published in 1981), Wolff critiqued her own earlier work for its insistence on a unified and essential human art producer. However, she also raised concern at the paradox that she perceived was occurring in contemporary critical thought about art and culture. By dissolving the materiality of the subject of art (the artist) critical theorists were intensifying the textualisation of culture.

It is one thing to recognise the complex interplay of text, meaning and social structure, a recognition which has informed some important work in recent art history and literary studies. It is another matter, however, to opt for a radical indeterminacy, in which history is perceived as a plurality of texts. (Wolff, 1993, p. 149)

According to Wolff describing culture as a series of texts provides a cover for political neutrality and relativism, where one text is as good as another. In effect, and despite its critical origins, this type of theory could be seen to collude with capitalism in its reification of art products. Artists are disengaged from having any special relationship with the products that they make, and the interpretation of art works is apparently multiple and unrestrained. Meaning, however, is only released for those who have the power to define it and a relativist position undermines the actual relationships of power that people are subjects of and subjected to in lived reality. Theories of emancipation (e.g. Marxism, feminism) become stories and trivialise the material effects on people’s lives from which they have arisen (e.g. the effects of poverty and oppression). Wolff (1993) claims that it is necessary to resist relativism in order to defend political positions that aim to transform society and also “...in the interests of sociological adequacy...” (p. 151). Meanings located within individual subject bodies can be invoked strategically, so that judgements can still be made regarding quality and value.

The type of textualisation that Wolff critiques has developed from structuralism and semiotics (see Saussure, 1966). Here language use is constrained within a disembodied system of signs. The act of speaking makes reference to this external set of rules rather than to the physical
world. This appears to be the prevalent philosophy underpinning the visual arts strand of the arts curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000) where everything becomes text, open to semiotic analysis, including the speaking subject. The problem arises that in reading the subject as a collection of signs, the subject is dissolved.

The position that Wolff (1993) proposes as an alternative to the dilemma between the extremes of the creative genius and the dissolved artist relies on a notion of subjectivity similar to the contingent, yet re-constitutive self described in the previous chapter (op. cit. Jones, 1998). “Recent work in the social history of art has suggested that we can still focus on the artist as producer, on the understanding that we reconceptualise subjectivity as provisionally fixed, as fluid and inconsistent, and as itself the product and effect of discourse, ideology and social relations” (Wolff, 1993, p. 147). This complexification of the subject enables meaning to exist both within selves and in the interactions between selves, and also recognises how meanings are shaped within contexts (e.g. linguistic, historical, cultural). Within this type of analysis emancipatory goals remain fundamental rather than peripheral, as they seek to open up the possibilities for meeting needs, making meaning and developing differential power relations rather than imposing increased constraints. Her analysis also permits the making of meaning, as well as the making of art, to continue to be seen as a form of manufacture or production undertaken by subjects, even though they themselves are transitory and contradictory. This tradition in art writing has a direct relationship to Marxist analyses where work lies at the heart of human nature:

Human needs and human creativity or productivity have an indissoluble relationship. The activity that makes this relationship possible is a material, practical activity: human work. Work is the expression and fundamental condition of human freedom, and its significance lies only in its relationship to human needs. (Vazquez, 1973, p. 61)

Marx pointed out that an antagonism [between art and work] does exist when work takes on the form of alienated labor, but not when it has a creative character, when it produces objects in which man objectifies and expresses himself (Ibid, p. 64)

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Re-constructing the subject acknowledges that in a practical and material sense needs must be met through activity, "...it happens to be the case that people need to eat" (Wolff, 1993, p. 16), and activity remains an essential feature of human existence. Perceiving art through the construct of work becomes more than a useful analytical tool. It is a metaphor that has been constructed within a particular discursive context, and makes reference to the lived reality of the subjects of art. Art writers and artists I refer to in this thesis (e.g. Kosuth 1991; Pollock 1988; Williams 1993; Wolff 1991, 1993) have connections with the traditions of Marxist inquiries. Despite differences in interests there is a compatibility or cohesiveness in the way they perceive art as a human event or activity not dissimilar from other types of human endeavour, they interact ideologically, textually and materially within the context of this tradition. As I shall address later, this idea also has currency in art and general educational writings that suggest that learning occurs through engagement in social activity.

For me the particular usefulness of Marx’s theory of labour for understanding art, is its explanation of how work becomes constrained under oppressive regimes (e.g. capitalism) and equally how all work has the potential to be creative and purposeful. The creativity and transformative potential of non-alienated labour has a material optimism that is difficult to give up, however much of Kosuth’s (op. cit.) discussion of the contemporary situation of art practice shows it as a form of alienated labour. The separation of artists (or artisans) and their work is described by Marx in his examination of Capital (1970). Under a system of capitalism labourers are forced to sell portions of their labour as a commodity on the open market rather than being in the more liberating position of selling the commodities that are products of labour, "...the labourer instead of being in the position to sell commodities in which his labour is incorporated, must be obliged to offer for sale as a commodity that very labour-power, which exists only in his living self" (Marx, 1970, pp. 168-9). The nature of labour changes in the exchange and labourers become alienated from their work and attention is shifted away from the actual processes of production. Although Marx claims that capital is not a thing but a set of social relations, within a capitalist framework attention is focused on the embodiment of material things (commodities) and the social relations surrounding the actual physical experience of their production processes become obscured. Hence within a capitalist
society it is the products of labour that become fetishised and terms like “outcomes-based” and “accountability” become the staple of political and social debate.

Despite the difficulties of working in a capitalist society, Kosuth’s (1993) own art practice in the last quarter of the twentieth century, does appear to show that there are some spaces where attention can be refocused onto the processes of art. The struggle he articulates bears some similarity to Marx’s analysis of colonisation. In his work *Capital* Marx (1970), in the chapter entitled *The Modern Theory of Colonisation*, discusses the colonial doctrines of his contemporary Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Here Marx claims that the example of the English colonies is proof that the capitalist mode of production requires the expropriation of private property and hence appropriation of the production of independent labourers. In Marx’s time, the colonies provided multiple examples of workers who resisted capitalist regimes and accumulated their own means of production. Consequently, Marx claims that their labour was used to enrich themselves and not transformed into capital. The colonies, however, became sites of struggle between independent workers (or artisans) and the capitalist powers. Colonial powers sought to control independence through the development of policies that saw land prices increase beyond the means of working class immigrants. Without land, labourers were unable to own the means of production and were forced to sell their labour.

The struggle that Marx outlines between the colonised and the colonising forces of capitalism is an apt explanation for my experiences of existence as a contemporary artist. The location of art is fiercely contested by art authorities and independent artisans. Artists themselves often seem to sit in a position of tension between non-alienated engagement in the processes of art and a commodified practice that elicits art products for consumption. Who owns the mode of art production? In my world, the social relationships between the producers of art and the sellers of art are often ambiguous. Does the artist determine the form and substance of art or do the art dealers, critics and gallery officials who are engaged in the secondary marketing of art works as commodities dictate their shape? Is commodified labour offered in the art market or have the art works in dealer galleries been produced through artists’ autonomous labour? The struggle is further complicated for art educators who often take on education as a second-
ary identity to attain some financial autonomy over their practice as artists. What portion of
their practice as artists, art educators or educators takes the form of alienated labour? Within
an analysis that denies the role of the body in art relationships, these relations appear so
complicated as to be irresolvable. By taking a position of embodied practice, meanings have a
fluidity within the temporality and dynamism of art practice, yet also a phenomenological
significance. When the subject is reinserted into the social relations of art, art practice has a
capacity for subjectivity as well as subjection. Meagan a secondary art teacher - “And just
the conceptual art that really interests me but I consider, myself, to be a different field of art
from the kind of art that I’m interested in making myself. I’m not really interested in the
marketing of ideas so much I’m more interested in making objects. So I feel on the back foot
because it’s not fashionable so I’ve had to really reinterpret and figure out how can I defend
my own particular position and I can’t really separate that out from who I am as a teacher
because all my theories and reactions to all those things kind of inform a lot about me and
how I teach. So I’m figuring out ways of resisting all that and resisting fashion.”

INTERPRETATION

As I try to interpret my experience of art education and that of the selves I have encountered
along the way, it is as though the forms of inquiry in art history, art education and art theory
developed in the 1970s and 1980s required the dissolution of the subject in order to distance
themselves from universalising discourses that privileged the subject of modernist and Carte-
sian thinking. As I have suggested earlier, inherent in these discourses was a privileging of
mind over body. An insistent social construction denied the phenomenological subject and
also foreclosed knowledge that was not rational. My recent rediscovery of art within (as well
as without) myself has re-ignited problems that I had been required to dismiss as irrelevant to
the social relations of art. The problems I am now faced with include questions about the
nature of creativity and its relationship to art, the relationship of art bodies (artists, art works,
art consumers) to art practice and the aspects of art which cannot be described through lan-
guage. This suggests to me that my field of inquiry is expanding as I explore the possibilities
of multiple knowledges extending beyond the rational, scientific and systematic analyses of
social construction. While for Kosuth (1993), the location of artist is a particular location
distinct from the art authority where art is known as process and not product, relating his concept of work to Marx’s concept of labour power it is evident that work is not just a set of relations. When it is non-alienated it is located in quite particularised, even though transgressible, bodies. Thus art is process and product.

Neo-Marxist Diane Elson refers to the term “phantomlike objectivity”, used by Marx to describe the meaning of commodities, to suggest a relationship between a product and the labour of its production that extends materialism to the realm of the mind. There is a relationship between products and the expenditure of general human labour (abstract labour) that creates them, or rather, there is a continuity between product (body) and abstraction (mind). Elson’s analysis of Marx’s theory of labour suggests that the transforming force of labour power does not result in the extraordinary, unrestrained and objective transmutation of one essence into another that may be attributed to the creative Master artist. However, she is critical of the deterministic interpretations of Marx’s work that have a “...misplaced concreteness, in that they understand that theory as a relation between already determined, ‘given’, independent variables located in the process of production, and certain to-be-determined, dependent variables located in the process of circulation” (Elson, 1979, p. 130). This mathematical formula has been inscribed into some art historical discourses as a linear set of relationships between art production, art distribution, art exchange and art consumption. Elson argues that Marx intended there to be a “...continuity as well as a difference between what determines and what is determined” (Ibid, p. 133).

It is this concept of determination that has a direct relationship to my problematic of creativity. Marx’s labour is an energy embodied in both the phenomenological body and the works it creates. “Labour is the living, form-giving fire” (Marx, 1973, p. 361). The body of the artist was at one time both joined and separate from its creation. They collided in an instant and broke away on separate paths into colossal but limited space, like the white ball hitting the edge of the pink on the snooker table. Who knows where the pink ball goes as it sinks into the side pocket, out of view? This view of art practice, where product and artist are both the same and different has a theoretical consistency with the ideas at the beginning of this chapter. The
artist is not separate from the art works that she or he creates, but is a more complex form of compressed energy, with complex thought the vibration of energy at a higher frequency. The development of meaning (evident through thought) occurs through the movement, interaction and collision of bodies (energy) in multiple dimensions. Despite anomalies, temporal (or historical) and spatial contexts provide some constraint on the possibilities of what can be determined. Bodies are forms in space which in spite of changes over time, tend towards a coherence. This process is most clearly described for me by John Dewey (1934/1980) in his book *Art as Experience*: “There is in nature, even below the level of life, something more than mere flux and change. Form is arrived at whenever a stable, even though moving equilibrium is reached. Changes interlock and sustain each one another” (p. 14).

Dewey represented art existing in the interaction between the self (of the artist and art perceiver) and its environment. With a dearth of material pertaining to art in Marx’s own writing, Dewey provides me with a material aesthetic that places art in the fluctuating relationships of actual perception rather than in static and idealistic forms of Enlightenment aesthetics (e.g. Kant). In both Marxist and Deweyan thought, the self is both materially present and socially constructed (a form that is a stable yet moving equilibrium). These are the underlying conditions of an embodied art. Art meaning is located in a set of relationships within art bodies and through their collective activity in time.

Reacquainting art knowledge with art practice, embodied in both human bodies and the bodies of art works, invites a different form of art ‘literacy’ than the visual art literacy described in *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000). Despite my critique of visual literacy in the previous chapter, I still think that without reducing the body to the limitation of a literary text, interpretation of bodies is a key function of subjectivity. Dennis Atkinson (2001) uses the term ‘visuality’ to describe the constructed nature of visual reality. Writing in England, Atkinson is critical of the way relationships between vision and representation are taken for granted within English school curriculum and assessment policy. In his paper *Teachers, Students and Drawings: extending discourses of visuality* he problematises a natural reading of visual representation. The meaning made of sensory data,
both of the world and texts we fashion in the world, is mediated through discursive frames that are not always readily apparent. His argument suggests that the analysis of texts (in this case drawings) makes apparent the discourses within which they operate. Atkinson (1998, 2001) claims that the normative assessment practices of art teachers is often associated with an unchallenged association between achievement in drawing and the conventions of perspectival projection. This assumes that the artistic convention of perspective is a natural way of seeing and recording the world. While this assumption appears derived from developmentalism, and this is also Atkinson’s (2001) claim, early work on stages of development in drawing actually had a wider concept of drawing than visual mimesis. In the 1930s Viktor Lowenfeld’s (1959) study of the drawings of children who were weak sighted and blind found that there were two different ways that the children oriented themselves towards drawing, visually and haptically. Haptic drawing is developed through a tactile and embodied perception of the world. When visual and haptic drawing are dichotomised, there is a reiteration of the division between mind and body. I think there is also a problem in constructing drawing entirely as a response to sensory experience. If drawing is limited to a response to sensory stimulus, the conceptual and structural elements of drawing practice are undermined. I do, however, see strengths in conceiving the visual and haptic models of drawing as interrelated and partial pictures of drawing practice, which is possible within a contingent and dynamic notion of embodiment. Lowenfeld’s study demonstrates how through the shift from work to text in the late 20th century (identified by Barthes, 1984) the embodied aspects of developmentalism became forgotten. The significance I attach to Atkinson’s work is that through questioning the separation of vision from the subject, he opens up the possibility of bringing back together mind and body within art education. Atkinson asks art educators to look critically at the assumptions we make about texts, as objects specific to their contexts, and to look for new relationships between texts and the contexts of which they are a part. The answer to why a child constructs a drawing in they way they do is specific to the situation of the child within its socio-cultural milieu. Art teachers’ understandings of children’s drawing is similarly specific to its situation. In this sense visual representation and its interpretation are re-situated within a body, a body that is physically, temporally and contextually locatable in spite of its transience.
Vision, when understood as embodied and subjective practice, plays a part in constructing reality along with other embodied practices. Through perception, bodies/selves are open to subjective interpretation, and the act of interpretation is involved in constructing the self. I am suggesting that because interpretation is itself an activity, through engagement in interpretation selves construct and reconstruct themselves, cognitively and materially (they change over time). In an art sense, interpretation can be seen as an act of creativity, and as creativity is enacted the self is recreated or formalised into a moving equilibrium. This is similar to the processes Marx described, whereby the self is transformed through its creative endeavour.

Understanding interpretation as an activity also makes it consistent with a concept of learning that sees the self transformed through its interaction with its learning context. Theories of situated learning and activity suggest that learning is a transformation that occurs within an individual as a result of an engagement in social activity (Lave, 1993; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

One way to think of learning is as the historical production, transformation, and change of persons. Or to put it the other way around, in a thoroughly historical theory of social practice, the historicizing of the production of persons should lead to a focus on processes of learning. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p 51)

Interpretation is positioned as a social act when it is recognised as impacting on the developments or transformations of multiple bodies, (i.e. human bodies and art works), and not just the development of a unitary self. Art educationalist Graeme Sullivan (2001) picks up this idea when, in an article on artistic thinking, he suggests that cognition “...takes place within an interactive system that includes the self, others and the artefacts we use” (p. 6). In fact, Sullivan makes a case that, rather than opt for a position that privileges either materiality “thinking in a medium” or literacy “thinking within a language”, both can be reconciled as necessary and interrelated features of art understanding. Sullivan (1996, 2001) calls this “thinking in a setting” and claims that through detailed and manifold examinations of artists’ practice it is apparent that artistic thinking is a co-constructed process. There is a relational dimension to cognition, or transcognition, which makes cognition dependent on relationships
between self and others. “The cognitive coalition involves an ongoing dialogue between, within and around the artist, artwork, viewer, and context where each has a role in co-constructing meaning” (Sullivan, 2001, p. 6). Despite my resistance to the reification of art products, I still want to derive meaning from art works. It is part of my lived reality that I go to art galleries to engage with art works and develop an understanding of them. My interpretation of art works helps to construct my identity, which in turn makes me open to interpretation and reinterpretation. Rather than a linguistic analysis that makes reference to an external or virtual set of language rules, I require a wider interpretative form of analysis that acknowledges a phenomenological and material bases for art.

When I was in the third year of my undergraduate degree in fine arts, I became interested in the idea that art works, along with other forms of material culture, became the remains of human activity. Whether they are trivial or important in their original context, as time passes, the left behind bits of past cultures become clues and are read for meaning in the reconstruction of history. In my work as a sculptor, I read the work of social archaeologists (e.g. Ian Hodder, Christopher Tilley, Daniel Miller) and constructed artefacts that spoke of ancient cultures and how they are mythologised in the present, as a form of story writing with archaeological evidence. My recent work has involved remembering this line of inquiry as I have questioned the construction of art works as texts. To bring together a materialist stance and textual interpretation is to see interpretation itself as an activity, and in our particular case, a human activity. This differs from the assumption enshrined in the arts curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000) that the location of meaning exists within an external set of rules (or the lexicon of semiotics).

My analysis of art practice depends on the construction of a subject as both materially and discursively defined. However, the notion of interpretation that I adhere to is also ultimately underpinned by a material or phenomenological subject. Interpretation is not an end in itself but a means for making sense of human experience. Here I find the work of Paul Ricoeur useful in explaining the relationship between interpretation and materialism. The textual relativism of structuralism is challenged by the hermeneutics of Ricoeur (1981). Structuralist
linguistics is a science that positions meaning in the signification of individual words or signs. However, Ricoeur claims that different levels of language require different forms of analysis, and that speech acts cannot be analysed in terms of their individual phonemic units, nor texts be seen as collections of discrete sentences. "A text is more than a linear succession of sentences. It is a cumulative, holistic process" (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 212). What differs between sentences and words is that in the construction of sentences someone is saying something about something (Ibid.). They are constructed through action. Ricoeur sees sentences as the basic units of discourse, which he explains as "...language-event, or linguistic usage" (Ibid, p. 198). Both of these descriptors position discourse within the phenomenological world. Discourse exists within conceivable time and is integrally connected to its interlocutors. This interpretation is consistent with the hermeneutic position that the function of the human sciences goes beyond asking 'how can the world be known?' but is shifted to 'how is the world inhabited?' Ricoeur phrases the question as "...what is the mode of being of that being who exists only in understanding?" (Ibid, p. 54). Consequently projects of epistemology are seen to be underpinned by ontological conditions (Ricoeur 1991) and the ontological includes that which is excluded by the epistemological.

The human subject of hermeneutic analysis, "...becomes 'like' a text"... [open to the act of interpretation] ...because it's existence can only be grasped through its works and signs..." (Moore, 1990, p. 88). This positions action as the foundation of subjectivity, and corporeality as both evidence of and impetus for action. However, according to Ricoeur the evidence that the corporeal provides is not of the action itself, the practice of particular individuals, but of the meaning of that action. And meanings change through interpretation. Therefore, in the case of an art work, rather than being considered as a static repository of meaning, it can be seen as provoking interpretation, and it is in fluctuating acts of interpretation that meaning resides.

Similar to the critiques lodged against semiotics, Ricoeur's work has been criticised on the basis that to interpret phenomena like texts, they must first be objectified or removed from the real (Moore, 1990). This distances phenomena from the material conditions of their produc-
tion and undermines the effects of power manifest through discourse and ideology. While the act of interpretation within Ricoeur's work must be seen as having both exclusionary and liberatory potential, this dichotomy is crucial to recognising what it is that enables Ricoeur's work to be seen as a liberatory discourse. Discourses can either operate as regimes of closure and exclusion or opportunities for increased openness and inclusion. Opening up the ownership of power increases the possibility of exclusion as well as inclusion. To maintain the possibility of emancipation means opening up the possibilities for oppressive discourses. What becomes important is how interpretation is enacted strategically to extend possibilities for subjectivity.

I do not believe that there is anything inherently good about human nature. I also agree with Allan (a secondary art teacher) who told me that art does not necessarily make you more moral or a more rounded human being. Allan - “I don't believe that art will make you a better person. This seems to be belief that has permeated art education in New Zealand. Art can help you understand your environment in a more reflective and critical way, but it won't make you kinder or fairer...”. Idealistic and all encompassing notions of freedom and justice are unnecessary justifications if the value of art education is considered within specific subject bodies and their positions within cultural contexts and social structures. Questions such as what are the effects of our practices on students should underpin art education policy and curriculum. For students whose primary engagement with the world is through drawing, or sculpture or photography, dismantling art education would be catastrophic. Operating as a vehicle for the transformation of self, art education also creates opportunities for human development more generally. It is up to the strategic interpretation of art educators, invested in the practices of art, to make these benefits apparent. I am working as an art educationalist within a tradition of critical inquiry, but there are many forces that oppose the construction of art as a project of emancipation. Constructs as diverse as capitalism, Cartesian philosophy, semiotics, aesthetics and positivist science enforce limitations on subjectivity in art. To examine how art educators may construct liberatory meanings within these constraints requires a return to the context of practice.
Notes:

1 Marx takes a significant role in this chapter which is credit to his influence upon critical thought in art and educational practice throughout the 20th century (the site of research). “Although Nietzsche was the first to mount a direct assault on the notion of perspectiveless thought, it was Marx who initially discerned its fault lines and forged the weapons of political and social analyses with which twentieth-century critics would thoroughly shatter it” (Bordo, 1999, p. 288).

2 See Rees and Borzello (1986).

3 Dewey has also had a seminal role in the construction of understandings about art and education in the 20th century, particularly as it related to embodiment. Jackson (2002) suggests that for Dewey, artists work upon materials, “...such things as paper, ink, canvas...bodily movements of dancers, words of actors, and so forth” (p. 171) and become transformed. “The newly formed object becomes literally meaning-full. It embodies meaning within itself” (p. 172). The process of work is not mechanical either, “...the person while doing is usually observing as well and since the person while undergoing (or contemplatively reflecting) is often imaginatively rehearsing what remains to be done, there is little that remains of the activity that could be called pure doing or pure undergoing” (p. 171).

4 Again, here Atkinson’s work is used as material that situates wider theoretical concerns within the field of my inquiry (as it is articulated within this chapter i.e. embodied notions of art education). For less particularised examples of embodied notions of vision see Haraway (1997) or Merleau-Ponty (1962).

5 Lowenfeld’s study was shown in Barrett’s (1948) critical examination of the 1945 draft art scheme to be significant in its construction and thus took on material form in New Zealand art education practice.
This chapter relates some of the predominant themes arising in the previous chapters to my discussions with four teachers of art about their practice. The conversations I had with art teachers were an ongoing feature of my research practice and I undertook them for different purposes. I spoke to Allan very informally in the very earliest phases of my research and this conversation gave me some direction for how to proceed with other art teachers. For example, it led me to interview Anne and Meagan using more refined, yet still semi-structured interview schedules. The schedules I used are included in appendix one. While I returned to talk to Anne a year later armed with a second interview schedule, this time the scope of the conversation was dictated by her interests in my work. She asked me questions about the relevance of my work to art education practice. The conversations with Michael were recorded during our debriefs over the four week art unit we team taught. And there were numerous other conversations with art advisers, art teacher educators and other art teachers, the evidence of which ranges from comprehensive field notes to brief diary entries to scrawled notes attached to my wall. Some of these documents are evident in chapter 7 where I describe the data and its analysis through pastiches of text and image.

As I started to include the voices of the art teachers in my writing, I made a strategic decision about how to use them, and I have tried not to deviate from my decision. As much as possible I wanted to preserve the integrity of their discourses and not fragment them into discrete, semantic units, reconfigured by my scrutiny and analysis. My position is supported by Ricoeur's (1981) claim that understanding of discourse is derived from a holistic and cumulative engagement rather than dissection of its parts. In this chapter I present sections from the transcripts that I believe have enough integrity to stand on their own, preserving the speakers' own words. I have organised the sections under broad categories of analysis; Form and content, Process and product, Art as inquiring, thinking, Art practice and education, Learning art in a socio-cultural context, Embodiment in art education. These themes are developed in subsequent writing, particularly chapters seven and nine, where ideas from the conversations are developed into fictional narratives about art education practice.
FORM AND CONTENT
Form and content are categories of analysis used to describe art works. What significance might they have for a phenomenological understanding of art teaching and learning that is concerned with contextual rather than discrete definitions?

Anne: But the whole thing about, and this was really solidified for me in Merton [Polytech], because I started doing it all a bit later, that the reasons for doing anything seemed like the most obvious starting point. The content side. Having something to say. Or the content

There is something about the transcripts of conversations that make them more exciting than all the other texts I come across in the course of research. I love the way they flit from one theme to another, overlapping ideas like brushstrokes, shifting from one part of the picture to another like a painter’s eye roving over the picture plane. They provide a consistency, wholeness and exquisite materiality within my larger work, in both form and content, despite the fact that they only represent a small part of what has been a very long and complex journey. In their cadences, the conversations move from subjectivity to historicity to epistemology versus ontology to the formalism of modernism and its oppressive regime to the relationships between modernism, patriarchy and economic rationalism and their effects on the professionalism of
might just be about what you were talking about, a love of surfaces and what that
means to you, but coming at it from some kind of thinking in that way, whether that
was to do with personal or political things. Seems pretty core, pretty fundamental
and I feel it's something that we are missing a bit because we are focusing on and
aiming for other things and quality is emphasised so much. Particularly at bursary
level.

*Ruth: A surface quality.*

Anne: You're aiming to get to a certain place and, this is confidential isn't it, but I
remember those conversations with Judith about 'issues' and we had some really
good workshops that were helpful, and yet her core thing was that originality wasn't
the aim. Because she doesn't believe in originality, and it depends how you define
that word but then every single person is an individual and associated with that is
being individual or original or being different and the extension of that argument is
that it's fine for kids just to learn by example and working to different artist models.

*Ruth: Without having their own reasons for doing it?*

Anne: Exactly. And also you don't have time to, because if that's what you’re aspiring
to and that's what you see in benchmark books very nice slick copies or learning from
artists models it's not engendering other ways of approaching it. It think that's the
great thing about 6th form we focus on that, that's what the focus of our course is
anyway. It's topics or themes or individual issues and it's interesting because I don't
know if that's something that is even more of a need for students at girls' schools.
And we talk about that with quite a lot of the girls in 5th form the main sort of theme
or topic this year was to do with culture and identity. We used personal objects and
patterns, we all use things... They didn't have to approach them, I mean we probably

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teachers to the fragmentation implicit in technocracy and scientific rationalism to the
eurocentrism of New Zealand culture and education to the submergence of emotion and
desire in art to the interpretation of texts. Their speakers pluck out ideas from the
mass of their experience, relating them to real encounters. This is what it is like in the
context of art education practice.

...I fly out of what I often feel is the hermetic world of Christchurch and spend a day
in another city where the streets are busier, hills are steeper and the pace is faster.
Here I become immersed in the world of art education practice, and find the lines
between art and teaching, research and conversation and cafe culture and high culture
could have done it in a more structured way. Particularly to cover some of the formal aims, but a lot of them said in their end of year evaluations they really loved that being able to express themselves, for them that was really important being able to have a personal input. But I think one of the dangers of that whole modernist way of looking at bursary and developing bursary is that it cuts that out. It sees that as irrelevant. I remember Carole Shepheard at conference when she was talking, her address, do you remember her speech at conference?

*Ruth: Some of it.*

Anne: And one of the things that really struck me was that she was saying she would tell kids stop just doing things, go away and read biographies, read about artists and why they make work. Where it comes from. About their lives. And that whole side of it isn’t, what they’re doing it for, isn’t focused on... It’s not in the curriculum it’s not reflected in work you see.

*Ruth: But that can be a component of art history too can’t it? That whole cultural history and reasons and understanding. I think that’s art history at its best.*

Anne: Definitely. Although that’s studying other people’s impetus not thinking about your own as an artist. So a lot of countries - we had this English woman relating... And she was saying, and that’s I suppose where the curriculum’s going, that there’s more knowing about and theory and practice all related which I think could be really good because it could allow more room for that rather than just pushing out more quality and quantity. Although that’s quite contentious isn’t it? Like a lot of teachers just want it to stay the making and making practical work rather than studying. Which she was saying, that’s what you do in England pretty much so they don’t have a separate art history they have it all together. I still think both are important, I just especially blurry. On the bus from the airport to the school I visit I see a woman I am sure I recognise several seats in front of me. I look furtively at her, and she looks furtively at me but she leaves the bus before I realise where I have seen her, an artist and a teacher I remember from long ago. I get out of the bus and walk to the school, it is grey and raining but my heart is pumping. The street is almost empty but with its organic undulations it feels alive. I have really moved out of the flat footedness of Christchurch. The school is almost empty, it is the last few days of the year and only the Year 9 and 10 students are left in class although some seniors hover around in quiet whispering groups waiting for their friends to finish their exams. It is taller and more compact than other schools I have known, there appears to be more concrete
think they’re totally separate. There could be more overlaps. I think that’s one of the things in terms of bursary and its focus on development... one of the ways that seems to happen in an easy way to see through abstraction or simplification or change, following those steps, and that’s where the content subject matter thing is quite interesting because it can just be formal issues, so I think that process favours less content, and it’s interesting looking at feminist art and the importance of content and it’s almost like there’s these opposed ways of seeing it.

**Ruth:** It’s almost a division between doing and knowing about things when you start trying to separate the content out from the form. It’s like the division between theory and practice. Even though that isn’t what they would claim they were doing.

Anne: Exactly. No but I think that happens really clearly. And I think that to do that well, I think that sometimes it’s more easy to at junior levels because you don’t have time constraints - but then you can only do it in a more superficial way. And also you need time and resources to actually do that well. Do you see that happening in the schools that you’ve been in? Is there as much interest in content?

**PROCESS AND PRODUCT**

What are the meanings surrounding product and process centred art educations in classroom practice? Given that contemporary art educators (Sullivan, 2001; Zimmerman, 1999) are calling for a reconciliation between product and process, does the reconciliation make practical sense?

Michael - Yeah it’s all just outcomes based and the same when you get them to write. The idea of them going to rework a text, the kids just don’t like doing it - they’ll write it once and then think that’s it - so they’ll do a draft which means to them they’ll write down without really, maybe they’ll do a brainstorm and then they’ll write it in sen-

than grass. It is an inner city girls’ secondary school, and perhaps the founding fathers of this place decided that girls did not need large areas of grass to run about on as they also decided in Christchurch. I walk through a door marked “exams in progress” go to the very formal foyer, rich in school history, and wait for the teacher I am there to meet, I am given a badge that denominates me as ‘visitor’ and I sit and wait and wait. Anne comes to the foyer to greet me. The last time I saw her was at the art educator’s conference at the start of the previous year, but she always looks the same. I am sure that today she wears the same jumper she wore when I first met her almost five years ago. It has more holes in it now. I am taken for a whirlwind tour around the art department. There are a few girls working in the first room we enter. This week they get
Michael teaches a Year 7/8 class in a suburban full primary school. He has a bit of an interest in art education but his subject specialisations are dance and technology.

tence or paragraph format - then they’ll check it for spelling and all they’ll fix is spelling and maybe some grammar. But to go over it and to make the whole thing more sensible isn’t on - they just want to go from that very pre-draft process onto the computer and then for them it’s published once it’s on the computer. They assume the computers going to pick up all of their errors. Which it doesn’t and so at that point they don’t think they need to proofread it any more. To get them to go back and redo it again you’re fighting an uphill battle.

Ruth - it starts really young doesn’t it. It starts with early childhood education.

Michael - and it just goes right through. Its just the whole emphasis on product. Rather than on the process. And the parents are wanting to see what their kids can do and they’re looking at the finished product, because they think that the finished product is the beauty. Rather than going through the process of doing it - so all the encouragement is to do something well and that’s your presentation rather than to go through the process of development, learning how to do it and improve it and make it better. So you’re fighting parents on it as well and you’re fighting teachers who have been in the trade 20 years. You’re fighting the Ministry and their emphasis on product and dis-
crete units - and breaking everything down - despite where the curricula are supposed to be integrated and so forth.

Ruth - This unit in some ways is problematic because there's an end point and there's a competition - but in other ways it's quite process orientated. The fact that they're doing all these different processes and they're cutting them up and they're probably not used to having to rip into their own art works and cut them up and reassemble them.

Michael - No.

Ruth - which I think may be challenging them in that way - in terms of developing process but on the other hand I am really aware that yes they do have to have a finished outcome.

Michael - but also they start out with 4 blank pages, one image, they multiply it four times and then for the first colour - and for the second one, they really should modify their first print and then modify it again and see which one they like the best and then go and start doing it for their second colour and just go through that same process of modifying. They just don't do it...

Ruth - but it's so problematic with the time isn't it. To actually do that as well - they're doing it a bit and some of them are doing it better than others.

Michael - These kids, they do 50 minutes a day in mathematics, 5 days a week and normally you wouldn't teach maths on a Friday or reading on a Friday - that's usually your fun day and its just such a huge emphasis on mathematics and reading that to integrate those skills into other areas it just doesn't happen. So when you’re teaching Social Studies you’re looking at content - or you’re looking at behaviour - you’re not really looking at process - when you look at the assessments, the sort of things they use

In the act of conversing we tell tales, recall events, identify authors, artists, books, teachers, art works, places. We talk about the divisions between what is required and what we would like to see happening in art education. There are authorities that we name which restrict the possibilities of what we think we can attain. Some of these authorities have names (individuals), some have locations (institutions) and some are abstract notions (discourses). We respond to each other either in harmony or through misunderstanding as we each follow our own thought paths. The complexity inherent in the art of conversation is a metaphor for the complexity of life in the phenomenological realm. We are professionals telling the stories that make up our
for end of year reports - it’s all behaviour, with, you get one line for development of skill - whatever that means. Ability to work through process, ability to self-correct it doesn’t go down in those lines.

ART AS INQUIRING, THINKING

Where is art cognition located? Can artistic thinking be characterised specifically or does it have generic features?

Allan - For many it is their first experience of art. In a class quite often you’ll find 3 who have been to an art gallery of their or their parents own volition. A few more who’ve been with school and some not at all. Core art opens up the idea that art is a way of understanding things not just the playtime that some of them may get from primary schools. When teaching kowhaiwhai he starts with the language. Gets lots of moans – and children asking “when are we going to ‘do' something”. But that’s where you need to start.

At a conference in the 1990s Paul Duncum talked about reading visual images – advocated giving up art and taking up English. But Allan thinks that art is a combination of understanding and making. It makes no sense not to be producing makers. We are living in an increasingly visual world. Although there are problems with producing so many designers who end up working with electronic media in a boring and facile way – e.g. packaging.

Allan did a presentation on assessment of student work at school – showed professional identities, weaving together the stories into a complex whole. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) describe the professional knowledge landscape as a place where teachers develop their professional identities. The professional knowledge landscape is a metaphor, constructed through the narratives or stories that make up the professional lives of teachers. Through conversation, the teachers and I share our personal stories (stories to live by (Ibid)) and also develop collective stories or identities. At each conversation I recognise that my professional identity is shifting further away from theirs. It takes great effort to keep up with the intricacies of the world of art education practice. In Anne’s art room I struggle to remain focused in the midst of constant interruption. Talking to Meagan I realise I have no knowledge
colleagues in other subjects the workbooks that art students produce. He felt that other teachers were very impressed and surprised that the students generated so much of their own work, ideas etc. The workbooks show research that is then developed into their own ideas. The assessment processes already used in art were already similar to the recommended processes apart from the formal documentation of them. The 5th form students have an ABA criteria that they are marked against. They research artists and have to make work that is informed by the conventions of artists. Their work is measured against this and the criteria and they are also given a holistic comment on the work.

Allan believes art is a cognitive process.

ART PRACTICE AND EDUCATION

Do historical and cultural understandings of art play a role in the contemporary art room? How does an art teacher see the relationship between culture and self in becoming knowledgeable about art?

Meagan - Your core idea in your work seems to be about the relationship of practice to art education? Is that right?

Ruth - Yes

Meagan - Do you separate art education, which is essentially teaching people and facilitating people in their making of art, is that so very different from your own art making processes? Or the art making process that anyone might do? I mean it

of NCEA beyond its name. But together we extend the possibilities of what art education might be and I am grateful that they have found the time to do this. I remember the roaring speed of life in a school.

...It is lunchtime. We leave the school to meet up with another art teacher, Sandra, from a school nearby. She is someone I have not seen for a number of years and I'm looking forward to catching up with her now. We walk along the grey streets. I can smell wet asphalt and car exhausts and I have to walk quickly to keep up with Anne's long stride and avoid traffic, pedestrians as well as vehicles. In the foyer of the bustling café where we meet Sandra, is a large framed copy of the Treaty of Waitangi.
is a different thing if it’s a programme - you’re trying to set up an experience for students to learn something in art practice, through a whole range of information and things, but essentially it’s their private experience of their head, their brain, their art work. It’s really an art experience isn’t it and it’s theirs and they would bring all the complexity to it that they choose to. Depending on who they are and where they’re at. So I sort of think it’s not that different from me making an art work, it is different because they’re in a set up environment and they’re students but that’s the only thing that I see is different. They’re still having an art making experience. They’re still going through a process and having an outcome that they can respond to that will be part of a continuum of other outcomes and processes. So when I think about practice in relation to art education I’m beginning to feel more strongly that theory should come after practice and not before. In that I think that I don’t know if that works with education or not I’m just thinking this one through I’m getting to that point myself with my own work that because, art making for me is a really different sort of a feeling from anything else that I do and if I have ideas and things and often feel drawn to different things and you know it’s partly emotional and partly intellectual and partly sensual process for me but when I’m actually doing it I am in a different, I get into a different state. ...Actually it’s the same as if I’m writing a letter I’m carried away in the present. And I’m not really anywhere else I’m just totally in the present and I think that if you become overly conscious of theory in that it takes you out of the present that you can’t be in the present. My thinking is still very new on this. I’ve been totally frozen, by being overly conscious of all the tides of theory floating around - the raging torrents of theory around art lately. And just the conceptual art that really interests me but I consider to be a different field of art from the kind of art that I’m interested in making myself. I’m not really interested in the marketing of ideas so much. I’m more interested in making objects. So I feel on the back foot because it’s not as fashionable so I’ve had to really reinterpret and figure out how can I defend my own particular [interests] and I can’t really separate that out from who I am as a teacher because all my theories and

This café is located underneath an office of Archives New Zealand. Anne says they used to have the Treaty on display here. The decor is black and white and chrome and I order a slice of gourmet pizza for lunch. Sandra and Anne talk readily about school, I try to join in with my past experience of teaching but it was so long ago that it seems distant and unimportant to me now. My current work is much more introspective than the robust physical or explosive emotional encounters of school life, and it is too difficult to talk about yet. I tell them how much pleasure I get from surfaces and textures, and the way light hits form, there is an awkward pause. They talk about school administration and the difficulties they encounter as they try to create safe spaces for their students. They talk about future plans, and past failures. Sandra and
reactions to all those things kind of inform a lot about me and about how I teach. So I’m figuring out ways of resisting all that and resisting the fashion. And just to have the integrity in my own little sphere of operation and instead of spending a lot of time trying to defend it just simply believing in the right of any person to create their own field of operation because I think that’s the battle that got fought by the modernists and I don’t see why I shouldn’t do that. I just feel like we got freed from so many of the constraints and I can create how I want to within it. I don’t know if I’d actually teach that to kids, ...and I try to inform them of all the things that are going on. I try to give them that sense of ownership with their own art work - that it doesn’t have to, that everything doesn’t have to fit. Because I think that’s a really powerful thrust of education now, that everything you do must be a pastiche of what’s been done before, you must name your sources and you must point to your brush stroke and say that you got it from so and so. I just think that for some people that’s a really exciting thing to do and for others it’s an absolute death knell on their feeling of ownership and creative invention. I think people need to feel freedom and feeling the boundaries of your own individuality and how incredibly banal that is. But still of complete importance. I think practice is really, there’s something quite sacred about practice that shouldn’t be ‘tutu’ed around with too much. You hear enough stories of people who got thrashed by their art teachers who can never pick up a pencil again - I never want to ever contribute to that for anybody ever. If I feel critical of someone’s work I’ll totally bend over backwards to try and frame it positively or to try and help them to see it themselves or I suppose I don’t believe that art education is all about producing the new art hero of the decade. I think it’s more about the individual’s relationship to their own expression, their own ability to express themselves and then maybe they might want to take it that other step and take it further and become involved in the art world but I think that art education is not necessarily as much part of the art world as some would have us believe. I’ve been taught that art education is part of the art world, at high school level I don’t think that’s appropriate. When I think about my

Anne decide to meet for lunch more often, this conversation seems to have provided a useful support for their professional identities. I leave the lunch wondering if I will ever be of any use to them. I go back to school with Anne where we sit down in her empty classroom and tape this conversation...

In empathy with the philosophy of Lyotard (1991) and the interpretative work of Ricoeur (1981, 1991), I have developed a sense that it is through poetic, descriptive or fictional modes that language is at its most expansive and most able to elucidate the real. As I said in an earlier chapter, interpretation is an act of subjectivity. Fiction leaves open the most holes in which to pose questions and imagine the unimagined. I
seniors there are probably only two of them out of my group of twelve who have the creative intelligence to actually encounter the art world at all. Some of the others are doing really lovely work and sure they'll pass and some of them might even pass quite well but they totally don't have any ideas. They completely do what is utterly obvious. Or respond to my questioning and promptings and urgings and guidance. And doing what they're told. Or they're really highly skilled at intuiting what it is I want and then giving it to me. They're not driven by their own ideas. I think why should I adjust, I don't want to teach a whole programme to those two people. Because all those others, they all get such a lot out of what they're doing. They get enormous, huge feedback from their peers and their families and their communities and how clever they are and they contribute. I know what I'm speaking is absolute heresy in some sectors. Total heresy, but I know I can be anonymous. Honestly I think there is such disgusting, the whole way that we are going is where we hand over to experts to do everything for us and so instead of singing we put on a CD. And I think that art is very much like that too. Because of the print medium I suppose, electronic medium. But I think you can't match the experience of art, it's just so interesting and so diverting. And so enjoyable, for me anyway, having a relationship with my own attempts to make visual my ideas. That whole art making thing I find really riveting. That's what I try and communicate to kids.

But you learn skills and use them. To your own ends.

*Ruth - skill is an interesting word. Tell me about skill.*

Meagan - Oh I think skill's just things like um, there's heaps of skills, I call them tricks. They're just tricks. Put a bit of dark shading on the edge of an object and make it look round. They're always made out to be so, so clever and they're really just little ruses. And it's really good to dismantle that myth around that sort of stuff. I suppose I see the think that leaving the door open to interpretation is significant in order to write about the practice of art education in a meaningful way without subjugating practice to theory. According to Ricoeur (1981), in an act of interpretation, fictional text functions as a reference to reality instead of taking its place. This is antithetical to positivistic forms of language which, referring to each other, become a closed system of symbols. Anne herself sees practice or engagement in the phenomenological world, as the primary condition of human existence and understanding. "...But actually the process of making and doing...I also think that changes your thought patterns" (Anne). For Anne human experience drives thought and she says she is "...mystified that there are people developing new concepts of education without hands on making
whole art education and art practice in art as just an extension of the enormous classism that world has been. Where knowledge has been power and just the fact that so many artists through the centuries have, Vermeer and people like him who used camera obscura, people have been so sucked in by their brilliance, and so outside of that whole process but those guys used machines and tricks and theories and skills as well as having an imagination and the drive and the resources, and the financial support for education and commission. I find what those things are and hand those things on, I feel really strongly about that. That there are really good tools, they're just tools really aren't they skills that enable, if people want to make something look to real you get a bit of white paint and put a little reflection in it. Or you just use your eye and try and see what you're looking at and try and interpret that on the page. Those sort of things. I feel quite passionate about empowering myself and other people to participate in those things that I think everyone should have access to. I think it's not fair that things are kept hidden. I think that's just my own extreme experience of having such a bad education, I felt like all this information was withheld from me so I'm probably going over the top, over-personalising everything. And doing my bit to address that.

LEARNING ART IN A SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

What types of social and cultural meanings do art educators bring to the art room and how do they impact on their practice?

Ruth - there's almost a sort of irony about that because art is a bit feminising as well.

Meagan - It is. ...And I think especially well all of the arts... But men who practise those arts their masculinity is somehow suspect. Which is why they probably over compensate. It's quite funny. Because I think that's a really big part of how art's valued or not. I do wonder whether that's why most off my classes at senior level are mostly women.

and art being a part of it." I think the lessons that these people teach me is that value for art practice will not be found in policy statements or curriculum documents. Value is located where theory hits practice, and practice informs theory. Meagan's interests in the work of other artists informs her curriculum, yet her decisions about the particular features of her curriculum are responsive to the needs and desires of her students "So I try and make things connect with them, rather than you really should know about this person" (Meagan). The art teachers provide a challenge to my work. How can I be responsive to the demands of art education in my research practice? My answer has been to make as visible as a thesis allows ways in which understandings are developed, in a phenomenological sense.
Anyway I think this one is really interesting (points to second question on interview schedule). How do our beliefs about art and education affect our programmes, because I find as a teacher that I completely teach out of who I am and it’s not just out of an education that I might have had. But out of what I personally took out of that education and what I developed myself and what my thinking is and what my interests are at the time or what I feel really comfortable with and what I feel I can do and I don’t really teach things that feel alien to me or outside of me. I sort of internalise things first, before I teach I’m like the mother who eats the fish and then regurgitates it for her children. It’s not something that I just sort of pass on at a distance from myself. So I think that my beliefs about art completely affect what I teach and like that even though I make my own, take my own position in relation to the curriculum, it’s always ever only that. I think that would be the same for everybody. It’s only your own understanding of what it means as a teacher you have to pull in the curriculum to it to some extent, don’t you. But how one does that I think is really, really, really personal. How it’s interpreted and how it’s developed. I think that’s really interesting because that depends on what, like I think my education was really eclectic. Having been looking at art galleries and being involved with art circles for a long, long time. But you know, art school for me was pretty, most of what I got out of art school was what I put into it, I didn’t really take much away from the art school that I went to and most of what I learned was in opposition to it by being angry about it and fighting it because it was so sexist. And so limited. There was a group of us that really fought it and explored other things and so we kind of generated our own art education really. From what we weren’t given. So I suppose I found teachers college up here very, very useful and got a lot from it. And then just the reading I’ve done. So I think that a lot of my art education has been not from a position of privilege but rather from creating it for myself kind of angle. And especially going to art school later in life, and already having my ideas about in

...It is the end of the school day and I still have several hours before my flight home. Anne asks me if I mind going with her to a reunion of her ex-students. The 7th form art class of 1998 have arranged a gathering at the café attached to the city gallery. A number of them seem to have gone on to design school. Some others are in their second year of University doing BAs. Already they seem accustomed to the coffee drinking, art junky, café society. Some of them share a slice of cake. I am horrified at the price of an orange juice. They ask the two art teachers what they have been doing, what they will do next. They talk about people I don’t know and they don’t miss me when I excuse myself from the table and take a walk around the gallery. The exhibition _Parihaka: the_
my head just from living life and observing and thinking about things and working things out for myself and starting to do some reading and then finding out that other people felt the same way. And feeling that was really great, that was a real endorsement in my thinking processes and after a while it felt it was a real bummer because I felt too clever working this all out for myself - but they were just totally general knowledge. It seemed to take some of the specialness away but it still made me feel as though all the ideas that I’d had were quite real to me. So I suppose it is a weird combination and I think I’m really interested because I don’t feel like I had the perfect education. My own education was so lacking. My High School education in art was very, very hands off - just “here you are, here’s some paper go away and do something.” My education was so lacking, that I’m still hungry for knowledge. I’m still learning desperately, constantly all the time because I feel so behind. I’ve probably caught up now because my whole stance has been trying to catch up trying to get as much information as I could. So I’m always learning and trying new things so that’s probably what keeps my teaching really interesting to me. Because I tend to just, if I’ve been studying up an artist and their way of working and set of ideas, and I translate it through and then teach it. So that makes it really interesting for me and the kids seem to respond to it really well. They go fine.

**EMBODIMENT IN ART EDUCATION**

What is the significance of art practice to education? Where is the self in the construction of art knowledge?

Anne: I also feel that kids, and I’m thinking about senior students, their tolerance of that is minimal. They place such value on practice and things associated with it. They can understand those ideas and appreciate that and bring them into discussion, but I think they’ve got this...

*art of resistance* is on in the main gallery. I recognise the names of many of the artists. One of them, Seraphine Pick, was briefly an art teacher at the school where I taught. I look at her glossed up painting and it reminds me of a series of photographs by Margaret Dawson. The narrative series where she had subjects dress up in colonial military costumes and set them up in scenes. Actors frozen in stills. In the small gallery nearest the café is an exhibition of photographs of food, all the food eaten on a road trip...

Ricoeur suggests that because of the historicity of human experience, it can only appear in language as narrative. Narrative form can represent the temporality of human
I wonder if this is the whole split - I believe that western civilisation is all about fragmentation. That we study and analyse and cut and compartmentalise all these different ideas, states of being and so that we don’t have any holistic sense about anything anymore in our lives and that stuff you’re talking about, and what that woman is doing, is all to me about the head stuff and the intellectual approaches and analysing. And that’s as far as a lot of that stuff goes for me. And a lot of contemporary art development is like that. Or developments in any area of research. And young people haven’t split themselves up like that yet. So I always find interesting that whenever you talk about anything that’s purely ideas based, they just find it a bit of a joke. It’s like the common sense gut reaction what kind of a nerd are you? Where’s the actual something more full bodied about. And it such a western thing to do, get into that whole head-trip. Other cultures I think approach things in a bit more of a holistic way. It’s like this extreme way that we’ve evolved in western civilisation is do away with the, anything of the... , because making that relates to those other aspects of a person. Emotional, physical, sensual that can’t be contained and controlled, in the way that you can ideas. They can’t be understood fully. What do you think of it?

Ruth: I’ve been reading some interesting stuff, by, a feminist art theorist in the states, Amelia Jones and she writes on performance art and body art. She talks about it being such a site of resistance, because by performing your own body ...She talks about body art from the 1970s and how in the 1980s it was disregarded as essentialist nonsense but how a lot of those claims are judging it purely on vision and image and all that stuff about the male gaze and how presenting your body you’re succumbing to male desire but she talks about how it’s subversive because it goes beyond just vision and just image because it’s to do with all sorts of physical aspects as well that can’t be known and can’t be controlled...which relates to that analysis of text – it’s all about looking at something and saying that’s related to that etc. rather than the actual physical making of art works which is something beyond the connection between your experience. Moore (1990), drawing from Ricoeur writes, “ in addition, narrativity itself can only be articulated by the crossed interplay of the two narrative modes: history and fiction” (pp. 109-110). Presenting transcribed speaking voices is one of a number of ways that I represent the art teachers’ thinking and understanding about art education as it occurs through engagement with others. Conversations develop over time, and are more meaningful when seen as an interplay of reflection and response rather than individual thoughts taken out as discrete units. I have selected excerpts from the conversations that appear to have especial relevance to my thesis. They create dialogue around many of the themes I have been in pursuit of, including the relationships between theory and practice, form and content, self and others, product
eye and your brain.

Anne: A cerebral process.

Ruth: But people only seem to understand it when they’ve done it, or experienced it themselves.

Anne: That’s what’s interesting about people developing things when they don’t have that component. It’s like not knowing or forgetting that there are other forms of experience or learning that aren’t just the visual or ideas process. And that’s quite alarming that that’s going, if it is. I mean and it is just in terms of how art developments are taking place where there’s less and less focus on those aspects. In some ways. And that relates again to developing a society on new technology, its just reflecting that move away from the physical.

Ruth: I needed to go back into a classroom and actually teach and experience the physical presence of being surrounded by children.

Anne: And they’re so physical. Human beings are, but we forget to be. And that’s the Western thing again. The western fear of bodies and physicality and touch and death and life and birth and blood. And that’s what’s interesting about feminist art that it focused on so much of those things. And any art to do with the body, that’s the primary basic thing, the physical centre.

Ruth: It’s not describable in words and so can’t experience that via words.

Anne: And that’s why it’s difficult and problematic to a lot of people because its going against the thrust in western culture to be able to understand and analyse and contain in a certain way. Western culture is more comfortable with intellectual rather and process. They touch on some of the most significant theories I have related to the practice of art education; for example, embodiment, interpretation and the significance of context. Perhaps even more importantly, rereading these transcripts, I am reminded that taking a position where abstractions such as understanding, interpretation and meaning are embodied in the subject’s engagement in the material world requires writing the material into my texts, making it as much a primary source of reference as Lyotard, Pollock or Wolff. In the course of my inquiry I have dipped into theories that construct learning within socio-cultural contexts. For example in a discussion of the philosophical assumptions underlying the changing notions of human activity, Vladislav Lektorsky (1999) describes the process of learning as the individual's
than emotional ideas for a start. I remember my aunt saying to me, she’s English and into quite a lot of philosophy and she works in dance education. “Anne you’re always saying I feel, you should be saying,” she was a good one for should, “I think or I believe.” That whole sense of making something objective and the importance placed on objectivity and neutrality rather than opinion. It’s all to do with what’s seen as stereotypically male and rationalising approach. I think all those things are related to moving away from practice. In terms of that, you can relate it with patriarchal ways that we’ve developed and operated...

Ruth: The emphasis on science and technology...I was reading something by Doreen Blumhardt, the 1st primary art adviser, she was writing about when she was first getting art off the ground she’d have these workshops and all these primary teachers would come and participate in these week long workshops. And she also held some for principals and some senior administrators, and they’d come and they’d have no experience of art before but through the actual practice of doing they’d come to value it more in schools.

internalisation of collective activity. This explains the significance of the social dimensions of art and art education practice in the development of the individual. Art students become knowing through participation in art communities. Within a framework of activity theory “...human consciousness, including human cognition, must be analyzed and understood in the context of human activity” (Jensen, 1999, p. ). If this is the case, Jensen (1999) asks why activity theory does not also see itself in terms of practice and continues to make reference to theoretical ideals and abstractions as a primary source of legitimacy....
Chapter seven

In this chapter I bring together ideas about art education within a context of art education practice. The fictional narrative serves to structure the data or experience of my research which in the previous chapter was somewhat fragmented. It brings together pieces gleaned from my research context conversations, interviews, thought and reading into a single coherent and meaningful form. My intention is to show how understanding is constructed by an art teacher, Mel, through her engagement within settings, made up of conceptual, ideological and material products and processes. Despite this story acting as a formalisation of Mel’s understanding, she never reaches a definite conclusion about the meaning of art education because her story goes on beyond the limitations of written text. Her story continues in chapter 9.
Mel metaphorically banged her head against the wall as she tried to empty it of the noise of the day. She imagined that if the voices in her head were silent, for just a short time, she’d have a chance to think about what she’d done today. And how she could do it better tomorrow. She imagined that a short period of calm in the finally empty art room would mean that tonight, at home, as an alternative to revisiting and revising her working day she could ask her flatmates what they’d done today and actually listen to the answer. Instead of the peace she sought, her Head of Department walked through the door that connected two of the three art rooms and held up a weighty book. “What about this?” She put the book on the desk in front of Mel who looked at the two pages. Three images were distributed across the page, the style and captions identified different artists. “I like that one. It reminds me of an installation work by Christian Boltanski, you know the sculptor, the book I showed you the other day.”

“Sculptor? I thought he was a photographer!”

“You think everyone’s a photographer!”

“As if you don’t think everyone’s a sculptor. Anyway that wasn’t what I meant — this one.”

Sharn pointed to an image on the opposite page. “For the Year 11 programme: For next year. What do you think of this for a theme — classical imagery?”

Once the image had been identified and the purpose revealed Mel’s thoughts clicked into line with her senior teacher. A perfect synergy.

“I don’t know — two dimensional resources wouldn’t be a problem, we’ve got plenty of books on classical art — but what will they draw from? Three-dimensionally?”

Sharn nodded in recognition. She had already thought about this. “We’ve got a couple of garden statues at home — a woman pouring water and a Venus de Milo like thing — have you got anything like that?”

“I don’t think so. But drapery is easy enough to come by — we could do whole pages of drapery like the paintings of fabric folds by Jude Rae. They’re a really accessible way of approaching classical imagery. Demystifying it.”

“And using typography - roman numerals and letters — it could be good. Anyway - keep thinking about it.” Sharn closed up the book, but not before marking the image with a slip of torn paper.

“It’s three-thirty,” Grant the third art teacher in the three teacher department stuck his head through outside the door. “Are you coming?”

As they walked over to the staff room Grant reminded Mel about his friend’s exhibition opening that evening.

“I haven’t got enough energy Grant.”

“You’ll enjoy it! Nat’s done some really funny work this time. I helped him carry some of the bigger pieces, we had a job getting them up those stairs to the gallery. Not just the size — they
were slippery as hell – he’s covered these boxes with coconut oil. I stunk of it all weekend. Oh... and Suze will be there – when I went to visit their department on Friday she said she’d come. Suze worked at a large girls school on the other side of town and had been at teachers’ college with Mel. “You should have seen the work their sculptors were doing Mel. One girl had built this huge pit that she filled with sand – Suze says she makes sandcastle’s all day long and photographs them – little tiny ones, grouped together, like villages…” “Like Charles Simmonds?” “Who’s he?” “The American guy that makes those tiny architectural forms – in weird places, like in the cracks of walls and stuff.” “Oh okay – I think I know – but these were quite painterly too, the photographs of the sand works, looking down on them, almost Shane Cotton paintings.” “I’ll come to the opening.” Mel felt an urge to meet up with Suze. She wanted to talk to another sculptor about things she felt only sculptors understood - the relationships between ideas, materials, space and the processes of making. There was a student in her year 13 class on her mind who did amazingly fine drawings, technically precise, but he was having difficulty realising his ideas in three-dimensions. He’d tried to transfer a delicate pencil drawing into a maquette using rolled up paper. The clumsy paper had none of the qualities of the fine pencil lines. Mel had given him the old talk about ‘truth to materials’ and relating materials to marks made on the paper. Together they’d looked through a book on the work of Claes Oldenburg and discussed the relationships between his drawings and his sculptures. After this talk the boy decided that the marks he’d made in the series of drawings could most easily be translated into wire – but when he’d tried working with it the bulbous lumps of solder at the apex of every join disrupted its cleanliness. Mel had told him that they needed to find a new process for making or he’d have to draw from his sculptures and see what kinds of marks were appropriate to these models. Mel often had difficulty with work like his. Her own work was much more tactile, hands on, messy. Clean lines meant obliterating the hand of the artist. When she’d been at art school there had been a lot of discussion about this. Roland Barthes – the death of the author, the death of the artist. Art was a social construction. No art was an institutional construction. Too young to resist, Mel slipped into line with the prevailing ideology. She knew it was uncool to talk about self and instead focused on her construction as “woman”. She found it was the only way that a bit of blood, breathe or body could get caught up into the processes of art as long as she maintained an identifiable disdain for or derision of them. But once she was out of there, and had time to recover her sense of self, her understanding of art became increasingly embodied in her flesh, in her matrix of human relationships and in her relationship to the earth, water and air. Art was in the chaos of life.

The staff room was already full and all three art teachers could not find seats in their usual corner. Mel sat down next to one of the factions in the very large English department – these were the mavericks, mostly younger teachers, who challenged the dominant traditions of
grammatical precision, high quality literature and academic excellence that were still evident in the school. The art department had been annexed into their extended family. Artists as the friends of rebels.

"Beryl's looking lovely in red today." Joshua poked Mel in the elbow as their principal, symbol of old world authority, moved into position, ready to start the meeting.

"Brings out the veins in her cheeks," someone else added acidly. Mel poised her pen above the page in her diary as if to jot down notes. Instead she started drawing the hard angled edges of the overhead projector. Beryl informed the assembly that today's meeting was a professional development session. John, the international students' officer, was going to speak about the benefits of having overseas students in the school and then there would be an opportunity for the staff to discuss some strategies for including the students in the classroom and school.

As John spoke, Mel's drawing took over two days of her diary. She added the portable screen, a low table and John's right leg and arm. As she worked the soft folds of fabric around John's elbow in sticky blue ballpoint pen her thoughts coagulated on the cemetery around the corner from the school. "Statuary, classical statuary - angels, and water bearers - must tell Sham."

The people around her started shifting about.

"What's going on?" Mel whispered to Joshua who was leaving her side. He pointed at the screen. There were lists of staff. Groups. Her name was next to the head of the mathematics department, Maureen Taylor - she surveyed the crowd, saw straight-backed, hair bobbed Maureen sitting with some other teachers and went to join them. The group of teachers was disparate, clearly selected to appear randomly diverse, but contrived all the same. They were already debating the merits of having overseas students in the classroom, heatedly.

"It's all very well having them in subjects where they don't need much English." When he noticed Mel had joined the group Bob, a long serving science teacher, paused before he added "...like art, but in my subject the kids need to have a strong grasp of English. We deal with some pretty complicated terms and ideas and the kids need to know what they mean. It holds the others back when I have to keep explaining to them what I mean, spend more time with them. As a parent I'd be pretty hacked off if I knew my kid was getting less attention, less quality learning because some of the other kids in their class couldn't speak English." Bob shifted his weight from his sandalled feet, and, crossing his bare arms, leaned backwards, away from the other teachers, having made his point. Mel thought about the group of four Japanese girls placed in her year 10 class for the term. They sat together in a world of their own, working away on the most meticulous pencil drawings. They politely attempted everything that she set the rest of the class, although they often seemed to pare down the work - replacing a rough dry bristle brush with a delicate fibre tip. They seemed to be having a good time - they were smiling and good humoured, but she sometimes wondered how they felt about what went on around them. What sense did they make of it? When they first entered the class the rough, chunky ideas of the suburban kiwi kids had seemed foreign to the delicacy of these girls although recently she had noticed a certain robustness in one of them; a loud hoarseness in her laugh, paint spilling out onto her page in big black blobs and enough audac-
ity to come and ask Mel what she had to do next.
“I see your point Bob, but I find the Asians really great in maths.” Maureen took control of
the discussion in clipped sentences. “Hard-working. Really well motivated. They are model
students. They show that Maths is a universal language.”

A few years ago Mel would have quickly jumped in and got herself covered in the mud of the
battlefield. Maybe even yesterday, but today Mel was too tired. She had little faith that any of
the other teachers in this particular group would back her up if she queried the fears, preju-
dices and mythologies underlying some of the other teachers’ comments. And Mel also found
that the longer she worked as a teacher the less confident she was that she actually did have
any answers. At least not without really taking the time to think them through.

Mel was sitting next to Tim, a beginning teacher on a relieving contract for the term. She’d
vaguely known him at university, he was a friend of a friend she hadn’t seen for years. A
couple of weeks ago Mel had sat with him at morning tea and asked him how he was finding
life in the school.

“Okay.” But he hadn’t seemed very certain. When pressed he added, “this school though, the
kids are so badly behaved. No respect for their elders. The third formers, they don’t listen to a
word I say. The only thing they understand is when I shout at them and even then, some of the
tough bastards laugh. You have to come down on them really hard to get anything
done.”

Mel was surprised. Not only at his comments, but at her own naivety. This was someone
who’d had the same friends as her, been to university like her and was now a teacher. She had
expected him to think more like her.

“When I first came here I had a few problems with some
of the kids, but once I’d earned their respect things generally went a lot better. I suppose it’s
all those raging hormones,” Mel laughed, “but teenagers seem to feel things very deeply. I
found that I needed to treat them with a little more care than I had adults. In fact, I think being
a teacher has made me a better person overall. More respectful, kinder.” She smiled more
widely as she thought about the conversation she’d had with two art teachers she’d been to
college with. The three women in eclectic but customary art teacher dress had been walking
past the power houses of Wellington, contrasting with the men in grey suits. One of them had
admitted how damn hard it was to be nice all the time – working with teenagers. That smile
froze on your face, but no matter what, they were all determined to keep it. “When it gets too
hard to smile that’s when I’ll drop out” one of them said.

“But first you’ve got to make them sit down and listen to you,” Tim grumbled.

Mel’s mind drifted further away from the discussion about international students that was now
less heated and was focused on devising a list of points that could be relayed to the meeting as
the summary of their discussion. She felt little connection to this particular group of teachers
and Mel recognised that they felt the same. She saw little value in this type of professional
development, no-one ever changed their practice as a result of the compulsory whole staff get
togethers. The teachers always left the room confident in their own opinions and grumbling
about the waste of time. At an art department meeting earlier this year, Grant, who was new to
the school had asked about the performance appraisal system. What did the school mean by
compulsory professional development? Sham smiled as she explained to Grant that the school provided formal sessions throughout the year that he’d be expected to attend. “What about this, must take part in subject specific professional development to keep-up-to-date and further knowledge in own field?” Grant pointed to one of a list of competencies on a sheet he had been given during his induction day.

“You’re standing for the art teachers’ association committee again this year?” Sham asked.

“Yes.”

“You’re going to the art educators’ conference in April?”

“Yes. I’m taking a painting workshop.”

“You’ll do more professional development before term two than some teachers at this school will do all year. I may as well sign you off now.” Mel agreed. She had learnt most about her profession and her practice through her informal discussions and encounters with other art teachers. She had been on the committee of the local art teachers association for the first few years of her career. It had been tremendously instrumental in developing her identity as an art teacher. She had met most of the local heads of departments, school advisors and art teacher educators and had opportunities to listen to them discussing their philosophies. The political advocacy the committee had been involved in had given Mel a wider perspective on how their work fitted into the general education landscape. More recently Mel had become involved in the bursary marking system. The last couple of years Mel had gone to Wellington at the end of the year and joined the team of sculpture markers. In groups, they walked around the folios, spread out on the floor, and through both argument and accord they ranked the work of hundreds of year 13 students. Mel really appreciated the opportunity to see work that was evidence of sculpture programmes from all over the country.

As the staff meeting came to a close Mel met up with Grant on the way back to her classroom.

“Do you need a lift tonight?”

“Tonight?”

“Nat’s opening.”

“No – I’d better take my car, I can’t stay too late I’ve got planning to do.” Tired before, Mel was now exhausted as she drove home, however her mind was not at rest. Familiarity with both the route and operation of her car allowed her to replay the period one Year 9 core art class from this morning. The slide of a Roault painting, a dead man hanging from a noose, how had she explained it? She had used too many words. If she did it again she would say something different, something more coherent. Only one student had answered her question. Did the rest understand what she wanted. Probably not. Had she spent long enough talking? Too long. The rhythm was wrong. Teacher talk then children do. Think then do. They were just waiting to get stuck in, to make things, to get involved. But how do you get them to engage with ideas? To work and not play. Last week she’d started a unit with her year 9 elective group that looked like it was going to be successful. Mel had put out piles of art magazines on the desks. The students had found their own works. Art works they liked. She’d
been surprised, she thought most of them would go for the traditional works, realist. They had actually chosen a huge variety of work. Some quite conceptually challenging, some quite abstract. They could articulate why they liked a work surprisingly well. “I must start with them more often. Get them to find their own reasons for being here. To understand that art is part of their ordinary lives.” Despite the intense collegiality she felt with the other two art teachers she decided that it was in this way that she differed from them, Sharn in particular.

The Year 11 programme that both Mel and Sharn taught was an example of the difference. This year the two teachers will decide on next year’s theme, they will make connections between the theme and the work of several artists. Next year the artists will be the models for the series of weekly (sometimes daily) exercises that the two teachers would develop. Each exercise will produce one or two pages for their workbook. By September the year 11 students will have a pile of workbook pages from which they can start to generate a folio of work.

Folio work was generally directed by the teacher as well, although tailored to the individual strengths of students. Mel felt little attachment to the programme and generally followed placidly behind her senior teacher. She knew the formula and could get her kids to pump out work accordingly, but she always felt there was something of great significance, significance to her students and their learning, missing in the programme. She especially felt it when she taught the year 12 students. They had difficulty choosing a piece of paper to work on. What size paper? What colour? What orientation? What type of paper? It took over half a year to get the majority of the class competent at making limited choices about the paper they should use.

The lights turned red and Mel’s old, faded and weary Toyota had to pull up sharply behind a silver sports car, sun glare reflecting into her eyes from its lustrous spoiler, a vibrating, heavy bass from its internal stereo. Mel’s thoughts shifted sharply too. Back to the meeting and Bob, the science teacher, and what he’d said. It started to prickle and she was annoyed with herself that she’d sat so silently. Does art lack complicated ideas? Art is a way of thinking and drawing is its means of communication. To draw. How much English do you need to understand drawing, to communicate your ideas through drawing? Is drawing a universal language? No, it’s an art language, you need to be fluent in art in order to understand it. But drawing is more complicated than a language, it is multi-dimensional and multi-sensory. You need to be immersed in the practices of art in order to make sense of it not just skimming over its surfaces with your eyes. For Mel these moments of clarity rarely occurred at the point of impact, the teaching moment. There were too many roles and responsibilities that needed to be negotiated in the classroom. So instead she had to make sure they were integrated into her teaching through her preparation and planning. Tonight she would add to her year 10 unit plan a discussion about the relationships between drawing and communication and the different forms that they could take in art. Mel had expected that becoming an experienced teacher would mean teaching in automatic, like changing gears, engaging the clutch, in her manual car. Teaching in automatic would leave your mind free for contemplation while your body dealt with the mechanics. That this never occurred, after five and a half years teaching, was effec-
tive proof that her mind could not be disengaged from the frenetic bodily collisions of the classroom. Life in the classroom was lived at high speed.

The exhibition opening was crowded. Mel had been surprised how much more comfortable they had become now that she was a teacher. As an art student an opening was a place of fear. She stood on the edge of the community she wanted to conquer, terrified to let too much slip and upset people who could help her, or befriend people who couldn’t. Becoming an art teacher was like passing to another, more comfortable place in the art community. Your motivations were less self involved, more altruistic. Art encounters were invariably, albeit involuntarily, evaluated for their relevance to the classroom. This differed from the cagey judgements you’d place on the work of artists you perceived in competition to yourself. Art teachers were allowed to like art, almost unconditionally. And as a teacher you became part of the network of art teachers. Mel still remembered her first teaching section, and meeting up with a first year art teacher in the department who claimed that the best thing about being an art teacher was being part of a community, feeling connected, enjoying gallery openings, casually discussing what she liked in the latest edition of Art New Zealand, hearing the gossip. Karen told Mel she’d never felt like that in the two years she’d struggled to make a career out of art after leaving art school. Even though she had worked in a large studio with other emerging artists, Karen said that there was always an uneasy competition between them and their social bonds were weak. She never saw them now. In the art education profession relationships were established based on school affiliations, connections between colleagues, that two-day course you went to last March... They were more friends than rivals. The only dread left between two art teachers meeting after a prolonged absence was how to answer the inevitable question, “are you still making art?” Mel had an art teacher friend, Bob, up in the North Island who last time she had seen him had just applied to his school for a leave of absence for this year. He’d planned to devote the year to making art and travelling. “Maybe I’ll head over to Australia for a while, do some relieving or something, check out the art scene, make some work.” His partner was a ceramicist and was also eager to let inspiration come to him from the exploration of a new environment. However, Mel had recently heard on the grapevine that the two were now based in Wellington, Bob had taken up a short term contract with the Ministry of Education for the year instead. “Poor old Bob,” Mel had thought. “This job grips you and won’t let you stray too far. But then what other way could an artist get paid a regular salary every fortnight.”

Mel had managed to keep her own art making going in a very small way although not quite sufficiently to satisfy herself. The occasional weekend and sometimes during the holidays she would tutu about in the shed down the back of her garden. Most of the time her workbench was lightly dusted with particles of grime brought into the shed from the garden, and torn cobwebs but Mel and her friend Suze had made some rough plans for the joint exhibition the two of them were working towards, sometime in the indeterminate future. Mel was at her most motivated after they had one of those half-drunk discussions, often at a party, and
reanimated their common goal. During the last discussion the two women had decided that the show would have a colour theme. Suze would make monochrome work and Mel would make work in primary colours, “like those terrible, lumpy school paints in primary red, primary blue and primary yellow – what kind of artist would use those colours?”. “We could use the squashed up, disfigured paint bottles themselves” laughed Suze. “An installation on the state of school art education”. “Remember when we were at college and Jenny thought that there might be a market for art that looks like bland school art. Paper maché puppets with googly eyes and crayon and dye pictures and scratching into black crayon. She wanted to make “school art” art so that she could be an artist model for all those thousands of children who make it.”

“And teachers that teach it!”

Even though it wasn’t very often, Mel made art to remind herself that she was still an artist and that one day, maybe she would want to escape from her day job and have the freedom to just make art. It wasn’t as though she was not committed to her profession as an art teacher. It was just that the physical and mental demands of teaching meant that undertaking anything else in a significant way was much too difficult for her. This meant that she always felt slightly intimidated by those art teachers, usually male, who managed to keep up a strenuous exhibition schedule alongside their teaching. “I’m sure their teaching must suffer for it” she’d thought, however the examination and scholarship record of their students told otherwise. As she walked up the stairs on the way to the main gallery she smiled at one of these teachers, and was pleased that he was engaged in another conversation. She moved past quickly, directing her soft booted heels up the linoleum stairs.

The artist, Grant’s friend Nathan Apelu, was surrounded by a group of middle class, middle aged appreciators of fine art. Next to the group he looked like a big man, although in Samoan terms he was not that big. He was a vivid, clearly defined shape against the blur of people milling around. The work also had a distinct presence in the gallery space, extensions of the artist who made it. The smell and sound of Samoa filled the room and reminded Mel of her first visit to Avondale Market in Auckland. When she had been to teacher’s college she did one of her sections at a large school in Auckland. She had made friends with her associate who had taken her there one Sunday morning. Mel remembered wooden boxes of fruit and vegetables, and tables full of big shiny fish with jelly eyes. And the twanging guitar music. The smell of the coconut soap she’d bought from a stall that also sold shell hair combs, and the lavalavas in bright reds, oranges and greens was the same as the equally intense forms now surrounding her in the gallery. But the smooth oily surfaces of Nathan’s sculptural and painterly forms had a slickness and ingenuity that had not been part of the actual experience of the market. Standing here watching, Mel felt an immense stillness from the work, until she started walking over to the back of the gallery, towards Suze. In motion the art work became part of the blur of bodies, albeit of a brighter hue and with hard unyielding edges and angles to negotiate her soft, flexible body around.
Suze was over in the corner talking to the HOD from the art department at St Richard’s College. Mel went over to her. “Hiya, you know Brendon don’t you?” “Yes, we met at the art history workshops last year.” “Ho, ho. Yes” replied the tall, aging but very chic Brendon. “I think we got one over on the Ministry that time. Thwarted all their plans. They’d only got us in to develop new resources for them on the cheap.”

“Brendon was great,” laughed Mel. “He snuck them all out under his jacket.”

“Brendon has just been telling me that Laura Easton is moving on at the end of this year.” “From Waiwera Girls?” asked Mel. “Yes,” Brendon replied. “She bought a few acres a year ago with her partner. They’ve built a gallery and studio. It’s a lovely place. And they’re also opening a restaurant for her son on the property, he’s a fabulous chef. Laura said that rather than get bitter about being in the job too long or even worse, die on the job, she’d rather start a new venture. While she still can. It makes sense to me, I think I’m getting close to that point myself.” Brendon drifted away and Mel and Suze were left to talk.

“That’ll be a plum job,” said Suze. “The HOD at Waiwera?” “Yep, I could fancy that. A girls school, big department, well resourced. What about you?” Suze asked Mel cautiously. Last year Suze had been acting head of her department. She had found the transition back into her assistant teacher role difficult.

“I’ve never really thought about being a HOD,” replied Mel. “All that organisation and extra meetings. And having to deal with the senior management…. No I don’t think I’ll be applying.”

“Good, I’m glad I don’t have to compete against you then!” Suze laughed. Suze dragged Mel back into the fray of bodies, grabbed another glass of white wine from the table and forged into a new group of people. This time Mel did not know any of them, and she stood behind Suze, smiling ambiguously. “Mel! How are you?” Mel turned to look at the person who had just greeted her. The look on her face betrayed her bafflement. “Ian. Ian Sawyers.” Mel still looked confused. “We went to art school together. In the sculpture department. Remember? I was a couple of years behind you.” Mel finally recalled a dim memory of the tall, long haired man standing in front of her. “Oh you hung around with that other guy, he was also tall.” “Yeah, Andy. He’s working with John Amos, the sculptor, at the moment. He’s his technician. And Jonah, remember him?” Mel shook her head. “It was a long time ago.”

“Not that long. Anyway what are you doing these days?” asked Ian.

“I’m teaching.”

“Yeah, don’t think I’ve got the patience for that.”

“What are you doing?”

“Oh, just got back from some travel. Went over to Europe. Did some bar work. Also spent some time in Sydney, hung out with quite a cool group of artists there.”

“You did some exhibitions over there?”

“No. But went to lots of galleries. Saw some great work. And this guy I knew, he was pretty hot and exhibited in the biennale. Now I’m back I’m gonna set myself up a studio, make some
work, see what happens. Anyway, nice to see you...see you round.” Ian loped off and joined another group, laughed loudly, patted someone else on the back. Suze was involved in a discussion about someone Mel didn’t know who was travelling around the Middle East. Mel took the opportunity to break away and look at the art. She squeezed between groups of people standing chatting, avoided bumping into the waiting staff handing round canapés. On the largest wall a wide canvas was buckled and folded and plaited and knotted. Mel stood and viewed it from a distance but too many bodies intervened in her line of sight. She walked up to the work, standing half a metre from it, and examined its complicated surface. From here she couldn’t scrutinise it as a whole. She became immersed in the section she could see, and although she doubted it was enough to understand the work she became quite intrigued by the quality of the light that touched the tops of the canvas plaits and the thickness of paint that still bore traces of brush marks. Suze and Grant had met up and walked towards Mel. They told her they were going for a drink once the crowd had died down and asked if she wanted to come too.

“I’d love to but not today,” replied Mel as she thought with regret about last year’s Year 10 unit that instead of tweaking into shape for the new class on Wednesday she was rewriting from scratch. Mel walked towards the exit, waved good bye to a couple of people and went home to work on her unit.

The children began to drift into the art room in groups of two or three or four, and occasionally one on their own. In the space of 5 minutes, Mel’s attention shifted from the pile of paper in front of her, to Aaron and Amy’s disagreement at morning tea time, to Jayden flicking a rubber band around the room, to Gamal’s lost painting, to Jessica’s new fluffy pink pencil case, to that book she lent Andrew last week, to Pip’s late entry to... never mind... “Okay class,” she stood with her hands on her hips and faced the main group of teenagers clustered around the front group of tables. The others were spread disparately throughout the rest of the room. She had only 45 minutes left to make an impact on their learning. Normally the class started with even less semblance of order as the students gradually picked up or rejected what they’d left in the previous session. On this day they were starting something new. Mel decided that first she needed to give them some insight into the teaching and learning process. “I’d like to try something I’ve not done before,” she told them. “And it may not be easy, but if it works, I think you’ll be learning some really valuable things. And hopefully you’ll be really interested in what we’re doing too...” There was the sound of shuffling feet in the back corner and she noticed Jayden getting restless. “If you could do anything in art, anything you wanted, what would you like to do?” Mel asked him. Jayden looked up startled, “yes Miss”, he said quickly and tried to look more alert. “No, I mean it. I’d really like to know what you’d like to do. What all of you would like to do.” A few hands shot up. “Make masks,” called out Andrew. “Watercolour painting” called Dayna. “Well hold onto those thoughts for a while,” Mel told them. “What we’re going to start with are ideas. The techniques that we use to express those ideas will come later.” Mel had a large pile of art books and resources behind
her; Henry Moore's sketches, Joel Shapiro's drawings, Francesco Clemente's watercolours, Miwa Yanagi's photographs, Séraphine Pick's oil paintings, Nancy Spero's prints among others. But they stayed firmly closed for the time being. In large letters she wrote on the board:

Environment
Emotions
Action
Thought

"I'd like you to think very carefully about these four themes. From one of these, or a mixture, each one of you will be developing issues, or ideas that will form the basis of an art project." The students' attention focused on the board. There were a few eyes alight amongst a number of frowns, but fewer than usual blank, bored stares. "When I've finished talking I'd like you to spend a couple of minutes thinking about yourself and what type of person you are. And, if you need to, talking to your neighbours about which one of these themes you would like to work with. If you're someone who is very aware of the things around you, either inside or outside, then you might like to start with 'environment'. If you are concerned about your relationships with people or how you or others feel then you might start with 'emotions'. If you are an active person or aware of things that move about, or work perhaps you could look at 'action'. And if you are one of those people who live in their heads, maybe read a lot...perhaps you'd like to work with 'thoughts'."

A lazy hand headed upwards. "Yes Jessica." "What type of thoughts?" As she prepared to answer Jessica a slight panic clutched at Mel as she realised that what she wanted to do with these students may degenerate into a chaotic and ineffectual mess. She was intensely aware that what she was proposing for these students was an experiment with unpredictable outcomes. It was an experiment based on a hypotheses she had developed through her own teaching practice and interactions with other art educators as well as her own art experiences. As far as she could see, one of the significant advantages of being an artist, and therefore learning about art, was the potential to pursue your own lines of inquiry. Follow your bliss. Art education should be an opportunity for students to develop their own interests in art and catch sight of their own bliss. In her own work as an artist, Mel loved the way that an idea or a material or an image or an experience would catch her attention and she'd follow it, not knowing where it would take her. But the biggest thrills came when one line of inquiry would crash into another, and all of a sudden, just in a flash, it seemed as though she understood everything. Reality was in her grasp in that moment of understanding but by the time she realised it the moment was gone. She wanted her students to experience that kind of clarity and understanding, albeit for the briefest instant.

Mel's experiment had started to formulate itself at a forum on creativity she had attended last year. One of the speakers had caught Mel's particular interest. The woman had worked at Teachers' College in the 1960s and been head of the primary art programme. She had spoken
of the immersion programmes in the arts that they ran for primary teacher trainees. For two week blocks trainees immersed themselves in the arts, talking about them, looking at art works, making and writing, listening to music. Even trainees who had little prior understanding of art and other arts disciplines began to see value in them. In the weeks after she had attended the forum Mel began to think about the nature of her art room and how similar its teaching practices were to the actual practices of art. How did the programme she offered affect the way that her students valued art? She suspected that it had very little impact and the unease surrounding this revelation had resulted in a number of slow shifts in her pedagogy. More children, even in the younger year levels, began to work on a vertical rather than horizontal surface as she took down children’s work from the walls and made work spaces in their place. The furniture was pared down to the absolute minimum and regularly shifted around to meet the needs of the moment; a still life in the centre of the room, tables grouped together for printmaking, desks in a circle for a drawing activity. Large piles of art books and reference books became part of the shifting landscape of the classroom and were referred to by students of all ages. As the senior students drifted through the room in their free periods she cornered them and surrounded them with groups of admiring younger students who asked them questions about Mr Mackey in the science lab and if they knew Kylie in Mrs Eaves class and how much work they had to do for seventh form art and what artists do they like and what do they think about the paintings in this book. In the art room at lunchtime Mel left them to it, and on her duty day she felt a covert thrill when she went from the barren silence of a geography classroom to the frenzied clutter and chatter of her art room, filled with students from all year levels, working and eating while their non-art friends joined in just to be part of the energy.

And now Mel was rewriting her curriculum to attempt, within the constraints she faced in a large suburban high school, to more fully engage her students in the context of art practice, not just in a way that reproduces art processes, but through a fully embodied immersion in the multiple ways that artists think and act, because although art was a way of inquiring it was a particular way, an art way. What she proposed really wasn’t that far away from usual practices of studio-based art teaching, however it did require relinquishing a greater degree of control over curriculum content than was usual in schools, particularly with this age group. She had struggled over how to engage them and get them to follow their bliss when their experiences of art as well as life were so limited. Mel, not quite satisfied, had settled on providing a minimal structure within which students could develop an interest in art through exposure to a range of art practices. One of the HODs she knew from the local art teachers’ association had once said that it was important to model your own practice as an artist in the classroom, but also to remember that your practice was just one example. Other forms of practice should be invited into art rooms through books, posters, slides and visits to art galleries to provide students with a richer range of experiences to draw from. Mel accepted this idea, and wanted her students to develop their own sense of self in the content of the curriculum, but where should she begin?
Through her previous experience as an art teacher, Mel anticipated that some students would need to have their interests aroused. Not all of the students that came here would have an interest in learning about art. Some came here to spend a social hour with their friends and some came because no-one else wanted them in their classrooms. The art room was a safe haven in the formidable territory of the school. The framework she provided needed to engender the interests of students who did not see themselves within the content of art curriculum. That is how she had come to divide the course up into the four themes which in some sense seemed all encapsulating (environment, emotions, actions, thought) and, in another, woefully inadequate in comparison to the complex way that artists duck and dive through the liquid of art. However, by starting from the self, the changeable, indefinite article that is self, and finding how that self interacts with its environment or is engaged in activity, or lives a life of emotions or is constructed in thought, it seemed to more clearly represent what artists actually did. Most of the practising artists she knew worked within fields of personal interest that shifted, expanded, multiplied, overlapped and collapsed in unexpected contortions within which they formed strategic alliances between themselves and ‘others’, sometimes other artists, linguistic theorists, political activists or media celebrities. Artists’ products littered the field in varying stages of completion, acting as intermediaries between themselves and the reality they interpreted. Art works represent beginnings as much as endings. When artists are subject to authorities written outside of the practices of art (commercial artists who were commissioned to work to a brief, or art teachers who acquiesce to the demands of examinations) the possibilities of art practice and its purposes close down, and the subjective virtues of innovation, creativity and imagination become constricted. Mel wanted her students to explore how they fitted into the world and, as artists, the types of relationships, contexts and discourses they were subject to and subject of. What could they make out of the world and what constrained their making?

As the students struggled to understand the project their teacher had set them, the logic of the art room took over. The room assumed its customary buzz. To someone looking in from outside the classroom, the students and teacher would appear to move restlessly throughout the space. Small groupings coalesced and dissolved. Gamal stood up, Jessica sat down. Jayden jokingly threatened Sam with a pair of scissors. For Mel time accelerated as she tried to make contact with each person in the class. Each time she twisted her attention to another person she was confronted by a new set of problems. The project took on new shapes as she redefined it with each of the students and assisted them in the task of making meaning, and directing them towards making art meaning. A group of students starting dipping into the pile of art books left on the front desk. Aaron and Andrew were mapping their thoughts on some large sheets of newsprint, and as words became inadequate to explain what they meant they started drawing. Mel went over to them and watched and listened to them work for a while. Aaron drew a fish. Andrew was drawing the sea. “Can we work together Miss?” “I don’t see
why not. As long as it’s on something you’re both interested in.” “Well we both really like fishing, so that’s like action and environment, isn’t it?” Aaron kept talking while Andrew carried on with his drawing.

“Well fishing’s very big. Can you narrow it down?” Mel looked at the mind map the two boys had produced. “That looks like an interesting idea,” Mel pointed to one of the notes. It said “Fishing trophies”. “That would give you more of a focus. And then perhaps you could think about the different uses of fishing trophies. How their meanings change.”

“Whaaat?” asked Aaron.

“Well what they might mean to an environmentalist that’s different from what they mean to the person who caught the fish?” Mel remembered a book from table that had Jeff Koonz’s sculptures of trophies. She wasn’t sure that these boys would ‘get it’ but she brought it over to them anyway. Before she had time to do more than open the book, Jessica tapped at her shoulder. “I’m not sure I get what we’re supposed to be doing?” Mel walked with Jessica back to her seat. “Well have you thought about which type of person you are?” she asked.

“I’m a thought person wouldn’t you say?” “Well yes, you probably are.” Jessica was a highly motivated student who was accustomed to high academic achievement in all her studies.


“And what do you know about philosophy?”

“Well I read this cool book called Sophie’s World. It was all about philosophy. And it really made me think. Greek philosophy and Roman philosophy, all these different ideas.”

“Well you could base your work in the classics. Ancient greek and roman culture or ideas or mythology.”

“Yeah, I like the idea of ancient Greece. But I’m not sure about what I’d want to focus on.” Mel sent Jessica off to the library to bring back some books on ancient greece, so she could do a bit of research and narrow down her field. She surveyed the room again. Pip was writing in her journal. Mel had presumed Pip was not working on the art project, she knew they all had a journal for English, until she glimpsed the words “art project” and “emotions” as Pip sought to cover up her efforts with her elbow. Mel sensed it would be most appropriate to leave Pip alone for now. She walked to the back of the class where Jayden was working away on some lined refill. It was headed up “Comics”. A short list followed; Animal Man, X-Men, Spider Man. Most of the page consisted of superhero figures, with bulging arm muscles and skin tight suits filling up the frames that Jayden had drawn around them. “I’d like to do something with comics” Jayden told her. “Okay Jayden, before you get too far, I think we need to back up a bit. Remember I said I’d like you to think about an issue or idea that you’re going to follow up. What are some of the things comics are about? Like fighting, war, - they’re really active things,” she said. “Nah Miss. I’ve already thought about that. You know like the frames in comics, they’re like boxes, little environments...tight little environments.”

At the end of the 6 week unit Mel stepped back and surveyed the work the year 10 students
had exhibited throughout the room. There was an incredible variety in the work, large scale
paintings in acid blue paint, small, scrappy books of drawings. Someone had made a big
bamboo construction in the centre of the room, the seniors had complained about tripping
over it when they came in for their art history lesson. The only unifying feature seemed to be
the requirement that their display of work demonstrate the process that the students had been
through. Apart from a couple who submitted work books or journals most of them had ap­
proached this in a similar way. So each larger art work was accompanied by a string of
smaller ones, like a mother cat surrounded by her kittens, similarly formed but visibly differ­
ent. There was some very visually interesting work, usually but not exclusively by the stu­
dents she thought of as the most able. Jessica had ended up making some beautiful collages,
layers of classical imagery and handwritten quotes. She’d started out making classical reliefs
out of clay, copied from images in books, but soon realised how much skill it required and
gave up. Mel intervened and got Jessica working back on a two dimensional surface where
her work went from strength to strength. But there was also some very unrefined and patchy
work with regard to art making skill. Andrew and Aaron had made some trophies out of paper
mache. Mel had talked to them about making them look grotesque, but they ended up looking
a lot like the paper mache her and Suze derided as primary ‘school art’. Mel thumbed through
the journal Pip had left alongside her intricate collages cut from teen magazines and photo­
copied images of war by established Magnum photographers. Her dense long hand script was
difficult to read, and scrawled across pages and pages. Mel had tried to engage Pip in discus­
sion but found her very evasive about what she was doing. Reading the journal would be a
revelation to her. She looked at Jayden’s 3 dimensional sketches of cartoon characters jump­
ing out of cardboard window frames. The ideas he’d started with were evident, and had been
developed in some senses, mostly by using cardboard supports like in children’s pop-up books
to lift the figures off the page. But the figures were still scratched into lined refill with red and
black ball point pen. “There must be a better way to get them to think about both. To develop
the formal aspects as well as the ideas,” Mel thought. But the work certainly showed signs of
being personally relevant, there was something happening here that wasn’t usually part of the
art room. There seemed to be something of value occurring. “It’s a start,” thought Mel. “A
good start, but I can do better.”
Chapter eight

I struggled with this chapter more than any other. It has been written and rewritten so many times, it currently bears little relationship to its former incarnations. It also shifted in chapter order from three to five to finally settle in at eight. While I still field queries about whether it should sit earlier in thesis because of its relationship to a conventional methodology chapter, I am convinced that this is the best place for it. Of all the chapters its form is the most clearly derived from an academic educational research model. I think that positioning it earlier would privilege this form for coming to understand art education. In the actual scheme of my research project, educational knowledge has been secondary and has arisen out of my understanding of art education contexts. Situating the chapters according to their relationship with my research practice seems even more crucial in this case, considering the claims I make here regarding the embedded nature of art inquiry and learning. It also talks directly to the interdisciplinarity of the thesis, as I make recommendations for the development of productive relationships between art and education through continual and equitable dialogue.
Art, Arts-based Inquiry and Education: A difference of genre

The relationships between form and content have been significant in coming to understand the value of art practice throughout my inquiry. Now I draw together the form and content of my research on the value of art practice in education. Initially examining the nature of inquiry and how it is manifest in my research project, I work towards the claim that there is a consistency between art-based research and art curriculum. Both are formulated in part from art processes or a notion that art is a method of inquiry. In fact Paul Duncum (1998/9) suggests that in a primary generalist education, art curriculum should be entirely about inquiry, or making meaning¹. In this chapter I argue that art is more than just a form of inquiry, and that the development of understanding in art also requires an embodiment in the content and products of art. Otherwise the understanding developed is not an art understanding. To eschew a position that art is a disciplinary understanding, as Duncum suggests for at least primary education, is to dislocate art inquiry from the historical and cultural contexts within which its practitioners engage in the construction of art understandings. I believe that art inquiry practices arise from an integral relationship between the contexts of art, made up of material and conceptual products, and the embodied experiences of being an artist within these contexts. When art understanding is generalised, or through the metaphor of literacy, constructed as the same as anything else, a case is being made at best for trivialisation and at worst the evisceration of art practice in the curriculum (see Hughes, 1997).

Constructing a research project founded on sculptural practice has meant following a very meandering path. Sculpture has spatial form, even when it is conceptual it is realised in three dimensions, however, its temporality makes its form mutable, e.g. distorted, transformed, partial. Practising sculpture involves engaging in activity that does not have a predictable outcome. You are never quite sure what will be left standing when time has taken you to a point of formalisation. When I was a practising sculptor I constructed a metaphor of landscape for thinking about my work and how its themes interrelated. There were forms that evolved as
tectonic plates collided, and eroded as the rains fell and the sea assaulted their edges. Thinking about my current research project as a metaphor of moving through a landscape, it has involved sighting a number of high peaks that I never reached, traversing terrain littered with crossroads and entering lands that I had never even heard of. I think the notion of a landscape and the physical exertion involved in crossing it, is especially poignant given the primacy in my study of the material world. Throughout the experience I have become focused on the lived effects of research. I have acute and recent memories of the heat and the cold associated with sitting for too many hours in a computing laboratory with no external windows. I have more vague and faintly unsettling memories of inviting art educators into the silent, stillness of the fifth floor of the education department, where they spoke with fire and commitment about their work, and at the same time recognising my growing distance from their profession. And I also have pleasurable memories of the abrupt coagulations of thought that coalesced into something plastic I could write about, although they often arrived inconveniently, disrupting moments of placid, domestic life. I have found that research is an embodied encounter and even now I wear the yellow scars of the bleach bottle on my hair, applied in a period of intellectual restlessness. Would it be possible for me to convey the significance of my encounters with just the realities of empirical data displayed in tables and statistics and without a richly, decorative narrative and the interruptions of images? From my understandings of ‘traditional’ social science research, these deviations into autobiographical trivia are irrelevant to my thesis. The fact that they have intervened in my study at all reflects my inability to separate out the relevant from the irrelevant foci, or in fact, the research from anything else. In its formulation I did not succeed in taking account of all the variables in my hypothesis. I did not ask the right questions at the beginning of my study, and I certainly did not stimulate the right responses.

Lyotard (1991) presents the possibility that Western philosophical thought has been underwritten by two discernible threads, logical positivism and poetic ontologie. I find it useful to think of these two threads as I try to construct value for art education within curriculum, however, I am aware that there are pitfalls in becoming too comfortable with this division. I
want to avoid a simplistic opposition of science versus art. Positivism is not translatable into
science although, according to Lyotard, the ethos of positivism has become the grand narra-
tive of technological-scientific development in contemporary society.

I'm granting to physics theory that technological-scientific development is, on the
surface of the earth, the present-day form of a process of negentropy or
complexification that has been underway since the earth began its existence. I'm
granting that human beings aren't and never have been the motor of this
complexification, but an effect and carrier of this negentropy, its carrier (Lyotard,

Lyotard (1991) argues that development on Earth has been underpinned by a rationalising
force that in the present age has found an outlet in positivism. Positivism is constructed
from a technocratic rationality that Peters and Marshall (1996a, 1996b) claim “...has af-
fected and infected the whole range of social and cultural life including economic struc-
tures, law, bureaucratic organizations, and even the arts” (1996b, p. 90). As I have sug-
gested in chapter four, technocratic rationality and its expansion into universalising dis-
courses such as modernism, patriarchy and capitalism, is evident in the policies of art
curriculum as well as in the more general practices of art and art education. I would even
go as far to suggest that, in our era, the dominant notion of development is one of a linear
technocratic process predicated on achieving an economically rationalised and predeter-
mined end through the most efficient means. This means that viewed from a positivistic
framework, artistic development must either conform or be pathologised. There are many
examples of art practice conforming to the demands of the technological-scientific devel-
opment. This is evident in conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth’s (1991) concern, raised in an
earlier chapter, that the practice of art is being redefined by rationalist forces that empha-
sise the production and consumption of art products. He suggests that artists are in com-
plicity with the marketisation of art practice, working towards the efficient production of
art works. From a position of positivism, art practices that do not conform oppose the
prevailing norms of productivity and marketability, e.g. science/art, rational/irrational, intellectual/emotional, masculine/feminine. Frequently faced with similar binary positioning, I find that I am forced to defend art practice from being seen as something other than an affliction of excess emotionality, self indulgence and psychological imbalance.

Lyotard (1991) uses the example of language to explain the difference between poetic ontlogie and logical positivism. He claims that positivism is concerned with the process of fragmenting and structuring language. “As for the second option, which I called ontological, it is by its nature turned towards those modes of language which do not aim solely to describe exhaustively the objects to which they refer” (Lyotard, 1991, p. 72). The modes of language he refers to include the arts in their various forms, which have indeterminate ends and accept multiple meanings. Rather than a ‘crude’ distinction between art and science, and reiteration of a binary logic, what I think Lyotard is suggesting is that an ontological framework is inherently more sensitive to a variety forms of representation than positivism can possibly accommodate. Lyotard suggests that despite the force driving scientific and technological development being increased complexification, real complexity may actually exist in the ontological, suggesting less of a substantive division between positivist and ontological thinking and more that from an ontological position, positivism is one of the plethora of discourses operating in reality. Positivism is less encompassing and is therefore caught in an intractable dilemma in regard to its relationship with ontological understandings. In The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge Lyotard (1999) repeats his claims that scientific development (or in this case positivism) is a narrative, and suggests that its narrative features are obscured in the interests of legitimating scientific knowledge as a universal truth. However, “scientific knowledge cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative, kind of knowledge, which from its point of view is no knowledge at all” (Ibid, p. 29). Therefore rather than opposing traditions, the two represent entirely different ways of engaging in the world. One of which maintains binaries (positivist thinking), the other (ontological thinking) encompasses knowledge of ambiguity and contradiction as well as fact and clarity. Narra-
tive knowledge’s “...incomprehension of the problems of scientific discourse is accompanied by a certain tolerance: it approaches such discourse primarily as a variant in the family of narrative cultures” (Ibid, p. 27).

Working within an ontological framework opens up the possibility that inquiry can be founded on uncertainty and ambiguity, constructed from subjectively determined interpretations of reality. Lyotard (1991) claims that what is common to the ontological way of thinking is “…the freedom and lack of preparation…” (p. 73) that is open to receive what has not been thought. I perceive this to entail an acceptance that what occurs in the phenomenological realm is much too complex to explain through singularly rationalised accounts. Multiple forms of representation can be drawn upon as a more comprehensive way of representing (but not delimiting) what actually occurs. Taking this position legitimates research practice that shows a readiness or openness to encounters with the incongruity, ambiguity and deviation that make up the experiences of reality. In the particular case of my research into art education, I think that it is not only necessary to leave myself open to lines of inquiry that I had not imagined, but to be prepared to leave lines of inquiry open for others to formulate their own understandings. To do otherwise, and deliberately present reality as a clean, closed and unified abstraction made up of linear text and tabulation, is to draw solely on forms that obscure their limitations and regulatory functions behind veils of neutrality.

Following on from the work of Ricouer (1981, 1991), discussed in chapter 4, I see my work as interpretation rather than linguistic precision. In practice this means seeing the work of artists, art teachers and their students as a plethora of complex relationships that cannot be grasped but can be represented. More accurate representations are sympathetic to the intricacies of art education as it is lived and attempt to present it in ways that resist the fragmentation, violence and regulation of positivist inquiry. Examples of this practice in my thesis are the use of fictional narrative as a way of illustrating experience, presenting chunks of raw data as testament to ways that art educators construct their practice through
the collision and collusión of multiple and contingent selves and the juxtaposition of pictures against a backdrop of words (and vice versa). Faced with this tangle of forms, not completely digested for their consumption, I am requiring my readers to work especially hard in their encounters with the work. This seems to me, to be a way of revealing the symbiotic relationship between the form and content of my central thesis, i.e. art practice is a fully embodied practice which requires bodily immersion in order to understand its significance. My understanding of sculptural practice means that a methodology founded upon it, requires presenting examples of how art meaning is constructed within the art context of this written text, its temporal unfolding as well as its material construction as an object. Through multiple forms of representation I am engaging in and demanding interpretation rather than explaining what I know. Through the holes apparent in an art mode of inquiry, I also recognise that I am opening up the risk that what I write may be seen as lacking within the logical positivism that positions my work in the university setting. It is high stakes in the world of the academy. Can a short story and a random collection of pictures take the place of serious data analysis?

The outcomes of the art methodology I have followed in conducting this project suggest that the value of art practice lies in its function as a means of inquiry within an ontological framework, and this has been a position I have occupied. Seen as the only credible function for art education, this stance presents problems. As someone trained in the discipline of art, it also ‘feels’ wrong. If art practice is valuable only as an example of a method of inquiry, how can art be considered a significant and essential feature of curriculum? To maintain value for art practice, there needs to be some distinction between art and other forms of inquiry. If art practice is not distinguishable from other forms, then the conflation of arts disciplines within a single curriculum statement, such as The arts in the New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000) is a good idea. However, I ‘know’ that it is not. There seems to be a necessary paradox, or requisite unsettledness, in understanding art as both a discipline, defined by its historical context, and as a way of making sense of the world, or means of interpretation. Thinking about what this may look like, I imagine that art as a discipline would have its own form (which is contingent and reciprocal in its en-
gagement with other forms) with its own history (which changes from the vantage point of the self that interprets it) and a set of rules (that are transgressible and indefinite). Art would also function as a way of engaging with reality, although this could not be achieved, as art, without an understanding of art as a disciplinary practice. Ignorance of art's historical context or disregarding aesthetics as a significant means of understanding art all move art practice out of the realms of art, and into a different type of social practice. Without fundamental disciplinary understandings, although keeping in mind that what these consist of are open to negotiation, I believe that there is little to distinguish the value of art from any other fiercely contested area of the curriculum.

Recently I have come across a range of educational discourses surrounding arts-based inquiry as an innovative pedagogical and research tool (Diamond & Mullen, 1999; Higgs & Titchen, 2001). Within these models of practice, art is presented as a means or conduit for inquiry, and its research methods are drawn from arts practices such as narrative, fiction, music and other forms of creative expression. Diamond and Mullen claim that arts-based inquiry is a hybridised form of theoretical research, developed from the arts as well as the social sciences and humanities. Arts-based inquiry functions as an alternative means of representing knowledge, alternative to traditional, positivistic research methods. Art educationalists, schooled in art practices as well as social science, are critiquing the methodology of a generic arts-based inquiry for its assumptions that any old form of critical or qualitative practice can be attributed to the arts. Some of these arts-based concepts also appear to be based on an assumption that the arts are necessarily more liberating than other forms of research or pedagogical practice. Proponents of an arts-based methodology, Titchen and Higgs (2001), see professional development occurring through the adoption of an artistic mode of inquiry and claim that they are recognising the “...opportunities that creativity and creative arts strategies provide for generating and optimising change in professional practice and in society more generally” (pp. 273-4). Diamond & Mullen (1999) express similar aims when they equate arts practices with freedom, self-actualisation, social justice, and critical discourse. Considering the relationships I have previously described between the production of art works, technocratic rationality and capitalist com-
modification, I think that these representations of art practice are clearly overemphasising the connections between art and emancipation. Art is not innately critical and contemporary art practices are perhaps even more likely to uphold economic and technological rationalism than to oppose it. The underlying assumptions for presenting art as a singular means of critical inquiry, appears to be that a notion of development in the arts (holistic) is oppositional to development in science (fractal) and is more closely akin to human development. This binary distinction is not new and as I suggested previously, one that I do not wish to privilege. Alternatively, arts-based inquiry can be explored from its historical context, primarily embedded in a relationship with art practice. From within the traditions of art, arts-based inquiry can be examined for practices that have extended and enabled the development of multiple subjectivities, thus operating as discourses of emancipation. For example, in chapter 4 I identified the particular practice of feminist ‘Body Art’ as an art practice that has operated to expand notions of feminine subjectivity. Critical engagement of this sort requires an immersion and understanding of how representation has constructed identity within the contexts of culture, that is, immersion in the contextual understandings, not just familiarity with the processes. Not only are the ways of working informed by the content, they are also inseparable from the content. In order to disrupt regimes of representation you must know the traditional forms of representation you are disrupting and how they convey meaning. In the photographic self-portraits of body artist Hannah Wilke, she demonstrated a thorough understanding of the codes used to represent feminine beauty. Her subtle manipulation of those codes enabled her to subvert them. The suggestion in some arts-based inquiry methods, such as those espoused by Higgs and Titchen (2001), is that all art practices, regardless of content, can engender the same level of personal autonomy. This appears to be a profoundly untenable position.

While Diamond and Mullen’s (1999) work does seem to be informed by some level of art understanding, the concept of art that underpins their arts-based inquiry methods appears sanitised compared with the work of many contemporary artists and art writers. In the work of Diamond & Mullen (1999) and Diamond & Van Halen Faber (2002), arts-based inquiry
as a pedagogical or research method is positioned within an established, and canonised, history of liberal humanist educational theory where art has predominantly been valued as a palliative, making people kinder, more well-rounded and humane. While I suspect that this view has served to reinforce the idea that art does not have its own value and its usefulness is extrinsic to its specific disciplinary understandings, I am not arguing that art is solely a discipline in its own right. Art has evident relationships with other areas of knowledge (e.g. feminist art is related to feminist theory and practice) and roles to play in the construction of multi- or interdisciplinary understandings. Contexts of knowledge are mutable and interdependent as well as specific and disciplinary. A way to proceed with collaboration between art and education may be to explore the existing educational and art contexts in which arts-based inquiry models have been constructed for their strengths and work towards an expansion of them in the light of art understandings. I believe this may produce a more satisfying interdisciplinary collaboration than the work currently called arts-based inquiry.

Writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, Froebel believed that children would grow naturally in an educational environment where they were encouraged, but not forced, towards pursuing a practice of self expression and creativity (Boultwood & Curtis, 1970). His ideas were part of a thread developing in educational thought that recognised the connectedness of knowledge, and the need to develop individuals to better fit into social life. This thread was taken up by John Dewey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with his developments in progressive education. Progressive education’s association with the arts was strengthened with Dewey’s parallel writings in materialist aesthetic and educational philosophy. Unlike much of the arts-based inquiry discourse, Dewey’s belief in the individual and environment functioning as an organic unity did not reduce art and education to a single entity. Dewey insisted on a significant role for art in education, recognising it as a fundamental force of development ‘in its own right’, and perhaps it was his deeper investigation and interpretation of art and aesthetics that informed this distinction. An aspect of Dewey’s work on the nature of art I find interesting is that he insists that art cannot be categorically defined or broken down into different classes, however he does
insist on differentiation in art. “While there is no difference that may be exactly defined between prose and poetry, there is a gulf between the prosaic and poetic as extreme limiting terms of tendencies in experience” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 241). Or rather, although variations in art cannot be explained through a technocratic rationality, they can be explained through a rationality predicated on ontology. This provides some insight into a Deweyan perspective on the differences between art and education, both of which he describes through the medium of experience. They are the same (experience), but materially different (are involved in different types of experiences with different effects). Therefore education can be approached aesthetically, that is, informed by the experience of art, but the experience will be different because the products and context of education will be different from those of an art context. In education you are working with a different material from when you are working in painting and this necessarily means using a different method, even though the differences may be subtle.

More recently Elliot Eisner (1994), initially educated as an artist, promoted viewing teaching as an art to extend the possibilities of what teaching consisted of, and to provide a representation of the pedagogical endeavour.

To argue as I will that teaching is an art is something of a paradox. We live at a time when virtually the entire effort of those who have attempted to study teaching has been devoted to the creation of a science of teaching.... Yet, most of those who teach – indeed, even those who study teaching scientifically - often regard their own teaching as an artistic activity. For some, to say that teaching is an art is to say that it is poorly understood and that when it is understood a science of teaching will have been developed. (Eisner, 1994, p. 154

As Eisner goes on to describe the relationship between art and teaching he seems to apply some quite generic attributes to his notion of art. He defines teaching as an art in four senses, “....teaching as a source of aesthetic experience, as dependent on the perception and control of qualities, as a heuristic or adventitious activity, and as seeking emergent
ends" (1994, p. 156) Apart from the relationship between teaching and aesthetic experience, drawn directly from Dewey, Eisner's other three senses of artistic teaching could be applied to many other forms of practice. This, however, appears to be a particular case where Eisner is talking at a generic level about how art can inform education rather than attempting to define art. When describing the art of teaching, Eisner seems to have drawn out the similarities between teaching and art. Eisner (1991) takes a different position in another paper, *What The Arts Taught Me About Education*. Here he follows Dewey in clearly distinguishing between art forms and he claims that understanding in one art form is not transferable to another. While this also suggests that understanding in one context is not the same as understanding in another, he does suggest that his understanding in art has enabled him to understand education in some respects.

What the arts have taught me is that nuance counts, in teaching no less than in painting. It has taught me that not everything can be reduced to quantity and that the attempt to do so creates a destructive form of reductionism and a misleading sense of precision. I have learned from the arts that poetic language is often needed to *render* a performance vivid, and that suggestion and innuendo are often more telling than stark statement of fact. (Eisner, 1991, p. 17)

I think that the strength in these discourses is their capacity to open up education to practices that seek to extend notions of teaching and education to the benefit of learners. By focusing educational attention on art, these authors advocate a value in practices founded in uncertainty and unpredictability rather than the certainty and constraint of positivist teaching methods (e.g. behaviour management and standardised testing). I think that their success in genuinely expanding the field of educational possibility, rather than just inverting it, has been dependent on how profoundly they understand art in order to understand its lessons for education. This reminds me of Lyotard's (1988) work in *The Differend*, describing the paradoxical relationship between forms (self and other). Lyotard claims that the language of one genre is not directly translatable into the language of another, causing an
inherent misunderstanding. Through dialogue, one genre can come to its own understand­ing of the other, albeit in its own language and not the language of the other. In the case of art and education this would mean that there will always be some inconsistencies caused by mistranslations and disciplinary incoherency, yet the value of art to education, and vice versa, is more readily apparent when education becomes involved in a continual dialogue with art. Educators talking directly to artists would enrich the relationship that is currently suffering as the self (education) attributes generic “arts” qualities to artistic practice (other). Here Dewey and Eisner had an advantage, being invested in the “genres” of art and education. They stand as intermediaries, fluent in both art and education. Yet even here what seems to be missing is attention to the detail of how understandings may inform the development of critical or liberatory understandings in education.


I find it hard, though, to gather what it is that makes these relatively common exercises of qualitative research “artistic”. Even though the basic premises of art and qualitative research have a lot in common and even though they make use of one another, these concepts should not be confused. Neither the positive connotations traditionally attached to the word “art” nor expanding the concepts of “art” and “science” are acceptable excuses for this identification. If everything is art, nothing is art. (Räsänen, 2002, p. 178)

Further to her critique, Räsänen claims that implicit in Diamond and Mullen’s version of arts-based inquiry is an acceptance that art practice can adequately be called upon to inform research through writing, and that writing is the best way of making sense of the world. Not only does this omit the significance of anything existing outside of language, or
even written language, for educational practice, but also rewrites a technocratic rationality into arts-based inquiry. Arts are constrained by the limitations of the rules of written language. Räsänen suggests that investigating the possibilities of visual conceptualisation as an art practice would necessarily extend and enrich what is meant by arts-based inquiry. Michael Emme (2001) is an art educator who also calls on the visual to extend notions of inquiry. He advocates visuality as a tool for developing critical thinking in research and teaching. Emme argues that faced with the recent explosion of visual media, interpreting visual images is crucial to critical inquiry. On the subject of arts-based research he states that, “along with legitimating art education by being attentive to the research traditions in education, it is our activist task to challenge the educators to learn to look” (Emme, 2001, p. 72).

I agree that including and developing a discourse of the visual within the notion of arts-based inquiry would be a somewhat more profound use of art as an alternative means of inquiry. Visual representation has a long relationship with art practice, particularly in the Western art historical tradition where visual art methods of painting, drawing and more recently photography have been considered the closest possible representations of reality. The inclusion of visual discourses in an arts-based inquiry model makes some explanation of how art differs from other forms of inquiry practice, although, as my argument in chapter three suggests, I dispute that art should be entirely reduced to a notion of visual thinking or representation. Vision as a hegemonic discourse is removed from the context of a bodily function. Thus limiting art knowledge through representations of vision consigns the body to an object, again knowable only through the abstraction of language, in this case visual language. Following on from my earlier argument, the way out of this dilemma may be to acknowledge the embodied aspects of art as a discipline, such as technique and work, alongside the symbolic and abstract notions of art as representation and cognition. As well as considering how art is a method of inquiry or visual mode of representation, I would like to reinsert the artist into the discussion of arts-based inquiry. What do artists actually do and how do they do it? Reinserting the artist in a discussion of art inquiry may shift the
significance of art to education, from a process divorced from its content to recognition of its embeddedness.

In her review of Diamond & Mullen’s book, Räsänen raises the concern that despite being a book about arts-based inquiry, apart from the “...canonized sources of art education, Dewey and Eisner...” (2002, p. 180) the authors only use one other art source. A recent series in the journal *Curriculum Inquiry* has been dedicated to Arts-based Educational Research, and its editorial by C. T. Patrick Diamond and Christine Van Halen-Faber (2002) suggests a similarly limited derivation from art sources. Diamond and Van Halen-Faber’s notion of art seems complacent in its acceptance that Dewey’s definition of art is robust enough to stand up to all of the challenges of the 21st century. This excludes debates that have occurred subsequent to Dewey’s writing on the nature of art, such as gender and identity in representation, art and new technologies, or even the role of conceptual art in an aesthetics of the material. This omission is repeated in the two subsequent papers in the series by Clandinin & Huber (2002) and Eisner & Powell (2002). While I value the aesthetics of Dewey, and I have referred to his work throughout this thesis in order to illuminate the connections between art and material life, I do think that contemporary work on arts-based inquiry would benefit from deeper engagement in the discourses of art. Investigating a more diverse, both historically and contemporary, range of art practices would result in a richer and, particularly for artists, more satisfying collaboration between art and education. I believe that this limitation privileges a historically sanctioned, hegemonic and sanitised version of art and serves to obscure the critical practices that may actually contribute to the development of an arts-based inquiry with emancipatory aims and outcomes. I suggest that those genuinely interested in drawing connections between arts-based inquiry and emancipation should invite a wider group of art practitioners (i.e. artists, critics, theorists, educators, researchers) into their debates in order to sort out the activists from the reactionaries.
SALVAGING CRITICAL PRACTICE FOR THE ARTIST/EDUCATOR

In this section I explore the relationships between art as a means of inquiry and discipline and the implications this has for art curricula. Even when art is constructed as a discourse of inquiry, art educators may be taking for granted the relationship that art processes have with art content. While teachers focus curriculum content on art methods of inquiry, children are formulating their own disciplinary understandings of art. Without a deliberate or transparent approach to art content, the understandings being developed may be simplistic or even undesirable. To create a context that supports the growth of rich and complex art understandings, curriculum should be drawn from rich and profound art practices (both form and content). While I have already stated that not all art practices are equally emancipatory, encouraging inquiry that dialogues between disciplines opens up the possibilities for subjectivity. In particular I support the case of developing critical art education understandings through the methods of inquiry and content of critical art practices. These are practices that, through the exploration of self and its relationality to context and other selves, provide opportunities for radical and multiple notions of individual and cultural identity.

My discussion of arts-based inquiry has clear connections with my research methodology. I have engaged in a practice of academic research derived from my understandings of both education and art, and even though I still consider art my primary means of understanding the world, I am becoming increasingly fluent in my second. This is reflected in the way I have drawn together art and educational sources, and work with research forms that oscillate between art and educational methods. What may be less apparent is how the debate regarding arts-based inquiry is significant to the overall thesis of my work, i.e. re-evaluating art practice in curriculum and pedagogy.

Art educator Paul Duncum (1998/9) is critical of existing primary art education curricula. Duncum states;

Very few primary generalist teachers know much about art, and consequently what
Duncum suggests that rather than a skill based curriculum, art in a generalist education should focus on the development of meaning through visual forms, hence enabling teachers with minimal specialist knowledge in art to successfully teach it. Duncum also discounts the merits of a discipline based art education, which is in keeping with mainstream art education discourse, particularly in the United States where they are rethinking the Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) model which fragmented art knowledge and separated art from other disciplines (see Brown & Korzenik, 1993, and compare with Brown, 1999). Duncum's answer for art in general education is that art should be seen as "...a form of literacy..." (Ibid, p. 15), so that the outcome of art education is to teach children how to learn, rather than any intrinsically art outcome. Perhaps by calling on visual modes of understanding, it could be argued that Duncum is defining the art-based inquiry in his art education as more than just the generic 'arts' inquiry methods critiqued by Räsänen (2000). While discourses of vision expand the notion Duncum is dealing with, I think it also traps art within an unhelpful and constraining position in curriculum. Vision as a paradigm for understanding art is impoverished in its exclusion of physical, sensual and emotional engagement. It is also interesting that despite the position Duncum takes, his article describes a range of art education practices that demonstrate a significantly more embodied notion of art education than the theoretical framework that he draws from. Duncum describes a range of strategies for the primary generalist teacher to enable children to make and engage with art works. In the conclusion Duncum writes, "the making strategies recommended in this paper help children to explore and learn in a way that draws on and extends their existing abilities, stretches their imagination, and focuses their perceptions of the world around them" (Duncum 1998/9, p. 22). Although predominantly based in drawing, these types of art education goals suggest an engagement on the part of the children beyond constructing...
Step One: use one crayon to draw a series of wavy lines horizontally across your page.

Step Two: use the same crayon to draw a series of wavy lines vertically across your page.

Step Three: using many different coloured crayons fill in the shapes that have formed at the intersections of the lines. Use your crayons thickly and don't leave any white gaps.

Step Four: using black acrylic paint, cover the whole surface of your picture

Step Five: use a compass point or a pointed stick to scratch away the paint to make your picture.

Figure 6. Example of a primary school art expressionist exercise
meaning from visual images. Significantly children are making art works, they are developing abilities and skills and, as the concept of imagination would suggest, involved in the construction of themselves as active participants in the material of art content. They are also engaged in a reciprocal dialogue between themselves and other selves. For example, Duncum describes a conversational strategy whereby children learn to make pictures through graphical interaction and negotiation with their peers. One child sees what another child is doing and adapts it for their own needs. Although for Duncum the focus is on ‘seeing what the other child did’ and representing this in the visual form of a picture, there are clearly other relationships occurring within this single interaction. The children are in physical proximity with one another, and as peers they are positioned within a common set of social circumstances. They are subject to similar social demands, whether that is doing what a teacher wants in a classroom setting or making pictures in the way that it is expected children will make them at home. The conversation that occurs between the children is more than a case of visual communication. They are embedded within a spatial, cultural and temporal setting that impacts on the type of conversation that occurs, the ‘language’ the conversation occurs in and how the conversation is interpreted by its participants and eavesdroppers (e.g. teacher, educational researchers). All of these are aspects that are overlooked in a depiction of art as an inherently visual mode of understanding.

I think that a significant question that needs to be asked here, is that in the absence of any deliberate art content in the conversation between the children what are the disciplinary understandings of art that are being developed? My favourite example that may illuminate the significance of this question is a long-standing tradition in primary school art practice (see Figure 6). I can remember quite precisely sitting on the floor of my primer four open-plan classroom and being asked by my teacher to follow very similar instructions. I have seen similar practices used in contemporary primary classrooms. It was only in the last few years that I recognised the connections between this example of ‘school art’ and its ‘real’ art content. In fact, as is evident in the following art work by the Swiss painter Paul Klee, the art process has been replicated from an art context to the school context reasonably accurately.
The practice of drawing by scratching away the surface is called scrafitto, and this particular example by Klee is related to the expressionist movement of the early to mid twentieth century. The childlike images of *Cosmic Composition* reflect Klee’s interests in primitive, subconscious and juvenile experience, which were themes allied with expressionism. The practice I have described occurring in primary education also arose out of the influence of expressionism, that art should allow the representation of subjective, intuitive and emotional experience. Encouraging children to develop increasing control in self-expression was a clearly defined aim of the 1961 Art and Crafts syllabus (Department of Education) and as I have discussed earlier in this thesis this thread originated much earlier. The contextual significance surrounding this type of art making is so far removed from the school practice that even if it was once known it has now been forgotten.

One significant difference between the work of Klee and the school practice, is that Klee was consciously working within a tradition of Western painting and a cultural environment that enabled him to explore the notion of self-expression. What understandings of art might the scrafitto drawing activity develop in children who are not exposed to this context? The art
content of this activity has been dehistoricised and decontextualised, and it is a process divorced from art content that has become part of the tradition of primary school practice. While understandings about art content are still being produced through this activity, they are increasingly impoverished from their originally rich and complex cultural context. It has become ‘school art’. What does a child who sees another child drawing but does not see an adult drawing understand about the content of art? Perhaps the understanding that is fostered through ‘school art’ is that art is something produced by children, not adults, and consequently the significance of art as a way of engaging in their multiple cultural contexts beyond the culture of school is reduced. This discredits the potential of children, positioning their practice outside of historical traditions of knowledge and understanding. ‘School art’ practices that dislocate process from content enforce a hidden curriculum that undervalues and undermines the significance of art in contemporary culture and therefore in education. Which is to say that the value in an inquiry approach to art education is marginal unless inquiry is seen to arise within specific contexts and integrally related to content. Zimmerman and Zimmerman (2000) write about the significance of children’s art inquiry occurring within a community context, emphasising the social and cultural construction of art meaning. Drawing from Vygotsky they suggest that learning occurs within a cultural setting and that providing an enriched and culturally relevant art context enables children, through ‘active inquiry’, to “...learn to value many traditions, understand what art is, why it is made, differences in human experiences, and the variety of ways art is made” (Zimmerman & Zimmerman, 2000, p. 90).

To return to my earlier discussion of arts-based inquiry, I believe that the concepts currently being developed are significant not only for their implications for educational research and professional development, but also as core pedagogical methods for school-based curriculum. The opening up of empirical/scientific research methods to other disciplinary modes of inquiry is indicative of the way that knowledge is increasingly being understood as diverse yet interrelated. Acknowledgement of this understanding in the curriculum would mean opening up the traditional curriculum hierarchies, headed by numeracy and literacy, to a wider range of disciplines. Eisner has been one of the long-standing mainstream advocates for arts in
general education. In 1991 he claimed that he was just starting to see other educationalists, particularly developmental and differential psychologists, catch up with him.

I confess that I sometimes feel like someone standing on the sandy beach of a fog-swept sea watching a row boat filled with cognitive psychologists searching for the shore. I sometimes see myself waving to those aboard and shouting to them 'Over here! Come over here! What's taken you so long?'. (Eisner, 1991, p. 14)

As notions of intelligence have diversified, not only have arts such as music been recognised as having distinct cognitive features, but perhaps more telling, art has been shown to be a discipline that requires engagement in multiple forms of cognition. For example, Gardner's (1996) work on multiple intelligences does not distinguish a separate 'art' intelligence, but suggests that art understanding is informed by a whole range of intelligences. To do justice to a discussion on the relationship between art and cognition would require more space and time than I am willing to dedicate here, and this is a theme that I would like to address more thoroughly in the future, however it does have some bearing on the significance of art practice in education. Currently I am particularly interested in Graeme Sullivan's (2001) claim that artistic thinking is an example of transcognition. Artistic thinking is an engagement within a setting populated by artists, art viewers, art works and the other paraphernalia of art. This is consistent with my position that thinking about art is not different from making art in that they are both art activities that occur through the interaction of bodies (human, artefact and environment) in time. Even though time and space are variables, both 'making art' and 'knowing about art' are forms of art practice that occur within an art context. The work of Gardner and Sullivan are examples of an understanding about cognition that acknowledges diversity and suggests to me that art has a significant role to play in curriculum for its capacity to provide opportunities for a diverse range of aptitudes. For example, seeing art as either transcognition or a construct of multiple intelligences negates a position that claims some people are innately more talented in art than others. The value of art education lies in the way that students interact with an art context and the profundity of the art interpretations that they make within this context. This may or may not relate to how successfully they conform to existing conventions.
of art and troubles the construction of 'good drawers' as children whose drawings bear resemblance to the Western conventions of perspective drawing (see Atkinson, 1998). However, it does require some form of immersion in historical or contemporary art practices, whether this is a physical engagement with art works, learning art languages or thinking as an artist.

The main thrust of my argument here is that art should be recognised not just for its significance to interdisciplinary study, but also as a discipline in its own right. In fact the conclusion, or temporary formulation, that I have come to in finding value in art for education is that profound understanding requires some form of disciplinary understanding from which to make sense of the world. Yet I am wary of leaving this statement unchallenged. To separate art entirely from other types of knowledge privileges a positivist notion of development, that is founded on increasing fragmentation. Rather, what art offers is a contingent disciplinary knowledge, that through dialogue and negotiation can alter the shape of other disciplines, as well as be open to its own alteration. This is where the dialogue between education and art becomes crucial, particularly in the formulation of a critical pedagogy and curriculum. It is not enough to expect arts-based methods of inquiry to produce liberatory outcomes (as claimed by its proponents) without recognising the crucial role that disciplinary understanding plays in liberatory art education practice. Neither is it enough to expect that art education can be liberatory without understanding how critical understandings (such as feminism, Marxism, bi-culturalism, ecology) impact on its development.

I have already suggested that opening up a dialogue with critical art practices, the development of arts-based inquiries can expand understandings of emancipatory practice. Critical art practices, such as the 'Body Art' discussed in Chapter 4, open up the spaces in between formalised and conventional practices of art, and make visible the procreativity and negotiation of selves. They show similarities in form to the desires expressed by Diamond and Mullen (1999), in that inquiry is responsive to desire, fluid and has indeterminate ends. However, the strength of including critical art practices within an education with emancipatory goals is also that the critical element is embodied within a material context of art content. Inquiry is embodied within the complexity of a learning context rather than contributing to its fragmenta-
tion. Equally importantly, I believe, is that ideas such as Jones’ (1998) notion of ‘body art’, founded on a reciprocal and contingent subjectivity, open up the possibilities that profound interdisciplinary understandings do not occur in an indiscriminate fashion. They require sustained dialogue, between and across disciplines, and through engagement in contextual understandings may result in the development of new disciplinary understandings. For example, modernist art has been open to the influence of critical discourses, like feminism, and resulted in the formulation of new critical art practices (like feminist art). Critical artists and art educators are also engaged in practices that have distinctively ‘art’ characteristics and enable critical practice. The sculptural ‘paintings’ of Rosemarie Trockel using stove-top elements speak of an inquiry into domesticity and the role of women (see Figure 8), but her works are also engaged in dialogue with the big, formalist, abstract paintings of male avant garde painters like Kasimir Malevich, Barnett Newman and Frank Stella or pop art of Richard Artschwager and Robert Rauschenburg.

Figure 8. Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled (Oven plates)*, 1991

The practices of critical artists have significance to the development of curriculum and pedagogy in that they are a source of critical content as well as being a source of critical method that expands possibilities of inquiry and interpretation. The same could be said of the practices of critical educators. Art educator Elizabeth Grierson (2000b) claims that it is the ethical responsibility of art educators to review how institutions or paradigms of knowledge operate within art education contexts. She argues that art pedagogies within a postmodern context are engaged in the discursive definition of subjectivities and can also participate in revealing their
construction. “If practices of pedagogy are open to discursive framing of our subjectivities, then it matters whom the pedagogy serves and how mechanisms of the pedagogy are instituted in policy and practice” (Grierson, 2000b, p. 7). Consequently, art educators have an ethical responsibility to engage in critical pedagogies, enabling “...a critical approach to questions of subjectivity, identity, history, knowledge formations, as well as processes, representational systems and significations, through the creative practices of the arts” (p. 8). It is important not to lose sight of the agency of teachers in the construction of enabling discourses. Following Ricoeur (1981) discourse is an embodied act too.

Within educational discourse, critical pedagogy is also caught within a dilemma where learning has both liberatory and authoritarian characteristics. In order to foster learning teachers must bring more to the pedagogical relationship than their students already contain. At the same time learners are asked to act upon the intended curriculum, thus subject to a demand to change themselves and become something that they were not before. Sharon Todd (2001) writes about the act of learning as an endeavour fraught with an ontological violence where students are coerced into altering themselves, and are shaped by the pedagogy of their teacher3. There is an implicit violence in the control exerted by the teacher, even though learners must acquiesce to pedagogical demands to achieve sociality, or to become able to define their subjectivity in relation to others. Learning occurs through a struggle to become more like a socialised human being and less like a wild and individual collection of nerves and responses. To stay the same and remain a unified and unitary self, would be to remain as isolated and from others as a newly born infant.

Teachers are also caught in relationships of inherent violence and authoritarian control both as authorities themselves but also subject to higher authorities such as institutional and social constraints and the people through which they operate. However Todd (2001) suggests, that from their position of authority, teachers have an ethical responsibility to minimise the effects of the violence of learning for their students. It is the ethicality that is in effect a non-violent element within the relationship between student and teacher. Teachers can use power to construct an environment which fosters learning as well as demands it.
At the same time as pedagogy demands that its subjects ‘learn to become’, in practice there is a great deal of uncertainty and unpredictability to the pedagogical enterprise. People bring a host of idiosyncrasies and unconscious associations that enable them to resist, transform and create symbolic attachments which pedagogy cannot predict or control. (Todd, 2001, p. 436)

Characterised as a practice of ambiguity and uncertainty, learning to some extent defies the exertion of pedagogical control. Recognising and anticipating that students learn in unpredictable ways goes beyond characterising students as merely resistant to their teachers’ demands. Resistance would imply that a student resists the pedagogical demand in order to stay the same. Unpredictability and uncertainty are part of the ontological condition of learning and I believe that they need to be anticipated in order to foster an ethical pedagogical practice. Anticipating uncertainty does not mean predicting the outcomes of learning, but anticipating that the outcomes themselves will not be entirely predictable. Herein lies the potential for teachers to develop a relationality between themselves and their students that transcends a linear relationship of domination, subjection and resistance. The ethical responsibility of the teacher is twofold. Teachers can maintain an acceptance of or preparedness for the uncertain path that a student will follow by developing a pedagogy that accommodates uncertainty. And as they do they will also be opening up their pedagogy to the critical content which will enable learners to become more than they were before. An indeterminate and critical pedagogy should reveal its narrative structure, thus laying bare how it acts as a discourse of power. Sustaining criticality in teaching and learning is in part founded in shifting the form of teaching, as a form of authority, into the content of curriculum. In the same way that I have found content and form in the discipline of art to have become inextricably entangled, so too have its pedagogy and curriculum. In the following, and final section of this chapter I explore particular examples of how critical narratives may shape the form and content (pedagogy and curriculum) of a critical art education practice. These are examples of how art and education may be brought into dialogue with each other.
THE PRACTICE OF CRITICAL ART EDUCATION

In her book *The Gendering of Art Education*, Pen Dalton (2001) writes specifically about the way art education is developed through discourses of gender and the role it also plays in constructing gender in society. I think that her work is useful in understanding the value of a critical art education practice and how it can function as an exemplar of cross-disciplinary understanding. Dalton claims that aesthetics has been a site of feminine subversion of Enlightenment rationality. "Aesthetics emerged as an Enlightenment discourse not in opposition to science’s inquiring and critical spirit, but as an attempt to make rational sense of all those human areas of existence that are beyond the realm of the empirical gaze, measurement and categorization…” (Dalton, 2001, p. 141). Dalton describes ‘the aesthetic’ as being more than a discipline in the sense of art conventions and historical practice, but a whole, yet indefinite, way of organising ideas. Her work is critical of contemporary and conventional art educations that have been developed from systems models, an example of such is Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) developed in the United States but influential throughout the western world. DBAE is identified as one of the philosophies influential in the development of New Zealand art education by the arts curriculum developers. “DBAE is an approach based on a set of principles surrounding the study of art, which integrates content and skills from four areas: art making, art history, art criticism, art aesthetics, that contribute to the creation and understanding, and appreciation of art” (Foley, et al. 1999, para 1.3). Dalton claims models of practice like DBAE have more to do with economic and patriarchal power interests than a critical educative purpose. Dalton’s criticism reminds me that I am walking a fine line, negotiating between art as a discipline and method of inquiry. My argument to retain the concept of art discipline may be read in support of a purely discipline-based model of art, even though I think I am actually closer to Dalton’s position than that. Dalton suggests that understanding the aesthetic as a way of making sense of irrational, unpredictable and ‘human’ existence may serve as a model paradigm for art education, which in practice would be “…more appropriate to arts education aims and more inclusive of the creative and interventionist values which represent the interests of real women”, (Ibid, p. 142). Although Dalton does not directly discuss the implications of this idea on practice, her earlier discussion on critical art practices that she claims underpin her theoretical perspective suggests that these also would have great
significance to her vision of art education. I think that too often the notion of the discipline of art is characterised as a masculine, rational and particularly modernist idea, excluding the possibility that critical art is also an art disciplinary understanding. The art practices privileged under this type of categorisation might consist of perspectival projection and its negation in the modernist grid composition, mimetic representation in sculptural form or linear generative notions of development. This privilege obscures other locations where the discipline of art may occur, e.g. some feminist art that has been founded on an organic rather than scientific notion of development, Sunday artists whose exhibitions I regularly see in the lobbies of supermarkets, the conjunction of doctrine and representation in the political art of the Soviet Union. Understanding the discipline of art as variable, multiple and transient revalues the actual embodied experiences of art as intersubjective developments in multidisciplinary understandings. The boundaries of art shift, but they have not yet dissolved and artists continue to engage within their limits. Dalton argues that feminist understandings of art should gain significance in art education through focusing art educational attention on the paradigm of aesthetics. While she argues against the notion of a disciplinary centred practice like DBAE, I think her position could also be the basis for an argument to extend disciplinary practices to include feminist art as legitimate conduits for developing art understandings. This is consistent with Dalton’s use of the term aesthetic which, although she constructs it as a wide ranging term, clearly has a contingent relationship with art. Thus a contingent discipline, rather than a unified one, may actually serve her purpose. As well, the type of inquiry methods in feminist art practices, and the content from which they cannot be separated, bears greater resemblance to the emancipatory arts-based inquiries of Diamond and Mullen (1999) than the conventional art practices they actually draw upon. Dalton (2001) claims that:

Feminist artists broke down media barriers prevalent in art criticism and education, and employed interdisciplinary techniques with ‘content’. They asserted the functions of the body in performance. Using strategies of embarrassment and shame, they disturbed and exposed the modernist claims of autonomy, objectivity and implicitly questioned the privileging of the Cartesian subject underpinning the priorities of
While Feminist art's troubling of dominant rationalising forces operating in modernist art, parallels arts-based inquiry's critique of positivist method, what feminist art does not do is claim that it is 'other' than art. Feminist art practices have relationships to other disciplines and disciplinary methods, but are not devoid of art content. I believe that introducing critical practices such as feminist art into curriculum may provide an example of how an 'art' inquiry could extend the possibilities for learning. Teachers using models of art practice that negotiate power and authority and acknowledge lived experience, open up possibilities for students' development within the context of art education, thus addressing the pedagogical demand of ethical practice. By immersing learning in the content of art, art is embodied in students' experiences of reality and in the way they interact with their environment. It also becomes part of the way students construct meaning for themselves and come to know others. For some learners, art holds particular relevance as it offers forms of interpretation, representation or activity that are not necessarily limited to the constraints of language. For some others, embodiment in art is the most satisfying and rich way to engage with their social and cultural context. And for others, their immersion in art practice becomes the basis on which they can begin to formulate understandings of the 'other' as they open up a dialogue between the disciplines that underpin their own, chosen forms of representation and art. Although to achieve these types of aims, not just any art inquiry will do. Art inquiry that is embodied within a context of liberatory and critical art practice provides more opportunities for liberatory and critical inquiry, and has the potential to profoundly effect the way learners construct themselves and those around them by expanding possibilities for subjectivity and sociality rather than closing them down.

In the feminist art education implied through Dalton's work, art practice is valuable in that it creates a contingent disciplinary context from which to explore multidisciplinary knowledge, informed by the multidisciplinary practices of feminist artists. Art practice can also serve as an exemplar for education more generally, by demonstrating how the disciplinary understandings of art may be used to rewrite the understandings of education. As an embodied
subject of art Jan Jagodzinski (1992) is engaged in forms of representation and practice beyond a notion of language. Writing on curriculum, Jagodzinski weaves together the lexicon of formal representation and lived experience, using the formal properties of Western painting as categories of experience. He suggests that the lived experience of art curriculum exists in the spaces between the formal properties e.g. line, colour, texture, mass, scale, space. “This is the space of play, of risk, of creativity” (Jagodzinski, 1992, p. 159), yet he also problematises an uncritical division or linearity between form and creativity. Instead Jagodzinski’s writing suggests to me that there is a continual engagement between form and process, and that form (or the body) within the context of time and space, is itself in a continual state of re-creation.

The spacial [sic] -temporal experience of “line” is continually informed by the body’s negotiation between becoming lost and finding a direction. Such journeys are always packed with ambiguity, paradox, and, above all, surprise (Ibid, pp. 160-161).

In the text, Jagodzinski appears to be describing a pedagogy of indeterminacy and critique that can be found through the disciplinary understandings of art. What appeals to me in this formulation of curriculum is that it fulfils my desire of being embodied in the human condition, full of unpredictability and complexity, as well as being more particularly formulated from the contextual understandings of art. As such it negotiates between disciplinary knowledge and interdisciplinary inquiry, providing an example of how curriculum may be formulated from other disciplinary understandings. Seeing this writing as an exemplar rather than an attempt to define a unified model for general education practice, describes a different approach from the arts-based inquiry models which appear to be general rather than particular solutions. Its significance as an addition to curriculum also lies in its capacity to invite students to re-invent themselves without necessarily relying on the efficacy of words. A curriculum that privileges literacy as interpretation is exclusionary, isolating learners whose primary engagement with their world does not conform to the structural requirements of language.

To argue for a material basis for art education, as well as education more generally, makes no sense unless the argument is translated into the context of practice. The interactions that occur
between pedagogy, curriculum and learning in the art room are complex, extending into the culture in which they are embedded and which is embodied in them. They require a complex analysis that, rather than attempting to define the complexities, is cognisant of its own inadequacies. Thus allowing theoretical analysis to exist as both form and its representation, in the same way that art works are embodied representations of the ideas, emotions, sensations and experiences of those who engage with them. In some respects the construction of this entire text represents a transition between theory and practice, as I shift between positions of academic researcher and artist.
Notes:

1 This particular work by Duncum is used as the primary source material. For other examples see Duncum (1999, 2001).

2 Which is not to undermine or discount the complexities surrounding the relationship between visual representation and art theory, history, practice and criticism. In particular see ‘Part Two: Representation’ of The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader (Jones, 2003) for a range of authors (including Berger, Chicago and Schapiro, Mulvey, Barry and Flitterman-Lewis, Doane, Kelly, Pollock, hooks, Phelan) on the contested nature of representation throughout the last quarter of the 20th century.

3 Other sources on the construction of ethical and emancipatory pedagogies that problematise the subject include Epstein (1993); Miedema & Wardekker (1999).
CONCLUSION

In this final chapter I shift more definitively from the context of academic and authorial voice to a fictional narrative. The fictional genre has a close relationship with artistic representation and through modelling its use I want to show how artistic forms of representation and the inquiry that precedes them are intrinsically interrelated to the content that they describe. The indeterminacy of fiction also more closely represents the context of practice, both sharing shifting forms and imprecise openings.

The narrative is in the form of a play script, which seemed the most appropriate form to make the co-construction of understanding apparent. The form is inherently dialogic and enabled me to present contingent and reciprocal voices and identities, embedded within social structures and cultural contexts.
SALVAGING PRACTICE

A play with many parts

CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):
RESEARCHER. A female doctoral student from the university. Aged in mid 30s. Wears jeans and well-worn shoes. Chin length hair is dyed orangish with regrowth showing through. Wears glasses. Wants to find a value for art education beyond the relativism of the postmodern condition.

SHARN. A Head of Department of a large co-educational state secondary school. Aged late 40s. Hair is dyed auburn and cut in a long bob. Wears a new t-shirt tucked into dress jeans, tasteful gold accessories and strappy sandals. Enjoys seeing the progression her students make when she sets up the right learning conditions.

NATHAN. An artist. Samoan. Late 30s. Clothes look fairly new and trendy, especially shiny black shoes. Makes art that he finds amusing, teaches adults because it earns him money but fundamentally believes there is nothing else he’d rather be doing than being an artist.

GRANT. An art teacher from the same department as Sham. Hair is long and untidy. Early 40s. Wears scruffy clothes covered in paint and holes. Boots have paint on them. Believes that his role as a teacher is to pass on the skills of art in a fair and equitable manner.

MEL. An art teacher from the same department as Sham and Grant. Aged about 30. Hair is long and pulled up roughly on top of head. She dresses casually in a long flowing skirt and baggy top. Shoes have flat heels but are of a fashionable style. Wears handmade jewellery. Wants to empower her students so that they can all find a place for themselves in art curriculum.

SUZE. An art teacher at a central city girls’ school. Aged about 30. Bleached blonde hair cut short and has a range of piercings in her ears and nose. Clothes very stylish but casual. Believes it is her role to get students to challenge unfair practices and the limits of imposed authorities.

GRAEME SULLIVAN. Played by himself. (Sullivan, 2001, p. 9)

JANET WOLFF. Played by herself. (Wolff, 1999, pp. 501-202)

ELWYN RICHARDSON. Played by himself. (Richardson, 1964, p. 197)
SCENE: A group of six adults are in the artist Nathan Apelu’s comfortable living room sitting in stylishly retro sofas, vinyl bean-bags and large faux siapo floor cushions. There are numerous art works on the walls, along with Nathan’s extensive collection of pasifika and palangi kitsch.

RESEARCHER - Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today...

<Sharn opens up her diary, pen poised to write>

RESEARCHER - ...it’s so good to see you all together in one place and I hope that this experience today will be of as much use to you as it is to me. I know that when I’ve met you all before you’ve shown a marvellous willingness to share your ideas, and genuinely engage with each other. I really value that. There’s a number of things I’d like to do today, hopefully not to the detriment of you continuing your conversations here today. I’d like you to help me construct some theories for art learning, that is, for us to make our own theories about what is valuable about making art in schools. And to try them out in practice, a hypothetical practice. So what I thought could happen is that first we could spend some time talking about the value of art to curriculum and then go on to plan a unit of work, based on our common understandings, or differences, about what makes art practice valuable. You see I am looking for value in art education but I don’t think the quest will be simple...

SHARN - Art doesn’t necessarily make you a better person you know.

RESEARCHER – No. I agree...

SHARN – In fact many of the artists I know are critical and cynical individuals.

<Nath unconsciously looks in Nathan’s direction, but when he notices she puts on one of her impervious professional smiles.>

NATHAN <defensively>– Don’t you often feel that our difference is pathologised?

RESEARCHER – Pathologised?

NATHAN – That art is treated as an illness, an emotional disease?

RESEARCHER – I’m not sure that I understand what you mean.

NATHAN - <takes down a plaque off the wall and reads>

HOW TO BE AN ARTIST,

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SARK © 1990 not just for artists

GRANT <laughs> - An excess of optimism!

MEL <smiling> – I know those generalisations sound trite, but there is something in it isn’t there? We’re not all quite like that but we’re not the same as other people, we think about things differently. That’s our advantage.

SUZE – Or disadvantage…

RESEARCHER – But the way that you think, I’m not yet sure that it is different from the way others think.

MEL – Artists don’t think in straight lines. And they never know where they’re going nor what will inspire. When I was listening to Nat reading a few moments ago, and I was listening, part of my mind was looking at that yellow cup, the one with a spoon in it, over there. <She points> I was looking at it and when my head tilted to just this angle <tilts head> the spoon lined up with the diagonal of the table top on the far wall. And it reminded me of a painting I’d seen in a book last week. Not the subject matter, the painting was an exterior scene, but the colours and forms. The strong diagonals…

SUZE – So the content wasn’t important? Going down that road takes you to a position where paintings are all about surface and all that modernist formalism rubbish. That’s one of my biggest gripes about art education in schools, everything is about trickery and getting the prettiest effect, it is especially endemic at Bursary level. That’s why some teachers get much better results than others. The work they encourage is slick and lacks content, meaningful content that is, and the students don’t even understand what they’ve produced or why. Where are they in modernism? Where are the students?

MEL – No, I don’t think I meant that. I do think that we start from ourselves and our own
interests when we are working as artists, but also as art teachers we develop curriculum from our own interests. Because we are interested, very interested, in art. And sometimes our interests are ‘issues-based’ and sometimes they are formal, but mostly they’re both. But I do think sometimes art teachers forget how much we have internalised the relationships between content and form and constantly make decisions based on both of them without really recognising it. They get muddled up in our thinking. Developing both appears so natural that sometimes in the classroom one or the other gets overlooked. And I agree with you, most often it is content. We probably should give up more control of curriculum content, in the interests of our students.

GRANT – But form is important too. In fact I’d say it’s useless to talk about content until they’ve got the skills, the formal skills to convey it. Drawing in particular. Drawing is the way that we communicate our ideas. Without an understanding of form, or how to create it through skill and technique, our students can’t do that. They can’t communicate their ideas.

SHARN - Which is why modelling is so important. Because we are interested in what we teach, and already competent as artists we can model our practice for our students. I love to get stuck into some printmaking before I take a printmaking unit, or go out and take some photographs with the kids...

GRANT – …And when you’re doing it as well it’s so much easier to talk to the kids about what they’re facing. What’s going on for them. You can discuss the way the light hits the top of the table and not the bottom ‘til the cows come home, but if you can show them, through drawing, that’s a whole ‘nother thing. It’s the communication thing...

MEL – See that’s the thing, isn’t drawing more than just communication? Isn’t it thinking too? Like when I’m drawing in three dimensions, or making maquettes, towards making sculpture, it’s not just to communicate my ideas, it is my ideas, my ideas realised in space. The maquettes are my thinking.

SUZE – But not necessarily critical thinking...

NATHAN <interrupts> – I’ve never taught kids, but I do take workshops for adults. And it’s different then because they all have their own interests, and are working on different things, and you have to keep all these different ideas in your head, and respond to each one differently.

SUZE – I don’t know. I think it could work like that with kids too.

MEL - It does sometimes, when you actually manage to find out what they are interested in. But with children their interests, especially art interests, are less developed, and so you have to provide a range of experiences in order to develop them.
NATHAN - It's really demanding to key into all those different minds and help them in some way. And sometimes I wonder if they really need me. What am I actually contributing to their development? They have quite fixed ideas about the content of their work, and often about the way they're going to express it too. The worst ones are those die-hards who use water-colours and nothing else. And they ask me what my work is about and when I tell them I can see their respect diminish as they realise that I won't be showing them how to use a fine sable brush to create ripples on their oceans. It's lucky I have an ego robust enough to deal with it!

SHARN <smiles at the Researcher and puts her pen down on top of her now closed diary> - We seem to have gotten off topic. I'm sorry. What would you like us to discuss?

RESEARCHER - No it's fine. Really! I think this discussion on form and content is really quite crucial. It's giving me some insight into how they have operated as structuring elements in Western art traditions, yet how they are actually quite muddy categories. Although I still think they have some bearing on how art differs from other forms of social practice...

SUZE - Getting back to Nathan's example, of those watercolourists, it's not just about technique. There's a whole cultural history that surrounds it. Upper-class girls who were trained in watercolour as part of their grooming, colonial expeditions with watercolourists on their vessels to document the newly discovered land masses ripe for exploitation or intrepid middle-class women tourists using watercolour notebooks to record their travels in the 19th century.

GRANT - You know Prince Charles is a keen watercolourist.

SUZE - Exactly! Watercolour painting isn't just a technique, it's about class. Why don't we teach that in the classroom? When we don't make the social history of art visible we are perpetuating the myths that the techniques hide.

MEL <musing> - I've always liked those watercolours by Sherrie Levine. Where she copies oil paintings by the grand masters, but domesticates them...

SUZE <more conciliatory> - Okay, so watercolour can also be a radical act.

MEL - But that's part of the problem isn't it <looks at researcher> in saying that we're talking about form and content, it presupposes that there is such a thing as form and content, I mean definitively. But it's not like that when you're making art, or curriculum for that matter. When you're making art you draw from everything and anything, it's the how that matters, the thinking! 'Cos you're making connections all over the place.
RESEARCHER – But do you really draw from anywhere? With the watercolour example, there’s a historical context that Suze was clearly making reference to?

<There’s a knock at the front door visible from the room and Nathan puts down his glass of red wine on a paua shell coaster. He opens the door and looks quizzically at the newcomer who, at ease, enters the room and sits down.>

RESEARCHER – I’m sorry, I forgot to mention that we might have some visitors while we’re talking, just a few. People who may have some significance to our discussion. This is Graeme Sullivan, an art education researcher, who is interested in the roles that processes, practices and contexts play in the development of artistic thinking. I think that his notion of transcognition has significance to our discussion of where and how those art connections are made. <Turns to Graeme Sullivan> Could you tell us more about this, in relation to the Critical Influence project? <She turns to the others to explain> That was a project where he undertook a 12 month investigation into the thinking of two artists as they prepared for exhibition.

GRAEME SULLIVAN – The outcomes of the Critical Influence project indicate that mapping the cognitive character of artistic practice there is a need to move towards a reconciliation of the process-product dichotomy. This involves a melding of the psychological view that describes art learning as ‘thinking in a medium’, and the interpretative position that describes art knowing as “thinking in a language”. This can be described as ‘thinking in a setting’... The cognitive coalition involves an on-going dialogue between, within and around the artist, artwork, viewer, and context where each has a role in co-constructing meaning. This process is iterative and strategic in nature as meaning is encompassed and negotiated. I describe this as transcognition. Transcognition is a process where the ‘self’ and ‘others’ are parallel and necessary agents of mind that inform each other through analysis and critique... The strategic interaction between the self and others occurs over time and involves iteration and negotiation as individual purpose is mediated by situational factors. During this time, concerns about process and product serve as a basis upon which practice is grounded.

<Once Graeme Sullivan finishes talking he quietly gets up and leaves. Nathan looks surprised but no-one else appears to notice.>

MEL – So, the connections that are being made are not random but strategic?

GRANT – Say that again...

MEL – Well you do actually draw the connections together, from all over the place like I said, but there’s a deliberation to it. Like with the watercolour example, you can choose to make connections between watercolour and radical feminism or you can choose to connect it to the
traditions of middle-class privilege.

RESEARCHER – But is it entirely a matter of choosing to do this? Choosing freely I mean.

GRANT – Well there are the situational constraints, aren’t there, I mean you don’t choose to connect watercolour painting to travelling to the moon.

MEL – But you might do, if it had strategic importance – like if you were trying to get the kids to think about how the colonists arrived in new lands and just imposed their vision anywhere that they landed. And then you got them to make paintings of the moonscapes from their own world view. And then talked about how it might be different if a Moon person tried to represent the moon, because of it just being dust and having no other materials and...

GRANT – ...and reflecting their own cultural perspective on representation, whatever that would be. Yeah I get you.

SUZE – But what about the things Graeme Sullivan was saying about the ‘self’ and ‘others’? That was fascinating stuff. Pretty dense though. Wasn’t that something to do with the constraints that we all face in understanding art? A shame we can’t replay it.

RESEARCHER – Oh but we can! <She lifts up a tape recorder, and rewinds>

Tape replays - I describe this as transcognition. Transcognition is a process where the ‘self’ and ‘others’ are parallel and necessary agents of mind that inform each other through analysis and critique... The strategic interaction between the self and others occurs over time and involves iteration and negotiation as individual purpose is mediated by situational factors.

SUZE – Yes that was it, the self and others are agents, so a single self constructs meaning in negotiation with others, not freely by themselves.

RESEARCHER – Through analysis and critique and over time.

SUZE – And both self and others are active agents in the construction of the situation or context, which is why as a teacher you can decide to connect watercolour to the moon, because through thinking within a setting, you are also constructing that setting.

GRANT – And others are also constructing that setting and anything that veers too wildly from the shared understandings may result in conflict. Like my first job, when I was working at St Pat’s and how old Peter used to go on about which were acceptable and unacceptable images to use in the art room. And then one day I brought in this poster I had of a painting by Hieronymus
Bosch and put it on the wall. And the kids loved it, all that fine detail and creepy weird animals and fantastic machines. But then I got a complaint from a parent about the nudity in it, and Peter got wild and then I found myself in the principal’s office and in the end I had to write an apology and what for? For goodness sakes – he was a religious painter.

NATHAN - But your problem was because the setting was not just about interpersonal relationships. The constraints imposed within that setting can also be really huge things, structural things. In your example, Grant, your understanding about art was interacting with fundamental issues to do morality, which was an outcome of a particular religious doctrine which regulates the way people react.

MEL - But couldn’t someone have just stood up and said “hey, what a load of nonsense”

NATHAN - But they don’t. I see it all the time with institutional racism. I’ve got this mate who’s a curator in one of the public galleries up north. We get on great socially, and there’s no way you would say he was racist. But you just try and get him to show my work in the gallery through any frame other than as a Pacific Island artist. He can’t. Nathan Apelu equals Samoan art. The whole functioning of the gallery is based on making up categories and slotting people into them. It just can’t cope with the fact that categories don’t exist.

SUZE - So do they or don’t they exist then? Am I bound by structures or can I break them? I’d like to think I have some agency.

RESEARCHER - I think that they do exist, but perhaps not in quite the same form as they were conceived of in the past.

<There is knock at the door, Nathan answers it. A woman enters the room.>

RESEARCHER - This is Janet Wolff. She writes on the sociology of art and cultural studies.

JANET WOLFF - In short, a sociological model that takes categories of “class” and “gender” as unproblematically given, and that reads cultural activities and products as expressions of class (and other) positions, is revealed as fundamentally determinist and theoretically naive...Once we acknowledge that those social categories (class, race, gender, and so on) are themselves discursive constructs, historically changing articulations, and, ultimately, no more than heuristics devices in analysis (and, of course, in political mobilization), then where is that solidity of the social world on which a cultural studies that is not “purely textual” can depend?

In my view, this necessary rethinking of the sociological project does not translate into license for “wild interpretation”. Indeed, in the past few years encouraging signs have appeared within the discipline of a determination to engage with critical theory in the humanities and in cultural
SUZE - Whoo!

RESEARCHER - She has an interesting take on identity and self too that might add something to the discussion. She claims that identity is constructed from discourse and cultural narrative, what it consists of depends upon the interpretive context. Yet we experience identity as if it is fixed, and this is what makes a structural analysis of identity still important.

SUZE - This is fascinating. Have I got it straight? It appears as though we are constrained by categories of race, class and gender, and others of course, and in fact we are, because that's how we experience them, but...and this is the important bit, these categories are actually changing in meaning from one setting to another. So doesn't that mean that there is potential within a cultural setting to expand their meanings, to sort of blow them open?

SHARN - Well that's what happened with the woman's movement in the 70s. Being a “woman” then meant something a whole lot different than for my mother's generation.

SUZE - But then as the meaning of “woman” changed even more, like in the 1980s, it became apparent that the changed meaning of the category wasn't as liberatory as first imagined.

RESEARCHER - And so in art you get all that work about dissolving the categories, Griselda Pollock, Mary Kelly...

MEL - But it didn't work did it. Because now we are in 2003 and there's two men and four women sitting here. We've not ended the categories, they're still part of our identities...

SUZE - Even though the meaning is not quite the same.

MEL - You think that might hold for form and content too? As categories of art. They're so hard to pin down because they change all the time. But from within particular conventions they act as structuring devices. They have rules.

RESEARCHER - Interesting point.

<There is a lull in the conversation.>

RESEARCHER - Maybe this would be a pertinent time for us to start negotiating our context.
The part that we have control over that is. Planning our unit – the art unit that will demonstrate what is valuable about art learning.

SHARN – And how would you like us to do that?

RESEARCHER – Well how do you usually go about planning?

MEL – It starts with a conversation! Just like this really.

GRANT – I like to look at images. I notice you have a pile of books there…

NATHAN – And feel free to make use of mine <he indicates to a bookcase amply stocked with art books; thin paperbacks and compulsorily fat hard covers.>

MEL – We’re looking at negotiated meanings aren’t we. And then there was that idea about ‘thinking within a setting’. Well this is our setting isn’t it <indicates around the room> And it’s a very rich setting too. Could this be the basis for our unit? The things that are all about us in this room, the collection of art works and the variety art and craft forms and the colours and textures. They are pretty inspiring.

NATHAN – I’m flattered!

SHARN – I like that idea Mel. It provides a common ground then, we’re all in this space together.

GRANT – And Nat’ll make a great artist model <points to one of the large wall works that had been exhibited in Nat’s last show>.

SUZE – And if we follow some of that thinking from before, <her voice slows> we are also both part of the setting and engaged in constructing, or maybe reconstructing the setting. <And speeds up> Which gets you well away from the fatuous idea that meanings are embedded in art works and that with the right education we will be able draw them out. And instead allows that meanings are actually constructed by the context. Like this. <Suze picks up a bottle opener in the shape of a Hawaiian hula dancer> I mean, where else apart from in this totally astonishing collection of ‘objet d’art’ would this not be considered completely offensive.

RESEARCHER – Could you elaborate on what you mean by context?

SUZE – Well I guess all the other things around us, and the way they’ve been put together. I suppose. By Nat. Can you tell me what you are getting at?
RESEARCHER – It’s just you said that we’re all involved in constructing the context. And if that’s the case then all the meanings that we bring here are informing it. And that’s more than just Nat’s intention in bringing the collection together isn’t it.

SUZE – Okay...

RESEARCHER – So what role does your understanding of that bottle-opener’s offensive meanings, even if that’s in another context, play in this context?

<Suze, very unusually, struggles nor a moment to find words.>

RESEARCHER – Okay putting it back into the context of practice, how important to you are those offensive meanings as a source of content? For curriculum?

SUZE – Well yes, of course they are. Undoubtedly...

MEL – Its like the other example, watercolour. The meanings there were multiple and sometimes even critical, like the Sherrie Levine watercolours, but unless you knew some of the outside history you wouldn’t get those critical meanings. I mean you’d have to know about more than just what’s immediately apparent, more than just the paintings in front of you. You’d need a whole conceptual structure, understanding about the feminist critique of the master artist and his all seeing eye. And the same with the bottle opener. As we said before, the context doesn’t begin and end here, there’s also all that history of colonial and patriarchal oppression and popular culture.

SUZE – And those understandings are the most important, if your aim is education that is. I think that to understand the way the world functions it is crucial to develop understandings about the fringes and borders. The places where power relationships impact on people’s lives.

NATHAN – And that’s all part of the context. Having those understandings, being able to connect something in the here and now to a whole raft of other events and ideas and objects.

GRANT – <Grant goes over to the book shelf and as he talks, carefully selects several books>. And for each one of us that’ll be different because we’ve all had different experiences so we bring different experiences to this one context. So then it’s not one context is it? It’s a bit different for each of us. And that’s what it’ll be like for the kids, they all come with a raft of different understandings.

SHARN - And won’t that mean that in our unit we can’t assume they’re all starting from the same place? So do we accommodate that difference from the beginning or do we go in and start off working all together on the same basic skills? <Sharn leans over to the coffee table and
grabs a large blue crayon and a sheet of newsprint. She kneels at the table and makes a space to work>.

GRANT – Well there are some basic generic skills. Like drawing. We should get them all drawing together. It doesn’t do the ones who know how to do it any harm, it’s not as if once you’ve mastered some basic drawing skills you don’t need to do them any more.

SUZE – I don’t know about starting off with drawing. I mean if they are all coming from different places then that might mean that for some of them drawing will turn them off completely. You know all that “I’m not very good at drawing, but Lucy’s a really good drawer” stuff. And it’s not just the ‘innately’ talented we’ll be privileging. There’s also a social justice issue. A few of them will already have the right cultural capital. Maybe some of them will have parents who have a lot of art at home, or some of them might have been to art classes out of school. If we want to capture as many of them as we can at the start I think we need to think about empowering those who can’t, so they can achieve as well as those who can.

GRANT – But there are strategies and skills that can be taught, really easy ones, that are accessible for anyone. It’s really important that we show them that drawing is something they can do, just by learning the right tricks. I mean even the renaissance artists used tricks like the camera obscura and perspective grids.

MEL – I agree with you Grant about teaching those things within the right settings. I like the idea of demystifying those processes to make them more accessible. But Suze may also have a point. If we’re looking to build on children’s prior experiences then I think we need some way of getting them to see themselves in this project right from the start. We could start off by getting them interested in something that relates to our theme. Perhaps we could look at a range of images or objects, and they could choose which one they like the best.

GRANT – I could live with that. But we shouldn’t make it an open slather. Too many choices will lead to chaos.

MEL – Yes I think you’re right. I always find that Bursary has far too many choices and it’s always so difficult getting them to fix on one thing. Some of them can’t make up their minds about what they want to focus on. And then someone will want to change to a different theme, and then another one does, and it always turns out quite a few of them were never really committed to what they said they were. And anyway, in this unit we want them to make choices within the context that we’re all involved in constructing. As we said earlier choices are never entirely free, they are negotiated between self and others. And I think that it’s really important that the students develop some shared understandings and to achieve that their choices would certainly need to be restricted.
SHARN – So we start off with a range of pictures? Art works?

NATHAN – I’m not a teacher, as you all know. But that’s not how I’d do it.

SHARN – Go on.

NATHAN – Well as an artist. I mean I’m really influenced by the work of others, it goes without saying that the art books I read, and exhibitions I go to and artists I mix with have a huge influence on my work. But that’s not where I start when I’m making art. It usually starts with an idea, an idea sparked off by something I see. Or taste or smell or hear. Or something someone says. And then I’ll make a note of it in my workbook, a sketch of it or a written note. Sometimes I’ll even start working through the idea straight away.

SUZE – A workbook might do it you know. As a way of working through their ideas in the forms of their choice. They take notes, or draw or collect images or all of those. I know that in 6th form the girls keep a workbook and they respond to it in very different ways. For some of them you can see that their use of it is tokenism, but I think that’s got a lot to do with it being assessed. They stuff a whole lot of things in it at the last minute, stuff that they think I’ll be interested in, like cut outs from a single newspaper or woman’s weekly and photocopies of art works. But really the ones who use it to most effect may use it often or only occasionally, and what they put in it varies incredibly too. It may be a whole diatribe of their personal thoughts or it may be a few quick doodles that they jotted down in the middle of maths. But I think the thing is to make it theirs, they don’t have to show all of what goes in it if they don’t want to, I find the idea of assessing a workbook personally invasive.

SHARN – Okay workbooks are definite then. Assuming they’ve not been using them previously, we’ll need to introduce the idea quite early on. How will we do that?

MEL – What if we set up an environment for them? Sort of like this one but obviously not a living room. It’ll have this sort of mixture of kitsch objects and pasifika textiles and maybe some art works on the walls. A bookcase full of art books. And then we’d start off by getting them to interact with the space. Look at it, touch it, smell things. Like your exhibition Nat, the smell of the coconut oil was overwhelming. And so important. We would definitely need things they can smell.

NATHAN – And music. A bit of central European moog or the Golden Ali’is from Samoa.

MEL - And they can use their workbooks to record what catches their attention.
RESEARCHER – So you’d be creating a physical setting that the students will engage with. That’s an interesting idea. And do you know how that might translate into learning? Beyond sensation?

SUZE – As Nat suggested, they need the physical setting to spark ideas. But that’s not where it’ll end. Ideas will need to be acted upon as well as recorded. To move them on. And that’s where drawing has a role. As a way of thinking through what they’ve just encountered. They can draw ideas related to their experiences.

SHARN – Is that enough guidance though? I mean that they may not have the skills for drawing. Or may not know how to develop an idea through drawing.

GRANT – So at that point, after the experience of being in the space we could bring them back together and introduce some basic drawing strategies. And at first what they draw, will just be informed by what they saw in the space, but gradually, as we feed in ideas we’ll get them to think how they could include those other types of encounters in their drawings. Like asking “how might you include smell” in your drawing?

SUZE – And then they’ll draw little squiggly lines like the ones that are drawn in kids comics. Or if you’re lucky a wrinkled up nose.

GRANT – Then it’s up to us to show them different ways of doing that. Modelling the practice of developing ideas for them. And get them to recognise that the squiggly lines and wrinkled up nose might be quite legitimate ways of starting to think through the problem in their workbooks, before they start butchering their drawings.

RESEARCHER – Okay let’s recap. You’re going to set up an environment. Introduce the children to the use of an artist’s workbook. Get them to engage with the environment. Think through their encounters in their workbook. Do some drawings that relate to their visual engagement in the space and use them to launch into a multi-sensory exploration of the space. Is that right?

SHARN – Yes.

<The others nod slowly>.

RESEARCHER – Are there any gaps?

MEL – I’m still not entirely happy about the primacy of visual encounters. Why do we always privilege their ability to draw what they see?
SUZE – And what about the, for lack of a better word, content of what they’re doing? Where have those complex understandings that connect them to the world gone?

SHARN – Well to address Suze’s point, we have the art works and the art books. Couldn’t we start to feed them in at this point? We could bring in artists who have already dealt with relevant ideas in complex and critical ways. There are artists like Dick Frizzell who work with images of kiwiana and pasifika kitsch, or popular culture…

NATHAN - …Judy Darragh, Michael Parekowhai.

GRANT – Nathan Apelu!

SHARN – We could get the students looking at these works to help inform how they might approach the content in a critical way and also show them what references the artists have made to social movements, cultural events or even other artists. Michael Parekowhai is a classic example. There are his giant steel kowhaiwhai panels that look like they’ve come from mass produced model aeroplane kits. You could introduce them to some of the students and talk about the appropriation of Māori imagery and even get them to look up Gordon Walters, the artist who his work refers to.

SUZE – And most of those artists are sculptors. I think this is important in addressing Mel’s concern. I realise sculpture has a visual aspect, but there’s more to it than that. There’s a physical relationship between the sculpture and viewer beyond mere vision. You feel the spatial relationships between your own body and the art work, touch is an essential part of sculpture too. There’s a world of difference between the dappled roughness of rusty steel and the bite of sharp edged stainless steel and its not just to do with what it looks like. How many of us ever take the don’t touch notices seriously at a sculpture show? That’s why so much of a sculptor’s drawing is done in three dimensions. Not all thoughts about sculpture can be realised through two-dimensional drawings.

MEL – And for some of the students, perhaps the ones interested in more esoteric or less tangible aspects of the environment, couldn’t we introduce them to quite conceptual artists. Maybe get them involved in a time-based project. How long does the smell of coconut last on the skin of a mango or something, documented in digital video and laser printer stickers!

SUZE - So the drawing instruction won’t necessarily be anything as formal as an observational line drawing class then. It’ll be looser, ‘drawing as thinking’ or something, as long as it’s fit for purpose. Not just the construct of rennaissance perspective dressed up as visual truth.

RESEARCHER – So it is important that the students each undertake different lines of inquiry?
MEL – Yes I think so. So that they develop a sense of self in all this. So that they see themselves as artists and develop their own understandings through thinking in art.

SUZE – I’m in two minds about this now. I think it’s important that they develop a sense of self but they also need to have a responsibility to each other don’t they?

GRANT – I went to this guy’s studio once, a painter. When he left art school he had a pretty promising career. His work was right up there, contemporary, you know. But he gave it all up. Went back to painting traditional still life, and I mean traditional – they looked like something from the 17th century. And that’s all he did for the rest of his career. It was pretty incredible stuff. With modernism, innovation and individuality are what counts, but I think there’s something to be said for following traditions, and resisting the modern urge to be different. It reinstates craft back into our work. That’s what I teach in drawing, and try to teach with painting, the craft and skill.

SUZE – So social cohesiveness is achieved by everyone doing the same thing, finding their place in society and unquestioningly slotting in. If that’s all that happens in a classroom it sounds as if it would be pretty conservative. It’s a useful idea though, and thinking about it has clarified a few things for me. Teaching some level of craft and skill is clearly important, they need the tools to work their ideas through, but I think that there does need to be potential for children to pursue their own interests, albeit within the boundaries that we have set, that is, the context that we have initially established. Because whether they are interested in what they’re doing or not will profoundly affect what they learn. So do the kids need to be able to develop individual meanings from the setting in their own ways? I think perhaps they might.

MEL – That’s sort of like what we were talking about before isn’t it? That individual meanings are not just individual are they? Our students, and us as well, are shaped through their interactions with each other as well as their thinking. All negotiated within a setting. And the setting is constantly changing, as we all construct and reconstruct it according to our own understandings.

RESEARCHER <under breath> – Subjectivity is contingent and reciprocal…

SHARN – Pardon?

RESEARCHER – What you were saying <indicates Mel and Suze> just reminded me of the writing by art critic Amelia Jones. She talks about the self and how it is constructed through contingency and reciprocity, engaged in constant self-reconstruction through its engagement with others. And also, art educator Elizabeth Grierson suggests that a contingent and contradictory subjectivity should underpin art education practice.
SUZE – So how would you see that impacting on educational practice?

RESEARCHER – I think...I think acceptance of a contingent self, or that students construct themselves through their negotiated understandings, would underpin an art education that actively encourages the exploration of identity and self-building. And I think that the artist models you all suggested earlier, Parekowhai, Darragh and Frizzell, will assist towards that end. They are all artists concerned with the shape of identity within a cultural context. They explore how identity is shaped by the structuring forces within that context, yet these are interpreted subjectively and so identity is enacted in unique and individual ways. So, putting these ideas back into practice, in an art programme I would expect to see you accommodate both cultural and individual identity. How are the students the same as other artists? As well as what makes them different. And by artists I also mean other students engaged in art...

SUZE – Okay let me get this straight in my mind. The students will work towards understanding themselves in relation to the setting, and that will include seeing themselves as part of groups of artists. So they will be engaged in individual programmes doing this?

GRANT - Remember they will also be involved in group activities too, like the drawing exercises near the beginning.

SUZE – Right. So will it sort of be like letting them out, pulling them back in or, what might be better is that we plan some group activities for the beginning of the unit but as it progresses the types of group activities that are most relevant will depend on where the students have taken their ideas. Then it will be up to us to regroup when we see it is necessary or relevant.

MEL – And that means relevant for the students doesn’t it? So it may become apparent that some may need to do plaster moulding and some others may need to do a painting workshop depending on what they’re working on.

SHARN – But there still seems to be something missing from the overall programme, some form of overall guidance so that they are clear about what they are working towards. Can we get them to work towards some sort of common goal? One that would allow them to pursue different interests, but enables social learning as well. If the challenge is to create a setting that encourages fairness and justice, and meet the needs of the whole group don’t we need to create some sort of common language that they can all communicate in?

GRANT – You mean like if we got them to work towards a whole class project. Like an exhibition at the end of the unit? An exhibition would be good. And all the paraphernalia that goes with an exhibition. Catalogue, opening…
MEL – If we’re going to get them to make a catalogue, presumably with writing about the art works, we’re going to have to lead them up to it. Get them used to thinking and talking about each other’s work. Because even though the forms that they’re working in may be different, they’ll have common themes to talk about. I mean all the work’s been derived from a common context.

SUZE – All the work has contributed to developing a common context as well.

<There is another knock on the door, this time the researcher gets up and opens the door. A elderly man walks in and sits down in a hard wooden armchair in the corner of the room.>

RESEARCHER – This is Elwyn Richardson, you may have heard of him. He taught in a small rural primary school in Oruaiti, Northland throughout the 1950s. The two teacher school had an extraordinarily innovative programme based on crafts, art making and language arts. I thought he could make a valuable contribution to our discussion on the value of appraising art work. He has quite a long, but very interesting story to tell us.

ELWYN RICHARDSON – Much of the teaching that I thought assisted expression was not effective because I did not at first know how to discriminate between good and bad work. I gave undue importance to the formal and factual side of the programme at which the child of higher intelligence ‘succeeded’. At first the standard of judgement was always my own, and I see now that the work of the school reflected my inability to judge well. My measure of the relative success of each child placed the children of lower intelligence in a position of lower privilege and importance. Since some children could absorb information and skills well I had thought it reasonable to value this most. It was easy to place more importance on rote learning than on conscious understanding by the child.

Any progress that was made in the beginning arose out of my own recognition of the needs of the situation but I saw that it was the children who should eventually be making such assessments and who should be becoming more proficient at knowing their own needs.

When the first pots were taken from the kiln and the children talked about them, I saw that most of them knew that three or four were better than the others. In the same way certain paintings, poems, stories, and lino prints were selected as better than the others.

I had a responsibility in these decisions in the same way as I had earlier, when no judgement was made of the value of work. The standard had really depended on me at that time, and in the same way I had to make a contact in spirit with the decisions that were now being made. I saw that it was desirable that children should, at some time in their growth, be able to progress in some
manner of expression without contact with a teacher. Experience has shown me that individuals
who do not reach this point, soon suffer the levelling-down influences that take effect as a result
of the weaker statements taking place around them. This happens as soon as there is no
discrimination between good and bad work. Soon the children appear to have little critical ability.
So we discussed the work done each day, especially after an event such as the opening of a kiln
or completion of a drama series, with a view to selecting the better aspects for examination. We
tried to find out why one pot appeared to be better than the others, but generally we concluded
that it just was. This led us to set aside a special place in the school where such things could be
kept.

<Elwyn Richardson lifts himself carefully from the chair and leaves through the front door>

RESEARCHER – I think his story is interesting in several ways. But for me, it particularly
illustrated how important it is to create dialogue around student’s work, to enable them to develop
understanding of what they have achieved. The dialogue enriched their own understandings of
how and what they have learnt, but it also provided a transparent and constructive context where
they could relate their own efforts to the efforts of others.

MEL – So they were assessing their own work in relation to the work of others. Isn’t that some
kind of normative assessment, ranking one against another?

RESEARCHER – I think it’s not just assessment against each other, but against the setting as a
whole. You all seem perfectly comfortable with the idea that students should be actively
encouraged to expand their understanding of art by looking at the work of other artists. Their
engagement with a range of artists and their work becomes embedded in their understandings
about quality in work. As does a comparison to the content of their work, or what sources they
are referring to, or subject matter they’re a drawing from. And they also learn from each other,
you suggested this yourselves earlier in our discussion. Don’t you think that students are always
comparing their own work to the work of other people they encounter making art? But how that
occurs can either be obfuscating or enabling to their learning.

GRANT – Yep! I remember being told at primary school not to copy ideas from my mate. I
thought he was a fantastic drawer. He could draw these excellent seagulls that looked like they
were really flying, so I copied them into my sky. I distinctly remember my teacher saying "Grant
this is supposed to be all your own work, copying is cheating!" We were making a mural, but all
the parts were done on separate sheets of paper and then she stuck them all together at the end.
When I did my teacher training it took quite a long time for me to recognise that not letting kids
copy each others drawing was just one of those art teacher myths I had taken on board without
any question.
MEL – Like not using a rubber!

SUZE – And not tracing.

GRANT – Yeah, all the things that as an artist you’d never think twice about doing, as long as it gives the right effect.

SHARN – I think we’re getting towards the end.

MEL – Yes I agree.

RESEARCHER – Shall we just run over the unit again? With all the pieces in place?

SHARN <reading> – Set up an interior environment using art works, books, artefacts, music, smells. Introduce whole class to use of an artist workbook. Get students to spend time in the environment, interacting and exploring it. Use their workbooks to think through their responses to the space. Come back together as a group for some whole class drawing instruction, drawing as thinking through ideas. Encourage children to explore the parts they were interested in, and recorded, through drawing. Work with children individually on developing their ideas through art making, allowing flexibility in art forms. Develop student's interests in critical art practices by directing them to the practices of artists who look at cultural identity. Ascertain needs for skill-based workshops e.g. sculptural methods, painting etc. and deliver them, modelling the practices for them <Sharn says to the others> That last bit was my addition, any problems? <They shake their heads and Sharn carries on reading>. Throughout unit provide regular time slots for group based discussion and critique of learning. Students all work towards an exhibition where they will also be responsible for making a catalogue, with documentary evidence of their work, invitations and organising an opening.

SUZE - You know what? That doesn’t sound a lot different from my Year 13 sculpture programme. Apart from the specificity of the discipline of sculpture, although we approach that with a lot of flexibility too.

GRANT - Yep, it could also be painting, or at least some of the programmes I’ve seen. Teachers who are really fired up and motivate their kids to really work through ideas. Of course some teachers still do it all for them.

SHARN - Or it could even be photography. But not only Year 13, also the last term of Year 12. We’ve started ripping up photos, making three dimensional installations and all sorts.

MEL - It also has a lot of similarities to my Year 10 programme, and even some of Year 9.
GRANT - Funny that, I thought we’d come up with something really different, and amazing.

RESEARCHER - To be honest, I’m just as surprised as you. After all that work. But maybe that’s all I needed to know.
Epilogue

It would be quite beautiful to finish with the playscript. There is something appealing about leaving in the context of practice with the end not quite sewn up. While I love ragged edges and unravelled threads, there are bigger issues at stake than textural beauty. Perhaps a better representation to make is to acknowledge that as meaning makers we are always trying to wrap things up. I think there are issues in my writing about content and context that need resolving and this work needs to be seen in a context wider than itself. It might be helpful, here at the end, not just to revisit some of the themes I have covered as much as explore their usefulness. Near the start of this project, one of my supervisors gave me a photocopied poem and it has been on my wall since the beginning; To Be of Use by Marge Piercy (1973/1982). I’ve always wanted to be useful. What use will this big, thick book be?

Through discourse and collective action, Mel and her colleagues came to some new understandings about the construction of art curriculum. Mel arrived at a place she had not been able to reach by herself nor while she was fully immersed in the tangle of experiences and ideas that make up the contexts of art teaching and learning. It is not just the substance of the curriculum plan developed by the play characters that informed their new understanding, in many ways the practices seemed familiar to all of them. The clarity they achieved through examining the constituents of rich and meaningful art education, however, was new. It lead to a greater understanding about why this particular unit,
with its particular features, better served their educational goals than others. The solution that Mel and the others arrived at was not necessarily the best nor only solution to achieve those goals, it could have developed along many different dimensions depending on what was brought to the conversation by each of the participants. It was shaped, however, by the ground of their multiple practices (as teachers, artists and researchers) as they had experienced them, and been brought into the context of their discussion. This diversity created a richer context within which to construct their common and individual understandings. To find an art analogy for this, might be to explain that when working through art ideas you need to keep adding to your sources of information in order to develop rich and meaningful art understandings. Thus a series drawings from a single photographic image become stale unless you introduce new source material into your work. Beyond this recommendation for a diversity of interests, extending the discourse of art education practice to include research and theory has significance in that it reacquaints the mind and the body that were severed in Cartesian logic.

One of the implications of this thesis, is that it provides a theoretical platform from which to re-evaluate the significance of art practice and its embodiment in material contexts that has been represented within a dichotomous and fraught relationship with intellectual understandings such as aesthetics and visual literacy throughout the 20th century. By returning to work on the bodies of theory significant to thinking about art education in New Zealand (Marx, Dewey, Pollock, Blumhardt) I have sought to salvage what is useful for art education in the 21st century. While as an educational researcher my practice appears to be somewhat removed from the context of art education practice where most of my colleagues work, I think there is a great importance in its construction as another form of art education practice and not a theoretical and therefore separate endeavour. I think you do need to take yourself out of the art room in order to make sense of the huge volume of sensory data that bombards you in a class made up of over thirty bodies, yet my physical and conceptual connections to that place are still there. In fact I see no point to the endeavour of research if it does not continually reference itself to classroom practice, and draws from its subject matter and form. I am sitting in my quiet box of an office, watching a group of pre-school children running about on the outdoor stage attached to the nearby music school. I am dislocated but attached to their play through my relationship with my daughter, which doesn't cease even
though she is not here. I catch myself thinking about where we can go this weekend to run about in the sunshine.

Like Mel’s teaching, my research practice has taken me on a journey. I have examined some of my taken-for-granted assumptions about the value of art education, and looked at them in the light of multiple perspectives. For example I have looked at art practice from the vantage point of an artist, a feminist art theorist, and an educationist. This has not necessarily meant that my understanding of art practice differs wildly from where I started. I do think that it is now much deeper, more coherent and more compelling. Meanings about art practice have been built up towards a cohesive and unifying, albeit temporary, resolution. In the context of the thesis, chapters lay on top of each other and each layer must be pared away to find their underlying truths. The relationships between each layer will be more obvious in contemplation of the whole than in a fragmented analysis of each section. The self-consciousness of my work also means that I have the opportunity to look at my own contingent construction as an art educator and critically examine my understandings from the position of a researcher embodied in the context of my study. In the thesis I express concern that some threads of art education and the philosophies underlying them have suffered from an excess of textualisation or cultural relativism. Textualisation of culture obscures the relationship cultures have to the living bodies of which they are constituted. In this frame understanding, definable as the contemplation of cultural texts, is positioned as something that occurs outside of the body and thus is removed from the text it scrutinises. The textualisation of culture is manifest in art education in that the actual experiences of engaging in art practice have been secondary, or entirely dismissed, to art as an intellectual abstraction. This undermines the significance played by the actual bodies of artists, and how their embodied art practice is implicated in a continual re-construction of themselves and their cultural settings. This is not to say that their agency is unlimited. Art practice is constrained through discursive limitations which are effected as if they were real. While categories of social analysis such as ‘woman’ and ‘middle-class’ or disciplinary categories such as ‘art’ and ‘sculpture’ have variable and changeable meanings from the perspectives of individual selves, selves are located within cultural settings and social structures which prevent meaning making occurring
in wild and unrestrained ways. I think this is where creativity lies, in the ways that artists push on structural boundaries, drawing attention to their limitations.

Understanding art practice is phenomenological, derived through particular action and engagement within particular material contexts. In saying that, it is problematic that there is not wider research engagement in the contexts of art practice in education. In the 1970s Ray Thorburn was involved in a project to document historical and contemporary art education practices. The book *Art in schools: The New Zealand experience* (Thorburn and Smith, 1978) documents some of the context of their investigation, and Thorburn’s (1981) doctoral thesis provides a theoretical analysis of the context. The work was a useful basis from which to develop art education policy in the 1980s, including a new art syllabus, overhaul of the bursary practical art prescriptions and the development of a new sixth form practical art programme. What has been happening in schools since then? There has been little research into the contexts of art education in New Zealand, and it is now unclear how these policies impacted on practice. Without similar surveys, current policy development is built on shakier ground. There is a lot of work that needs to be done in examining the sites where art educators and art students construct meanings about art. There are many more questions that need to be asked about the role of art practice in education. From my studies of art education, the following questions have occurred to me;

- What is the relationship between current policies and the actual practices of art education?
- What roles do cultural traditions play in contemporary art education practice?
- What is occurring in schools that is of value and should be held onto?

This list is not exhaustive and only reflects some of the outcomes of my research interests over the last few years. I think that part of the process of finding relevant and valuable questions to form the basis of a large scale art education research project requires immersion in the context of practice. Thus would require getting out into art education settings to find out what are significant questions to ask.
Where else does art practice have significance for educational purposes? The proponents of arts-based inquiries suggest that art practice is a model for educational inquiry across disciplines. Art educator Paul Duncum (1998/99) accepts that ‘making meaning’ should be the fundamental goal of art education in primary schools, disregarding whether that is art meaning or not. I dispute this position and believe that depth and richness of understanding requires working within contingent contexts of subject specialisation. This does not exclude the possibility of inter-disciplinary understandings, but requires recognition that genuine inter-disciplinary understandings develop through cross-cultural collaboration and dialogue. An example of this is the hybrid practices of feminist art resulting from cross-cultural communication between the theory and practices of both feminism and art. In the case of arts-based inquiry, artists are primarily absent from the discourse. While a more profound dialogue with art practices would assist in the development of genuinely inter-disciplinary understandings, this also means that the whole notion of a generalist education should be under scrutiny. The ultimate outcomes of a generalised education may be generic and de-contextualised understandings. A conception of education as an embodied practice, embodied within individual subjects and disciplinary understandings, has the potential to be developed more generally as a learning theory.

There are also implications for recognizing the educative significance of art practice that occurs outside of formal education structures. Understandings are specifically embedded within cultural contexts, thus school understandings are reproduced through the settings of school. In the case of art education, ‘school art’ practices generalise art knowledges and remove them from their rich historical and cultural contexts. Following my argument on the significance of social structural elements in an analysis of culture, it would be untenable to entirely dismiss the concept of ‘school’ which profoundly effects understandings about education for both children and adults. I think, instead, that the notion of ‘school’ as an educative setting requires investigation for its limitations. This may involve looking at understandings produced in school art practices that constrain the subjectivity of its students, and asking how they may begin to be transcended. This may also involve looking at the
situated nature of learning that extends subjectivities, and asking where and how does it occur? In particular, I would suggest looking into critical art practices like feminist art to inform curriculum development. Fostering critical understandings from critical content rises to the challenges of critical pedagogy, creating contexts of emancipation for learning.

It may sound like I have raised more questions than answers, but I think this is the nature of an art research project. On a practical level, the question of the value to education of art practice is so vast and under-researched that my study could only contribute to its literature rather than provide essential answers. On a philosophical level, I recall Lyotard’s (1991) claim that thinking is questioning, and only raises more questions. Despite my adoption of these positions, there are formalisations that occur along the way, this thesis itself stands as an example of thought transformed into product. The form of a thesis provides limitations on how it can be read. It is self-contained, and constructed from neat black and white printing on clean white paper. In comparison both thought and life in the art room are continual, fuzzy, ambiguous messes. While these are clear differences, I have tried to emphasise the similarities between this object (thesis) and the actual experiences of art education, in both a material and conceptual sense, through pushing on the boundaries of its form. I have tried to create a context in which understandings about art practice can be engaged with and extended. While this thesis can only ever be a partial representation of the art education research undertaken in my project, I think that working with open-ended forms of representation makes a more complex explanation of how understanding about art practice arises from engagement in art practice. Understanding the value of art practice lies in immersion in its practices.

For 6 years, through the then Education Boards in each area, I arranged to bring teachers in to a central place for one week, about 25-30 at a time, from the same classroom level, to learn by doing the activities they would do with their children. In the same way headmasters and inspectors did a week’s learning by doing, in each area. They painted on large sheets of paper, worked with clay, made puppets etc. (Doreen Blumhardt, personal communication, 19/07/01)
Primary Historical Sources

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**Appropriation**

Other images and texts have been appropriated in an art sense. Appropriation in art is described by The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art and Artists as;

The direct duplication, copying or incorporation of an image (painting, photograph, etc.) by another artists who represents it in a different context, thus completely altering its meaning and questioning notions of originality and authenticity (Read & Stangos, 1995, p. 19).
Interview Schedule 1: The Value of Practice in Art Education

These are the topics I would like to cover in this interview. You may approach them in any order. Please feel free to discuss any other issue that you think is relevant to this topic.

• How is art a valuable addition to the curriculum?

• How do your beliefs about art and education affect the art programmes in your classroom?

• What role do you think practice should take in art education?

• How has your background (e.g. previous education, work, life experiences) influenced the value you place on practice in art education?
Interview Schedule 2: A Personal History of Art Education

These are the topics I would like to cover in this interview. You may approach them in any order. Please feel free to discuss any other issue that you think is relevant to this topic.

- How would you describe your own art education?

- Who and what have played pivotal roles in your development and interests in art and art education?

- How has your own art education affected the way you think about art education now?