

# Sample 1

## Course Development Project Report

### Course Background

ART 326 – Current Art Practice – is a culmination of studio art students’ art history studies. In students’ trajectory through the program they study the history of art, starting with the Art History General Education courses that take them from ancient art through the Renaissance, and, along with a few other courses, end with ART 320 - Twentieth Century Art and Art and Theory. This takes them through the year 2000. My course, Current Art Practice, looks at what has been happening in art since then, and what is currently happening. Its main objective is to help students situate themselves and their own work within, or in relation to, the current art world. A course with this title was previously taught, but it mostly covered what is now covered, in ART 320, so my course is basically a brand new course. I am the only instructor so far, and it looks like that will be the case generally except for semesters when I am on leave. It is a course for majors.

### Learning Outcomes

#### Awareness

Students will develop a greater awareness of significant contemporary art and exhibitions.

#### Contextualization

Students will contextualize their own art in relation to contemporary art and practice through research, readings, writing, and presentations.

#### Critical Thinking

Students will critically examine spiritual values and ethical issues relevant to contemporary art and their own artistic practice.

Students learn to make art and they learn about art history in their years in our programs, but they often don’t learn to locate themselves in relation to art history and current art. These learning outcomes help them synthesize all of their other courses and understand what they are doing, make deliberate decisions about their work, and plan for their future. These outcomes are key to fulfilling several of the program learning outcomes, such as those titled Art History and Context; Spirituality, Ethics, and Art; and Professional Development.

### Course Activities

The backbone of the course consists of weekly reading assignments, reflective writing, and class discussion. Each week centers around a theme. Some examples include The Art Market and Trends; Art and Class and Economics; Making a Life as an Artist; Humor, Irony, and Sincerity; Art and Identity; Beauty, Mastery, Skill, (Im)Perfection, and Failure; Art and Technology and the Internet; and Spirituality and Art. Students read a selection of important texts that are chosen both to introduce them to the most important conversations happening around those themes and to introduce them to artists whose work engages those themes. Students write short (300 to 500 word) responses to the body of texts, highlighting and responding to the ideas in the readings that were most engaging or relevant to them. In class we spend a significant portion of our 3-hour class period dissecting and discussing the readings together, debating the ideas in them and talking about their application. Finally, we look at lots of art that relates to the themes and discuss the ways those artists engage with the ideas we have read about and discussed.

The final project for the class is an annotated bibliography and a paper that center around two topics or themes (at least one of which is one we did not discuss in class) that the students engage in their own work. They research scholarship addressing the themes and art made in relation to them for the annotated bibliography. They then analyze the ideas in the scholarship, the work of artists who engage with the themes, and situate themselves and their own work within that discussion.

### Assessments of Student Learning

Students' weekly writing and our in-class discussions let me see their understanding of the themes we discuss in class. These writing assignments and discussions draw heavily on their knowledge of relevant contemporary art, their understanding of the key parts of the conversations around the week's theme, and their ability to analyze and synthesize this understanding. Their annotated bibliography and final paper provides strong insight into how thoroughly they understand the art and ideas that relate to their own art.

## **Student Achievement of Learning Outcomes (and how to improve student achievement)**

**Awareness** - Students will develop a greater awareness of significant contemporary art and exhibitions.

Students' weekly writing and final papers show significant learning about contemporary art, but their synthesis of this knowledge and level of reflection about the art they learn about varies by student. As part of their weekly writing, I could have them choose one or two specific works by significant contemporary artists and analyze those works using ideas from the readings.

### **Contextualization**

Students will contextualize their own art in relation to contemporary art and practice through research, readings, writing, and presentations.

Students' final papers focus on this and are, for the most part, well researched and display thoughtful analysis of their own work and how it relates to their research. More than half of students received 90% or higher on the final paper. Lower grades were mostly the result of insufficient effort.

### **Critical Thinking**

Students will critically examine spiritual values and ethical issues relevant to contemporary art and their own artistic practice.

Several of the weekly themes relate to spiritual and ethical values, and the discussions we have surrounding them are rich and enlightening. The writing they do doesn't always show substantial engagement with the issues – it seems that they need my guidance in class to get traction in thinking about them. Additionally, not all students participate in an engaged way in these discussions. I think there is room in the course to have them choose a specific ethical or spiritual issue relating to art and do a more sustained analysis of it and how they approach it in their own work. In the Student Ratings, 83% of students selected the highest rating for "Spiritually strengthening" and 100% selected the highest rating for "Intellectually Enlarging."

## **Final Reflections, and Improving the Course**

Despite average grades for this course (3.3) being lower than those for the department (3.66), college (3.7), and university (3.44), the Composite Student Rating for this course (4.9) is significantly higher than the averages for the department (4.5), college (4.6), and university (4.4). This tells me that although the class is challenging, students find the course rewarding and enriching.

I have used online surveys to get honest feedback from students as well as the formal student evaluations at the end of the semester. Overall, students are enthusiastic about what we do in class and what they learn. I have used mid-semester surveys to make small adjustments in how the course runs. Because of the feedback I got on these surveys, I have incorporated a few new elements into each class period that have done a lot to enhance students' attention and engagement.

At the end of last semester I had a long (2-hour) conversation with the class about how our semester had gone. I treated it as a collaborative assessment and brainstorming session to improve the class. I was pleased to hear that overall students were really excited about what we had done and didn't have any major complaints. They did, however, have really good suggestions for helping students feel more engaged and to feel more ownership over their learning. I shouldn't be surprised to learn that I have a higher tolerance for long discussions of dense readings

than the students do, and they helped me think of ways to break those discussions up, make them more engaging, etc. Additionally, there was a strong consensus that some of the themes we studied are essential for every art student to study, and there are also a few themes we studied that were good, but not essential, and that could be replaced by others. Based on this feedback, I have re-built the semester schedule with the essential themes built in, but with five of the weeks open for determination by the class at the beginning of the semester. This semester, we started by having a conversation about many of the possible themes and then we voted to select which of them we would incorporate into our schedule.

## **Appendix 1**

# **Representative Samples of Student Final Papers**

December 11, 2017

NAME

Art 326

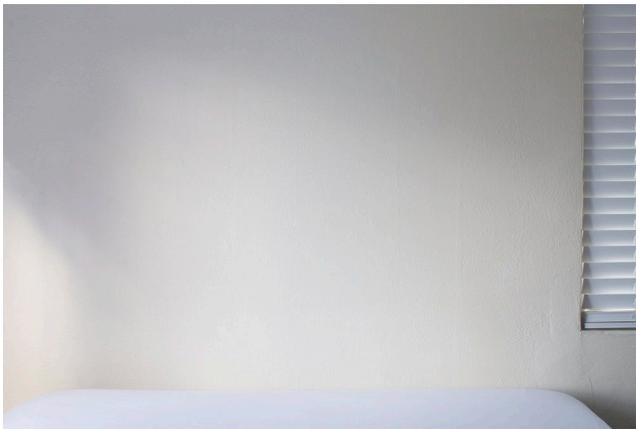
### Work contextualization

Some of the main themes I consider in my art making are emptiness, timelessness, nothingness, and the idea of the sublime. Growing up in Western society, these concepts become prominent as they draw a line between culture saturated with information and meaningless advertising (where it is difficult to leave aside cognitive processes even for a moment) and culture that is closely linked to the basis of primal existence. The idea of emptiness is interesting to me because it stands in strong contrast to what the western capitalistic system promotes and values. Emptiness then becomes a subject of exploration and an idea that is intimately familiar to many people, yet dismissed because of our society's value system. Emptiness does not contain anything; it may carry a message, but not one that is attractive or desirable. Perhaps it exists in a space and perpetually points at a place within those who come in contact with it, a place that is empty, yet vast, painful, but holds numerous possibilities. My goal is to explore and connect these ideas to my own art making and see how my art is influenced by artists and authors who work with similar concepts.

Emptiness lacks substance; however, some argue that it is inherently connected to creativity and art making. Philip Shaw talked about emptiness as one of the driving forces of art creation. In his book "The Sublime," he shares a story about a woman and her own emptiness to demonstrate this idea. Shaw writes, "This woman always complained of what she called an

empty space inside her, a space she could never fill. The walls of the woman's house are covered with paintings by her brother-in-law. Eventually the brother-in-law sells one of his paintings, which he removes from the wall and takes away, leaving an empty space. The empty space takes on significance for the woman; it is associated with her own feelings of emptiness. One day, in an attempt to overcome her depression, she starts to daub a little on the wall, so as to fill up the space. The woman shows remarkable skill as an artist, so much so that when the painting or 'thing' is shown to her brother-in-law he proclaims, "You will never make me believe that it is you who painted that" (Shaw 53). This story is a good illustration of what the empty space or emptiness can provoke one to do and of the potential transformation it is capable of.

I work predominantly in the medium of video and photography. My work is generally very minimal and reduces information to as little as possible. This photograph (Figure 1),



(Figure 1) *Untitled*, from the *Partially Present* series, photograph, 2017.

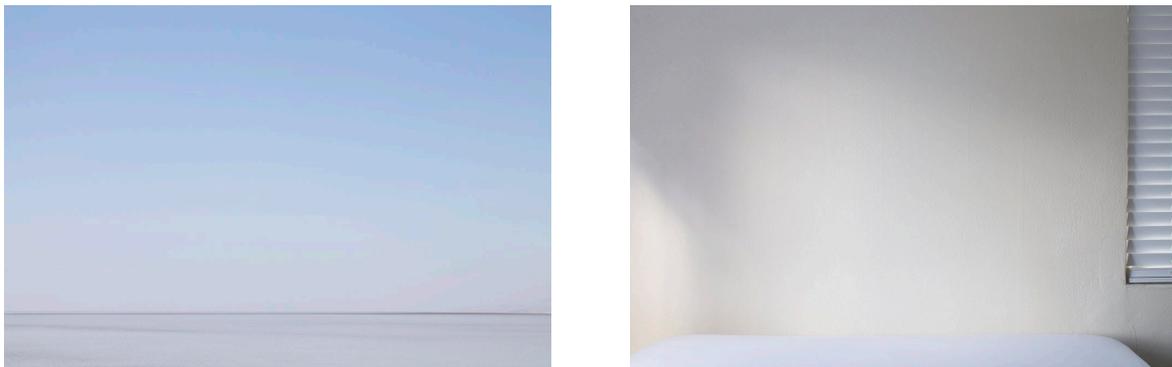
for instance, comes from a series called *Partially Present* that deals with the idea of shutting down cognitive processes and focusing on daydreaming or mere being. I think of this image in terms of Johannes Vermeer and his use of morning light in his paintings. Many of Vermeer's scenes are calm, quiet, and do not portray any substantial action. His paintings talk about liminal, in between spaces rather than of main events of the day. I did not live in Vermeer's time and I do

not know whether the 17<sup>th</sup> century mornings in the Netherlands were much calmer than morning of our contemporary world. Regardless of whether Vermeer was pointing at a lived reality of his time or a dream he envisioned, his paintings remain to be strong explorations of minimal importance, of quietness. For these reasons, his work seems to evoke a sense of mystery and the sublime. This photograph portrays an empty bed, a window with closed blinds, and morning light reflected on the only wall. As Vermeer painted people performing mundane tasks in the dawn, I am interested in what I see in the morning when nothing is sure except for a wall with light reflection cut off by the horizon of my bed.

To contextualize my work in terms of contemporary art, I would talk about this particular photograph in terms of Hiroshi Sugimoto's series called *Seascapes*. This body of work consists of several hundreds four by five photographs depicting ocean horizons from different parts of the world. In the series and in Sugimoto's other work, time collapses in on itself. John Yau explained Sugimoto's perception of timelessness in an essay called "Time Halted: The Photographs of Hiroshi Sugimoto." This essay discusses the difference between Roland Barthes' and Sugimoto's views of time. While Barthes thought of time as a linear continuation of existence, Sugimoto had more of a non-linear perspective on time. Yau writes, "The photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto's recognition of time is very different from Barthes'. For him, time is both non-existent and circular. He understands that the bodies that one sees are temporary havens, way stations that are only briefly occupied" (Yau). In this simple description, one can see the distance between the western and eastern worlds and the opposite perceptions of different phenomena. Similar to the concepts discussed above, emptiness is generally examined and valued more in the east than it is in the west.

The concepts of linearity and non-linearity are interesting and relate to my work in certain ways. Although my photographs may have linearity in them (they contain many straight and controlled lines), their subject matter is extremely non-linear. Similarly in *Seascapes*, Sugimoto juxtaposes linear horizons that divide space with experiences that seems rather circular – repeatedly visiting and photographing seascapes. Additionally, when I pair interior with exterior horizons (figure 2), I think not only of how the lines divide space, but also how they become symbols of potential division of time and point at multiple timelines. Pairing images supports the notion of non-linear timeline because of how the two images are in conversation with one another. They reference each other and create a back and forth reflection signifying some kind of otherness contained within one whole.

(Figure 2) Untitled. From the *Partially Present* series, photographs, 2017.



Timelessness and emptiness are also related to the concept of openness. Visually, I often depict images that portray vastness, openness, and emptiness. None of these concepts, however, interest me unless they are internalized. Martin Heidegger, a prominent philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century talked about openness in relation to art. In his book “The Origin of the Work of Art” he wrote, “Art keeps openness of the world open” (Heidegger). By this, he might have been referring to the lightness (and heaviness) of human existence and art’s ability to approach

individuals and perhaps open something blocking their view. Openness can be liberating and haunting at once and its effect depends on how a person takes it in.

Gerhard Richter is an artist in whose work openness is strongly present. He works in many different styles and media, for which he might be considered open to possibilities. In addition, Richter's subject matter seems quite open, and not merely in its content but in its message. The various directions contained in his art reflect his experience with several different ideologies of his home country in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Richter's earlier paintings have an atmospheric quality that puts a certain distance between his work and the viewer. The blurriness, unclarity, and melancholy have a connection to the concept of openness and the sublime, where the thing Richter is representing is perhaps a reflection of something abstract and out of humans' reach.



Figure 3, *Passing*, photograph, 2017.

In January 2017, I made a series of photograph called *Passing*. Most of the pieces from this series are diptychs, and they are photographs of places I passed as I was travelling through the Czech Republic. As I was visiting the country for a few short weeks, I felt as if the entire

time I was floating in some atmospheric matter as the fog stayed very thick for most of my visit. Besides the presence of fog, it was my first time going back in wintertime in five years and I sensed a certain distance between the land and myself. As I was passing by the frozen ground, riding on buses in the constant dim light, I thought a lot about Richter's work. Later, when I printed my photographs, I was told they look like certain parts from Richter's paintings. I was interested in the shift that happened; me thinking of Richter's work and it being visually manifested in my photos.

The *Passing* diptych (Figure 3) makes me think of time again. Looking at one place twice or experiencing multiple similar experiences within a short period of time brings me back to the idea of circular time. Henri Michaux discussed timelessness in connection to the sublime in his essay "To Draw the Flow of Time." Michaux's text illustrates human relationship to the relative tempo of time. His reflection does not only stay with the topic of timelessness, but transforms into an exploration of perception of verticality and loops. Michaux says, "I was myself to discover what an awful, conclusive experience it is to change one's tempo, to lose it suddenly, to find another in its place, an unknown, terribly fast tempo that one does not know how to handle, that makes everything different, unrecognizable, insane, that causes everything to overshoot itself and flash by" (Michaux). This chaotic, yet poetic depiction of his experience with tempo change points at something that exists outside of the human perception and comprehension. Perhaps this is where time, timelessness, the void, emptiness, and the openness all converge in something one might call the sublime, the unattainable.

As one can draw parallels between the work of Gerhard Richter and ideas of openness and passing time, so can I see these concepts correspond with the work of Tamas Dezso. This artist was born in 1978 Hungary and his medium is primarily photography. Dezso is interested in

land previously occupied by the USSR and in the way they were left abandoned for many years. There are places in the area of the former Eastern Block that look just like they did thirty years ago. This occurrence is worth investigating because figuratively speaking, discovering these spaces can take people places occupying a different timeline. Dezso states in his biography, “The map of Hungary is speckled with capsules of time. During the political transformation twenty years ago, as the country experienced change it simply forgot about certain places – streets, blocks of flats, vacant sites and whole districts became self-defined enclosures, where today a certain out-dated, awkward, longed-to-be-forgotten Eastern Europeanness still lingers. There are places which seem to be at one with other parts of the city in a single space, but their co-existence in time is only apparent; places which decompose in accordance with their own specific chronology, determined by their past, such that what remains would then either be silently reconquered by nature or enveloped by the lifestyles of tomorrow’s generations” (Dezso). Dezso’s work resembles Richter’s in its foggy, atmospheric feel and his investigation of the past enriches and brings awareness of the present.

I would like return to the notion of otherness, which connects to the overarching theme of the sublime. To me, the term otherness refers to something existing outside of the ordinary, but also potentially something that points back at where I am standing, showing me things in new light. The water and sheets photographic diptych is a symbol of otherness to me and this kind of work is what reminds me of that concept within the art context. Both images are very simple depictions of prosaic things; the surface of an ocean and the surface of a bed covered with crumpled bed sheet. They are what they are; yet they speak about some other idea that joins them together. This may be an idea of universal depth, whether it be depth of an ocean or depth of a

person's sleep. I find this particular piece being in conversation with Felix Gonzales-Torres' installations. The obvious piece of Gonzales-Torres' that my photograph is reminiscent is his



Figure 4. *Untitled*. Photograph, 2017.

billboard with a print of an unnamed, empty bed where he was juxtaposing intimacy with the fact his partner was dying of AIDS. Furthermore, his work is simple, but discusses very complex topics. The notion of otherness is strongly present in his piece *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)* from 1991. Gonzales-Torres installed a pile of candy in a gallery and let visitors take a candy, which made the piece eventually disappear. Here, the artist was not directly depicting what he had in mind while making this work, but steered the making in a course that enabled the final product to be vague enough, thus making one thing that points at another.

Gonzales-Torres's work comes across as very personal and strong partially because he is able to talk about such intimate topics in ways that can potentially be hardly recognizable. The use of symbols in his work is prevalent. Here, otherness may play a role of alleviation the difficulty of painful topics and taking on a different part to bring some reconciliation. The artist said about his art making process; "After doing all these shows, I've become burnt out with trying to have some kind of personal presence in the work. Because I'm not my art. It's not the form and it's not the shape, not the way these things function that's being put into question.

What is being put into question is me. I made “*Untitled*” (*Placebo*) because I needed to make it. There was no other consideration involved except that I wanted to make art work that could disappear, that never existed, and it was a metaphor for when Ross was dying. So it was a metaphor that I would abandon this work before this work abandoned me. I’m going to destroy it before it de- stroys me. That was my little amount of power when it came to this work. I didn’t want it to last, because then it couldn’t hurt me” (Gonzales-Torres). His words are reflective of the poetic nature of his work. Bargaining for power while knowing there is no win, taking control in the least controlling way, and creating art that is painful in its content is how Gonzales-Torres often worked. In his case, much of the process and motivation seemed to be connected to pain.

Moreover, otherness can be considered as secluded, alienated existence and because of that it is connected to pain on some level. I am interested in artists who are artists partly because they choose not to ignore pain, and they have the ability to express their experience in a subtle, poetic way. Krzysztof Kieslowski, a Polish filmmaker of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the author of *Three Colors* heavily dealt with the topic of otherness and pain in this work. Kieslowski addressed these topics in unexpected ways and most of his films include scenes that would be considered video art by many artists. In his film *Three Colors: Blue*, Kieslowski uses the brush strokes of filmmaking to paint an image of woman who lost her husband and only child in a car accident. Throughout the movie, there are several scenes where the screen goes black and the viewer can either hear music, sound, or nothing at all. The blackness allows for the viewers to come to themselves and sit with their own emotions as they experience painful scenes on the screen.

In the winter of 2017, I made a series of videos capturing me walking in a landscape. The movement in these videos is always right to left, and each scene is looped three times before the

next landscape is introduced. In between the individual displays, there is a black screen that lasts for about ten seconds. There is nothing to see, only the ambient sound from the video continues on. I think of this video in terms of Kieslowski's cinematography because of the alienated setting the video is made in. Like in *Three Colors* or *Dekalog*, my figure is trapped in repeating the same loop over and over until there is a break, a pause. The figures in Kieslowski's work are living in close proximity to others, yet they are completely alone in their task of living. *Dekalog*, for instance, speaks about ten different individuals living in the same apartment complex, being unaware of each other. Their lives do not seem to intertwine with lives of those near to them. The only element that connects these people's lives is a figure of a young man with a skinny face and large staring eyes, representing god, angel, or the devil. He is there only to observe, and he never intervenes or changes the course of action.



Figure 5. *Looping Walk*. Video, 10 minutes. 2017.

In my video *Looping Walk*, I become the element tying the video together. My figure is trapped on one hand, but she get to exist in various places, experiencing them multiple times on the other. There is no one to keep her sane, but also no one to disrupt this ritualistic act. Pain is there, and it gets to exist independently of the outside world. Like in the story of the woman with an empty wall, pain and emptiness become the creative forces of this video and of my art

making. Emptiness, timelessness, openness, otherness all correlate, as they create something unknown and often sublime. David Morgan described as feelings of being overwhelmed by the sublime, “My world crumbles before the looming prospect of a reality that threatens to replace the foundation of the familiar. My sense of order is jumbled, my status called into question, whatever I took to be certain may be thrown into doubt. This experience of the liminal may be configured as transcendence or as transformation” (Morgan). I find Morgan’s writing correlate with my *Looping Walk* because of the liminal nature of both experiences. His losing control and sense of reality echo the repetitive task of walking with no direction. Morgan describes how the things that were certainty to him happen to no longer fulfill that reassuring function. Perhaps this perpetual walk and ever-changing landscape is to bring one to a path that may be chaotic, but potentially hold more answers and expand one’s perspectives.

Lastly, although I am invested in these concepts and I explore them through my art making, there is no guarantee my artwork will ever communicate these ideas to the outside viewer. Jean-Francois Lyotard addressed this unattainability of the sublime in his text “The Sublime and the Avant-Garde,” in which he brings together the impossibility to portray the absolute and the sublime with the artist’s constant effort to find it and depict it. In contrast to Lyotard’s conviction, Thomas Weiskel gives a more utopian, yet significant perspective on the topic in his “The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence.” Weiskel makes the case for the artists’ creative outcomes to hold the sublime and mediate it to those who search it and come in contact with the art. I am devoted to these ideas whether or not my art touches the recipient, and the hope is that some piece, sometime might just as Weiskel suggested.

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16 December 2017

## Discovering the Divine Feminine through Performance Art

There is a goddess-shaped hole in Western Judeo-Christian culture.

As women continue to try to cast off the traces of patriarchal oppression and reach for a more egalitarian society, the issue of patriarchy has manifested itself in all areas. Many feminists have commenced a search for the Divine Feminine both within the framework of traditional religion, as well as in alternative paths. Performance art has the potential to play a part in filling that void.

The consequences of an absent female deity are many, though perhaps not readily visible. Having a male represented as divine, with no female counterpart, empowers men over women by giving them a perfect, divine example of male authority. Women are left with only flawed and mortal role models, relegating them to a lesser potential and importance.

In her book *In Woman's Image: An Iconography of God*, Wioleta Polinska raises the issue that although the Bible never explicitly talks about God having a specific gender, the language used is always referential to a "He."<sup>1</sup> Virginia Mollenkott highlights the problem with this wording. She points out that there are "political effects of naming God as exclusively masculine: because God is husbandlike, husbands are godlike. Because God is fatherlike, fathers are godlike. The stage is set for exploitation of girls and women."<sup>2</sup> Even when husbands and fathers are far from godlike, this comparison gives them societal authority over the women in their lives, too often to the abuse and mistreatment of many women.

In traditional Jewish and Christian theology, Eve is looked upon as the transgressor and Adam as the righteous ruler. Women have borne guilt for this "sin" for ages, which has caused a myriad of problems. Female bodies being vilified as evil and unclean has caused female sexuality to be repressed and denied, while still being used as an excuse for men to give in to temptation. Because women are life bearing, they have been kept as property, bought and sold, and ruled over by men—yet the fountain of their life giving abilities, menstruation, has often been dealt with as shameful and disgusting.

Modern results of this ongoing patriarchy are evident in many men who hold powerful positions in our society today. There has been a rash of politicians, businessmen, and others who show no respect for women and girls in private or public, and bear no shame for it. Many are still societally accepted even though they abuse sexually, and in other ways, the women around them. Also evidencing this despicable situation is the continued violence by men, especially against girls and women, on a routine basis. The constant reports of abductions, rapes, and murders of girls make every young woman wary of walking to her car by herself at night.

<sup>1</sup> Wioleta Polinska, *In Woman's Image: An Iconography for God*. 2004, *Feminist Theology: The Journal of the Britain & Ireland School of Feminist Theology*, volume 13, issue 1, 41.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1984, 5.

But it doesn't have to be that way. If our society were taught to revere and respect women, and truly hold them sacred, there would be an attitude of freedom rather than fear, because they would be *safe*. And when women and girls are safe, the whole society is.

A careful reading of scripture reveals that God is often attributed traditionally feminine qualities. Much imagery is used throughout the Bible to describe God's sufferings and love for humanity as a woman in travail<sup>3</sup>, a mother with her suckling child<sup>4</sup>, and a mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings to protect them.<sup>5</sup> Even at the beginning of Genesis, God talks about making man in "our image"—both male and female were created in the image of God.<sup>6</sup> If both male and female were created in God's image, it logically follows that God is both male and female, or that there is more than one deity who makes up God. This especially makes sense considering the use of "our" in that phrase.

Mormon doctrine, which supports these findings, has a slightly different take on this subject than traditional Christianity. God is seen as a glorified man, literally the father of humanity. It is recognized that He has a female counterpart, Heavenly Mother, the mother of humanity. Little is known about her, and although much is said about the value of the women of the church, patriarchy still presides.

As a Christian woman, and member of a very organized religion, I have spent a lot of time contemplating the paradox of our visible god being male, and the many archetypally feminine attributes he possesses. The highest commandment is to become like God himself, but the very language used—"even as your *Father* which is in heaven is perfect"<sup>7</sup>—excludes women. How are women to envision themselves as becoming like God when there is no visible female god as a role model? If this Divine Mother figure were more recognized and visibly represented, both women and men would receive immense benefit.

In an effort to break free of the societal oppression and to envision a god with whom they can identify, many women have embarked on a journey to find the Empowered Feminine, and in that journey have discovered the Divine Feminine. Art is extremely important in this endeavor. For ages, the ubiquitous image of God as an old white-bearded man has been inscribed into our minds by painters such as Michelangelo. Since the 1960s, women have been trying to find a way to represent themselves through art in a manner that takes back control over their bodies and celebrates parts of being female that have historically been repressed. Envisioning the Divine Mother is part of this representation.

"For anything like a revolution to take place, it must be imagined first. Before we can mobilize the energy to move forward toward a better world, we must have begun to envision it," writes Dr. Carol Flinders, a professor of ancient mystical literature at Berkeley. In her book *At the Root of This Longing: Reconciling a Spiritual Hunger and a Feminist Thirst*, Flinders discusses the idea of finding empowerment through narrative. It's the idea that people are more

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<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Romans 8:22 KJV

<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible*, KJV, Isaiah 49:15

<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Bible*, KJV, Matthew 23:37

<sup>6</sup> *The Holy Bible*, KJV, Genesis 1:26-27

<sup>7</sup> *The Holy Bible*, KJV, Matthew 5:48

able to accomplish something if they have an example they can relate to who has previously done that thing. For example, if a little girl learns about Amelia Earhart and is inspired by her, she is more likely to consider becoming a pilot a feasible plan of action, than if she had never seen or heard of a female pilot. It is when there is no precedent or known example present that invented narrative becomes a necessity for success.<sup>8</sup>

This is why feminist art, particularly performance art, is so important. It allows women to create their own histories, whether real or imagined, and make them visible. By becoming visible, they bring new possibilities to the minds of both artist and viewer. This way, the experiences of women are validated, acknowledged, and valued. Through the art they see and the art they make, women can imagine a narrative of success for themselves. They see the image of a powerful Goddess who has been through what they are going through, and they know what they can do and become.

As part of Second Wave Feminism, feminist art emerged as a way to establish women in the largely male-centric art world. Performance art went perfectly with the feminist agenda for several reasons. First, performance art uses the body as its medium. The female body was a battleground for feminists, considering that it has been used by men for pleasure, property, and violence across cultures and through time. Also, performance art occupies real time. It demands commitment and attention from the viewer, and breaks social norms and expectations. Feminism was all about breaking the normality of societal interaction, and bringing attention to what was wrong with the patriarchal system. Finally, it blurs the line between what is real and what is representation, bringing urgency and liveness to what is being performed. Because performance uses lived experience as its medium, it is difficult to detach it from real life, which is part of its power.<sup>9</sup>

Unsurprisingly, much of this art was really shocking. Much feminist art used imagery of vaginas and wombs. Judy Chicago's 1979 work *The Dinner Party* played heavily on these motifs, to exquisite effect. It is a large installation made up of a triangular table with 39 place settings, each representing an influential woman in history. The white tile floor is inscribed in gold with 999 names of other important women. Each place setting was handmade by Chicago and other female artists who collaborated with her.<sup>10</sup> They are made with traditionally feminine techniques such as ceramics, weaving, and needlework. Although it is a sculptural installation, the making of *The Dinner Party* was essentially a collaborative performance, paying homage to the divinity of feminine history. Even though it was such a



Figure 1. Primordial Goddess plate from *The Dinner Party*, 1979. China paint on porcelain. Judy Chicago.

<sup>8</sup> Carol Lee Flinders, *At the Root of This Longing: Reconciling a Spiritual Hunger and a Feminist Thirst*. New York: Harper One, 1998, 144.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton, *Elements of Performance Art*. London: The Ting, Theatre of Mistakes, 1977

<sup>10</sup> Judy Chicago, <http://www.judychicago.com/gallery/the-dinner-party/dp-artwork/>

beautiful work, people were still outraged by the obvious imagery of vulvas on each ceramic plate.

In performances, bare breasts and bodies were on display. All of this was to take the physical back from being under the power of men, to own it and no longer be ashamed. Some of it was sexualized, which was scandalous to the general public, but largely because female sexuality had been repressed and seen as inappropriate and unfeminine. While this was liberating to some, it also at some moments may have had the exact opposite effect of continuing to objectify women's bodies.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 2. *Untitled (Rape Scene)*, 1973.  
Performance. Ana Mendieta.

But the rage and passion with which this art was made was totally justifiable. After so many years of suffering inflicted upon womankind, the cries of injustice were finally finding voice. One example of this was Ana Mendieta's performances of *Untitled (Rape Scene)*, a personal reaction to the brutal rape and murder of a fellow student, Sara Ann Otten, at University of Iowa.

For the performance, Mendieta re-created the scene of the crime in her own apartment, then posed, tied across a table, stripped and bloodied from the waist down.

It was a grisly scene, and it highlighted the horror and reality of the situation. She said, "I can't see being theoretical about an issue like that."<sup>12</sup> By performing as the victim of the crime, Mendieta was honoring and acknowledging Otten's experience, and that of countless other women and girls. This type of art was an outcry against the system that allowed such things to happen, an outcry against the total desecration of something so sacred as a woman's life and body.

Not all feminist performances were so shocking, though they were still controversial. Mary Kelley's series *Post-Partum Document* was an exploration of a completely different side of the feminine experience. This series encompassed six years of Kelley's life, beginning at her pregnancy with her son and chronicling their relationship for his first six years. Although the final products displayed in the gallery were artifacts and writings from her life, I consider Kelley's work to be performative, as it was documentation from time based actions that imbued the objects with meaning.

Kelley's work, though not as graphic as Mendieta's, is as un-"theoretical" as you can get. She used her son's stained diapers and onesies as journal pages, writing about her real experiences as a new mother. As her son grew and their relationship developed, she wrote about those things, too, revealing raw, extremely real moments. And she let him make his marks—scribbles in crayon nearly obscuring her words.

<sup>11</sup> Polinska, *In Women's Image*, 41

<sup>12</sup> Tate, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/mendieta-untitled-rape-scene-t13355>



Figure 3. *Waiting*, 1972. Performance. Faith Wilding.

Faith Wilding's 1972 performance *Waiting* is a captivating 15 minute monologue that follows the pattern of a girl's life. For the performance, Wilding sat in a chair, rocking back and forth as she spoke, a room full of people sat and watched and listened. Her voice changed as the monologue progressed: high and loud as she spoke from the perspective of a baby waiting to be held and taken care of, through puberty as she waited for her first kiss, motherhood as she waited for her belly to grow and her baby to be born, and finally falling to a weak crackle as she waited for her husband to die and her children to come visit. It highlighted the powerless position that many women have found themselves in and resigned themselves to—living in a world not made for women.

Janine Antoni and Courtney Kessel, contemporary artists, are also making work related to motherhood. For Antoni's piece

*Momme*, she crawled under her mother's dress and sat there on the couch with her, as if they had become one person again, like before she was born. The resulting photograph is only slightly strange, you can hardly tell there are two people under the long white dress. The only clues are the strange bulge around the midsection and the third foot peeking out from below the hem.

This piece, and others that Antoni has made with her own daughter, reflect the bond between mothers and daughters. It shows how mothers nurture their children and how much children, especially daughters, need and crave that attachment long after they have grown and become independent.



Figure 5. *Momme*, 1995. Photograph. Janine Antoni.

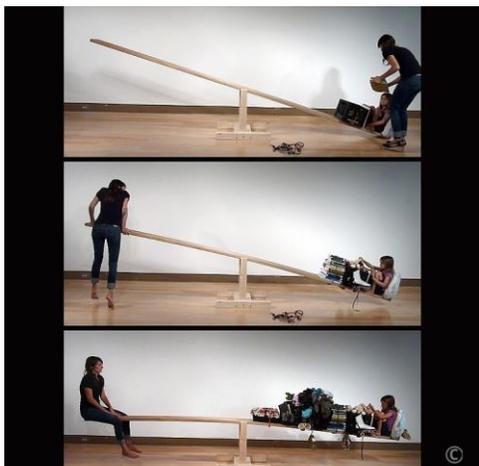


Figure 4. *In Balance With*, 2011. Performance. Courtney Kessel.

Kessel makes art revolving around her daughter. Her

performances are about balancing her life around her daughter's, as well as how her daughter came from within herself, and still inhabits her in some ways. *In Balance With*, a 2011 work, literally illustrates this delicate balance. Kessel made a giant seesaw, and set her young daughter on one end. Over the course of the performance, she would add objects belonging to her daughter to that end, periodically climbing onto her own end until the weight on each side was even. Then mother and daughter would then sit there until the

daughter tired of it, at which point the performance would end. In this work, Kessel explored the sacrifices motherhood brings.

This type of art fulfills a deep need for me. By making these actions into art, we take them from their normal contexts and bring them to a gallery, lifting them from the mundane and turning them into something significant. This liberates them to be seen as something special, something divine. I need to see women as divine, because I cannot see the Divine Mother herself. I need to see art that depicts Her or that embodies Her actions. By seeing these things, I may begin to know her as I know the Divine Father already, an image in my mind, a feeling in my spirit.

Much of my art is about the natural functions of the female body. I am passionate about body awareness, fertility, and childbirth-- things that might be gross or taboo to many men and even women. But I feel that if women are going to make progress toward repossessing their bodies, they need to understand and love them the way they are.

One recent installation I did was a collection of 164 ceramic apples. I handmade each one



Figure 6. Detail, *Counting From Menarche*, 2017.  
Ceramic and watercolor paint. [REDACTED]

out of clay, and painted them a dusky red. Into some of the apples I printed words like “loss,” “tide,” “strength,” and I displayed them laid out in a large triangle on the floor of the gallery. The title of the show was *Counting From Menarche*.

*Menarche* is the word that refers to a girl’s first period. Each apple I made represented one menstrual period from my life. I calculated the approximate number of menstrual periods I have had, beginning at my very first, menarche, and then commemorated each one since then with an apple, unique from all the rest.

Menstruation is often looked upon with disgust, shame, if not disregarded as merely something uncomfortable that women go through every month. But our society fails to understand that it is the very wellspring of life! Every woman

has a finite number of egg cells, and every time she menstruates, she loses one that will never be replaced. Obviously, it would be preposterous to try and give life to every single one, but the awareness of potential life

brings awe and respect for that bodily process. For years, I have been tracking my ovulation, and every time my period comes, I feel a solemnity and reverence, as well as a sisterhood with all the other women who are suffering through it with me.

The other part of *Counting From Menarche* was a piece I performed in the gallery, seated inside a red gauze tent of my own making. I sat on a cushion at a low tri-cornered table, sorting beans, rice, and lentils from a pile in the middle of the table into their respective bowls. The performance was laborious and mind numbing, and I spread it out over a few days.

The most significant moment was when my mother approached me and asked what it all meant. I told her I was sorting seeds as I had seen her sort beans throughout my childhood, every other day to make bean soup for our family. She protested, “But why are the rice and lentils mixed in? I would never do that!” It wasn’t about that, I explained. To me, that tiny action of sorting beans represented the countless mundane actions that women do in the service of their families. My mother had never thought to ask for thanks. She did it because of the Divine Mother that is in her, a selfless sacrifice that she had chosen to make.

Seeing other women make art about birth, menstruation, or the feminine experience validates the stories I tell myself, the stories that are nearly absent in theology, about the Divine Mother. It makes me strong to know that there is a Divine Being who has been through what I am living—felt the cramps and dealt with the blood, experienced pregnancy nausea, watched her body change as new life developed inside her. Without that knowledge, I feel hopeless and alone in my misery—is this just my lot in life and it doesn’t matter at all, or is there a sacredness in the experience?

Even though I don’t see the Mother God or read about Her in the scriptures, I see Her in the grief and rage of Ana Mendieta’s *Untitled (Rape Scene)*. I see Her in *Post-Partum Document*; in the dirty diapers and Mary Kelley’s sacrifice of becoming a mother, building her life around the necessities and growth of her son. I see Her in Janine Antoni’s work as she tries to once again access the closeness, comfort, and nourishment of her mother’s womb, and in the many other artworks women make. I see Her as I count beans in my little red tent, doing what my mother did for years on end for her family.

If we foster a reverence, a divine perspective of womanhood, bodies, and life-giving, and teach it not just to girls and women but to boys and men, too, girls will be able to walk down the street without being attacked or abducted. Men who rape women will be held accountable instead of walking free and with no consequences.

If women are allowed to take back ownership of their bodies—and men relinquish the attitude that women’s bodies are only there to give them pleasure,



Figure 7. Detail from *Counting From Menarche*, 2017. Performance including wood, ceramic, fabric, dried beans, rice, and lentils.

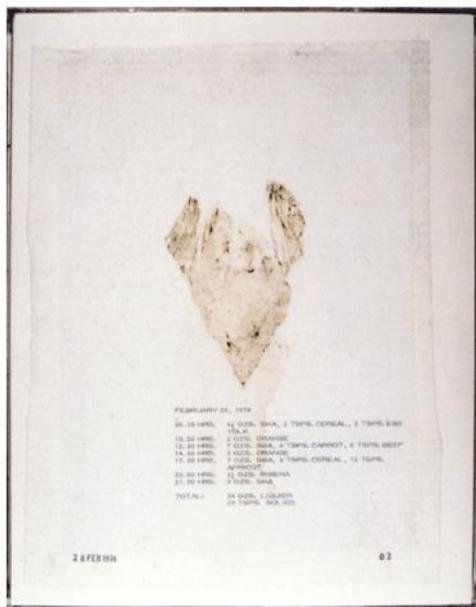


Figure 8. Detail from *Post-Partum Document*, 1976. Diaper liner, printed text. Mary Kelley.

or are there for the taking—women can be powerful. By powerful, I don't mean authoritarian or despotic over others, but rather in control of oneself and confident enough to help others. And when one has the choice to sacrifice for others, rather than being forced to, that sacrifice can be rewarding and strengthening, even divine.

Feminist performance art is a powerful tool in helping bring women out of oppression. Bringing the Divine Feminine to light through performance feeds a hunger that many may not even realize they have. Performance is powerful to expose negative aspects of our culture and change them, and it can also bring to light truths and possibilities.

I believe that having a greater, more reverent, real representation of women in art, especially performance art, will lead to fostering respect and reverence for the female experience. Coming to know the Divine Mother will in no way demean the Divine Father, rather bring women and girls to safety and empowerment, while helping all of humanity to see the full picture of divinity.

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- Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1984, 5.
- The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Romans 8:22
- The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Isaiah 49:15
- The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Matthew 23:37
- The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Genesis 1:26-27
- The Holy Bible*, King James Version, Matthew 5:48
- Carol Lee Flinders, *At the Root of This Longing: Reconciling a Spiritual Hunger and a Feminist Thirst*. New York: Harper One, 1998, 144.
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- Judy Chicago, *Judy Chicago*. <http://www.judychicago.com/gallery/the-dinner-party/dp-artwork/>
- Tate, *Ana Mendieta: Untitled (Rape Scene)*, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/mendieta-untitled-rape-scene-t13355>

## Annotated Bibliography

Hill, Leslie. *The Guerilla Guide to Performance Art: How to Make a Living as an Artist*. London; New York: Continuum, 2004.

This is a practical guide to making performance art as a professional. It won't be as important to my paper as I'd hoped, but it is extremely useful looking forward to a future of art making that includes performance.

Howell, Anthony and Templeton, Fiona. *Elements of Performance Art*. London: The Ting, Theatre of Mistakes, 1977.

*Elements of Performance Art* is an original handbook to performance art, from the 70s. It talks a lot about participation, as well as proximity and involvement of viewers. It also addresses concerns such as time frame, location, and interaction with props or other art pieces. It relates strongly to my questions about what my own limits are with performance and participation.

Goldberg, RoseLee. *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. Third Edition. London; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011.

*Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* is a history of performance, beginning at Italian Futurism and following its permutations through to modern day. It discusses the issues artists were addressing and the subject matter they were working with. A lot of it has to do with using the body as a medium.

Fusco, Coco. *Corpus delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*. New York; Routledge, 2000.

*Corpus dilecti* is full of examples of performance art in both North and South America. It relates to Claire Bishop's writings, in that much of the work is political in various ways. Also, many of the artists featured deal with issues of gender and feminism, which I am particularly interested. I want to see how my art fits into this tradition, and how it also diverges.

Reason, Matthew and Lindelof, Anja Mølle, Editors. *Experiencing Liveness in Contemporary Performance: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Taylor and Francis, 2016. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=4729892>.

This is a discussion of live performance, and the quality of liveness as the relationship between performance and audience. This will be helpful for me to understand my own art, as I have done performance in person, as well as performance for camera.

Bishop, Claire. *Participation*. London; Cambridge, Mass.: Whitechapel; MIT Press, 2006.

Participatory/performance art always seems to spring from something political. Value-judgements are necessary to clarify and understand shared values. How do we make it better, more complex and powerful? Authorship: is singular authorship bad and collective good? Not necessarily. *Participation* looks at the politics of participatory art. It will help me understand the place of participation in my performance pieces, as that is one aspect of my art I am trying to figure out.

Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells*. London; New York: Verso Books, 2012

*Artificial Hells* is an exploration of socially engaged art as a combination of performance and participation, where the lines are blurred between the two sides into a collaboration. Through various essays from other authors, and her own thoughts, Bishop analyzes the elements of activation, authorship, and community in relation to art. She claims that participation is inherently political. It provides a basis for me to analyze my own art and how political I mean for it to be.

Wark, Jayne. *Radical Gestures : Feminism and Performance Art in North America*, MQUP, 2006  
ProQuest Ebook Central,  
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=3332008>.

This book is a historical and theoretical analysis of how performance provided a new “frontier” for feminist artists, one where they didn’t have to conform to long held traditions set by men. It also discusses the use of the body as a medium, as well as political factors and many other issues that have influenced feminism and performance art.

Atre, Shubhangana. *The Feminine as Archetype*. Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 92 (2011), pp. 151-193. Accessed 30 November 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43941279>

This article uses a Jungian analysis to explore the feminine as an archetype in connection with the goddess phenomenon, while also analyzing the social and political conditions of women in

different cultures. This could be useful in getting a cultural background for some of the beliefs about women and how they are treated in different places and within different social structures.

Flinders, Carol Lee. *At the Root of This Longing: Reconciling a Spiritual Hunger and a Feminist Thirst*. New York: Harper One, 1998.

This book, an exploration of feminism and spirituality, contains a lot of information about the Divine Feminine. Combining ideas from Judeo-Christian, Indian, and Native American traditions, Flinders analyzes what is perhaps missing from Western culture regarding women. One idea that particularly pertains to this research project is that of inventing your own narrative history to empower yourself when there is none readily available to you.

Springgay, Stephanie. *Knitting as an Aesthetic of Civic Engagement: Re-conceptualizing Feminist Pedagogy through Touch*. *Feminist Teacher*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2010), pp. 111-123. University of Illinois Press. Accessed 30 Nov. 2017.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/femteacher.20.2.0111>

This article discusses feminist pedagogy as having to do with the body, and social interconnectivity. It focuses on the typically feminine act of knitting as a conduit for teaching and art making. I am interested in using tasks historically relegated to women as a connection with the past as well as today's world. I think they have power to address feminist concerns, when used appropriately.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford, and Rosemary Ruether. *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine : A Western Religious History*. University of California Press, 2005. ProQuestI Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=231914>.

This book lays out a history of recent (within the last 50 years) struggles within Feminism about religion and spirituality. It addresses the varying belief systems that feminists have adopted and invented, and then goes back through history to analyze the roots of those systems. A particularly interesting perspective is that historically, men have been the creators of goddesses for their own purposes—it is not women who create, follow, and benefit from them. In our recent history, however, we have been trying to use goddesses as empowerment for women.

Gaskin, Ina May. *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*. Bantam Dell, 2003.

The concept of this book is to empower women in one of the most primal things they could ever experience: childbirth. Strangely, the feminist movement of the 70s rejected childbirth as a part

of patriarchal oppression. Ina May sees it as an opportunity for women to be in total harmony with and control of their bodies. Although not overtly religious, she talks a great deal about spirituality. She also uses art created by women to express the incredible things experienced. I have found the birth stories in this book to be a fantastic source for learning about the Divine Feminine in action.

Saxena, Neela Bhattacharya. *Absent Mother God of the West : A Kali Lover's Journey into Christianity and Judaism*. Lexington Books, 2015. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=4098379>.

This is the chronicle of a Hindu woman's search for the Western Mother God. She explores the idea of healing the relationships between men and women by reconciling the Masculine God with the Feminine God. She talks about how the Divine Feminine was forgotten or eradicated and how Goddesses are making a comeback.

Polinska, Wioleta. In *Woman's Image: An Iconography for God*. 2004, *Feminist Theology: The Journal of the Britain & Ireland School of Feminist Theology*, volume 13, issue 1, starting on page 40.  
<http://content.ebscohost.com/ContentServer.asp?EbscoContent=dGJyMMv17ESep684wtvhOLCmr0%2BeqK9Srqe4Sa%2BWXWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGuskyurK5IuePfgex43zx1%2BqE &T=P&P=AN&S=R&D=aph&K=14271208>

This book talks about how the western tradition conceptualizes God as solely male, which perpetuates a male-centered power dynamic that is not necessarily supported by scripture. Visual culture continues to support that. There are, however, difficulties associated with visual representations of a Feminine God, which revolve around objectifying the female body, and again subordinating it to the concept of the “unknowable mystery” of the masculine God. Visual representation of a Feminine God is important, though, and useful to changing the long held bias of God as male.

Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1984.

Mollenkott talks about how the generally accepted readings of the Bible conceptualize God as male, but historically, there has been ambiguity about assigning sex to Deity. In the Bible, there are many parts that speak of God in a distinctly feminine way. This is useful when trying to find a place of divinity for the feminine.

## Artists

Janine Antoni does performance and makes objects. She often plays on archetypally feminine tasks or societal roles, such as weaving, cleaning, or being beautiful, to make her art. She also deals with her identity as a daughter, exploring her relationship to her mother, and her identity as a mother, interacting with her daughter. Her work is subtle and humorous, but has a reverence about it that I feel relates to my concept of the Divine Feminine

Mary Kelley's series *Postpartum Document* and the work surrounding it have very much to do with what I think of as the Divine Feminine. Her record of her son's infancy, documented on his stained diapers and vests, are contemplative and urgently real. Previous to his birth, she also made videos of her pregnant belly, and the ripples as the baby moved inside her.

Judy Chicago is well known for her feminist art, but the one piece of hers that interests me most in the context of the Divine Feminine is *The Dinner Party*. It is a large installation made up of a triangular table with 39 place settings, each representing an influential woman in history. The white tile floor is inscribed in gold with 999 names of other important women. Each place setting was handmade by Chicago and other female artists who collaborated with her. They are made with traditionally feminine techniques such as ceramics, weaving, and needlework. Although it is a sculptural installation, the making of *The Dinner Party* was essentially a collaborative performance, paying homage to the divinity of feminine history.

Courtney Kessel uses her experience as a mother to make her work. Her performances are about balancing her life around her daughter's, as well as how her daughter came from within herself, and still inhabits her in some ways. As she fulfills her role as a mother, she explores the sacrifices and joys motherhood brings.

Ana Mendieta made very provocative work about gender, especially the female experience. One series that catches my attention is specifically about the body and the goddess. She would find places in the earth where her body would fit, then lay in them naked, becoming a part of the earth.

Faith Wilding's performance *Waiting* is a captivating 15 minute monologue that follows the pattern of a girl's life. For the performance, Wilding sat in a chair, rocking back and forth as she spoke, a room full of people sat and watched and listened. Her voice changed as the monologue progressed: high and loud as she spoke from the perspective of a baby waiting to be held and taken care of, through puberty as she waited for her first kiss, motherhood as she waited for her belly to grow and her baby to be born, and finally falling to a weak crackle as she waited for her husband to die and her children to come visit. It highlighted the powerless position that many women have found themselves in and resigned themselves to—living in a world not made for women.

## Transformative Experiences: Contextualizing Personal Artwork Through the Lenses of Technology and Failure

Art exists within the space of humanity, and as such, it must carry its own context. A piece of art cannot be isolated from its cultural origins. There are many ways of providing that context to a piece of art, and often those methods are mixed together to create something new to the dialog of the art world. For me, the contexts I use to provide a sense of context to my viewers is by using technology and exploring the idea of failure. In order to do this, I must first understand the ways in which other artists have used similar methods and how their work through those methods added to the development of a cultural dialog.

Though I employ several different methods of creating art, the methods that I seem to naturally feel comfortable in involve technology. I've developed a certain fondness for making videos and making photographs via a digital post-process. Modern technology really found its place in art when artists started employing video in their work, since it was and is such an accessible technology.

Takeshi Murata is one of my favorite artists, and he exploits technological processes in his work. He is best known for his videos that are created using a technique called datamoshing, in which the core code of the video is corrupted and altered, resulting in glitch colors and effects that one does not usually see in most videos (i.e. cinema, film, and popular Internet videos with high production value). One such video is *Untitled (Pink Dot)*. I have tried my hand at datamoshing my own material, and while I enjoy the process and its effects, I wanted to try to visually incorporate it in a different way. This resulted in my making a self-portrait diptych (fig. 1)

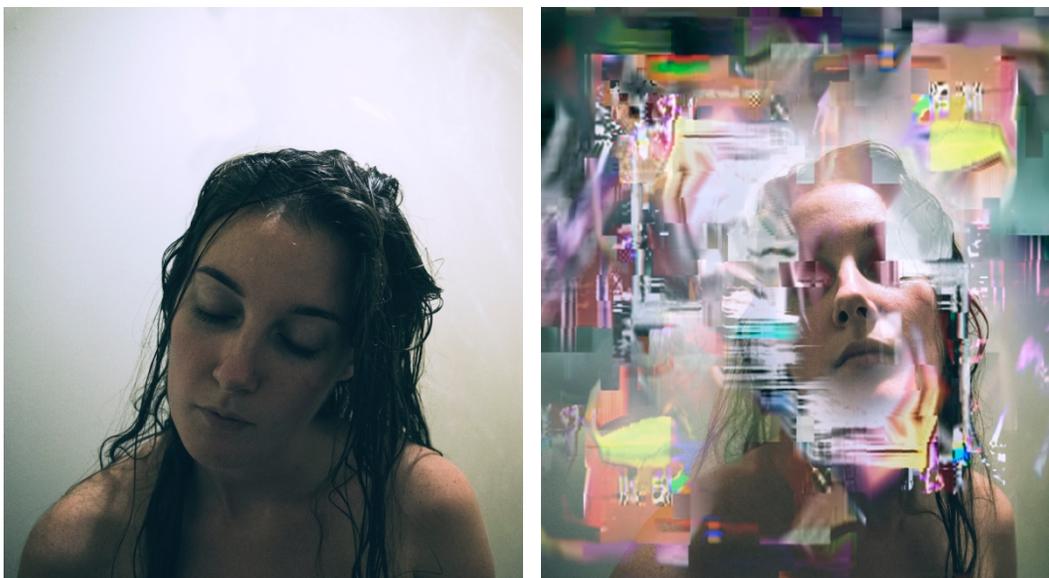


fig.1: [REDACTED] *Coins and Water*, photograph diptych, 16" x 18" per image, 2017

The second image of the diptych incorporates typical effects that are usually seen in datamoshed videos. Murata uses this imagery with popular movies to make them melt and distort in a way that reflects on their ontological state. By changing the source material so drastically such that it reflects undesirability and imperfection in the mainstream video world, Murata moves concrete material into an existential and surreal state. Similarly, the meshed colors and shapes in my photograph move the figure into a more reflective state that appears removed from the materiality of the world. Osip Brik, an avant-garde writer, talked about the removal of painting from reality due to the technological development of photography. Painting was no longer required to represent reality, so it became more abstract.<sup>1</sup> However, this datamoshing technique exploits photographic processes to become more of a painterly endeavor. I am forced to consider why I decided to make this image as a photograph as opposed to creating it by painting it. I do not completely know why I made this as a photograph, other than perhaps it is because I am more familiar with the digital tools of editing photography and video, but I appreciate the comparison to painting because it is making me more aware of what medium I am using to make an artwork and whether or not it is the best medium to use.

Rick Silva combines technology and nature to create a dialog about the fusion of two seemingly incompatible worlds. One of his most notable works is a video piece called *The Silva Field Guide to Birds of a Parallel Future*. The video is a series of clips of digitally imaged and composited birdlike figures moving through an ambiguous space (fig. 2).

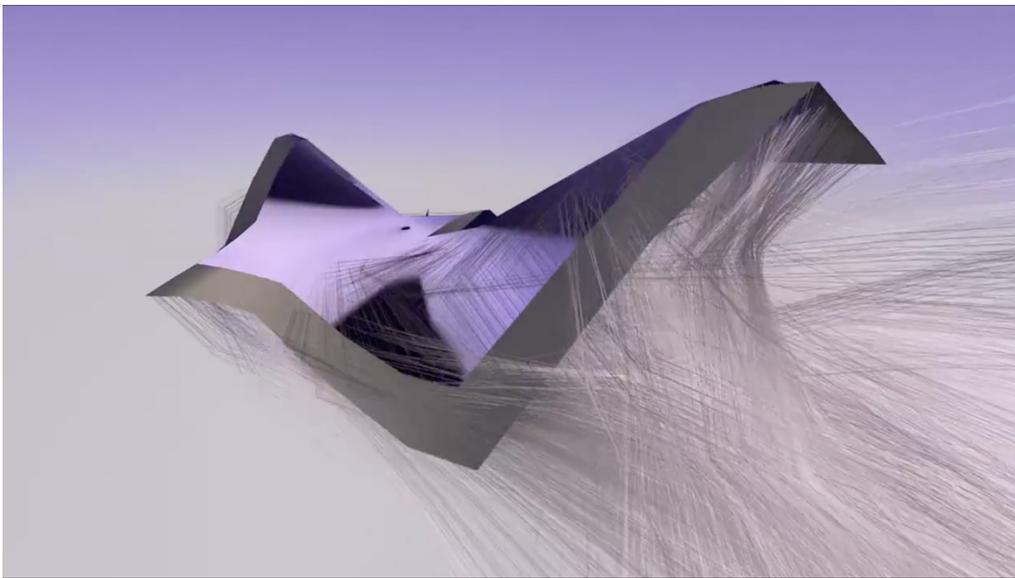


fig.2: Rick Silva, *The Silva Field Guide to Birds of a Parallel Future* (still), video, 2014

<sup>1</sup> Brik, Osip. "Photography Versus Painting." *Art in Theory: 1900—2000*. Eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 1992. 470. Print.

Author Marga Bijvoet discussed the implications of merging the worlds of art and technology. The essence of an artwork changes based on the medium it is made in.<sup>2</sup> Hypothetically, Silva's video would not have the same effect on the viewer if the same images were made by animating them by hand instead of through a computer program. Computer generated graphics retain a sense of distance from humanness; it becomes more difficult to sense an artist's hand in the formal structures when they are made by an artificial intelligence that can only think in binary terms. Again, I am drawn to the specifics of a medium as opposed to another. There is an obvious reason why Silva decided to create the video using the method he did. In a way, it connects to the Futurist Manifesto penned by Umberto Boccioni, who said "as in every realm of the human mind, clear-sighted individual research has swept away the unchanging obscurities of dogma, so must the vivifying current of science soon deliver painting from academism."<sup>3</sup> The Futurists believed that continually advancing technologies would only positively develop their work. The movement had a firm belief in speed and strength by technology, not only in art, but also in society. Though this particular sentiment is not what Silva was trying to communicate to his audience in *The Field Guide*, it certainly rings true in the way that video and computer technology has aided in making strong contemporary art.

Nancy Burson relies on the aid of artificial intelligence to recognize and recreate images based on real world source material. In her photographic piece, *First and Second Beauty Composites*, we question the reality of a computer-generated image. Society has high and idealized standards of beauty, but when a computer takes several of the most beautiful women from different generations and composites them to what should theoretically be the two most beautiful women to ever exist, the results are oddly bland and uncanny at the same time (fig 3).

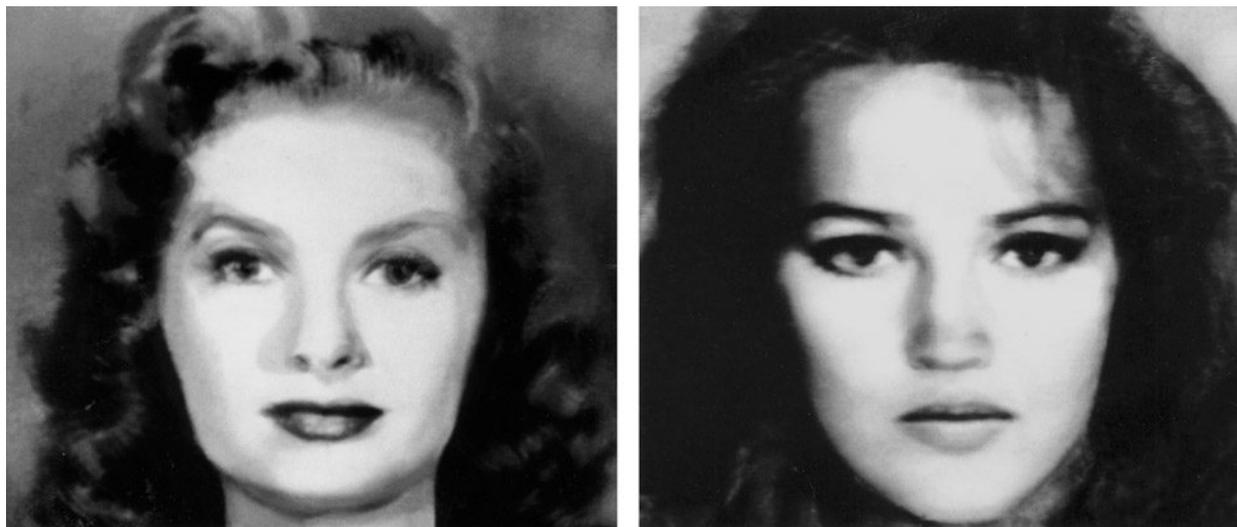


fig.3: Nancy Burson, *First and Second Beauty Composites*, silver gelatin print, 7 ¼" x 8 ¼" apiece, 1982

<sup>2</sup> Bijvoet, Marga, 1948. *Art as Inquiry: Toward New Collaborations between Art, Science, and Technology*. United States:, 1997. Web.

<sup>3</sup> Boccioni, Umberto. "Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto." *Art in Theory: 1900–2000*. Eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 1992. 150-152. Print.

The figure on the left is compiled of the features of Bette Davis, Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Sophia Loren, and Marilyn Monroe, while the right is of Jane Fonda, Jacqueline Bisset, Diane Keaton, Brooke Shields, and Meryl Streep. The supposed results are expected to be breathtakingly stunning, yet the reality falls short of that. I am personally interested in similar themes of comparing the expectation of something to its reality, and I try to incorporate those ideas into my work by using double exposures and diptych comparisons. Marshall McLuhan claims that technology has continued to sever people from reality so that they create similar kinds of false expectations. People therefore retreat into themselves and become passive participants in their own lives as a result of technology producing literal results for them.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it is because of this that both Burson and I exploit technology—her via disappointing computer composites, and I through corrupting data—so we limit it and keep it from becoming an entity beyond our control.

Trevor Paglen examines the political effects of technology on human life. He has photographed drones, supposedly nonexistent secret government bases, and photographed the pipes running along the ocean floor that connect the world to the Internet. One of his pieces, *Machine Readable Hito*, examines the mind-boggling effects of artificial intelligence and its increasing likeness in an odd way to organic human intelligence. The piece is a series of images of artist Hito Steyerl making a wide variety of emotional facial expressions. Beneath each image is a caption made by a computer program that has been programmed to decipher the extent to which any given emotion is depicted in a specific expression. Though the viewer may initially think that the decision of how much emotion is contained in the face is objectively reported by an algorithm, it is eventually understood that the program had to somehow decide the amount of emotion in the face. Why did the algorithm decide one particular expression had more sadness than anger? How did the programmer of the algorithm program that ability to decide in the code? Ana Mendieta wrote an essay on the combination of the intersection of politics and art. “The ruling class...pushes to paralyze the social development of man...In this way, they create a product, a style, which dominates mass communications, and now also the arts, in all of its manifestations.”<sup>5</sup> Though I try to limit the abilities of technology, it is problematic that politics twists art in order to surveil and control the masses. I take Paglen’s work and Mendieta’s warning into consideration as I contemplate the implications of what my work is trying to say.

Natalie Jeremijenko has a more positive take on the incorporation of technology in her work, rather than warning people of the dangers it can potentially pose, she fuses technology with nature to create a vision of an improved world where nature mutates into something almost surreal. In *Tree Logic*, Jeremijenko developed a way for trees to grow upside down while being suspended in midair. In a less utilitarian way, I have

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<sup>4</sup> McLuhan, Marshall. "Introduction" from *Understanding Media*. Eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 1992. 754-757. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Mendieta, Ana. "Art and Politics." *Art in Theory: 1900—2000*. Eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 1992. 1064-1065. Print.

brought technology and nature together by creating pixelated landscape photographs. My reasons for doing this are different from Jeremijenko's, but I look toward the placement of technology within nature and vice versa to create a new kind of reality that needs to be adapted to. In *Women, Art, and Technology*, Judy Malloy discusses the unfortunate invisibility and importance of women who have made developments in the arts and sciences, and how these developments can work together.<sup>6</sup> In the context of Jeremijenko's work and Malloy's writing on the importance of female developments in male-dominated fields, I feel more empowered to develop my work in the way I want to develop it, instead of sticking to more practical or expected methods of making work. I have taken risks in most of my work, especially in the works that are personally raw—and even though those pieces are not always successful, it does not usually make me less motivated about continuing to develop my work to be better.

Jim Sanborn makes cryptic and momentous works about large abstract entities and human phenomena. One such work is titled *Critical Assembly*, and is an installation comprised of the actual machines that were used in the development of the atomic bomb in the early twentieth century. The sight of these machines placed solemnly in a space evoke the tragedies of those who were devastated by the effects of the atomic bomb, whether that be by being a primary victim who was directly killed by the weapon or a secondary victim that felt the effects of a loved one who was obliterated by the bomb. The audience is left to wonder about the monstrosity of humanity, of people who do this to each other. In a similar emotional way, I explore the relationships of people I am connected to in some of my work, and wonder about the comparisons of what I expect those relationships to be like, and the slightly uglier reality of them. The work reinterprets the function of the machinery, and perhaps, through the viewer's contemplation of them, makes them into something more symbolic and conceptual than what they are as objects. Sanborn's piece embodies the ideas found in Kasimir Malevich's writing on the development of futurism.<sup>7</sup> Just like Cubism and Futurism were essential for Malevich to develop the Suprematist movement, it was also necessary for humanity to create the atomic bomb so that Sanborn could create a commentary on it. Though the atomic bomb was an atrocious invention, the development of its technology allowed Sanborn to make it into something more positive. The use of machines in an artwork is a theme found in Walter Benjamin's seminal writing, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin discusses the alteration of the aura of a piece of work when a mechanical apparatus is involved. "That which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art."<sup>8</sup> In a similar way, Sanborn's piece is also transformed by its medium of authentic machines and not just reproductions.

Though I originally felt my work identified with the theme of technology simply because it used technology in its creation process, I've come to realize through placing my work and the ideas surrounding it with the artwork of successful artists that

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<sup>6</sup> Malloy, Judy. *Women, Art, and Technology*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2003. Web.

<sup>7</sup> Malevich, Kasimir. "From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting." *Art in Theory: 1900—2000*. Eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 1992. 173-184. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Germany:, 1935. Print.

technology is a lot more than it appears. It is simply a method of working, and it has many specific implications, depending on its use in a piece, that need to be carefully considered. The immediate connotations of technology are ideas surrounding progress and development among human society. Though I feel I've used technology successfully as a method of making work, I realize that these artists have used technology in more ways than one, and that is something I must learn to do to make my work better.

As a developing artist, I often fail at what I do and what I make. Dealing with that almost always unintentional failure is difficult when it comes to physically creating an artwork, but it creates and develops my ways of thinking about how I make my work. The idea of failure is an integral part to the development of work and this concept spills over into the conceptual ideas contained within artworks.

Again, Takeshi Murata is an artist who excels well in this area. His datamoshed videos depend on the failure of the limits of video technology, and the failure of the code contained within the video to keep itself together is what creates the effects in his datamoshed video works. (fig. 4)



fig.4: Takeshi Murata, *Monster Movie* (still), video, 2005

From a technical standpoint, video that works correctly should not look like this. Some of my photographic work is also dealing with the aesthetics opposite to what people usually expect a photograph to look like. Instead of creating crisp, high resolution images, I intentionally degrade the resolution so that they are transformed into something beyond a photograph. (fig. 5)



fig.5: [REDACTED], *Iteration 2 of Memory 68 of 108 Total Memories of Summer 23*, photograph, 6" x 6", 2017

Joel Fisher coins a peculiar term called “anaprokopology”, which is defined as the study of not succeeding. Society has a habit of focusing on and rewarding success, and automatically discounts and frowns upon failure. He claims that this is a damaging point of view, and that we should learn that failure needs to be embraced for people to develop.<sup>9</sup> I agree with this sentiment, especially in regards to my artwork. I often see my failed works to be negative things that prove my lack of ability as an artist, but based on Fisher’s words, I should not see them this way. A similarly themed article by Paul Ricoeur references the visual philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates. Failure is inherent in everything that undergoes the passage of time, as these things exist and degrade within memories.<sup>10</sup> Failure is so normal, yet I have difficulty accepting it—but I will continue to work within the realms of failure no matter what I do.

Nauman documents performances that depict the literal failures of physics and the limitations of the human body. In one particular piece, he photographs himself failing to levitate off the floor of his studio. (fig. 6) In a rather humorous and absurd way, knowing full well that he would not be able to literally levitate, and knowing that his viewers would know he would never be able to levitate, he tries to do so anyway. The futility of the act reminds us of our mortal imperfection. Being human means we cannot do anything and everything that we think up, whether that be for ethical reasons or due to specific limitations that cannot be surpassed. Exploring my themes of expectations and reality has revealed many things about failure to me. Nauman’s expectation may have been to levitate, but his reality meant he failed at it. My expectation of my

<sup>9</sup> Fisher, Joel. "Judgement and Purpose." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 116-122. Print.

<sup>10</sup> Ricoeur, Paul. "Memory and Imagination." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 68-72. Print.

relationships with people may be to remain stable, but I—and everyone I interact with—fail at that too in reality.



fig.6: Bruce Nauman, *Failing to Levitate in the Studio*, black and white photograph, 1966

These ideas interact with Chris Burden's thoughts on his own failed art experiments, in which he expected one thing but failed to achieve it. His Pearl Harbor project did not go as planned, but he reflected on the experience in a positive way: "I'd been so wrong in my expectations. It was a total unsuccess in that sense, because it was a failure in terms of what I'd imagined it to be. [Because of this] I think it's important to be in touch with your intuition..."<sup>11</sup> Learning to trust intuition and letting go of sometimes obvious logic, as both Nauman and Burden did in their work, is a successful way of using failure to their advantage.

Cory Arcangel deals with failure both technically and conceptually in his piece *Super Mario Movie*. The video's narrative deals with an old Nintendo cartridge melting in the heat of an untouched closet, and how the data corruption that comes with the melting cartridge causes Mario to consider his existence as a piece of data in a game. (fig. 7)

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<sup>11</sup> Burden, Chris. "On Pearl Harbour (1971)." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 128. Print.



fig.7: Cory Arcangel, *Super Mario Movie* (still), video, 2005

In a way similar in principle to Takeshi Murata, Arcangel specifically changes and corrupts data inside a game cartridge to get the visual effects he wants. Part of the piece is based around the fact that the game will not play right after being tampered with—a limitation or a failure of the medium. The other part of the piece centers around Mario’s failure to comprehend what he is being subjected to. Paul Watzlawick writes about how the human experience as a whole is a failure because no one can ever truly know reality. “That we do not discover reality but rather invent it is quite shocking for many people. And the shocking part about it—according to the concept of radical constructivism—is that the only thing we can ever know about the real reality...is what it is not.”<sup>12</sup> This is a concept that envelops both Arcangel’s video and some of my paintings, which contain figures within an alternate reality. Again, though we expect our world to hold up, like Mario expected his to hold, our realities can dissolve to become something different that is also reality.

Annika Ström is a performance artist whose piece *The Missed Concert* examines the failures of public social structure. In the piece, she invites friends and family to a musical performance whose duration is so short that several people don’t realize that it’s already over until they get there and realize they have missed the whole thing even though they are only a few minutes late. She is purposely taking control of people’s expectations of what performances usually are (and therefore what people think they should be) and exploiting those expectations in a way that they fail to be met. Some of my video work, especially one called *Incomplete?* also relies on people’s expectations of a medium. (fig. 8) In the piece I have a central piece of text that is continually being typed out. The viewer wants to read the text, but surrounding the text is a series of scrolling letters that move so fast and so jarringly that it makes it difficult to focus on the typed text. There is a frustration that emerges from expecting one thing, but failing to be able to do it.

<sup>12</sup> Watzlawick, Paul. “On the Nonsense of Sense and the Sense of Nonsense.” *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 84-85. Print.

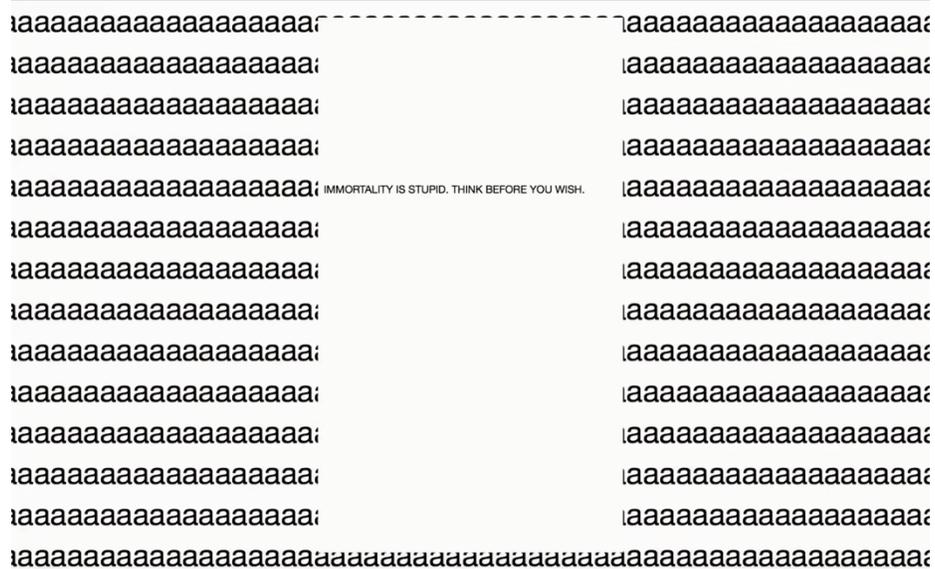


fig.8: [redacted], *Incomplete?* (still), video, 2017

Harald Szeemann writes about how experiencing a sense of failure in art keeps it human and prevents from becoming cold and mechanical, and adds a sense of poetry into the work.<sup>13</sup> The experience of failure, both in Ström's and my pieces is what engages the viewer in both subject and content.

Keren Cytter's *Video Art Manual* also exploits specific expectations and tropes that we expect videos to have. Through the use of subtitles and the semi-apocalyptic event of solar flares taking down the power grid, Cytter points out her own flaws in the technical aspects of making a video (fig. 9).

<sup>13</sup> Szeemann, Harald. "Failure as a Poetic Dimension." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 194. Print.

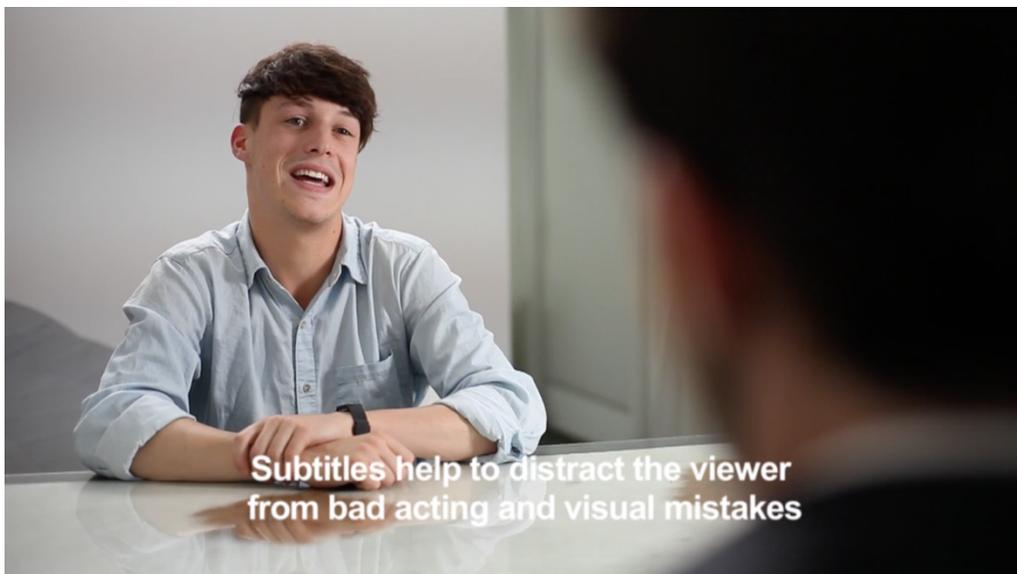


fig.9: Keren Cytter, *Video Art Manual* (still), video, 2011

The failure to meet specific tropes and intentionally pointing them out is an approach to failure that is honest and understanding of the role of failure. Cytter accepts the fact that the production value of a video can never be perfect, yet people continually try to mask the weaknesses in an effort to appear perfect and meet the impossible standard of the industry. In my video piece titled *Assimilate*, I also compare standards that are set for people by society and contrast it with another entity that tries to resist it and find solace in its own imperfection. The color fields of the two sides represent the standards while one side does its best to fail at matching the other. Christy Lange writes about how every artwork is bound to fail because of its lack of function and high level of repetition.<sup>14</sup> Pragmatically, my video and Cytter's video do not have much function other than to fail in of themselves. If failure is already inherent in making a work, then pointing out our determination to continuously succeed could pose interesting ideas about learning to be comfortable with having that failure.

Sean Landers makes paintings whose surfaces are often completely covered in text. The text is small and cramped, yet covers the entire surface of huge canvases, so the viewer needs to spend several minutes with each painting in order to take in the entirety of its subject. Most of the text on paintings such as *Self-Something* are internal monologues about Landers's own personal thoughts and emotions as they relate to his existence within society. (fig. 10)

<sup>14</sup> Lange, Christy. "Bound to Fail." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 131-137. Print.



fig.10: Sean Landers, *Self-Something* (detail), oil on linen, 108" x 168", 1994

According to the International Necronautical Society, who released a declaration on inauthenticity to the Tate Modern, "art is the consequence and experience of failed transcendence."<sup>15</sup> As seen in Lander's painting, art resides in the mortal world and cannot hold across lines of mortality and what occurs after death, especially since no one living knows what the experience of death is like. The piece points out the flaws of being human, in similar ways to the questions asked in my video *Incomplete?* are. Jennifer Higgle makes similar comments about artist Matthew Brannon's work: "So much interpretation (read: art, life) is clouded and driven by the fallacies of memory, about the slippage between actuality and recollection. Trying to mine slivers of meaning from the residue of an experience that has, inevitably, cracked and crumbled with time can complicate or cool your initial engagement with something or someone."<sup>16</sup>

It is because of our ideas of perfection that we have the knowledge of how to fail. Without one you cannot have the other. Society has developed a rule of being perfect in so many ways that no one can ever actually reach it. It is because of this that there is actually so much more to the idea of failure than we are socialized to believe there is. Not only does my work fail, but great artists also work to fail in intended and unintended ways. My work is tied to theirs because they have also failed.

Technology and failure are two such ways in which my work finds its place in relation to other artists and their work. Many of the ideas that are expressed in their work are circulating throughout the dialogs they create with their work. In technology, artists, including myself, are finding ways to use the medium in unprecedented ways to say something about the medium itself and why it has a place with other mediums. In failure, artists have all come to know what failure is, especially through all the different

15 International Necronautical Society. "Tate Declaration on Inauthenticity." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 108-112. Print.

16 Higgle, Jennifer. "The Embarrassing Truth: Matthew Brannon." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 103-108. Print.

ways failure can be understood and interpreted. My work adds to these dialogs in its own unique way, even if it isn't the best way. I have looked to these artists in ways that I can learn from their actions and even branch out from them and learn to fail or learn to understand the materiality of technological art as I continue to add my own voice to that dialog.

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Watzlawick, Paul. "On the Nonsense of Sense and the Sense of Nonsense." *Failure*. Ed. Lisa Le Feuvre. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010. 84-85. Print.

## **Appendix**

### **Representative Samples of Student Weekly Writing**



In the interview, Sarah Thornton talks about the art market and the art world of today. Repeatedly, she refers to Marcel Duchamp and to his claiming of the urinal art. She explains that Duchamp put coming artists in a difficult position by claiming that art can be anything. I think that is true, but perhaps it was necessary for an art revolution to take place. This rapid change in the art world was taking place prior to Duchamp's time, but taking the conceptual part of art so far started a radical avalanche continuing until today. When Thornton says artists were put in a difficult situation, I think she refers to the public's perception and criticism of art today. I also found interesting how she talked about artists as, in a way, celebrities that the public loves and hates simultaneously. The public tends to be upset if someone who did not actually achieve much is elevated and celebrated. I can kind of relate to this unrealistic view of artists because when I was little and I was not aware of an actual art world or an artist, I thought an artist was just an outlived concept, somebody greater than the mean public and someone who does not fit into society. She refers to craft as the skills an artist needs to make it in the art world today, which I thought was an interesting idea.

As for the art market, Zorloni explains the art market as, "process through which works of art are sold and distributed." The main art markets take place in New York and London. France and Italy are also prominent; Italy has a big resource of ancient art, which plays part in the local art market. In Zorloni's essay, he distinguishes the market into two main sectors; the primary market, which is the selling original works for the first time (and this is more applicable to emerging artists) and the secondary market, which is "the exchange of existing art works." The secondary market works more with artists that are more established and whose background is more known. There are also the alternative, the avant-garde, the classical-contemporary, and the junk-art markets.

The market plays a major role in art because money determines the value of art. I really hate Donald Kuspit's essay on the value of art and money, but as I read on, I saw he had a point. In an ideal world, art and money would be separated because how Kuspit puts it in his conclusion, "money has entered the sacred river of art and muddied it." A lot goes into the attaching of a price to an artwork is often an unreasonable or subconscious process. For instance, I was baffled by the concept of money value of an artwork being closely linked to the artist's nationality, and the nationality's political and economic state. Another strong idea Kuspit proposed was that art is absorbed by money and that if a painting is worth several millions of dollars, nobody even questions its intrinsic value, whether the painting is good or bad, all questions and critical thinking about that piece are tossed in the garbage because its money value overrides everything else about the work.

The last article about gallery system was somewhat comical, comically true. I learned that red works sell better and polka dots go as well. Of course, the essay discussed how problematic the gallery system is and how keeping prices private navigates the art market strongly, which is not in favor of living artists today.

Lastly, I think artists are heavily depended on the market today unless they want to only make art for themselves and have another job. I am not sure where I see myself in relation to all of this, and of course it would be nice to make money for doing something I love, but I also worry that the requirements put on artists by institution could shift my art making to something I am no longer so interested in.

19 September 2017

## The Art Market

The primary reason there is an art market because artists have to eat. Ideally an artist could make a living off of their art. But it has also become a way to gain fame and social status, not only for the artists themselves, but for collectors and other players, as well. According to Sarah Thornton, art has become anything an artist does. Rather than stemming from skill or craft with material anymore, being an artist comes from the ability to break into the art market. Successful artists succeed because they work hard and believe in themselves, and get acknowledgement from the critics. So perhaps the art market plays the role of congratulator—the system that feeds the need of artists to be acknowledged.

What role does the market play in art? How does the market shape art? The Market is what determines which art is in or out. It dictates taste, steering what is accepted and what becomes popular. Other artists, wanting to get in, might see what sells and what succeeds, letting that influence what they make, in hopes of becoming successful. It also limits what is available, thus giving a perhaps false picture of what art is.

The system of four different markets as laid out in *Structure of the Contemporary Art Market* seems to encourage an elitist and hoity-toity attitude. On one hand, it makes some sense that collectors take on the “responsibility” to elevate the tastes of society. But are they truly doing that? The things in their collections are too expensive for anyone in normal society to buy, and they are often incomprehensible, as well. At the same time, art that is within the right price range and accessible to the crowds is labeled as “junk art,” derogatorily marked as merely decorative, not rigorous enough, or it has just slipped through the cracks of the other, higher markets.

I can't help but notice similar trends in MFA programs. The most expensive ones have famous artists as faculty. You pay a lot to spend time with famous people so they can pull strings and get you famous, too, which again seems incredibly elitist.

As it said in *Art Values or Money Values*, art has largely lost its spiritual value, meaning that it is now a commodity to be traded for money, with the value of the art being determined monetarily. From my perspective, this is a grave mistake. Art as a creative endeavor often springs from a mysterious spiritual place that has no measure of value. It has meaning that should be separate from money, and explores ideas that take people further into the unknown than they could go by themselves. Money dismisses this pricelessness and takes over as the main priority and measuring stick of worth, simultaneously dismissing the potential of human expression and exploration in exchange for a popularity contest.

I don't want to participate in the art market. It's so hard to put prices on your work, and it's hard to give up an idealistic dedication to creation for creations sake. But realistically, you have to find some way to function in a system that runs on capitalism. Many people do it by depending on other jobs to bring in income, which I will probably do, as well. Most of my work is rather conceptual, anyway, and not easily sold. I would be interested to learn more about how performance artists function, seeing that their work is not a sellable object.

# Art Market Madness

## Confusing capitalist power dynamics with cultural relevance

I found the readings to be very troublesome as the common theme of power dynamics in the Art market, and their resulting influence on the art that is being made, makes one question the validity of Arts role in society. Donald Kuspit suggests in *Art Values or Money Values*, “There is no way that art prices can avoid reflecting sociopolitical realities, for art values have always reflected them, if not exclusively.” If these markets are just perpetuating current power dynamics, as noted also by Sarah Thornton in her interview, what is the role of Art?

Thorton talks about three aspects to what constitutes the validity of an artist: Politics, Kinship, and Craft, and argues that craft is any and every skill in needed to be a successful contemporary artist today. A lot of this strategy and marketing was also touched on by Blair Brooks in her article *High-end Art is one of the most manipulated markets in the world*, “Value in art can be arbitrary but brands are fragile.”

So what constitutes an artists ‘Brand’? And how do these socio-political stereotypes and hierarchies limit what art is and isn’t important? Thorton also mentioned the disparity between female graduates from Fine Arts masters programs and those that call themselves artists. In that term are more female graduates, but more male ‘artists’. Clearly the Art historical cannon still plays a role in who can call themselves a valid artist and who can’t. But would this flip if the capitalist power dynamic were to also shift towards women? Just as Kuspit illustrates with the National shift of power of commerce and wealth towards Asian nations leading to a shift in Artistic value validations. “I suggest that as the political credibility and economic power of the United States declines and the political credibility and economic power of China grows -- as Shanghai overtakes New York and even London and Frankfurt as a commercial centre -- the art

produced in the United States will lose economic and artistic value while the art produced in China will gain economic and artistic value, with a few art administratively enforced exceptions.”

And what of the ‘insider’ vs ‘outsider’ markets? The taboos that are involved in both regarding artist authenticity, intellectual ideas, fitting into the Art cannon? Trying to make sense of the Structure of the Art Market, even as compartmentalized and laid out by Alessia Zorloni, can make ones head spin. The ‘threat’ of Junk and Alternative art markets looms large for those with high aspirations, but can perhaps be a place of refuge for those who wish to separate themselves from the Art Market Machine.

The questions each artist has to ask themselves, in current practice, but also in a commercial one is, “Who is the audience?” How does that affect the work, contextually and conceptually, knowing the influences of the firms and consumers that determine what does or doesn't get bought? How does an Artist navigate the heavy handed mediation of the Galleries within that system? Also, what role do grants/subsidies play in, not only the making of art, but what art becomes deemed important?

In his book *Curationism* David Blalzer deconstructs the way that curators have become the new artist in the way that they dictate quite heavy-handedly what is and isn't of value within the market. (I left this book at home, so do not have access to direct quotes I remember reading from it.) So how can artists reestablish and recreate authority and ownership over their making? Or do artists not adhere to these constraints and just choose to create anyway. The difference between ‘artist’ and ‘maker’ as Thorton put it, is those who adhere to art-historical progression and those who don't negotiate that within context. So must we declare a camp to sit in? Must we be financially independent to be free to create works outside this power dynamic? Or is it unavoidable and better embraced than fought against?

9/19/2017

Reading Response 2 -art market

Even though all four of the readings were related to the structure of the contemporary art market, I felt that each of the readings was serving a different function and I had a very different reaction as an artist to the different articles. I felt informed by the interview with Sarah Thornton (which provided many interesting insights), instructed by “High-End Art is One of the Most Manipulated Markets in the World” (which gave several tips on how an artist can “make it” in the market) and encouraged by the article “Structure of the Contemporary Art Market and the Profile of Italian Artists” (the art world is bigger than what it seems, and it is possible to change your position in it, like how Italy tried new ideas to change their art market for the better). I was baffled and a little disgusted by the article “Art Values of Money Values?” by Donald Kuspit. Not because I thought Kuspit was out of line or completely backwards in his thinking, but because I was afraid that what he was saying could be true. I think his writing was a little hyperbolic and meant to shock, but from the information I gathered from the other articles money does indeed play a huge role in the art market. I think the art market exists because of both the artists’ desire to turn art making into a career, and other professionals’ desire to turn art owning into a status symbol. Kuspit claims that art has “never been independent of money”, but that in the contemporary art world, art is now dependent on money and money, or price, attached to an art piece is now more important and valuable than the art itself. He states that making art is just a method of worshipping money and capitalism. I think that a desire to make money does drive many artists, especially artists who are big names in the market, but I would say that this is a blanket statement that doesn’t apply to all art making practices.

As an artist, there are many other things that inspire me to make art besides money. I have always had a desire to show my work and receive recognition, but it wasn't until very recently that I have thought about the possibility of selling my art in a gallery setting. Now that the idea of making money with my art is my head, I must make sure that I don't let it affect my practice too strongly. Sarah Thornton talked about the concept of "selling out" as an artist, which she interprets as "selling to outsiders". I believe that the opposite is possible; I would consider changing the work that I make specifically to feed the tastes of the "insiders" of the market is a version of selling out. Thornton also discussed the idea of knowing how to function in the art market, or "playing the game", as being part of an artist's craft. There are specific skills that an artist needs in relation to the market, like choosing the right dealer and gallery or knowing how much art to produce. I think these skills are important, but going back to Kuspit's article, I don't think artists have to let acquiring these skills outweigh their focus on their other art practice skills, the non-market or money related motivations for making art.

## Art and Beauty, Truth, Ethics

The readings represented three distinct but complex views on the role of beauty within art. Roger Scruton's opinion on the matter was that if art isn't beautiful, then it is not truly art. It is pointless to create art that has no sense of aesthetic beauty, and he laments at the fact that so many artists are creating works that no longer need a sense of skill, taste, or creativity. Dave Hickey contends that today, it is mostly the beautiful artwork that actually does anything. He claims that the issue of beauty in art is closely tied to the art market, because people care more for how a piece of art looks more than what it means. Though beauty is not true, it has more power over artists and artwork that try to make work otherwise. He writes that "beauty steals the institution's power, seduces its congregation, and elicits the dismay of artists who have committed themselves to plain honesty..." He concludes with the idea that beauty has been and will continue to be the most effective instrument of change in civilization, provided that art's purpose is to inspire people to change something about themselves. In Arthur Danto's writing, he agrees with the power of beauty but he also says that even ugly things still have the potential to be as powerfully influential as beauty: "It is important to distinguish between aesthetic beauty and a wider sense of artistic excellence where aesthetic beauty may not be relevant at all." Artistic excellence can, but doesn't have to reside in the ability to make something technically beautiful.

Out of these three ideas on the purpose of beauty, I relate to Danto's opinion the most. I do agree that beauty is a powerful tool, but it shouldn't be the only thing that matters in a work of art. If a work of art is supposed to do something, namely, say something and reflect on the world people live in, then we cannot turn only to the use of the beautiful. I find the beautiful to be untrustworthy, initially. It represents an idea of perfection that no one can hope to attain. It is an ideal that does not acknowledge the real. To me, the ideal should only be utilized if it is placed in context of reality. Though I completely disagreed with Scruton's general argument, there were a few points he made that I agreed with. He said that we should stop exploiting things and start contemplating them: "the message of the flower is the flower". As a general idea, this makes sense to me. Though there is a time and a place to use things to make a point, this doesn't have to be the case with everything. He also said that "art has the ability to redeem life by finding beauty even in the worst of things, even death." I like that statement because to me, it pulls away from the "artistic excellence" that is often equated with making beautiful things, and pulls more towards an abstracted idea of beauty, something that helps us find peace and elicits a mental and emotional resolution.

Scruton said we should find a place where the real and ideal can exist in harmony. Is this even possible?

Why does Scruton claim that beauty is a universal necessity? How is beauty needed universally?

██████████  
11/28/2017

ART 326 reading response -Art & Beauty

Of the three arguments on beauty and truth in art, Danto's view point resonated the most with my opinions on the subject. Hicky's discussion was more difficult for me to access and agree with, and Scruton's video montage monologue seemed very closeminded and angered me to the point of not being able to listen to his voice any longer. Even before I came to college I think I always understood and agreed with what Danto said at the end of his essay: "Whatever the case, aesthetic attributes do not stand alone". As I have learned more about art and thought more about this topic, especially in the last few weeks with the Faith and Works lecture and our discussions in class, I have come to understand that not only that "beauty is not the defining inflector" in art, but that aesthetic attributes are unnecessary or wrong in some art works.

I would agree with Hicky that in contemporary art beauty can be used as an instrument to engage civilization in specific conversations about the world. Beauty certainly attracts more viewers to the artwork and allows more people to be involved in the discussion that otherwise would avoid it if the art itself was not aesthetically appealing. But from what I understood of the reading, Hicky talks about how beauty "steals the power of the new institution", the power being to allow artists to be perfectly honest. I think that Danto proved this wrong by his description of the 1993 Whitney Biennale. I really liked all the ideas that Danto discussed based off of the works in the exhibition. He talked about how two of the other "inflectors" that art has besides beauty are disgust and outrageousness, and how these are appropriate for certain subject matters that the art work is engaging. I agree with him that it would be wrong to make beautiful art about certain topics, such as sexual assault and discrimination. Beauty is "incompatible with such

contents”. Beauty is also not synonymous with “artistic excellence” or consequence as Hicky discusses, Danto shows that making a viewer disgusted about a disgusting topic is another form of excellence.

My favorite line from all three of the articles is from Danto: “The great consequence of beauty having been removed from the concept of art was that whether to use beauty or not became an option for artists”. I think that is the key that ties Hicky’s viewpoint into the discussion that Danto is having, which I agree with. This is the opposite of Scruton’s diatribe, where he said that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century beauty wasn’t important anymore, it was replaced by originality and a “cult of ugliness”. He said that “ugly” art is self-centered and has a commercial “all about me” attitude. I can understand that in some situations this might appear to be the case, but I think that truth lies in the art that uses beauty or ugliness strategically to help the viewer access the content of the work.

## ‘Beauty Sells’

As David Hickey so concisely describes ‘If images dont DO anything in this culture why are we still sitting around talking about them!?’ But are aesthetics the only ‘content’ in the image worth discussing? Hickey believes it is the prerequisite to the discovery or accessing any other content beyond it. I believe it’s important to Look at what art has done, what it does, and what it can do. What Micheal Craig Martin points out in “Why Beauty Matters?” is that What the layman can now do for himself the artist cannot do anymore-the role of the artist in society-whether creating a new mode of painting, or a new paradigm of thinking-is that we change the way the rest of society sees the world. Once they see that perspective-continuing on on that vein is (however valid) no longer necessary or relevant to the new search for the unturned.

“It is extremely important to distinguish between aesthetic beauty and the wider sense of artistic excellence, where artistic beauty may not be relevant at all.” (Danto 107) Like researchers and lab techs of perception awareness, we are constantly searching and experimenting to find however small the shift, new ways of seeing, feeling, knowing and understanding the world around us, and even beyond us. A great example is the work *Postpartum Document* where the inner world of Mary Kelly, though extremely personal, indeed strikes the view as ‘universally relevant,’ as experienced by anyone who has raised children, or is in close proximity to those that do. It is personal to Kelly, but intimate with the veiwer, connecting both through a new realization of what parenthood can/should mean. Or Katie Paterson's’ exploration and illustrations of the universe. Using conventional means in trying to bring the spheres of the unknown and unknowable into the sphere of the known. Relating what we can only try and perceive in our minds to our bodies. Whether these new ways of seeing will be for the positive or negative is determined perhaps by their effect. I believe artists act on their own moral imperatives to counteract modes of seeing they deem or observe to he detrimental to its corresponding sphere of influence. One of which is the idealization of ‘beauty.’

“Beautiful art sells. If it sells itself it is an idolatrous commodity. If it sells anything else it is a seductive advertisement.” (Hickey,15) But was Beauty not always meant to ‘sell something’? As Roger Scruton would argue, beauty is meant to portray (sell) the ‘ideal.’ However, ‘beauty’ in terms of idealization, is no longer helpful to our current paradigm and in fact has been recognized as dangerous in many ways. This is amply exemplified by Scruton when talking of ‘the beauty of youth’ and likening it to the ‘divine’ we recognize that like a naïve child who understands up to a point, that ideals can be useful, however fails to note as Hickey does that ‘the fluid nuancing of pleasure, power and beauty is a serious ongoing business in this culture, and has been since the 16th century.” (17) Beauty when used as an ideal is not only alienating, but enforces structures of power by creating criteria for what strictly is and isn't beautiful. These ideals of beauty do not exist in a bubble, just as art itself does not exist in a bubble. Their effect is a real one, and so not only does the context of beauty become important within the discourse of art, but its content within the discourse of how art shapes and effects the individuals that shape a society. Arts purpose became one less of the riggers of trade and craft, and more of intellectual rigour. Carrying on with the adage, “if it doesn’t challenge you, it doesn't change you.”

The upholding of ‘beauty’ and it’s ‘ideals’ fell along side the power structures that supported it. ‘Artistic beauty’ was only available to those of ‘cultivated leisure.’ (Danto 105) This was art made specifically for those in top power structures. They were those buying it, so it was made in aims to ‘please.’ In aims to sell. Scruton’s philosophy of beauty as a virtue falls flat here. Is it virtuous to reinforce a power structure through imagery that puts certain people of ‘ideal’ disposition over others? How can you hold a ‘thing’ such as beauty in such high regard based on it’s subjective value, when it’s objectively and very literally done so much damage?

November 25<sup>th</sup>

Scruton had some interesting things to say, but his view was also kind of one sided. He made the case for beauty in art because he felt that beauty is what gives art meaning and what makes human life worthwhile. Something I found very interesting was how at the beginning of the documentary, he pointed out that in our disorganized world of ugliness and chaos, things are just about “me.” This is an interesting idea and I believe that it is probably much more so now, on the other hand, however, the film contrasted beauty of the past (music, art, etc.) with things of the present which was not only art (but advertising or attitudes of people). It is easy to make quick conclusions about today’s time and time that no one living today experienced, but the sense of things about only about “me” has always been around, I believe (e. g. there has always been wars and killing each other for property and so on). It just seems to be manifested in a different way today. He also made a good point about art that tries to be shocking – and how it only becomes boring after a time. One thing I disagreed with was his claim that if art is just an idea, than anybody can be an artist. And it is probably true, anybody can be, but not everybody is. People like to say “anybody could do that” but only the artist does it. I like the conversation with the artists who made the sculpture that was explained as an oak tree and the way he explained that art is not there to show or point at a better world, but at a world that is real and in which we exist. Generally speaking, Scruton argued that beauty is what gives things meaning and purpose and if it is taken away, then what is left?

Hickey’s essay *On Beauty* argues in favor of beauty. Hickey presents beauty in contemporary art as a powerful element that “steals the institution’s power, seduces its congregation... elicits the dismay of artists who have committed themselves to plain honesty...” Later on the same page, Hickey talks about the link between beauty and idolatry and how they in a way go hand in hand as beautiful art always sells. He tied this to advertising as well and raised interesting questions. Hickey drew connections between talking about an image and talking about the art market (in our day). He also discussed the fluidity between pleasure, power and beauty, which he dated back to the sixteenth century. Hickey makes a case against Scruton’s traditional argument for beauty.

Danto makes case for both; beauty and ugliness in art are effective and important. In his section *Good Art Can Be Ugly* Danto brings up a conference hosted by UoT called “Whatever happened to Beauty?” and Fry’s unique criticism of a painting that he called beautiful, but other critics did not understand why or had a different idea of what a painting is. Danto states his conviction for good art and artistic excellence being work that accomplishes whatever it is supposed to regardless of beauty or esthetics in general. Later, Danto discusses the controversy of beauty in relation to Picasso who portrayed beautiful women (or prostitutes) which was inevitably connected to suffering while for “ugly” women this possibility of suffering was

blocked. Beauty in this tradition was linked to perverse. I found this discussion similar to the documentary on the gaze and objectifying women we watched at the beginning of the semester. Danto asks whether the world deserve beauty. In this section, he discusses beauty being portrayed as philosophical and presents arguments against “the moral appropriateness of beauty.” I liked the passage on “Optional Beauty” in which Danto talks about art existing because humans are driven feelings and art has a way of engaging with those. In some cases, beauty can be the truth and in others more of manipulation.

■■■■'s notes (ignore please)

Ugliness about - Me, my pleasure  
Meaning of life connected to losing of beauty

Scruton – claimed his thesis of wanting to persuade people that beauty is important  
Makes human life to be worth while  
Randomness of modern life cannot be redeemed by art

Talks against pile of bricks – says there is no meaning to it. Cult of ugliness

Shocking- becomes boring after time

Anybody can be artist if art is just an idea – but everybody is not  
Talks against class of water on shelf being explained as an oak tree – what is wrong with it? Does not let us think of things differently

The author – wrtist of glass was talking about how its not meant to be showing people a better world, but the real world in which we exist  
Lust treats people as disposable objects  
Beauty is platonic thing – we can't own it, we just contemplate it  
Message of the flower is the flower  
Holding baby – attention on it and not on yourself  
Beauty shines on us from ordinary world –that is what art is about

It obliterate meaning and knowledge

Faculty Development Series – NAME

## Citizenship Project Proposal

See report in blue below.

### Collaborative Goals/Activities

- As the coordinator of the Art Department's BA program, I am leading our efforts to develop new emphases within the degree to make the program maximally relevant to students in their artistic and career goals after graduation. It is important to me that that this be done in a way that is transparent and inclusive. At each step of the process, I will involve other faculty in the department. Specifically, at each stage of the development I will invite my colleagues to participate or at least give feedback, both to make the new emphases maximally relevant to students and to foster an environment of inclusive governance and decision-making.
  - I have completed the proposal for the new emphases and it has gone through all of the levels of approval. It is scheduled to start next academic year. At various phases, I met with colleagues to discuss both the general direction and specifics as I worked to make it as beneficial as possible for students. My colleagues in the department were unanimously supportive and we're excited for how the new structure of our largest degree program can improve and energize the department.
- I am an introvert, but I recognize the importance of building professional relationships, both for personal well-being as well as for the opportunities that can grow from these relationships. There are areas where my work overlaps with other disciplines, specifically Geography, Geology, and disciplines related to language. At the Spring Faculty Development Seminar I was fortunate to meet a number of new colleagues. My goal will be to have some kind of meeting (lunch, etc.) with a colleague from a different department at least four times in the eight months between now and February 2018.
  - I have done this with colleagues from English, Communications, Film, Music, and with somebody from BYU Broadcasting. I'd like to continue to do this in the future – I have come across so many other faculty at BYU doing really interesting things that have intriguing overlaps with my own work.

I have started development of a collaborative project with one of my colleagues that will be ongoing for at least the next year. Additionally, I want to potential for collaborating with some of the faculty members outside of my department who have interesting intersections with my interests.

This process has been really good for me, as it has helped me do what I was already working to do – actively cultivating relationships, seeking out opportunities to get to know people, and opening my work to more collaboration. I know that so many professional opportunities come as a result of social relationships and the chance to focus on establishing relationships here at BYU has been really beneficial. I'm thrilled by the caliber of my colleagues here and by the work they are doing and I'm really excited about the potential to collaborate with them, in teaching (I'd love to do a cross-department study abroad with a colleague in TMA I have gotten to know), citizenship (figuring out how to reinforce or create new structures in the university that allow people from art to work with people in other disciplines) and in scholarly projects.

## Faculty Development Series – NAME

# Report - Scholarship Strategies Project

Original proposal in black, [report/reflections in blue](#)

## Paragraphs from Faculty Development Plant that I'll focus on

- Develop new bodies of work integrating my research into landscape, land use, topography and digital fabrication methods. I have a direction for my upcoming creative work and need to move it forward. Conceptually, I still have more research to do into topics such as how we relate to landscape, power and representations of landscape, and the Great Basin. I am particularly interested in delving deeper into land use issues in the Great Basin and making work in relation to the land surrounding places like test bombing ranges, chemical and nuclear storage and disposal facilities, mineral extraction sites, etc. Additionally, developing this work will entail continuing to find ways to acquire topographic data, translate it into something usable, manipulate it, and use it to create images and objects. Specifically, I want to create drawings, digital prints, and sculptural objects that grow out of this engagement with these ways of making and with the set of conceptual concerns I'm exploring.
  - [I have made a lot of progress on this project. I have developed methods for finding and working with these data sources and have an ongoing body of work that grows from this research. I am currently working on integrating these methods with models made from digital scans of rocks taken from the sites listed.](#)
- Find residencies. I am most productive when I have concentrated time to focus on creating work. As a husband and father I want to be present with my family as much as I can and that desire can conflict with getting my creative work made. Artist residencies offer the chance for highly concentrated time working on new art. I will seek out relevant opportunities for artist residencies so that I can develop new work and foster relationships with other artists.
  - [I did a residency at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in the summer of 2017 that was key in getting new momentum in my productivity. I won't do a residency in 2018 but I have planned for residencies in 2019 I'll apply for.](#)
- Develop professional relationships that lead to exhibition and other professional opportunities. I will work to develop these relationships at residencies, which would give me the chance to connect with artists from around the country and world. I will also work to develop relationships with members of the local and regional art community.
  - [I have established relationships with the directors or curators of at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art and the Granary Art Center, and I feel confident that eventually both could lead to exhibits. I have also taken advantage of running our Studio Seminar lecture series to get to know people I have wanted to get to know.](#)

## Scholarly Goals to Complete by February, 2018

- Overarching goal -- For 2017, exceed the scholarship expectations as outlined in the department's rank and status document.
  - [I have done this. Our department's expectations are that we should have 6 scholarship-related events \(exhibits, commissions, residencies, etc.\) per year and that at least three of those should have a national or international profile. In 2017 I had ten events, six of which were national or international.](#)
- Create at least ten new drawings, six photographic works, and one new video work in the body of work described in the first bullet-point above.
  - [I made eight new drawings, four photographic works, and didn't complete a new video work. I have done a lot of development on an ambitious video project that I hope to complete this](#)

summer.

- Apply for, and be awarded, one artist residency and while there focus on both creating new work and meeting the other residents.
  - I was awarded, and completed, a residency at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts.
- At least once a month between now and February either reach out to new people (artists, curators, scholars, etc.) whose work intersects with mine or reconnect with people from the past whose work is relevant to my own.
  - I have done this most months since the FDS.

### Strategies for Increased Scholarly Productivity

In the table below are strategies to increase my scholarly productivity and questions I'll ask myself in February of 2018 to evaluate if I have succeeded in implementing these strategies.

Strategy	Evaluation Questions for Feb. 2018
Discuss ideas for research and creative works with colleagues	Can I name two colleagues who are familiar enough with what I'm working on that they could confidently summarize it to somebody else? My mentor, Peter Everett, would be able to do this. Possibly Joe Ostraff also. I have also been working with Joe on a collaborative project we're going to work on over the next few years. I need to keep working on this.
Share key parts of your research in your classroom teaching	Do students in at least one of my classes know what I'm working on in my studio? Occasionally I share bits of this, but not as much as I could. I'll keep working on doing this.
Regularly involve students in research and/or creative works (and find funding to pay them).	Do I have a studio assistant that helps me with my scholarly production? I have applied for funding to be able to hire students to assist with the video project I'm working on.
Set aside <i>daily</i> blocks of time to write or work on creative activities—at least 15-30 minutes each day. Don't wait for large blocks of time!	Do I make some progress on my scholarship at least four days a week? This varies by week. I too easily let my time be sucked up by all of the teaching and administrative responsibilities. But I have been better at carving out time for scholarship than in the past.
Note names of established scholars in your research area and develop strategies for initiating conversations with them regarding areas of common interest.	Have I started new conversations with artists, curators, and scholars since starting at BYU? Which ones? Yes. Jared Steffenson, Amy Jorgensen, Veronica Roberts, Rick Silva.
Don't wait until you have "perfected" your piece. Get it into an editor's (or producer's) hands as soon as you can. Set deadlines.	Do I have deadlines for my current work? What are they? Yes. By May of 2018 I am supposed to get back in touch with Amy Jorgensen and Jared Steffenson to show them the drawings and photos that I have been working on. I want to have those bodies of work

	developed enough that they could form the basis of a solo exhibit.
Develop organizational skills: prioritize, simplify, delegate tasks to others.	What have I implemented to spend more of my time working on my top priorities? What have I implemented to spend less time on lower priorities? I have gotten better at saying no to unnecessary commitments, even when they are worthy things to do.

**Reflections, and Plans for the Future**

Writing the strategies and evaluation questions above was a really great way to create a path forward in my scholarship. It is easy to let teaching and administrative duties use up all available time and just having taken the time to think about these strategies and how I would evaluate my progress made it easier to implement them.

Moving forward, I plan to continue to implement these strategies. I really need to be better at setting aside time EVERY day to work on my scholarship. That will be my goal for next academic year. But even though I fell short in accomplishing that, I have been more productive than in the past and have had good success disseminating my work.

# Sample 2

# Citizenship Project Final Report

NAME

3/12/18

## **1. Describe your experience in implementing your Citizenship Project proposal. What worked and didn't work? What has resulted from these activities?**

My proposal had a written component and an artistic component. For the written component, I was to work on a collaborative journal article with Mark Graham in the Art Education Area and a different work with Amy Miner (of BYU Art Partnership) and Brittany May. These were both ongoing writings which I hoped to complete for this project. For the artistic component, I would curate a show with Brian Christensen and then install it in the Provo Library gallery. The show would include my own work as well.

With Mark Graham, we were able to successfully complete our paper and to submit it to a journal. However, the project with Amy Miner and Brittany May has gone defunct. Though we set up a date and time to visit and continue work, it was rescheduled a couple times and then dropped. I believe interest in this project has died out and is not worth further pursuit. Instead, I started and completed a different writing project with Rachael Wasden at the BYU Library and Molly Neves, who is a former art teacher.

The Box Show collaboration with Brian Christensen was a success. The concept behind the box show is that everyone would start with a plexiglass box that is the same size (5x5"). Their artwork could be any media, but everything needed to be securely attached to the box. Brian requested and received money from our department to purchase supplies for our project. Along with some students, we built 25 plexiglass boxes. We sent out a call for students and I organized responses and collected the finished works. With students and other participants, we installed shelving at the gallery and juried and arranged the works. We hosted a gallery opening on Friday, February 2nd as part of the Provo Gallery Stroll. The show will remain up through March 23rd.

## **2. What have you learned from this process, and what plans do you have to enhance future collaborations?**

I learned from this process that collaboration can be very generative, but only when everyone is on board and excited about the project. The Box Show was a good example of a collaborative project that went well. I found it really helpful when working with Brian to set dates for next steps while talking with him and then to follow up with an email so we both had the info in writing. It was also helpful that the project had definite due date. We had a date for set-up from the gallery, so we worked backwards to determine when we would need to collect work, when we'd need to create boxes, send out the call, etc.

As I look forward to future collaborative projects, I will try to implement some of the principles that worked for the collaborations that were successful. After identifying projects that are engaging for all collaborators, I will set up firm deadlines (either external, or internal) to keep work going strong. I will set regular meetings with collaborators to follow up on progress.

# Course Development Project Final Report

NAME

3/12/18

## Course Background

Art Ed 476R is the seminar class associated with Student Teaching for Art Education.

Student teaching is an intense service learning experience where student teachers work alongside a cooperating teacher. Our student teachers spend nine weeks in a secondary setting and six weeks in an elementary classroom. This is their capstone experience in Art Education licensure.

I took this course over from another professor several years ago and am the only one teaching the course for our area. Many of the requirements for the course are mandated for all education students across campus and cannot be changed. My main role in teaching this class is to shepherd students through all the requirements of licensure in the state of Utah and to prepare them for interviewing for teaching jobs.

## Learning Outcomes

Below are the Learning Outcomes listed in the course syllabus:

### **1. Demonstrate proficiency in the everyday tasks of teaching by doing the following:**

- a. Create weekly lesson plans, teaching outlines, or improvement plans in collaboration with the cooperating teacher.
- b. Become familiar with and apply National Core Standards for Visual Arts Education and the Utah Effective Teaching standards to planning and teaching in weekly lesson plans and in the Teacher Work Sample.
- c. Exhibit professionalism in each school setting and the seminar by being consistently punctual (as shown in PAES evaluations) and prepared (as shown in weekly lesson plans).

### **2. Complete the following requirements established by BYU's Department of Art, the Department of Teacher Education and the Utah State Office of Education:**

- a. Teacher Work Sample in (TWS). The document should be exemplary in content and presentation, proofread, and on time. Submit the TWS on MyLink.
- b. Meet the expectations of the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor, and administration of the sponsoring school. This is evidenced in achieving at least a 2.4 cumulative score on all PAES evaluations from University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. The evaluations will be submitted by the evaluators on MyLink, and will be signed by the student teacher.

**3. Continually reflect on your own as well as others teaching practice by doing the following:**

- a. Provide thoughtful peer review to classmates on teaching practice during discussions and review of on-site video recorded art lessons.
- b. Invite and accept commendations and recommendations made by the university supervisor, co-operating teacher, school administrator and peers. Also engage in regular reflection and self-assessment about the essential questions of the course.
- c. Plan and execute an exhibition of student work.

**4. Prepare for Job Interviews by doing the following:**

- a. Create a Professional Portfolio.
- b. Participate in the Teacher Fair (Winter Semester) or in mock job interviews during seminar (Fall Semester)

**Describe the quality and importance of the course learning outcomes.**

1. Explain why the learning outcomes represent what is most important for students to learn within the context and purpose of the course.

As their capstone experience, and the last class they take before becoming teachers, it is extremely important that students demonstrate proficiency in everyday teaching tasks, complete all requirements for licensure, reflect upon their practice, and prepare to interview for jobs.

2. Show how the course learning outcomes support program learning outcomes.

Our program learning outcomes are listed below with a description for each of how the course learning outcomes support it (if applicable):

**Community, Research, Lifelong Learning, and Service**

**Students will actively engage in communities of learning through collaborative inquiry, research, and service.**

Courses that Contribute: ARTED 276 ARTED 378 ARTED 397 ARTED 450 ARTED 476R  
ARTED 478 ARTED 496R

Linked to BYU Aims: *Communicate effectively, Lifelong service*

As students demonstrate proficiency in the everyday tasks of teaching (LO#1), they must actively engage with their mentor teachers and communities of learning in their school and in student teaching seminar. Students also research their own practice and serve as they prepare their Teacher Work Sample (part of LO #2)

**Curriculum Theory**

**Students will construct curricula and other professional materials that reflect current practices and theories in art and education.**

Courses that Contribute: ARTED 339 ARTED 378 ARTED 450 ARTED 476R ARTED 478

Linked to BYU Aims: *Communicate effectively, Competence*

This outcome is also addressed by LO#1 as students write lesson plans.

**Studio Practice**

**Students will develop a studio practice that connects to their identity as an art educator and that includes the breadth of media and skills required of art educators in schools.**

Courses that Contribute: ARTED 339 ARTED 397 ARTED 450 ARTED 478

Linked to BYU Aims: *Communicate effectively, Competence*

This Program Outcome is addressed in the other methods courses required before student teaching.

### **Teaching Experience**

**Students will demonstrate sound teaching practices in a variety of contexts.**

Courses that Contribute: ARTED 276 ARTED 339 ARTED 378 ARTED 450 ARTED 476R ARTED 478 ARTED 496R

Linked to BYU Aims: *Communicate effectively, Competence*

This outcome is addressed in LO#1 and LO#3 as students practice teaching and reflect upon their teaching. Students also demonstrate their capacity in creating a professional portfolio for LO#4.

### **Professional Licensure**

**Students will fulfill all professional licensure requirements and standards as required by the Art Education Program, the McKay School of Education, and University Standards for Educational Preparation Programs.**

Courses that Contribute: ARTED 276 ARTED 339 ARTED 378 ARTED 397 ARTED 450 ARTED 476R ARTED 478 ARTED 496R

Linked to BYU Aims: *Communicate effectively, Competence*

This program outcome is explicitly addressed in LO#2.

### **Spiritual Dimension of Art Education**

**Students will demonstrate their ability to consider complex questions and personal responsibilities associated with art and education in the light of gospel principles.**

This learning outcome is addressed as students reflect upon their practice (LO#3) in student teaching seminar.

## **Course Activities**

1. Describe how the course activities provide sufficient practice, guidance, and feedback to facilitate student learning.

Course activities are explicitly tied to the learning outcomes for the class. Students practice teaching, prepare licensure materials, reflect upon their practice, and prepare for job interviews.

I am careful in preparing this course to not overload students with assignments. Student teaching is equivalent to taking on a new full-time job, and the Teacher work Sample (for licensure) is often 30 or more pages long. Students gain much of their practice on the job.

That is also where they get the most guidance and feedback from their mentor teachers and university supervisors.

In seminar class, we regularly discuss how things are going, and what questions students have. This is an opportunity for them to explore in a group setting the challenges they are facing. Students also offer feedback and support to each other.

Another activity we do which is not listed in the assignments is mock interviews. Students are prepared on how to create PAR stories (a story in which they share a **P**roblem they encountered, the **A**ction(s) they took to resolve it, and the **R**esults). Then, they practice interviewing several times with different mock interviewers. This allows students to practice the things they will say when faced with an actual interview.

Below is a listing of all of the course assignments.

### **I. Teacher Work Sample (TWS)**

The TWS is required for all students completing licensure programs at BYU. It is a comprehensive work sample of student teaching that includes the following sections:

1. Contextual Factors
2. Learning Goals
3. Assessment Plan
4. Design for Instruction
5. Instructional Decision Making
6. Report of Student Learning
7. Reflection and Self-Evaluation

These will be completed in sections weekly. **A working draft will be saved as a google doc which will be shared with your writing fellow and instructor. The final draft will be submitted on MyLink by November 15th.**

### **II. Video**

At least one taped lesson is required for the semester. Edit the video to 5-8 minutes.

**Turn in your edited video on GoReact by the 6th week of class**, and come to class prepared to view and reflect upon it. You will also be giving feedback on everyone else's videos.

### **III. Weekly Lesson Plan Assignment**

**Each week**, meet with your cooperating teacher. Determine together which of the following activities will be most helpful. Complete the activity, and **bring a typed up copy to class that has been signed by the cooperating teacher.**

Options:

1. **Formal lesson plan** (this should be what is turned in most weeks): This should be something that you are preparing to teach in one or more classes the following week. At minimum, it needs to include learning goals, assessment, a detailed outline of how it will be taught, and any materials that needed to be generated to teach with (slide presentations, handouts, etc.). In addition to bringing a printed copy to class, email a digital version of your lesson plan to your university supervisor before you teach. As you plan lessons, specifically consider essential questions #'s 1,2, 5, 8,9, and 10.

2. **Teaching outline for the week** (this format can be used on weeks with a lot of work-days, or if the cooperating teacher will be doing most of the lesson prep and teaching as the beginning and end of a placement): This should include a detailed daily schedule of what you will be doing to support instruction in the classroom the following week.
3. **Plan for improvement** (this format can be used throughout the semester as needed, usually 1-4 times): This should address a specific aspect of teaching drawn from the list of essential questions above, or your own concerns that you wish to improve upon with support from your cooperating teacher and/or university supervisor. Include a description of the area of focus, a description of specific steps you want to take to improve, and a description of how your mentors can support this improvement.

## **V. Professional Portfolio**

Your completed professional portfolio will be turned in **at your exit interview during finals week.**

Plan ahead by having photographs taken of yourself in your teaching settings, including documentation of student work. *Avoid pictures with students' faces, as this requires a photo release from the students' parents.*

Your Professional Teaching Portfolio is intended as a promotional piece for you to take with you when you interview for a teaching position. Carefully consider your content and presentation, as it will reflect who you are as a professional.

1. **Title Page** (i.e. Professional Teaching Portfolio of Sam Samuelson)

2. **Table of Contents**

3. **Photograph of Self**

4. **Teaching Philosophy**

5. **Vitae/Resume**

6. **References**

7. **Sample of Student Art:** Consider including: Individual student work with or without the student included, You teaching, demonstrating, you displaying / hanging a show, you judging student artwork

8. **Creative Portfolio:** This should include photographs of your own artwork with titles and artist statements

9. **Curriculum Samples:** Consider including an overall unit plan with sample lessons so administrators can see that you can plan towards large themes.

## **VI. Exhibition-Student Show**

The exhibit can be in the school, the university, a public gallery, or other exhibition space (libraries, restaurants, etc.). Begin thinking now of what you would like to have exhibited and the process you will use for selection. This exhibit should also document in written form the nature of the project and what students learned in the process. Are you going to exhibit only the very best work or the work of all students? How will you design and promote the exhibit? Create a document that describes your exhibition, how and where it was displayed, and how pieces were selected. The written assignment should also include photographs of the exhibition. **Turn this assignment in on Learning Suite by the final week of class.**

## VII. Weekly Schedule

**Before every class on Wednesday, email your weekly schedule to NAME and your University supervisor.** Include in the email your school name, location, and mentor teacher, with a number that you can be reached at. List each class period with an accurate time of when it meets, and add a description of what you plan on teaching and/or doing during that time. Note at least one lesson that would be good for potential visits by your supervisor.

## VIII. Supervisor Visits

These visits are a very important part of the student teaching experience. They will form the basis for your final evaluations and future recommendations. They are also a key part of reflective teaching.

**Visits could be on any school day and may be not be announced/scheduled prior so be prepared.**

When we arrive, give a simple introduction to the students. For example, "This is my university supervisor, NAME, she'll be visiting class today."

Following your lesson, plan to spend a few minutes in a debriefing session with your supervisor (usually out in the hall). If possible, arrange in advance for your cooperating teacher to cover for you. Often your supervisor will also conference with your cooperating teacher.

## IX. Job Interview Preparation

Participate in the Teacher Fair (Winter Semester) or in mock job interviews during seminar (Fall Semester).

2. Show how course activities are aligned with course learning outcomes and assessments.

Most of the course activities are assessments, and so serve as a way of gauging student understanding of an progress with the learning outcomes. A more thorough explanation of these assessments may be found in the assessment section.

3. Explain why course activities and content represent the most current thinking and information in the field.

Course activities and content line up with the most current requirements for licensure in the state of Utah. Assignments like the weekly lesson plan that encourage regular collaboration and consultation between the mentor teacher and student teacher are in line with current research that shows that the relationship between student teacher and mentor are pivotal to the student teacher's experience. Portfolio requirements are based on feedback from our representative for University Career Services as well as queries to former and current administrators for what they are looking for in a candidate.

## **Assessments of Student Learning**

See the listing above of all assessments used in the course to determine if students have achieved the learning outcomes.

1. Explain how assessments provide sufficient opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

The assessments in this course are designed to be learning opportunities for our students; chances for them to put into practice the things that they have only theorized about in previous coursework. Thus, it both shows us their capacity and increases it. We see growth over the semester.

Students demonstrate in multiple modes that they are capable teachers. They turn in lesson plans, they videotape their teaching and view it with the class, they create an exhibit of student work, and they write a Teacher Work Sample. In visiting them, we can see clearly how they are doing on the job. They demonstrate responsibility and professionalism in collaborating with their mentor teachers on lesson plans, and in regularly turning in schedules. They generate a professional portfolio that demonstrates their capacity in teaching both in writing and in images.

2. Describe why assessments adequately measure the achievement of each course learning outcome (i.e., if a student achieved a high score on an assessment designed to measure a given course learning outcome, could an observer say, with confidence, that that student has achieved that outcome?)

Because there are so many different modes of assessment for this class, I can state with confidence that students who successfully complete all the course assignments are prepared to teach. By the end of the semester, I will have seen them teach in person, viewed a video of them teaching, read multiple lesson plans, read their teaching philosophy and resume, and seen many images of their own work and student work. I will also have communicated regularly with mentor teachers to see how students are performing and if there are any concerns. Mentors and University Supervisors will have observed them teaching multiple times and offered both formative and summative evaluations of their teaching. Issues, if there are any are addressed early and often so that graduate student teachers will have shown their competency to take over their own classroom.

## **Student Achievement of Learning Outcomes**

1. For each outcome, provide evidence to show that students have achieved the outcome.

**1. Demonstrate proficiency in the everyday tasks of teaching by doing the following:**

- a. Create weekly lesson plans, teaching outlines, or improvement plans in collaboration with the cooperating teacher.
- b. Become familiar with and apply National Core Standards for Visual Arts Education and the Utah Effective Teaching standards to planning and teaching in weekly lesson plans and in the Teacher Work Sample.
- c. Exhibit professionalism in each school setting and the seminar by being consistently punctual (as shown in UPTOP evaluations) and prepared (as shown in weekly lesson plans).

All 14 students in Fall 2017 received passing scores on their weekly lesson plans signed by their mentor teachers. (meaning they turned in nearly all of them, possibly missing a week or two).

Each student received a passing score on their Teacher Work Sample, which required that they include core standards linked to learning goals for a unit they taught.

All students passed their PAES evaluations from University Supervisors. One student received a slightly lower than passing score from her cooperating teacher. However, since she passed all supervisor evaluations, she still was eligible for a license and passed the class.

**2. Complete the following requirements established by BYU's Department of Art, the Department of Teacher Education and the Utah State Office of Education:**

- a. Teacher Work Sample in (TWS). The document should be exemplary in content and presentation, proofread, and on time. Submit the TWS on MyLink.
- b. Meet the expectations of the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor, and administration of the sponsoring school. This is evidenced in achieving at least a 2.4 cumulative score on all UPTOP evaluations from University Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. The evaluations will be submitted by the evaluators on MyLink, and will be signed by the student teacher.

All 14 students passed their Teacher Work samples.

Likewise, all student teachers passed their PAES evaluations from University Supervisors.

**3. Continually reflect on your own as well as others teaching practice by doing the following:**

- a. Provide thoughtful peer review to classmates on teaching practice during discussions and review of on-site video recorded art lessons.
- b. Invite and accept commendations and recommendations made by the university supervisor, co-operating teacher, school administrator and peers. Also engage in regular reflection and self-assessment about the essential questions of the course.
- c. Plan and execute an exhibition of student work.

Throughout the semester, students discussed their practice and reviewed one another's videos. Part of the PAES evaluation includes whether or not our student teachers are reflective teachers and if they collaborated well with others.

**4. Prepare for Job Interviews by doing the following:**

- a. Create a Professional Portfolio.
- b. Participate in the Teacher Fair (Winter Semester) or in mock job interviews during seminar (Fall Semester)

All 14 students turned in a quality Professional Portfolio that was polished enough to take to a job interview. They practiced job interviews with class. Many students subsequently applied and interviewed for jobs with local districts.

## **2. Highlight evidence that is most convincing.**

With all of the work required of student teachers, it is an impressive feat in and of itself to receive good reviews of student teaching and to complete all of the required paperwork and assessments. All of our students ended the semester passing. Those who had concerns early in the semester were able to work through them to still achieve a passing score.

## **3. Identify outcomes for which student performance is weak or less than expected.**

The biggest concern that we often have during student teaching is the relationship between mentor teacher and student teacher, specifically when that relationship is problematic. Though we had a couple of students and mentors who had difficulty adjusting to each other, we were able to meet with both of them and problem solve the issues so that everyone could have as successful an experience as possible

Many students every semester struggle with the teacher work sample. The wording can be confusing, and the task itself can be overwhelming. However, this assessment cannot be changed since it is a requirement of licensure. Because of this, I've added some extra helps to get students through it. Writing Fellows work with students to help them with the writing in their drafts. We've split the assignment into smaller chunks with due dates to make it more manageable, and they received feedback from me throughout the process. This seems to alleviate most issues so that students can be successful.

## **4. Identify any outcomes for which there is not sufficient evidence to fully determine if students achieved the outcome.**

There is sufficient evidence for every outcome.

## **7. Steps Planned or Taken to Improve Teaching and Student Learning**

1. Describe the results of your analysis of student performance.

Though some students had difficulties early on, or had less than stellar reviews from everyone, all were able to meet the requirements of the class and of Utah State Licensure. They each demonstrated that they were prepared to start as a first-year teacher.

2. Summarize the feedback you have received from students, peers, and supervisors.

Students regularly stress about this class. In class, and in reviews, they are concerned about the workload and being able to accomplish it all while at school all day every day.

3. Based on these analyses and feedback, indicate the steps you are planning or have taken to improve your teaching and student learning. (This includes developing as a teacher and changes to the course.)

To help mitigate the stress and general overwhelm of the class, I've broken down large assignments into component parts. This has helped to make the load more manageable throughout the semester. I worked with my advocate from the center for teaching and learning to re-align assignments with learning goals and program outcomes. I've also sought out support from the Writing Fellows. I ask students regularly in seminar how they are doing, and will often answer questions and address concerns during class.

4. If you have already taken steps to improve your teaching, identify any changes in student performance that have resulted from these steps.

Student stress is still high (as I think it will be for any student teaching experience), but they express appreciation for the segmenting of assignments into less overwhelming parts. The syllabus is more developed and easy to navigate for students since reviewing it with outside help. Writing drafts have improved dramatically since students started meeting with Writing Fellows before turning in drafts. Something that I can continue to tweak and adjust is the scheduling for when the smaller component parts are due. I think an earlier due date will make final editing less stressful towards the end of the semester. I will continue to work on this. I will also continue to regularly check in with students, and adjust each semester accordingly.



# Scholarship Strategies Project Final Report

NAME

3/12/18

## **1. Evaluate your success in accomplishing your scholarly goals (activities or products).**

I completed and submitted three articles to journals since my original scholarship strategies proposal. One has already been accepted and published. Additionally, I revised and resubmitted a previous work which was also accepted for publication at a future date.

Two artistic works were accepted into national art exhibitions. I also juried and installed an exhibition in Provo which included my own work as well as the work of community members, faculty, and students.

Though I was not able to complete all of the projects that were in my original proposal, I was able to make solid progress in completing projects and in adding publications and shows to my CV.

## **2. Describe your experience in applying the strategies you targeted to enhance your scholarly productivity. Have any of these strategies become a useful part of your regular work habits?**

I utilized two strategies to enhance my scholarly productivity. As Sarah Coyne suggested in the Spring Faculty Development Seminar, I wrote out a long term plan with specific goals for each month. I also planned to schedule out my time on a weekly basis, planning in blocks that could be utilized for writing and art making.

In looking at the month-to-month plan, I was able to meet most of my goals. It was helpful to plan ahead which projects to focus on each month. However, the short term scheduling on a weekly basis was more difficult to maintain and not as helpful. I found setting deadlines for finishing things and scheduling meetings with collaborators to be more useful as shorter term strategies.

## **3. If appropriate, revise the paragraph(s) from your faculty development plan where you identify the themes, topics, methods, or applications that will serve as the organizing structure of your program of scholarship.**

The original plan that I developed for my faculty development plan was based directly on my expectations letter and therefore is still the most relevant organizing structure for my program of scholarship.

## **4. Describe what you learned from this process and your plans for enhancing your future scholarly productivity.**

I learned that because scholarship is such a nebulous responsibility, it is important for me to create structure and accountability in the form of monthly goals, show deadlines, and collaborators to whom I'm accountable. I will need to continue to incorporate these things into my future practice.