LEARNING FROM AND ABOUT ARTISTS: 
IDENTITY, PLACE, PRACTICE 

by 

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ABSTRACT

*Learning From and About Artists: Identity, Place, Practice* is an inter-personal exploration of thought-processes and activities involved in teaching and artistic practices. As an a/r/tographical living inquiry, the work investigates, disrupts, interprets, and re-creates understandings about how these practices relate to each other and how the three artists participating in the research negotiate their identities within/in-between teaching and making art.

The general understanding of who artists are, how/why they produce art, and what/how/why they teach, is problematic if not vague. This investigation helps understand the relation among these questions and the conceptual connections brought forward by and manifested within theory as practice. Starting with the artistic process as shaped by the artists’ educational background, by the artist-teacher identity, and by the studio environment, the inciting question of the research is the following: how do artists understand their artistic practice in relation to their teaching practice?

The participants in this study are three practicing artists who are or have been involved with teaching art. Conversations with artists Scott Plear and Thomas Anfield and visits to their studios offered the opportunity to interrogate and explore reflectively and reflexively through conversation, art making and writing. Thinking, values, and ideas transgress and transform with the visuals and texts and the dissolved researcher - researched binary opposition is carried through by a circulation in-between conventional positionings as well as by an autobiographical dimension of the research.
This work is significant in its acquired understandings. Art and teaching practices are interconnected and informing each other. *Identity, place, practice* reflect a processual being-knowing-doing strongly related to a *context* of perpetual change. A cyclical re-affirmation, with the emphasis on the co-relational slash, draws on a multifaceted artist/teacher identity, thus meeting the conditions of a/r/tography. *Vulnerability* and *Repetition* emerge as active concepts and constitute a meaningful commitment to a learning-to-learn performance. The possibilities and experiences of this a/r/t inquiry should inspire teachers, regardless of their practice, to undertake such relational process.
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To my parents

Thank you for giving me the world.
CHAPTER I

Introduction

This work is a personal and inter-personal narrative in that it presents thought processes and activities involved in generating and analysing accounts of lived experience, intentions, and a shared love story with the medium of paint. It is also an attempt to narrate impossible-to-be-narrated selves. I shift looking outward, inward, trying to re-present simultaneous views and embrace a transformative approach to subject-object relationship. This work does not assert truth but hopefully provokes to a creative tension, which will lead to new possibilities and experiences. My attempt includes an invitation to an a/r/tographical living inquiry.

The general understanding of what artists do in their studio is vague. Further, there is obscurity over and around what concepts are at work and how they permeate art/teaching practices. “[...] a less commonly studied component of visual art education is the educational dynamic engendered by teachers who are also artists”, Graham (2009, p. 85) states in the beginning of his article, How the Teaching Artist Can Change the Dynamics of Teaching and Learning. The interest of the present research is set in the context of an ever growing conversation in the field of art education where issues involving individualistic practices have increasingly been set aside and replaced with an emphasis on the dynamic relationality as manifested in and through identity and collaborative practices. Yet, as Reiss & Pringle (2003, p. 219) note, “there is a lack of detailed research that explores how and why artists engage with participants” (I take the word ‘participants’ to mean students in particular, in relation to the research at hand). Such preoccupations echo the intentions here except, the contribution I hope to bring to the field
resides in the slightly different approach – because it doesn’t shy away from negotiating between ‘outdated’ and ‘current’ views, this research intends to acknowledge the different ways of living and knowing particular to the three artist-participants and to bring into question personal artistic and teaching activities and field of knowledge so to emphasise the power of transformation residing in art practice as it relates to teaching. Thinking, values, and ideas transgress and transform what I understand in this research to be a translation of artistic preoccupations into teaching and sharing knowledge. Starting with the artistic process as shaped by the artists’ educational background, by the artist-teacher identity, and by the studio environment, the research question that develops is the following: how do artists understand their artistic practice in relation to their teaching practice? Aforementioned authors and many others have posed similar questions. In 1978 Szekely was inquiring and examining the competence of art teachers. He determined several advantages the art teacher as an artist can offer to art education experience. In his understanding, “it is impossible to be a truly competent art teacher without continuing to practice one’s artistic vocation” (p. 20). Whether or not such view has been long abandoned or is still part of the contemporary debate, his conclusion nevertheless brings into attention the co-relation of art and teaching practices. In 1981 Anderson was delivering the following understanding with regards to artist teacher: “the crisis is not one of professional identity as much as realising the underlying implications of our profession” (p.46). I formulated my research question in relation and consideration to such professional implications as the ones Anderson (1981) mentions. Looking at what motivates professional artists to commit to education, Waldorf (2009) pursues “a better understanding of artists, who, through the use of their knowledge and practice of the arts, influence change in student learning, teaching practices and school culture” (p. 13). Thus, my research proposes new understandings of art and teaching
when these practices re-emerge as events that happen within the liminal space they create by relating to each other through atonement and exchange. Its difference resides in its manner of opening up and furthering conversations and preoccupations of contemporary art and art education communities. To some extent, questions emerging during the research might coincide or not differ greatly from the ones pursued by similar undertakings, yet I believe they contribute significantly to the conversation and development of art education by proposing and encouraging interpretation of personal and collective reflections on art teaching practice (and any other educational commitments, for that matter) in different ways.

The participants in this study are three practicing artists, including myself, who are or have been involved with teaching art. As my experience suggests, making art and teaching art cannot be neatly separated, although they may have specific features as practices. Graham (2009) notes: “[The art-teachers’] personal artistic activities can have a profound influence on how they interact with students, how they shape the learning environment, and how they interpret their field of knowledge” (p. 93). As a respondent in Barrett’s (2009) inquiry Springgay makes the following statement: “It is important that Teaching Artists be practicing artists [...]. [They] are in the midst of art, and they bring this aspect of their lives into their teaching practice” (p. 201). Art and teaching emerge as possible articulations of the personalities, dispositions, and understandings activated during this inquiry, or otherwise created, found, and/or inherited during a lifetime. A significant part of the thesis tackles issues around identity, thus bringing forward a capacity to embody and perform certain meanings and values. Looking into who artists are, how/why they produce art, and what/how/why they teach, should help understand the relation among these questions and the connections that are conceptualised and manifest in theory and practice. To me, making/teaching art are inextricably linked through the active quality of the
relational within a context that is always changing, therefore surfacing one important aspect of the artist-teacher condition – restlessness and oscillatory vulnerability brought about through a liminal space. For this reason, I situate the inquiry at the threshold between theory and practice and I appreciate it as an opportunity to interrogate and explore reflectively and reflexively through conversation, art making and writing. The artworks and texts intend to record what is being said and un-said, what is present and absent, and to negotiate experiences and beliefs. I disrupt beliefs commonly held about artists and I unsettle rather than reconcile ways of thinking, knowing, and making which often seem established in their familiarity. The analysis of covered and uncovered meanings resonates with opinion and the particular rather than the typical. In its form, content, mode of inquiry and representation, this work suggests findings and its achievements rest on its own power to disperse, to touch, and to be shared, re /found and refined perpetually.

Most people in my life are involved with the arts and art education. My familiarity with artists and my growing up in the atmosphere created by their conversations are part of the reason why, in this research, I turned to artists who shape and share, one way or another, my present context. The participants’ dedication to painting is a significant aspect. I first interacted with Scott Plear and Thomas Anfield through their art in the space of a gallery where our works are often displayed together. I saw their paintings before I knew them as individuals. The selection of participants is part of the research process and is significant in itself. Each participant artist loves the medium of painting. Each artist has also taught as part of his career. The teaching experience we all have to a different degree is also a very important factor in the selection. How and why we share certain dispositions in our practices will be discussed in later pages. I also decided to place the description of the two artists’ biographies at the end of the thesis. It is my way of offering
readers a cleaner start, acknowledging at the same time that no one can be completely free of biases or expectations. In my experience, it is tempting to provide a discernible image of the main characters in the beginning of an account, so that the public has a mental figure to build on as the reading advances. I hope readers will engage with this work and reach their own conclusions. A gradual exposure culminates more than once in different ways and at different stages of the reading. I believe that such an approach can advance a more profound understanding of the artists involved and resonates with the way they would like to be exposed and understood – through their thinking and ideas, through the connections they form and through the meaningful relationships they have regardless of academic degrees they may have earned.

Once Thomas and Scott accepted the invitation to contribute to the study, I conducted individual interviews over a two-month period. At that stage in the research, I used audio recording and photo documentation to collect data. I visited each participant three times in their respective studios, for I posited that space would mediate our conversations and promote a comfortable atmosphere in which the inquiry could develop towards deeper communication and significant disclosures. To me, the studio represented a familiar place for all of us, thus it helped us relate substantially. Moreover, the space of the studios proved prolific for acquiring data, since it gave me the opportunity not only to interact with the participants’ works in progress, but also to observe the two artists naturally manifest in a space representative of their preoccupations and endeavours. My intention was to establish a conversational relationship with the interviewees, based on unstructured interviews and to engage with a/r/tographic inquiry as a methodology that allows openness in the research process, thus invoking growth through researcher/participant transactions and awareness in the moment. I went to interviews with a few general questions
(What is an artist? What is an artist teacher? How the participants understand their artistic and teaching practices? etc.), and certain themes in mind (concepts of place, studio, painting as an artistic medium etc.) and I allowed them to develop through dialogical interactions with the participants – I chose interview as a method in order to advance understanding through human interaction.

Qualitative interviews are used when researchers want to gain in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena, experiences, or set of experiences [...] This can only be accomplished when the qualitative interview is open ended enough for the participant to provide a depth of knowledge on the research topic.

(deMarrais, 2004, p. 52)

I considered the whole project as the work of three artists coming together for the same purpose: to embrace the challenge of exploring who they are, how they think, and what/how they share their ideas with the world. Both artists were willing to devote some of their time and space to reflective and reflexive pursuits and were interested in entertaining conversations about themselves and their work. The interviews elicited subjective accounts of lived experience, including inner thoughts, emotions, etc., which affected the generated data into being complex and authentic. There were discussions on their thought processes and subjective experiences of making and teaching art. We talked about our understanding of identity as related to our practice, about the consequences of our received education and the influences we experienced. In the course of dialog, we discussed the perception of spaces where we work and create. I asked them to be attentive to how they conceptualise place by photographing their own studio. Those images are presented and discussed in later pages along with disseminations of concepts and ideas. I
used parts of what has been said in our discussions that I considered meaningful and loaded with explorative potential to serve the study’s interest and notably, I must confess, to stir and provoke matters at the heart of the researcher. A personal dimension of the work presented here acquired more and more contour along the way as if a needy abundance of questions and reflexive states was begging to be fed. The insight into different and similar artistic and educational practices of others incited me not only to reflect on my own theories and practice but also, to hunt for a sophisticated appreciation of studio-based artist thinking and the possibilities that open once thinking extends into art teaching practice. Reflection has been an important ingredient and method for this research. Allowing time between conversations, to negotiate and ponder on new findings and understandings, has been vital. Such an approach is also suggested to the reader by my shaping the text in an interrupted manner. Specified moments in the course of a day, recorded days of the week, and seemingly aleatory dates, note episodes of apparent silence characteristic of the inquiry process. The flow of the reading should encourage an interaction with the thesis marked by pause and re-consideration. I render time not as linear, but fluctuating – I suggest the reading should also be intermittent, multilayered, and unconfined to the sequence of chapters or paragraphs. Furthermore, I invite a reading of images as they intertwine with text in different ways. There are instances where the artworks of the participants accompany my own written thoughts, encouraging more meaning to emerge; and there are other occasions where Scott or Thomas’s verbal articulations seem to add insight to my own art. Often, words

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1 The initial idea was to collect some field observations and my own thoughts by keeping a journal (hence the appearance of suspended thoughts and random recorded dates). In time, I observed my notes transforming more and more into analysis and becoming a much bigger part of the research than in its final form presented here. I decided to keep traces of the pathway this inquiry created, with its turns and shifts. Just as in a painting, I sometimes allow the sketch lines to remain visible and function as part of the work’s compositional articulation. In the following, I present several more reasons for shaping the text the way it is.
neighbouring an image are enhanced to suggest a promising connection with the visual (and even a possible title for it). A significant indication is that text and image are not representational of each other or the process of inquiry. Rather, they are the inquiry themselves, contriving and portraying (as in a re-presentation) the a/r/tographical process and its product as unfolding aesthetic experiences.

Reflexivity, reflection, and interruptions acting as contiguous and relational theories and practices, portray how I analysed the data and performed the research process as a metissage act, carried out through slashes and bridges between text and image, between thinking, making, being, and between the identities each participant held and I attend to, on both professional and personal grounds – modes of existence which meet in the borderlands of continuous and oscillatory transformation. A/r/tography as a methodology has been particularly useful in the case of this inquiry, for it creates “forms of thirdness that provide the space of exploration” (Irwin, 2004, p. 30). This in-between space not only hosts the data and its assessment, it is also the inquiry process and product simultaneously. This work’s articulation never ceases to be created, for it is a resonance of the conceptual practices of a/r/tography: contiguity, living inquiry, metaphor and metonymy, openings, reverberations, and excess, which are interpreted as flexible, itersubjective, and tumultuous. I find that Bourriaud’s words with regard to contemporary artwork speak to the activity and product of this thesis “presented as a period of time to be lived through, like an opening to unlimited discussion” (2002, p. 15).

The reader is invited to appreciate that: this study does not have a ‘final’ form. The open and inconclusive character of this work deliberately avoids restrictive meanings. In this regard, there are two reasons for the decisions made concerning the character or disposition of the inquiry, the
analysis, and its rendition. First, I had an enormous struggle with my position in the research; I still do and I believe such continuous struggle should be suggested by the artworks and the text here. Second, I could not think of a better way to narrate the meandering being of artists or to suggest as closely as possible the capricious atmosphere that the process of inquiry created, than to conceive the written part of the project in an irresolute manner and to create ambiguous images as part of what I learned from and about the two artists and from my own interpretation of them and my-self.

Given my position in the study, as participant and researcher, I chose to concentrate on who we are and how we think. For a good part of the project, I immersed myself into undoing the subject-object binary opposition. As inquirer, I embraced an in-between space and became the inquired participating with the two artists in addressing some questions. It soon became apparent that meanings and findings could follow countless different routes and that they opened a multitude of possibilities, some divergent and some shared, for each of us involved in the project. The sections devoted to my own experiences and understandings parallel and articulate themes and statements of the participants taken from the interview transcripts – I draw from disparate dialogues, thus smudging the lines between inquirer and inquired, insider and outsider, and even author and audience. Thomas and Scott’s words, along with mine, are marked by our respective first names every time, the format urging the reader to interact with three different perspectives separately, simultaneously, and/or creating his/her own meanings. Vis-à-vis to a/r/tography Springgay notes, “A/r/tography is a mode of thinking about or theorizing multiplicities. It is not about framing rules or understanding principles, but about the possibilities of intertextual relations” (2008, p. 161). Competing values, contradictory notions and impulses, and ambivalent perceptions are recognized and appreciated, as the methods and form of analysis and re-
presentation suggest. Our own photo images of the studios and artworks offer the opportunity to consider them independently and in relationship. Moreover, as mentioned before, visuals and text intertwine, sometimes to the point where authorship, if it cannot be completely disregarded, is at least negligible. Thus, I consider there is much to be gained in the research by suspending the problematic idea of singular self and undermine univocal subject position in the favour of multiplicity and polyvocality (Gergen & Gergen, 2003).

Although I consider this study co-produced by three practicing artists, including myself, I would like to acknowledge a fourth, whose presence might only be felt by me and is mostly inferred throughout the written pages. There is a considerable fraction of my-self indispensable, at least to the autobiographical parts of the thesis, which only becomes evident in the connection I have with my mother. Her figure as an artist is not auxiliary and her role as a mentor is not merely occasional to the research. I could not write about art and teaching art without thinking of her tutelage. On a different level, her presence also speaks to my need to create a familiar place that I can access as a refuge when the research becomes too unsettling.

Very aware that many versions of this inquiry are possible and promising, I also understood early on that this version would be inevitably subjective because, in my understanding, art is subjective and an inquiry related to it is the same in its interpretations of personal experiences; so much so, that the work itself had to become the subject. As a/r/tography, this thesis produces and creates itself from within (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). “The conditions for measurement are contingent upon and exist within the structure itself – an absolute measure” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxxii).
Circumstances: disrupted and negotiated practice

Important to consider, when talking about artists and what they do or why they do it, is the idea that within the arts field, professional knowledge is considered the artist’s awareness of positioning him/her self in contemporary contexts and recent narratives of art; and many times artists turn to university departments (or schools of art) to procure and practice such capacities. Anderson (1981, p. 45) noted, “art educators obtain education and training from institutions of higher learning and settle into roles [...] usually categorized as professional artist or professional teacher of art”. In 1986, Day noted that prospective art teachers were enrolling in studio classes in order to be properly accommodated and considered. What has changed perhaps is that the conversation on the role and relative status of artist and teacher (Barrett, 2009; Daichendt, 2009a, 2009b; Graham, 2009; Randall, 2009; Reiss & Pringle, 2003; Saraniero, 2009; Waldorf, 2009) intensified, for time allowed the professional field of art education to become ever more complex, and as shared narratives of art and education grew in number.

When there is a need to enable conversations on the educational role of art and the artist in society, such intentions presume critical engagements, examinations and interpretations of ideas, and experimentations – the sort of undertakings (whether meant to socially engage or not) that artists now, maybe more than ever, pursue with their work in (and outside) the studio. Artistic practice is challenging. The social and cultural responsibilities that come with it are ever more evident and ardent, especially for an artist teacher. The expectations of artistic ideas and identities being embedded in the specificities of their time and cultural, social, and economical space are higher. “We are trying to help [art] students to imagine themselves as citizens within
the world – not only the art world. This is the most difficult […] perhaps most radical venture we are engaged in” (Becker, 1997, p. 16). The literature involved in advancing visual culture for the benefit of art education curriculum talks about contemporary art works and the artists’ social interests as a source, as well as an argument for the shift from modernist principles (which, is often argued, are not sufficient for art education) to postmodern ideas (Duncum, 2001, 2002, 2003; Efland, Freedman, & Sturr, 1996; Freedman & Sturr, 2004; Gude, 2004, 2007). Often, it seems, the elements and principles of design are dismissed altogether, for they serve the modernist normative values (some of which the two artists and I share for reasons discussed later in the study) in a contemporary art world where distinctions between high and low art are unclear at best, or utterly rejected. To what extent such directions within the educational environment have any real effect on what artists do or, in turn, teach, remains to be seen. As will be shown later, in the case of the two artists present in this research, such context forces them to face feelings of frustration and the insecurity brought about by experiences verging on paradoxical circumstances. As if the world of art and education they emerged from differs so greatly from present conditions and expectations that inconsistency, as a form of slippage into un/known, becomes a matter of survival. But what is this survival if not being immersed in a practice that acknowledges a liminal space where old and new meanings and values co-exist, re-create and co-create each other. I understand such rift as fertile and within such awareness, my work as an artist, researcher, and teacher is situated and entertains a phantom grasp of sense. It is my belief that my partners in inquiry, although not directly communicating such perceptions as the ones just described, nevertheless plunge into them with their practice and with everything they are, only to emerge regenerated time and time again. I bore witness to such processes of transformation in their presence. Yet, ambiguity is present all throughout this research, providing
openings for learning, and still, making a constant companion to new understandings and interpretations.

In a postmodernist manner, the array of concepts and beliefs, irregularity and contradiction, do not exclude interdependency. Derridean thought would follow that apparent opposites imply one another and as Christopher Butler notes, in turn, “understanding is always a form of misunderstanding, because it is never direct, is always a form of partial interpretation” (2002, p. 21). As Elkins (2005) explains, at least on one side the result is relativism in visual language, where an unstable reference point is made by the postmodern ambiguity of interpretation. To some extent, beginning with modernism, discussions on art orientated the spotlight on issues involving representational skills as technique towards concepts and theories. In a sense, it can be suggested that the celebration of wedded art with academic elitism got its bounce from modernism. In the second part of the twentieth century, art-making leant towards the mode of the artist as researcher as a trend. Today’s art proposes perceptive, experimental, and critical models and often involves participation. Sullivan (2005) notes in the introduction of his Art Practice as Research: “The critical and creative investigations that occur in studios, galleries, on the Internet, in community spaces, and in other places where artists work, are forms of research grounded in art practice” (p. xi). In the case of this inquiry, the attempt to investigate studio work aimed to understand such work in a manner that would enhance the appreciation for, and emphasise the, learning that occurs on the verge of theory and creative practice. Within such state of prelude I decided to take advantage of the openings offered by the connections between art and teaching, making and self, self and community.
But a study looking at who artist-teachers are, what they do, and what shapes their experiences, cannot omit the educational influences on artists, which implicates those who teach and what is being taught as art. Historically and culturally, it is common knowledge that artists learn from other artists.

The most pervasive contemporary manifestation of the teaching artist is found in college and university departments of art [where artists, selected] for their accomplishments, are paid to teach art to students enrolled in the institution that employs them […] while the clear expectation is maintained that they continue to produce art.

(Day, 1986, p. 38)

A number of narratives were shared on art and the artist – teacher debate. For the past thirty years, questions that negotiate the role of the artist in education and the artist-teacher model have been asked. “It is the image of the artist as an independent creator that is the source of most conflict within the artist-teacher image” (1986, p. 39), Day was noting 24 years ago. Becoming an artist is not an act outside school Singerman (1999) notes; “the problem of becoming an artist [is] an educational problem at once intensely psychological and absolutely professional” (p. 130). Except, the university artist might mostly be there to pursue professional acknowledgement, which raises questions about the ontological problem of the artist (who is an artist?) and further, the ontology of art (what is a work of art?) and the role of traditional and contemporary practices (as in what kind of value is prized). Concerning the professional artist and professional teacher of art negotiations, Anderson (1981, p. 46) observes, “the crisis is not one of professional identity as much as realizing the underlying implications of our profession”. In the past, the attention given to art minorities and women, and the arts of popular culture,
connoted what might have been a general drift away from an attitude of fascination with elitist conceptions of art (Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996, p. 112). Yet, if ‘elitist’ describes an a priori capacity of individuals, then it is possible for the idea of Enlightenment - ‘artist as genius’- to persist, in its modernist form. A Kantian fine art, which belongs to the artistic genius, cannot be taught, but the innate talent should be trained in schools (Kant, 1951); talent which, Crawford explains, is “something original and exemplary which serves as a model for others” (2005, p. 66). Neighbour to a supposed universality of values is the image of the artist seen as ‘other’, with his/her capacities perceived today as mythical. This ‘otherness’ of artists imprinted on their particular appearance (the strange clothes, outcast behaviour), and the intimate fortress as the studio impenetrable for outsiders, had to be overcome, in order for the disconnection between artist and general public or community to be resolved. Or so it was believed, for such a struggle can be traced back to 1920s and earlier when, “the artist’s isolation [was] used to explain the problems of art education and of the artist as a personality, as well as the isolation and peculiarity of modern art” (Singerman, 1999, p. 28). At the same time, it might be that the very strangeness and mysterious aura surrounding the image of artists still present some sort of attraction to students willing and eager to step into the studio-classroom and “work hard” at becoming an artist, as both participants of this research noticed in their own experience with teaching. Perhaps, “the effect of the studio mystique and the charismatic aura that has developed around the role of the artist” (Day, 1986, p. 39) remain an influential factor in the everyday context of arts and education questions.

The art production that used to find itself as subject for acts of deliberation has already been described as concepts made up, developed, released, and circulated as images; especially if, for a postmodern practice, manual ability is not vital in discerning or evaluating works of art or the
maker (Singerman, 1999). In such instances, what started as a reaction to an old traditional academy, translated into postmodernism as a diagnosis that rejected conventional styles (Schwandt, 2007, p. 235). Having demolished the old image of art academies with their uniformity and reproduction of doctrines and the veteran image of the academic artist as a master of technique, the artist as modern ‘bohemian’ forced into experimentations could persist today. The participants and I all feel pressured to come out with something ‘new’ every time, “fresh and hip” as Thomas says with a fake smile brought about by disbelief. Scott: “[Artists] seem to be stuck. And I think that it gives them an advantage to justify almost, well, anything, as an attempt to democratise something that is highly undemocratic. So instead, it becomes more peers supportive, like there’s no criteria to judge this stuff anymore. It’s social – if your peers are supported, you are supported, so you support them, then it becomes very clubby.”

There is a tension between a chased autonomy of self and of the artwork and their being social and cultural constructs. Adorno took note on such correspondence akin to a theory of the artwork (1997). I would like to take into account that, the idea of identity and artwork creating each other is worth considering, and note that uniqueness, when desired and recognised, serves a certain need to keep, identity and artwork, one through the other, alive and relevant. Uniqueness and unity, singularity and totality combined, attest to what the pursuit could be about for art producers and/or consumers. The value of identity and artwork as essences fades when dispossessed of predetermined meanings. Feminist, postmodernist and cultural studies argue identity as commissioned by, or against, various intentions and conventional classifications of a social construction in performance; thus artworks become projects and co-accomplishments.

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2 I expand on self and subject, identity and subjectivity few pages later, as I understand them as oscillatory and echoing each other.
Perhaps acknowledgement that no matter how creative art does not occur in a vacuum supports the idea that everything, including identity, comes\textsuperscript{3} from somewhere and suffers perpetual de/formation. Identity and any enterprise (theoretical or practical) for that matter are, in my opinion, inextricably linked. Between the artist who is expected to strenuously promote his/her career and not waste time with experimentations, and the artist who is celebrating the formless, the subjective and the instinctive, lays an arrangement of tasks that might suggest the in-between place of postmodern condition; and identity is subject to “open conversation between different understandings, different vocabularies, different cultural paradigms” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 402). Furthermore, if art is an active representation of multiple constituent selves, and if the identities of artist, researcher and teacher are understood as existing simultaneously and contiguously (Irwin & Springay, 2008), then inquiry into artist-as-teacher, artist-as-researcher, and artistic experiences is essential; for the terms in which art education can be(come) “a legitimate practice in its own right” (Reiss & Pringle, 2003, p. 218) can be facilitated by investigating “the role of the artists, their creative practice and pedagogic approaches” (Reiss & Pringle, 2003, p. 219). Thus, the second chapter of the thesis will concern itself with an exploration of contiguous identities and moments of awareness un/folding in experience as they have an important influence, direct or inferred, on art/teaching practices.

\textsuperscript{3} The active verb “comes” is used intentionally to suggest perennial motion, like an eternal come-around, or rotations of the orbit – each turn different yet recurrent.
CHAPTER II

‘identity’

I am in a public park. Not far away there is a lawn and along the edge of that lawn there are benches. A man passes by those benches. I see this man; I apprehend him as an object and at the same time as man. What does this signify? What do I mean when I assert that this object is a man?

(Sartre, 1992, p. 341)

In the pages following these lines of his Being and Nothingness, Sartre notes that we humans can be defined and exist through our relations to the world and to ourselves. While looking at Other, I am objectified by others’ looks, hence the responsibility to study and expose my-self together with the artists involved. In this inquiry, besides generating accounts of experience through interviews, I also generate data using occurrences in my own life through autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, A.P, 2002). I engage in critical self-reflection, as what is being explored and conceived here corresponds to the ground I myself dwell on as an interpreter, knowing, at the same time, that meaning is unstable. I interrogate my own existence by finding/creating a liminal place, where I occupy yet question my own position, and where I see myself as “both inquirer and respondent, […] teacher and learner, […] the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 283). Therefore, a self-questioning parallels this inquiry not only because “we need to write autobiographically in order to connect
with others” (Leggo, 2008, p. 4), but also because the creative practice of my a/r/tographical engagement presented here is meant to evoke and provoke conversations on identity and subjectivity, through fragmented exposure and the possibilities of a permeable self. The interplay of self behold image and dis/embodied identities is bound to happen, for “self and subject identities overlap or resonate with one another”, as Leggo (2008, p. 16) observes. I am a ‘site’ for competing selves opened to the possibility of being looked at when, at the same time, I gaze back as researcher and researched.

Image 1: ‘back’

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4 The notion of multiple identities references the subjectivity as influenced, supplied, and/or commended by social, cultural, ideological contexts, imaging and language.
As Springgay notes (2004a, p. 68), paraphrasing bell hooks (2000), “The appearance of what we see and accept needs to move beyond surface descriptions in such a way as to examine what it might mean to question identity, conformity, and resistance through an engagement with our own body experiences and memories”. Used methodologically, reflexivity attends to what ontological hermeneutics appreciate not as method, but as a kind of event or process that we participate in for understanding. When “people are continuously interpreting the events that they experience, and these interpretations differ from person to person” (Aoki, 2005, p. 103), a/r/tography, as a concept where “knowing, doing, and making” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9) merge, is a significant encounter and preoccupation with the world and an appropriate approach to this research; because “who one is becomes completely caught up in what one knows and does” (emphasis in original, Carson & Sumara, 1997, p. xvii).

There is a personal purpose within this research, which needs to be acknowledged. It comes from an acute necessity for self-understanding, as I have always considered reflection indispensable to the evolution of my practice as an artist – an artist who believes that to explore and exploit the educational potential of arts is a duty to embrace. My pronounced dedication to work in the studio comes along with a commitment to “meditative and contemplative practices” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxiii) concerning education as well. I intended and hopefully succeeded to be critically aware of my own position while reflexivity provisioned a poststructural and postmodern experience of self. At this junction in the research, I had to acknowledge the contiguous existence and interplay of unstable subjective realities and to use paintings and narrative text, for they are spontaneous and momentary in their expression and they reference my ambition to capture something of the echo produced by elusive selves resistant to alignment, hierarchy, and structure. What follows has been found, created, and analysed in the realm of a
luminal space where a position is occupied yet questioned leaving any result in an indeterminate state. The motivation behind it comes from my desire to generate, extract, and voice through visual, verbal and textual articulations accounts, meanings and interpretations of lived experience. Such attempt not only makes the pursuit fertile but it can also complicate – questions evolve in a generative way, active and acknowledging all sources of involvement. The participants’ voice\(^5\) parallels mine throughout the reading.

Image 2: ‘Calypso Core’

The selves narrated, described, analysed, and interpreted repeatedly in what follows, cannot be calibrated as in drawing a regulating contour line to make them readable with confidence and certainty. Moreover, there is no levelled ground on which to inscribe. As Jean-Luc Nancy writes, “we happen as the opening itself, the dangerous fault line of a rupture” (2000, p. xii).

\(^5\) The participants’ voice is present in, and articulated by, their paintings just as much (if not more) as by their words reproduced in the thesis.
Monday: *I am an artist*

‘I am an artist.’ Language eludes my effort to settle or anchor the meaning of what I have just stated. “It defies every attempt […] to make meaning one’s own” (Aoki, 2005, p. 444).

Andra: “Tell me about the moment (if you had one) when you said to yourself ‘I am an artist now.’”

Scott: “In the last few years I had that feeling, but it was fleeting. It’s not like I’m doing stuff so I guess I’m an artist. It vanishes and ‘let’s go back to work!’ It vanishes. It’s ego because then you become pretentious. I mean, I could be a plumber too. Actually, I could be a lot of things.”

Even when/if the artist identity implies a stereotype, it does not presume identity as stable. To borrow from Homi Bhabha (2004), stereotype requires constant reinforcement, which is brought about through *repetition*. Scott’s feeling of ephemeral confidence to settle an identity as artist
and his need to keep working to assert that identity, is not strange from my own experience. The line of self-portraits presented throughout the thesis bears witness to this idea (see p. 54). I could not describe my nearly compulsory desire for repetition in a better way than by connecting it to the thoughts that wrestle, on one hand, with the unstable identity de/constructed around the archetypal figure of the artist; and on the other hand, with the human impossibility of duplicating acts, processes, ideas, feelings, and most of all, values. I propose and discuss visually (in different mediums and techniques) the doubtful singularity of identity by re-creating similar images over and over again. The result is a series of works not intended to be read as copies of each other, but designed to suggest reverberation – an echo of my attempts to anchor and justify my own statement: ‘I am an artist’. Artworks are now ways of being visually marked and acted.

Scott’s continual gesture of returning to the work in the studio (see also p. 38) suggests, to me, an act intended to reiterate identity. Perhaps such need is produced by the impossibility to hinge identity, by its ferment and inconsistency and by it being multifold. A subtle line between autonomy and the relational might seem necessary when trying to ascertain identity. Yet, my understanding of art and self is of a relational nature, which lures the selfhood negotiation attempts into continuous extensions of impulses, motives, efforts, intentions, meanings, consequences. They inspire to a complex and unstable configuration of thoughts and feelings by which the artist-self struggles for its identity. The realisation follows that hybridity, a term used in Postcolonial Theory, is the border of contact and conflict between differences and commonalities, where the identical is unattainable (Macey, 2000), thus leaving identity in a continuous re-negotiation. According to the complex vision of postmodernity, hybridity undermines any sense of personal and/or singular identities and being an artist is not a social/cultural/professional or an individual category any longer.
Monday: The Ildentity

In my experience, people most often state their identity by first revealing what they do, especially as in what their profession is. ‘My name is Alexandra. I am an artist.’ I first named myself an artist (I used to understand it as a term by which I would be known and distinguished from or identified with others) four years ago, when people who fairly lately got to know me would, obstinately in their purpose and opinion⁶, refer to me as artist.

Image 4: ‘Monkey with Mirror’

I am not sure if it felt like a new persona was being born or I was finally being revealed as what I have always known myself to be. It does seem that I constantly pursue

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⁶ Their reasons might prove consequential. I see context as playing a significant role in the act of ‘naming’.
acknowledgement on two venues: one social, on the outside, and a self-validation, on the inside; although, achieving the validation of others is, in scope, somehow personal and acknowledgements do come with some form of support and self-reassurance at the same time. In naming my-self an artist I consider a self-recognition and possession, the kind of acknowledgement Thomas accounts as of great importance when he states, “the true artist is the artist who does his work despite how people react to it. Ultimately it is about being honest or so dishonest that that’s obvious too”. Having others name me so represents that expression of appreciation that people usually seek in others and many times, it seems they cannot do without. Such need readily reflects the co- of art. As Scott says, “you have to have even just a crump of support from other people to keep doing [art].” Although I use a form of division based on what might seem as opposite qualities (inside-outside recognition), I do not intend to group or classify. Rather, I am trying to relate and see what overlapping them could bring as a result.

It took a while for me to say aloud, ‘I am an artist’. In the past I always contemplated myself as an art student (my artist-mother always played the art-teacher role in my life). I fancy that such a frame inhibited my confidence to surface, not the faith in my own artistic practice but the validation brought apparently by the self-possession I so desperately desired. I always paid attention to my mother, although my neediness was mixed; at first with my strong desire to reject her artist-self, for I felt it threatened my chance to my own artistic freedom; then with a desire to become her; and lately with the realization that without her, I would not be who I am today and

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7 The reader will come across contradictions in artists’ statements, but dissention is more than welcomed in this study. It is received as profuse - it generates data and provides numerous possible trails to follow.

8 By self-possession, I mean that self-confidence I used to think it came as the result of a core conception of self.
that there are parts of a self-understanding which would not be reached without the reflections of self that my mother and I provide each other. It was only when I began to examine and ponder on the attention I always give my mother, that I took in the appreciation that, in my case, the artistic self is intertwined with the parent/mentor.

As I am writing this, I now understand the impossibility of ever capturing an integral self, let alone a sole identity defined by a single authoritative voice (Porter, 2002 p. 216). That unitary self does not exist or is never complete. Being, as in to do, know, and embody that something (in this case, the artist/teacher identity and/or art) is not a continuous process, but an interrupted and a dynamic one. How could I be an artist, a researcher, and a teacher all at once? Yet, within those interruptions, I don’t seize to be. To complicate further, I probably intend many something else’s at the same time. The I is always flustered by uncertainty, fragmentation and internal contradiction, and always haunted by the provisional character of authenticity. The self or the term preferred by postmodernists subject, draws attention to the illusion of autonomy and to the dictated notion of self by discourses of power (Butler, 2002). While moving through subject positions and contradictory discourses, the consequences of such a perishable fashioning of identity and self must be carrying a load of meanings, which are yet strikingly unclear but salient nevertheless.

I am back to repetition.
Tuesday: Self

Thomas: “The idea that art is a separable thing is bizarre to me. Art is the way you dress, the way you set your table, move your hair – that’s art. We are dealing with something that is amorphic, unstable and, I guess, at its core is a reflection of our humanness that is unstable and contradictory.”

Andra: “How do you feel about doing art just for our ‘selves’?”

Thomas: “What is ‘our selves’? I do not believe in a separate ego that is me. I believe that the universe expresses itself in everything we see, which includes light, plants, and stars and planets and people. They don’t come from somewhere else. They are not in haven and then pop into the earth, look around and go back up. There’s only this, and this is fantastically wonderful. People say ‘how did life start?’ Well, it started when the universe started. It didn’t start on dead rocks and then little amoebas. The planet was alive, the star was alive; it exploded and created all the elements of the universe. That’s life itself. What caused the star to explode is a living energy – that’s life and that’s what we are and that’s what we express; that’s what our art constantly refers back to: the absolute bubbling quality of life; it doesn’t come from somewhere else. See, now we are getting to something more spiritual than artistic; but they go together for me.”

Andra: “Why do you make art?”

Thomas: “For exactly what I just said. There’s an energy that bubbles up through the planet and it produces me to do this; that’s what I feel like doing, that’s what I want to do.”
The identities embraced and activated are interwoven threads and as the fabric of my being folds and un-folds, a pattern is continuously re/created from inside-out and outside-in. I now imply a self that cannot be separate from context: influences of family, culture, society, place, etc. The complex process of interactions with the outside world reflects more than one image back on me (and sometimes names it too!); it re-evaluates the past and present I, concepts and ideas, and reflects what I do not entirely, or even partly, recognize as my own reflection. Is I so many shapes and shades? Perhaps the self-found image is nothing else than the result of some construction - do I recognise it as my own because it resonates with something I know or feel my-self to be? Or do I learn it? Do I become it? Nevertheless, every reflection I perceive, I interiorise. By interiorising, I don’t mean complete and unconditional acceptance. Rather, I am pointing out that humans are very malleable and every exposure or connection that implicates the I/eye creates an impact; and whether we consciously conceptualise the release of energy this impact produces or the unconscious is at work, or both, change within us will rapidly happen. Or will it? For instance, a new sensation adds through our finger tips to our experience and it might create new thoughts and associations – a sort of synaesthetic values in our consciousness; a new information might influence our future decisions; a new idea may re/de/form our concepts and beliefs; and just as we think we begin to know something, that something could become something else. Quite possibly, from our efforts to understand, that something draws its energy to constantly transform; and so, we never grasp but, in the mean time, we manage to learn. We are in the fashion of a perpetual becoming. I had better make records of the I/eye, before the I becomes entirely unrecognizable to my own eye/I.
Wednesday:

Ready to answer my own question now. It seems that I do learn to be what I am, without excluding the irregular character of ‘what I feel so obvious to be’. I think that, what my mentors taught me was mostly how to be an artist by using the canvas as a support for the I/eye. Only, these days, the I seems scratched out or suspended...

Another Friday: Identity

... and my shades change yet again. Who am I? If I believe, as Irwin and Springgay, that “a/t/tographical work entails […] constantly questioning and complicating that which has yet to be named” (2008, p. xxxi); if I believe Merleau-Ponty – the philosopher of ambiguity par excellence, who underscored the fundamental ambiguity of the human condition (Flynn, 2006, p. 66); and if I also believe that I do not have my work, I am my work, then I embrace Sartre’s responsibility entailed in my condemnation to freedom, and I am that which has yet to be named.

Scott: “Finally, I decided that I will do what I wanted to do, which was to be a painter. By 1984 I figured: I’m an artist.”

Andra: “Remember when you first started to call yourself an artist or to see yourself as such.”

Scott: “That was, I would say, probably in the last couple of days.” He smiles.

Thomas: “I think you just have a certain talent. I suppose I had that from the beginning. [Art] is my vocation, my job. The word artist doesn’t really work anymore. It’s like painter. It’s better to say you are a painter, but then you have to explain people that you don’t paint houses.”
For me, identity occupies a space of conflict and tension. I am interested in that very space in relation to Scott’s and Thomas’ words here. From my conversations with the artists, I get a similar restlessness and a-temporality in trying to aim, fix, or evaluate decisions and identity. Although the two artists seem very aware of who/what they are, different answers resonate with a living made up of partial identities and with the fluster of making choices – which boat is more appropriate for the journey, can we take a leap from one boat to another, and if we fail to others, can we save ourselves from drowning? Would drowning even be so bad?

Scott: “There are art teachers and then there are artists-who-teach. The department I am in really stresses the artist-teacher as opposed to art-teacher. I met a great teacher who taught at Emily Carr for years and he educated people a lot on the visual world. So you get what you can from where you can. There are many artists who are lousy teachers, so I think you have to look at the individual and what the person has to offer.”

Thomas: “I am an artist-who-is-teaching, not an art teacher. As an art-teacher I would have gone to school and studied art teaching and that would have been a different thing. I don’t necessary think it would have been better for what I was teaching. For teaching figure drawing, figure painting, it was better to have had the experience I have as an artist than to have gone to school to learn to teach art. There’s allot of people teaching art classes and the quality of what is being produced, the kind of information that’s being transmitted, is really lacking in substance. Substance in the sense of underneath the stance: what is your foundation? People don’t appreciate the amount of years it takes to be able to draw a simple form. You cannot learn it in three or four years as far as I’m concerned. Well, I shouldn’t say that. Some people can. If my goal would have been to become a teacher and found myself teaching figure drawing, that might or might not be good, depending on who you are. But I think you would be better off with
somebody who’s been painting figure for twenty years than with someone who’s been teaching it only. Now that being said, there are very good artists who are awful teachers. And I had very good teachers who were not very good artists; but they knew how to get things out of you. But then everybody is self-taught really, because people just give you clues on how to go figure things out.”

In his insightful interrogations of the term artist teacher\(^9\), Daichendt (2009a) marks its earliest use with George Wallis (1811-1891), whose model of art education suggested “a bridging of the roles of artist and teacher embodied in a philosophy of teaching art” (p. 225). Further, Daichendt (2009a; 2009b) discerns two different approaches in the debate of the term (which debate began to unravel with Lanier (1959), who condemned the nominative function of the term, for it underlines certain “attitudes” (p. 10)) as a designated/descriptive term of a twofold practice and as a concept in which artistic activity is highlighted as it relates to teaching. I do remember a time in my own art-student life when, within a Faculty of Fine Arts, a program was being offered in art education. The fine arts would share certain theoretical courses with the education department, but never the studio practice classes. I was granted the experience of both and graduated with a ‘double specialisation’. The dilemma is still posing a torment on me and possibly, a later version of this research will emerge from it. I do remind myself, when one occasion or another requires, that identity, in its social form, is the link between society and individual action. Attempts to understand the nature of such constructs do not represent a main single goal in the present research. For now, reasons are diverse and I could hit on some at this juncture, rather by chance. I do believe though that previous conceptions of teaching and artistic

\(^9\) I use artist-teacher interchangeably with art-teacher or teaching artist. Daichendt (2009b, p. 37) remarks: “The concept of artist-teacher can be encompassing of the qualities of an art teacher and also of the unique aspects of being a reflective artist”.

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practices are in full speed transformation. The important thing to notice here, I think, resides in attending the two artists’ avoidance of the term ‘teacher’ from a slightly different angle. Surely, the word ‘teacher’ often stands for a certain social denomination and represents, again, certain descriptions or degree of re/sources and a domain; just as much as the word ‘artist’ does, I suppose. On a second look, when the word is not systematic language anymore and becomes other than just concept – it becomes living practice, identity, to paraphrase Jean-Luc Nancy (2000, p. 149), is not an absolute distinction, but fascinating alchemy. The act of teaching itself is not left out from the expression of what Scott and Thomas understand them-selves to be. “I am an artist who teaches”, they both state. I choose not to lose myself in terms and names\textsuperscript{10} and look at acts and practices instead.

Scott: “For me, I just look at the work done and if it’s good, it’s good, and I don’t worry about those terms too much.”

Perhaps an understanding of art-teacher as concept can lead to an philosophy where the two practices – teaching art and making art – support and even promote one another, while meanings of delegated terms continue to feed debates and individuals implicated in art education continue to re-invent themselves. I will grant a good possibility though, to the idea that some practicing artists might yet be less ready to discern, or better yet, to take note and record on, the multiplicity and implications of meanings and relations that arise in their teaching lives, transforming their

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{10} In my own, personal opinion, the terms we use to identify, or the act of naming itself, even discussions on naming with the purpose of identification, are references to an attempt that implies power struggle and politics. It is not my intent with this research to commission and develop extensively on such instances, although I do understand them as impossible to let unattended and, at the same time, consequential to possible leads a different form of this study might follow in the future.
\end{flushleft}
identity and their being.¹¹ Maybe the two artists-who-teach interviewed here do not document per se, but they live and their artwork embodies such connections, as later pages of this thesis will show.

In her article, *Learning to Love This More: Mentorship for the New Teaching Artist*, Lichtenstein (2009) writes: “teaching artists embrace the “artist-as” phenomenon – artist as teacher, scholar, leader, activist, mother, healer, guide, interpreter, translator, animator, curator, mediator, provocateur, advocate, lover ______ (fill in the blank)” (p. 156). That such thinking emerged from increasing attention to artists playing a multitude of roles for the benefit of society does appear as a good description of current context, with the comment that what increased is expectation rather than just attention, and I find that artists today struggle to rise up to the bar. At the same time, in my vision, artists have always undeniably contributed to the evolution of culture and society although their roles might have been less obvious, documented, and/or acknowledged with nouns attached to an identity regarded as a given – nouns which are sometimes used and interpreted as suggestive or descriptive to a combination of tasks. Once in the 20th century, the idea began to shape up, that the arts are or should be, in their function and role, “socially engaged, participatory and educational” (Reiss & Pringle, 2003, p. 216), art became an activity informed by, and evaluated in, terms of its social and economical context (Reiss & Pringle, 2003). Thus, artistic quality and value have to be re-negotiated, inviting the artist as individual to commitments of sharing power, control, and to personal re-make up in order to incisively address the complex issues of community. It is such expectations facing artists in

¹¹ ‘Being’ as in what I noted pages before, knowing, doing, living.
the contemporary context that lead me to suspect that part of the frustration\textsuperscript{12} displayed by Thomas and Scott in what follows may be coming from an unsettled positioning amid meaningful actions and multilayered intentions; from being forced to professionally position themselves in a relevant manner within context – which might mean being individually obscured and/or dominated by an emphasis on communal outcomes.

Thomas: “There’s a whole world for everybody! So it depends on which hierarchy you buy into. It depends on whom you are talking to. It’s all made up. I’m concerned with the canon that’s being presented, that things start to get chipped away – a canon that’s getting cleaner and cleaner and more sellable, more package-able. This idea of always being upset with yourself for not being brilliant enough is such a waste of time and such an insult to what you actually are. There’s no such thing as a better artist and a weaker artist, for example. That’s an absolute nonsense; someone made it up. There are just navetistic agreements so people get in positions of power and help their friends. Is anyone right after all? So, it took me a long time to realise that you can do nothing to make yourself more likable or popular. It can’t be done. You can only be you. You can try to. Maybe you can maybe you can’t. I don’t know. I think you have to make peace with it. You can make yourself a lot worse by being dishonest, but that’s different. You are responsible for what you do. I could start make money by painting flowers and the world would say great! But no one would like them. They would be awful. And even if I tried to make them great, somehow they won’t be real. I guess the problem I have is that there’s an overlying feeling in society that you should know exactly what you are and how good you are and if you don’t,

\textsuperscript{12} I would like to adjust the word ‘frustration’ a tint towards agitation, commotion, and even effervescence.
then you are discarded. That to me is not how you do things. You don’t do that in a garden. You let everything grow; and then you go wow, here is the fruit! You wait. Things have to grow.”

Andra: “How do you relate your artistic process with your practice as a teacher?”

Scott: “They are different parts of me.”

Andra: “So you are not completely and absolutely just artist, you are also a teacher.”

Scott: “Of course, I am a husband, a business man; I am a lot of things.”

Andra: “How do you think about them?”

Scott: “You have to adapt to the medium. The teaching medium is very different from the painting medium. Certainly, there might be threads. With both you have to be open, creative, to try see through things, to see what is really going on. I think most artists are very messed up because they can’t do the other thing, they can’t use their analytic side. You need a blend of both; otherwise, you are at sea, at the whim of someone else. You see it all the time, artists who get their careers left off or stolen. They don’t want to be here, they don’t know how to be here.”

An irregular cut through the ‘artist-as’ and ‘teacher-as’ would allow the use of tears and recollage towards Thomas’ “discarded” or Irwin’s “excess” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx) – ‘an/other-as’ closer to the ambiguous condition of identity especially since, ‘teacher-as’ could also be a construction meant to reference the overlapping myriad of roles and responsibilities placed on educators whose efforts are directed accordingly, to contextual demands, such as the well-being and transformation of society. Therefore, who is an artist and who is a teacher leave
plenty of room to dissolve separation between values and status and affirm the undetermined.\textsuperscript{13}

Individuals are their own possible evaluators, art making and teaching are their own measure.

Image 5: ‘Dusk’  
Image 6: ‘Dusk II’

At this point in the research, for me, artist-as-teacher became artist/teacher \textbf{with an emphasis on the space in-between}, where adjacent and simultaneous acts and methods un/fold. I make use of this judgment in later pages and I focus on the \textit{in-between} concept especially in the section where I wrestle with the idea of \textit{place} (third chapter). Nonetheless, the visuals present here should remind the reader of my instigation to layered readings. To me, these two self-portraits are significant in different ways, in them-selves and together with the text. They have their own voice parallel and speaking to the text, for they do create a physical space between them, while a metaphysical one is strongly suggested by them facing each other as in a conversation, thus

\textsuperscript{13} Destabilisation which, in certain circumstances, could mean withstanding some forms of ranking.
introducing the next paragraph where I propose that identity can be assessed and sometimes conceived within dialog. But they also meaningfully relate to some of my own methods and concepts employed in this research: reflection and repetition. If performing as such, this couple of images echo some similarities between us – the co-creators of this inquiry, which I prefer not to spell out but allow the readers to find or maybe create and explore on their own.

Another Tuesday: Self – Reflection can bring along meaningful action.

I regard the understandings emerged from my conversations with the respondents as co-influenced and jointly created between the two participants and I.

Image 7: ‘Monkeys with Intellectual Pursuits’
Thomas: “You coming over last time made me realise, not having taught for almost a year now, how much I have been thinking about this stuff. People teaching always talk about ideas. What I’m up against as a teacher is trying to say it all.”

Human interaction intensifies the relationality of self and knowledge. Confronting the world is confronting the self – a form of self-exposure that forces us to pause and consider biases, to employ and consummate “the strangeness within, that which cannot be fully understood” (Guyas, 2008, p. 32). Furthermore, different facets of our being correlate and become visible in a juxtaposition of self and subject matter (Gergen & Gergen, 2003). “Understanding is interpretation”, according to philosophical hermeneutics (emphasis in original, Schwandt, 2003, p. 301). Thus, in our dialogs, by trying to understand our-selves and the subject matter, we are interpreting self and subject matter; and through interpretation we are re/creating data, selves, and topics while “learning to inhabit the world in a better way” (emphasis in original, Bourriaud, 2002, p. 13). Therefore, in a context where “the contemporary art world is still reluctant to embrace the unique work of artists who teach [...] and schools are somewhat hesitant to embrace a bundle of artists without official teaching credentials” (Lichtenstein, 2009, p. 157), should artists wonder what of their identity they have to give up in order to make possible the undertake of two apparently distinct pursuits? I believe, should insecurities be replaced with dynamic and cooperative efforts, a transformative perspective on identity, pedagogy, and artistic production might occur, which will give way to the activist potentials of multiplicity. During this inquiry, I found that potent energy leading to transformation in the introspective states the participants and I reached individually and together through dialog. It soon became apparent that our reflective investigations and collaboration exposed multilayered possibilities and emphasised the ‘in action’ character of teaching, learning, research, and creative practices.
Another Sunday: *I am an artist/researcher/teacher*

Different parts of me become relevant at different times. I search into what affords identity to be formed, performed, deformed and reformed. I fold and unfold, trying to decide what to reveal and what to conceal – making choices is inevitable, yet control is keen on eluding capture. I decide to avoid being identified with anything and to conceive and manifest a relationship with everything. If there is a middle, as researcher and researched, I suspect being in it. As researcher, I am facing conditions that seem to commend to situate myself; as subject of the study, I’m confronted with the impossibility of being detached. By juxtaposing self and subject matter, inspecting the world becomes introspection.

My experience as an artist within the area of Education has often been one of being removed from a customary place and a habitual practice. Nevertheless, I believe that my effort should speak of my robust claim to a teacher identity. In the time I spent thinking about education and working towards a Master degree, I felt lost and re/found repeatedly. A transformative learning environment is complex, profoundly strenuous, yet loaded with possibilities. It is within such fluctuating space that this research developed and where a new ‘me’ affirmed itself in and through the living inquiry of a/r/tography.

Questioning and expending the making and teaching of art presumes a variety of pursuits that can be related not only to issues involving artist/teacher identity, but also to studio practices and theorizing. Just as for Bourriaud (2002, p. 13) artworks are “ways of living and models of action”, what Graeme Sullivan names “artist-theorist” (2005, p. 212) is for me part of an artistic way of working and being. Thus, the dimensions created by adding the theorising artist as researcher to the artist/teacher, could draw the contours of the a/r/tographer identity, for it might turn out that bridging the artistic practice of the studio with the realm of learning genuinely is an
a/r/tographer’s endeavour. Perhaps moments of learning are being generated not only in the classroom, where the artist/teacher identity performs, or in the private studio, where the artistic stance of identity performs, but in-between; and that theorising leads to a *learning to learn* performance entertained by what Irwin (2004) calls “spaces between and spaces between the in-between” (p. 31) where artist, teacher, and researcher are not labels for different roles anymore. Or, perhaps not; and artists indeed embrace different, context dependent roles. Nevertheless, I would like to go back to Sartre’s (1949) “journey down the road to freedom” (Bauer, 1969, p. 65) and think with the hopes of a painter who breaks away from a fixed position in society and is transformed by such act. Yet with it, comes the anguish of becoming. The three painters here, we seem to adapt our-selves to it mainly in and through action.

Another Monday:

I am looking to find my feet through action and thought. I walk on my tiptoes so I can grow wings and defy grounding. I re- “discover myself everywhere between myself and being as the nothing which *is* not being. The world is human.” (emphasis in original, Sartre, 1992, p. 297)
“The individual is constantly subjected to a range of possible meanings and is therefore an unstable site of constructions and reconstructions, which often overlap” (Easthope & McGowan, 2004, p. 76). Throughout our conversations, the participants and I developed discussions on social constructed and self-found layers of identity. The relationship between being an artist and being a teacher – two seemingly different performances of identity, became apparent. Yet, this relationship is constantly negotiated, pondered on, lost and re/found.

Andra: “How do you see yourself?”
Scott: “Always an artist, but I don’t think that way so much. It is just the basement of the term.”
Andra: “Talk to me about how it is to be you as an artist, husband, teacher. How do you relate these fragments of identity?
Scott: “This is a very difficult question. My world is three things, three places. It is a triangle: home, college, studio. That is my world.”
Mother taught me that I am not separate from the world; I am within everything and everything is within me. Since we are born, our most important endeavour is to get to know who we are. I have been told this is the essence of life. Getting in touch with this essence is an effort found in the attempt to recognise our own self. Art can reveal and/or emphasise some of the most refined facets of being. Because artists work with subtleties, it is in the nature of their being and doing to introspect assiduously and to question every aspect of their practice and every belief put to work. These are my mother’s particular notions of what an artist is and what an artist does. By presenting them here, I acknowledge dispositions she might have enabled in my own
understandings of art practice and self. Aware that, to some extent, I could not not be an extension of her ingrained values, these values are that much more the notions I often bring into question.

Thomas: “The artist and the teacher in me are inseparable from my conception of myself, but I don’t know what that really means.”

Andra: “I see you also as a husband, a father, a teacher; you have all sorts of identities within you, it would seem.”

Thomas: “When I fully comply with one of them, I complain about being taken away from my art at all times to everybody.”

Andra: “Where does that leave the connection you mentioned before then?”

Thomas: “The thing is that you have to have something to be in the studio about. As an artist, you have to ask yourself: are you doing it for you or are you doing it for them? And then what are you going to do with it? What is your goal?”

Andra: “What is your goal?”

Thomas: “It is to find my voice, my unique voice of my own experience.”

Scott: “Ultimately, you are the artist, it is you doing it and it is you why you do it.”

There is much to notice in the artists’ answers mentioned so far. The conceptual dis/re/connections between doing and being are profound and suggest a state of harmony desired and reached transiently in difference and contradictions. The presence of a unitary individuality only manifests fleetingly and only through the multiplicity of identities that constitute it. Artists are in a constant reflexive state and search for a self because they know that part of who they are is part of what all their work and endeavours will become. Further, being in the studio is
equivalent to being in the making. The artistic process and product are forms of action never separate from the maker or the place where he/she manifests. At the same time, the importance of the artist’s individuality does not invoke a holistic image of the person at its origin, not as the final explanation of it. In a poststructuralist manner, the artwork has no single meaning ordained by the biography of the maker. The artwork is the product of the artistic act and the artist is, in part at least, what that very same act has encouraged. In the making, the artist’s intent is to explore, not to fully fix the self within a self-sufficient object. The corresponding attempt to negotiation around identity is significant in ourselves and in what produces identity. Whatever selves we discover, cover, uncover, or recover are not in the artwork as much as in the process that promotes and fosters it. Thus, the artwork itself emerges together with and impels a mobilised unhinged self sustained only through continuous friction; hence, the process as active and relational.

Other Sunday:
Although several dimensions of an artist’s identity is constructed, performed, and regulated, what it means to be an artist does not lend itself to a universal definition and it does not have uniform applicability in education. Making art is not the same with teaching or research if the focus of energies does not aim at the intersections between these practices. An a/r/tographer does not just enlarge understanding, but approaches the making itself as a space filled with transformative potential. Artists are in a constant reflexive state and search for a self because they consider parts of themselves to be part of what they do. Art is research when revolves around and with reflexive commitment.
For the two artists, the matter is not about articulating an understanding of studio practice in relation to teaching practice, or one through the other. I understand them as related and as I interpret from the conversations had with the artists, they see themselves and carry themselves as artists; “artists who teach”, but artists nevertheless. The relation between practices is there as far as I can tell, but it is more obvious to me than to them. Art relates to everything in their lives, it is their life or “a life style” as Thomas states, and artists practice that relationality; but they do not think as much about it. Rather, they don’t verbalise it or articulate it through language, they live it. For them, connections and exchange manifest through action. The identity announced in the title of this thesis and declared by two of the participants, is the artist identity. There is a link between the identity described by certain practices and the action inscribed on those practices. The two artists do not pause to reason on naming it; they act as in the most natural gesture. To me, this means that there is a relationship between the artist and the teacher identities that, through a dynamic self, transforms and manifests in and alongside different discourses and practices.

Scott: “Art is experience, not just brain stuff, and it gets to feelings you can’t reach otherwise. Poetry creates this, architecture, food, so it’s a whole world. And it has overlaps for sure.”

Thomas: “[Art] is all my experiences that add up to who I am.”

The artists’ existence manifests in a place of constant questioning, a place of struggle, uncomfortable, yet adored. The interplay of feeling and reasoning is present in many articulations Scott and Thomas make. Being an artist represents an opportunity to relate to

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14 As inquirer of this research, I intend to respect the two participants’ identity affirmation as artists. Although I consider naming as political, I also know that such relative construction is impossible to avoid.
outside, to create a place within a given community or to create one's own community. At the same time, the artists are compelled to satisfy the need to explore who they are. Going through conversations we had, I suddenly realize that we are all consumed by our need to search for identity, and that even though that search can be and is related to various aspects of our lives, we always re/turn to our work in the studio in an attempt to confront and consume this need. I understand studio as at once physical and meta-physical place, involving the making, and therefore linking theory with practice – a place where both intellectual contemplation and artistic making manifest. This link becomes obvious within the process, which process becomes the method and the research itself, in and through abstract and sensorial matters. The repetitive acts performed in the studio are meaningful in themselves.

Scott: “[In my studio], I’m trying to think which way to go next. I have several ideas, but I’m not sure. I know I’m only going to figure this out in the studio, so I better get down there and do something, anything. Roll out a canvas, put something on it and see what happens. I think I paint to get that excitement about the result of a painting and I don’t always get that, but I try.”

Other Wednesday:

To pull together the main points, themes, and/or insights of this chapter, I have to find a place of contact, a battlefield. That place for me is the studio.
CHAPTER III

‘place’

Towards the end of 1960s Ian Wallace, an artist also engaged with teaching, began a photographic documentation of his studio as the place of artistic production. Since then, he has accumulated many works in various techniques and mediums with the intention to emphasise aspects of the intellectual and material creation unfolding in the artist’s studio. These were illustrated in a publication and exhibition: Ian Wallace: In the Studio (2005) held at the Charles H. Scott Gallery. The idea of documenting himself in the studio became a fertile and complicated discussion on the production of works of art and in 1988 Wallace included a series of images taken in other artists’ studios. An autobiographical component in the thesis also attends to my own art-studio concepts and relates them to Thomas’ and Scott’s approaches of studio and practice, hence the analyses of their working environment together with my own included in the third chapter. If conceptions of place and identity interconnect, then the artistic and teaching processes specific to each study participant promote a certain way of living and being, control and are dictated by specific understandings of art, research, and pedagogy.

Morning: “I” “practice” “place.”

The inquiry follows, to some extent, the private studio places where the two artists perform, for, as I mentioned, part of my intention was to collect the participants’ interpretations of the located or dislocated experiences of place in relation to their practice. “The rooms we inhabit come to describe our ways of practice. Equally, through their inherent limits, the rooms we work in come
to define our ways of working” (Russel, 2000, Introduction, para. 1). The place of creation is part of what artists are and do. Donal O’Donoghue speaks in that sense to a “practice of place-making” (2007, p. 68): through an inclusive/exclusive process, selective ideologies can become, consciously or not, material manifestations. Place can allow certain performances and it inhibits others. Donal O’Donoghue notes that there is a place dimension to any sociological inquiry, thus directing his investigation into the construction of identities by attending to the spatial, and he quotes Gieryn (1999) in his article: “everything that we study is emplaced: it happens somewhere and involves material stuff” (2007, p. 74).

I have been tempted for a while during this part of the study to make use of the term private art-studio because the content of my conversations with Thomas and Scott suggests certain
interpretations of place and directions to this study towards ownership, control, and their implications. The participants usually work in private and have a designated place to do so, a place that they own. At the same time, teaching often includes a community and therefore a public place of performance. My intent was to open conventional perceptions of private/public binary opposition up to debate and, by exploring beyond appearances, to practice the collapse of regulating dualities. As I mentioned few paragraphs before, in order to accomplish that, I turned to my own studio, which has a private quality to it as well, but that value is relative in my understanding, and so I followed through on a more personal note and inquired for a more complex understanding of the creative process in relation to my own studio. In my own sense, studio is an environment that allows and encourages a sort of creative performance as in the production of art and learning, and therefore is equipped with certain qualities. While documenting, I observed the objects, volumes, and other sensual qualities that compose the space of the studio; the tools and materials used, together with the processes involved in painting production, which include making and contemplation. I tried to experience in different ways everything that could suggest, in my own case, an autobiographical trace in the studio. Discussions on public/private place did not develop as much in conversations had with the participants, although I have been opened in allowing them to occur and develop naturally, had such path occurred. Acknowledged here is the idea that the place of creation, whether found in the privacy of the studio or in the classroom, can be part of what makes an identity and its product, what they are and how they are presented, represented, or understood. At the same time, whether on the background of an art school, a continent, a time or a certain space which the

15 In my understanding, the creative process includes not only the action and thought involved in the making of art but teaching as well. More importantly, I consider the creative process as essential to both artistic and teaching-learning practices and the relation among them.
context allows to be created, the production of place promotes a certain way of living and being; a configuration of place can manipulate specific understandings of what an artist’s and teacher’s identity is or should be and what an artist/teacher does, just as much as the artists here stage-manage their working place conform to their ways of practice.

Andra: “I would like to talk to you about place and your conception of it as related to the studio and the work you do in it. What does studio mean to you?”

Scott: “It is probably the most valuable tool. It is where you go to work and it’s somehow mysterious.”

Andra: “Some artists might argue that where you do your art is not important.”

Scott: “To me it is. I’m not an exhibitionist. I feel it private. I’ve had a studio for thirty years. It’s not a stage, it’s a private place. I don’t want people creeping in there asking questions. You don’t want people in your bedroom. It’s a private place, a lot of private things go on in there. I don’t want to be Michael Jackson.”

Thomas: “I always have to take the paintings upstairs, look at them, and bring them back down.”

Andra: “There are artists who say they can paint anywhere.”

Thomas: “Not me, for years I struggled with what I want, to get a studio out of my house and just go there and work nine hours a day or I’m like, I like my house, I like my family.”

Andra: “Your house is like a studio.”

Thomas: “Sometimes is frustrating because people ask me staff, especially the kids, and I get disturbances. But I also like having dinner, drinking some wine, and it’s nine thirty and I’d like
to do some painting for few hours. I’m not going to get in the car and drive to a studio somewhere. And I don’t want to feel that I-have-to-paint-now kind of thing. So it’s not like you have to force yourself to keep working, but do different things you need to do. You have to be inspired or something.”

The conceptions Thomas and Scott have of their respective studios conform to their own personal perceptions and values they place on professional work and family, so that the same place being described according to those very values is, in a rebound manner, forcefully prescribing certain activities characteristic to the being-an-artist performance. Family home and studio under the same roof is an experience Thomas and I share, though possibly in different ways. As he describes, such an arrangement does emphasise the experience of some rather commonly implied ideas about how artists work – into the solitude and comfort the studio fortress is supposed to provide. In this particular case, the feeling of security and comfort is doubled by the significance of home and being close to other important aspects in artists’ lives. Yet home equals “disturbances” at the same time.

From Thomas and Scott’s perspective, I can direct my interpretation of the studio towards the private-place idea mentioned before. It is almost as if, what happens in there stays in there. Yet, the result\textsuperscript{16} of the transcendental process of making art leaves those mystifying rooms in order to be publicly shared and consumed.

Scott: “Home is nurture. I relax, recharge with my wife, have a glass of wine, a nice meal, and it is the loving, you know. The studio is a kind of sanctuary. I believe it’s a private place and a lot

\textsuperscript{16} By result, I mean not only art objects but also knowledge derived from the inciting experience of the studio.
of people don’t understand that. They come to the studio like, are they coming in my bedroom too? It’s a very personal place and sometimes you have to be careful with who you let in because they could really swap your energy. Not so much now, I don’t let many people in. So it’s an oasis, a kind of a castle key where you do whatever you need to do and it’s for yourself. I don’t want it to be like a temple or anything, it’s not like that. That’s silly but, studio is a very personal place to work away from the hassle in the world. You get that when you go out and you bring that with you into the studio because, well, you are in it. Studio, I think, is a kind of place where you can struggle, wrestle with this things, and sometimes is easy, sometimes is painful, so it is a combination of these things.”

I find very interesting that a discussion on studio-as-place brought forward considerations towards the participants’ family home and the experience of it. It does seem that the two artists talk about their home and studio, as those are two significant places that can be better understood in relation to each other. They use home so to emphasise privacy as the difference between studio and any other environment and, at the same time, they accentuate the value studio holds in their lives by equalling it to the complacency of home as a place shared with others.

Gradually, the emphasis turns away from the conventional conception of a painter’s studio towards the consideration of an intellectual working place. Scott understands and practices studio as a place of dissemination. Research there takes the form of a self-reflection in the act of production and can offer an important support to both intellectual and technical aspects of his working methods. Leaving physicality aside, there is no place completely separate from another. Studio is a site of intensified experience, where inside outside worlds meet and the boundaries between them erode absolute division. Home can provide, in this case, the same thing – a place
of meeting while performing who and what we are in relation to other people. But it goes even further. Just the same, classroom as studio can suggest yet another facet of relationality.

Scott: “The classroom is a kind of Disneyland, the kind of place where you try to pass on this practice that you have. So it’s good, you meet young people. I’m much more jaded now. I mean, twenty-three years when I started I didn’t know all the traps and all the things are set up for you by students – they always try to get you. You have to be pretty straight, clear, and hard sometimes, until you figure out a way of where they are coming from. “

It is important to notice here that the classroom-studio is a place where built and amplified relationships are readily acknowledged. Here, the artist Scott becomes the artist/teacher. His articulations of place reveal his teaching practice within the effort to understand the students and to pass on his own artistic practice. Therefore, in Scott’s understanding, part of what is private-studio informs the practice in the classroom, and, in my opinion, a complex combination of sources becomes obvious. Even if in his words studio is private and separate from the outside world, still in his words, the artist always brings inside experiences of outside; thus, in my understanding, place is always something else than the sense we think we grasp of it and it always changes the inhabitants together with itself.

Scott: “I could certainly have my studio anywhere, but I think it would change the work. Change, I don’t know in what way or how. I think about when I went to the prairies. If I went to Mexico, it would change. I went to London and it changed. But I think the core would be the same.”

I do not believe that studio is defined here as the artwork’s place of origin, nor is it understood as a geographical point. Rather, what I infer from Scott and Thomas is an interesting link between artwork and place. Two thoughts follow from it. One relates to the images they themselves took
of their studios. The participants’ identity reinforces myths that surround artists and their practices. That is, they not only inhabit spaces designed for artists, but they also create these very spaces. In this sense, artists make-up the world of objects not only to sustain their practice as the creators of artistic objects and thought, but also to emphasize, through the ideas invested in objects surrounding them, that they are, indeed, artists. The second idea I infer from our conversations suggests that place can represent a context made out of many instable pieces that continuously transform. There is a close and significant connection between place, practice, artist and artwork and there is so much to influence and that transforms, so much to affect. The pieces of the puzzle are infinite and although their shapes are cut to fit, they will never form a whole.

Evening: Studio-as-place

Alexander Liberman’s book The Artist in His Studio (1960) is a visual and written insight into how modern artists looked, lived, and worked (from Matisse and Picasso to Duchamp, Chagall, and Dubuffet). They are artists whom he visited, talked to, watched them at work, and photographed. He notes: “In books on art I found little factual information about artists’ studios, methods of work, and tools […] Seldom has anyone described those details that are part of the creation of the work of art itself” (1960, p. 9). Such arguments and intentions parallel somewhat the ones of this study. I now understand studio-as-place being part of and/or taking part in the artistic and educational process. Any added detail that promotes a fuller understanding of the artist and his/her methods of working is significant and need be recorded especially since, this investigation aims at the relations among/between making and teaching art.
Gained access to the artists’ **studios served the research** well as an entry point to visions, philosophies, scheme of thoughts, and aspirations. Add those to a sensation and a feeling of ‘being there’ and a deeper awareness about what it means to produce art and promote an “artistic knowing” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 62) will come through, serve, and inspire those who are studying art, teaching art, creating art curriculum, and those who are art dealers, historians and critiques, practicing artists, or those thinking of becoming part of the art and art-education world.
The images presented here are photographs Scott, Thomas, and I took of our own respective studios. I avoid the trap of textually ascertain meanings of them or the temptation to visually describe or translate the text around them. The reader will not find inserted here the describing notes I took of the participants’ studios. I prefer the reader to be inspired by what we captured and suggested with the images we chose. Objects, colour, composition, volumes, distances and many more qualities can speak volumes to the reader.

Even if the sociological or anthropological understandings could be abandoned for a moment, what follows should still offer a penetrating and profound experience of engaging with places-of-creation, which is, in my opinion, educational. I recognise practical studio-based work as an intellectual activity affected by the complex and contentious relationship between research and
the professional practice of art and education. The next part of this chapter aims to be a record and to suggest the possible significance arising in-between the causes and effects of such thinking.

The Place of In-Between

From the beginning, this study compelled me to develop a simultaneous visual/textual experience, imagining and interpretation. Artwork and text join and attend to each other not to explain one another or new findings, but to reach new meanings and understandings within their own specific articulations, metaphors, and qualities. What is more, artwork and text are part of the research as methods employed.

Image 11: ‘qualities’
“We create to understand. We imagine as we come to know”, Sullivan writes (2005, p. 65). This paragraph introduces what is, in part, my most asserted effort to engage in a/r/tographical research, for it “constructs the very “thing” one is attempting to make sense of” (emphasis in original, Springgay, 2008, p. 159). At times, I ‘create’ my own data. By now, the reader must have observed that, throughout the research, a/r/tography used as methodology speaks directly to and of this inquiry. I delve into what an a/r/tographer is by entertaining reflexivity within teaching and artistic practice; I interpret what an artist does by engaging with a/r/tographical conceptual practices (Irwin & Springgay, 2008); and I explore the relationality of a/r/t by ‘perturbing’ the artist to entertain discussions on the relationship between artistic sensuous experience, thought or complex ideas, and teaching art – all on the background of studio self-dialogs. To achieve this, I destabilize the coherence of what studio implies in general understanding (in the case of this study – where artists paint) and interpret it as a conscious and unconscious source for and effect of the artist/teacher’s process of thought and making art. Hence, studio becomes a place of transformation rather than simply a physical place for practice. It becomes the researching process itself. I consider such a conceptualisation of the studio-as-place important to this inquiry because, when artists give or voice the meaning of their working space, part of their exposition includes the personal understandings and interpretations that set in context what is characteristic or appropriate to their theoretical and practical ideas. This way, art is research and research is the method where the process becomes more important than the final product. Understanding is not found but created through ongoing inquiry. In spite of the title it carries, this chapter is not as much about place per se, or studio, as it is about a personal scape-configuration of, and escape to, a metamorphic state of being.
Wednesday Afternoon: *There is a struggle within me that I suspect is never going to end, only transform:*

*The Beginning*

The form and content of this thesis doubts any hegemonic metanarrative and is deliberately resistant to confident and confining interpretations. It is a personal narrative inquiry in that it studies processes and activities involved in generating and analyzing a story of life and lived experience and intentions. It is a creative narrative about an impossible to-be-narrated self. It is ethnography and autobiography together for I am looking outward, beyond myself, and inward, and for it re/presents a simultaneous view and transformative approach to subject-object relationship. It is not a statement, but an evocation of multilayered states of being. It does not claim, but invites into experience. My position is decentred and unstable; my findings are particular. While conversing, writing, photographing, drawing, and painting, I am more concerned with the process of understanding and creating meaning than with the comfort of pretty packaging fixed ideas. Perceptions, believes, memories, decisions and feelings, evaluations and judgements blend in together with my imagination; distinctions between theory and practice are blurred and in the spiral of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, (Schwandt, 2007) I can only come up with fragments. The incomplete character of the knowledge displayed should serve as impulse and provoke. There should be no expectations for closure and please, allow pre/conceived barriers to shift. This work is different:
There Is No Beginning

Staring at a blank page is the same to me as **staring at a blank canvas**. I call it *white fear*. My too many thoughts run fast in too many directions all at once; and they usually run together with any reasoning I am desperately holding on to so they will not strain beyond my own comprehension.

![Image 12: ‘blank canvas’](image)

At the same time, overstretching is an illusory threat and I can acknowledge that ‘reasoning’ I call the background knowledge I am carrying and afraid to abandon, for I have been taught that if
I learned I can explain. In my anxiety of pining down a beginning I hopelessly search in the linearity of time or even evolution and I gradually realise that such order, classification and control cannot offer my work reliability and validity—unnecessary standards for its assessment, evaluation and moral purpose (Gouzouasis, 2008)–for it is not a narrative explanation applied to my own history, but a form of narrative understanding of questions, concepts, theories and practice involved in the a/r/tographical Place of In-between; it is a self-study and an artistic inquiry. The outcome should be significant in that it is meaningful (Sullivan, 2005) avoiding, at the same time, to tell more about the theorist than the artist in me.

The meaning my writing and art-works convey is open—“we are always interpreting in the light of preconception” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 227). The conversational relationship between subject-object, author-character, writer-reader, image-text, helps implications and complications emerge; yet, meaning is unstable. Therefore, the gesture of my floating in the process of this project takes white fear to a place of borderlands. As Graeme Sullivan (2005) remarks, reflexive practice advances the process of inquiry, thus linking reflexivity to positionality. Once some of the threads, woven in the fabric of my being and resistant to transformative corrosion, are identified, my positionality can re/position in that it can become responsive to a restless context and to a volatile place; and therefore, my disposition shifts. “Those who live in the borderlands are re-thinking, re-living, and re-making [...] as they confront difference and similarity in apparently contradictory worlds. They are living a thirdness, a new third world” (Irwin, 2004, p. 29). Rather than obstacle, white fear functions only as a condition for creation and becoming when there are no complete and total pure oppositions and the beginning and the end disappear; for then there is only:
The Place of In-between

When moving from a familiar place to other there is a deep and strong necessity to re/form. In my case, I felt I had to find some grounding to overcome the anxiety of being away from home and to wrestle the need to feel in place again. In order to accomplish that, I thought, I had to figure myself out first; and so it happened that when I first took a picture of myself and place reflecting one through the other on the glassy surface of a window, the main character of the photograph seemed to be my bodily figure. But soon enough, connections and understandings of place as in and through identity and being emerged in my vision. Those new perceptions began to articulate themselves in the image and I gradually became aware of a shift and re/becoming. The window as object is physically part of the place I now call home. The place inside/behind me, the world outside, and the third place created in the window are “superimposed spaces, creating thus a porous interface that complicates the […] physical presence” (Gemeinboeck & Blach, 2005, p. 75). The exploration, production, and inhabitation of this at once physical and metaphysical experience involved a continuous movement and transformation, so the reflection itself becomes a re-vision of the journey I was in. The interplay of inside-outside elements composes “images-within-images” (Burnham, 2005, p. 14) that serve as traces of binaries dissolved. De-contoured marks of my own life pose onto the public place outside the home, thus creating a narrative in which I am both author and character. I was looking with finesse to evoke a self as part of the setting. This kind of juxtaposition of self and subject matter allows an immediacy of intimate reflections as affected by change and chaos. Paintings, photographs and narrative text can be spontaneous and momentary in their expression. They reference a self that is elusive and unwilling to be structured into unity. I saw myself as phantom, vague and oscillatory, sometimes contradictory, much like the place I was in at the moment I was searching.
By the next photograph\textsuperscript{17}, the passage became obvious: the exterior, the glassy surface of the window and the interior of \textit{my-place} “transgress and reallocate one into the other” (Springgay, 2004a, p. 67). The place at my \textbf{back came forward to become me}. When looking through the

\textsuperscript{17} I am not the person who took the photographs presented in the thesis. Although the implications of such collaboration raise issues concerning photographer’s identity and involvement with the research, these particular aspects are not pursued in the present work. I consider the authorship as shared to a negligible degree for the present version of the research.
window at the world, I met my own reflection, and the encounter with the world became a **confrontation with the self**. I needed to paint to make sense of what had happened. I had to sketch my understandings with the brush and then work on the meanings through paint, colours, and words.

Image 14: ‘the self’

By trying to capture my existence in the public space outside, in the privacy of home and on the window surface, I explored identity and ways of being. The realisation came that, by taking a
photograph, I actually captured an instance of a contiguous existence. In the process, I became aware of how concepts link together in a constant commitment to and engagement with the world. I had a taste of an in-between essence that makes a new vision possible, an evanescent moment of which presence I can doubt yet know at once that it allows an endless perceiving. Photography is an amazing medium and agent of multiplicity – a complication of the myriad of what can be seen at the same time, yet cannot be name. Rather, it captures what seems impossible to capture:

The Unseen

The window – an object serving the act of seeing through, lead me to opportunities for repetitive acts in which imperceptive before details acquired significance. An artistic performance of the window enabled seemingly settled ideas to re-surface and re-combine notions of difference and relationality. Image after image, the idea of place emerged as a key entry point to my research question how do artists understand their artistic practice in relation to their teaching practice. I had to re/turn to fragments that previously amplified the search on identity and expanded its concepts. Thus, the idea of place complicated more and context intrinsically linked to it. So far, a significant part of the thesis involved issues around identity, thus bringing forward a capacity to embody and perform certain meanings and values. My performance in the window amplified the issues brought about by identity and context which are both interdependent and always changing, therefore surfacing one important aspect of the artist-teacher condition – restlessness and oscillatory vulnerability – experiences expressed and repeated in my own creative gestures.
First chapter makes reference to a context in co-motion, where the value of identity and artwork as essences fades when dispossessed of predetermined meanings while, for artists, the link between identity and work can be intense; as a matter of fact, artist and art work re/create and exist through each other (Vasko, 2006). In their guide to Postmodernism, Richard Appignanesi and Chris Garratt (2007, p. 36) note on this idea by emphasising the case of London artists Ghilbert and George, whose art exhibition turned to be a display of themselves as living-sculptures in 1970 as an answer to the displacement of the idea of artistic originality and its cherished uniqueness: “The aura and autonomy of the original work of art can end up transferred to the artist’s own charisma value”. In this case, the quality of the art object becomes the identity of the artist as displayed and perceived by the public. Good examples are Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol who, at times, seemed to base their artistic production and success on their public image and exhibit of their private lives.

![Image 15: ‘Flip Side’](image15.jpg)
Moreover, the *place* of creation has an undeniable connection to the artistic products it can promote by reflecting/creating values ingrained in the capricious context and being. The work in the studio is exploration, is the digging up for the unseen and the struggle to make it visible, to reveal and expose. For me, the self-perception search turned into an inquiry of socio/cultural identity through artwork; of artwork through identity and place; of place through artistic engagements, texts, theory and identity. The paintings are my confessions the same way *my place* is a statement of my beliefs and understandings of art and life. *Identity, place, practice* became, for me, interdependent and strongly related to a *context* of perpetual transformation. Not reproducing, but continuously re/modeling and re/creating these concepts and ideas boosted the value of the decentralized control\textsuperscript{18} into allowing an adaptive self-emergence as a complex system, where coherence comes from internal diversity and interaction. I realised that my identity does not depend completely on my awareness of self or on images inflicted on me from outside myself, but on the milieu I, in so many ways, inhabit (Davis & Sumara, 2006). Moreover, it inhabits me! So I thought I had to grasp in one image the complex layering and intertwining observations and interpretations of self and *other*, in and out, back and forth. But I meant to grab just to let go at the same time – an instance in which I could have awaken to the fact that such volatile concentration of my powers had been nevertheless within my reach.

\textsuperscript{18} I reference here the control I have, share, and discard at times so to abandon forms of authority and absolutes in this research.
Image 16: ‘breach’

As the place of production – the specific location of the making of art object and aesthetic ideas, studio acquires the task to suspend the breach between the sensorial and the intellectual. It
functions as vehicle for self-reflection in relation to the work process itself and its conceptual aspects. Realising that the presence of my body can offer understandings about the types of things and their relation to each other, about property and space and time, causality and possibility, I decided to move from body as metaphor and make use of it in a different way, so I can experience the exploration of place through the objects and spaces that inhabit it by absorbing it. I employed an epistemological concern with the body: “body knowledge through touch” (Springgay, 2004b, p. 15). The physical contact with matter can provide understandings and the proximity to things explored can as well. Springgay (2004b) talks about touch as a different way of making sense. So I started to challenge my visual and tactile perceptions, making contact with each and every thing I felt distant or attracted to in my-place. I sketched them too, and I painted. I felt surfaces, volumes, textures, dimensions, shapes and forms, the material coldness and warmth, heaviness and light, the full and empty. I saw distances, shades and tones, bright and dark. I tasted and I smelled; but everything my-place and body had to offer were contiguous sensations that allowed me the in-between. The boundaries between senses became obscure so that the material experiences and my imagination associated, blended, when I started painting. My re/presentations evoke experience. I wasn’t going to even try to actually represent it as it was lived. Instead, I continuously create and transform what I seek to describe and understand.
Soumien notes, “because I view research as an active form of self-(re)creation, I consider it imperative to actively seek out and develop methods that best express an individual researcher’s intentions and epistemological/ontological understandings” (2006, p. 141). Photography, painting, and text are the tools I use to follow the trace of this investigation and the vague
contour of its participants. Yet, I do not aim an objective analysis or coherence of interpretation in either visuals or text. Rather, I acknowledge what Gillian Rose (2001, p. 3) calls critical visual methodology “as an approach that thinks about the visual in terms of the cultural significance, social practices and power relations in which it is embedded; and that means thinking about the power relations that produce, are articulated through, and can be challenged by, ways of seeing and imaging” (as quoted by Soumien, 2006, p. 143). Visual imagery alludes not only to historical traditions, but to the human disposition to think symbolically as well. This kind of codes and inferences contained in images “typify how visual forms are rooted in cultural practices, symbolic processes, and information systems” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 63), by casting the artistic intent and provoking an impulsive cultural response. Aspects of shared human experience take the form of archetypes inherited from our ancestors. Because part of my work’s purpose was to cancel the idea of endurance and attachments to prescribed knowledge, I intentionally implicated fragments of traditional symbolic language of art, culture, and aesthetics as a way to obtain contrast and suggest the elusive. Thus, the lion, universally perceived as the leading emblem of royalty and masculinity, is placed at the bottom of the canvas. Its power as a signifier is minimized, yet its presence key when read in combination with the self-portrait figure. Down history, various attributes have been attached to lion’s image, like strength, conquest, prescribed power, pride, and authority – the very values I am trying to break. However, read as lioness, a fertility Greco-Roman symbol would allude to femininity and fierce motherhood. Since it appears together with my own figure, the implications of my being a woman are referenced in more than one way. The painting could become a social distorting picture brought about by asymmetrical powers and correcting gender bias initiative; or an encoded contrast meant to provoke a woman-artist’s presence dependent upon the lack but promise of power. The alluded
nudeness of a feminine body references a secular tradition of painting. Yet, my figure breaks the norm of the nude as an art-form. Instead, I stand naked (partly covered by the traditional stretched canvas). In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger (1977, p. 53 – 54) marks the distinction between nakedness and nudity: “the nude is always conventionalized – and the authority for its conventions derives from a certain tradition of art [...]. The naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude”. I therefore say, the presence of my figure is not nude in the inquiring visuals. I did not placed myself on display, I revealed my own self. Berger goes on noting, “to be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognized for oneself” (1972, p. 54). I try to create nakedness in the eye of the beholder. I scrutinize the researched and I expose myself to the inquirer.

Nevertheless, these aspects of the visuals I created are not meant to provide instructions for viewers to follow or to reach explanations. Moreover, I had to fight disposition, and de-form and de-structure the image. It should be invention rather than interpretation. The play of symbols allowed me not only to codify and uncover at the same time, but to overcome fixed, mundane interpretations and create the unexpected – the Unseen. In Egyptian art, two lions sitting back to back signify the rising and the setting sun. In my painting, the lion’s position is reversed, sitting face to face with, not a lion, but a rabbit. In its shy habits, rabbit epitomizes timidity – my initial reluctant feelings of being exposed. The inclusion and combination of traditional imagery is meaningful to *me* and *my* process: the re/presentation of two figures facing each other suspends the raising and the setting sun, therefore emphasising a new third – the vision of a rift when night and day disappear; because posing in front of the window offered me moments to contemplate experience in light of living inquiry. That light materialises in my artworks. You can see it best between night and day, for living inquiry is always at the edge of transformation and becoming.
There is a moment of uncertainty when day and night cease to be and perception does not help clarify, rather it complicates. I entertained ambiguity and found that, where is neither beginning for darkness nor end for light, no linear or binary oppositions exist. As soon as we start thinking about experience, meaning occurs in a breath – a vivid addictive act that has become a matter of survival for me. At the same time, the very attempt to meaning representation is a continuous re/creation and transformation of the experience described. The paintings’ quality of improvised performance, that is spontaneity of trace, creates the effect of immediacy, which I recognize as an “illusion of being there, of no gap in time between the event and the rendering of it” (Porter, 2002, p.167). The brush is an extension of my inner movements and the surface of the canvas is witness to their unpredictable and un-reproducible traces. Although repetition occurs with every image, the meaning conveyed is different every time. Lines, edges and planes transgress into each other indifferent to rigid spatial expressions; though, I admit, sometimes I still render myself within the rule-based design of my traditional studio upbringing. It would be naive to try avoiding contradictions with my creative process or this research. The control and regulation often disappear, but once in a while, discrete points of decision-making come up and materialise. I embrace it all because identity and creative production, like place, should offer infinite possibilities; and possession of artistic tools provides just that: freedom beyond pre defined interdependences and the advantage of intentional surrender. Aesthetic vocabulary does not have to create a disposition which will get one stuck with attitude, but allow a quality of perception within that “un/subscribed place, whose becoming is propelled by its in-betweeness” (Gemeinboeck & Blach, 2005, p.78). Therefore, I engaged in different aspects of place and identity through a/r/tographical modes of inquiry, for they are themselves the very process that attends to precious yet neglected details and the unseen:
Excess

“Inquiry embraces ambiguity and improvisation, and entertains excessive” (Irwin, 2008, p. 73). There I was, inevitable, in the “midst of co-implicated activities” (Irwin, 2008, p. 73), when the window transformed. It dissipated; and instead of being an object or location, it became a process of movement and displacement of meaning – a Place of In-between. It is where I have never looked before and where the openness to the possibility of unexpected and becoming of art, research, teaching, and learning resists continuous correspondence to possessive habits and comfortable traditions. Incredible yet obvious – all this time I have been choosing outside the acceptable. I have been fostering vulnerability:

Vulnerability

My physical presence occupied the place, making it what it is and transforming it with every movement and shift, with every breath. I was producing the place at the same time I was exploring it, and the susceptible transparency of my self-created image became a process of internalising understandings: I could see place through my-self while its elements gave me contour and re/shaped me. As a participant-observer of place and self (through my body, senses and being), I felt exposed to the extent that the public could not avoid intrusiveness. A physical exposure would have brought feelings of shame, but the transparency suggested in the visuals is not physical. The translucent substance, made my own self emerge from the shadows of the unknown by light shining through and from behind my figure. Even though the canvas concealed parts of the body, it no longer mattered. Just like in Stephanie Springgay’s Body as Fragment (2004a, p. 62), “Artwork itself becomes an archive of body, memories, a container of
processes and actions unfolded in the making of the work”. Art contains nuances of genuine experience and at least I knew I was striving to see myself at work while working. I was performing exhibition. It had been my need to connect in order to be that fuelled my research all along. Moreover, the uniqueness I have been looking for in myself could only be expressed in my being-with. I have been exposing myself as an act of reaching out. An intimate relationship though, also comes with “tension and conflict as part of feeling vulnerable” (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 132). There were times when the research came very close to the unbearable yet, place brought along the most captivating faze. I felt a practice forming and I knew right then, between an endless canvas and an infinite window, that I could understand. I taught myself and I actually learned. In the window, I and place transformed at the same time. I saw myself as artist/teacher.

Window is usually a visual mediator; it opens for us to see beyond. I used it as means for distortion and as a transparent image, wondering if my view is transparent enough to see the other in and around me. As Springgay (2008) thinks about ethics, to contact other assumes the need to challenge self-understanding. I understand togetherness as a re/becoming which resides “precisely [in] this in-between of thinking and materiality that invites researchers to explore the interstitial spaces of art making, research and teaching” (Springgay, 2008, p. 160). Within the research process, the unwillingness to ply on control made slippage, contamination, and corrosion enoble the join. I began to see the ethical inquirer in me as a/r/tographer, for a/r/tography is not a methodology based on traditional empirical subject-object relationship. Rather, truth is a matter of understanding in and through a process or event (Schwandt, 2007). The consent to deterioration was to me the very act of passing into understanding what is that which had re/formed me into an/other and who is that I become. Therefore, in all my research work, the process of art-making is meaningful and prolific. While I paint, I have to let go and
accept transformation. The act of painting can turn into a powerful will I do not possess, I cannot control, yet it is part of me. There is a bias that I have and it involves faith and hope in art as resource and force. Such confidence could be interpreted by some as my secret notion of the truth, supposedly un-allowed for the postmodernist de-constructor in me. Although “a crippling mystery to those hostile to deconstruction, [this is] a sustaining one of those who practice its faith” (Butler, 2002, p. 18). Nevertheless, artistic endeavours carry the same openness to abandonment that is necessary in the research of other. I was gazing at myself as I would gaze to other and as the other would gaze back at me. The expression le regard used by Sartre is translated in English as the look. In his Phenomenology, becoming the object of the look is an important aspect of being as awareness of becoming the object for another consciousness. Being looked at offers control of the situation no longer and it is also accompanied by a sense of shame – consciousness of being looked at and judge by others (Macey, 2000). Posing at the window, I supposed people walking outside could see me and having painted myself, I knew the canvas will be exhibited and I will be in sight once again. Visual perception is a significant theme in Lacan’s work and it has been rendered by English translations as the gaze. His approach of intersubjective relations is also phenomenological, but develops a new theory in which the gaze belongs to the object rather than to the subject. As the subject gazes to the object, its perception is that the object gazes back at it and thus, the subject is “lured in the image of the object” through what is called Anamorphis (Macey, 2000, p. 155) – a deliberate distortion so the object depicted could only be seen for what it is by changing the ‘normal’ perspective. I pushed the idea into a place where there are no ‘correct’ points of view, first of all because the unfixed and indefinite identity is, in its motion, multiple and shifting.
Part of my research has then become the experience of being simultaneously signified and signifier, in Derrida’s terms; for “the signified is never ‘outside’ the sign [and] every so-called signified is always another signifier” (emphasis in the text, Lucy, 2004, p. 159). The transparency of my bodily image is part of my reflexive approach and suggests a play with presence – absence meant to emphasise the actual full presence of the I as writer in the text, as artist in the painting, as learner in the teacher and as inquirer/inquired in the research. What I did not expect was the surprise of overcoming the anxious need to achieve a precise, conclusive definition of my identity, which only an absolute inside-outside separation attitude would attempt. Having an unclear, fluid, ungrounded self-image, did not suppose a lack of identity after all. As Lucy (2004) outlines Derrida’s key idea on writing, the non-oppositional nature of inside-outside makes it possible to have an identity at all. The exchange I found myself in, invited to simultaneous directions: at once inside-out and outside-in.

The exploration of place turned into a process of re/un/folding. Stephanie Springgay explains, “a fold is both exterior and interior” (2005, p. 109). While distinct, layers are interconnected and touching each other. I felt the nature of knowing through a sense of being in an immediate relation with something – an experience of place that repeated many times during the interviews with Thomas and Scott. I understand the production of knowledge as conversation and reciprocity between self and other. Opposed to rationalist thought, and emanating from the phenomenologist work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a/r/tographical research “becomes a process of exchange that is not separated from the body but emerges through our interactions with the world” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxii), with other. Contiguity is one of the conceptual practices of A/r/tography. Therefore my project is a series of multiple, diverse, inconsistent, yet adjacent selves found in a simultaneous and layered existence. It endorses difference, contrast,
discordance, and fragmentation and questions the limits and implications of knowledge when produced and represented (Springgay, 2004a). As mentioned before, although the visuals contain my own bodily image, they are not a representation of the body. Drawing on phenomenological philosophy, I turned from things to their meaning. Moreover, through the physical experience of the body, through touch and visual perception, I deconstructed meaning. I thought of body as access to experience – the lived experience “that is the heart of a/r/tographical research” (Springgay, 2008, p. 158). I re/negotiated identity as it reflects on other and I conveyed a self-recognition in and through a private place publicly exposed. Within the new found I became more acute. The excitement of the transformation I had witnessed intensified the before unnoticed details in and around me, out of control. Nothing can hold me back from “questioning how things come into being and the nature of their being” (Irwin, 2008, p. xxx).

Image 18: ‘out of control’
Another evening: Studio as place

Whatever new meanings the visuals produced within this research convey, they will transform in the eyes and minds of the reader; and with what I have written, they will change again. My artistic self-expression might communicate how I look, feel, think, and act, but at the same time another image of myself is conveyed by the medium itself. The artworks and text here are not about the research, they are about the mediums implicated in the research and they are the research itself immersed in the “complex web of meaning making” (Springgay, 2004b, p. 15).

Configurations of thought go beyond the usual, outside the familiar (Springgay, 2008) and the emphasis moves on:

The Place of In-between

There is a struggle within me that I suspect is never going to end, only transform.

The Beginning:

Motion within Simultaneous Perspectives makes Vulnerability become The Unseen Excess outside the acceptable. Although it seems impossible to capture, there is a Place of In-between that can; but then:

There is no beginning
This work is different. It just wouldn’t reach:

The End

This study is shaped, performed, and re/presented around personal, theoretical, and practical commitments that lead to particular interpretations. Ideas oscillate around and in-between contradictions and dissolve binaries to explore how we diffuse our-selves in our work and how what we do becomes in some way who we are (to the world and to ourselves). In the past chapters of the thesis, the process-of-becoming developed into a significant node of interlacing visions of identity, place, and practice, folded upon itself and influenced by an unstable context. The following chapter offers again selective and subjective examples without making any claims to balance. It attends to memory and to how we, the co-creators of this inquiry, have forgotten our past yet past defines us as frequently as we avoid what is uncomfortable or unattractive, for we seldom find a place to rest our beliefs. All we find are fragmentary attributes and impulses in the debate over divergence of values. Those values play an important role in the understanding of our practices.
CHAPTER IV

‘practice’

Artist Josh Smith (2009, p.162) states: “There’s too much in the world to learn everything, so I have to learn through something”.

In her intention to teach me how to be an artist, my mother helped me see, when I looked at various ways artists have used objects, subjects, metaphors, symbols, and their skill, to create artworks and the meaning within them. By her side, I learned more about being an artist than being anything else, like a woman or even a daughter. Our complicated relationship always seemed to suggest that our best chance to deeply communicate and connect was art. We learned each other (mother – daughter) through art and with that my mother taught me the world. At the present I can say that, confirming my artistic being in her eyes or maybe in mine, is what transformed our relationship the most. Like Josh Smith, she too believes that we learn through something; and since, as an artist, she understands learning to be achieved mostly through an individualistic effort, I believe she wanted to offer her daughter the something that she knows best, leaving the learning up to me. In a sense, it seems she focused on what is to be learned and not on teaching-learning process. There is a suspicion in my mind that the separation of making – teaching – learning is illusive and instead, these are active fronts (journeys) related to each other on the common ground of practice.

Today I think learning through art – because looking at the world, not as if the world has been laid in front me with a particular set of attitudes and assumptions to follow, but looking as an
active perception – is an act of bringing the world into being. Elements of the paintings present in this research propose the viewer aspects of uncertainty as they disclose/close themselves to be in the process of at once composition and decomposition. Learning is as such – it does not claim, but invites into the sort of experience that stretches beyond the usual and away from conventional, where fragments force us to incessant repetitive acts of re-turning. The compulsion to unity fades, though details reveal themselves as parts of the totality. Learning is a new understanding and practice every time; it does not start and it does not seize. To me, painting has the same qualities. Anderson wrote in 1981 (p. 45), “artists [...] value the learning process and consider learning to be an on-going, life-long process”. The mother taught her daughter how to paint and the daughter learned a way of living. As Stephanie Springgay (2008, p. 161) notes, a/r/tography “is a way of living in the world as being-with, of touching the other not to know or consume the other, but as an encounter that mediates, constructs, and transforms subjectivity.” I discovered such practice by un-folding my actions within the proximal space that teaching, researching, and making art create between/among them as complex, singular, and relational practices. I learn and forget myself everyday within the tension created by constant re/examination and re/interrogation, for I am confronted with a changing world.

The 1st:

Mother always says the first steps are important, for one is being born in a certain geographical, historical, and astral place – confluences around which we revolve. By being a mentor-artist, she is giving me a fingertip, she says. She repeatedly suggests that, if I look piercingly every time with different eyes, the world and I become richer in meanings; that in our humanness we tend
towards harmony – a dance of togetherness, with rhythm, not chaos. She tells me that nature is integration, but in our attempt to synchronise the same, we never reach perfect cognizance. Some people need the oblique, some the straight. Yet, we never stop trying. We, artists, never stop painting. And the work we do is witness to our internal struggles externalised.

When I selected the artist-participants for this research, the motive behind my every choice was less reason than feeling, I suspect. I did not peak ahead to their context. I saw the artwork and much later the name. Little did I know that the participants and I inherently share some common interests and values and that having family members practicing art would be an experience to match with each other’s. And so I often wonder what was that I saw when I looked at their paintings, how much and what of a person is embedded in his/her practice.

The very capacity we have to recognize others and recognize ourselves in relation to those others means that we have something psychically in common—a commonness that comes from being part of common landscapes, of being positioned within common discourses and from seeing not only from “within” specific positionings, from “here,” but also from seeing from “without,” from “over there.”

(emphasis in original, Davies & Davies, 2007, p. 1143)

In my case, the self-acknowledgement and recognition has not been fully attained in the past; thus many hours of hard work in the studio that were supposed to build towards it. I have been taught that working hard and with persistence, determination, conviction, dedication, and finally ‘guts’, is an important part of being an artist.
Andra: “How do you feel when you go to your class and teach? What are your concerns and expectations?”

Scott: “That my students are there, that they are doing the assignments, and that they are communicative and serious about what they are doing – these are my biggest struggles.”

Andra: “How do you face these struggles? How do you attend to them?”

Scott: “By setting guidelines, strict guidelines that they need to follow because they need to learn discipline. The idea of an artist just ‘oh, well, I’ll paint today or tomorrow and then I’ll hang out’ just doesn’t work. You have to practice, like a musician: practice, practice, practice. So I try to help them see how much work they have to do.”

Andra: “What are the results?”

Scott: “Mixed. Some people aren’t there for serious reasons as I think they have to be. They don’t want to take drawing, but they are required by the program. Other people are very afraid of it; you know art is very scary.”

Andra: “How do you deal with that fear?”

Scott: “I try to encourage them. There are students who see what others can make and get very intimidated. I say look, yours is as good as theirs is. They have their own background, they don’t have your life experience; you are not going to draw like Michelangelo, you are going to draw like you. That’s what you have to boil down – the essence, to see what you are. And that takes time. An artist who is crazy about painting can be very inspiring for students. My students can see that I take this very serious and that art can be more than just doodling. An artist who teaches
can give students a perception of how it really is out there, how difficult it is, and how art school isn’t just Disney Land, because you have people paid to like your work whereas outside they can say anything about it – that’s half the challenge. As a teacher, you have to be supportive, especially with the first year. You also have to be truthful and the students appreciate that. They look, but their eyes are not always attuned to whatever they are looking for in some ways because it is not simple, it is not straightforward and that often confuses them. A pictorial piece and an abstract piece are very different. Students will have a different response to them and they will struggle with that. It is a struggle. Being in the art field, being into the unknown and pushing, trying to figure out the art-world we are living in, can inform the teaching. It creates enthusiasm for your class, for your students, and you can tell them what the truth is: that is miserable you know, that art is hard.”

I found about Scott’s artistic practice and goals in the conversations we had about his teaching, thus making the connection between art/teaching practices obvious. It was in his strategic attempt to support his students that I could see how complex both practices are and how they overlap. It is my understanding that entertaining art discussions with students is very much part of the artists’ teaching practice. Art encourages layered dialogues that include artists sharing their artistic beliefs with students and handing in their conceptual and practical knowledge to the class. Teaching studio is not reduced to artists informing their students on various issues concerning the production of art from their own situated point of view only. From talking to Scott and Thomas, I could infer that, in a studio class, dynamic community experience is created through dialog. Students express their worries and the challenges they face. Thomas and Scott are aware of the tumultuous experience of their students, in part because they have been there themselves and they interpret this turbulent state as inherent to the nature of art and an artist’s
existence. One important regard to Thomas and Scott’s teaching is that they approach their students as potential professional artists. They teach in that direction so to give everyone in the class the same opportunity and chance to develop as such if students choose so. Thus, according to participants, encouragement becomes one of the most important ingredients to being an artist and teaching art, along with an emphasis on the serious effort required in becoming a professional.

Thomas: “It’s amazing how students’ saying ‘I cannot draw’ is based on ‘I don’t know simple mechanics of drawing’. There are two different things. If you can do handwriting, then you can draw. What is really interesting is how nobody does drawing or painting frivolously. Most people are nervous as hell. I tell them: just know that I know that you were almost in tears half the time.”

Scott: “It is not simple, it is not straight forward, and that confuses [the students]. [Images] are very different in themselves. Students will have a different response to them and they will struggle with that. But that’s alright and they are only at the beginning. You have to walk the road – money and emotional support. You have to have even just a crump of support and you will keep doing it, because there is something in doing it that is very exciting.”

Throughout my conversations with the participants, what practicing artists have to offer to class, what makes art hard and a demanding commitment and why art is/isn’t special are recurrent themes. My intent here is to point out that discussions on teaching practice gradually but persistently unveil yet another facet of the relationship between making art, teaching art and identity. From artist’s responses, is significant to the research that teaching finds itself somehow intertwined in our discussions about what art is, what makes one an artist, and what we think we are doing when making art. Different dimensions of art/teaching practice spill over and into each
other. In my own personal understanding, their connection creates a series of acts leading to a hybrid practice, which is undertaken by ‘hybrid people’ and is difficult to name. Art does not only make the subject of art studio class; it is present in and through those teaching and those who learn. Within such context, the negotiation around identity discussed earlier relates to practice and can be appreciated as active manifestations that encourage and/or reinforce relationships between different aspects of life and people that are or become various extensions of it.

Scott: “You keep at it. You get up in the morning, you make coffee, and hopefully one continues to do art. So I think my essence is a kind of excitement about the result of a painting, a kind of that-looks-right and I don’t always get that but I try. Even when I think I do my wife comes in and tells me what is really good; and then, often, students who have very good eyes would come in my studio. There are people whose eyes I really trust.”

It is obvious to me that artists infuse art into many aspects of their lives and art serves whatever means they engage towards an end. Relationships are forged for Scott, for instance, to his home, where art as a goal permeates the familiar acts done during an ordinary day. For Thomas is the extra ordinary activity he appropriated – dancing – that he approaches according to his artistic knowledge.

Thomas: “I always did [dancing] as an artist, as a figure painter. I felt I had a real neck for it because is all about expressive figures. I’ve been designing figures in space for twenty years. I know the body and where to put it. And so I thought [dancing] was the logical thing to do if you are painting figures and drawing them.”

Furthermore, Thomas’s decision to teach relates to aspects of his art making.
Thomas: “I knew [artistic anatomy] and I wanted to teach it. I had a real reaction as in, I know this, I know how to do it, and I want to share this stuff because I’m very passionate about it.”

It seems to me that the two artists repeatedly relate everything they are to what they do and that everything they do is linked to what they know. What they seem to practice, each in his own way, is the artist being – as intertwined with other aspects of their lives, which in turn, cannot be unravelled and/or commented separately. “Who one is becomes completely caught up in what one knows and does” (italics in original, Carson & Sumara, 1997, p. xvii).

Image 19: ‘Theory’
If one thing is clear to me, it is how fuzzy the slash between theory/practice is; or rather, the fix bifurcation of thought and action is subverted when art and teaching – two manifestations of human knowledge, exist actively in each other’s presence. I must confess that I, for one, cannot have it any other way. Knowing, doing, making are tangled together as aspects of the lived aesthetic experience and with its dynamic character. I acknowledge here that all my efforts to understand do not rest on concrete and explained evidence or experiences, but they always take place on some background.

Scott: “I’m searching for a structure, colour, form, that allow me to explore a wide range of possible feelings. Some paintings are like stories; some are bright and sunny, some are stormy and darker. It’s a mystery story or it’s an adventure. I think people find a structure like in those sea stories – they are all about the same two guys and the author creates a tapestry of possible stories of things that could happen to these two people. Like Sherlock Holmes – a new adventure is knocking at his door. So I think there is a structure that then you can use to amplify feelings. But it is hard.”

Andra: “We often talk about technique. Did you notice? I wonder why.”

Thomas: “Well, because that’s the nature of what I teach.”

Andra: “In my experience, when artists talk about their art in less formal contexts, it’s more about the actual making technique and maybe not so much about the concept of their work.”

Thomas: “And isn’t it funny how technique seems to relate to something cosmic and spiritual? It’s not about me teaching this technique so I can what? Make money, be famous? It is about connecting to something human and spiritual, whereas the more conceptual side of things wants
to connect to the same thing through social, say being concerned with humanity by addressing issues; which is great but, these are just two sides of the same many-sided dice. So we talk about technique because that’s the nature of painting; and then, for what end? If it’s technique just for technique, then it’s weird. You have to make sure that whatever you learn and teach is for an exploratory purpose, so you do something with it and not become a monkey, no matter how skilful. My eye gets caught up in these classical, traditional, compositional, formal rules which are exactly what most people want when it comes to study with someone like me, in a place like the one I was teaching. How do I make something go further away and how do I make something look closer? Little things like that in themselves are a universe of experience about how the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional work and how do we see and use them. All that becomes my modus operand, that’s what I’m teaching and that’s what I’m about. And yet, I feel worried. On one hand it’s a gift, on the other it’s a terrible curse. I always make a point of saying to everybody that this is only one tiny little thing that you have to do something with. You have to apply it on something bigger. You have to keep your brain open. The best paintings are the ones that jump off the wall and rip your eyeball out. A key issue is that you use that traditional material to do something else – anything successful is a mixture of construction, ideal and creativity and basis; in the sense that I have done something, I created something from my life, from my experience of where I went to school, where I grew up, what I thought about, what I studied and struggled with, what I failed at. These things reveal themselves as my painting.”

Experience is not made out of isolated sensations. According to Merleau-Ponty (2006), every perception we have of something is in connection to a background and in a relational positioning to something else. In his practice, Thomas connects aspects of individual experience and social life; he sees human experience having continuity in un-compartmentalised activities.
Thomas: “I just want to paint whenever I want. I don’t want to have any schedules for doing things, I hate that.”

Andra: “Back when you were teaching, that was a schedule.”

Thomas: “But it was nice, I wanted to do it. I also thought my teaching must be pretty good because I learned so much. By teaching, the students and I together learned everything I myself didn’t learn in art school.”

There are no simple ways of separating methods employed in teaching practice from the ones of art practice. For one, they are committed to and joined by meanings and significations embedded in the ideological traditions specific to each research participant (my-self included). Second, the relational quality of art making/teaching comes along with the power to influence, which influence is not possible without a performance of particularities. In such case, art classes become “hybrid research and pedagogical sites [...] As students and teacher share sources, tastes, and artistic interests, they become joint producers of contemporary visual culture” (Graham, 2009, p. 92).

The 25th

Now there are days when willingly, as in a conscious effort done with critical awareness, I collapse the whole composition, just so I can re-construct my-self and my practice again. It seems that I always aim conducted by the same desire: to be no less than all that I can be, hence the repetitive acts never fateful to the original state and never leading to identical results. Rather than being trapped in a replica, I devote to a process that supports my progress towards the
intensity, or towards the density I expect and require of myself. There used to be no other stance of my being that I would work harder on, than the artist-me. Thus, I do relate with the participants when it comes to the commitment to what each of us believes being an artist is. Today, my efforts go into exploring the possibilities of transformation. I believe that what we artist/teachers practice often comes to re-enforce a way of being in the world. What I constantly discover, create around me, and negotiate everyday are relational understandings; it is where all my energies are cumulated and diffused.

The 16th

As part of my commitment to art, my learning from and about artists goes beyond the interest of collecting descriptions and explanations of artworks, art studios, or even the artists’ concepts and processes of teaching and creation; my purpose is not only to obtain the artist’s articulations, but to examine, analyse, disseminate those articulations and the relations they might introduce. In order for students to gain as much as possible from art education, an examination into what art education has to gain from artists is necessary; and furthermore, an exploration of what the world has to gain from art is imperative. In the past, I believed I was supposed to search for and think in terms that might suggest a definite, completely grounded, universal concept or idea, for I have been trained in a context where the subject matter of an art class was ultimately Art, where the effect, the advantage, or the result art encourages or delivers, vary out of many reasons but they also vary through and because of art. I am well aware that any mind-set changes in time. When artists step into the classroom, it appears they do so with a pre-pronounced identity and expectations, maybe thinking less about teaching and much more about art. Indeed, it is tempting
to mark the conclusion that the two participants in this study embrace a single adjudicated role, but I consider such reasoning as deceiving. First, because conclusions are perishable; second, because diving deeper in conversations takes me, the researcher and researched, to much more complicated manifestations and understandings.

Andra: “I noticed the new series of drawings you have in the gallery.”

Scott: “I came to do those from an assignment I gave my students to draw something wiry. This one student did wires coming from the back of her computer. I thought it was a great subject because we look at the back of the computer and it can be ugly. It’s never clean. Then I thought of drawings by Fillip Guston, whom I always liked, and they are kind of wiry. I thought that would be a great subject matter to use, to play with, and that’s how it got going. I think my art helps my teaching; and [teaching] gave me insight into how to communicate verbally what I do on somewhat intuitive level.”

As Graham (2009) observes, many teaching artists acknowledge the inspiration and stimuli they draw from the dialogical relationship created with their students: “Teaching is a dialog that informs both parties. As students’ interests and ideas are taken seriously, the teacher’s artistic experience is balanced with an awareness of emergent possibilities” (Graham, 2009, p.92). Here, I believe, Scott remarks to me the same experience; and Thomas also, on page 86. To paraphrase Reiss & Pringle (2003), the knowledge and experiences shared and developed between and among artists and students, transform the artists engaged with this particular form of creative practice into co-participants in learning.
In this research and as part of it, the artworks of the participants *complicate the inquiry* further. As such, the suggested details and the sought-after quality of mark making in the image above are evocative of the drive inherent to the identity of teacher, researcher and artist. The temptation to translate the pictorial into language is there, but the paintings’ components refuse to be fixed by a verbal facade. Spoken words and painted words do not make the same judgement or same understanding.
The 11th

One of the postmodern keys is the problem of language and the illusion of meaning, which largely subscribe to the values and believes one embraces. I am wondering still, what I should do with those moments when I struggle to resist writing the word art with a capital letter. The closest I can ever come to a definition of art in language is feeling. The feeling of creating something with the purpose and the effect of an endless circuit of repercussions is art.

Andra: “What is the core?”

Scott: “Oh, that’s it, I don’t know.”

Andra: “But you have it.”

Scott: “Have you seen it?”

Andra: “Well, you are talking about it.”

Scott: “Have you seen it? Maybe it’s an illusion. When you see a painting and it’s something there – I cannot talk about that. I don’t know how to, I can’t. “

Andra: “Where, what is it?”

Image 21: ‘Cobalt core’
Scott: “It comes out. I can’t will it.”

Andra: “Visually, not verbally?”

Scott: “No, no, visually.”

Sullivan notes, “The experience of the artist is the core element in the creation of new knowledge” (2005, p. 191).

Thomas: “It depends on what you are trying to achieve. I think the goals in painting are very different from the goals of other work. The difference between painting and a lot of conceptual art today is like the old story of the guy who goes to a psychiatrist and the psychiatrist asks ‘how do you feel?’ ‘Well, I think...’ and the psychiatrist says, ‘I didn’t ask you what you think, I asked you how you feel.’ That’s the kind of difference between those two but they are not exclusive of each other.”

The interplay of feeling and reasoning is present in many articulations artists make. Intellectual and emotional experiences involved in the making and teaching of art readily reflect the dual role as practitioner and theorist on the artist/teacher. The repeated mention of “feeling” in conversation may incline towards the argument that no objective world-view is within reach. It follows that feeling cannot be a final standard and also that, without evading issues of aesthetic evaluation, theorising does not permanently fix the changing experience and meaning art can offer. I believe that, what theory and practice have in common is a cognitive function. “There is a knowing within experience” (emphasis in original, Schwandt, 2007, p. 102), attained within action.

Scott: “[Paintings] are so charged with something beyond words. How do you put Mozart into words? You can try, but is not going to be Mozart. You will not experience Mozart; you will
experience words. You have to see the painting rather than have it described to you. The painting captures something you can’t reach otherwise. It is a whole world and it has overlaps for sure.”

Thomas and Scott may display a “pragmatist respect for non-linguistic dimensions of experience” (Shusterman, 2002, p. 129). I do not deny a world of lived experience, but language itself creates experience. Moreover, through the very act of painting, for instance, (just like the acts of writing, singing, performing, etc.) the experience to be described or inscribed is continuously re-created.

The 23rd

The access to understandings determined by an artwork and an art lesson is influenced partly by the artist/teacher’s choices of meaning creation and presentation, which includes medium and form of communication. The artist, the learner, the teacher, and the viewer make sense of the art product through their own memory, knowledge, and experience.

Thomas: “The word meaning, to mean, means by the measure of man. Everything that we experience is through your own senses anyway. Nothing cannot be by your experience. I think the word meaning is itself loaded because it assumes it should have a function. There is no meaning to a clear pool and a rock beside it. It is beautiful has no meaning but it has an experience. If I look someone in the eyes, really look into their eyes, what happens there? Something really weird happens, right? It is so intense. It doesn’t have a meaning but it feels like something. Of course, we create our own stories. Everything has a story.”

I learned from my mother to believe that artists pause so to listen to the world’s experience subtly and faintly whisper to them the often ignored or the concealed; hence the need to teach
others the new understandings; and hence the words as extra tools for communicating our feelings, although meaning is intangible and subjugated to subjective experience.

The 14th

What motivates my fellow artists to choose teaching? When I first started my journey towards an MA within an Art Education program, what fuelled my ambition was a firm belief that possessing some sort of creative abilities empowers people to inspire others. At first I thought there were lessons to be learned. But what one learns is not always the lesson being taught. From teaching art, I went to teaching about what art is or could be. Another thing I learned from my mother: artistic medium cannot stand on its own, it needs to relate. To her, artists are people with unnumbered sets of uncommon eyes, through which they can at once look and see, communicate and thus, connect. Their work is to uncover and make visible to others that which is mostly unseen and sometimes hidden within the most redundant of human acts, most stable of convictions, and most obscure of human thoughts. This is what my parent/mentor taught me art is. Later, when teaching came into my life, I learned to articulate art as research and research as relational aesthetics.

Andra: “How do you feel about art as research?”

Scott: “I like to call it searching. You are searching when you paint and I think you are searching for an essence. You try to enrich it and yet simplify it, make it clearer yet more concentrated.”

Artists are people always in search of missing data – layers of evidence recorded in the private perception of the artist, documented in the private/public place of creation, and interpreted and shared through the visual realm of inventive (painted) images and objects. The new suggested meanings would have been impossible before. It is not enough to say that art could be research,
for I understand research inherent in the artistic process. An artist’s work is responsive to personal and public phenomena and interests. Being an artist represents an opportunity to relate to outside, to create a place within a given community or to create one’s own community. At the same time, there is always a form of rebellion and separation to be noticed, a being avant-garde by not being avant-garde. On a meta-physical level, rebellion represents a demand for unity; but universal accord is chimerical and from such impossibility, relationality emerges. We cannot be artists on our own. As mentioned in the introduction part of the thesis, art does not occur in a vacuum, which supports the idea that identity and any enterprise (theoretical or practical) are affected and activated by social constructs, actions and intentions. Thus, constructed from outside, being an artist comes with and revolves around certain expectations. Thomas and Scott are aware of preconceived ideas about what the image of being an artist should convey and they are often confronted with such predictions. They seem to follow them through, yet they withstand them.

For instance, it is assumed that the artist displays a certain talent and interest in arts from an early age and/or that s/he manifests better skills than the mainstream and therefore is encouraged to develop into an artist. Akin to an inborn natural artistic flair is the idea that acknowledgement is more readily given to an artist if s/he has in the background an artistic environment based on family members involved with the arts or a strong artistic mentorship and exposure.

Thomas: “I started doing art when I was a little kid. Of course, all kids do that, the difference is that I had a lucky set of circumstances where people around me were encouraging me. I think you just have a certain talent [...] and so the others see that, and will get you to draw something.

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19 I also understand teaching as part of the very nature of art, characteristic to it, and involved in it.
And also, I’ve been told that I was an artist by my parents and grandparents. My grandmother painted and my grandfather was an art director, so art was always definitely in the air.”

Scott: “I started as always being interested in painting. As a very young boy, I had a very good experience at elementary school. We looked at Paul Klee, Emily Car and it kind of transformed my interest into art.”

Contrasting with the idea of talent is the belief that art is not special.

Thomas: “We have this horrible distinction, like art is a special lofty thing and special, really clever people have spent a lot of their time learning about ‘stuff’. That is not art. Art is the mysterious force of nature expressed through the human being in any shape or form. But people are so afraid to lose their position that they hold on to ‘special’. You can’t get rid of art. It’s not something different.”

Andra: “It is life.”

Thomas: “You can’t be a human being without knowing intimately what art is. But then, why is it that people can’t do it the goofy way? People do things like that don’t care, but they don’t draw or paint that way. They feel it so important and like a sacred thing.”

Art is not special, yet, as seen in a previous paragraph (see p. 68-70), it is hard to do.

Thomas: “What I really like about art is that you are absolutely on equal terms with everybody.”

Scott: “The trouble is that everybody is an artist. We live in an age when my sister paints and she is an artist. My second cousin paints and she is very good at it. I say, sure. It is just the basement of the term, it generalises it because we want to be democratic.”

Again, some of the underling beliefs present in the artist’s practice transpire into teaching practice. Artists are supposed to endure hardship; being a ‘real’ artist is difficult, is being in a place of constant questioning, a place of struggle, uncomfortable, yet adored. Consequently,
encouragement and support to pursue an artistic career is an important ingredient in becoming an artist. Artists are very proud of finding a community who shares the same interests and passion, and more importantly, that it is that community who nourished them into artistic maturity. They will carve the names of their dearest mentors forever onto who they are as artists or what turned them into ones, and no matter how much their concepts and believes have changed since their apprenticeship, they will preserve the same admiration and reverence towards the kinships formed at an early stage in their becoming art practitioners.

Thomas: “The art school in New York had excellent teachers who were teaching classical and all of them were practicing, showing, professional artists. Very good, high level ones, you know. They knew their stuff inside out. By god, really, really great! I had Elliot Goldfinger master anatomist. We did dissections with him; Michael Laviano teaching theory painting. The building was amazing and being in New York I could always find all those people who surrounded me and made me feel that that’s the way the world is and that’s how the world feels and thinks like.”

Scott: “I met people in Saskatchewan who really excited me, people like Bill Rudolf, Davy Haynes, who are very committed and engaged in what they do. They are professional artists. They were mentors. I could go to these workshops and I could paint next to Otto Rogers, see how he worked. But there were no lessons. It was just osmotic.”

Aligned to a general set of expectations, the artists would start building their artistic profession with attending a school of art. In Thomas’s case and the same in Scott’s, the experience of institutionalized education proved unsatisfactory. It was something else they were after, something that I believe relates to a context relevant to their artistic purposes and individual energy and perspectives. Gradually, I started to understand the important role of a community.
Thomas: “The academic tradition has been handed down by artists and it’s not in universities as far as I can tell. I went to Langara and they had an ok program, but they had it set up so you would do theory in the morning and a studio in the afternoon: design on Monday, painting on Tuesday, sculpture on Wednesday, and so on. I thought this is nuts, because at the end of the year you are going to have eight painting classes and eight drawing classes, which is crazy. So I only went to the drawing-painting classes and at the end of the year they told me I can’t come back because I messed up the whole program. But I made way more progress in what I wanted to do. I knew what I wanted to do. The other artistic mediums didn’t hold my interest. Then I went to apply to Emily Carr. It was the first year that it opened on Grandville Island. I didn’t get in, which was probably a life saving thing.”

Andra: “Why?”

Thomas: “Because I don’t think it would have been the right place for me. I like the fact that I don’t really like so much around me. I don’t get involved too much in the Vancouver scene and hang out and talk to everybody. I don’t respect a lot of what they are doing and at the same time I don’t want to feel guilty or bad about it and they may have the same feelings towards me and that’s fine, that’s great. It’s not what is rocking my world. Except it would have been a good life changing experience in other ways, but your life is what it is. Then I won a scholarship at the New York Academy of Art.”

Scott: “I went to Saskatchewan to have the workshop and people were unabashedly like in sculpture, like weld in sculpture together. That was great, that was what I wanted. I had the art school experience and I had this other experience. It took me a couple of years to figure out what I was going to do, which way I was going to go, and I finally decided to go with the things
learned at Emma Lake. I went back in 1980 and I learned more. So I would say that art school had just about nothing to do with what I ended up being.”

Thomas: “You wonder what the job is. Art has become more ‘the career’, your ‘position’ in being a value whereas, work done by someone without the right credentials could be as important as the work done with credentials. I find this terrifying actually.”

Scott: “Students have to survive art school because they are put in an art-for-show environment. That kind of fame and notoriety can really get in the way. Edward Lear said there are two kinds of things that can ruin an artist’s life: failure and success. Artists are not something that you can institutionalise because they are like mercury. It can’t be held. The moment you bring in bureaucracy and structure, it taints it all and it loses its spontaneity. Art schools can wrack people.”

Andra: “I never called myself an artist while being a student.”

Scott: “No, and not have should you.”

If the official art schooling institutions did not feed the specific interest of these two artists, is because in the case of the participants (and in my own, I should add) it is not the credentials that really matter, but the possible connections forged towards a durable and meaningful relationship with a community and an environment that would encourage and support their interests.

Scott: “[At Emma Lake] there were no courses. There was a giant studio that we all shared with mature artists, so you didn’t learn just by watching what they were doing, you wanted to try what you saw and learned modally. You could walk around, see what people were doing, talk and also get input from others, so it was very helpful. I wanted to paint. It was reassuring that the kind of art I was interested in was still being made even though, on the coast here, you wouldn’t know it. That is the big lesson I learned, that you could still do it, it was alright. I went back five or six
times from 1970s to the year 2000. When I first went there, I was complete neophyte and by the end, I was helping other people.”

At the same time, in my understanding and obviously in Scott’s case, it seems that there comes a time for artists to have their own disciples. “Artists have always taught their trade, craft, or discipline” (Daichendt, 2009b, p. 37), for they need to re-create with/for students some of lived experiences they themselves had as novices; as if such act would be a condition inscribed on taking part in the community that, hopefully, is responsive to, and supportive of, their interests. Thus, another assumption, which has been noted not only in early 20th century, but indeed, it can be traced back in history to the incipient times of art making, is that the artists’ experience in studio is indispensable to “understanding students’ artistic growth and therefore, indentifying teachable moments in the classroom” (Daichendt, 2009b, p. 37). In other words, being a professional artist would automatically mean that the individual could also teach art and that being part of an artistic community, defined by certain common interests and belief systems, readily provides the social acknowledgement desired. Such expectations are part of the debate on different understandings of artist-teacher and more, of a philosophy that reiterates, or not, a specific educational background and/or profession (Daichendt, 2009b).

Scott and Thomas developed as artists within a specific context. Their educational environment has been characterised by residues of an artistic age when the non-figurative and the gestural were the dominant language. Art Informel (early 50s), equivalent in expressiveness and gesture to Abstract Expressionism in north America, was the result of artist’s emotional and physical engagement in the making of paintings.
Scott: “I think I was very much affected by abstract expressionism. I had a really hard time getting from to abstract. I couldn’t quite let go in order to understand what abstract does – like, where do you start? – and that took me a long time to sort out. But I made my first abstract painting as a student in 1980 and I still have it in the studio. It was hanging around Pehrudoff that I got a hit of what to do and I started to let go to my need to make something look real and realized that it wasn’t a moral issue. A painting is not a moral issue. You just paint and you have to trust yourself that you will come out when you paint. You have to trust that and not contrive, not force, just put paint down and see what happens. I started by using my hand to scrap the paint across the surface and I have done that for thirty years. You do an act like that, repetitively, for so long, something is going to come out, hopefully, something emotionally human. Art is experience, it’s not just brain stuff, and it gets to feelings you can’t reach otherwise.”

The 17th

But then, what is the product of artistic activity, objects, ideas, meanings? Is it teaching? Is it learning? Meaning making is a creative process and involves interpretative as well as technical abilities, concepts, and ideas. An important topic emerging from my conversations with the artists is on object versus experience.

Thomas: “It doesn’t matter that you don’t like how some artists are doing their work, you have to watch the work for what it is. So when you look at other people’s work, it is important to look at it as itself. I for one, like form, the quality of form and that take-your-breath-away feeling.”

Scott: “With painting there are so many things going on, surface, colour, value, paint. The only thing I read once that made any sense to me was Clement Greenberg.”
The art object does not reach a state of completion for it is the product of an understanding process and each person’s understandings may attend different aspects of the artwork. Although artists talk in and of what might be adjudicated as formalist terms and beliefs, it is not Bell’s “significant form” what painting as an artwork is or what it can be reduced to, in their understanding. Suggestive enough to such idea is that Scott and Thomas talk about how the artwork continuously transforms in relation to a public: Scott acknowledges the possible validity of input received from his wife and his students; and Thomas states, “I find that what is empty for somebody at some point, could be so full of meaning to somebody else.”

In what follows, it does appear that Thomas and Scott both have an emphasis on what they call “good” and “powerful work” as intrinsic values of the artwork providing it with an end in itself. But nowhere in our conversations did it come out that form is a sufficient condition for judging the eminence of an artwork or appraising a work as art; nor was there an argument for the privileging of material object amplified to a point where making the decision on what is and isn’t art would rest on the eminent existence of the object. Instead, the two artists do seem to bargain the essentialism of traditional aesthetics (mostly, I suspect, at an internal level) in as much as what are thought to be universal generalisations concerning the arts, painting in particular, are understood as concepts to be taught methodically to all students not as ideals essential to art, but as tools used to crack open conventional formulas.

Scott: “My approach to painting is not based on sociology or politics or getting a message across, I mean a literal message across, as much as it is about the innate structure of a painting and about how colour, texture, and those things can be worked together to create an aesthetic. I think that just meeting someone who takes being an artist very seriously can elevate in students the awareness of a whole other side to the visual that they weren’t aware of. Most teenage students
are used to draw cartoons or sports cars and have almost no painting experience. So there will be a structure for the class, but it needs to be bust open to the world, and artists who can develop their own teaching techniques can pass on the interest, the passion, the fascination.”

Thomas: “What I really like about art, painting in particular more than any other art form, is that you are absolutely on equal terms with everybody. You and Rembrandt got exactly the same chance: a piece of canvas and a stick with hair on it. There is the goal. You learn tradition to be and create a new voice and express it through wonderful, powerful artwork. As Van Gogh said, you don’t start where another artists left off, you start where they started, so you have to learn your stuff. I teach what I have been taught but with the constant reminder that it is with the purpose of moving on, it’s for the purpose of exploration, it’s for satisfying something that is bothering you, to keep going, and not to learn skills to do something in a certain way that looks predetermined. Maybe, finally, I’m having the balls to take that traditional understanding of form and make something out of it. The reality is that what I was learning when I learned [traditional figurative], was still just a weird phenomenon on the edge. What I was taught was not being taught in schools at that time – weird place. The art schools at that time didn’t like it either so, I was creating my own hierarchy wishing the big art-world would like what I do without realising that they haven’t like that for a long time. So I took a different route and I’m happy I did.”

In Scott’s case, the breaking through produced within an oscillatory swing between two different (at least, different to his experience) art educational environments and a shift from representational to abstract.

Scott: “With landscape you are given a structure, but the tuff part is how to make that yours. With the abstract is coming out as a structure. They are the same, but come out in different ways.”
In the midst of Scott’s transformation, the crevice created preserved, nevertheless, the aesthetic quality and experience of art beyond words and the engagement with the materiality of the painting medium as a remainder of his initial and preserved artistic interest and intent. For same or different reasons or impulses, in their articulations on the route of their practice, each artist reaches an appreciation of the process through challenging and destabilising values. Artists are
critical thinkers, very aware of and opinionated about their social, cultural, economic, etc. context. The critical dimensions of their thinking forms/transforms with and through their art making. In Thomas’ recent work, I find an acknowledgement of social constructed meanings, a celebration of the complex social synergy and a debate on its multidimensional issues. On canvas, the range of moods and human inter-actions contrasts and blends a very natural way of being in the world with a conflicting one. For me, his paintings open an incessant conversation about the world’s co-relative fusions and collusions.

As any alternative aimed towards a change of meaning and value, the formal issue opened up an extensive field of experimentations in the realm of painting and a multiplicity of efforts, which are still practiced and explored today. Only, the present context is drawn upon philosophical, sociological, and political thought, which dispersed itself into visual arts. Moreover, as James Elkins observes, “many postmodernisms are predicated on the dissolution of painting”. He goes on to say that, “the concept of multiple, therefore, has to be taken on board as part of a fundamental rethinking of painting that nevertheless does not occur separately from concepts of painting.” (2005, p. 162)

Thomas: “I paint in relation to the whole world and the history of art. So I paint and in my mind is a big world painting museum, and there are all my heroes. There is a Bonnard, a Van Gogh, Cezanne, and Rothko; there is a Fillip Gasten, and there is my painting. And it’s not like I hold it up to see is that good, is it as profound, is it as human, but is it as fresh and me; is it as me as theirs?”

The self has to be negotiated today on many different, yet relational stratum. Ambivalent contradictions lead to ambivalent conclusions and thus, to “the very impossibility of identity as
something whole and apparent to itself” (Easthope & McGowan, 2004, p. 243). What is apparent though, is the love for painting. What came out very strongly throughout our discussions is the love for the medium, medium direct related to the object, therefore the importance of the object, for its power to reference tremendous stimulation and inner commotion. “The enjoyable artistic embodiment and formal sophistication, which so many learned to appreciate in modernist art” (Butler, 2002, p. 6), support the object not as much as the carrier of change as the bearer of artists’ commitment to the act of making. The research participants are painters after all, their work implies an engagement with paints and a canvas and it is hard to not to consider that maybe, the object produced is indeed the very message sent across. Why, because the importance of the process transpires through all the artists’ believes and practices, and painting as object in the making, delivers the opportunity to certain kinds of experience and practice. Their painted object references the process.

Thomas: “It’s a feeling. Ultimately, it is about being honest; or it is so dishonest that that’s obvious too. I don’t know. It is amazing how much you bargain. I’ve spent a long time mutating.”

Scott: “I remember Stanley Boxer saying that painting is not a moral issue. People shut themselves down so fast. They make a mark and then they worry about it. Well, don’t worry about it, just make another one and another one. Maybe you’ve done four or five – look at them, see what this is about. It’s not a grave, serious thing – that constipates you, keeps you from doing it. Not to worry about it is a big leap and that takes some trust in the process that will work out. There is no guarantee, but that’s life, there is no guarantee.”

Thomas: “The idea of what is the purpose and what is the meaning: when you are dancing, is the purpose to get from one side of the room to the other or is it to enjoy the dance across the floor?"
Is the purpose of a symphony to get to the end? Obviously not; otherwise we would be writing just endings all the time. It’s about being in the middle, being part of the process. This is the problem, you are dealing with something that is amorfic, unstable, and I guess, at its core is a reflection of our humanness, which is unstable and contradictory.”

Artists are not oblivious to changes in the climate of ideas; they could not be. Artists are rather sensitive, even extra sensitive to context. If we are still within the realm of postmodernity, then there might be a certain expectation for our contemporary artists to display an enhanced involvement with the process of understanding and be less inclined towards the contentment of artistic closures or the comfort of unity. A shift of attention from the obvious in the artist’s statements to the hidden residues of our conversations brings out an almost subconscious postmodern attitude. I say almost, because it can be argued that between the simultaneous conversations that compete and supplement each other in our present times, we can still keep a sense of what modernism is and practice it. The postmodern ideas and attitudes follow no single line of development. What is more, the evolution itself is not linear. The values the artists here embrace, determine largely the understandings and interpretations of these divergent yet collate principles and ethics circulated and negotiated between modern and postmodern. Perhaps the political and philosophical perspectives and the forms (or non-forms) embraced today do not dominate each other nearly as much. Rather, I would say, we live in a time of suspicion. If painters evaluate themselves within such circumstances, than they may consider themselves and their own practices in need of continuous re-invention. As mentioned times before, identity occupies a restless space. The permutations of vision and understandings manifest in the process
of making, to which the painted object stands as witness of a trafficking self.

Image 23: ‘Double Core’

I believe Thomas swims in such a contingent space, dependent on uncertainty. There is a back and forth movement of his ideas, which makes the “artist who teaches”, more resistant to a confident and/or confined interpretation. If him, or Scott for that matter, do not barefacedly and entirely embrace the postmodern condition I, as the explorer and learner involved with interpretation, am, at times, faced with their often unsettling, not to say hazed, un/reliance on certainties concerning teaching and art.
Chapter V

‘understandings’

Saturday, March 20th

Artist, teacher, researcher, learner – nouns used and interpreted before as indicative/evocative of a theory - practice bifurcation, transformed the divisible into relational throughout this research, via entwined individual and social human thoughts and actions, habits and skills, and all that makes up a life world. “Shaped by the past in an infinity of unexamined ways, the present situation is the “given” in which understanding is rooted, and which reflection can never entirely hold at a critical distance and objectify” (emphasis in original, Linge, 2004, p. xv). The intentions of this study have been attended within an oscillatory process brought about by its initial question: how do artists understand their artistic practice in relation to their teaching practice? The experiences analysed and created by accounts and perspectives of people involved in the inquiry are individual, yet at once inter-subjective. The personal and public interrelated, thus meanings, interpretations, and practices now constitute, for me and hopefully for the reader, a platform for new and nonetheless unsteady, fragile, and partial understandings. Some of these understandings reflect back onto questions regarding who artists are, how/why they produce art, and what/how/why they teach. A strong relationality between art/teacher identity, practices and their social performance and significance emerged along and with the research. My conversations with artists Scott Plear and Thomas Anfield are a significant part of this work in

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20 I do not use the word new the customary way as pioneering, original or as to describe unfamiliar ideas or a concept appearing for the first time. By new I rather imply the occurred, the extra, the another, and the ex/changed. New is relative and relational – it can only be in relation to something else, idea I expressed vis-à-vis to beginning and end as well. The in-between provokes the new- beginning- end co-constructed relations.
more than one way. Multiplicity, layering, vulnerability and repetition are some of the concepts for creating and consuming the process of this exploration. The next paragraphs will mention some of the potential interpretations and understandings achieved along with the acknowledgement that answers, they are not. I will also continue this final chapter with reflections I appreciate as contributions to theory, art education community, and my own practice.

Tuesday, March 23rd

Some of the literature mentioned in the introductory chapter refers to artistic practice as being challenging, especially for those performing the artist/teacher identity. The present context of arts and art education can be characterised as complex and demanding. Thus Plear, Anfield and I feel, at times, forced to relevantly position ourselves amid meaningful actions and multilayered intentions. The understanding I reached in this regard, is not settling, but rather contiguous, in that it implies the absence of any equivalents in-between. The juxtaposition of identities we all embrace is, to a certain degree contingent on socially and individually co-constructed images and expectations of being an artist and being a teacher. This is not a static state-of-the-matter though, for practices are continuously re-negotiated, leading to a perpetual prelude of unsettled identities and inconsistency in thought and values, which make a vital component in reaching some understandings within the vehiculated meanings around us. At the same time, artists are compelled to satisfy a need to explore who they are. For me, artist-as-teacher became artist/teacher during this living inquiry, with an emphasis on the space in-between, where adjacent and simultaneous acts and methods un/fold.
Through conversations with the participants, I realised that we are always immersed in exploration and that, even though that search is intrinsic to various aspects of our lives, we always claim our work in the studio to be, for one, a personal confrontation with our own questioning; and two, a cyclical re-affirmation of the artist identity. This way, studio becomes a place of transformation rather than simply a physical place for practice. Studio is a physical and metaphysical place. It becomes the researching process itself, it encourages repetitive acts and promotes a vulnerable state in which leftover details acquire significance in their diversity and interaction.

Identity, place, practice became, for me, interdependent and strongly related to a context of perpetual change. Their coherence is hesitant and only manifests intermittently to culminate fleetingly every time in a different encore. Who is an artist and who is a teacher leave plenty of room to dissolve separation between values and status and affirm the undetermined. Individuals are their own possible evaluators, art making and teaching are their own measure. The artistic and teaching processes specific to each study participant promote a certain way of living and being, often dictated by and committed to meanings and significations embedded in ideological traditions of art, research, and pedagogy. There are no simple ways of separating methods employed in teaching practice from the ones of art practice – they join when Thomas and Scott are re-creating lived experiences for and with their students. It is my understanding that for these artists, the meaning of community can be enhanced through their teaching practice; that together with an art/teacher identity, a third practice emerges as elaborate, prolific and satisfying as it is responsive to, and supportive of co-related social and individual interests. It is in such complex state of being that the I yet to be named can affirm to the world and to itself.
The chased autonomy of self has also been debated in this research together with a predisposed idea of artwork as the unique essence of its maker. If such attitudes would manifest, then art and teaching would probably also be understood and acted as two separated, even divergent practices. Moreover, artists would have to wonder how to divide and what parts of themselves to neglect in order to carry out two apparently different pursuits. In the process of inquiry, I came to understand that instead, there is a multifaceted relationality and strong connections among/between being, making, knowing. Whatever self we find is not as much in the artwork as in its process. Self is unstable, because the process itself is active and relational. How endurable or provisional the self is remains indefinite for Thomas and Scott and to the outcome of this research. In my vision, identity, subject-positions, or self, linger flexible, fragmented and aggregated in language, gesture, desires and intents (Schwandt, 2007, p. 144). The point is, when actively co-produced, a making “through [...] vulnerability and receptivity” (Springgay, 2008, p. 163), a knowing open to dissonance and capable of being fragile, exposed, and even tempted outside systems, and an ambiguous, uncertain and never yet known being, can all supply a transformative perspective on identity and pedagogy and artistic production.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, some personal reflections developed within and together with this research. In my own understanding and practice they are now concepts I intend to use in the future as parts of the a/r/tographical renderings. Thus, Vulnerability and Repetition are active and suggestive of a process, rather than being methods. They helped allude the portraying of the research participants and to reveal the circumstances of this work to the reader. They also assisted moments of reflection and stimulated relational possibilities and conjunctures to emerge and unfold among the constitutive aspects of this inquiry: image, text, identities,
theories, practices, place, context, researcher, researched, audience, individuals, community, and so forth.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability speaks of interactions and encounters, propelling the inquiry without defining its purpose. It is acts of openness, a fragile being, where contradictions are embraced, the precarious is celebrated, and resistance is not cast away, for vulnerability is porous, not annihilatory. Within the art/teaching process, knowing and unknowing collide. The result is the necessary ‘damage’ to static horizons and individual fringe silhouettes.

During this exploration, I practiced Vulnerability as researcher and researched by experiencing the other in participants and in myself, by provoking the nameless to exposure and the safe absolutes to liability. For me, the vulnerability as concept culminated with the third chapter of the thesis when, posing in the window, I betrayed the quiet balance between settled beliefs with a hesitant cry for change and transformation – understanding is fragile and perverse in that it is willing to counter the obstinate, to make room for the rejected, and corrupt the proper. Vulnerability brings along alternate moments of action and reflective pause; it is not weakness but risk and surrender to scrutinizing acts. It implies the residues which, given time, either evolve or dissolve under the prospect of their own multiple effects. I find the contributions of this
research to theory and practice in the moments of a learning-to-learn performance – phenomenon mediated by and created through Vulnerability.

**Repetition**

Repetition is also a concept, an act of re-turning that is prolific when co-performed. In the case of this research, series of images and a community of participants were needed and created so to enhance relationality and re/affirm the undetermined when repetition, as an a/r/tographical rendering, was employed. Repetition creates and attends to a space where the similar and the distinct co-exist and co-act as (co)relative. Repetition cannot be described as harmonious or utterly sympathetic to established conventions and attitudes. Nevertheless, the circulation of fragments and leftovers of a recalled heritage alone suffice to insinuate the phantom presence of static values, whose reference points may have been long lost, one by one. There is an affinity or correspondence between known and unknown, which implies construction, de-construction and re-construction within *alteration*. Repetition is not a technique, rather a happening, thus active, shifting, layering clippings to re-affirm intentions, desires, strengths, and weaknesses, in hopes to grasp an “eternity of the Same” (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 95). But repetition has a relational thus productive quality, not reproductive. In the research, I re-turned to the work in the studio relentlessly, just like Thomas and Scott, aiming to ascertain my identity as artist. Repetitively, I created self-portraits one after another, trying to make sure that the artist-me is still there, no
matter how many re-productions in/by how many visual mediums and texts. Throughout the thesis, days of the week marked in the first chapter repeat later so the reader can displace fragments and pursue with the reading as follows: Sunday followed by Another Sunday, and Other Sunday; Wednesday becomes Another Wednesday and Wednesday Afternoon, etc. At the same time, the thesis can be read following the lead of one research contributor at a time by tracking their name in repetition. Read in more than one way, the thesis acquires not only a different disposition, but also several, unexpected, hidden otherwise meanings. Different aspects of each of us involved in the research surface and a deeper understanding of who we are and what we do occurs. Repetition as concept offers these possibilities and many others.

Repetition does not imply uniformity, duplication, the identical or the same difference. The repetitive act of shading light from various positions or sources reveals different configurations and qualities – a multifaceted object – thus changing perceptions and transforming understandings. The cycle of learning-to-learn is dynamic and without equivalence every time.

The double [...] is an imaginary figure, which, just like the soul, the shadow, the mirror image, haunts the subject like his other, which makes it so that the subject is simultaneously itself and never resembles itself again, which haunts the subject like a subtle and always averted death.

(Baudrillard, 1994, p. 95)
The assessment of *Learning from and about artists: identity, place, practice* should rest on its dramatic and at the same time subtle ability to do just that: extract insights from and about, and create understandings with, three artists who teach. Also, as an a/r/tographical theory-as-practice enterprise, this thesis should compel a continuous questioning and complicating as a way of living and being. It is its lived nature, that makes this research not only viable, but salient. The process of the inquiry together with the understandings it creates are the research itself and its method. “The conditions for measurement are contingent upon and exist within the structure itself – an absolute measure” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxxii). Within a/r/tographical methodology, *Vulnerability* and *Repetition* helped to constitute this work. I suggest the engagement with it and its assessment both to be carried on with and through these two renderings. I hope my understanding of art and teaching practices as interconnected and informing each other is inviting and that it can disperse so to help teachers, regardless of their practice, to undertake such relational process. I offer this work to the imagination, experience and experimentation, distinction and conjecture of the reader.
REFERENCES


*Teaching Artist Journal, 4*(3), 167-175.
APPENDIX

Appendix A

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

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<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</th>
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<td>UBC/Education/Curriculum and Pedagogy</td>
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**INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:**

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Other locations where the research will be conducted:
The research will be conducted in the subjects’ art studios, classrooms where they teach art, or other locations used by subjects as a working space. Langara College is another location where this research will be conducted.

**CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):**
Alexandra Cristina Ghecevici
Donal O'Donoghue

**SPONSORING AGENCIES:**
N/A

**PROJECT TITLE:**
Learning From and About Artists: Identity, Place, Practice

**CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE:** May 12, 2010

**DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:**

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The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following: