RE-THINKING THE SPACES OF PRODUCTION:
RE-WRITING STUDIO PRACTICES AS FRAGMENTED TEXT

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ABSTRACT

As educators and researchers, how can we challenge the conventions of pedagogical practices and traditional art production expectations in the studio? Art educational research has invited into play a revamping of traditional research 'inquiries' that suggests we, as researchers and art educators, re-think issues deemed important in improving instruction as we move into the next century.

This study uses feminist and postmodern critical theories to re-frame the inquiry and in turn questions its own inquiry. By juxtaposing narratives of past art students' studio experiences with those occurring in this re-search space, an analogy is drawn between 'where we produce', that is, within the parameters of preconceived constructs - studio, academia, classrooms - to understand the meanings of 'spaces of production'. Central to this project is the concept of spaces in which the process of production occurs: that is, the spaces between 'the idea and the object' of students' experiences of learning in post secondary art studios along with those in which educational re-search occurs. It is vital that we challenge notions held taut about the production practices of re-searching, so that research issues and methods do not simply replicate past production sites but enter to invent varied points of view.

The evolving 'fragmented' text includes: narratives of past art production and studio experiences shared by two female participants and myself as post fine arts students; the experiences I, as researcher, entered in the spaces of production of this so called 're-search'; feminist and postmodern critiques; and examples of contemporary artistic practices. As a result, a space to challenge conventionalities about re-searching and art studio practices is opened. A re-working/re-sculpting of the conventional 're-search' text is performed.
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... AND WHERE ACTIVE SPACES ARE CREATED
CHAPTER 1

This project begins from the following story:

Recently, I was struck by a review in the Vancouver Weekend Sun (Saturday, September 17, 1994) about the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver, B.C.. Alan Barkley, President of the Institute at that time, provided the following statement:

Art school students don't occupy seats in a classroom, they inhabit the space in which they learn. They spend hours in it, creating images and solving problems long after the rest of us have gone home. They occupy it and won't easily be dislodged from it. Space is spiritual real estate. Space is home. (p. D13)

Hmmmm I wondered! What was that space that I once inhabited? Was it as “spiritual” and as comforting as that place called “home”? My initial response was to the language of this statement that in my interpretation suggested that space (home and spirituality) is a safe, comfortable, functional, unproblematic, conflict free, spiritually wholesome, and nurturing place. And returning to re-think my learning experiences raised availing concerns about this location of production as it collides with my recall of that space I once occupied as an art student; the space of learning which embodied traces of my physicality, culture and history superimposed by the institution.
wearing dark rimmed sunglasses

I let the 'phrase' seep and simmer for a mere 6 minutes as the instructions suggested on the package and removed the bag containing the baggage of history that proceed and follow me to a space of inquiry. L. and I had just left the Contemporary Art Gallery on Hamilton Street in downtown Vancouver aimlessly proceeding southward. The streets were sombre and the sun drenched concrete's stench of sweat seeped through the pores of our shoes. Our day began with a futile attempt to seek out a workable studio space in Vancouver that was larger than the size of our bathrooms. On that hot September day we were greeted yet again with the dismal realisation that we would not find that space that would allow us to occupy it for that glorious spiritual experience that, oh, we so desperately sought as want-to-be makers of art.

Re-reading the article from the newspaper, I recall L. retorting "spiritual, I do kitchen art for gods sake - how spiritual can that be?" I was compelled to rethink what this meant for me as I recalled those endless hours once spent in the studio which on occasion I refused to "dislodge" myself from in the wee hours of the morning. I recalled those studios situated in the concrete escarpments amidst the tundra-esque landscape of York University. What was that essence I embodied and lived for four years?

"Tale, told, to be told.../Are you truthful?"

(Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1990, p. 327)
But...

... I ask myself, why recite another ‘story’? Stories about my experiences, about other’s experiences: experiences of learning, experiences of producing, experiences of ....? What stories are told, whose stories are told, who’s telling the stories, who’s appropriating, censoring, and/or veneering the makeup of these stories? And assuming that limitations are implicit in the reciting (telling/re-telling), perceiving (understanding and interpreting), and re-generating/re-reading of these ‘stories’, can amorphous edges allow (re)newed stories to take form? Perhaps by *listening* to ‘stories’ offered to us by three post art students, and by allowing ourselves a space to actively engage with these ‘stories’, a re-framing process will occur within the production space of this project.

Meaning making/becoming - a process which refuses stabilisation; a process which allows an intersecting of stories; a process which requires subjectivity to re-situate outside of all consuming catharcism; it intersects crisis ... where the subject is shifting in the “rupture of a structure, the rupture of equilibrium” (my emphasis, Clark and Hulley, 1990-91, p.159); it energetically displaces self in the paradox of both knowing and not knowing - resting and pausing momentarily in the dwelling place of confronting self in the mirror while simultaneously looking obliquely to re-enter in the process, in the “impossibility of identity, self-knowledge, and self-possession” (Clark and Hulley, 1990-91, p. 153)
It gives this written text another layer of meaning, another point of view, another intricacy, another point of departure, generating another frame of meaning, thus enticing the reader/listener/viewer to think critically about the possibilities of suspending pre-constituted assumptions about the meaning of production (in studio, classroom or re-search spaces). 

Generated through stories offered by art students as producers within a particular learning space, this project aims to displace the hegemonic ideology that contains meaning about what and how learning occurs. By actively moving with the dynamic process of production, a space to create is at work in this project (piece).

In this universe, the pauses and rests are at least as important as the movements. Something is abruptly triggered. And just as abruptly, it is immobilized. Everything stops, then begins again. The works of Rebecca Horn make us think about the brusque, the sudden, the unexpected, the instantaneous. They likewise lead us to reflect upon waverings and alterations. (Lascault, 1994, p. 105)

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1 Julia Kristeva’s semanalytic work can be referenced in respect to this notion of the ‘text’. John Lechte (1990), in a book entitled Julia Kristeva, elaborates on the development of Kristeva’s late 60s and early 70s work on the “Word, dialogue, and novel”. As Lechte points out, semanalysis “brings to light the heterogeneity of language, rather than the homogeneity of the conventional linguistic model...it will illuminate the ‘subject in process’...and not the stereotypical subject of consciousness...semanalysis will reveal practice as transgressive...” (1990, p. 101). I appropriate her analysis and understanding of the textual relations that occupy the transcendental spaces in the production of meaning through this reading provided by Lechte.
The story: its' hybrid form indicates that it has come into being across transitional material that cannot be contained within a unified narrational system. It functions as a pivot. (Mulvey, 1989, p. 179)

Laying the turf:
astro-turf, contextual-turf, situational-turf, shifting...

As a 'post' art student influenced by contemporary art practices and theory, I came to question the place art production occupies in the institutions of 'learning'. The following project is a response and challenge to notions that render the identity of the art student, the artist, and the space of production as fixed and cohesive constructs. The journey begins with the prefaced story and continues with the narratives of three post visual arts students and theoretical texts, and is interwoven with the series of events that evolve in the process of producing this particular research project. By focusing on former art students’ re-telling of their experiences in the art studio and of their processes of becoming artists in a post secondary institution, this project challenges the assumption that art students universally experience the art studio as an uncontested, non-problematic and spiritually invigorating space of production.
The intertextual space this project occupies carries stories of studio experiences through various layers of (re)writing, (re)thinking (re)understanding...

It weaves through the spaces of ‘re-told’ stories and coincides with other readings that inform this space of production...

By allowing the reader, the artist, the tensions between academics and our practices, the glitches and the colliding of moments into the text, the site of this study shifts between/through/amongst preordained meaning...

The spaces I refer to are comfortable in their uncomfortability, generative, gendered, conflictual, vibrant, productive, historical, lived, concrete, abstract, symbolic, .... but none the less, always in motion...

Somewhere in between, a different mode of imagining the process of producing develops and grants that space to (re)question the complex meanings that impact on the process of production...

Inspired by the learning process and the educating process, the conventions of art school and academia come into question in the space of this research process...
Initialised by this challenge, this project considers how educational re-searching offers itself as a space to re-think the processes considered acceptable and available in our spaces of production. That is, spaces where research is produced, where art is produced, where students are produced, where students produce, and where experiences, knowledge and meaning are produced for consumption. Taking this initiative, I offer a critical view of the re-searching space in this thesis by juxtaposing the voices of post art students’ fragmentary narrations in order to challenge the confines and spatial activity occurring in this structure. Broad themes of identity, location and representation, conveyed by the participants in their processes of making meaning and meaning making in art school, support the shifting planes of meaning and guide this study through various levels of subtexts, subthemes, and subnarratives.

*Hélène Cixous’ movement in her fictional and theoretical writings weave through the hybrid infusion of voices that proceed and follow her to the spaces of her writing. The translative exchange between text, its performance, her unconscious and her biography gives way to a retelling that resists categorization. It takes flight into a space where we as listeners to her words can take with us yet another text, another performance and carry them into our biographies and unconscious, to a vacant movement, a space awaiting to resound.*
By weaving through the tensions and glitches that arise in the participant’s pedagogical experiences and in the researching process itself, moments of poetic ambiguity come together to re-frame this work as a learning and producing process. The intent is to parallel the production that occurs in art school studios with those occurring in the spaces of educational re-search. It is here that the preconceptions of the art studio meet the preconceptions of academia/research. These structures don’t often meet the needs, desires, realities of differing students and may only function to stifle the student’s learning process in the name of learned outcomes. In both cases very different individuals are set to work and expected to produce within often preconceived frameworks. This paper too is set within the confines of a pre-conceived framework. And while it is itself a site of learning and producing, this paper becomes a paradoxical site of production that is both fluid and accommodating to the reader, while simultaneously suspending the urge to comfortably accommodate, turning instead to live with the tensions and the liveliness between meaning making/becoming.

**Pretext/Utterances: tensions, glitches and poetic ambiguity**

**tensions**

Before proceeding let me interrupt to frame the concepts supporting the course of this re-searching event. Tensions occur as I come to terms with my own attempts to evade the tensions of the researching process. They arise in my interactions with the participants. They are manifested in the interpretive disagreements that arise in our conversations. Tensions erode the linear movement of this research process. They suspend the pre-set re-search guidelines. For example, when my participants *fail* to comply with the set research plan, or when my participants
recall their own personal studio experiences, conflicting and contradictory structures of meaning arise and refuse conventional academic expression. Examples of tension are conveyed through the stories told of our travels through art school.

**glitches**

And then there are glitches. Glitches are where active spaces are created. I see glitches not as neutral nor negative vacuous spaces, but rather as moments that disturb, infer and collide with the comforts of a seemingly comfortable place. Glitches enhance the tensionality of a moment. Glitches fill vacuous spaces that disrupt those moments of seductive pleasure when all is assuredly good. Glitches provide those tensions that force one to re-think their own subjectivity in a situation. Glitches, while always present, occupy that negative space within the peripherals of a frame that patiently await for that moment of uncertainty to appear. There absence assures a presence of a moment. The truth behind a glitch is that it always promises to lead 'elsewhere'. The intricacies of coming to know something differently, the potent force towards activity, is where the glitch resides.

**poetic ambiguity**

What I refer to as poetic ambiguity inspires this pedagogical event. It re-frames the interplay of tensions and glitches in this written text. It is evident and not evident. At times it poses as a glitch, at times as a tension. By no means does poetic ambiguity presume to contain a unified totality of the spaces in which we produce, but enters to emerge with the textual flow of the research.
The text is both a process and a product, a coming together of moments. It is itself, volatile, fragmented and continuous. It is a process of meaning being made and becoming within the dynamics of a production site. It is the fissure of a seam in a seemingly seamless fabric that evidences that various components of spaces in which we produce: cultural, political, social, institutional, come together to un/comfortably collide.

Introducing N., L., and myself: and a glimpse of working with/in tensions, glitches and poetic ambiguity in various locales of learning

In this study, three individuals recount their stories of lived experiences. My interest in tracing the different learning experiences, shaped by the language and educational system of institutions, influences this re-searching process. As questions about spaces of production arose it was evident that glitches and tensions would avail.

In conversation with L. (April 11, 1995)

"Is it all right to not record this interview", she asks. "Will it matter? What will happen?" Of course at the time I did not know, but I was not willing to mask my "research" behind the veils of convention and passive compromise in order to jeopardise a meaningful conversation. We decided not to record and L. proceeded with her story. This proposition presented by L. was timely and appropriate and I as re-searcher had to question my own re-search assumptions.
Interview with N. (April 5, 1995)

"I could never nail her down [referring to her instructor] to show me how to do this [referring to paper making], so eventually what I did was, I made some pulp, I didn't have a screen, I brought a spaghetti strainer to school and I started making these sheets of paper with the spaghetti strainer which was a huge influence on my work because I developed this technique of working in casting..."

Rosa's story: In conversation with N. (May 17, 1995)

I came to meet with N. for the second time to re-generate previously collected data and to further discuss her studio practices. Only ten minutes into the conversation and I realised that I was becoming an analytical menace. The air was thick with tension and I feared not being able to cut through it. The tape finally came to an end. I had two options, a) either turn it over and press record, or b) put an end to the restlessness that had set in. I felt that our conversation had come to an end. Yet what I thought had been a complete disaster took a turn into another meaningful conversation about how her past art school experiences presently informs her art production. The first half of our meeting was filled with misunderstandings and confusion.... Now all that was beginning to come together.

Art education: “towards the 21st century”

At a time of tremendous change within the field of education, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) commission on research in art education has acknowledged the emerging "cultural change of postmodernity". The NAEA's 1994 research agenda recommends that "diverse approaches" need to be considered for "art education(s) research agenda towards the
21st century", further articulating questions that address, for example, "how...feminist inquiry and postmodern critical theories influence art teaching practices" (Art Education, 1994, 47(4)).

Accepting such recommendations, this study considers how, amidst current theoretical discourses, can research enable "diverse approaches" to investigate notions of re-searching and producing.

As issues raised by feminists and postmodern critical theorists continue, "tensions, conflicts and oppositions" (Szkudlarek, 1993, p. 121) amass in academic discourses, art education has not been unaffected. Given the controversial complexities that are implicit in these theoretical perspectives, I am compelled to locate this project with/in an ideological movement that accepts a view from "elsewhere" as a gesture towards disrupting the linearity of conventional academic standards.

Lemecha (1990) quotes Teresa de Lauretis - a feminist theorist concerned with perspectives on gender and representation - as writing that this activity comprises a “movement in and out of ideology”.

It is a 'movement from the space represented by/in a representation, by/in a discourse, by/in a sex-gender system, to the space not yet implied (unseen) in them...she uses the term 'space-off' to refer to this marginal, feminist space, this elsewhere'.... (Lemecha, 1991, p. 10-11)

As student artists and as student researchers, we ‘inhabit the space in which we learn’ (paraphrasing Barkley). We are influenced by the conventional structures set to educate us. These influences are not always necessarily warm, cosy, generative, spiritual, etc. Nor do these influences necessarily have any relation to our historical or cultural realities. Generally speaking, if a more malleable learning environment were possible, would these places of production
become more generative? To re-think the ways learning and producing have been constituted and reproduced would allow for both educator and student a more inspiring process of learning. Thus this re-search offers a space to challenge "conventional trappings" (Trend, 1992) - a space between what will be shared, taught and learned through this re-searching process - as we in art education consider what it means to move "towards the 21st century".

The layers of evolving text

Highlighting my departure from issues raised by feminist and postmodern theorists, contemporary art practices and theories, and current trends in educational research, this project extends a fragment of a 'fragmented' text. By resounding texts, images and voices that have informed this project, what follows is an unfolding of stories told, of stories to be told and of stories previously rendered unspeakable. In this evolving textuality, the "traces of writing" inscribed (Lechte in reference to Kristeva, 1990, p. 100) - theoretical writings, personal interpretation, and the narratives shared by post art students - carry fragments of history and break from the totality of a unifying structure to re-create fragments that touch upon new meaning. This conglomeration of thoughts and ideas created in this paper presents a 'partial' glimpse into the shifting spaces of production - the social, physical, intellectual, and cultural - as it re-works/re-sculpts the conventional research text. Therefore, it challenges conventional educational research and normative approaches to teaching in the hope of de-centring established expectations of students' learning with/in the studio/classroom/sites of learning.
"To interpolate rhythmically
a series of citations
from the 'host' text
leads to the text as 'procession'...
a double exposed print".

(Ulmer, 1983, p. 91)

The methodological perspectives taken into account are as follows: commemorative memory emphasises the importance of translating personal histories to be carried into a space of new meaning through a process of rethinking experiences; hermeneutic phenomenology, as a research tool to assist in re-searching lived experiences; postmodern and feminist methodologies provide a shifting theoretical view of existing discussions on representation and identity politics and their contribution to educational research practices; and various aspects of critical ethnographic researching techniques are considered for the challenges of traditional methods and to present a critical perspective of establishing an intertextual rapport between research and researched. Here, readings between the diverse languages of feminism (Alcoff, 1991; Bhavnani, 1993; de Lauretis, 1993; Haraway, 1988; Spivak, 1993), critical ethnography (Britzman, 1995a, 1995; Clifford, 1986; Lather, 1986; Roman, 1993), hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1990) and postmodern research/ing (Denzin, 1995; Tyler, 1986) contribute to this analysis. These theories will be taken into the re-search space of this project to suggest a critical
Once again....the story

L's response to the article in the Vancouver Sun led me to ask the question, "what informs students' expectations in their studio practices?" Asking this question provided me with a spatial metaphor of the symbiotic relation between art and research production in which I was able to explore the meanings of production. It inspired questions that ask for example, "what kind of discourse can we invite in an era of 'post-discourse' for art and art education; as educators and researchers how can we challenge the conventions of pedagogical practices and traditional production expectations?" Furthermore, welcoming Alan Barkley's statement and the NAEA's recommendation compelled me to re-think the spaces of location, and to recognize how these spaces require us to take into account the experiences of art students as art producers within a cast socio-cultural arena called art school.

An interweaving/intertexturing of stories share our perceptions and understanding of what informed our art production, and explores what it meant to us to 'become' artists. As we engage in conversation, a colliding of "mystories"\(^2\) transpires and allows this text to co-mingle with this

\(^2\)"...designed to simulate the experience of invention, the crossing of discourses that has been shown to occur in the invention of process. Realizing that learning is much closer to invention than verification" (Ulmer, 1994, p. xii).
perceived 'dialogic' project in which questions actively enter spaces and conceptually (dis)rupt the text. Re-called experiences, conversations, and a theoretical interplay constitute a generative and dialogic space *between* fiction and non-fiction to present something new.

In this symbiotic relation between art making (the art studio where art is produced) and research (that space which "I", as 're-searcher' produces within) a spatial intertextuality invites us to re-think formal approaches of 'doing' (art, research) and to re-think the ways knowledge is promoted and nurtured. And in doing so, a break from the conventional spaces of research production, so as to avoid re-producing the foundations of sound academic frameworks, is imperative. Instead, we are led to question the places we occupy as producers, as students and as learners affected by these foundational 'educating' influences.

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3I refer to the concept of 'dialogical' as portrayed in the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin. “Dialogue does not simply mean the exchange of utterances casually offered in the form of a conversation between two speakers: dialogic relationships are a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoiners in a dialogue...they are an almost universal phenomenon, permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life - in general, everything that has meaning and significance” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 40). The "artistic architectonics" of a dialogic work as referred to in Bakhtin’s notion of the "polyphonic novel" suggests that an intersection of meaning transcends the dependence of a finalized monologic discourse. In reference to Dostoevsky's "artistic task", the task is to destroy the established forms of the fundamentally monologic European novel" (p. 8) where the dialogic lies in the hero's self-consciousness derived through the representation of his subject of becoming in an infinite state. The hero is not finalized in a fixed position and "is by itself sufficient to break down the monologic unity of an artistic world." (p. 51) Bakhtin describes the monologic design as "closed and defining semantic boundaries", for in a monologic design, discourse is defined and finalized by the authorial consciousness which is part of the "rigid framework set against the external world." For this project, this becomes a central question in my own re-thinking of meanings of production as they are re-constituted in a written design that like Dostoevsky's hero "destroy(s) that framework of other people's words about him (sic) that might finalize and deaden him" as does the meaning attached to a production implicated through the rendering of the other, the rendering of actions, and the rendering of being through the representative authorial voice.
The mode of academic writing now taught in school tends to be positioned on the side of the already known rather than on the side of the wanting to find out and hence discourage learning how to learn.... (Ulmer, 1994, p. xii)

Can this analogy of art production change the ways we question our perceptions of production? What is the significance of re-thinking conventional practices? What does it mean to re-think histories, conventions, traditions and the place(s) where we write and create ourselves? If we are to re-think the spaces in which we produce we can challenge our assumptions about what it means to do and thereby invent ways we think about the spaces in which we are asked to produce/perform.

"Between" a location where there is active movement in the process of 'becoming', and does not rest n/either here n/or there but in the "middle of two terms". (Delueze and Parnet, 1987)
But ...

to call attention to 'our' locations (and spaces) of learning, of teaching, of research, of speaking, is to actively engage with our own positions of difference where we, "researchers" and "subjects" can re-think our space of negotiation. This re-thinking space I suggest is one between epistemologies, 're-search', research question, participant's experience and the evolving text, through their intertextuality.
THE STUDY OUTLINED
The building was low, flat and encompassed a corner block in the heart of downtown Vancouver.
My guess was that it was probably built in the early 70's: glass, aluminium siding, and stucco. L. and I had made arrangements to see the studio space. Since both of us had absolutely no room in our homes to work, we felt that a studio space would make it possible to spread ourselves out. The windows concealed the inside. Not knowing what to expect, all we could do was wait in anticipation - hoping that this space wouldn’t be the size of our bathrooms.
As a critical space opens to disrupt the unfolding "narratives" and "life stories" of studio practices, an extension into the complexity of pedagogical spaces of studio practices and schooling is appropriate.

Commemorating the space of creation between N., L. and me

Former visual arts undergraduate students of either an art college or university were invited to participate. They were required to have completed their studies in the program and have received a diploma or degree in fine arts. By involving participants who had completed the program, I was able to (re)-present experiences brought forth through the process of reinscribing the past to present. This practice of transporting translated history into a space of new meaning leads to Roger Simon's (1991) consideration of “commemorative memory”.

In more elaborated terms, commemoration is a practice that draws on one or more discursive assertions about the past inserting these into images and narrative. Engaging these images and narratives is intended to provoke structures of meaning and feeling which could be drawn upon in the determination of one’s present actions and future possibilities. (Simon, 1991, p. 10)

Between telling and interpreting lived experiences

Each of the participants in this project studied at different times, institutions and locations throughout Canada. N’s art background varied greatly. Leaving her native northern Ontario home, she went from art college to art college, starting programs and never completing them, before she finally decided to settle at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver, British Columbia, to “finally” receive a diploma in interdisciplinary studies. L.'s art school
experience was confined to one institution. She began and completed her undergraduate degree at University of Western in London, Ontario, which was also her home town. Her transition into the fine arts program seemed to come to her as somewhat of a surprise as she re-tells the story of how she became involved in the program. Initially, she says, making art as an academic career was not her desire. For myself, I spent several months in Italy enrolled in drawing and painting courses prior to attending York University in Toronto, Ontario, where I also completed my studies in sculpture and interdisciplinary studies.

**L.'s story:** One big sigh and she begins:

"okay this is how it goes" - **the story**...It wasn't at all her primary interest to study fine arts at university. She informs me that she was advised by a school counsellor to consider pursuing the visual arts. Seeing that her marks were so high in this area, it was just the logical route to take---she decided to follow his advice.

(re-searcher's journal entry following conversation, May 11, 1995)

**N.'s story:** "I was the kid that did all the drawings, and the decorations and all that from grade 1 and in my high school we didn't have any art classes. It was only in my last year that we actually got one art teacher who taught one art class for all the grades and I did take that class - but by that time I had learned a lot of things on my own...but what I realised is that everybody assumed that I was going to be an artist - everyone assumed that I was going to move to Montreal and go to the École des beaux arte and do that and um...I was scared". (conversation transcription from April 5, 1995)
My story: I never really knew what drove me to "study art" - much can be attributed to high school experiences, the support, the teachers, the group of friends, the 'scene', etc., that I had consumed. This I would say led me to take seriously this interest - maybe after time, it became a habit, an obsession or possibly just a comfortable place that would evidently reinforce my belief that this was for me the 'right' career move to make. (journal March 18, 1995)

So.....

The participants were informed of my interests and what would be required of them (see Appendix 1). The re-search would entail our reflections about what informed our perceptions and roles as students seeking to become 'artists' and to discuss what constructs such as "studio space" had/have on our "artistic" development. A space was open for communal exchange between research(er) and participants. To guide this project, initial questions were geared to include or address issues of the ideological and pedagogical structures. Descriptive, interpretative and analytical interview questions were orchestrated to draw upon "techniques" that would enable multiple levels of personal perceptions and interpretations to come forth during our meeting. The following questions guided this study (Appendix 2):

**Interview #1**

What informed your process of production? What space do you recall occupying as a student? In your view, how did this affect your process of production?
Interview #2

In your schooling how did you experience an art class in relation to other disciplines in the school? How did this experience inform your understanding of what art was to you? What was art for you?

What was your experience in your art studio classes?

How do you perceive the emergence of this experience as it affected your process of production?

How did your perception as a female student inform your understanding of what art was for you?

What informed your process of production?

These were the questions I asked myself and the questions that were carried into the re-search site.

*Interviewing as a research method can be artificially separated into two parts. The first part is actually doing the interview; the second is interpreting the interview. In the conventional one-to-one interview, the researcher or interviewer asks the subject or interviewee some questions, which may be predetermined (close-ended interviews) or developed within the interviewing process (open-ended interviews) and records the answers, usually on audio tape. (Britzman, 1995, p. 236)*

After spending one session with each participant gathering biographical data about their past art production and artistic aspirations, I proposed that they spend some time writing about a particular experience, incident, or moment that occurred in their art studio practices. Returning to critique and re-write past production, L. and N. were asked to reflect on their art, studio experiences, or perceptions of what art/production meant to them. The focus of the written piece was left open for them to decide what story was important to be told. Although, at the time, I
was reading a book by Gillian Rose (1993) entitled *Geography and Feminism*. In this book, Rose discusses the power structures that bind women’s routines, the “limits and confines”, and the recreation and contestation that our behaviours are spatially dependent upon. She refers to this as the arena of patriarchy which women’s behaviour confronts daily. This reading led me to rethink the social and cultural implications attached to the concept of *location* and to re-think, in the context of learning, the unified perimeters given to mediate our mobility with/in studio spaces, learning spaces, and, in the contexts of re-search, with/in the production spaces of this study. And this followed me into the re-search space to be discussed in conversation with the participants.

Following this introduction, I asked L. and N. to record their *spatial mobility* by considering themes and issues raised during our interview/conversation. Broadly speaking, in our journal writing we were to address issues of the *arena* (the perimeters, spaces, interactions, limitations, relations; e.g., power/professors/art world, etc.) that composed our spatial mobility with/in art production. This practice of re-thinking the place once occupied enabled us to (re)assess the constitution of particular arenas that are constructed in the name of productivity.

**MEMO: To N.**
**RE: The April 5th meeting (a brief summary of our conversation)**

After our first meeting, I left enthusiastic about the study and was reassured about my conviction to proceed with this ‘type’ of research. During our conversation, an interesting procession of events occurred as I listened to your story about the experiences which led you to pursue your desire to make art. As certain themes evolved during the conversation it was apparent that some central issues could be explored on behalf of both myself and for you (in terms of journal writing which we discussed). After re-listening to the tape and re-calling the conversation we had, these points stood out for me:

- your history of coming to decide to pursue a personal drive and fulfil a commitment to create;
- the compartmentalisation that you expressed in terms of your secondary and post secondary experiences;
- entering into a space which for you was more accommodating (interdisciplinary art);
unaccommodating spaces (personal, intellectual, physical, social, etc.). For the writing part of this study, some points that you could "Re-think", as a "post art student", in terms of the space/place that you were in at the time [recalling particular experiences you choose to elaborate on or introduce in your writing (the physical, intellectual, emotional, social spaces)] were raised during our discussion. Some other points I have drawn out above are based on the conversation. Just to simplify things, as you proceed in your writing, remember to re-think of a particular incident, choosing one or two points to elaborate upon.

This performance complemented the act of verbally re-telling about the processes inscribing our experiences in the studio spaces we occupied. Returning to narrate our re-collected experiences would explicitly challenge us to re-experience (or re-think) the ways that our performances in the studio were constituted; on a cultural, social, and personal level within this inhabited space of learning. This process of re-thinking experiences which occurred in the location of art school not only enabled me to (re)assess the ideological constitution of three women’s spaces of production, but also deferred the notion of unified experiences held taut by statements such as the one previously referred to in the Vancouver Sun article. As re-searcher, my interest was to collect stories of place/space, production and experiences in order to weave through this text the performances and biographies of constructed knowledge in its various forms. In doing so, the present re-search was confronted with the challenge of negotiating between the representation offered “by” the participants and the representation “for” the participants that would inadvertently seep into this re-search space given the nature of the study. Although given that conflicting and controversial circumstances surround the discourse of representation, the intent was to partake in a didactic interplay of meaning, between the evolving interpretations and theories of re-presenting, within this project and within the dialogic space of our meeting.
Co-researching the narrational spaces

Following the initial steps of the re-searching process, I returned to discuss and interpret with the participants the themes and issues drawn from my analysis of the first interview and their ‘writings’. My intent to challenge ‘textually’ the conventions of ‘objective research’ led me to involve participants not as objects of an inquisitor’s gaze, but as subjects - subjects with a “language and ideology and, therefore, in history” (Kristeva in Clarke and Hulley, 1990-91, p. 154) - composing this study. It was important that the participants engaged in the interpretive inquiry and constitution of their own (con)-texts prior to my narrating of/about them. The collected data were generated and then re-analysed with the participant(s) in order to mutually arrive at agreed upon themes. Resorting to analytical and interpretative interview questions put us in the position to discuss and understand the implications of my initial interview, the writing and the outcome of my analysis.

Towards the end of the conversation with L., I reterated the instructions about the written piece and thanked L. for her time. Before leaving, L. asks, “how about if I interview you instead the next time?” - We both laugh.

They were invited to consent to the text that was to be analysed and used in my interpretive writing and to negotiate the terms of their participation in this study, therefore, actively constructing the conversational space that was to follow. As a method of negotiation in the complexities inherent to our meetings, I was able to actively listen and participate dialogically, and suspend the weightiness that dominating and guiding questions would carry.
The moment I returned to L.'s folder it was apparent. The instructions for the participants that had so wonderfully been orchestrated in compiling this project to meet a definitive criteria lay barren, or at least that's what I feared. L. never did write even though she assured me she would "produce" a text about her studio experiences, maybe recite a truth/ a lie/ a story. I never did get "the story from the horse's mouth" ...

This practice as Britzman(1995) points out is not without faults. Although the intent is to be critical of our own practices as researchers and of the re-searching process, contradictions are inevitably inherent. Quoting Britzman at length reveals one of her re-searching contradictions and invokes us to challenge our own re-searching practices:

*I desire to construct good stories filled with the stuff of rising and falling action, plots, themes, and denouement. And yet, within the narrative tropes I chose to employ, there is a contradictory point of no return, of having to abandon the impossible desire to portray the study's subjects as they would portray themselves. Thus, I positioned myself behind their backs to point out what they could not see, would not do, and could not have said even as I struggled against such omnipotence. I tried to hold tightly to the ethic of not producing these subjects as persons to blame or as heroes of resistance. Instead, my concern was one of questioning how the categories of blame and resistance became discursively produced and lived. In textualizing their identities, I held on to the hope that readers would be compelled to ask the dangerous questions: What is it that structures my own stories and my own intelligibility? (Britzman, 1995, p. 233)*
The textual collaging of this intertextual experience

The logic of polyphony: short chapters which answer to one another, characters which reverberate, resonate, one in relation to the other: to fragment, to make discontinuous narrative series and make the relationship of one to another in a permanent ambivalence and dialogism. (Kristeva in Clark and Hulley, 1990-91, p. 180)

The effectiveness of collage is that, like metaphor, the piece, displaced into a new context, retains associations with its former context. (Ulmer, on Derrida, 1985, p. 59)

Collage/montage is a conceptual/literary/visual device used by artists, writers and avant-garde filmmakers of the 20th century. In this text, this device is used to conceptually assist in orchestrating the ‘fragmented’ written material, the text as whole, and the intertextual con-text of this research, and perhaps it is one method to be considered as a model to challenge and disrupt the ideological dominance of learning, teaching and producing (in studios, classroom, and sites of re-searching). Gregory Ulmer (1985) refers to this pedagogical device for his purposes of understanding the classroom as a place of ‘invention’ where re-constituted meaning amongst the various voices that reside in a learning space will flow amidst new spaces of creating/inventing learning. Here the language of de-centering (Aoki, 1993) to constitute new meaning between and amidst individual differences resounds. The studio/classroom is not a space of holistic compromise but rather provides an alternative to the “illusion” of a one point perspective by juxtaposing identity ‘and’ the relation to the space it inhabits. This is the dialogical classroom. A space of opportunity that transpires to move and disperse within and amongst the spaces of learning. I attempt to situate this project along tectonic fissures of marginality, to narrate the
merging of history and experience in this re-constituted space. This is a movement into "murky waters" (Campbell, 1995), a place between discourses, of discourses, on either side of the margin, and somewhere in between. To contextualize the "parallax" (Denzin, 1995) to follow, a closer look at the title of this study will provide the intonations of this 're-search'.

Syntax and intonations:
'Re-thinking'; 'Spaces of Production'; 'Re-writing'; 'Fragmented'

'Re-thinking':

The term refers to the junctures between experiences of learning and 're-searching' to representation and "identity formations in relations of and to power" (Szkudlarek, 1993, p. 64). This is illuminated in this process of thinking again the dynamics of individual identities and their relation to the landscape in which they are constituted. In this case, the term to re-think signifies a departure from the 'origin' to a reconstituted space where the conjunction 'but' begins its performance. It acts as a point of departure to question historicized past and engage present/future possibilities. Functioning as a pivot, this conjuncture welcomes the possibility for narratives to 'take flight' from the 'once upon a time' to the 'elsewhere' of prevailing paradigms and for spectators/readers to be cognisant of the multiple interpretations that permeate from diverse histories. For example, focusing on various issues to question the symbolic order of women's subjectivity, Teresa de Lauretis (1993) turns to the rhetorical strategy employed by Virginia Woolf when she began her public address with the word "But".
("But, you may say..." the "but" anticipating the question(ing) of her title, setting up a dialogue, a divergency, an immediate objection to her speech by her audience) remarks both the theme and the strategic gesture of her title, and like an echo chamber causes them to resonate and to expand. (de Lauretis, 1993, p. 398)

'Spaces of Production':

These are the spaces of art production, 're-search' spaces, classroom spaces, cultural and social spaces that properties of learning are filtered through. This "dialogic and discursive" (Bakhtin, 1984) space suggests a pedagogical shift in the ways that we must reconsider the implicit meanings that evolve alongside of/in the margins of contained and embodied objects in the classrooms/studios of production.

'Re-writing':

"Writing as texting, mapping, ideologically composing" (Clifford, 1986) - re-writing as re-texting, re-mapping, re-ideologically composing (paraphrasing Clifford); this is the act that occurs between the made and the re-making which occurs in the translating process that is offered through the interchange of meanings. Here the learning is a carrier of meaning through sounds, keeping in motion, shifting, exchanging.... "Re-writing is a re-making...which expose[s] the extent to which our reality has been invaded by fiction" (in communication with Dr. Ted Aoki, 1995). It is a polyphonic text that combines an interchange of utterances among 're-searcher', 're-searched', other texts, and the exchanges to be considered.
'fragmented':

To re-write (to teach, produce, perform) from text to text, narratives and theories, as they come together on these pages, not as embalmed entities, but as fragmentary sources to narrate yet another fragmented re-told story. Strands of assembled "truth[s] told only from what 'I' know" (Clifford, 1986) will then prevail.

"Watching daily the grass turn to a brownish mulch and the humidity develop inside the glass box, the transformative process beckoned that I continue to engage in the process as a piece unto itself" ('Between Dwelling', 1993, excerpt from journal entry on my past art work, November 1995).
Configuring the text

Norman Denzin (1995) provides a critique of research methodologies and makes a distinction between modernist and postmodern qualitative inquiries. He advocates a di'-vision' from "postpositivist ethnographic" approaches in educational research. Denzin states that "unlike its postmodern counterpart, this traditional text [referring to the modern] does not attempt to connect mobile, moving, shifting minds....there is no attempt to create a parallax of discourses where nothing is stable. If such were the case, there would be discourse on discourse, discourse on perspective, point of view, language itself" (p. 7). To divert writing away from what Denzin calls "embalmed, transcribed speech" (1995, p. 13) to one that requires "a new form of looking, hearing, and feeling" (1995, p. 17) will entail that my act of 're-searching' challenges the 'trappings' of conventional text, the 'trappings' of "forms of a constraint in and against which women's thought and creativity, fantasy and imagination have had to, and still must, define themselves" (de Lauretis, 1993, p. 393), and the 'trappings' of traditional classrooms for the transmission of constructed knowledge.

Haraway is arguing for a politics and epistemology of location, positioning, and situating where rational knowledge claims are based on partiality and not universality, what Haraway (589) refers to as "the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity." It is important to recognize that she is referring here to doing critical work in "unhomogeneous gendered social space" (what better description of the classroom can we get?) and in order to decode the conflicting discourses operative in such a space - or to liberate such a space - we must follow Haraway (589) in seeking an approach that "is always interpretive, critical, and partial...a ground for conservation, rationality, and objectivity - which is power-sensitive, not pluralist "conversation." This is what Haraway (589) refers to as "the joining of partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position." What this implies for critical educators is a sensitivity to the agency of the subjects' (students') generative bodies. (McLaren, 1991, p. 152-153)
I leave with the reader the presentation of hybrid terms, a space of negotiation both in the text and the studio. A space which always allows the “flight of a third term” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983), and a fourth term and a fifth term...
the TWO WAY mirror, RE-FRACTing, SUPERIMPOSING,
CONFRONTing IDENTITY:

OSCILLATING THE TEXT ("the lesson[s] that we cannot ignore")

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4Spivak, (1993) on the “taxonomic talk of paradigms” (p. 75-76).
...the non-conclusive act of reading and re-reading, 
writing and re-writing, 
listening and re-listening, 
telling and re-telling, 
I stopped (in the silence of the dwelling place) 
to listen to my experience that these stories, 
theories and practices spoke with.... 
(Sept. 21/94 journal entry)

“What is it to learn and to unlearn?” (Britzman, 1995a, p. 152). Deborah Britzman echoes Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s question and asks us to destabilise the body of knowledge that has shaped our actions in education and in the production of educational research. “[P]edagogies that call into question the conceptual geography of normalization” (p. 152) reject the dominant order that has historically been ascribed to the processes and productions of our educational and research performances. The method of inquiry I’ve suggested enables us to re-think our practices in hopes of critically engaging and disrupting the learning and teaching that occur within various institutions.
As the process of this project continues to unfold, I, as researcher, accept the intermingling translation offered by various theorists and writers in the field of education, art, and critical theory who have made contentious the framing and the freezing (as opposed to friezing) of representation, of location, and of our pedagogical inquiries. The lessons offered by these writers will assist this project in ways that will historically ground, shift and challenge our understanding of feminist, postmodern, artistic and pedagogical issues affecting our spaces of production. Therefore, a closer reading with/in a shifting polyphony of voices - from the scenes of postmodern and feminist contentions, art communities, and the spaces of education - is essential if we are to ask questions such as, “how is it to learn and to unlearn” the ways of learning, teaching, and producing that are replicated in our space of production.

On The Line

The “host” as it resounds with/in the text leads through the spaces where the words resonate, through the oscillation of text, while carrying with it voices, through a procession of translations, enabling me to listen to the experiences as they resonate through personal experiences - a pedagogical reaching - the sharing of stories - creating and continuing narratives from one sound to another and back again - an echoing that reciprocates yet carries new meaning - as intonations vary according to the geographical landscape that it touches - body, mind and spirit. (Mastri & Smith, 1995, p. 11)

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5This subheading is borrowed from a book titled On the line by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1983). Lines: complex, multiple, rupturing, between, nomadic, moving, . . . a thought to consider as I attempt to physically ‘trace’ differently the paths that have followed me.
The NAEA's (Art Education, 1994) address of 'major research needs' integral to the promotion of quality visual art education has opened the perimeters for researchers to critically address future possibilities. Suggested is that “it is necessary to explore a wide variety of research issues that will facilitate examining, negotiating, and modifying commonly held beliefs in the field of art education.” It is in this space that my interests lie. Some suggestions for research consideration are as follows: “what definitions of art are being used in art education programs” and “how might feminist inquiry and post-modern critical theories influence art teaching practices?” These questions pose an interesting challenge for researchers and educators in visual art education in light of current theoretical, feminist and postmodern discussions. Deployed is a forum that critically looks at diverse ways meanings of representation are disseminated as discussions position themselves within the complexities of current approaches to question identity and representation. For my purposes I pause in the spaces that make possible such an inquiry, and ask, “how will such an inquiry allow a space for re-search to create within such terms - art, postmodern, feminism - that are themselves in perpetual motion, while extending knowledge that contributes to research which itself is contingent upon this instability?”

*Our own integration of politics into pedagogy...does not work from an existing marginalized space, instead, it looks to create spaces in which relationships among the pedagogical participants are realigned, shifting the balance of power and authority and thereby challenging the ways in which institutional relations and local actions construct what is considered appropriate within relationships. (Thompson and Gitlin, 1995, p. 132)*
Postmodern and feminist theories that make contentious dominant ideologies (e.g., closed and unifying singular Truths, positivism, institutionalized and normative knowledge claims) and essentialist framing of identities, and the ways we come to learn and know, demonstrate how shifting ideological, theoretical, and structural systems actively partake in problematizing fixed notions of, in our case, pedagogical and artistic practices. Provisional claims suggested by these discourses challenge theoretical epistemologies which contain meaning within fixed perimeters of unifying "truths", and for the purposes of this project, it is important that diverse perspectives be taken into account.

**Considering the lessons of postmodern and feminist theories**

Postmodernism grew out of ‘peoples’ recognition of unadaptable metastructures that configure our social and cultural mobilities. Its philosophical premise is initially derived from the argument of the demise of foundationalism philosophy, thus revealing the instability of systems of knowledge that historically produce the conditions of cultural identities as intact bodies. Lyotard’s critique of grand ‘meta-narratives’ posits a definition which displaces the "totalizing, universalizing ‘metanarratives’ and the humanistic view of the subject" (Lather, 1991, p. 5), while theorists such as Foucault, Derrida, Spivak and others offer textual sites to negotiate differences and to resist the universality of a unitary body of knowledge and identity.

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6It is necessary to emphasize that postmodern and feminist theories do not hold unifying philosophical agendas. Conceptions of postmodernism and feminism carry conflicting and contesting views within and amongst varying factions. I have singled out examples which for my purposes provide adequate critique to challenge dominant ways of knowing.
Foucault refers to the “indignity of speaking for others”.

An understanding of contemporary relating of power and the Western intellectual’s role within them requires an examination of the intersection of a theory of representation and the political economy of global capitalism. A theory of representation points on the one hand, to the domains of ideology, meaning, and subjectivity and on the other, to the domain of politics, the state, and the law. (Spivak, 1988, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”)

Referring to Derrida’s contributions to the use of deconstruction, Spivak acknowledges how it can be used to make founded political programs more useful by making their in-built problems more visible”. Spivak looks at deconstruction’s association with feminism. “Deconstruction does not aim at praxis or theoretical practice but lives in the persistent crisis or unease of the moment of techne or crafting”. (1993, p. 121)

Such perspectives are influential in offering us an appreciation for the many domains which exist between and among various identities that enter educational institutions, and therefore, the influences can be as contradictory as the sites of production themselves in which they are intended to influence - or as Spivak would say, “an explosion of marginality studies in college and university teaching”(1993, p. ix).

As the margin or “outside” enters an institution or teaching machine, what kind of teaching it enters will determine its contours. (Spivak, 1993, p. ix)

The questioning of re-presentational and re-presentative knowledge has contributed greatly to the disruption of dominant educational inquiries and to “theoretical orthodoxy” (Jardine, 1988, p.10). Not surprisingly, feminist theoretical debates continue to challenge and problematize founding frameworks of prevailing paradigms which seek to construct a quintessential truth about experiences, identity and knowledge. This has led to new approaches
in educational inquiries (Bhavnani, 1993; Britzman, 1995; Griffiths, 1995; Haraway, 1988; hooks, 1994; Roman, 1990; Spivak, 1993; etc.). By challenging the very questions being posed, the language that saturates knowledge claims and the autonomy of research in this era of postmodernity, feminist approaches to research, theory, art production, and pedagogical practices have fuelled divergent conceptions of theoretical epistemologies. Foregrounding feminist concerns, Bhavnani (1993) states that “knowledge production is...a historical process” with conflicting and opposing interests, going on to say that feminist epistemological projects that challenge positivist approaches to knowledge “can demonstrate that objective knowledges are situated and partial, not impartial or disembodied, and neither are they transcendent” (Bhavnani, 1993, p. 96). This emphasis on divergency and plausibility moves toward the displacement of the essential in spaces of production.

Furthermore, considering research in art education, recent graduate projects have addressed, for example, pedagogical questions from a feminist perspective. Issues that challenge the dominant ideology by placing women’s epistemologies at the fore are actively problematizing and engaging re-search from a feminist ideological perspective. For example, Yvonne Madelaine Gaudelius (1993) explores women’s identity, subjectivity and how these issues counter dominant ways of seeing, representation and constructions of desire to include issues of spatial representation (local, personal, geographical, cultural, political). She asks “how does the work of artists question and re-write systems of meaning and positions of women-as-subjects?”(p. 28). Such questions make problematic the ideological systems provided for our calculated education that excludes conflicting identities and interests.

"Knowledge...is 'always provisional, open-ended and relational' in the sense that 'one theory, one method of analysis, or one concept of the subject cannot unproblematically be applied to all women in all contexts." (Teresa de Lauretis in Thompson and Gitlin, 1995, p. 132)
Narrative 1: Co-mingling stories of studio experiences  
a polyphonic text of dispersed meaning

Taking a back seat to the narratives of our experiences, I find myself entwined in histories of student's identities in the studio and classrooms of production and to issues that address identity, representation and location. Codes were made visible and it became apparent that shifts prevailed according to our demographic positions, social, cultural and gendered histories. In coming to compose the stories, I was granted the privilege, as narrator of this project, to highlight the experiences as they developed in the text/ure/ing of this text.

In our studio practices at the undergraduate level, the silence of contradictory ideologies was at times evident. Much of our artistic obsessions focused on technique - mastering, manipulating and learning the how to's - our spaces seen through the straight lens of production - recreating as it were, art school. Did it teach us how to think, how to act, how to see, what was appropriate and what was inappropriate?

L. talks about the paled surfacing of skin as it sheds an identity that for her stripped self to veil self as an appendage on a wall awaiting to be peeled from her surface onto another - to be applauded or ostracised in the course of the critique.

N. reconstructed skin of self in rendering forms through the veil of puppetry as it juxtaposed an intensely silent scream - mirroring her wall of history.

I instead "Played the game" of stifling and making subversive my serious intentions.
Critical pedagogists, for example, have sought to re-think and deconstruct the language of traditionally secured structures of meaning that construct individual identities. By disseminating language that sustains the foundation of educational ideologies, identity politics, and production, critical pedagogues have created a space to linger as more questions are posed concerning the complexities of education in the contemporary world. This trend is evidenced in methodological and theoretical qualitative inquiries loosely affiliated with postmodern and/or feminist paradigms. (Aoki, 1993; Britzman, 1995; Child et al, 1995; Clifford, 1986; Denzin, 1995; Giroux, 1991; Thompson and Gitlin, 1995; Lather, 1986; Roman and Apple, 1990; Slattery, 1995; Szkudlarek, 1993; Trifonas, 1995; Tyler, 1986, to name a few). Recent literature introduced in educational resources and journals, research and graduate work in art education (for example: Abrahams, 1988; Balomenos-Trifonas, 1993; Garber & Gaudelius, 1992; Gaudelius, 1993; Moniques, 1994) demonstrates a wide range of attempts to grapple with the connotations implicit to a shifting postmodern paradigm. Consistent with these critical perspectives is that they make contentious patterns of logic and reasoning that have been historically propagated by human science research. By articulating and making problematic the academic and power structures that confine our academic performances - as teachers and students - the narrational and critical writings presented by these theorists intersect with challenges to re-think the traditional conception of ‘researching’ objectively the lived experiences of research subjects. Abbreviating a point of view from a postmodern perspective Child et al. (1995) state that:

*Postmodernism attacks a constellation of modern beliefs which construe the world as ultimately reducible, through rational/empirical means, to discrete entities, or essences, which are causally governed by universal laws. The ‘essences,’ and their governing ‘laws’, are represented and reproduced in what Jean-Francois Lyotard and others refer to as ‘metanarratives’ - grand stories which purportedly reduce the world to ‘unity, certainty, universality, and ultimacy’. (p. 167)
In this intermediating space among various educational perspectives, a shifting terrain is currently engaging tensions and ambivalence which strongly support the place that contemporary critical scholars currently reconcile amidst. Peter Trifonas’ (1995) essay, “Objectivity, Subjectivity, and Relativism: The Case for Qualitative Methodologies in Educational Research”, points out the genealogy of educational research and states that contemporary philosophies in qualitative pedagogical inquiries are re-framing discourses within dominant epistemological paradigms that question ‘qualitative forms of analysis’. Trifonas states that the “nonfoundationalism of contemporary relativists have rejected outright the plausibility of discerning the accuracy of claims to knowledge in an absolutely objective ontological or methodological sense” (p. 89). I argue that by confronting and problematizing the power relations that construe meaning in pedagogical spaces of learning - a space where tensions and glitches are actively encouraged - evokes a space where contradictory dimensions of identity reveal the ways learning experiences are constructed in the classrooms, the ways that art is produced in schools, institutions, and art communities. In research, we can challenge the ways identity is constructed. The textual performance of this project - re-searching, translating, interpreting, writing - demonstrates this by bringing together various elements of voice, narration and interpretation to present the instability of normative researching practices which attempt to make epistemologically sound conclusions about learning experiences.

*The intent of the tape recorder was to make doable my performance as a recorder and transmitter of stories. I would supposedly spread the word directly from the source. But the truth was that the language of learning was contained on a magnetic strip which could potentially be contaminated by my granted power as a re-searcher to derive meaning that would adequately substantiate my pre-meditated objective goal.*
Art communities as heterogeneous sites

In the scene of postmodernism considered

The question posed by the NAEA - "what definitions of art are being used in art education programs?" - gives us an opportunity to consider the fundamental necessity to re-think the scene of postmodernism and feminism and to present some current trends in contemporary art production.

Robert Merrill (1988) in Ethics/Aesthetics: A post-modern position (1988) compiles a collection of writings that challenge "new way(s) of thinking about our work" (p. xi) by re-writing questions arising out of post-modern discourses. In this text, Linda Hutcheon (1988) offers a fitting meaning for the label of postmodern as first used in architecture. Launching her definition of postmodernism as "parodic or ironic in its relation to the past- both formal and social, aesthetic and ideological," (p. 1) Hutcheon offers her understanding of a process which seeks to re-think its very own meaning of production, that is, an active meta-analysis of its production. The "inscription and contestation of prevailing norms, both aesthetic and ideological" (p. 2) is a paradox with which postmodernism contends. Hutcheon refers to the "double-edged sword" of postmodernity stating that it is not one that denies or contests but rather functions to "problematicize the entire notion of the representation of reality" (p. 3) and suggests that to question the complexities requires that we be implicated in the choice of what we "choose to challenge" (p. 3).

Postmodernism...questions how and why, and does so by self-consciously, even didactically, investigating the politics of the production and reception of art. To challenge a dominant ideology, it recognizes, is itself another ideology. To claim
that questioning is a value in itself is ideological; it is done in the name of its own
power investment in institutional and intellectual exchanges within academic and
critical discourse. And, of course, the very act of questioning is one of inscribing
(and then contesting) that which is being queried. In other words, the very form of
interrogation enacts the postmodern paradox of being both complicitious [sic] with
and critical of the prevailing norms - which it has inscribed by its very questioning.
(Hutcheon, 1988, p. 4)

In reference to postmodern art, Hutcheon points out that the performance of production
be accepted as a ‘hybrid’ interplay between the framing of our critical and theoretical actions:

"it is both self-reflexive and ‘worldly’ (Said 35). Its deliberately unresolved
paradoxes serve to underline, not to smooth over, the complex contradictions within
our socially determined patterns of thinking and acting”. (p. 5)

It is this “worldly and self-reflexive” space that contemporary art seizes upon to disseminate the
language of representation and disrupt the totalizing inscription of identity and production. The
critique of framing what is deemed acceptable for production and consumption, and how one
visually communicates, continues to challenge the ideologies within the system of ‘art making’
that contemporary critical discussions have inspired.

In the scene of contemporary art discourse considered

Diane Nemiroff (1995) notes, in her contribution to the catalogue accompanying an
exhibition of nine contemporary Canadian artists works on display in Japan, the shifting frame of
“aesthetic strategies” that diverse contemporary Canadian artists are addressing in their works.
Here it is possible to consider how an oscillation between texts functions to re-address prevailing
issues and “lessons that cannot be ignored.” She states that:

*the basic aesthetic strategy is that of framing...General Idea frames the role of the
artist itself, offering a playful, but trenchant critique of the powerful notion of the
artist as inspired genius whose art is the expression of a unique subjectivity. The
manipulation of the frame of reference to create a mobile, shifting view of reality is
a postmodern strategy that is particularly familiar to Canadian artists (p. 129-130).*

In *Spirits on the Crossing Travellers to/from Nowhere: Contemporary Art in Canada 1980-94*
(1995), Nemiroff addresses the patrilineage of dominant Canadian culture as it is deconstructed
by these exhibiting artists. In reference to Jana Sterbak’s art work the critique of power and
identity is “located in the self and the body” (p. 131). The close links in the “connection between
power and identity,” she states, are associated with the artist who operates in the position of
marginality. Furthermore, the shifting terrain ascribed to the processes of contemporary art
production embrace issues of race, class, and identity which are not necessarily concerned with
cosiness and humbleness. Works by artists exhibiting in this Japanese exhibition, according to
Nemiroff, “underlines the fact that in a hybrid society identity cannot be unitary, but must partake
of a doubling and superposition of identities one upon another” (p. 131). Co-opting the broad
language of feminism and postmodernism, the range of works produced by these artists manifests
critical concerns which is revealed through their diverse artistic agendas and aesthetic
approaches. Working within tensions to critique identity and representation of hegemony,
themes take on several forms to critique the staged power structures.

Examples of paradoxical discourse and approaches in contemporary art practices are
further elaborated for our consideration in education. bell hooks (1995) draws upon various
‘subaltern’ artists in order to understand the nature of marginality sustained in the language of colonialism and the language which continues to be perpetuated as a form of colonialism within the spaces of academic so called radicalism. Hal Fosters’ compilation of “essays on postmodern culture” (1983) point to discussions that contribute to theories that suggest the necessity to blur the boundaries of secured identities. While a recent publication, *Youth culture killed my dog (but I don’t really mind)* (1995), produced in conjunction with an annual exhibition of young contemporary Chicago art, suspends the forces of oppositionality to bring to view the mediating spaces in which artists work amidst. For example, artists Hendrika Sonnenberg and Chris Hanson’s ongoing collaborative efforts eclipse the fractured spaces between the mundane, the sur-real, and the laborious task of making visible the familiar that would normally pass right by us.

*Abandoned in a vacant lot with only gravel, scrap wood, and various detritus on hand, Sonnenberg and Hanson spent the afternoon trying to raise the steel plate uniformly an inch or two off the ground, just enough to make its levitation evident to themselves (and whomever else might happen to notice).*

*(Scanlan, 1995, p. 48)*
In the scene of contemporary art production translated by art education

Unfortunately, stereotypes of what art production means to some still persist. Essentialized notions about artistic practices still need to reconcile with the discourse of difference as it exists in contemporary art practices. As we near the 21st century these myths continue to reiterate where we once were. Modernist preoccupation's with the unique identity and individuality of the artist, essentialized notions of "women's art," the glorification of navel-gazing as a creative act, art understood as a cathartic masturbatory act performed in the artist studio (e.g., Nick Nolte in the film New York Stories, one of many examples) continue to veil the complexities of perceptions and experiences for us within and out of art school. Griselda Pollock (1985) identifies two dominant conceptions of art that permeate the spaces of studio practices; the bourgeois, which she identifies as a celebration of individualism, self-motivation, and the self-creating artist, and the romantic idea of the artist which values subjectivity (p. 10). These dichotomous conceptions of artistic practices are crucial for us to acknowledge if we are to re-understand the complexities of these labels and thus avoid repetition in re-searching practices.

While the language of critical and cultural theory is linked with current theories of art practices, perhaps it is time to understand the importance of this intersection essential for the art classroom. The recommendation welcomed by the NAEA suggests that it is perhaps time to shift the manner in which these issues are addressed. We have the vocabulary to understand the challenges of hegemonic practices, but is it possible that we may still be appropriating, re-inscribing and re-translating uncritically the histories of past myths about art into a new meaning that re-perpetuates the codes of tradition? These brief examples of issues concerning contemporary artists suggests that tensions pervade diverse art practices and, therefore, the notion of spirituality and home is one which might need to be re-considered or considered differently
with respect to art students practising roles in the studio. To deconstruct and en-frame this discourse differently is necessary for contemporary pedagogical discussions.

*Kati Campbell’s discussion on Purity and danger: Theory and practice and their incestuous relations* takes “seriously a paranoia about theory prescribing practice in regards to art making.” She stated in her talk that she wants to “put under review the traditional idea that one mode of action must predominate in a given discipline irrespective of the conditions of a historical moment. It seems to me that what has to be attended to rather is the significance of why certain approaches come to predominance at a given period - that is, trying to examine what this is in response to. If there is a fear for example that by no longer being able to take for granted the precise task for art, its form and materiality, and its locale of practice, that art will flounder. It might be wise to consider the consequences of keeping everything in their proper places, art in its ring, theory in its, politics in yet another.” (ECIAD symposium, February 17, 1995)

Pedagogical issues of teaching practices, feminist pedagogy, research methodologies and curriculum theories share commonalties with the challenges that I have been placed with/in this 're-search'. A recent symposium held at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (February, 1995) entitled *Pedagogical issues in contemporary art and culture: A symposium* offered four very different pedagogical positions presented by instructors of the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and Simon Fraser University’s visual arts department. Recognising the gap between theory and practice, Vancouver artist and theorist Kati Campbell, spoke about the tensions that existed between students’ knowledge of art production and their actual art producing experiences. She described the widely differing modes of production of her students, ranging from the “semantic doodlers”, to those who strove for a “mastery of the object”, to those who “exonerated the self in the impressive labour intensiveness of production which reflects an older model of art practices - that is a very technical virtuosity”, to the “mythical creation [of] seductive loss of self”, and to production as a “meditative trance like state.” The numerous
individual approaches to art making disallowed Campbell to submit as an educator to what she called “paradigms of closure.” Instead she referred to herself as always needing to “think(ing) hybridly” among these contradictions of production, theory and practice. Campbell spoke to her position within and between the conventional practices in the art studio and the invigorating spaces which she occupies daily.

**Stretching the aesthetic boundaries**

**In the scene of education**

Controversies regarding the meaning of terms such as modernism, postmodernism, feminism continue to provide tensions for those grappling to put theory into pedagogical practice.

What is interesting to note though is the exchange that is occurring between disciplinary boundaries. For example, recent theoretical writings have turned to view artistic practices as a metaphor for the support of pedagogical inquiries.

A recent addition to discussions addressing the potential for an aesthetically informed approach to the ways education and research are perceived can be found in a special issue of the journal *Educational Theory* (Winter 1995, Volume 45, Number 1). Dedicated specifically to issues that challenge normative assumptions about research and about art, this edition provides convincing arguments that challenge our perceptions of *art* and suggests that we re-think the complexities "mediated by the discourses of the arts" (Grumet, 1995, p. 36).

Madeleine Grumet discusses the legacy of modernism and the way art is viewed and reproduced in schools, which she believes has led "art away from the curriculum, isolating it on an island of professional practice and specialised study" (p. 36). She states that:
It is not surprising that many teachers would find this agenda (modernist) daunting. Nor is it surprising that educational researchers would be discouraged from adopting aesthetic means to represent school experiences if they too huddled under the umbrella of the modern. The social function of educational research, the collective interest in its conclusions, and the expectations that its findings will affect practice militate against the revelatory and autonomous pretensions of modernity. The portrayal of the artist as an agonizing misfit discourages those who work in schools and universities from identifying their work with aesthetic practice. (Grumet, 1995, p. 39)

Grumet extends her critique of art education’s "split-off" from educational communities, and reminds us that a move into the postmodern era entails not a de/vision of segregated utopian enterprises that compete for integral autonomy and replicate modernist knowledge claims, but is one that should resist disciplinary boundaries. Her paper challenges those working in the field to re-think the ways conventionality is reproduced. She specifically critiques dominant tendencies within the field of art education and emphasises the significance of an aesthetically and artistically informed postmodern pedagogy.

Amidst discourses that advocate postmodern sensibilities as a strategy to re-think curriculum development, we find Patrick Slattery (1995) arguing, in Curriculum development in the postmodern era, for an “aesthetic informed curriculum” as one of “six ways to explore postmodern curriculum development” (p. 207). He suggests that such an approach be used in curriculum development and for qualitative inquiry as a way of freeing research from the dogma of closure. Although having made his argument for an aesthetically informed curriculum meaningful, he falters when he privies art as a cathartic journey in his narration of experiencing Jackson Pollock’s paintings. In spite of his good and serious intention, the message we receive unfortunately re-echoes the granting of the ‘art of painting’ as the embodiment of aesthetics and thus reiterates a gesture towards pure formalist dogma. In no way am I undermining the importance of Jackson Pollock’s work and his symbolised status as a radical changer of the social
role of art and the chance element ascribed to his process of painting, since his contribution to art and re-thinking the act of painting was, and certainly continues to be, influential. But what I do question is 'the picture Slattery is painting' about artists and art making for pedagogical theory and practice.

In this so called era of postmodernity, Slattery’s interpretation is problematic in context to art production. Referring to methods of art criticism to substantiate his critique of “curriculum development in a postmodern era,” Slattery fixates on the formal qualities of interpreting a work of art. He states that “the critic as connoisseur evaluates the impact of the unique balance of color in the entire context of the painting as used by the artist to achieve a synthetical and empathetic relationship with the viewer” (1995, p. 211). By highlighting this formula for ‘methods of critique’, he excludes ‘meaning’ intended by many artists, their convictions and not always verging interests. Given Slattery’s conviction to welcoming an aesthetically informed curriculum suggests to me that it is perhaps a necessary request that researchers, curriculum developers, and educators, avoid complying to a language that defines the artist as a quintessential ‘type’ by paying homage solely to the formal, stylistic or self-expressive devices of art making and accept also the intellectual, social, personal and political agendas that artists carry with them into the scene of art production.

It is this discourse of making central the formalist stress on ‘materiality’ as the sole contributor to an “aesthetically informed curriculum” which can be challenged through the lessons of feminist art criticism (de Lauretis, 1988; Garber & Gaudelius, 1992; Lippard, 1977; Pollock, 1985, 1987, 1988; Solomon-Godeau, 1984). One challenge suggests the necessity to go beyond the mere personal into questions of ideology, culture, and production of meaning, and to critique dominant reproduction of sexual and social sites of representation. Feminist thought is
not without contradictions. In terms of feminist aesthetics, the agendas oscillate between "political activism, consciousness raising, self expression," through to deconstructing the material and means used in art production itself adapted as an approach to disengage the ideological code imbedded in representation of the 'other' (de Lauretis, 1988).

From the side of contemporary art, the ideology of aestheticism has pushed the creative boundaries beyond privatisation and individualism of experiences. Slattery's proposition for an aesthetically informed curriculum prompts an appreciation of theoretical and disciplinary openness. However, the insistence on certain assumptions about art making must be reconsidered in light of shifting aesthetic ideologies. And perhaps it is time we listen to this language of shifting ideologies that contemporary artist engage in the re-definition of aesthetic and formal knowledge.

Kati Campbell stated in her talk that fear of theory has infiltrated the curriculum of art practices and refers to the writings of Mary Douglas' 1968 book entitled Purity and Dirt to describe this fear. She acknowledges the thesis that "control of culture by constructing borders and the objects associated with them - things out of place - disrupt order and produce various kinds of anxiety - fear of things being out of place that produces our notion of contaminate, dirt and the abject...." (ECIAD symposium, February 17, 1995)

Campbell sees "theory and art making as parallel practices which continually inform each other . . ."
L’s transition into a feminist informed space was not an easy one, but a welcomed one - that is, the switch from “technical virtuosity” (borrowing from K. Campbell’s talk) to a myriad of ‘critical, conceptual, intellectual virtuosity’ required a new way of thinking and a different way of thinking about art making and issues of gender, identity and self representation. The shift was not altogether endearing to the institution but for L., by the sounds of it, this personal disruption was invigorating. The disruption was evident as it informed the manner of class/studio critiques, the procedures that one engaged in with their art making, the questions that one began to pose to themselves and that where posed to them carried a different inscription. No longer did the discussions focus solely on pure formalist concerns, but the discussions now involved the artist as subject of/and/in/and/to their work and the institution of art making. L. described the feeling of being initially overwhelmed by the shifting “contours” of feminist informed discourses that shadowed her art production. She became obsessed with skin and her own body, history, family, identity became an integral theme. This she tells is her translation of feminist discussions that permeated her understanding of contemporary issues affecting art and vis-versa. After being questioned by her instructor - “why the frame?” - L.’s interests and approaches to making took a turn. She described her work to me as now interested in the dis-location and re-location of self and bodily obsession with self as a woman. In L.’s in-depth passionate disclosure about her experiences in the studio component of her studies, she carried through themes of her experiences describing them as transcending and transitional spaces - from one form of rigor to another form of rigor. The turn she embodied artistically was set within and against the backdrop provided by shifting paradigms of art production for which her instructors were now concerned.
Contextualizing the dis-rupt-ive learning spaces

“to erase the stage and transform the neutrality and distance separating actor and audience, master and pupil” (Ulmer, 1985, p. 175).

Subjects and objects in this performance inform and re-inform the constitutional space within which actions occur. Characters, spectators, participants, enter the arena, exchange meaning to re-constitute new meaning within this space of production. Pertinent issues emanate from personal, political, cultural, social and historical realities and give rise to difference and differences in the epistemological status of our concerns.

Bridging the “scene of teaching”

By rethinking the construction and reproduction of re-emerging practices, educational research as previously noted is turning to disrupt the ways we perform in learning and teaching spaces. Many educational theorists are committed to challenging dominant ways of knowing pedagogical relations. For example, Gregory Ulmer (1985) in Applied Grammatology addresses postmodern critical theories for a pedagogical transformation of teaching and learning relations. His suggestion is to break from “semiotic pedagogy” as transmitter of tradition and move towards “the classroom as a place of invention rather than reproduction” (p. 163).

Ulmer translates Jacques Derrida’s conception of “grammatology” as a move beyond conventional pedagogy in order to understand what “might take the place of conventional pedagogy” (p. ix). And to do so, he uses the notion of avant-garde performance art/experimental art to envision the grammatological classrooms new pedagogy (p. 174). Both pedagogically and
epistemologically, he seeks to envision a new pedagogy whereby the grammatological classroom and the written transmission of ideas shift accord.

Grammatology, in any case, requires the introduction of the subject into the scene of teaching - the inscription of one's own signature on the curriculum (each one is read by what he/she writes “on”), leading to the decentering of disciplinary identities. The relevant motto here is: “we must begin wherever we are and the thought of the trace which cannot take the scent into account, has already taught us that it was impossible to justify a point of departure absolutely” (Derrida in Ulmer, 1985, p. xiii).

According to Ulmer, the traditional pedagogical space - a neutral zone that separates the teacher from the learner, the identity of students from the learning experience, and the ‘actor from the spectator’ - must be erased to allow active glitches to transform pedagogical relations.

The classroom/studio is itself a theatrical site that is codified by the curriculum - the authoring of this text - authored through the textures of language - through the terms and questions posed by research, which may or may not carry with it a set of ideological constructs. Yet it remains our task to engage in re-thinking the ways in which we ascribe and imprint our performances as object forms of learning and thus to keep in motion the performance. This performance is itself a site of contradictions, paradoxes, tensions and glitches that present statements of the poetic heterogeneity that breathes life into our learning and teaching landscape.

In terms of understanding how a dynamic interplay that tends to remain dormant in many pedagogical spaces of production can be thought of in a new way, we can turn to consider the film theory of Trinh T. Minh-ha. Trinh (1992) recognises the importance of this activity of “shifting categories” and the “mixing of different modes of writing” (p. 138) that can occur in the “negative spaces” of the frame. She states that negative space is crucial to the depiction of
“hybridation” that occurs amongst individuals and their relations to self, history and the contexts in which they reside. This is the “space that makes both composition and framing possible, that characterizes the way an image breathes”... it is the space which “makes forms and contents possible” (p. 142) and in this space disciplinary boundaries are not kept intact. Coupling Trinh’s perspective with Ulmer’s assessment of the grammatological classroom affirms that the spaces which we as learners enter are crucial zones of negotiation, complex and shifting, and should be open for students and teachers to mediate various meanings and experiences that themselves will not be contained within pre-ordained frameworks. Perhaps this can be a lesson - the lesson of theatrics - between the didactic interplay of location, representation and multifaceted identities which communicate from many centres - that we can take along our paths of learning.

To inter-sect - as we step back to re-visit moments anew, we are reminded that contingency is not an isolated experience reverberating in opposition to, but rather mediates through moments of speech, to flow amidst new spaces of creating learning (“invention”).

Narrative 3: My 1st year painting

I quickly became aware of the strategy that Janet, my painting instructor, was employing in the painting class. Slightly intimidated by my inability to paint I decided that it was time to enroll in a six week summer 2nd year painting course. I assumed that everyone in the class had probably painted in the past. And here was I. I had never constructed a frame nor stretched a canvas before and this seemed to present a problem. Horror stories about the androcentric painting department were a fact at York University. Trying to avoid exposing my painterly ineptitude I began. I decided to rip long thin strips of canvas which I then stapled onto the walls of my studio space and proceeded to paint - what? I didn't know - I followed their path. Eventually the strips began to take form - moulding the pieces with variations of black on black -
three pillars began to appear - landmarks. My next move was to paint a backdrop for my paintings which had by then become pillars adhered to posts and cast in cement blocks. What could I use? - canvas was too expensive. I returned the next day with a bucket and two white cotton sheets - embroidered with lace and proceeded to paint my canvas - dunking - staining - hanging - drying - re-emphasising the crevices. During my feeble attempt to paint, my instructor offered continuous support by posing questions about painting, about the act itself, my inhibitions, and about what this obvious diversion from traditional painting methods meant to me at the time. Her critical support assured me that what I was doing was okay. Looking back to this studio experience, it was at this time that I recognised the importance of allowing students the space required for learning that on this occasion meant unlearning the techniques of painting in this class situation. Not only did I have the chance to confront my own inhibitions about painting, but the performance itself became a theatrical site of negotiation between the medium, myself, the instructor and the class critique. In the end, the painting had really nothing to do with painting per se, but opened up to the space which was awaiting to challenge our assumptions about painting, the genres and the stories that would be told around each individual piece. Here the tensions encountered coincide with the questions 'I' must confront as a re-searcher - processes of producing research and to re-define the very limits of the term 're-search' requires us to re-think the labels that name our textual practices of writing/producing/reading/performing. Re-framing my own position as the producer in the processes of composing this project became as important as the act itself and it was the spatial mobility that was allowing me, both in terms of medium and meaning, to do what I did.

The lessons that can not be forgotten and the lessons that need to be unlearned move with risks and contradictions. But it is precisely in this paradoxical space that educational inquiry must re-think in order to acknowledge taken for granted assumptions about our practices in production - to re-think our own inscription within and against broad generalisations - not to be captivated by the totalized gaze - to leave room for tensions and glitches to permeate and move with the fragmentary text into new meaning.
RE-THINKING "AGAINST THE TOTALIZING GAZE"

Peeking through any crevice available for our peering eyes, our curiosity began to build. L. and I were certain that what lay behind those tattered curtains promised that we would no longer have to squat in the corners of our tiny, windowless, basement apartments. We had roommates to respect. For us both, the problem was that we felt obliged to clean up after ourselves. Long after they were asleep our 'problem solving' was confined to the limits of our minds. The space we inhabited was re-translated to a space of cleanliness, purity, and camouflage. The artistic spread?
Captivated by the words of Hélène Cixous, I, too, bring with me her approach to writing.

*The texts that call me have different voices...*

*I have brought them with me,*

*I will make them resound. (1993, p.5)*

Cixous brings with her the essential act of taking flight - from one sound amidst another, between the texts and experiences of colliding *stories* told, *stories* untold, to contemplative *stories* and to *stories* re-seen in a new form - leading us to unravel our movement "between text, performance, unconscious, and biography" (Shiach, 1991, p. 33). This is the place of the "l'écriture féminine", "feminine writing":

*a place...which is not economically or politically indebted to all the vileness and compromise. That is not obliged to reproduce the system. That is writing. If there is a somewhere else that can escape the infernal repetition, it lies in that direction, where it writes itself, where it dreams, where it invents new worlds. (Sellers, 1994, p. xxix)*

‘It’ is a place where 'dialogical' intonations that carry sounds of personal history, culture, political realities collide - somewhere “between the speaker, the word, and the listener” (Denzin, 1995, p. 11) - ‘it’ is the third space - the hybrid space - the negative space - where one dreams and invents.
Art school experiences of N., L., and me: why we did what we did

The following text draws upon the stories shared by N., L., and me about our embodied experiences which influenced our work.

Narrative 1
between being inside of imagination and outside of language

I place myself in the spaces of production to re-think my spatial relation in a given time. That space which inspired/allowed/motivated/or determined my becoming.

"Yes We Bake", 1988 (written October 26, 1994)

As a collaborative work that involved myself and a friend, A. Dicresce, with whom at the time I worked closely, this work represents our response to the language between sculpting and essential notions of domesticated women.

Women weave, craft, quilt, make small objects and passively reflect. We were in an undergraduate sculpture class. In our futile attempt to 'knead' clay, in preparation to sculpt a representational figure of a nude, we were approached by our professor who kindly acknowledged our frustration by co-opting derogatory language to pose the question "don't you bake?". We decided to share our baking abilities.

The product: The sculptural installation consisted of an authentic "Rice Krispie square" measuring approximately 2' x 2'; which we laboriously baked in our kitchen for weeks; a pedestal to support the square; framed Rice Krispie square ingredients - rice krispies, marshmallows, butter, and the recipe; a television which continuously played old Kellogg's commercials that at one point was abruptly interrupted by music intended to disrupt the viewers recalling of their familiarity with these commercials - the music itself was disrupted by a speech given by the "Green and Common Women" during the Miners' Strike of the late 70's.

In the commercials, dominant images of the nuclear family dominated the screen - mother waving from inside the home to the family playing outside in the garden, calling them in to the prepared rice krispie meal awaiting them at the kitchen table.
The composition of the image is one that is classically patriarchal - co-opting the language of dominance and employed to sell a commodity vicariously achieved through the selling of family values to include the conventionalities of mother as nurturer, father as the maker of luxury and happiness and children as the reapers of tradition.

Using old commercials, we sought to reveal the perpetuation of oppression and subordination as we saw it through the depiction of the stereotyping of women and the family dynamics advocated by these images and through our challenge to the construction of the classroom that was held by our male professor.

This experience subverted our desire to continue with the assigned project. The power of language left us momentarily speechless and angry. All it took was one word - one comment and the scene had changed. Identifying this as a problem, that if left unspoken, would submit us to a personal silence and thus possibly the silencing of other women's sculpting experiences.

In response to the sexism and in response to our anger, we constructed an installation that required the viewer to position themselves with/in the act of compiling ingredients to produce something edible (literally and aesthetically). By deconstructing the elements - the various components of non-baking (in this case marshmallows, rice krispies, margarine, recipe) and the idea - (a ridiculously sized rice krispie square, jarred comfort, isolated and framed components, and the tension that would be cast by our reaction to both traditional sculpting and the obvious 'reaction to') - would enable us to raise into question the language that had led us to imagine such a work. Isolating the elements within frames, which were then placed on the walls, en-framing the space, the monumental square and the television monitor, we sought to question the monumentality of art making in this particular sculpture class. As a collaborative work, our continuous dialogue in the process of (b)(m)aking this work enticed us to question “why were we baking”? It was important for us, as women, to keep in check the significance of why we were doing what we were doing - and this responsibility became crucial in our continuous questioning of our subject position to the art studio and to our own works of art. Re-inscribing the act of perceiving of the work, the space we occupied in coming to conceive of this image and the act thereafter of re-thinking the spaces of our production hit a personal accord as we sat in a room, filled with our work, nervously awaiting to be critiqued.

As I flip through a book titled Cindy Sherman, 1979-1993 of artist Cindy Sherman's most recent work, I appreciate the incredibly powerful imagery as she stages her many layers of veneered self re-presentation. By staging herself to be everything from the Hollywood star we can easily identify with the symbolic “feminine as abject” (Ward 1992, p. 26). Sherman amplifies a critical view of a female identity. Her work epitomises a critique of women's spaces of production and critique of
where representation is re-produced. Her images provide constructions of "space as critique, creation, irony, contradiction and complexity" (Kondo, 1990, p. 43).

Through experimentation with multiple, shifting voices, I undertake a project to decenter and de-essentialize selves, focusing on the way people construct themselves and their lives in all their complexity, contradiction, and irony-within discursive fields of power and meaning, in specific situations, at specific historical moments. (Kondo, 1990, p. 43)

Re-visiting my experience

What enables the production of such works? This is a poignant question for art/education to address in light of theoretical discourses which foreground challenges to essentialist perceptions of students’ spatial, historical, demographic, social and cultural experiences in the spaces of art production. Without doubt many contemporary artists who critique the power of representation speak from a position of their immediate locations in the dynamic interplay of personal socio-cultural affiliations, of experience, and outside of the dominant discourse of pure aesthetics to provide the spectator/reader a point of entry that is a composite of critical, theoretical and visual queues. This inquiry is crucial in light of feminist and postmodern challenges of secured knowledge about the subject and practices of production.

Prevalent in feminist literature is a language of challenges, criticism, and commitment - one that supersedes the definitions of women’s solidarity - and turns instead to a language that symbolically re-represents to disrupt a dominant course of universalising and patriarchal events (Nicholson & Fraser, 1990; Probyn, 1990). Elspeth Probyn (1990), in referencing Adrienne Rich’s ‘politics of location’, points out “that we need to replace the assumption of universalism
and construct a feminist theory that starts from fragments of one's own body” (p. 177). Although the strategies intended are laminated in the incisive critique of 'construction of the feminine', controversies insistently (and thus much appreciated) continue within and among feminist strategic factions. But for our purposes, the acknowledgement of such struggles to coincide with the breaking down of fragmentary paths of experience (in this case art studios and learning institutions) is vital. Feminist literature has had a profound impact on educational research committed to blurring the boundaries, of self-critique and to the continual reassessment of meaning, of representation, and the reproduction of substantive knowledge. Therefore, to ask what conventions are being framed to organise the how, what, and where of the places we have come to know as spaces of production suggests that, as educators and researchers, we need to be rethinking for whom we teach/learn/research.

A recent meeting (August, 1995) with Alan Barkley, president of ECIAD, to discuss the statement that instigated this project, reconfirmed that feminism is not an isolated gesture confined to academic abstract theorising. From his experience, the passionate endeavours of women studio instructors jar the very patriarchal economy of privileging a static method of traditional production within the art institution. Feminism has disrupted the casting of a romanticised space where one engages in the act of production. According to Barkley, it is the continual questioning of the art institution by feminists that has, in the past 10 years, forced the dominant conception of art production to be re-examined at the ECIAD. The turf is no longer the glorified place which nurtures students' catharsis, but one which is undergoing criticism. Universalising claims of what making art means are thus suspended and somewhat disabled as the feminist instructors at ECIAD assure that the conventional constructs are engaged in the transformation and “redefinition of aesthetic and formal knowledge” (de Lauretis, 1988, p. 137).
Griselda Pollock’s 1985 article, *Art, art school, culture: Individualism after the death of the artist*, addresses female art students’ production practices in the culture of art schools. She articulates a view of art school culture resistant to a changing social and intellectual climate. The resistance is one which is met with antagonism towards challenges presented in the transforming of conventional art production that women have brought into the language of art school culture. Art schools as perceived “location(s) for the perpetual production of key ideologies” (1985/86, p. 11) continue to furnish the educational process with contradictory virtues of what art production essentially embodies which excludes the “educating” of art students, and instead vows to sustain the guise of *artist* in respect to the dominant ideal of “self-motivating and self-creating (as one) who makes things which embody that peculiarly heightened and highly valued subjectivity” (Pollock, 1985/6, p. 11). Controlling the experiences of studio occupants is a language that renders the concept of artist held taut by the agenda of a framed ‘masculinist’ space of production. The concerns Pollock raises builds upon an awareness of location in our production spaces where the fragmentary location of the personal/individual is reckoned as incidental and the dominating language controlling women’s challenging roles as artists is questioned. Although this article was written 10 years ago, this contesting perspective is worth pursuing given the language of the ECIAD’s article and also for developing feminist and postmodern sensibilities as suggested by the NAEA’s consideration for art education.

It is apparent that feminists’ refusals to compromise have shaken the institution and feminist theory can be seen as a turning point in our assumptions about the production of knowledge and art. From a similar space, I wonder where we, as researchers, producers, teachers and learners situate ourselves amongst this?
Narrative 2

On April 5, 1995 I met N. to listen to experiences she would share about the process of production in art school. Curious to hear what other women saw as essentially significant in the spaces in which they produced art, I listened and conversed with N.

Locating her experience, N. stimulated discussion about the many glitches that animated her space in art school. Prior to proceeding with the ‘questions’, N. walked me through her past ambitions and desires about coming to the world of art making. The images she provides reveal that the process was not transcended with ease. From high school through to art school, a number of altering artistic endeavours had to be sorted out. The pursuit was one of transitions. N. was driven by a personal desire which she acknowledges as a “hunger to know”. And somehow, my reading of this desire that she passionately retold about her past embodied much of what was later to follow in our conversation about confinement and the stretching of personal and physical boundaries in both her immediate artistic endeavours and in the medium of her present art work that filled the studio space where we conversed.

Locating experiences with N.:
finding a space of difference in her schooling

Rosa: ...“how did your experience of being in the studio inform your understanding of what art was to you? ...when you actually experienced being in the studio? ...think of your experience when you were in the class with the students and professors and how did that inform your understanding of making art at that time?"

N.: (pause) ...If I talk about the one that was my painting class 2nd and 3rd year painting at Emily Carr, one of the things that I inferred from being in those classes was ... one was that art was not important to the world and I thought this was kind of a really trivial marginal thing we were doing here and anything
was - that the 'art world' was pretty much dominated by man, ...my teachers were all men, and in my art history class when I saw documentaries about people who I admire in my generation, Warhol, Rauschenberg...well they were all men, ...I didn’t get a good sense of what I was doing and whether I might have a place.

Rosa: *hm hm*, in the art world you mean or in general?

N.: I didn’t feel like I had a place. Now I could see that there were other people and other students who *definitely* had a place and they were *definitely* going somewhere. When I was in 2nd and 3rd year that’s when the ‘Young Romantics’ where forming and the big show...I don’t know if you know about it

Rosa: no I don’t know

N.: oh, do you know Attila Lukacs

Rosa: yah

N.: well that whole...they were all art students a year ahead of me and they...most of them...they were called the ‘Young Romantics’. It was a movement that was created by a curator at the Vancouver art gallery.

Rosa: OK, the west coast

N.: yah and they gave it a lot of publicity and they tried to create a movement and everything and so a handful of these people who where students have gone on to become big painters.

**Glitches of persistence**

N.: ...I ended up switching departments. It was such a big thing to me that I really felt that I had gone through all of this to go to art school, and I felt that I had to get what I want out of this and I’m not getting it here, so I switched from the painting department to the interdisciplinary...and the purpose was to give me access to both departments...and that was more my sort of leaning.

Rosa: how was that experience?

N.: well that was (chuckling) very painful, it was very painful!

...and desire

N.: and personally it was hard for me, but I got to do some things that...I started to do things that were interesting , and I started to get...that’s where I started to get really motivated.

Rosa: do you see from there...what art started to mean for you, at that time? ...when did you start formulating in your mind, because you’ve talked a lot about all the shifts that you have gone through...the moves from Ontario to Quebec to art school to there, to here, to “I really want to be doing art”, from painting to performance...when did you start formulating in your mind what it was that you wanted to do having gone through all those “spaces” as Alan
Barkley would call it, of production and then you realising that” yah this is my space within it and this is what I want to be doing?”. When did that start to happen?

I try to draw from N. her interpretation - “how do you know that you have arrived” - I search for a critical incident, a beacon, a landmark, something to show.

N.: just in my last year when I was in interdisciplinary.

Rosa: and that’s when you started to do performance as well?

N.: yah, I started making masks and doing sculptural things...and...it started to relate to my...I always had a passion toward theatre...

Compartmentalisation - Boxes of Confinement and Negotiation

There is a distinction seen in N.’s telling of her transitional experiences - seen as a desire, as needing a place to come together. She talks about the division of disciplines, and she comes to a self realisation that it was already in her. N. describes her movements through the disciplinary compartments as a transition that “opened up” and as a movement that she says she had “to walk in the middle of” which she found difficult.

N.: I was the kind of kid that organised plays and stuff like that (chuckle) ...and I (in a more serious voice) had not pursued that aspect at all in my life and the performance art, I guess the dance that I had done too, sort of, sort of touched those things but performance art really brought those things together for me because before they all lived in different boxes and I found it very hard to go to art school and be a painter and then go to dance classes at night...none of it is connected...but in me they were connected...and in my last year, that’s when I think I started to think maybe when I get out of here, maybe I’ll be an artist. Maybe I will continue to be an artist...this is not just something...yah, yah...and so for me it was connecting these things that was important to me...
and finally finding a place for them. I didn’t think that I would actually be a performance artist.

Rosa: but that experience in itself... I mean just listening to you, I’m envisioning what you went through, I’m envisioning you now - when you talk about your experience through high school and then you talked about the transition to this (referring to where she is now), and now you’re talking about performance, theatre and dance, and making sculptural ... intervals into the space that surrounds you, and that space that you have almost come out of and working around, and?... how... is that something that you felt comfortable with? maybe that openness of it, of doing performance and doing theatrical work and even looking at these sculptures (I point to her works which surround us in the studio ), ... I see it as being something almost very ... microscopic in a way the way you’re describing the way you’ve gone through this process, but it’s also very open in a sense as though it’s expanded almost....

N.: hm, hm

Rosa: ...like you said the boxes, you know they were very much so box like, but in performance did you find that those boxes, especially interdisciplinary, that you could allow many boxes to come into that?

N.: yah

Rosa: and sort of co-mingle?

N.: yah and what I found was that, I was already there.

Rosa: yah exactly

N.: which was something that the people in my high school already saw

Rosa: yah

N.: that those things were, that those sort of bridging of meanings and all that kind of stuff was already in me...but I had compartmentalised everything and painting especially did that to me, and performance allowed me to incorporate my dance and incorporate my making of costumes, making of masks, sculptural things...working with issues, into working in collaboration with people, I mean all these things...and then I realised, wow, yah! (we both laugh)

Echoes of contradiction in women’s art practices

Griselda Pollock (1988) describes the working within/against the ‘hegemony of dominant discourses in art, where women, whose work embraces feminist intervention, position themselves. The discourse is one which negates dominant ideologies that represent and objectify
‘art, artist, women, cultures and societies’ and is one that we could equate to as working ‘against the totalizing gaze’. This language of oppositionality and againstness seeks to find new meaning in representative strategies presented by feminist artist who seek to deconstruct “the collective noun WOMAN in order to expose the social construction of femininity” (1985/86, p. 15).

... and resistance

This is obvious in ‘Yes We Bake”. Our drive to resist the unbearable categorisation of the “feminine” that was being ascribed to our sculpting abilities was at the time acutely significant. The space available to us in response to the patronising statement was pretty much so contaminated by the language that supported strategies of resistance and our imaginations in conceiving of this work was defined by this resistance.

... and ...

One strategy Pollock points to, using as example the works of artist Marie Yates, is the fragmentary components of personal and social history that are eclipsed as they work to tell a story. The story being told does not hermetically seal a truth for the viewer’s passive consumption, but functions to allow the viewer to locate self in the process of meaning making in the work’s telling. It is not presented as resolute. And through technical collaging/montaging of
imagery, photography and text, that intersect to tell a story about grieving, Yates tells a story of her histories "which has to be imagined by the spectator in order to make sense of the position from which the work is made" (Pollock, 1988, p. 187). This practice is not a foreign one. In the language of post-structuralism, on location and representation, the viewer is invited to actively partake in the meaning making.

What I am driving at is the weariness bestowed on the plight of individualism in art making that distances viewer and artists’ history and that disallows the engagement of locating the place from where one speaks. . .

The objective do’isms

. . . Like the objective do’isms that prevailed in N., L., and my re-told stories about studio experiences which isolated ‘self’ from the intertextuality of the spaces in which we produced.

N. described times of discouragement and not belonging - along with instructors’ refusal to acknowledge her desire to learn a technique and therefore was dismissed to go find out on her own - coupling this with her feeling of isolation when it came to the painting studio where certain people were at the fore while others, like herself, were nonchalantly forgotten. With each transition came another set of isolating experiences and the ever present I of individualism consumed each set of experiences - sequestering them into isolated, self sufficient, autonomous entities.
And L.'s endless hours of laborious endeavours to perfect the mastering of a technique was devoid of her 'as L.' - the person with a story, as a woman, as self-critic in the description of her experience which she relayed - that later on in our conversation took a turn. The focus of her re-told studio experience in the transitional narrative of producing in an arena of difference revived the absence of L. told in relation to the process of her production.

Whereas for myself, I equate this plight of individualism that distances my history in the method of researching taught in the institution of graduate school where I was encouraged to do. The process was confined to the endless hours of monologic production with meeting the product expectation - striving to produce the product in the form expected in order to 'master' the research technique.

In this space - in the hybrid intersection of subjective experiences and the 'real', meaning making is constituted within the processes that occur in those spaces that as learners we come to mediate within, that is with/in the interface of art making, where subjectivity and histories coincide.

**Narrative 3**

**Transitions, disruptions, and re-directions: in conversation with L.**

The conventional standards of art school that L. had grown to know in the first 2 years of her undergraduate visual arts program, as we heard earlier, took an abrupt turn. L. re-animates the event during our conversation by describing:
SKIN: the theme of her final project. She brought her expressions and challenges as a woman and art maker together to discourse with her present location in the studios of art production.

L.’s story: As she narrates her story about the experience of removing traces of her own shadow of body (skin) from herself to be traced on the wall as her projected other, L. continues to draw me into the vivid emotions that embodied her physicality and I participated as the engaged spectator embodying her stripping of self as self on the wall. The narration became more intricate as she proceeded to narrate the next step of removing the appendages of self (body), to trace (body), to cast (body), to erased (body). Her depiction of erasing the trace clearly works to map out in my mind the musings of her path from an embodied self to a stripped self - leaving behind and leading into (in my view) more questions about self/body/and the construction within a re-cast form.

She spoke about how her own physical presence was consumed in the processes of her production and articulated a presence that I too could relate to from my own past experiences. The institution of art production presents diverging paths to consider from an aesthetic, feminist, and postmodern perspective.

Her visual depiction - each word like glutinous electric tape - clung onto me and jolted life into the amorphous conversation now evolving. I turned to describe to her some of my experiences.... (May, 17, 1995)
Calling into question the process of "location" and the complexities that arise in the intersection between the place and its event is also central to the discussion presented by Elspeth Probyn (1990). By referencing Adrienne Rich's description of "girlhood games", Probyn addresses the problematic facing feminist theories situated with/in postmodernism of displacing subjectivity. In a paper titled Travels in the Postmodern: Making Sense of the Local, Probyn sees the "problematic composed of a number of intersecting critical questions: the epistemological constitution of knowledge, the ontology of the questioning subject, and the conjunctural question of where and how we may speak" (p. 177). These questions, when presented in context to meaning making in the production of art, negate the ascribed practices that descriptions about art making can contain. Thus this issue of location that meets in/between students' experiences foregrounds this process of inventing and rethinking new meaning in the spaces between the concept of production, the idea, and the processes which lead to its conception. Similarly, in this metaphorical re-thinking space, it seems appropriate that feminism provide incisive critiques for our "local/locale/locations" pursuits to (de)construct the spaces in which we can produce (see Nicholson and Fraser in Feminism/Postmodernism).

Far from being conclusive, discourse which coincides with feminist theory has opened many avenues for us in educational theory to re-consider our actions in the human sciences. Feminist theory is salient in our choosing of research methodologies, in discourse about pedagogical issues in the classroom, and in women's contemporary art practices. The language is not a foreign one but is at times still feared, loathed, and vulnerable to distortion.

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8This is re-borrowed from Probyn (1990) in her Travels into the postmodern: Making sense of the local as she participates in Rich’s metaphor of local to mean “the setting of a particular event”, locale which is “related to a particular time”, and location being the “method one comes to locate the site of research” (p. 178).
Bridging feminist art and postmodern critique

During my course work, the perennial question of 'why the lack of women's voices and experiences', still saturated the B.C. art education curriculum in this era of postmodern controversies. Seeking to "make" (in)visible the silences of women and to challenge the petrified notions of women art makers seemed at the time to be the logical pursuit. Yet, in order to acknowledge our convictions as critical cultural producers and as speaking subjects, a turn in this autonomous convention seemed inevitable. By acknowledging the hybrid critiques provided by various women artists who deploy questions of self-representation through diverse models of critique (for example Jenny Holzer, Frida Kahlo, Mary Kelly, Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, Martha Rosler, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Jana Sterbak, Carrie Mae Weems, to name a few) and within feminist art theory (Jardine, 1988; de Lauretis, 1984; Lippard, 1977; Mulvey, 1989; to name a few), a re-examination and re-thinking of my epistemological position, between the politics of 're-search' and the listening to experiences in their multiplicities is necessary. It is

*I italicize this word to emphasize my recognition of my privileged position as a giver of voice (see Pollock 1988, p. 165). Pollock in her elaborate critique of sexuality and representation states “[b]ut as feminists soon discovered the desire to make visible could not of itself produce knowledge” (p. 165). Contributing to the potential essentializing construct of women artists, it became essential for me to problematize this notion of representation (“...ethnographic gaze vs. ethnographic ear...” (Clifford, 1993, p. 12)) that prevailed in ethnographic research. Amidst the tensions of contradictory philosophical perspectives (critical pedagogy, feminist theories, deconstructive theories, hermeneutic) that seek to de-essentialize knowledge claims challenged my understanding of the power relations inherent in the language of research. Tomasz Szkudlarek (1993) in The problem of freedom in postmodern education provides a compelling critique that is mediated between the language(s) of postmodern critical pedagogies. "The hybridity that inevitably results from these endeavors, as well as from acts of resistance, is from the perspective of the needs of ‘identity under construction’ a particular disaster, a constant unfulfillment. But it is just the hybridity, the nonsovereignty, the amorphousness of the subject that, as I understand it, is the referent of educational projects in critical pedagogy" (Szkudlarek, 1993, pp. 113-114). This brought to light ethical and aesthetic questions in my so called research interest whereby it became necessary to step back and re-evaluate my subjectivity amidst this power relation.
argued that with/in feminist and (some) women's art and theory, a crucial shift in subject position and political address is disrupting critiques of the 'gaze'. Works by artists such as these named work between positions of bodily self as critique, to "dismantle(ing) traditional notions of authorship or which most specifically address the institutional and discursive space of art that best demonstrate a deconstructive orientation" (Solomon-Godeau, 1984, p. 81) hence giving "their art a transgressive force across a range of practices, critical discourses and social situations" (Bhabha, 1987, p.10). As a crucial step to inscribe 'self's' past and present, artists negotiate between the politics of representation that speaks as/for them, by writing from their marginalized positions - self appropriating the gaze - writing in the margins - using rhetorical language as a device to title their works as a method of self addressing and re-addressing the equations that have sought to constitute their experiences in light of dominant ideologies. But as Alice Jardine (1988) surmises in her conclusion to an exhibition catalogue, with regards to shifting and contradictory discourses among artists and critical theories: "so that the 'black hole' of our future dreamscapes will not have to be those already known:...we need to look again. With (our) others....To take us into the twenty-first century" (p. 115). Jardine comments:

In fact, over the past decade or so, it has been women artists and photographers of several generations who have been described by critics as the most genuinely “poststructuralist” or “deconstructionist”. One of the reasons for this is these artists' insistence not upon (feigning) the abandonnement of the universal (i.e., patriarchal) subject/object paradigm, but upon (assuming the risk of) putting themselves directly into the paradigm as...women. (Jardine, 1988, p. 106)

Presently this insistence to 're-present' voices of silence is taking on new meaning in my work. Occupying a transitional place within the complexities of feminist and postmodern
sensibilities allows me to contextualize the concept of "re-search-ing" in human and social sciences as I see it relating to feminist intervention in the discourses of art and art education. The bridging of these positions within postmodern controversies opens up a space for researchers and their co-researchers, educators, students, artists and readers of this text to re-think the conventions of pedagogical epistemologies in a changing landscape of curriculum (Aoki, 1993).

Hélène Cixous, among others, writes of the problematic of assuming that there could be one voice/one position from which to speak of women's concerns. (Lemecha, 1991, p. 10)

It is my contention that by opening up this space for invention, new possibilities can transgress current (and ongoing) "epistemological traps" (Trend, 1992, p. 3) to enable research and learning to re-think our contexts.

A critical approach to learning asks one to question and re-evaluate the legitimacy of knowledge forms, theoretical positions, ideological postures, and the presumed grounds on which arguments are based. It strives to be a dynamic attitude that searches for new and better ways to function by continually re-examining its own assumptions. (Trend, 1992, p. 3)

Prefaced by the meandering within the space where "but" coincides and collides with "and" entices me to re-consider my proceedings through the fragmentary text in which we produce. The language I have met along the way so far in reading, listening and writing has bridged various tangents that attempt to cease definition. Theories which presently inform this text enable me to re-think from the space within which I produce, as a researcher and as a post art student. It is also important to keep in mind how contemporary art practices are being
received in educational discourse and thus I suggest that we re-consider the complexities
provided by the visual and critical art discourses, both contemporary and past. And by allowing
these critical perspectives to seep into educational discourses, we are able make bearable those
spaces open for discussion about . . . .
ON TEXTING THE TEXT:
SPACE OF RE-SEARCH-ING AS CRITIQUE
(OR)
SITES OF CREATION:
DISCOURSE OF INVENTION
BETWEEN ARTISTS/PARTICIPANTS/RE-SEARCH
Maybe L. and I were just fooling ourselves into believing that if only we had that space to work in, then maybe our production would flourish and we could embody the pose of 'the artist'.

In compiling this project, I was confronted with the question of where I was situated as 're-searcher' within writing this text. Over the time span covering the conception of the project, prolonged and extended feelings of guilt about my potential 'orientalizing' techniques, the production of the project, the resistance to re-producing the very conventionalities I was suggesting we re-think, and the current inscribing of this text led to feelings of remorse which permeated the spaces of the long overdue exercise of coming to appreciate the various voices which fill my voice as I sift through my understanding of what it means to re-think our spaces of production. Maintaining the uneasiness of the task became a more tactful gesture.
This chapter is about re-thinking the methodological spaces of this production - the space of re-search as critique - re-written - fragmented - a co-mingling of juxtaposed images between the spaces of art students' narratives, artists' spaces of production, and the re-search-ing practices that interface this project. I bring the texts that have followed me (borrowing once again the words of Hélène Cixous) into action - follow paths - diverge with the spaces of this creation that are multiple, intertextual and inventive.

The mixing of different modes of writing; the mutual challenge of theoretical and poetical, discursive and 'non-discursive' languages; all these attempts at introducing a break into the fixed norms of the Master's confident prevailing discourses are easily misread, dismissed, or obscured in the name of 'good-writing', of 'theory,' or of 'scholarly work'. (Trinh, 1992, p. 138)

Re-visiting commemorative memory

It is in the bridging between the terms of past and present production experiences that a space is created for this research; a space to re-think the terms and language that assign fixed meaning to our roles as learners, re-searchers and as educators. bell hooks dedicates much to this notion of remembering and rethinking the spaces which she inhabit(ed) through the process of recollecting the structures of diasporic consciousness. In her recent book entitled Art on my mind: Visual politics (1995), hooks engages in her own recollection of “art on her mind” and the spaces which enable her to continue to shape questions from an Afro-American feminist perspective. Simultaneously, recalling her past art production and her present position as a
scholar in academia, hooks captures the paradox imbedded in the world of production as she juxtaposes experiences with those of prevalent black contemporary artists. Important to recognise in this practice is the necessary bridge which translates our understanding of ideological and political constructions of subjects and selves. hooks refers, as example, to artist Carrie Mae Weems who weaves historical narratives that appear staged and fictional in her contemporary documentary photographs. The narratives confound her domestic life as an African-American which hooks is compelled to acknowledge.

_Central to these processes is a procedure within which images and stories of a shared past are woven together with a person (or group’s) feelings and comprehension of their embodied presence in time and space. These processes of remembrance are organized and produced within practices of commemoration which initiate and structure the relation between a representation of past events and that constellation of affect and information which define a standpoint from which various people engage such representations. (Roger Simon in hooks, 1995, p. 68)_

Bridging this process to contemporary art practices, Diana Nemiroff’s (1995) reference to artist Vera Frenkel’s reflects upon her works preoccupation with commemorative memory as a strategy to support the critique of identity. Frenkel plays to blur the boundaries of history that construct identity. By inverting factual and fictitious tales in order to articulate a movement through a translative interplay of mediating identity, that is historical and contemporary. According to Nemiroff, her work “takes up the subject of displacement” by “adapting the role of the storyteller who weaves fact and fiction in order to tell the truth” (p. 131) as a re-framed translation of realities for the other(s). The importance of this strategy expresses the continual dialogue that comes into play when a composite of re-framed fragmented stories come together into a new space. In breaching the gap created between the _once present_ to the _now past_, a
movement of re-newed translation emerges which, according to Nemiroff, "frame(s) something so temporal and so fluctuating (that) is bound to be tentative and provisional" in our attempts to frame reality (p. 131). What is interesting to note is the interplay of fiction and fact that occurs. Tales told are not without history nor are they without fiction.

N. reflects in her journal: "Participating in this project has brought my attention to the parallels between my experience of restriction and non value in my religious upbringing and my subsequent treatment and reactions in the painting department."

Narrative 1: Unveiling fragments of history:
In conversation with N.

My second meeting with N. (May 17, 1995) amounted to an in-depth conversation about her personal history told through the description of her final graduating work. The compilation of her previous experiences described in our first meeting - from confinement within a medium and the disciplinary boundaries, to her compartmentalisation of interests, unaccommodating instructors, frustrations of not being able to achieve technical goals, to arriving at a point of mediation between the segmented boundaries in both medium and disciplinary interests that were regulated within certain studio environments - were eventually reconciled and brought together in these tensions. What N. produced was a work for her final graduation project that spoke to and about all those personal glitches she occupied and which accompanied her, as an individual and
art student. And as we spoke, the fragments of personal history previously told through her autobiography and studio experiences converged. She writes:

I proved my skills and my teachers were impressed with the final product. It was as if I had finally found a way to transform my personal feelings and let them guide and fuel my work. (Journal entry)

The photographs she showed me of this final project interfaced the many fragmentary narrations that N. had previously shared in conversation and writing. In her writing, fragmentary pieces of conversation that we had touched upon came together in a manner that made it more apparent that the processes she described were fractures of events that continuously resonated to dialogue with and through her historical past and into her present.

**N's graduating project: “where it all came together”**

"Firstly, this project allowed me to incorporate many mediums such as painting, sculpture and performance. I became aware that I had many interests and my natural inclination was to try and incorporate them. Later I would attribute this to my bilingual cultural heritage where I learned at an early age to integrate rather than segregate.

In my grad year, I went through a lot emotionally, dealing with personal issues of gender and religion. A chance visit to a church one day sparked a whole series of questions about the role of women and power. Since I was raised as a Catholic, this experience struck a deep chord within my past. But now as a grown woman, I felt my sexuality was not accepted in this male bastion. I remembered a vague recollection of there having once been a time when women had had power and this led to an investigation into prehistoric goddess worship. My graduation piece was an installation...which consisted of three twelve foot stationary puppets facing a large wall painted with medieval church imagery."
N. considers this project to be a point of recognition that her art making had come together in a manner she could accept. She described the fragmented composite of her project. Beginning with the masks, she talks about the experience that led up to this production: her technical struggles, lack of support, and the struggle with making these objects perform the functions she had originally intended. These struggles defied her desire, but in doing so provided a space for her to seek alternative methods of production and ultimately with the desire to go on.

N.: “like they sort of gave me this nod”

N.: you know,...and that just gave me that sort of tiny little bit, that tiny little bit, just enough that when I got out of school, and then...you know when it came time to make that decision as to, well am I going to get a studio? Am I going to continue doing this? I think that little bit was enough to reinforce, ‘well, yah, maybe I can do this.’

She continues to describe the project:

N.: I had a whole room...it was an installation. These three were lined up together...and then when you sort of walked in the room this way and you saw the puppets here and then you saw this mural and that...the face is a piece of Plexiglas suspended over the mural of my face.

Rosa: that’s excellent! this is the mural that you painted here as well?

N.: hm hm...so it really did incorporate everything. It incorporated performance, I mean I did do sort of a kind of ritual thing when I did the pieces and stuff...these are more performance oriented and these are more painting and this is combining the two...but also they were at opposites...(chuckling) they were opposing each other...this was representing the sort of...the me that I was kind of discovering and going back to...which was more the kind of person I was when I was a kid, and this was representing more the formal....

Rosa: where you were?

N.: yah yah...the formal aspect of painting...it’s all about the church...you can’t really see it, but that’s the Pope on a donkey that’s behind the face.

Rosa: that’s your face in the scream?

N.: yah yah
Rosa: that’s amazing! you really pulled everything together at the end there?

N.: at the very end! You know, it was, you know...I could have left it and been totally disappointed with...you know, it was just such a struggle all the time.

As the conversation continues, we return to the concept of compartmentalisation which I found to be central in her art school experience:

Rosa: so here you have the boxes again

N.: yah yah

Rosa: one box and the other confronting each other

N.: yah

Rosa: and that bridging that you said...you know, I could just imagine the tension that was created by having these two face each other....

Narrative 2: Bridging between N. and me

N. reminded me of a strange obsession of mine - why the box?

The theme of confinement borrowed from the narrative provided by N. is one which I found crucial to both our experiences. For myself, during my undergraduate experience I was obsessed with boxes. There I was recalling the square, the box, the cubes which I replicated over and over again, and there was N., in my interpretation miming the same theme. For her the symbol of the box represented confinement which eventually led her to “pushing boundaries” and to “the ultimate stretching of personal and physical boundaries” (from interview with N. April 7, 1995 and my notes dated May 17, 1995). She translated this into the medium she would later use and the space of negotiation that eventually occurred between her production spaces. In her artist statement, N. states that: “My interest in this medium [paper making] lies in its flexibility and resilience as I push it beyond its formal boundaries”. I instead wanted to ‘save the square’,
repaint the 15” x 15” square, watch the grass grow in it, cast it, conceal it, replicate it and this I saw once again being repeated in this research process. Somehow the constraints I saw as being imposed upon me marred my desires and ambitions in producing certain projects. Forces from (my) history, culture, peers, instructors and the institution in which I came to produce were vicariously being re-experienced in the confinement of re-searching structures. The story does not cease to continue. The process continues. Breaching each box unveiled another story, if not for N., then for myself in this project.

N.’s space of negotiation: Bridging the gap

N.: these actually represented different aspects of myself...actually it was from a book that I read at school that sort of changed me...and I found images that I related to, so I choose three of them and I illustrated those...I made the masks. This one is Aphrodite, and this is the goddess of sex and love, and this is Estia the goddess of the...[inaudible]...and this is...[inaudible]...those were the ones I related to and, so I did a lot of work. I’ve been looking at a book lately, it might even be on the table here...where I did a lot of writing and I did a lot of research into it...what each one meant and what it meant to me....

{showing the book}

Rosa: this really is an extension to what you are doing now...

N.: yah, and this started me into that and it started me into...how I really like to research things, and I like to read about things, and I do a lot of prep work and stuff like...I realise now that I gave this book to my teacher as my notebook (chuckling) and there’s a lot of personal stuff in here which I shouldn’t have told them about (both of us laughing)...anyways there were notes about --- this was the thing that I saw - I think I have a picture of it...somewhere. We went down to Seattle and I saw this large puppet and I fell in love with this puppet, I was just in awe of it...I had never seen anything like it before...it was in a store. This was the puppet.

{showing photo}

Rosa: how large was it?

N.: she must have been 15 feet tall or something

Rosa: that is so beautiful!

N.: yah, I mean I felt like prostrating the thing (chuckle) and then I realised that yah, it really touched something in me.

Rosa: how did you relate to the puppets?
N.: they didn't move - I couldn't make them move and that was part of my whole frustration of actually making these things. The department was supposed to give me...the idea of the department was that I was then able to go to all the departments. But that didn't mean anything. In the end I'd go into sculpture and I'd say, I want to build this 12 foot thing and how do I do it...he wouldn't talk to me...if I wasn't in his class, he wasn't going to spend time with me...and he'd just say things off the cuff like, you know, "oh well get some PVC and fill it with concrete", oh okay!...I didn't know anything about concrete (laughter). The nightmares of things that happened because of that was just pathetic!

Past meets present:
N.'s recall of art experiences drawn from historical and personal narratives and where she now finds herself in her present art production

Rosa: ...and that's where your paper making came in and 'pushing of boundaries'... 'manipulating' like you said...you know...you got the spaghetti strainer and you said forget it, I'll do what I need to do with that and....

N.: and yah, that's what I created is this...and you know, to tell you the truth, at the time I was angry! I mean, I was angry that I was having to bring my spaghetti strainer and fuckin' doing this on my own! You know? (laughter) But now, but now I see that uh...I guess that's part of...my sort of drive. Maybe somebody else wouldn't have done that. Actually in retrospect I would have been much happier in sculpture you know -- really - I mean I'm still here and I'm struggling with...I'm going 'oh man, I wonder how they do that?'

Informed by N.'s recollection

Central to N.'s studio experiences was a need to find an accommodating space of negotiation between the autonomous boxes of her history and desires, and their substantive identities assigned to their individual autonomies. This she did by switching departments from painting to interdisciplinary. She says: "I was stagnating and I needed more of a challenge...I chose to leave the department because of its patriarchal attitude but also because I had other mediums I wanted to develop in my art" (journal entry). Oscillating with and between N.'s recollection, informed my recollection of studio experiences. The questions I brought to this re-
searching process and conversation eventually eclipsed to insight the meaning that lay barren in our recall of studio experiences.

The easy part was being 'an art student' in the studios at York University. What was difficult was 'becoming' that artist that involved much more than what appeared on the surface. I 'hung', conversed, pondered my next artistic feat, produced and reproduced in this accommodating environment - not being too conscious of my moves, but nonchalantly navigating through them as the meaning of 'being' an artist codified my actions.

This all comes back to me. Having listened to N. and L. recite their navigations and experiences brings to mind a particular fear that jarred my experience in art school. One of the few professors who did make it parcel to the process of our production that we question our course of events made evident the need to suspend the seeming comfort that accompanies the act of doing - and it becomes obvious that we were being asked to surrender our artistic assumptions. Vera Frenkel was one of those few who predominated in challenging the classical embodiment of 'being an artist'. Posing highly theoretical issues that forced one to question their artistic actions, and their positions as artist, Frenkel made it apparent that we were not to produce solely for the sake of aesthetic production. This was an intimidating and foreign terrain. It jarred my conception of a comfortable space of production, and I didn't really know how to play this part. I had in the past been exposed to what I perceived as intense criticism, but her questions were asked differently and the language was foreign. Eventually though I began to resent the lack of challenges, questions, criticism, being repeatedly praised for my aesthetic endeavours - "if only I made it aesthetically appealing, titillate some emotional cord, seduce the viewer...." Eventually it became a game that I was to play in my production. I turned to play that game in my studio production, and engaging these questions and challenges in my work seemed inevitable.
what I did:

"They are playing a game. They are playing at not playing a game. If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game of not seeing I see the game".

R. D. Laing

There were 8 cast concrete squares and 1 glass container. Each cast differently - some contained objects set as slivers in the concrete, half concealed and half exposed - others were polished and gleaming - others retained their roughness - one was inscribed with the above text - and the glass container was filled with water which contained unedible apples to be 'bobbed'. And each day I came and changed the layout of the sculpture, stacking, layering, lining them up, placing them in larger a square - re-telling yet another story and re-shifting the meaning daily.

Feeling stifled by the environment and my expectation in the studio, I sought a new strategy and critical outlet that would alter my studio experience. I too felt inspired to question the why’s of my own production.
Between hermeneutics and postmodern research
and
the process of re-searching in this project

From a hermeneutic perspective there can be no such thing as a final 'truth' of the human subject and the human condition for we investigators are not the disengaged spectators that such a scientific inquiry would require. We are ourselves the subjects of the inquiry and the asking of the question regarding the nature of the human subject is a considerable part of what it means to be such a subject. (Kerby, 1991, p. 14)

In this project I sought a space to re-search lived experiences while simultaneously remaining critical of this space which I was to enter as a researcher - between researcher and researched. I saw this as a relationship which paralleled the spaces of producing and teaching in art studios and in classrooms.

A method of inquiry oriented to articulate the lived and interpretative experiences (between telling and analysing) of participants is informed by hermeneutic phenomenology. According to Max van Manen (1990), “phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience, [and] hermeneutics describes how one interprets the ‘texts’ of life” (my emphasis, p. 4). This process aims for “understanding the lived structures of meanings” (p. 4) which transpire in this pedagogical approach. The interpretative process incorporates a describing (what) and interpreting (how), in this case - studio practices - which I initially aimed for in my project. Central to this approach is the textualization of pedagogical relations which are actively created in the re-searching space and transformed in the interpreted text.
Stephen Tyler’s (1986) articulation of a post-modern ethnography takes the hermeneutic approach to research into account for its practice of negotiating relations between the represented and the representer.

Because post-modern ethnography privileges “discourse” over “text,” it foregrounds dialogue as opposed to monologue, and emphasizes the cooperative and collaborative nature of the ethnographic situation in contrast to the ideology of the transcendental observer....There is instead the mutual, dialogical production of a discourse, of a story of sorts. We better understand the ethnographic context as one of cooperative story making that, in one of its ideal forms, would result in a polyphonic text, none of whose participants would have the final word in the form of a framing story or encompassing synthesis - a discourse on the discourse. (Tyler, 1986, p. 126)

This emphasis to foreground dialogical relations in the arenas where research is performed coincides with approaches recognised by the hermeneutic process. Both of these methodological perspectives are dialogical sites - theatrical\textsuperscript{10} sites of negotiation, ‘grammatological’ sites, and are analogous to the production and learning sites of studios, classrooms and research.

Suggested by Tyler is that normative forms of analysis avoid preconceived assumptions, to instead emerge within/amongst/against the spaces of recall, discourse, interpretation, and writing. This practice is not guided by the representer’s interpretation of the represented experience, but

\textsuperscript{10}To conceptualize a theatrical site which is dialogic and open to the intersecting discourse between performance and audience, we can turn to Bertolt Brecht’s epic theatre where the spectator is encouraged to think critically, therefore partaking in the spectacle. Briefly, the epic theatre is a narrative which allows for the audience’s critical analysis. The play is a montage of self contained episodes which, like Russian Constructivist film-maker Sergei Eisenstein film, convey meaning through a collaging of separate scenes, with no final meaning in and of themselves, yet through the development of a heterogeneous discourse form new meaning through the converging interpretations. (See Ulmer, 1985 for further discussion and its pedagogical implications)
rather between the mediating interpretations of participants with/to the re-searchers', with/to the written text, and with/to a reader’s translation and relationship to the text.

Here the ‘lived structures of meanings’ occupy multiple levels of interpretation and understanding from ‘its origin’ through the continuum of interpretations. In this sense, one’s own descriptive/(auto)biographical (what) and interpretive (how) recall of experiences and perceptions work to inform the textual outcome that transform and reshape these stories of previously shaped experiences drawn from the locations of our production.

No one fragment carries the totality of the message, but each text (which is in itself a whole) has a particular urgency, an individual force, a necessity, and yet each text has a force which comes to it from all the other texts. (Seller, 1994, p. xvi)

The interpretive texts of artists

The options of “interpreting texts of life” is not to be disregarded in terms of artistic practices. As producers of ideas, objects and performances, contemporary artists (referring to those who currently exhibit in public, private or commercial galleries) have repeatedly employed in their practices the very questions that education considers as a methodological research practice. The paradoxical spaces artists confront are often spaces of vulnerability. Being at once private (in the course of the production) and public (since the artist creates for a viewing public), contemporary artists produce in a forum where tensions are created in the process of innovation, critique and change as it is interpreted from the locale of the artist in the world. Diverse
approaches and strategies activate the spaces within which production occurs and involve a
dialogue with identity, representation and the locations in which one resides.

Stan Douglas’s work is described by writer Scott Watson (1995), as
presenting challenges for the viewer, neither “preach(ing) nor
proscrib(ing)” but “instead the viewer might find that an irritant
has entered his (sic) consciousness, a burr that could catch a threat
on the garment of received ideas and start a process of
unravelling”....“Douglas explores what he calls ‘idiomatic
languages’ of media to probe or discourse how identity - that
supposedly permanent thing we call self - is shaped by the changing
regimes of representation”. (Watson, 1995, p. 37)

In Remote Control (1989), artist Jana Sterbak’s performance explores the
need for the body to find an adequate social space. In this work/performance, an
armature is employed to emphasise protection and to enhance xenophobic
enclosures. Reminiscent of a crinoline, Remote Control, is an aluminium grid
structure/frame on wheels, with a suspended undergarment to support the
performer and a motor to activate the structure and performance. As two women,
suspended in the vehicles are mechanically activated within the gallery space by
a male attendant, the question of power enters the scene. The performance is
further complicated by the tensions that are employed in the act of negotiating the
space with and amongst the spectators. In this work, Sterbak reveals the tensions
of the private and the public that is determined by the sites in which
performances occur. It is here that the question of identity within the locales in
which a performance occurs is consequential. Sterbak’s interpretation of woman
and self in a social setting enacts, through this metaphor, the continuous
discourse one must engage.

“Sterbak’s ambivalence towards the possibility of self-creation is a
central feature of her project. It reveals a certain romanticism, in
that the will to imagine ourselves and the world is held to be
integral to what we are”. (Noble, 1993, p. 12)
In the emerging form of re-search

Because I sought to create an active space between self as researcher and the participants as interpreters of their ‘realities’, the manner in which the questions where presented played a crucial role. By inviting the participants to describe their locations and experiences, it was imperative that a space, where emerging dialogue could occur, be available. In doing so, it was possible for this line of inquiry to take on new forms since my preconceived assumptions about what I would collect from our discussions was continuously challenged and, therefore, asked to be suspended. Each encounter was unpredictable. In other words, to avoid framing the direction of the ‘interview’, the questions I “held in hand” were loosely adhered to, at times suspended, and at times surrendered to the dialogical space that was actively evolving. The tensionality inspired by these moments created what could be perceived as lapses, yet these tensions and glitches transpired into rich discussions that were not pre-ordained. The open-ended and semi-structured questions assisted in drawing upon the autobiographical and narrated stories about desires, aspirations, spatial relations and the mediation that occur in the locations one spatially embodies. In this space of articulating the complex orchestration of learning environments and perceptions about the process of art production, emerged the challenge to see how ‘I’ as researcher became subject of and subject to the physical and spatial relations occurring in the researching process.

All three of us, N., L., and myself, had meandered to understand what this process of art production constituted for us - me perched against them - while viscerally perched within my own recall - I asked - they answered - they asked - we collaborated - collided - misread - disagreed - understood - casting a new layer for this so called interview and re-search.
Meeting with L. in the spaces of negotiation: Excerpts from a conversation that occurred in the space of discourse held taut by the angst of an interview to follow

The meeting with L. carried many moments of ongoing dialogic discourse. If I could return momentarily to my experience in the painting studio which I previously described, an analogy can be made concerning the spaces of uncertainty that arise in any pedagogical situation. As a student in the painting class I confronted my own personal inhibitions and was led to interpret the process of my production as opposed to the actual product. My instructor was presented with a similar challenge of having to accommodate my personal struggle while simultaneously negotiating an environment that would benefit the class. Taking this as a queue, the class critique turned to a discussion about what it means to produce in a painting class - what did the process of painting which I had submitted myself to say about the constitution of what we had come to know as painting? Similarly, in my coming to meet with L., I as re-searcher had to ask similar questions about my role as gatherer and distributor of knowledge.

I share with L. an article entitled Feminist genealogy by Teresa de Lauretis which had sparked some enthusiasm the previous night in terms of my research. In my over zealous way, I proclaim that I found my first word - the word that I was told not to ponder over.

In context to my thesis, I draw upon the word but. In this article the word refers to Virginia Wolfs' introduction to a paper she was invited to present --- the word, a conjunction as it bridges two thoughts, yet leads from one point to many others --- Leslie does a beautiful job in articulating her interpretation of but. It implies that something has come to pass and that the presence of that past has generated yet another juncture from where to enter - which is not necessarily that fixed point from where it began - it too has a life of its own and will be consumed by the life of that which will give it life --- to throw the past into question ....... the 'yah but's' of our conversations.
I feel this urgency to pull out the tape recorder since our conversation is so filled with rich discussion thinking to myself that I might forget this all.

Returning to our conversation, it becomes apparent that the need to record our voices was already happening -- recorded voices -- inscribed dialogue in the sounds spoken and those functioning within the fiction of our realities as they are brought together to form yet another reality.

"so should we get on with the interview" I don't recall whether it was her or I who asked --- but we proceed.

L. reads and signs the consent form -- she has already read the invitation to the study and was briefed on the research project itself. Signatures, consents, polite compliances, rules and regulations, rights and obligations --- I vividly recall my body tense up when watching her inscribe her name on the paper I provided for her consent ---

I now wear my re-searcher's cap and know not how to take it off - drawing my dark rimmed sunglasses out of their case I proceed to veil myself behind the researcher's mask.

The interview process --- divided line me and you -- I ask you answer --- was that the right answer - I ponder and wait for confirmation of my rightness in responding --- what do they want to hear L. asks?

We have agreed that this "interview" will not be recorded -- I glance at the questions I have mechanically inscribed on paper -- these were my research questions and these were the ones she was going to receive! Once again a taut line pulled between conversation and interview -- A new space was re-defined -- we adjust our postures -- consume more coffee -- we proceed: "what brought you to art school?", I ask. She emits one big sigh and begins: "okay" this is how it goes" . . .

L's story was being told - I listened. What would I say, recite, tell in my re-telling of her story?
In the scene of ethnography

In this diversified field of ethnography, the methodological orientations are accompanied by a wide range of ideas to critically describe, challenge or identify systems of practices within educational research which purport to describe and vicariously construct cultural/social identities as institutional ‘truisms’. Seeking to unveil the complexities of the researching process, this project focused on keeping in check my position as re-searcher in relation to the power structures that dominate the writing of cultures in educational research.

*My interest, then, was to trace the ‘invention’ of the student teacher, to explore: how this invention became viewed as synonymous with ‘experience’ in education...The tension I felt given these approaches to the study of teaching was between working with these theories and still writing an ethnography. (Britzman, 1995, p. 232)*

***Thick description***

...and she wore a red suede jacket

(some) feminist and postmodern contentions in “doing” educational research

About L.:

*She entered the restaurant. She wore a new dress, one which I had not seen before. Black background with various small white patterns speckled the surface. The collar was similar to what I recall my mother wearing in the 70’s - the dress flared from the waist down (they call that an 'A frame' cut). I think I forgot to compliment her on it. “Still carrying your big black bag,” I commented. For L. it's that fear of leaving home without a book. The short red suede jacket receives a compliment. (May 11, 1995)*
About N.:
Her long dark hair cascaded down her spine. Casually propped on the chair, feet perched on seat, her body swayed. She nonchalantly invited me into her artistic background. The "bohemian" in her permeated the paint splashed studio - images, castings, hand made paper, photographs, plaster casts, artist material, engulfed us. Gracefully she moved around her studio. Her hands wrinkled by the laborious work she did. They were artist's hands. It was obvious. (April 11, 1995)

Ongoing criticism in educational research has brought to the fore concerns about nullifying, objectifying, reifying, or romantizing the re-searched subject's position. Central to this critique is the scepticism towards appropriating the 'other' for the privileging of the re-searcher's knowledge claim and "speaking 'for' or 'about' them" (Alcoff, 1991). Linda Alcoff's (1991) contribution to the analysis of this practice offers a compelling perspective for re-thinking methodological approaches undertaken in various educational circles. Her discussion focuses on the critique of this practice as held by some feminist theories. She states that "current(s) within feminism...hold that speaking for others is arrogant, vain, unethical, and politically illegitimate" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 6).

My fascination with this practice, as it seeks to justify or disclaim its salience, reflects the questions raised in this project. Similar to Alcoff's elaboration of theorists' authorisation "to develop theories that express and encompass the ideas, needs, and goals of others" (1991, p. 7), I turn to the inscriptions designed in the cultural and social constructions of practices which are performed in the studios and in the spaces of re-searching. Assumptions about the essentialist inscriptions of people's ways of knowing, doing, performing are being reconsidered. Currently, the experiences that I confront in this project (the preparation of the project, our interactions with
the participants in the interview/conversation process and in the writing of the text) magnify and make integral through the practice of writing, questions that ask our re-searching positions to re-consider the manner in which objectives are surmised into “trappings of conventions”. Therefore, by using the “trappings” of methodological conventions to explore the categorisation of tidy units of learning, performing, reifying and gendering the spaces of our production allows me to re-think the spaces between the process and the product. Proceeding through this writing, this concern is continuously challenged.

To negotiate between the visual language which historically has depicted them (the subaltern artist) as ‘other’, being spoken as and spoken for, artist such as Barbara Kruger, Lorna Simpson, Adrian Piper appropriate recognisable imagery that foregrounds objectified practices of representing what or who they are. Relying on an audiences reception to familiar and ‘known’ cultural codes of meaning they invert, re-frame, and re-codify the text with slogans and titles as rhetorical devices to make absurdly evident the inscription that has been written ‘on’ them. Slogans such as “Who do they expect me to be today”(Piper) - “We won’t be our own best enemy”(Kruger) - “Is she as pretty as a picture”(Simpson) work to deconstruct the language of representation that privileges an ideologically dominant language over the ‘other’. Solomon-Godeau (1988) in reference to the rhetorical titles states that “these unanswerable questions, couched in the home-spun language of the cliché...make pointed reference to the dense matrix of desire and fear that underpins the perception of the (black, female) other” (p. 93).
Various forms of "data collection" contributed to the multiple understandings of researching which I had come to know. L. and I openly conversed about her studio experiences and the differences of our perceptions at the time we were schooled was evident.

Conversing/ my recalled journal entry following our meeting:

L.: "finally, finally I was able to think beyond technique". For two years prior to the feminist department head's arrival she spent hours upon hours meticulously producing to master "the technique". When finally she felt intellectually motivated, the confines of precision had been dropped and now she was being asked "why the frame?". She relays her story of what she perceived to be her first feminist informed piece and according to her "it was a disaster". She was confronted with the perverse "yah, so, now what?" Forced to push the boundaries of understanding what object making meant, L. recalls her entry into the transitional space; into the but of transpiring meaning. (Journal entry from May 11, 1995)

Yet for N. her experiences were very different from those described and relayed by L. and me. She recalls her persistence of pursuing art and the struggles which she encountered foregrounds the interview/conversation. The transitional space of realising she had to locate her own aspirations in the conflicting spaces of the art studio became very real in the stories which she shared. The biographical and descriptive information that N. relayed provided our discussion with the dynamics to embrace an uncomfortable space thus simultaneously coinciding with many of the stories about her studio experiences. Thus, the interview space left open and made room for myself to clarify the inferences that were assumed on my part about her experiences.
Transcribing the interview/conversation:

N: well I didn't do any of these things consciously
R: you didn't? (in a tone of surprise)
N: no, I mean this happened to me! You know that's the way I see it. (adamantly)
The way that I came to this was that experience I had in the church. So that experience clicked something in me that then led to this and led to me seeing this thing which I thought, yes, this is what I wanted to do. These are the issues...these are the medium...and at the time I didn't really think about it....
R: what was actually happening you mean?
N: no, no
R: or what you were being seduced by
N: no! (May 17, 1995)

Variations on forms of writing and “data” collection presented in this project play a central role in the conceptual and theoretical approach that en-frames this project. Faced with the ambivalence of how to write and do re-search correctly set the precedence for what would follow. Standards to formally fulfil the academic ‘re-search’ requirements were made apparent and these standards would inevitably permeate the en-framed text. Yet working within this construct enabled this study to paradoxically pose as the method of its very own form of critique. This site of research which was expressing a need for change from the normative discourses in educational inquiry was itself becoming a site of change.

Writing/ my experience of recalling a past work of art:

Rosa: “In-form-ed/ing” (1987): This work was a gesture informing 'who I am' as I momentarily fixed a picto-graphy (photographs as autobiography of family history) of my self on my body.
- a dark room - a chair against a wall - where I sat to receive the penetrating light from the projector- reminding - interrogating - informing me - with self induced traces of cast imagery - the space between projector and myself became a
fragmented series of infra-rays - mirrors refracting images against each other as they sort our their paths to meet mine - a tape recites the words “I AM” in the various languages that I have come to know - 24 slides representing my age divided into 3 sets of 8 - the first set cast a series of black fluctuating light rays proceeded the 2nd series of images of family which proceed the last set of 8 which cast a procession of lightness to darkness - methodically timed on my body. This framed triptych of this ideological construction of self brings to mind the space which I occupied that enabled me to conceive of this work as a “discovery that I am...[an Italian immigrant]...with a narrative, a story, a history” (Hall, 1987, p.45). (Journal entry October, 1994)

Visualising:

This was my second meeting with N.. Armed with my objectives for this research project invited yet another spectacle to unfold. She had described her projects to me in our first meeting and in attempts to now reconcile our interpretive understandings, I found N. returning to discuss previous work to help me better relate to her story. As we spoke she retrieved photos of her art school projects. Another system of communication. Surrounded by her speech, my objectives, the tape recorder and her art, my appreciation for the tension that I was feeling took on a new form. (following April 5, 1995 conversation with N.)

In this didactic interaction between the re-searched and the re-searcher, the performance took yet another turn. The pivotal narration of my research story had transcended into a space where I no longer was the interviewer and N. and L. the interviewees, but in a space where N. and L. were interested in relating this conversation to the present of their current work. It was inevitable that the conversations would diverge off the re-search path and I was both reluctant and open to follow its lead. It led me in both cases to very different places of divergency. With L. her once again reiteration with obsessive labour intensiveness came through in our
conversation about her current project, and with N. the path led to current issues of political/social/cultural concern. It led to where it wanted to go - to where N. and L. wanted it to go and it led to where I was wishing to follow it. One of N's participants raised issues relating to her current art project. She was asked whether she was concerned about being criticised for 'othering' and possibly being called a white anthropologist. We discussed this. This is where the path led.

Tyler's (1986) critique of postmodern ethnography spoke about how the form emerges "out of the joint work of the ethnographer and his (sic) narrative partners" (p.127). I, too, was the player in this re-search project, at times intertextually narrating with the participants and diverging down various paths - while at other times I caught myself glaring deeply into the mirror of myself - adhering to the reality that, I had to look away - look at the participants and listen to their stories - their visual images that were so eloquently being spoken - listen to their anger and humorous events and their desires - and inadvertently, listen to those stories which I too carried through art school culture and which I now carry with me into the spaces of producing re-search. It has followed me - down divergent paths - it was time for me to follow it - where Cixous follows herself to Dante through Lispector into the paths which merge, converge, intersect, interfere the narrative stories of our lives. In the spaces of studio production, we have exchanges that occur through the energetic dynamics of evolving discourse, intertxtual dialectics - between the learner, the teacher and the text - the life text, the personal text, the theoretical text - where performances occur - N.'s present studio space, L.'s re-search angst space, and my intermediating space. And here the evidence shows that the re-search process itself is an emerging form in the polyphony of constructed meanings.
Following L. . . .

. . . instead the story produced was a gold coloured egg, meticulously wrapped in shimmering red beads, hundreds of them, individually adhered to the surface of the painted shell and with the word "but" set in gold. We never did return to 'co-research the narrational space verbally, but a mutual understanding was implied.

Layers of skin: appendage

Each stitch of L's meticulously laid beads evidence her debt to un/natural laws exaggerating and signifying each forms tenuous (or frail), amorphous edge. L. places them in a box to protect them.

Re-visiting 'co-researching the narrational spaces'

This experience of co-researching the narrational spaces of re-searching, brought forth were my biases as a researcher trying to come to terms with the power relations imbedded in my construction of this project. Returning to discuss with N. my analysis of our previous meeting, it was made apparent that I, too, was perpetuating and colonising experiences against those which I rejected as perpetrating fallacies about art students learning spaces. Our second meeting amounted at times in my dominating her interpretation with my own interpretation making the
assumption that her understanding was the same as mine from a woman's perspective in the studio experiences of production. Two languages of interpretation had collided and a seemingly comfortable (place)/space had been disrupted. If I were naming, identifying, unifying or stabilising women's subjectivity in this 'other' space (Shiach, 1991), then I was contradicting the very practice which I set forth to critically challenge. It became apparent once this dilemma was made manifest that perhaps I had entered what Homi Bhabha refers to as that space of negotiating within didactic differences (Mitchell, 1995). And therefore, actively participating within these glitches to mediate understanding and to re-think the very practices being inscribed, forced me to confront and make problematic the space in which I at the time was producing...where active spaces are created.

*the subject in process - becoming - the rupture of identity,*

*the rupture of structure,*

*the rupture of an equilibrium.... (Kristeva in Clarke and Hulley, 1990-91)*
UNTITLED BY DEFAULT:

GLITCHES OF

DESIRE...AND...RESISTANCE...AND...
CHAPTER 6

We never did find that space that we sought. ...But then again maybe we did ... in our efforts of seeking ... Somewhere between the spade and the heart - between what we believe should be - the shaped and the formed - and what we desire - intervening with the events of personal history. A momentary allusion hinted that it was already there - awaiting as Cixous (Sellers, 1994) tells us “it is deep in my body, further down, behind thought” - and somewhere between the spade and the heart there is a space of caution and a lesson that cannot be ignored, reminding us that a space must remain open for us to play in the essence of the institution - to play and not play by the rules... between conventionality and suspended flux - like trying to find that ultimate point of suspension as L. would say between a fine glass of red wine and a fine brew of coffee.

There is, however, an important interface, often overlooked in recent art theory, between personal desire, chances or accidents of individual biography and the forces of history that exert a powerful influence on someone’s decision to become an artist and the kind of work that is then produced. (Mulvey, 1989, p.146)
After spending a mere 5 chapters stuck in these glitches of the so-called process of doing research, the task that I assumed I had thoughtfully set forth was beckoning attention. The weight of the research became unbearable, theories and thoughts were not always gelling, connections supposedly made appeared as casually aesthetic props - points made left dangling - ideas left suspended - the process of writing at times lacked as a form of critique - terminology aimlessly floating about - history being forgotten - criticism negated - fleeting discussions - I sought elsewhere - the fear of endlessly re-writing - at times the monologic voice took over - I spoke with the keys on my key board - my medium - letters to follow and chase - from left to right (write) and back again - chasing words, thoughts, ideas, the medium - and then I... - I stopped chasing - that is process piece - the chiselling and fine tuning had to wait - witty, new, inventive? Stuck in the essence of the institutions do'isms, the actions I performed illuminated the actions I so wanted to disrupt.

Between convention and invention I ponder the next move.......

Do I or do I not give myself that momentary passage into the possibilities of breaking from the conventions of research and turn to invent within the spaces of persistent glitches that occupy our pedagogical experiences?

"The problem...is how to describe this other side without making it simply a mirror image of what we already have" (Shiach, 1991, p. 33, referring to Hélène Cixous use of spatial metaphor in her movement between words).
"What space had I entered in the writing of this thesis - in the recall of my experiences - in the recalling of other's experiences?"

In the context of this study it has become evident in my own wondering through astryness, through the vortex of "re-search", that I begin to speculate upon the place that I now find myself. Among pedagogies that have entered a space between identities, epistemologies, and orthodoxies to inform yet another place to write from. To think "hybridly" (Homi Bhabha suggests "that cultures must be understood as complex intersections of multiple places, historical temporalities, and subject positions" (Mitchell, 1995, p. 80)) requires that a "grid" from where we can "seep" (using Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's term for "spaces where...'woman' oozes away", 1993, p. 18) to new ways of listening to the controversies of research can invite a turn in formal conventions of researching. Teresa de Lauretis (1993) calls for:

...strategies of discourse that will speak the silence of women in, through, against, over, under, and across the language of men. And hence, too, the necessity to pursue, develop, or invent practices of language where gender is neither elided nor abstracted into pure discursivity, but at the same time claimed and denied, posed and displaced, deconstructed and reconstructed. (p. 397)

Themes evolved into com-positional stories actively creating re-constituted meaning amidst the layering of experience, place and production. Located are the voices that informed the space of this production in the 'fragmentary re-writing' of studio experience and in the translative space of this project. If we take into account the writings of Cixous and actively engage in her path, what would ultimately be achieved in this textual space is "a form of 'exchange in which each one would keep the other alive and different’ " (Sellers, 1994, p. xxx). Thus, in the ‘hybrid’ spaces between
where the *processes plus the product* occur, I turned to the unfolding performance involved in re-
thinking and re-writing experiences brought forth through the conversations with 'post' art
students, myself as a 're-searcher', critical theorists, and artists. A space opened for a third term
to enter. This is the space where themes are actively created, the but(ting) against of two terms,
between our "articulat(ing) the presence of the past" (Mann, 1991, p. 121) experiences of the art
studio (becoming artist) process and the re-search (becoming research) process. And through this
pedagogical inquiry called re-searching, our stories came together to jar, to challenge, re-
constitute meaning to become, to contribute to the rupturing of this text.

November 17, 1994

"Between dwellings" (1993)

Description: 15" x 15" x 5" square glass container and grass clippings.

Beginning this work, I recall thinking of the glass structure I had made as a sort of dwelling place -
one which protects while simultaneously exposing - like the thin insular layer of skin
which cocoons but does not conceal - allowing the shedding of the appendage to burst
into something new - she camouflaged the body with the inscription of her chosen
medium. The enormous amount of grass clippings lay in a mound. Being drawn to this heap,
enticed me to frolic about visually. I therefore filled the glass box with the clippings. As I
proceeded to work on the piece I entered the (re) of the act set forth - somewhere between the
mound and the glass and the conceptual frame I had entered, and the desire to cast yet another
mould of amorphous material, I interact with the performance - similar to L.'s meticulous
obsession with her birds and eggs and N.'s persistency to shed the skin of paper. I began.
Meeting the third potential candidate: How do I contact someone out of the blue? "Hi my name is...I'm conducting a study about..." Waiting patiently for a response to my call for participants. Patiently I wait for someone to fill my requirements - someone to spare their time - someone to tell me a story. Meeting after meeting with potential subjects - trying to not lose sight of my conviction - compelled to entice people of the legitimacy of it all. Recording their histories, their stories, their silences. I was concerned about research for research sake and if this were the case, there was much to be reconciled on my part about the why's, how's, etc. (March 20, 1995 journal entry)

In the distance I hear the sound of children playing in the nearby park and as the sounds permeate my thoughts, dwelling places that function as private and public domains comes to mind. And as I proceeded to work with it, its construction, watching daily the grass begin to turn a brownish mulch and the humidity bead layers of sweat inside the structure, the transformative process continued - it continued to engage in the process - the process became the piece itself - The process of production became intrigue to itself, with the space at work opening a perpetual space for what was to evolve. As a sculpture, I was not confronted with a structure that I wished to transform literally, yet metaphorically I was engaging in precisely that spatially transformative process.

Tending to the piece daily - meticulously laying bead by bead, uniformly concealing the surface, casting latex birds enough to cover a wall - laying photographs of history that narrated a story of their own yet camouflaged their naked bodies that embalmed emblems of who they said they were - sieving fibres to re-cast layers of history - checking and re-checking; watching the grass - metamorphoses; documenting it in colour and in black and white, developing and enlarging the photographs - darkening/lightening/manipulating/re-framing - the process. Eventually it was time to take the grass out of its confines and I removed the cast block of grass out of the frame which it replicated.

I have thought about it - looked at it - named it and re-named it.

How many beads, how many eggs, how many birds, how many photos, how many characters - we each came with questions of our own in anticipation of those questions that would await us.
Having recently read a book entitled Dialogue by Deleuze and Parnet (1986), I decided to re-name the work to Between dwellings. Deleuze, engages in a discourse on the social phenomenon of "between"(ness) - a location where there is active movement in the process of "becoming", not resting n/either here n/or there but in the "middle of two terms". This all made sense as I returned to re-write (about) this once upon a time process and it fit so neatly into this moment of not knowing what the outcome would be. And here I find myself once again awaiting that comfort of erasing the anticipation of comfort in the dwellings of a re-search process.

Reflecting now, this title becomes appropriate in terms of the place I occupied as a participant in the production of this work - in constant dialogue my attention shifted from product to the manipulating of objects, ideas, text.

Approaching my participants with questions concerning what art production meant to them as students in a studio environment at a post secondary institution provided this project with an overwhelmingly rich potential for various inquiries to evolve. Resisting the temptation to sequester a theoretical framework for this project within a "finalized monologic discourse" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6), various themes have emerged to provide a fissure that mirrors the context from where I situate this study, that is in the interpretation of meanings as they are reconstituted in the process of re-thinking our modes of production.

It didn't take long for the resentment to set in - the resentment of complacency to a formal research method that was taught to me and to which I had adhered. I toppled over the task that I had set forth for myself - It didn't take long to recognise the trappings between manufactured research processes and productive ideologies that resisted the slippage and seepage of identities... (March 7, 1995)
Around the machineries, the stratagems that Rebecca Horn so rigorously assembles, which she measures, constructs, and organizes, you may choose to let your imagination wander into vague musings, uncertain wanderings, strayings. You may attempt to broach the precise through the indistinct, the exact through the approximate, the rigorous through the imprecise, the clear through the blurry. You may head down paradoxical, divergent paths. (Lascault, 1994, p. 104)

Re-reading the initial phrase provided by Alan Barkley, I realised that we were being described as students who occupied spaces of spirituality in the comfort of so-called home. My initial instinct was to tell the story differently, or at least through the stories of our past participation in the spaces of production. I did not want to find the answer to the question concerning all students’ embodied studio experiences, but rather, by allowing other voices of experience to come into play in this study, I sought to open and evoke discourse about the many questions and about the many spaces that we occupy. Thus, I had to re-read the notion of art studio production in a different light in order to pay homage to the location of the pluralities informing the processes that would enable me to realise that this (re-search) story had to be written differently.

The challenges presented and practised by “I” in this so called re-research process recessed in my intersections with the ‘participants’. Highlighting an “interview” with L., I use the experience to convey the challenges that met my conviction. L. assisted my need to truly disrupt the conventional research text - in her unconventional recommendation to proceed with the project yet without a tape recorder, by not complying to my set agenda, by not ‘writing’, by instead presenting a work of art that responded not to her past studio experiences but rather to the experience which we mutually shared about the interviewing/researching process. But after listening to her talk through experiences of “technical virtuosity” and “critical/feminist
“virtuosity” I look at the egg to see that this work carries signs of all the critical incidences of her past experiences and the process which L. had been submitted to in my coming to meet with me. L.’s egg was re-presentative of my efforts of re-searching differently screaming loudly to me

but...

*shifting terrains in movement*

*reconstituting yet again a space to question*

We could surmise possibilities, project experiences, essentialize theoretical frameworks, we can further construct curricula that essentially speaks to the socio/political/cultural climate of the time and yet remain ‘epistemologically trapped’. But in constituting a vision of the learning spaces one inhabits, what we need to hope is that these traps will owe to a presence of invention that informs and is informed, not by a fairy tale of heroic/romanticism past, but rather by one where we could begin to look back and begin anew.

*layer upon layer I conceal the evidence of the first scribe to reveal/create yet another gap in between moments.....the inscription continues*

but...and as we left the gallery aimlessly proceeding southward ....
REFERENCES


Appendix 1: Letter of initial contact (item 16)

As a graduate student in the Faculty of Education Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia, I am in the process of recruiting volunteers to participate in my graduate thesis study. The study entitled, Re-thinking the spaces of production: 'Re-writing' studio practices as 'fragmented' text, will investigate past art students experiences and perceptions as women in a post-secondary visual arts program. The study will investigate what art production meant to you during your education as a student in the studio environment.

I am looking for volunteers who:

a] are former undergraduate visual art students in any specialization

b] have received either a B.F.A. from a University or diploma from an Art College

c] can commit to approximately 3-4 hours of conversation/interview time

d] and are willing to share personal writing of reflections on their experiences as students and producers of art in a studio context. This will entail approximately 4-6 hours of writing.

Your identity will be confidential and you have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time during the study.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me:

Rosa Mastri
Department of Curriculum Studies
University of British Columbia
2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, B.C.
V6T 1Z4
Overview of the study for the participants

To potential participants:

This is a brief overview of my study and how it engages you in your participation.

The purpose of the study is to investigate past art students lived experiences and their perceptions as women in a post-secondary visual arts program. The primary focus will be your experiences in the studio component of your studies as you recall them now. By sharing autobiographies, conversation/interviews and reflections on your past experiences through brief journal writing, this study will investigate what the act of art production meant to you. My interest is to seek an understanding of what informs our conceptions as students seeking to become artists and the role that the concept of "studio space" has on our development and practising actions. To guide my study, the following questions will be used:

What was the participants experience in their art studio classes?

How do they perceive the evolvement of this experience as it affected their process of production?

How did their perception as female students inform their understanding of what art was for them?

What informed their process of production?

My intent is to develop 'text' that challenges the conventions of 'objective research'. This has led me to an approach that lends itself to re/search that involves participants as, not objects, but, subjects in the development of the 'text' - subjects who participate in the interpretive inquiry of their own (con)-text prior to my writing of this thesis. The collected data will be analyzed in conjunction with you (the participant) in order that we both come to agreed upon themes for the purpose of this study. You will consent to any of the text that will be analyzed and used in my writing.

I have included my Letter of Initial Contact and Consent Form that further describes the study and the terms that you will agree upon. I am open to negotiating this procedure that has been outlined but I expect that your participation will not be too time consuming. So once again, I thank you for your time and hope that you will take part in this study.
Appendix 2: Sample of interview questions (item 32)

The following questions will guide the interviews/conversations:

Interview/conversation #1]

In your schooling how did you experience an art class in relation to other disciplines in the school? How did this experience inform your understanding of what art was to you? What was art to you?

Interview/conversation #2]

What informed your process of production? What space do you recall occupying as a student? In your view, how did this affect your process of production?

Discuss your journal writing experience?
Appendix 3: Consent Form

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this Graduate thesis study which explores past art students experiences in the studio component of their post secondary education.

As a graduate student in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia, I am conducting a study entitled Re-thinking the spaces of production: 'Re-writing' studio practices as 'fragmented' text as a requirement for my Masters of Arts.

The purpose of the study is to investigate past art students lived experiences and perceptions as women in a post-secondary visual arts program. This study will investigate what art production meant to you at the time as a student in a studio environment.

Your signature on this form indicates that you agree to participate.

Your involvement will include:

1] Meeting with the researcher (Rosa Mastri) on two occasions to engage in conversations or interviews. The first meeting will be to gather biographical background and information about your experiences and perceptions as an art student in your production of art.

2] Participation in this study also includes journal writing and reflections of one or more works of your art, studio experience(s), or your perception of what art production was for you during your studio experiences.

3] The second meeting will follow the completion of your journal writing. This meeting will involve discussion about your re-writing of past experiences and discussion about the gathered analysis will follow.

4] Approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours of your time will be required for each meeting. Approximately 4-6 hours and 10-20 pages of journal writing will also be required.

5] Conversation/interviews will be audio taped and the journals will be read and analyzed. None of this data will be shared with any member of my research committee. In both cases, the data will be destroyed within five years after the completion of the study.

6] Your identity and name will be kept confidential and will not be used in any writing of this study. A pseudonym will be used unless you specifically agree to use your real name at the bottom of the form.

7] You have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time during the study without jeopardy.
If you have any questions concerning the procedures of this study, please feel free to contact me at the following address:

Rosa Mastri  
Department of Curriculum Studies  
University of British Columbia  
2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, B.C.  
V6T 1Z4

Or my Faculty Advisor:  
Dr. Rita Irwin

You acknowledge that you have received a copy of this consent form to be kept for your own records.

Sincerely,  
Rosa Mastri

I, ____________________________, consent to take part in this study.

(print name)

(signature) (date)

(address)

I, ____________________________ (signature), grant permission to use my real name in the written material for this study, although I can wait to give my permission.