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ARTIST TEACHER

Amy Wolfe

142 Pages

This arts-based research project uses qualitative and autoethnographic methods to explore the concept of artist-teacher. The author/artist journaled for three months about her artmaking process while undertaking five discussions about her work with peer advisors, both of whom were practicing artists. The author discovered that that key themes that ran through her artmaking process included the use of found objects (chance and organization), intuition, metaphor, politics and spirituality, other artists' influence, reflective practice, engagement with nature, and the effort to understand and address her audience. For three months, the author made notes about her teaching practice. These notes appeared to emphasize themes of chance, metaphor, other artists' work, intuition, and reflection.

The author discerned a connection between her activities as artist and as art teacher. Her artistic process shaped and gave agency to her arts pedagogy. Autoethnographic arts-based research helped to deepen both her artistic practice and teaching. Future recommendations would be to have other artist-teachers conduct their own arts-based research. The author intends to continue her own reflexive research throughout her teaching career. The author also recommends creating a collective group of artist-teachers to collaborate and reflect upon one another's artwork and teaching.

KEYWORDS: Artist-teacher; Autoethnographic research; Arts-based research



ARTIST TEACHER

AMY WOLFE

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Art

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ARTIST TEACHER

AMY WOLFE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Michael Vetere III



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As an art teacher and someone who is passionate about art in all its aspects; historical, aesthetic, critical and art creating, I think it is important to the craft and to my personal wellbeing that I continue to create my own artwork. This art making raises several questions: How does having a better understanding of my own creative process, and reflecting upon and verbalizing that process, inform my teaching? How do I integrate this knowledge into my own public school art classroom? Through this study, I will investigate my own process of art making and look at the steps that I personally take. Using journaling and feedback from two peer advisors and fellow artists, I will analyze my art making process and examine how this art making process informs my teaching. Finally, I will examine how I can integrate what I have learned from this creative process into my own classroom.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine my own process in creating art, and to analyze how the steps that I take to make art informs my teaching. I will analyze and reflect upon my artistic process so that I am able to verbalize what I'm doing visually. I will then integrate this process into my own classroom and pedagogy.

Artists have always reflected upon their artwork and processes and found that this inspired them and helped them to evolve. The reflection inspired their work and helped them to grow as artists and as teachers. Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Rothko, Joseph Beuys, to name a few, have all reflectively written about their artwork and their teaching. Kandinsky (1994) writing about his process stated



Over the years, I have realized it is not enough to work with hammering heart, hands clasped to your breast (which only makes your ribs ache), your whole body tense. This can only exhaust the artist, but not his task. The horse carries the rider quickly and sturdily. The rider, however, guides the horse. The artist's talent carries him to great heights quickly and sturdily. The artist, however, guides his talent. This is the 'conscious,' the 'calculated' element in one's work, . . . The artist must know his gifts through and through (p. 370).

Rothko (Lopez-Remiro, 2006) writes in *The Ideal Teacher*, "Art must be to him a language of lucid speech inducing the understanding and exaltation which art properly inspires. It is the artist teacher who has fulfilled that role with the most frequent success" (p.22). When Joseph Beuys (1990) was asked if teaching was an important function, he responded,

It's my most important function. To be a teacher is my greatest work of art. The rest is the waste product, a demonstration. . . I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it. Thought, speech, communication—and not only in the socialist sense of the word—are all expressions of the free human being (p. 85).

And still today contemporary artists reflect on their process and teaching, Linda Sikora, Mark Mitsuda & Therman Statom all discuss being an artist teacher in the PBS documentary *Craft in America: Teachers* (2016), Linda Sikora (2016) states, "Personally I don't have the energy to teach if I'm not in my studio. In fact, being in the studio inspires my teaching, the teaching inspires being in the studio." The artists confirmed that there is a cyclical nature to making art and teaching, they feed each other. Mark Mitsuda (2016) talks about the way you understand the medium more in depth when you have to teach it. Teaching is a different way of understanding art making than just the intuitive way that you use it in your own artwork.



Thurmann Statom (2016) speaks about teaching as advocacy. "Teaching is the highest form of advocacy you can do, in terms of influencing the world or having the chance to be a part of something that you can change" Sikora believes that there is a level of empathy that you have for your students, because you yourself are in the process too. She states, "Teaching just happens all of the time, it's a way of connecting in the world, being in the world and a way of affecting the world. I think it gives me as much as I give it." Lowenfeld argues "that creative practice offered an experience of responsiveness to others, a way of being present in the world, or reaching out and being seen and heard ... and, through the agency of imagination, to be empathetic to others" (Burton, 2009, p. 333).

I will conduct the study using arts-based research and autoethnography. Arts-based research uses art making as a research tool and as a mode for making metaphorical connections and generating ideas through visual imagery (Marshall, 2007).

Need for the study

Artist-teachers need the validation that what they are doing is important and to give a weight and clarity to visual arts in schools. Students need an appreciation of the art that is all around them. There is very little if any research on artist-teachers, and I think art teachers and artists suffer from that. I am hoping through this study to give an agency to other artist-teachers and to the importance of what we do in the classroom and in our own work. My research will also add to other literature on arts-based research as an argument for a plausible and highly effective method of research that creates outcomes not expected (Barone & Eisner, 2012). This type of research can open many avenues to new questions and new research. My research will also be autoethnographic in nature. Autoethnographic research incorporates one's affect and emotion into a study. This is what makes us who we are and how we see the world. "The



intellect makes sense of emotion, giving us structure and direction for them, but it is affect, not intellect, that provides the impetus and impulsion to do and be" (Dewey, 1934).

Autoethnography "becomes a form of inquiry that does not merely write up the research but is itself the story of discovery" (Rolling, 2008, p.841). Autoethnography- recognizes "in the temporality of experience that the construction of human meaning is never finished while human life continues" (Anderson, T., 2014, p. 90). Ellis and Bochner (as cited in Anderson, 2014) state, "The goal [of autoethnography] is to encourage compassion and promote dialogue . . . as an agent of self-understanding and ethical discussion" (p. 90). This self-understanding is what gives people humanity. In autoethnographic research there is a self-reflexivity. The energy that comes from this type of reflection changes the paradigm within this, "juxtaposing and rejuxtaposing the self as the instrument of inquiry within the confines of objective framing structures, altering [and challenging] those structures as one moves reflexively along" (Rolling, 2008, p.842).

This reflexive research can also give me insight into what I do in the classroom. What lessons I choose, how I present them, the artists that I explore, and how I let my students explore their own affect and emotion in the classroom and in their artwork. This type of research act is not linear or restricted by artificial boundaries. It is "interactive and reflexive whereby imaginative insight is constructed from a creative and critical practice" (Sullivan, 2006, p.20).

This autoethnographic research can also be arts-based research. Rolling (2014) describes arts-based research as an "improvisational inquiry" (p.227). It incorporates theory and praxis as working together to create new realities, creating a cyclical nature to research. Arts-based research is reflective, heuristic research. Barone & Eisner (2012), define arts-based research as "an approach to research that we define as a method of designed to enlarge human understanding" (p.8). Arts-based research will get at what may be overlooked by other methods



and cause challenges to the researcher or reader, but these challenges are what allows growth.

An artist-teacher, Shipe (2016), in using arts-based research in her own studies, kept a visual journal as she reflected on her teaching practices and students' responses. The journal became her art form. Her visual journaling was open ended without a specific predetermined outcome. This allowed her to remain open to unexpected findings and make metaphoric connections between educational theory, practice and creating art. Shipe (2016) states that through arts-based research, we can be empathetic, discover and appreciate the unexpected, and describe the phenomena that is our classroom practice.

Research Question

In order to focus the study, I developed the following research questions:

- 1. What is my process of making artwork?
- 2. How does this inform my teaching?
- 3. How can I integrate what I have learned from my process into the art classroom?

Definition of Terms

Autoethnography – "A form of research and writing that combines ethnography & autobiographical objectives" (Marzilli Miraglia & Smilan, 2014, p.303).

Arts-based educational research- "systematic, qualitative inquiry—focused on the study of issues and topics related to teaching and learning—that uses visual art production methods, visual art forms, and artistic ways of thinking and practice as a means to (1) generate research questions (2) analyze and interpret information or data, and /or (3) communicate findings of the study" (Hafeli, 2013, p. 111).



Ethnography- "has come to be equated with virtually any qualitative research project where the intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice. This is sometimes referred to as a 'thick description'" (Hoey, 2014).

Heuristic- "Enabling a person to discover or learn something for themselves" (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/heuristic).

Praxis- "Practice, as distinguished from theory" (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/praxis).



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arts-based Research

According to Barone and Eisner (2012), "Arts-based research is an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable" (p.1). Through this type of research one can say, in a spectrum of sensory modalities, what cannot be said in other forms of research. This type of research is not in opposition to social science or humanities research but is its own mode of operation.

The renowned art educator Elliott Eisner (2008) stated, "Arts-based research is not simply the application of a variety of loose methods; it is the result of artistically crafting the description of the situation so that it can be seen from another angle" (p.22). Eisner argued that "every research method is a way of seeing the world- and every way of seeing is a way of not seeing" (as cited in Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008, p.4). My approach builds as well upon the way another prominent theorist of art education, Susanne Langer, distinguished between discursive knowledge, which derives from argument and reasoning, and nondiscursive knowledge, which proceeds through intuition (Langer 1957). For the most part, arts-based research amounts to a form of non-discursive knowledge. It incorporates affect into its method as a major component. It is "a method designed to enlarge human understanding," one that does not come up with a definitive answer but leads to more questions (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p.8).

Thus, arts-based research is not a literal description of a state of affairs; it is an evocative and emotionally drenched expression that makes it possible to know how others feel. In the pursuit of such an aim, metaphor will be appealed to, analogies will be drawn, cadence and tempo of the language controlled... (p.9)



Visual art is a powerful tool. Leavy (2009) states "visual images occupy an elevated place in memory... images are consumed differently... and can be very powerful and lasting" (p. 216). Marshall (2007) discusses that the central premise of learning through image-making "is that clarity and meaning are engendered when ideas, concepts, or information is transformed into visual images, objects, or visual experiences... This transformation of concepts through imaging produces new insight and learning" (p.23).

Arts-based and autoethnographic research incorporates theory and praxis as working together to create new realities, creating a cyclical nature to research. Maxine Green (as cited in Sullivan, 2005) writes about the possibilities in imagination "a place of 'resisting fixities, seeking the openings,' where 'we relish incompleteness, because that signifies that something still lies ahead" (p. 115). Sullivan argues that this is exactly what autoethnographic/narrative research and arts-based research are all about. Sullivan (2005) states, "using the visual arts to turn questions into understanding that give rise to more questions not only describes an aesthetic process of self-realization but also describes a research process" (p. 115). Rollings (2014) writes that there is an improvisational aspect to arts-based research. Not everything worth knowing can be done through a statistical study. Sometimes the best way of learning is through a reflective process of creating artwork. He states:

Sometimes the purpose of art is to record and preserve knowledge over time. Sometimes the purpose of art is to raise questions about the knowledge passed down to us, contesting time-tested certainties. But whatever the purpose, art always forms, informs, and /or transforms ideas. (p. 229)

Jesse Prinz posits, "in the wonder that art provokes . . . the interaction 'between mind and the world is brought into central focus" (Washburn, 2014, p. 5). Medlock (2015) writes about



wonder as "not simply a passive act. . . it is also an active state of questioning and speculation about the meaning of an experience" (p. 30). He writes about the "process variables" as we create a piece of art, one of them being conceiving. Conceiving can be likened to impregnation, or a wonderstruck moment of enlightenment where you develop a concept for your work. And this "is embodied, embedded in the inner consciousness of the artist, and begins to take on a life of its own" (p. 44). And through this act we can be educated, transformed, and enlightened.

Hafeli (2013) understands arts-based research as a form of "systematic, qualitative inquiry" into teaching and learning (p.111). This approach allows educational researchers to use their own artwork and observations of their own visual thinking to develop research questions, analyze information, and put forth interpretations. This lived experience that Barnacle (2004) writes about "becomes not just an alternative site of knowledge production, but, rather, a privileged site of knowledge production ... in terms of how data is represented and how it is gathered" (p. 61).

Medlock (2015) describes what he calls the "emergence of wonder" as being characterized "as a dynamic stream of recursive processes that occur in a spiral-like manner" (para27). Visual learning and learning through creating explores a whole other realm of study that is not linear and does not adhere to the prescribed rules. This also speaks about the importance of practice-based research and its use for interpretation and the creation of new perceptions. Marshall (2007) refers to Sullivan's (2005) claim:

studio-based research is not concerned with generating new information . . . but with reconstruing existing information. Its goal is to *transform* perception: to change the way we see or interpret things. Transforming perceptions generates *insight*: new



understandings and new perspectives that make sense of perceptions and experience in new ways. (p. 25)

Marshall (2007) cites Ricoeur's theory of exteriorization, stating that "from Ricoeur's hermeneutic perspective, meaning emerges in the dialogue between the mind and the image; it is not the image itself but the active interpretation of the viewer" (p. 35). Interpretation is a main component of arts-based research.

Marshall (2007) stated that there is clarity of meaning when ideas are transformed into visual imagery. Sullivan (2005) claimed that this research is a "re-construing of existing information" (p. 25). By engaging in arts-based research we are transforming previously held assumptions and given new insights, and a new understanding of previous issues. This type of learning is where language is complementary and images are primary. It also extends past the image and the process and becomes also about the conversation between the artwork and the viewer. The more that we can understand and reflect upon our own artwork, the stronger our own pedagogy will be. Sullivan (2014) states that

Artists and art teachers use a myriad of methods, techniques, approaches, and strategies in making art and this is how we create opportunities for others to be affected by art. When artists create artworks, they create an environment and an opportunity within which others can learn something new. . . we are opening up new possibilities for thinking about, and acting upon, our new insights. (p.284)



Artistic Process

When one opens oneself up to the creative process one opens to "a form of transcendent consciousness" (Medlock, 2015, p. 22) one becomes "open to experience, and specifically to the vitality and mystery of the moment" (p. 18). As an artist, one must be open to this creative process. It becomes the ritual by which one works. Art is a language, a visual language, it is a way to view, interpret, and analyze the world. Rothko argues that artists have developed greater sensibility to the world. Visual imagery creates deeper empathy through its experience and understanding (Eisner, 2008; Leavy, 2009) and raises consciousness (Leavy, 2009; Marshall & D'Adamo, 2011; Weber, 2008). According to Marshall (2007), "Vision is a step toward language, not the other way around . . . Arnheim (as cited in Marshall,2007) believes that we think in a medium . . . such as ink, paint, stone, plaster, and clay" (p. 26).

Medlock (2015) wrote about the sense of wonder that artist have when working on a creative process. He also stated that a "specific artistic work is simply a segment of the artists" (and the receptive audience's) ongoing engagement in the experience of wonder, and that one work leaves off to create an opening for further creative experience" in a spiral manner, rather than in a linear process (p. 64).

This can lead to new perceptions in our pedagogy and new perspectives. Through art as research we are using the "lived experiences" as educational research (Barnacle, 2004). Van Manen (as cited in Barnacle, 2004) believed that knowledge is also created when artists work across domains. This research leads to "meaning questions," questions without answers that cannot be "solved" (p.23). These lived experiences are only truly grasped reflexively.

Arts-based research extends past the process and the image; it is also a conversation between the artwork and the viewer. Rothko (2004) believed that the viewer is part of this



process. Rothko wrote about the biological need to create art. He claimed that it is a necessary communication for the benefit of society:

man's senses collect and accumulate, the emotions and mind convert and order, and through the medium of art, they are emitted to participate again in the life stream where in turn they will stimulate action in other men. For art is not only expressive but communicable as well, this communicability imparts to it a social function. (p.28)

According to Rothko (as cited in Lopez-Remiro, 2006), maintaining your own art making makes you a better teacher and perceiver of the arts. Rothko stated:

art must be to him a language of lucid speech inducing the understanding and exaltation which art properly inspires. It is the artist teacher who has fulfilled that role with most frequent success. Because art is his own best mode of expression, and because of his intimate relationship with it and its methods, both in his own expression and that of other artists both past and present, he is likely to have developed that sensibility to a high degree than others whose only contact with art is from the point of view of the observer. (p. 22).

Bourriaud (2002) writes of relational aesthetics that "art is a state of encounter" (p. 18) and that "the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realties, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real", to turn your life "into a lasting world." (pp. 13-14).

Anderson (2014) believes that only through this personal experience, only through this process of art making can we hope to gain a new insight and connection with another human being. Art is our language, our visual language, it is the way that we view, interpret, and analyze the world around us. Anderson writes, "A major role of art is to give concrete form to our



subjective experience, so it can be examined for what it embodies about our human nature" (p. 89).

Autoethnography

According to Anderson (2014), autoethnographic research tells a story, puts you in the shoes of another person and "represents an *emic*, or insider's view of events and ideas" (p.89). This type of methodology cannot be replicated in a quantitative study. Narrative voice reflects this affective function" (Anderson, 2014, p. 89). Arts-based research can best be done through an autoethnographic study. This reflective type of research opens a spiral type learning that other quantitative ways cannot. Autoethnographic research differs from a quantitative research in that,

Autoethnographic, narrative researchers do not research and then write the story. Instead, understanding comes as a product of the writing itself. It is an open-ended act of exploration that follows the interests of the writer in relation to the issue(s), phenomena, and feelings that are directing the course of inquiry. (Anderson, 2014, p.91)

Rolling (2008) writes that autoethnography allows him to make art out of personal and professional identities that would otherwise constrain him. It gives credence to his own subjectivity and allows him to have control over how he codes or recodes his identity within cultural systems. According to Anderson (2014), arts-based research "engages in the spirit of phenomenology" (p.91). "Phenomenological research consists of reflectively bringing into nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life" (Van Manen, 1990, p.32). Only through this personal experience, only through this process of art making can we hope to gain a new insight and connection with another human being. Barnacle (2004) writes that, "phenomenology is



concerned with the qualities, values, and impressions of experience rather than with the what, when and why characteristic of methods that promote abstraction and explanation" (p.59).

Can all art making then be research, Marshall and D'Adamo (2011) argue that not all art is research. They argue that for the art making to be considered research, one must establish ways to record the process, analyze information, critique, and synthesize to make meaning out of the work and process. In autoethnography and narrative research there is a "heuristic reflexivity" (Anderson, 2014. p.88). Anderson (2014) states "heuristics—how we make sense of lived experiences—is at the heart of narrative and autoethnographic research "(p.89). As Schutz (as cited in Grumet, 1991) put it, "Meaning does not lie in experience. Rather those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflexively" (p. 69).

Arts-based and autoethnographic research is reflexive and improvisational in nature, creating a cyclical process to the research. Rolling, Jr. (2008) states that autoethnography moves the researchers lived experience to the center of the research to disrupt existing social and academic expectations, which are expected to be objective. The subjective concentration on the self turns research and reflection into a form of performance art and storytelling.

Anderson (2014) writes that autoethnographic research tells a story, and puts the reader in the shoes of another person to provide "an insider's view of events and ideas" (p.88). Anderson speaks of autoethnography as a process:

A destination possibly imagined but not actually known until you stop driving/becoming/moving/evolving. Which of course means that you don't ever really get there, because 'there' is ever-changing. In this light, autoethnographic and narrative research are exploratory in nature. (p. 91).



To authenticate this research one can include a member check with each participant. "Member –checks give participants a chance to check your story for factuality and comment on your presentation of significant meanings. what Geertz (as cited in Anderson, 2014) called *thick description*, that is, description rich in detail" (p. 92).

Artist Practice and Teaching

Ranciere (2011) purposes that viewing is an action in which the viewer can also be a pupil or a scholar, in becoming our own spectator we can be inspired to new methods of teaching. We can be actively learning, growing, and challenging preconceived beliefs and this impacts and strengthens our pedagogy. According to Hall (2010) there is a "rich conceptual seam of practice that lies in the interplay between one's own work as an artist or maker and one's teaching" (p. 106). There is a heuristic cycle that happens when one is being reflective about one's own artwork and pedagogical stance. Through autoethnographic research the story will be specific to me, but one in which I wish to give voice to others, give a voice and an agency to my students, and other art teachers. I reflected on my "lived experiences" to make sense of them as an artist and as a teacher. Ellis & Bochner (2000) explain that in autoethnographic research "authors use their own experiences in the culture *reflexively* to bend back to look more deeply at self-other relations" (p.740).

Seers (as cited in Thomas, 2010) wrote about "the importance of cultivating a climate of inquiry in the art classroom that promotes 'creative risk-taking and opportunity' among art teachers and their pupils" (p. 135). When students see their teacher actively engage with their own artwork and passionate about what they do, they too are engaged also and willing to take



risks in their own work. Students realize that it's okay to take risks and fail and then try again, and they become more aware of the process and the importance of it.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

My research method was arts-based and autoethnographic. I collected data through journal/sketchbook entries, photographs of my work, and my artwork. The research took place over four weeks while I was working on a body of artwork. Artist colleagues acted as member checks. They critiqued my work and reviewed my thoughts about it. They each provided an open-ended hour-long critique of my work each week during the making process and reviewed my journals. I made notes during these critiques and wrote reflective journal comments afterwards. At the same time, I took note of general curricular decisions that I made within my art classroom about such things as use of materials, project limitations and expectations, introduction to artists' work, and time on task that were directly influenced by my art making. The main focus of the research was on how I conducted my artistic practice. I did not record student work, name students, or use student assessment as data. I was not required to have IRB permission to conduct my study.

Metacognition is the "scaffolding" upon which I built my research. (Hargrove & Rice, 2015). Through the use of personal journals, I analyzed my process of making art and, concurrently, examined how my reflection on this process may or may not have informed my teaching in the art classroom. Did I have the students follow the same steps within the creative process that I followed in my studio or was my teaching more directed? What were the differences and similarities between the two processes?



Participants

My undergraduate work was in fine art concentrating in ceramics in 1996 at Illinois State University and then through a master's program in 2000 at St. Michael's College in Vermont I gained my art teaching certification. I began teaching art at the high school level at St. Thomas More in Champaign, Il for five years and have also taught junior high art at Bloomington Jr High School in Bloomington, Il for two years. I currently teach at an elementary school where half of the population is bilingual. There are 420 students at the school, 80% are in the free or reduced lunch program (reportcard@isbe.net). I have a dedicated art room, but this can change from year to year depending on enrollment. My class size is usually around 20-29 and I see the students for one hour, once a week. A unit can last a couple of weeks for the younger students and up to four to six weeks for the upper level students.

My member check participants; will include my studio mate, Wayne and a professor of printmaking at the local university, Laura; both are very active and producing in their own artwork. I have used pseudonyms for their names.

Wayne has been an artist for 40 plus years. He started in photography and still uses this as a starting point with his drawings. He works mainly in charcoal but also does dry point etchings. He captures the ephemeral moment in his drawing, and creates images with dual interpretations (Wayne, personal communication, May 17, 2016). He is also an artist-teacher, as he teaches figure drawing at a local arts center. He is a full-time artist working out of a studio building downtown, which he shares with another artist and me.

Laura has been a printmaking professor at a local university since 2002. She works in intaglio, creating abstract images that are influence by cartography and cycles in nature. She is a full-time artist as well as teacher and has had numerous residences and has shown her work from



Iowa, to New York, to China. In 2000, she co-founded a local print shop in town with her husband.

Location

The study took place in a small urban setting of a downtown Central Illinois City two hours south of Chicago, in my studio that I share with two other artists. The city has a population of 131,000 with an average income of \$62,000 (www.bnbiz.org/data/demographic-profiles). Its main employers are large insurance companies. It is also home to a small private university of 2,500 students and is adjacent to a state university of 20,000 students and two community colleges.

The two adjoining cities has many galleries and is a thriving arts community. It is home to galleries at the two universities and one community college. There are more than a dozen galleries/studios in downtown that actively participate in the open studios on First Friday. The Downtown Association Artists Committee also hosts an Area Artist Showcase, showcasing local artists. It is also home to the County Arts Center, which host a summer arts festival featuring local artists and artists from around the country.

Limitations

The limitations of my study are the amount of time I'm able to spend actively reflecting on my artistic process and reflecting on my teaching. I'm also limited in the amount of time I have to work in my studio. During the school year, I try to spend a few hours each week in my studio. During the summer, I try to spend a day or two there a week. I was also limited by the time I was allotted with my member checkers due to family issues of their own. I was able to spend two hours with Laura and three with Wayne over the course of several weeks. We met for



one hour at a time. I limited my own personal bias by using the professional artists as mentors and member checkers.



CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

My process of research was autoethnographic and arts based research. I kept a journal for three months on my reflections on my art making process and on my teaching. I also recorded my art making process through photographs.

I also met with my member checkers two times each to discuss my artwork, my process and my reflections. I recorded the conversations and have transcribed or summarized them.

Journal Entries Art Work Process

May 4th, 2016

I used to start with a concept, an idea, but now I let the materials decide what they want to be and it grows from there into a concept. I try not to force them into being.

I collect natural & man-made found objects that are intriguing to me. They have a

history, a story to tell. I combine them formally at first (see Figures A-1-4, Journal pp. 1-4)

New one- maybe *Rhythm*?

Six pieces, man-made and natural I've found. They found their way together. One piece (see Figure A-5) $\frac{3}{4}$ " (little larger) x 11/4" of wood was part of some larger cabinet or possible furniture. It has layers of worn blue-green paint on it, with bare patches, too, and two holes drilled into it. Looks like a small painting.

The bean pod seeds (see Figure A-6) (I'll have to find the correct term) are from our scavenges at the park. They are so beautiful and so delicate. I've been trying to figure out a way to incorporate them into my work. The base piece is planed walnut (see Figure A-7), I think, and it looks like someone cut small rectangles out of it for another project. Sometimes the best



pieces you find are the discarded scraps from someone else's creation. Sometimes the negative is better than the positive. Didn't Matisse say that about his paper cut-outs? I am in love with walnut shells. I love the way the squirrels chew them open, and no two are ever alike; they become these beautiful bone-like forms (see Figure A-8). So many interesting riches!

The last two pieces of this new piece are a piece of bark from a limb (see Figure A-9) and another manufactured piece of wood (see Figure A-10). They both contain in them horizontal lines and circular shapes or holes. The bark has a wonderfully wrinkled knot, and the way it broke, tapered at each end, is intriguing. The manufactured wood has the wonderful blue paint on the edge, marked for some reason. (See Figure A-11, *Rhythm* completed)

I try not to alter the objects I find. I try not to break or cut sticks, wood, etc. I like to leave them in the form I first discovered them in. I do draw on the wood or metal. I don't think I'm going to draw on this piece, though.

Usually I arrange the piece and let it be for a while before I glue anything down. I usually make edits from there, and the piece could sit for weeks before being glued. This is partially due to my time limitations in the studio with everything else I've got going on. I'm learning to be very patient.

I am considering whether or not to oil the walnut. Do I want it to be darker and somewhat shiny? Or not? Also, will this make it difficult to adhere the other wood? Will the epoxy fail? I had several other pieces break because of some technical difficulty with the epoxy.

I'm going to go look at one of my other pieces I've oiled that's walnut. I think it may bring out the wood grain more, but I'm going to wait. Might test it on the back-BUT can't get the lid off of the oil CAN! (Don't forget to add hanging device first!)



Mutineers (Figures A-12 & A-13)

I have lots of pieces with circles cut out of them. From the wood shop at ISU- where students are cutting out pieces from their turned bowls.

This piece is really thick, just shy of 2"- 6" long, 4 ¹/₂" (arrow up)

Mutineer-a person, especially a soldier or sailor, who rebels or refuses to obey the orders of a person in authority.

David Gray (2014)- Mutineers

"you know the way it is

These thoughts are mutineers

Trying to shake the monkey off my back."

May 9th, 2016

Talked with Laura,

Searching

Finding

Dada-vessel-collage-Dada

Layering

Collection

Classifying

Crown print press-John Cage, composer of 2 minutes of silence.

Collaboration

Quietly political

Noguchi



May 11th, 2016

| Notes from talk with Laura: | | |
|--|--------------|--|
| Mutineer | | |
| Lyrics | Written down | |
| Conversation | fragments- | |
| Novels | quotes | |
| Tone of a piece (arrow drawn) relates to tone of writers | | |
| Titles- taking ownership | | |
| Name-naming children | | |
| -untitled (w/ red stripes) | | |
| -gives viewers something to step (A title) into | | |
| -instruction- to meet the artist someway | | |
| -comment on a piece | | |

May 11th, 2016

I am in luck today that my 1st hour class is on a FIELD TRIP! - I didn't even realize it till class was about to start, so I have a few minutes to reflect/write. I have these limited hours for everything. It's always start/stop-start/stop. Can be quite frustrating at times, but I feel energized by my conversation with Laura and the beginning of my journaling/reflecting process.

I was thinking about the conversation this morning before my shower. So, in the bathroom I quickly wrote myself a note and texted it to myself. If I don't do that the thought/moment is gone. I was thinking about Laura asking me if my work was political. At first I was pretty sure it is not. I've been asked that before. I guess I always think of political as



in your face + LOUD! Laura was talking about an African American artist who said that if a black person walked into a gallery- that was political- quietly political.

I wrote- Maybe I am quietly political. I want the viewer, I want myself to stop- be still. I want you + myself to notice the beauty around us: to notice the little things that aren't so flashy and in your face. I guess that is political.

In my artist statement, I write- "In this ritual of finding objects and finding my composition, of growth + decay and of chance and intuition."

May 11th, 2016

I'm trying to get my second, third wind and get focused. Stretched, breathing, listening to music-Get to work! I'm going to glue *Rhythm*. I'm going to wait on oiling the walnut and decide later. I will have to look up pics to remember just where everything is, or was placed.

Remember to attach hanger 1st!

-Can't find my clamps

May 13th, 2016

Got the hanger glued on two days ago- and the base pieces last night. Today I'll glue the rest down. Feel better today- took some personal time at work. Only 45minutes, but somehow that provided relief.

Got it all glued down. I had to change the placement of the walnut. I glued the (painted) rectangle too high and then it was just too heavy-crowded there.

I'm really just enjoying the formal balance of the piece. And just using my found elements alone + not drawing on it.



I was a bit heavy handed with the epoxy on the seeds. I may have to oil the walnut now to try to disguise that. This is a reoccurring problem. –Need to fix that or use a different adhesive.

Now I need to decide what to work on next.

I'm going to work on my ongoing piece *Circle*? (not sure of the title) (see Figures A-14 & A-15).

May 17th, 2016

Talk with Wayne

-chance finding things- but not chance in putting together.

-balance-ying-yang

-disparate objects

-formal-visually

Zen

May 18th, 2016

I will work on one more piece or two with my "member checkers".

I'm feeling a little stuck trying to decide what next. It's the end of the year and very hectic at school, trying to wrap that all up. Had a really good discussion with Wayne last night. I need to take notes from it, but what is striking me right now is our talk about limitations and the limitations I place on myself while choosing pieces. What makes me pick up one piece while leaving another?

I think what I'm drawn to is a piece that has been altered by someone or something else. A piece that has been worn, used and discarded as not useful anymore. I am drawn to sticks, branches that have been altered by the bugs burrowing inside them. And how the tree grows



around it but the scar remains. I'm drawn to the lines "drawn" by the bugs eating their way to food, a rest?

I think I'm drawn to pieces where there is a history, a memory of something before me, being touched or altered by someone else, the cast off, the negative of someone else's sculpture or piece.

I think I am drawing (maybe painting) without drawing.

-Oiled *Rhythm*- need to attach bark-shell to the back so it stands off the wall.

Starting new piece- not right, right now. I'm going to draw on the back.

May 25th, 2016

Long hiatus from the studio. Wrapping up the school year, and I really had been neglecting things at school. So now I have lots to do to finish packing up my room etc.... But grades are done!

Put another coat of oil on the walnut of *Rhythm*. I think I'll work on *Circle*, plus the new one. I'll see how much energy I have.

Picked up a (very small) piece of concrete (or my youngest son did)-reminds me of *Venus* of *Willendorf*

Drew on the base of the new one (see Figure A-16 &A-17) (no name yet)- Beautiful burnt piece of wood. Has very formal elements arranged on top- but needed a drawing in the background. Drawing from some bug line work.

June 3rd, 2016

micro<MACRO (art show)-due June 10th!

Show about the relationship of scale to an artist's concept.

Size is about comparison & perspective



-may reference the physical + concrete or the fantastical + conceptual of what is micro or macro

24"- all directions

I'm reading Graeme Sullivan's (2014) *The Art of Research,* and he lists how there are "distinctive forms of artistic cognition prevail (when researching through art), such as

| -visualizing | -questioning |
|--------------|-------------------|
| -sensing | -grounding |
| -intuiting | -comparing |
| -focusing | -and interpreting |
| . (270) | |

-reasoning. (p. 279).

I'm drawn to this listing, ways of categorizing, organizing, cataloging, like the list Laura gave to me about my own work.

-searching (for objects, composition, balance and an understanding)

-Finding-Editing

-Combining

-Reacting

-Arranging

June 7th, 2016

I got a lot of work done yesterday on a new piece, about memory, layers, landscape. Not sure of the title yet. I think this is what I'll enter into the micro MACRO show on Friday. I was trying to work on two pieces at the same time, but I think that's over estimating my time.

This piece of wood came from the university sculpture room that they would use in the foundry during castings. Has great burn marks in it. I first set up (organized) the found objects



on top of the wood piece (see figure A-18). It needed more in the background. Unlike *Rhythm*, I needed to do some drawing on it.

I first thought about drawing the stick that I was going to include on top. I did a quick sketch on paper, and then abandoned that for a while. So, then I found another stick, beautiful part of a branch that has been really eaten through by termites or some bug. The entire stick is covered with lines, and circles and ridges, and there are a few little bits of bark holding on, too (see figure A-19).

So, I drew this first with pencil and added some other lines with charcoal.

When I came back to the piece after several days/week and looked at my sketch, I decided it did need to go on there. I began to draw that stick from the vantage point of looking down on to it, but how it'll be placed on the board, you may not see much of that at all.

The two drawings overlap like they were both there first (see figure A-20).

After drawing with pencil, I went back in with ink in some areas, some ebony pencil & a sanguine pencil.

I've also added a lotus pod at the bottom, which may become its own little landscape within a landscape (see figure A-21). I may add more pods or something like my print *Rise* or a nod to Redon's *Strange Flower* (1880).

I also had to turn the sample veneer vertically, because, horizontally, it now covered the drawing too much. It's not working now. I think it's too heavy on the left (see figure A-22).

I may break my rule of not cutting pieces and cut up the veneer.

June 8th, 2016

Can't get over my fear of the miter saw mixed with trying to cut a tiny piece of wood, so the veneer wood is out. I need to get more handsaws that would cut through that.



Finished the drawings on the board today. I did add a figure-like *Rise*-exactly like it actually (see figure A-23). There's a nice play between it and the pod. I did put a landscape around them.

I also added more to the middle drawing. It's funny how you walk away from your drawing unsatisfied, but the next day you can see all the good in it (sometimes).

I may draw some more on it. I have to get the pieces glued on and do it in stages so that they stay! I was going to elevate the thick block of wood on the left upper corner, elevate it with acorn tops and have the purple heart a little underneath, creating all these layers and maybe some possibility that they were truly connected. I think I'm finally becoming a better engineer through all of my failed gluing. I realized that there would not be a strong enough connection if it were just glued onto two acorn tops. It's a very thick piece of wood, so I compromised, and I have the purple heart just touching the other piece.

I really hope all my glue holds, otherwise it'll be plan B for the microMACRO show. I also put more text on the circle board. I hope to complete the text soon, so I can move on to the drawing.

I may do a drawing and somehow transfer it to the board. It's going to be hard to draw on top of all that ink.

June 9th, 2016

I got everything glued on this morning (see figure A-24). I'll have to go back and hang it and look at it later. I may not be able to drop off the piece until Saturday. Pushing it a bit.

I've been thinking about the title-what it all means. I'm thinking about things like memory, layers, landscapes. I usually turn to poetry or lyrics to help me verbalize what I cannot. I looked up some poems and found a great blog of poetry (Nataliejabbar,2016, April 30th)-<u></u>"Live



in the layers"- that might actually be my title! now that I'm writing this down. She has some great poets on here. I'll have to look up more of their work. Ali Ahmad Said Esber – "Song"-from "Elegy for the first Century" & Adrienne Rich "Itinerary."

Themes for my data/notes w/ member checkers---political-quietly political

-science (cataloging objects, finding objects)

-balance

My piece is done. I have to drop it off tomorrow or Saturday. I made (*may*) add a little to it tomorrow. I look at it again.

Title- Memory, layers

There's a conversation going on in the piece.

The individual pieces are communicating to each other, but possibly isolated too.

Is someone watching the story unfold?

Memory of the tree- Memory of the bugs eating lines into it.

memory- recollection

memoir- mindful remembering

conversation- words + phrases

dialog

meeting-

apparition- the appearance of something remarkable or unexpected

spirit

guardian

here

Soft place to land

Elysium (A soft place to land)



14 ³⁄₄" x 11 ¹⁄₂" x 5"

H x W x D

June 10th, 2016

Elysium- Greek mythology- Oxford English Dictionary

The place at the ends of the earth to which certain favored heroes were conveyed

by the gods after death.

Elusion (pedion) plane of the blessed

-a state or place of perfect bliss

1943- Pollock- The Guardians of the Secret

June 18th, 2016

Trying to find themes with my data, notes with my member checkers

with Laura- chance operations

-inviting others/ collaboration

-what informs my mark -making?

when I use my own mark-making- What informs the use of a hand

made mark?

In Rhythm, I specifically chose not to draw on it – to let the found objects be enough of

their own.

-Laura related this to a painter- except painting with materials not paint.

June 19th, 2016

"Irwin (as stated in Beer, 1999) in Landscape + Identity: 3 artist/teachers in BC] "that art is life, it is integrated with being and becoming, it is a source of memory and forecast and it is the flow of culture itself. Culture is performed in and through life" (p. 40).



June 28th, 2016

A week off, my youngest son didn't have any daycare, and I succumbed to summer, and it was great!

Now I'm working on *Circle*. Text is done. I'm going to lay three pieces of bark on top of it. I may draw milkweed pods or some kind of seed on top of the text. I'm working on a sketch now. Looking at Redon- I'm going to use charcoal first, and I want to remember how he uses light in his black and white- charcoal pastels,

July 5th, 2016

aletheia- the unconcealedness of beings – truth (Heidegger, 1971, p. 51) Poetry, Language, Thought)

Artist Statement

I get lost in nature, grounded and re-energized by it. I am especially drawn to trees and their anthropomorphic qualities. I find trees incredibly animated. The tree in my backyard, or the lone tree in the field puts down its roots and stays for a hundred years or more. I think about all that it has seen and experienced, how it has large gouges in it or how its base is being washed away by a flowing body of water and, still, its roots hang on, so persistent, so patient.

My work plays with the push and pull of real and perceived space, and the meditative nature of organic shapes and lines. I am drawn to the dialectic tension between natural and manmade objects. I use items I've collected from nature, combined with found man-made objects. This is the nature of the everyday; it is not some serene, hidden, untouched place. Everyday nature is my backyard, the bike trail, and the local park, spaces that have been constructed by humans, constructed for us, but given back to nature at the same time. The line of a stick, the form of a walnut shell half-eaten by a squirrel, the color and texture of fungus growing on bark,



intrigues me, and I'm drawn to pick it up. In this ritual of finding objects and finding my composition, of growth and decay and of chance and intuition, I find balance for myself.

Conversations with Mentors

Mentor One: Notes with Laura

May 9th, 2016

- L- So one thing when I was reading over your journal entry. I loved, I was . . .
- A- I hope that was okay that I just it sent it written.

L- I like that it was hand written. The big swoop in the "I", that kept coming back. To me it says something about what you're interested in doing, that big swoopy "I" kept, and there's a lot of it. "I" is all the way through it, and it's really big. I tried to write a list of verbs of things that you're doing, which I didn't actually see that much in your own writing, and so I tried to write them in order, actually of what you're doing. But I also had some question marks if I am summarizing your work correctly.

The audience is a factor in interpreting work – discovering things that the artist did not think about. In the end, the work becomes collaborative with artist and mentors.

(List of verbs) Searching Finding Combining Reacting Arranging Editing



And then I would say the last thing is,

Committing

A- Yeah, yeah

L-Because that's how you move on to another piece. Glue it down and then it's done.

A- Glue it down. And then you're done with it.

L- So the one thing, I wasn't sure if you were actually searching or if you're letting things kind of find you? You mentioned about going to the park. In a way that's searching because you're going to a specific spot, but maybe it's incorporated with having some fun with the kids, you know, and you get some things done. Maybe they find something for you, which I always like if things come to me that way.

A-Yeah, I love it when the boys, like Emmet will bring me a stick because they know I'm looking for a stick. And then he brings me, and I'm like that is a really great stick, Thank you, you know. But usually when we go for walks, I'm kind of like I have my eye out for whatever, looking for stuff.

L- And then I also had two questions. One was what informs your choices, when you gather materials? And I had some assumptions, maybe the circumstances that you're in, for example, going for a walk or just tripping over something or going through the bin at CVA, going through discards, you know. The circumstances you're in and then associations inform your choices, so for example you have a lot of things with bark you may look for things that work in contrast with that. Or you have a lot of things that have been broken you may look for things that have been cut. You know, or that kind of thing, you're looking for things to kind of speak or converse, for a range of things. And then need of course informs your choices and then



also, your, your time informs your choices. Sometimes you have to make work quickly, and sometimes you can let it stew.

But when you make quick choices I think sometimes, well at least when I make quick choices in the studio that really like boosts my confidence when it works, ya know. And I'll just think, I don't have to think this over. I don't really have to drive myself mad about this, I can (snap) just do it.

A-Yeah, and see what happens. Well, I think I like that about chance. I love some of the drawings that I've done, lately and other things. Or even like just putting things together just by chance. Or even the way that the squirrel has eaten the nut, I mean I didn't do that, they did that. You know what I mean. But you find it. And then that I really love too.

But yeah, something totally off topic, but I did the demo for the 5th graders clay piece. And I didn't have any time, so I snagged a Hiroshige, I think, bird and a vine and I quickly drew it on a vessel and made some little like bird feet on the bottom. And da-ta-da. And I was oh, that's really kind of cool. And I liked it ya know. But it wasn't like the same, but it was still it was like quick and it was nice that it actually turned out okay. You know what I mean especially for being so quick.

But usually I stew over it, it takes, you know what I mean. It's not quite right. I didn't have time to do that.

L- Well have you looked at other people that work with chance operations?

A-Um, I don't know. I mean I've been looking a lot at people that work sort of with natural objects. Or found materials. That I've been looking at. But definitely, I like Dada, I like that. I like that whole concept of chance.



And we did, we do talk, and that's another thing I can connect to class because, when I was starting, so for the vessel that they made was Niiyama, the stuff in the library. Have you seen that? Beautiful, beautiful work, and there's actually like a pamphlet that I have to go take more, I mean it's free. But so all of the poems, the pieces are based upon that.

So I said "Hey", I said , "let's, people, had free time, so I said go get a magazine and I want you to cut out 30 words. Thirty words that you just are drawn to, you like the type, or you like the word or something. And they were like, "Why are we doing this?" I'm not telling you why you're doing this, just go do it. And so only some of them did it, because then Emmet was sick [and I had to stay home with him], so it didn't follow through the way I wanted it to. But I said okay, (I think it was more Schmicks class), no it wasn't Schmicks might have been Cooper's, it might have been Delilah's class I had more time with, or Sicinski. Um, and I said okay now this is um is it Tristan Tzarra, is that the leader of the Dada? Is that how you pronounce it?

L- Oh, gosh, good question.

A- So anyway so I said here's his rules for putting your poem together. And he took a whole newspaper and cut it up and like threw it on the table and tried to see what happened. Um, and I said, just put the words out and just start arranging them and just sort of no thought what so ever. Whatever comes out comes out, and it's going to work. And they did. They just arranged it, I arranged mine, glued it down.

I was hoping that would be possibly something that someone might use that for their vessel. But then everything got so rushed, in the end, field trips, and me being gone.



The majority of people that actually thought about poetry and relating that to their imagery in their vessel was like you know, it was like Delilah and Eilidh. That was about it, ...Jenna. And then that was it, so.

But hopefully that kind of sparked some kind of ideas for them, I hope. But definitely that works with I'm doing too I think, in a way.

L- Well, the one artist now I'm completely blanking on it on his last name. I can describe him to you and I bet you'd guess his name. He has made a lot of prints with Crown point press, but he's a composer.

A- Oh, yeah, can I look up Crown point press?

L- Yeah, it's John....Ah! I'm kicking myself because I love his work. He's most famous, he's dead but he's most famous for his composition that was two minutes of silence.

A- Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah! I don't know.

L- John? I'd say John Kale, but it's not.

A- Yeah, I know who you're talking about though.

L- He's made a lot of prints based on asking things of other people. And then kind of setting up a code, to make decisions by. And then doing that with the print.

So for example he would go ask each of the printers to go outside and pick a rock. And then they'd bring the rock back in and he'd trace around it and that would be a form he would plug into an image.

And he would use the I-Ching and kind of like throw these set of stones and then look up in his book what the answer was or where he was supposed to be going and equate that to a color.

A- Huh! That's really cool.



L- Um, I have a book written about him by Kathan Brown. I'll have to see if I can get my hands on. Because he also worked with fire, you know, which is the ultimate with chance. Because it does whatever it wants to do. So he would light his paper on fire and then put a wet towel on it and run it through the press. And so whatever happened to it, it happened. That all happened. Even if the paper was, it like torn into different pieces or burned into different pieces, they would glue it down onto another sheet of paper. So it would be made whole, but you would see what happen to it.

A- It's kind of what Chris did right? What was Chris's last name?

L- Chris Hagen worked with fire.

A- Yeah, Chris Hagen. Those were beautiful. I loved those pieces he made.

L- Yes, Chris worked with chance and asked other people to do things to the work. Chris wanted people to handle the books and move different minerals from one page to another. Like he would have the edge of the page stained with rust or different spices or things like that. So he would want the viewer to dirty up the book.

A- Ah, okay, does that, on his opening I really didn't get a chance to talk to him. I think it was just a quick, it was after school and I had to go pick everybody up, um and it was a lot different than the other work I had seen from him. I wanted to talk to him and I didn't get a chance to talk to him about it.

L- Well, he had, he gave us some paper that was blank, but he had embossed it. That was what he did. He gave it to us and asked us to eat our meals on it.

A- Oh, that's where the whole, yeah, okay.

L- So he would invite friends over and they would have a meal or he would pass out, like Finn did a lot of eating on because he's the messiest eater.



You know we tried for the most heavily pigmented food. So we tried, but also things happened

L-Yeah, so inviting and collaboration of other people or other beings. So the squirrel only eats so much.

A-Right, yeah.

L-Or your son finds one stick over another one. Right and all those things have been moved around by other animals or the weather or whatever to get to the point where they're choosen.

A-Right

L- So there's a collaboration with all kinds of things. You know with the people who keep up the trail, with, um, the kind of winter that we've had or whatever. So it's a collaboration with the elements in a lot of ways, with the wind.

A- That's the other thing that a lot of the sticks I have I love the lines that the bugs have chewed. Those are the best! Yeah, like that's beautiful and it wasn't done by me. It was done by some other creature, but they're beautiful, so. Or the lichen or the mold or whatever has grown to is neat.

L-Well, and I've noticed with the pieces upstairs, some of them you have enhanced those marks with your own drawing. And there's one especially that I really enjoyed because I can't tell if you have. It looks like well that's as dark as it would be if she had done that. But it could also be as dark as a regular kind of natural formation in the wood grain. Some are very clear, I can see you're mimicking the way the bugs kind of worked through something. And that kind of brought up this last list of questions I had, which is what informs your own art making? Because some of the pieces look like they're about finding and combining and composing with them.



You know like arranging them, composing them, it's all about composition, texture, contrast, weight. And it is like painting in that way. But then your hand isn't that evident. Like what kind of marks did she make? Well, maybe she didn't make any marks. The materials are the marks. The texture of the bark is a mark. But so I was kind of wondering about in your journal you said in this one I'm not going to make any marks. You sort of made a promise to yourself. So I think that's kind of interesting to let the materials do their own thing. That's something that I don't have any kind of sympathy with. I don't know anything about that. So that's really curious to me. So I wrote some questions. So what informs the use of a handmade mark? And so I kind of hazarded at some answers to that. And one is that you maybe need to make something that you can't find. Or mimic something that you can find. It's kind of a meeting of the hand and the found object.

A- I definitely think the mimicking. I think a lot of it was mimicking what I'm seeing here in the bark, or in the bug lines or whatever. But it's funny because when ... like I just felt like this piece should just be formally done, you know what I mean. I liked just the way the formal arrangement of it was and I didn't want to make a mark on it.

L-Let it work for itself.

A-Right.

A- And I know when I first started ISU, another professor started talking to me about it and I could feel that he was not happy. That I just making art with other pieces, but I actually wasn't making the pieces. He felt like I didn't even make a mark on it, you didn't draw on it, you didn't do something to it. You just put them together. I felt like he thought that wasn't okay.

L-That's enough



A- So sometimes I feel like in the beginning, I need to be doing more and then I did end up liking that. Making the marks on the wood. I love drawing on wood, I love drawing on stone. In lithography, there's something different about that. But I put this together (Rhythm) and I just felt like it didn't need any drawing.

L-Well sometimes something like this (she picks up a bug eaten stick) this serves as a drawing. It's a nature made drawing.

A- That's true, the lines in it, there are holes.

L- And that has value, like a whole big stroke. I don't agree with that professor, I think combining the works is enough authorship. You don't have to have your hand. It's like photographing things you find. You don't find an abandoned house and then arrange it, You don't put your authorship in there and then photograph it. The thing that you're doing is capturing stuff that has already happened. So, this happened, this wood grain happened. Somehow this got to be this really artificial shape, this natural material, in this very artificial shape with this crazy color on the end. I don't think you have to do any of those things to make this your own. To me that's what really interesting about your work. It's very specific and very quirky. But it's not quirkily done with pen and ink, it's not with the hand, it's just with the eye. I think that's plenty. I don't think you also need to have your own hand present in there.

A-I love these pieces that students have discarded at school, the plates that you gave the sculpture studio. I have one of those in my pieces. There is some sort of history behind this and then there is also a history in the natural objects that I've found. In the way that they've grown or their scars, the way that the bugs have eaten away at it.

L-What do you think about locating things that are indicative of other places? Like you go for a walk here, you find certain things. You go for a walk at the art school you find certain



things. But what if you go for a walk in Chicago? You know you find other things that have been left behind but they're more like garbage or recycling.

A- Yeah, that's like Juan Chavez' work. That's what started the whole thing (at my school). I found it to be really interesting work. But for me the materials that he was using, I just can't grasp onto them like I can this. Like some of it was like foam, insulation, that kind of stuff.

L-Totally synthetic.

A-Yeah, I just can't. Aesthetically I don't like that. But I enjoyed looking at and I enjoyed Juan Chavez' show. I think I was more drawn to the burnt, when he burned that house and the scars that he made with the chainsaw and the teepee that he made out of the recycled clothing. I was more drawn to that. I do love the man-made planed wood. This I love, I love the blue paint that they put at the end of the boards. this blue or green. Why is it that color?

L-I'm not sure, sometimes it's orange. I think it's a way of classifying what size the wood is.

A-The mutineers piece, which is the next one I'm going to write about, I repeated that color inside the circle. Where some kid had cut out a circle to laminate to turn a bowl. You find those all over the wood studio.

L- Do you think that your limitations that you place on your choices has to do with your feelings about the environment for example or, a sense of ecology or do you think it's mixed with politics in some way.

A-It could be a little bit, but I don't think that it is. I was talking to another artist about her work and mine. She's very political. Mine is more spiritual than an in your face political, like you should be recycling. I feel like you should be, but I'm not trying to state that in my art.



It's more just the quietness and the spiritualness of nature. And the cycle, the cycle of growth, death, decomposing and coming back.

L-Well, also maybe the idea that, you know there was a junk sale in our studio a while back and this other artist bought all of these Barbie dolls, tons and tons or them, and action figures. I couldn't figure out what he was doing. I hadn't seen him use that in his work I'd only seen his upholstered work. And so pretty soon I saw these cast aluminum Barbie doll hips and pelvises. And they looked very different because they were taken out of context. And so what he's doing is he's kind of like quoting Barbie and quoting the synthetic. Kind of quirky language, but he's not showing you the actual thing. The actual thing gets ruined I imagine. In the molding process or whatever. But maybe that's why he had this particular reaction, because he had to do something to the found object and make it into another material.

A-But it could also be that he's been teaching for so long that he felt like. For me sometimes I feel like if you don't have that pedigree, that history or you don't know me and you're just like, "What is she doing and how can you just do this and call that art?" That's another thing that runs in the back of my head. Some people just come in and they don't get it at all.

L-Well, that can happen with anybody's work. I actually feel like that's kind of particular to this community or communities of this size. People don't collect here, generally. They don't drop tons of money on art. I'm not sure what they drop tons of money on, I don't know. But I know it's not art collecting. I know I was visiting another well-known artist a while ago and he was saying no one buys anything anymore. And he's been here a long, long time. He set up a store to sell his work. Which I think is really brave and really strange. Because no one is going to enter that, no is one knocking down his door to buy work. So I kind of feel like



the opinions of this community, I hate to say it, but I kind of discount them. Because I don't think they really, if we had a lot of people here that knew a lot of art, and we had a noteworthy arts community, or more active arts community, then maybe I would listen to their opinions more. That judging "that's art," that's such an ignorant way to approach something. It's sort of more like when you step through the door you know you're going to see art, so you have to get to another level of questioning. Rather than, this exists, this is art? That's really strange. I just shrugged that stuff off. You know, there are much more meaningful ways to enter a piece, just assuming it is, no big deal assuming something's art. But I think maybe one thing that's appealing in making this work. The materials you're using are right under your feet. It's sort of like an appreciation of what's in front of you.

A-I think that's another thing, too. When I lost my kiln I lost my ability to do clay. And I had all of this, and I think at that time I was really struggling all over ,so I feel like using, bearing down and using what I had. I remember my Grandmother during WWII, they had to split the house up and rent the upstairs;, times were tough. You did what you had to do. And this is available. I was talking to another artist one time, and he said he was out in the yard picking up sticks because he had to, so that he could mow. He held them up and thought these are lines, these are free lines that I have in my hand, and I feel the same way, that this material, like this little piece (holding a small square piece from a cabinet that's been painted), this could be a little painting, but I didn't do it, but it's beautiful just in and of itself.

A- So, maybe that recycling and not being wasteful, maybe that is part of it too.

L-It is. Well, I think that is kind of a political stance. You may not think about it that way, but you know, sometimes, I'm thinking about a different artist, an African American artist. There's an artist Emma Amos. She said any time a black person walks into the studio that's a



political act, right there. So I think it depends on how you view politics. You said in your face, we think about politics as in your face, but I think it can be a quiet gesture too, and sometimes the quiet gesture can be much more meaningful and powerful than something that makes you turn away right away. With in your face work I usually decide not to be shocked. Out of stubbornness I decide not to pay attention. I don't want to do what the artist wants to make me do.

A-Right, and sometimes those are so like one note, one and then it's just done. Like there's nothing else to get you into it.

You went to see the Martin Puryear show?

L-Yes

A-I was so lucky to get to see that show. I bolted over there right before the museum closed. I went to see Van Gogh, too, but went through very quickly it was so packed.

L-It also wasn't as good as the Puryear show. It had a lot of fluff, a lot of padding.

A-Yeah

L-They have to do that.

A-But the Puryear, you could just sit, and there are so many layers to what he is doing. It's not just a one note, one liner thing.

L-Also people like Noguchi. I kind of associate Noguchi and Puryear in the same sentence. That they are letting the materials provide their own beauty. Some of those forms that Noguchi uses, he's echoing the form that he already found in the material and sort of amplifying it. It's one that you're doing too. You're reacting to something that you find and echoing it or mimicking it, and by doing that you're amplifying it. You're making someone look at it differently. Well I'm kind of curious just having seen some of your work. We met and looked at



work, I think it's been a couple of years ago. We met and had a short critique. And then I've seen your work here and one thing that always strikes me is your sense of scale, because a lot of things have changed, but that has not changed over the years. You tend to prefer something that is a little something a little bit bigger than your hand. You vary a little bit back and forth. That floor piece upstairs that must be totally huge, because it's like 3 foot tall. So I'm kind of curious about the scale that you seem to really enjoy using.

A-I think that's more just because it has more to do with space and limitations. Like when I was in school full time. I was working on a very large sculpture that was metal. And the front part was wood; the front piece is over there, and I didn't have anywhere to put it, and I didn't have anywhere to store it, couldn't really move it, couldn't put it in my car. So I was like, "What am I supposed to do with that?" I can't do anything with that, so more out of necessity because when I use to paint or draw, like painting or drawing big was really, I loved that. Do you enjoy working on big prints?

L-I'm sort of going smaller and smaller. There's an interesting rage in miniature work now. So I've been kind of going after that.

A-Like how small are you going?

L-Well, 3 x3.

A-Oh, wow!

L-So really little.

A-Kind of like the artist's cards that we do.

L-There's a call for 3x3 works, or international miniature works and 3 x3 matches up to the proper centimeters to be a miniature thing. I just got into a show in Bulgaria.

A-Oh, you did. Oh, cool.



L-Yeah, just a miniature piece. So I've been going kind of small to see what I could do in this small limitation. And I have a hard time working big because the marks I like to make don't work at a certain scale. I made, I gave myself a project, in 2008, which was to work 25' x 40' and make a number of works that big. And it was so difficult because the marks I like to make are really small. And I couldn't figure out how to make bigger ones. None of the tools I like to use make a big mark. So I just kind of decided, a couple of years ago I decided I'm just going to work this big, because in prints that's big. In sculpture, it has larger than life limitations, building size limitations. So there's a huge variety in what we recognize as sculpture. At a certain point it's a monument. But then when it's really tiny there are all kinds of little words we have, like a statuette, or a well a miniature. There's a whole history of hand held objects. People kind of have to remind them of something or commemorate something, or for all kinds of reasons. But I think the reason people own small things is really different than the reason they like big things.

A-Right, yeah. Maybe if I had the space I would go bigger again, but it's just cumbersome and difficult to try to bend that metal myself. I spent so much time on that stupid sculpture, and then it's gone. Once I lost my studio I think they just pitched it, or recycled it. It was just rebar, but still.

L-Is this studio as big as the one you had at the university?

A-Yeah, but it would take up, it would be from there all the way to out here and I don't even know how to get it over here. It was gone any way. When I went back over there it was gone, and that's been over a year ago. I just let it go. I do like working on the size I'm working on, do maybe I just kind of found....



L-And also sometimes people change scale for very practical reasons. You're talking about I can't move it around and I can't store it, but maybe someone changes scale because they're showing in a particular space. So if you happen, if you got a proposal approved for the Brandt gallery in the County Cultural Center, you'd have to make like 200 pieces to fill it.

You'd be given a directive, give yourself a directive, like okay I'm going to have to upscale this work to work in this space. I actually find that it's really hard to good spaces for small work. Often if you're looking around to apply for shows, it's all for big work; it's really crazy.

A-Yeah, and it gets kind of lost otherwise. I had the one upstairs at the alumni show at the university galleries, and it fell. That was one of the epoxy problems, but also I didn't realize that the cars vibrate the walls. But it wasn't hanging right; it was off center, but anyway. That's not my thing, the hanging on the back, the technical difficulty I have. I get so involved and then I get the whole piece together, and then I realize I didn't put the hanging part on the back. And then trying after you've put everything together to put the hanging on the back. So anyway, it fell, and I ended up putting the bigger piece in there. Which really that little tiny one would have gotten swallowed, nobody would have noticed it. Because it was so small, and there were so many other bigger pieces.

L-There were tons of work.

L-So also I think the challenge, if you were going to have a show in a really big space, there's making that much work. There's also showing that much work I don't think is appropriate for you because the work would somehow dilute itself. It's nice to have a collection of pieces that's really deliberate and not like all I made or this huge thing. Somehow this scale it



seems to dictate the number of works that would go together in a space. You know 100 wouldn't work. It would seem, I don't know, it would be hard to look at each piece.

A-And also it's what I find too, that board is bigger. There's a board in the stairwell that is larger that I want to do something with.

L-Yeah, this is really nice. This looks like it came out of a house.

A-It did, right by my school. You know that beautiful Victorian that they have all painted up. The children must be home schooled, because they're always home, and they threw all of those in the trash, and so I was digging them out of the trash.

L-Mmh, was it a part of a fence?

A-It must have been.

L-This is really decorative. Outrageously ornate for something.

A-All of this was from there. There was more, but I just put some of it in my car.

L-I think that's supposed to be a seahorse.

A-Oh, maybe it is

L-Sort of like the eye and then the tail and the neck, although this one is shaped differently.

A-Is that something during the Victorian era? Their house is beautiful, though. But they don't go to our school. I don't know them at all.

I laid that piece on top of that one. Sometimes I just start laying stuff out.

L-Another thing that you might want to talk about is collage, because that's really what you're doing. You're using a collage aesthetic. And of course in collage, maybe in the standard dictionary of collage, you fashion your own pieces from paper or whatever, but you're collaging stuff you've already found. You're working so much like someone with the aesthetic of collage.



I think that word should make its way into your writing somewhere. And think about how layering works because sometimes your use of layering is really limited and sometimes it's kind of crazy. There's a lot happening with all of this overlapping. You know the shadow this casts and what's inherent to each piece. That's incredible, and it's a layer within a layer and the way something down in the surface works. Layering is something important also to consider. This is so beautiful. Is this purple heart?

A-Yeah.

L-Well, and also maybe the idea of collecting. Because that's what you're doing.

A-Right.

L-Before you, you know you're searching, your finding, you're collecting and I'm sure this sat around for a while before you decided to put it there. So you're collecting and kind of waiting for the proper moment to put this into action, and that's something, that's an interesting strategy. To have all of your materials and to try to discern when you're supposed to combine things. And I think, I do some of that myself. Like I'll have a piece of paper that I think is really beautiful, and I'll want to use it on just the right thing. You know, it can be difficult because the more beautiful something is or the more you cherish it, the harder it is to use it.

A-Yes, the harder it is to use it.

L-Yeah, it has to be just like the perfect situation, and I don't like working under that kind of pressure.

A- Yeah, then it kind of ties you up a little bit.

L-And you'll never win.

A-Exactly, that's when the kids [the students] are like "It's not perfect." Well, nothing is perfect; you will never be perfect.



L-Yeah. But that's one kind of problem of finding beauty in your materials, I think. It kind of intimidates you to figure out the best way to use it.

A-It's funny when I first started my undergraduate I was in biology. When I had that studio at the university, it was more organized (not great) but more organized than this, and I sort of had like my collections grouped. Kind of like specimens, like in biology or something. So I feel that sort of mindset is still sort of there. I'm not sure how to explain that.

L-Well, I think that mindset shows through in the way that you combine things because you're combining things of disparate character. You know, or different kind, you're classifying things. This is one kind of character, and this is found, and in a sense this is found too. The burn marks in there. You have these different kind of classifications of materials ,and you're seem to have an eye about how to combine them or how many of which kind to use and how to have them show off their qualities. You know like this, the curvature of this cut in a very different way because of this cut. If that weren't there I wouldn't look at it in the same manner. You know I look at this because it's in contrast to this. And I know this could be a thing you just picked up, but someone made that. So there's this idea of intention versus accident, found vs. fabricated. They're all found but there is a high level of fabrication but it's just not your fabrication. You're fabricating all of these things into one thing, but you're using the forms of other people.

John Cage, that's who I'm thinking of.

A-Oh, right, okay. yeah.

L-John Cage, using forms of other people, using chance, overlapping things based on chance. That two minutes of silence was really about the sounds that came from the audience.

A-Which was so interesting, all of the background.



L-Have you met at all with George, you may want to meet with him because his knowledge of wood is amazing. He gave a talk on the history of veneer and it was such an eye opener I couldn't believe it.

A-It was that when he was still teaching there?

L-I think maybe he was, maybe in the last couple of years he was teaching. He may consider his retirement, 100%. I don't meet with people.

A-I saw him at a party and he was very friendly.

L-You may want to message him. His knowledge of what he's seeing.

A-Well, that's right, all of the barks and stuff I'm finding, the trees. I remember growing up with my grandmother; I use to remember all of the names of the plants she had, like the Prairie Trillium, and all of the different little Illinois plants. Now I don't remember them anymore. And then at the university, you have all of those different trees. Like this (branch) is from the university quad. Like what is that?

L-I don't know.

A-I don't see this anywhere else on my walks. I don't know the name of a lot of the stuff.

L-Another person that you might talk with is the university radio station gardener, I'm blanking on his name. He's retired. He's a very interesting and engaged guy. His name will come to me as I'm trying to get to sleep. Because I met with him, I took a drawing class into his green house, and he was really into talking about what we were looking at, and he could tell you all kinds of things. He used to give tours of the quad. You know there's one native tree.



A-I think that's good to know what I am working with, the correct names. I always call these the bean pod seeds. The seeds are so cool' they are so fragile and delicate, but that's probably not what they're called I'm sure.

May 11th, 2016

L-I like the hand-written text; it's a personal thing to see someone's handwriting, to see someone's thoughts. And that's a nice prompt for me to ruminate over something.

A-More so then seeing the text in the computer. How impersonal that is.

L-And also the thing about writing in a journal it seems like you have the date you know, and the part that belongs to that day is a chunk time where you're sitting down and thinking about something. And when you're writing on the computer that element is completely gone.

A-Right.

L- You can edit yourself, you can write different things, erase things. It's really, writing in a book with your hand is very transparent.

A-And you can see where I've messed up the spelling or crossed something out.

L-Or add a carrot and a word. So you get someone's, you get a window into someone's thought process that is really different than writing on the computer. But I was looking at the David Gray quote because I also really like listening to music, I don't really like working in quiet much.

A-I don't either.

L-And I write down a lot of lyrics and also write down different parts of conversations or different parts of novels. I have to read part of a novel everyday that's like my guilty pleasure because I don't have television. I use to get *People* magazine; that was my television, my junky stuff, but I don't do that anymore. Every night before I go to sleep I read part of a novel, because



that's like my reward for the day. And some novelist, the people that I'm really drawn to, put words together in a way that are appealing to me. So often I see something I'll write it down somewhere else, and in my studio I have a list of fragments or quotes or something like that I have them written on the wall, so when I have to title something I will refer to that. And you know, even part of a sentence has a tone to it. Sometimes the tone of the piece relates to the tone of the phrase, and that's kind of how I put things together. Or sometimes, lyrics can be really fierce and ugly. And if I don't like a piece then I'll give it one of those ugly phrases, almost like a commentary on that piece. But I'm kind of envious of writers and so I always try to borrow a little bit of their magic in titling a piece. And I'm always a little bit weary of lyrics. I'm always a little confused about: am I interested in this because its sound is beautiful or the words are beautiful?

A- See I always think that maybe something doesn't grab me to begin with, but then the lyrics grab me, and the music may grow on me. You know what I mean because if something is really well written, and I am not a good writer. So if something is well written then it's like WOW! The way that they put that together is really amazing, or magical or something. It's almost like a piece of artwork. I try to dig in deeper. Well, why did they put this together this way, the music? Maybe at first it wasn't quite what I thought it would be, but then it sort of grows on me, and then I really like it. I think I'm more drawn to the lyrics in a way. Even though the melody is also really important.

L-Well, maybe it also it just depends on what kind of music it is. Some music is lyrically driven and some is really about how it sounds. Like my kids are totally obsessed with Queen. So we listen to Queen every time we're in the car together. And it's, if you look at the lyrics in the liner notes, they're not that impressive. And I've even tried to use some Queen lyrics in



titles, but they're sort of pedestrian. There really about this sort of over the top performance, and so they're sort of more like melody driven. But I think there are other artists who are really poets, and they're putting their words to music. I often feel like that about Bob Dylan, for example. He could just have well been a poet, because you can read his lyrics, and you're not missing the music.

A-I actually do prefer reading his lyrics. I'm not really a big Bob Dylan fan.

L-No, I'm not a big Bob Dylan fan either, but he sort of seems like sort of contemporary. A-Who redid a whole bunch of his songs? I can't think of the album.

L-There's one called *I'm Not There* that was for a movie of the same title. He was in it. A-Was that recent?

L-Oh no, he wasn't in it. But many people for the sound track rerecorded his music.

A-Oh, maybe that's what I'm thinking of then.

L-Actually there were several different people that played him. And Cate Blanchett was one of them. It was really good.

A- I think I do kind of remember that. I use to see movies all the time, and now they come and go, and I miss them.

L- Yeah, I never go to the movies. I see them at home.

A-Yeah, I can't because I won't sit there. I'm always thinking I should go do this or go do that. So to actually make myself sit. Plus in the theatre it's so big.

L-I just don't have any way to get out to the theatre. We have a, we remodeled our attic so we have this weird cubby on top of our house. It's just perfect for a TV. So Chris and I pile up there after the kids have gone to sleep.



I was thinking about the whole concept of titling, and I find it very interesting. I think it's because I wish I was a writer. So titling is a way to be a writer for a short time, and I think that titles can do lots of different things, like when you name something you're taking ownership of it. You're saying this is mine. I remember thinking for a long time about what my kids were going to be named, and that is like the ultimate titling.

A-Oh, it's so important. I see so many children come through, and your name is so important and sometimes the names are like, not.

I really thought about what my children were named because I think it goes to who they are.

L-I think it does. It's something like their skin, that their presented first impression that lots of people have of them is their name.

Mentor Two: Notes with Wayne

May 17th, 2016

W- The finding is the chance. I know this from bird watching. Bird watching is all chance. Ya know, what you see and where you see it is somewhat chance, but then it gets organized into a list, where you saw it and the date and all of that.

W- This is a collection of items that you've run across by happenstance, but then you edit basically. And you edited into a visual statement. By organizing things formally, juxtapositions occur that create new meanings.

A- Mmhm.

W- So chance is in finding them but then you manipulate that into a final statement. Otherwise Dada would be that you throw them in a box, and wherever they land you glue them down.



A-haha, yeah

W- But you make it, uh, the idea is that this is where this belongs. It's not where it fell. This is where I think it belongs, so that's a deliberation. The finding is the chance. But the organization is, um, trial and error basically, to find out where they belong and that's not exactly chance. That's a mental process, of putting things together. And you put them together in a balance, which is what I like about it. It's a balance between not opposites so much, but ying/yang kind of thing going on because you've got flatness and three-dimensionality, you've got color and neutral, you've got natural & man-made objects, rough line and sharp line, metal and wood in some cases. So, I think that that's taking this idea of finding things that are very disparate objects and putting them together, unifying the disparities It's a process that derives from artistic training, but also from intuition. You may be consciously or subconsciously arranging objects for their meaning.

W- Because they're very unified. They're very formal in, in, how visually formal. How you decide how certain forms work off of other forms. And then adding the drawing aspect to it, emphasizing the flatness.

So it's somewhat chance what you are doing. But you are not like John Cage because that is truly chance. If John Cage were to cut and rearrange his collages, then that would be similar to what you do.

A- He did do this on some pieces that he put through the press. When they came out he cut them and put them together on something else.

W- Sees my work as assemblage in a very formal way. This is not a negative critique in any way. The formality is what makes them so interesting. Taking these opposite forces and



putting them together in balance. He actually sees it as a strong element. It's almost more Zen than Dada.

So when you find things is it a fishing exposition or you find something and you say oh this is a visual element I've always been looking for?

A-No it's more that I'm just drawn to something. I pick it up and then file it away.

W- Do you file them a certain way down there?

A- You know what, I would, if I had time. It drives me crazy what a mess my studio is.

When I was at the university I actually had stuff a little more systematically, like in bags, almost like specimens, almost like biology lab. That would make it easier to work.

W-That's an organizational thing. So all the lichen go here, all the man made circular here, metal here...

So that's taking the chance of what you find and organizing it one way and then pulling from that to create something.

A-When we go for walks I'm just open to whatever. When I go to the university art department I may be looking for something specific like a piece of walnut, etc...

W-Have you ever thought that the titles could reflect the organizational process? You could include date found, date made, etc. Your titles now are very poetic. So that it could show your process. If you mean it to show. If that's not important.

A- That might be interesting to do a body of work that showed that. It was situational, like this is from this place and this is from that place. If I had time, but I don't.

W- You can file it away for a later date. There are many things that I thought about years ago that I'm just now getting to. And in your stage of life you just don't have the time. A lot of it is accumulating those ideas or thoughts and writing them down and keeping them there so that



when the time comes along, Diego goes off to college...And then all of the sudden time will be around.

75% of your ideas never come to fruition. But the idea is that you're always thinking about your process. And where you can go next. Whenever I do something I'm always thinking about where I could go next.

Early on in school I got stuck in a style and it was almost impossible to get out of.

Without someone saying why are you doing something different? So, for me I'm always looking at series so that I can go from one series to the next. So that I never hit a wall. When I hit a wall in drawing it's a horrible feeling when you hit that wall and no other place to go.

A- That's because somebody told you had to stay with that style or were just in that state.

W-No it was just a mental state. And then suddenly you find yourself saying, "Why am I still doing this. Well were do I go?" You basically walled yourself in to the point that there was no escape.

Have I ever told you about the bound man? I read as a young man. Very existentialist. He's been robbed. He finds himself on the road, bound. He's out in the wilderness. He knows if he doesn't get up and do something he's going to die. So he learns to move with his bindings. So he can hunt food, hunt game. A circus comes through and sees him and puts him on display. He has an affair with the circus owner's wife. Circus owner decides he's going to make this big fight between the bound man and a wolf and the bound man knows he can take the wolf. But when he gets into the cage the lover cuts the ropes because she's afraid he won't be able to do it. But he can't do anything then, and he runs away.

And to me that's always about within limitations there are infinite possibilities. And so your process is that boundary. So once you understand that process you can do infinite number



of things. So you're finding something, organizing something, putting it together, that's your boundary, but then what you do with that process, there are any number of outcomes.

And that story helped me realize that I'm bound by this fear, but I can still do things, really an epiphany for me in many ways. Yeah, we can be bound by fear, we can be bound by anything, but within that we can still do stuff.

We're talking more about me and not you.

A- No we're talking about process. When Juan Chavez came, and he was talking about the way he works. He said he didn't want to do the same thing again and again and again and get really perfect at it. I want to do, just like you said, this is going to take me this way and this will be taking me that way. So you're talking similarly in that way.

W-Do you find that looking at your process is leading your path forward?

A-Every piece is different. I'm not sure where I'm going next. I have different ideas laid out down there. I'm supposed to be working on something right now. I just finished that last piece. I'm not sure where I'm going next.

W- Do you find yourself drawn to like from one series of work, drawn to a visual statement that leads to another? I see that this has a void filled with something and the other has something laid on top of it. The bark intersects with the void, so it's filling the void in a way. Does that mean you will explore void filling after this, or is that just a one-off kind of thing, or something you're leaning towards.

A- I think that's just how that came about. I love the circles (voids). Those are from the wood shop. Students are cutting out circles to laminate them together to turn bowls. But I'm really drawn to a void or a circle. I think more of a circle. I have a board downstairs, this great



beat up old board. It's been painted and burned and for some reason it has two circles cut out of it and for some reason someone wrote circle on it. I don't know why.

W- And you're going to leave the word? That's interesting once you start incorporating language into it. That's like the Neo-Dada movement. Like Jim Dine would do that quite a bit. He would do an object and then draw an arrow. So you get into linguistics. We have a word for something but visually it's not that word. So you get into this linguistic layering again between object and the signifier of the object. That's again working with those contrasts.

A- I like to leave whatever I find as is. I don't like to mess with it or cut it. I like to leave it as what I found. And whoever did that to that for whatever reason I just find that interesting, like a little history.

W-So when you're looking for something what do you limit yourself to find? Do you have limitations on finding things? Do you say that if language has become interesting to you do you then pick up scraps of paper with language on them? Or do you not want paper to be a part of it?

A- I wouldn't pick up paper. I don't know why I just wouldn't. It would be interesting because someone else wrote that but for some reason when something is done to the wood or the metal. I have a whole bunch of plates from Intaglio class that people just left. It's on the other piece over there. They have images on them that someone else did. I don't know I just wouldn't pick up paper, use paper.

W-You pick up wood, and paper is wood. It has a manufactured, The wood you have is not manufactured. And even the metal has the same quality to it.

I still see the unifying thing is all a formal thing. And that finding is whatever is there and then putting it into a formal statement.



In finding there's chance but there's also limitations to the chance you can have. There are boundaries to your chance.

A-I think my limitation is that if I'm not drawn to it, if there isn't something interesting that I really like then I wouldn't pick it up.

W- So you don't want to analyze what draws you to a piece? You just want that feeling to be that feeling.

A- I know what draws me to pieces are the sort of scars on the pieces. So if a branch or part of a tree, or even where the insects have eaten. A line made by somebody else other than me. And that line is beautiful. And interesting

W- You're drawn by formal elements to the piece itself then?

A- Yeah, I think so.

But I also like the fact like at the top of that stick some sort of an insect has gone inside of it and caused it to bulge. You know sometimes how branches have those areas that bulge out.

W-I think they're called bowls or something like that, where the insect lays eggs inside.

A- The tree grows around it and somehow it's been damaged, and I think that's what I'm drawn to.

W- You like organic material but you have metal too. Is it cast off metal mostly? It's not been scared by nature but scared by a process of something.

A-It's the negative of someone else's piece, whatever they cut out or did something to, and then they used the other part of the piece.

W- So you do have a guideline of what draws you to something?

A- There's a memory to it, there's a history to it, there's somebody else's feeling or touch on that piece, and then I get to use it.



W-I think when you're discussing your process it's important to know that initial spark. Even though that initial spark is always mysterious to an artist. There are always things around it. Like you can discuss the things around the Big Bang, but you can't discuss why there was a Big Bang, and so creative ideas are like a Big Bang. So you can talk around it even though you can't talk specifically it. And that's all real important to know. But it is part of the process; it's not haphazard. It's a focused search and recovery. Everything you see, that's part of aesthetic theory that one thing makes you focus, and you don't see anything else but that. For you, when you see randomness, you really pick something out of that randomness for its significance that separates it from everything else in your field of vision. Something pops out that is more important than the surroundings because it has certain attributes that you like which would be natural materials, some sort of sacredness, some sort of discardedness, as well as formal ideas of texture, line and that sort of thing. So that's almost as important of a process, the gathering, as the unification of the piece, when you decide that these things go all together to unify into a thing.

A-That goes back to the ritual of making something. Maybe you have the same sort of process. In clay you had to prepare the clay, to get the clay ready to be used. And there are these steps you have to go through and in lithography you had to prepare the stone. So there's this meditative beginning to what you're going to do. I was talking to Laura about this and she said that she doesn't really talk about that ritual any longer because kids don't want to hear it. They want instant, like this is what we're going to do and boom go make it. They don't want the process, but that process is what leads you to a better state to make your art. There must be something like that for you when you are preparing to work.

W- For me, it's the initial performance.



A- Right, the photography.

W-That initial performance where all of my ideas, my thinking and my trying and my experimentation come out. Everything else is basically coming to, taking that one moment and making it into something that embodies the moment.

So that's what all these are (referring to his artwork), me preforming in front of the camera, the dancers performing with my limitations. But in order to really know that you can't just show the photographs, they're just boring photographs. You have to make that real through a process of representation that changes the photograph that you've seen into a person's artwork, what the artist sees, not the camera.

(Looking at the piece *Rhythm*)

W- So was this found this way (with the cuts out of it)

A-Yes, I really try to leave the pieces I find as is, I try not to cut them.

This one was all just about formally arranging the pieces.

W-And that's good. I don't know where that falls in current academia, if they would appreciate such formality. It's a strength I think, that formality, there's a strength there, and that's a constant among the thing you're looking for at the end. There's a balance between disparate elements. That's that process where the guidelines of finding but then there's doesn't necessarily mean that you know the end after you find it. There's really this thought process that goes from the finding to the completion. And that thought process is loosely guided by whatever it takes to take these disparate elements and put them together in a formal balance. And that's the interesting part of it. People who don't know anything about art can look at that and see that, without knowing that they're seeing it. I know because I see people coming in First Friday and the three of work? in so many different ways, people love looking at your stuff. These are



people way outside of academia. These are regular people. They see that formality; they see what's going on without being able to articulate it. That's a strength, in essence, that what you're doing you're going into that universal art language that formality is that people can connect with, whether they're academic or not.

May 27th, 2016

W- So you may need to start thinking about commodification of your artwork. In grad school, you commodify your work for a grade. You're selling yourself for a grade or accreditation. Everybody commodifies it to some degree. But it should be easy to do with this when you make objects you can hang on a wall; they're very interesting to look at so it shouldn't be a problem. You just want to think about size, whether you want to go big or small. Scale would be an interesting thing because I see you have some interesting objects to work with. You've got the half-moon tree ring there. That's a sculpture in and of itself. You've got a lot to work with.

July 6th, 2016

W- I was looking at some of your sculptures, and they look like mechanical instruments made out of natural objects. They have the look of radio sets or boxes that have some sort of electronic function but they're made out of...They take on a mechanical, electronic function even though it's like Gilligan's island radio.

A- I kind of feel that way about this one. Like it's going to go do something, but it's not.W- I really like that one. A lot of people have been looking at that one and really like it.A-I forgot to do tags, I wrote myself a note.

W-So what do you want to ask me? Did you look at anything last time? "The Bound Man"



A- No, I've just been so busy writing the other stuff.

W-Well I know how it is, they pile it on you.

W- In your work there is a celebration of nature, there is. The really interesting thing I've found is that everything is found, is cast-off and orphaned and they're put together in some way. To me that's the human kind, the finding the cast off, finding what's undervalued and creating value out of it, aesthetic value.

A-That's my favorite part about it too, in finding these pieces that someone else thought well this is not useful. You know they used this, whatever else was on it for something else that was really important to them, but this was just cast aside.

W-So you're making positive space out of the negative space, what's been cast off as unessential is the negative space. Now you look at whatever was gone, but it's not missed because it's the object and not the negative space that has the presence. You take that negative space, and you put it together, which is interesting because they bore a hole in that and you wonder what they bore a hole for?

A-Oh, those are for bowls, they laminate the wood together and they turn bowls from it.

W-So the interesting thing about that is that the hole is negative space there, but it's positive space somewhere else. So you're negative space is not really negative space.

A-I love that they're all these circles, that reference to the circle.

W-So it's interesting when we have that discussion, that sculptural discussion of the positive and negative space and then there's a whole other dimension to these. The positive and negative space is turned around. I am really a formalist and I look at things from that viewpoint. I can see that you are very formalist too, the way you put things together.



A-And I didn't really think about myself in that way until you started talking about my work in that way. And I thought yeah, I really am. And I feel like

W-But a lot of people don't want to be called on that.

A-I don't care. It's funny because in art education that's how it was taught. It was only taught through formalism. And now there's this huge backlash. The other students that I go to school with now, they don't want anything to do with that. But you have to have some of this so that when you get to this other conceptual stuff you have a foundation. Otherwise you have no foundation for what you are doing.

W-They have a critical theory foundation. They have enough critical theory to mouth what they've been told. They don't understand critical theory they just understand it as it's been presented to them in the service of art. So the philosophy and the thinking I emphasized, but anything else the foundation is undervalued. The foundation is the critical thinking now.

A-I feel like that is such a shame. And also they're getting away from the canon, which I totally understand, but at the same time I want these children to know the canon AND I want them to know more than that because they can't just know some obscure contemporary artist from New York, but not know Mondrian or Michelangelo.

W-Or even Duchamp.

A-And then there are all these other artists. They're saying that they're eventually linking it back to them, which I hope that they are. But I just really feel like you have to have that foundation, the history and in the making of it, the formalism of it.

W-Actually it's a real rejection of history in a way. In which case, we all know the famous adage, that you're doomed to repeat it. But I think that the interesting thing is that when you're in cahoots with the rich and powerful, what can you do and what can't you do.



A-Jeff Koons

W-Exactly, The movie the *Cradle Will Rock*, it's about the WPA. In one case Diego Rivera paints the mural of Rockefeller Center and the three rich guys, sit there talking about it. No more realism, no more political, from now on just form and color that's all we're going to do. And then along came abstract expressionism, a very apolitical movement. So I thought that was interesting. So that the rich and powerful decided to turn their back on realism, because realism was social realism, and social realism was part of that.

Teaching Journal

Sept 13th, 2016

I'm not sure where to start on my reflections on my teaching. I know that producing my own art does affect my teaching and my teaching effects my art or how I come to it. I think it has helped me to understand that I need patience, that things, work, takes time and I should allow for that and be patient with myself. Teaching also strengthens your skills in drawing, painting and many other mediums, because you are repeatedly going over the same skills and you're trying to break it down so that you can explain it well and it give you a better understanding of the medium.

I also think about art history a lot and how to incorporate that into my class, and I look at contemporary art. (NOT enough! But I do). I totally missed a show at the Cultural Art Center that I wanted to see. But when I see the contemporary artwork I try to find ways to incorporate it into my classroom, or the ideas, the way in which the artist works.

This is how Juan Chavez came to be the guest artist at Bent. I saw his show at the university galleries and was really captured by it. I was drawn to the work, the way he used found objects, and the way he incorporated the community into his work.



When I researched him and saw how similar his own story was to our own bilingual students' stories I knew he'd be great at our school.

The students were able to hear another artist talk about their work and then <u>work</u> <u>collaboratively</u> to create a piece for their school. Leave their legacy.

I also do this when I incorporate the gallery walk into the 4th grade field trip. I take 4th graders on an architecture walk of downtown with the County History Museum. I tie this in with our own architect of our school, Arthur Pillsbury.

Get students out, engaging in <u>THEIR</u> community and seeing the local artist/art that is all around them.

Sept. 15th, 2016

I saw a piece on *Craft in America*- PBS (2016) and it was Episode Eight, and they were talking about teachers. I'll have to get the transcript. There was a woman from Alfred who taught and was a producing potter, and she said when she was saying something to her students she was actually saying this also to herself. She has really limited time to work on her own artwork because of her teaching. But when she does get time, she is super focused and gets right to work. And I think this is true of me, too, or anyone determined and with limited time. You really learn to use your time productively and just GET to work and stop procrastination. And something I always tell my student is to have patience and to keep practicing, keep working at it. That's how we all improve and grow. And even though I still have such a small amount of time, if I did nothing it would be such a waste. And it would not feed me the way producing/ working/making art does.

I think I learned this having kids that even if you can only do a little bit, if you do it every day it adds up! And you get stuff done.



Sept. 20th, 2016

I emphasize a foundation for my students, a knowledge of the elements and principles of art, an understanding of color, color schemes, mixing colors, the effect that colors have upon each other or the way they can create a mood or feeling. I also introduce conceptual ideas as much as I can for younger students to understand, and I try to incorporate contemporary artists along with artists from the canon.

I need for my students to leave elementary school with a strong foundation so that they hopefully can continue in junior high and high school and possibly beyond.

Sept. 23rd, 2016

This formal foundation I'm sure feeds my work and vice versa. I work very formally, probably most of the time, but also conceptually, metaphorically. I work symbolically.

I want my students to also branch out and work metaphorically. But maybe it's too soon. Maybe, hopefully I'm just laying the foundation for that later on.

I want them to be aware, have knowledge of a wide spectrum of artists, but more than just knowing names. I want them to be able to talk intelligently and confidently about art and feel comfortable with art in a museum, gallery, or public art.

Sept. 24th, 2016

I think a lot of the time what I'm telling my students is what I tell myself, be patient, it takes time, not to rush, nothings perfect, happy accidents.

I give students a project and demo and have examples, but in the end it's up to them to take their project and push the boundaries of what I'm asking or push the boundaries of themselves.



I try to bring in contemporary artists or art history as much as possible. I think I first saw Ran Hwang's work while reading something for theory class or something. Then I found a link with Mass MOCA about an exhibit for kids they had with four other artists on the idea of freedom. I decided to use this with my 4th graders to create our own installation piece. I try to do this during Veterans Day. We thought about the word freedom. I also emailed teachers what one word means freedom to them. Students could only use one word. We then all wrote the word again and again on the paper. I related this to how Ran Hwang uses buttons in her work, and it's repetitive, putting all of those buttons in, like a mediation.

Once their paper is covered in the word, it doesn't even look like a word anymore, but more of a design or pattern. The students then cut up the paper to create their own little bird. In the end I take all of the birds and with the students' help create a larger bird in a space they've decided to have their installation.

The students have a hard time at first grasping what installation art is, but I think after the lesson they have a better understanding.

We also looked at a lot of her work while the unit was going on and looked at some of the videos of her installation pieces.

Sept. 26th, 2016

When we start the year I have the students make a sketchbook. I also show them my sketchbooks and talk about how I use them and how important it is. I tell them that I carry one everywhere I go, just in case I feel like I should jot something down or make a sketch. The students practice skills in their sketchbook, they also think of ideas for projects and can free draw sketch in their books. They're not allowed to tear out any pages, and they can take their



sketchbook home at the end of the year. I also assign a summer sketchbook for fun. I had about eight people actually turn that in this year.

Sept. 28th, 2016

With the 5th grade for pottery I used Niiyama's poetic vessels he made that are now at Milner library. I showed the students the website with the picture of the piece and the poem that related to it. I tried to get them to either write their own poem or find a poem, lyrics to a song and visually convey this in their piece. I think they're just too young for this, and it doesn't really work as well as I would like it too. But again I hope I'm laying the ground work for later work or ideas for them.



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Through my reflections in my journal, and my conversations with my mentors I came to better understand my artistic process. I can see how my creating feeds my passion for teaching, and my teaching feeds my creating in this cycle of action, reflection, and interpretation. The more in tune we are with our processes and with how we create, the more in balance we feel and the more we can relate this balance to our students. We can empathize with their efforts. In the following narrative, I will outline my art making process, as I have come to realize it through journaling and discussions with my mentors. I will then link this with my approach to classroom teaching to answer the following questions:

- 1. What is my process of making artwork?
- 2. How does this inform my teaching?
- 3. How can I integrate what I have learned from my process into the art classroom?

Art Making Process

It could be frustrating when I had limited time for my artwork, but the reflection, this self-reflexivity that is arts-based research is energizing. This chance to step back and really think about and appreciate my process and to see where I've come from and where I was going. To see how I move along the path by my reflecting and journaling about my process and with my conversations with my mentors. Rollings (2008) writes that "autoethnography generates agency within my very subjectivity" and "does not merely write up the research but is itself the story of discovery" (p.841)

This self-understanding is what gives us our humanity. Autoethnographic research entails self-reflexivity. The energy that comes from this type of reflection changes the paradigm



within this "juxtaposing and rejuxtaposing the self as the instrument of inquiry within the confines of objective framing structures, altering [and challenging] those structures as one moves reflexively along" (Rolling,2008, p.842).

In my reflections in my journal and conversations with Laura I am thinking about being political or quietly political and how my work relates to the viewer. I really want for myself and others to slow down and notice the beauty around them, to be still, observant and in "the experience of wonder" (Medlock, 2015, para 29). Medlock writes that "wonder is not simply a passive act of responsiveness to the mystery of life; it is also an active state of questioning and speculation about the meaning of an experience... a combination of persistence in the face of adversity and a deep yearning to engage" (para 30-31). May (1975) writes that when the viewer engages with a painting, "we are experiencing some new moment of sensibility. Some new vision is triggered in us by our contact with the painting; something unique is born in us" (p.22). As Kant states that our minds are in "an active state of forming and re-forming the world "(May, p.133). And "Merleau-Ponty (1962) showed that turning to the phenomena of lived experience means re-learning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of the world (p.viii)" (as cited in Van Manen, 1975, p. 31). We are experiencing the everyday in a new way, fully experiencing it and open to the wonder of it all, this lived experience becomes "a privileged site of knowledge production" (Barnacle, 2004, p. 61).

Tom Anderson (2014) states that "a major role of art is to give concrete form to our subjective experience, so it can be examined for what it embodies about out human nature (R. Anderson, 2004; Langer, 1948)" (p.89). Through this narrative research, this autoethnography, I analyzed my own dialogue and thought about my process. Through this heuristic process, I too make sense of my "lived experiences". As Schutz put it, "Meaning does not lie in experience.



Rather those experiences are meaningful which are grasped reflexively" (as cited in Grumet, 1991, p. 69).

Rollings (2008) describes this type of research as not merely writing up the facts "but is itself the story of discovery" (p.841). We often overlook the everyday experiences, "the content embodied in our own local experiences, our own life practices" … but arts-based research "is a means of inquiry that seeks to disembed content for inquiry from its embodiment in one's own life history and practices" (p.842).

Using Found Objects: Chance and Organization

When I began my research I just had in mind to create a few pieces to write about while researching and talking to my mentors about my process. I didn't really have any other clear plan about specifically what I was going to do, but I did have some ideas drawn from the materials I already had of possible pieces I would create.

I tried to let the materials decide what they wanted to be and it grew from there into a concept. Arnheim (as cited in Marshall, 2007) observed, "that perception precedes conception" which implies "we think in a medium . . . such as ink, paint, stone, plaster and clay" (p.26). I try not to force the materials into concept.

My mentor, Laura, made a list of words that described my artmaking process. She said it was searching for objects, composition, balance and an understanding, finding/editing, combining, reacting, arranging. At the same time, I was reading Sullivan (2014) and was struck by his list of how there are "distinctive forms of artistic cognition prevail [when researching through art], such as visualizing, questioning, sensing, grounding, intuiting, comparing, focusing, reasoning and interpreting" (p.279). Having these come together at the same time really shows the connection between my process and my arts-based research.



Laura and I talked about the Martin Puryear show that we both had a chance to see at the Art Institute of Chicago. We were fascinated by how one could look at his pieces for long periods of time and see new things in them or find new experiences. I hoped this is what I am doing in my work. Laura related it to the sculptor Noguchi and how he echoes "the form that he already found in the material and sort of amplifying it. She felt that is what I was doing in my work. I agreed with Laura when she said, "You're reacting to something that you find and echoing it or mimicking it, and by doing that you're amplifying it. You're making someone look at it differently" (personal communication, Laura, May 9, 2016).

Laura described my work as a collage aesthetic, or probably more like assemblage, and that is how I thought also. I have these pieces that I've collected and I was waiting for that moment when they came together. Laura says "You're collecting and kind of waiting for the proper moment to put this into action, and that's something, that's an interesting strategy. To have all of your materials and try to discern when you're supposed to combine things" (personal communication, Laura, May 9, 2016). In my process of artmaking I took pieces and start layering them on top of one another or next to one another, and along with objects I also layered drawing, and drawing media.

Rothko states (1947/2006), that "a picture lives by companionship, expanding and quickening in the eyes of the sensitive observer. It dies by the same token" (p. 57). This was much in the way that I worked by choosing my media through close observation and being a sensitive observer, like the pieces that I chose to work with on *Rhythm*, this bark piece and a manufactured piece of wood, both containing horizontal lines and circular shapes or holes. Wayne observed that the way I create is through creating balance. He said:



balance between not opposites so much, but ying/yang kind of thing going on because you've got flatness and three-dimensionality, you've got color and neutral, you've got natural & man-made objects, rough line and sharp line, metal and wood in some cases. So, I think that that's taking this idea of finding things that are very disparate objects and putting them together, unifying the disparities (personal communication, Wayne, May 17, 2016).

When putting together pieces for *Rhythm* I found it intriguing that the bark had a wrinkled knot on it and was tapered at both ends when it broke off. I think when you can stop and reflect or get quiet and observe this gives a balance to your life, your work and your teaching.

In my work, I like to take disparate objects and connect them in some way that make them one or that puts them into their own conversation. I think a big part of my process was like what a scientist would do, collecting and cataloging objects for my pieces. When I first started my undergraduate degree, I was going to study Biology. When I had my studio at the university, I had my materials organize much better than they were at the new studio. I had collections grouped, kind of like specimens. The way I catalog the materials makes me think in terms of a scientist or biologist. Laura thought that this connects to the way that I combine things of disparate character, that I made my own classifications and then I arrange them in a way that shows off their qualities. She thought

[There's an] "idea of intention versus accident, found vs. fabricated. They're all found, but there is a high level of fabrication but it's just not your fabrication. You're fabricating all of these things into one thing but you're using the forms of other people" (personal communication, Laura, May 9, 2016).



In a way, I think used chance in my work, maybe not as strict as a Dadaist who wouldn't rearrange elements in the end, but the found objects in my work were selected by chance. I was drawn to artists like John Cage who use chance operations in their work, but the formalist in me also has to have a hand in the way the piece is arranged and balanced. Bourriaud (2002), when writing about modern art wrote that "chance' can be summed up in just a few words: *learning to inhabit the work in a better way*, instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea or historical evolution" (p.13). I think this idea of chance is closer to the way that I worked. Wayne noticed correctly that my work was very formal too, which it is.

I invited others to collaborate with me in my work. If it's a bug that's eaten a line through a stick or a student who casts off a scrap as a negative in their piece. I thought all this memory or history comes through in my work. When I did search for objects it was usually with some other event going on, I was at the park with my kids or on a walk. I was not intentionally searching just for materials or for something specific. I tried to stay observant and I was drawn to the piece aesthetically.

I did place limitations on what objects I chose. I really had to be aesthetically drawn to something, either natural or man-made. I loved Juan Chavez's work, but I would not choose or want to work with the artificial objects, such as insulation or found tires. I wouldn't have the same connection to them. They are too artificial.

Intuition

I think I work intuitively. Agnes Martin (1997) said that she comes to her work with an empty mind. "When you have an empty mind, something comes in you can see it" (Smith & Kuwayama). I am drawn to natural or man-made objects that are altered in some way. A piece that has been worn, used and discarded by someone else as not useful anymore becomes useful



to me. I am drawn to sticks, branches that have been altered by the bugs burrowing inside them. I am using these objects to create "symbolic meaning" and create 'unconscious associations"" (Leavy, 2009, p. 216). Dewey (1934) states that "art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is" (p. 17). When I go for walks with my children, I am really open to whatever I may find. But when I go somewhere specific, like the university studios I may be looking for something more specific, like a piece or walnut, etc. Dewey goes on to say:

In every work of art, however, these meanings are actually embodied in a material, which thereby becomes the medium for their expression...its imaginative quality dominates, because meaning and values that are wider and deeper than the particular here and now in which they are anchored are realized by way of expressions... what is does is to concentrate an enlarge an immediate experience. (pp.284-285)

I think that the history or memory of the objects I collect connected to me and ultimately to the viewer. According to Rothko (1947/2004), art becomes a dialogue, first between the artist and the media, the work, and then with the viewer. For me the dialogue begins as I collect objects to use in my work. I am drawn to pick up pieces (media) that already have a history or a memory of something before me. Pieces that have already been touched or altered by someone else, the cast off, the negative or someone else's sculpture. And I like to leave whatever I find alone. I don't like to adjust it or cut it. Whomever altered the piece or cast off the negative for whatever reason, I found interesting, like a little history. There's a memory to it, there's a history to it, there's somebody else's feeling or touch on that piece, and then I get to use it. Wayne also felt that I work intuitively, and that I "may be consciously or subconsciously arranging objects for their meaning. Wayne says, "it's almost more Zen than Dada" (Wayne, personal communication,



May 17, 2016). Langer (1957) stated that knowing is either discursive, proceeding by argument or reasoning, or nondiscursive, proceeding thought intuition.

I work intuitively, questioning and comparing and creating visual metaphors. Wayne thought that the collection was almost as important a step in my process as "the unification of the piece" (personal communication, Wayne, May 17, 2016). Laura also pointed to the meditative beginning to the way I worked and the way that many artists work. Laura said in her teaching she down plays this aspect because students want everything to be instantaneous (Laura, personal communication, May 9, 2016). A ritual of a starting point leads you to a better state to make your art I did this in clay, when you had to prepare the clay to work. I did this in lithography, preparing the stone. For Wayne, the ritual was the initial performance of the photography and then using those photographs as references for his work.

Metaphor

I used forms in a metaphorical way. I related the form of a walnut chewed on by a squirrel to a bone-like form. Marshall (2007) compared artists to scientist in the way that we "question, observe, analyze, synthesize and hypothesize. . . and shape thought into conceptual images" (p.32". Bruner (1979), (as cited in Marshall, 2007) related metaphorical images in art to an economical means to convey complex meanings. Ricoeur (as cited in Marshall, 2007) labeled this "*iconic augmentation*, which he defines as the 'power of the image to condense, spell out, and develop reality" (p. 32). Through this relationship between artist, viewer and artwork new realities were created.

This leads to Miller's (as cited in Marshall 2007) idea that breakthroughs in twentieth - century physics derive from "imaginative insight" which he defines as "a product of deliberate observation, data gathering, and rational analysis (synthesis)" (p.31). This insight through



metaphorical images comes through seeing things or imagining things in a different way, making that leap through metaphor. Wayne also felt I worked metaphorically, that maybe it was partially by chance but then I edited what I found or saw. He said, "You edited into a visual statement, by organizing things formally, juxtapositions occur that create new meanings" (personal communication, Wayne, May 17, 2016).

I used metaphors in my work and worked formally, but conceptually also. I liked to connect my work to poetry or lyrics from a song. When I began to think about what my latest piece (*Elysium*) meant or a title for it, I was thinking about things like memory, layers, landscapes. I usually turn to poetry or lyrics to help me verbalize what I could not. Marshall (2008) wrote about what imagination is and how it is not something completely original. It involves "making novel connections between things that already exist and projecting from there" (p. 7). She refers to Ricoeur's (1991) claim "that concepts (or abstractions) are generated by connecting one tangible thing, idea or experience to another and then identifying the idea that connects them" (p.7). In art, this associative thinking can generate "eccentric associations and perspectives" (Marshall, 2014, p.3). During my conversation with Laura, we talked about how we used lyrics, or conversations or phrases of writings that we liked to look back upon, to title a piece or maybe it began a piece (personal communication, Laura, May 11, 2016).

I began in my journal to associate things I was thinking of, things I'd read, conversations I'd had, songs I'd listened to, poems I'd read to create a title for my piece. I began with the thoughts of memory or layers and thought about the piece having its own conversation. I thought about the individual parts of the whole conversing with one another, playing off one another. This led me to think about memory, the memory of the tree, the memory of the bugs eating lines into the tree branch. I began to expand upon those thoughts and thought about what



memory was or could be; a recollection, a memoir, a mindful remembering, a conversation, a dialogue, a meeting, an apparition, a spirit, a guardian, here, a soft place to land, and finally settled on *Elysium*.

Politics and Spirituality

When I talked with Laura, she classified the work I created through searching, finding, layering, collection, classifying, collaboration, as quietly political. Laura thought that maybe my artwork was trying to make a political or an environmental statement (personal communication, Laura, May 9, 2016). I don't think that my work was overtly or loudly political. I hoped what I was relating to the audience was the quietness or the spirituality of nature and the cycle of growth, death, decomposition and renewal.

Some people who came into the studio or who have looked at my work don't understand it. Maybe they thought it was supposed to say something to them, or they wanted it to "be" something, but I think if they took time with my piece or any art then it would "say" something to them, or they would come to an understanding. I think most of the time in our instantaneous world we don't allow ourselves the time to observe. Laura was agreeing with this sense. She felt that judging a piece of work-- saying "that's art" -- is "an ignorant way to approach something". She felt that once someone enters the door that person knows that she will be seeing art, and she needs to be open to it. And she finds this appealing in my work. That with the materials that I use I'm giving the viewer an "appreciation of what's in front of you", and appreciation of the everyday (personal communication, Laura, May 9, 2016). When truly engaged with a work of art new discoveries are born and these discoveries lead to other discoveries in an unending spiral. One must be a participant "to create what the artist discloses, to become an accomplice in freedom with that artist, an accomplice in releasing possibilities"



(p.149). Lowenfeld "argued that creative practice offered an experience of responsiveness to others, a way of being present in the world, of reaching out and being seen and heard" (Burton, 2009, p.333).

I was influenced across disciplines using my lived experiences in my work. As Van Manen (1990) stated this "is becoming full of the world, full of lived experience (p.32), to be open to "a sense of wonder (Medlock, 2015, para. 12). "This process of being receptive to the wonder of the spirit is another way of characterizing the creative process of artists" (para. 18). The artistic process is a spiral and every piece is different, and I was not sure where I was going next, which was acceptable to my art making process.

Van Manen (1990) wrote of a practice of thoughtfulness or mindfulness; being aware of what is around you and how this is incorporated into your life. Van Manen stated that creating art was "minding the Whole- that which renders fullness or wholeness to life" (p.31).

I tried to live in the fullness of life and whatever was around me. I tried to be open to the possibilities of other media, and then they found their way into my artwork. I was really drawn to music and lyrics, poetry and tried to relay this visually but not realistically. When I began a work, and let the materials lead me to a certain conclusion afterward I was often drawn back to a song that I'd heard or a poem I'd read. Sullivan (2014) states that "opening the opportunity for dialectical debate across domains is essential if we are to benefit not only from our common curiosity but also from our capacity to connect and collate relevance and meaning from across disparate domains" (p.278).

Other Artist's Influences

Communication also existed with artists of the past and present. I was drawn to the work of Juan Chavez and how he incorporated the found objects into his artwork and how his art



reached into the community. When Juan spoke to my fifth graders and talked about his process I really related to that. He said he didn't want to do the same thing again and again and perfect it. He wanted to continue to try new and different ways of creating, to let the materials lead him. Wayne also referred to this in our discussions, he said we create limitations for ourselves, but then within those limitations there are endless possibilities (personal communication, Wayne, 2016).

Bourriaud (2002) when writing about contemporary art stated that art "creates free areas, and time spans whose rhythm contrasts with those structuring everyday life, and it encourages an inter-human commerce that differs from the 'communication zones' that are imposed upon us...art is a state of encounter" (p.16 & 18). I think most artists work this way, there is a dialogue, real or imagined between artists, works of art, community, each other, and it feeds the art work.

In another piece that I was working on, *Circle*, I looked at the work of Odilon Redon and the way that he captured light in his charcoal works. I tried to incorporate this into the piece. Wayne talked about how ideas can be filed away for a later date. You may not have time right now to work on something you're thinking about but you can come back to that idea later. He said "Seventy-five percent of your ideas never come to fruition. But the idea is that you're always thinking about your process. And where you can go next" (personal communication, Wayne, May 17, 2016).

Reflective Practice

In my work, I tried to take time to step away from a piece and reflect on it. I tried to allow myself to be patient and give things the time they needed. This was becoming easier as I got older. When I was working on *Elysium* I was figuring out the drawing for the background. I



was first going to start with one branch, and I sketched it on a separate sheet of paper. I decided to go with another branch that had great lines, circles and ridges on it from the bugs chewing through it. After leaving the piece for a week or so I came back to it and decided that I did need the first drawing too. They were drawn with parts overlapping, almost as if they were both there first.

Laura made observations about my journal and the fact that it is hand written and how personal that is, likening it "to seeing someone's thoughts" and that "you get a window into someone's thought process that is really different than writing on the computer" (personal communication, Laura, May 11, 2016). Anderson (2014) states that "the writer's voice or attitude, as much as the story itself, serves to center the subjectivity that is core to what is to be understood about a story. Voice, used as an affective device" (p.89).

When I gave myself time and try not to rush the process I made fewer mistakes. I had arranged found objects on the board for *Elysium* that I wanted to glue down, but I realized, after giving it some time, that structurally that wasn't going to hold. So, I made adjustments and I reworked the arrangement.

My engineering of how to hang pieces was always a sticking point. I'd had pieces fall off the wall or the mounting for the hanging came loose because I was rushing or it was an afterthought. When I allowed myself time I could see how to better construct something that would work. When I had a piece that fell off the wall because of the engineering failure I had to pick a different piece for the show that I was in. I choose *Mimesis*, which was a much larger sculpture that stands about three feet tall. In the end, this was a much better choice, the first piece would have been lost in the large group show.



I think through the research of my process I've solidified my understanding of what time does for us in our work and the culmination of all that's come before. A piece may come together quickly or I may stew for weeks on it or put it aside and come back to it later. But these choices are because of my previous experiences and time, and learning to be patient.

Nature

In my artist's statement, I wrote about how my work was connected to nature. I have always felt connected to nature and have drawn from it in my artwork. I think this love of nature goes back to my grandmother. I lived with her for some time when I was younger and she was always in the yard planting flowers or in her garden. She would tell me all the names of the flowers, like Prairie Trillium, and other native Illinois plants. I loved the anthropomorphic qualities in trees and how animated they were. I think this relates to Medlock's (2015) writing about artists living with an attitude of an "openness to a sense of wonder" (para 12): instead of forcing something into being, one works with what one has and is in a constant dialogue with it to create. One is "receptive to the wonder of spirit" . . . "being open to experience, and specifically to the vitality and mystery of the moment" (para 18). He goes on to say that wonder is not passive "it is also an active state of questioning and speculation about the meaning of an experience" (para 30). Greene (1995) writes that the arts gets us out of the everyday, what Foucault called "normalization", and leads us to wonder and question (p.135). This "life-world, or world, is the everyday, intuitive, world of our day-to-day experience, in contrast to the idealized, cognitive world of the sciences and mathematics" (Barnacle, 2004, p.58). Langer (1957) wrote that "every work of art expresses, more or less purely, more or less subtly, not feelings and emotions the artist has, but feelings which the artist knows; his insight into the nature of sentience, his picture of vital experience, physical, and emotive and fantastic" (p.91). I



was trying to relay this in my work, the incredible patience of a tree, the persistence of it, all that it has seen and experienced was within it, and I hope that I got the viewer to notice it, notice the beauty in the everyday.

This everyday nature was my backyard, the bike trail, and the local park, not some far off elusive, remote destination, but what I saw every day as I stepped outside and into the world. This heuristic research gave an agency for the everyday, so as not to generalize something into statistical formulations but saw an experience for just that and saw how it related to the whole. **Audience**

When I began my conversations with my mentors a theme that appeared was the collaborative aspect between the artist and the viewer. Laura talked about how the audience is a factor in interpreting the art work and that you can discover things you never considered while making the work, how it becomes a collaboration between the artist and the viewer as much as it is a collaboration between the artist and the materials when the artist is creating (personal communication, Laura, May 9, 2016). Bourriaud (2002) when writing about modern art wrote about the collaborative nature of art in that "an art form where the substrate is formed by intersubjectivity, and which takes being-together as a central theme, the 'encounter' between beholder and picture, and the collective elaboration of meaning" forms the work (p. 15). Meaning is grasped through the collaboration between the viewer and the art, between the viewer and the artist.

Greene (1995) spoke about "releasing the imagination. . . and that imagination creates new orders as it brings 'the severed parts together (Woolf, 1976, p.72), connecting human consciousness and works of visual art" (p.140).



Through arts-based research, I have discovered themes in my art making process. This has underscored to me the need to continue the autoethnographic research and reflexive process that that I have begun. I have gained clarity through this process of labeling my various themes, which include: the use of found objects (chance and organization), intuition, metaphor, politics, spirituality, the influence of other artist, reflective practice, nature, and engagement with different audiences. This reflective experience has given not just clarity, but also agency to my artwork All this I can now express better to my colleagues and the public.

I also can integrate my art making practice into my teaching methods more intuitively and trace the connections between them. Through continued reflection and talking to artist colleagues and mentors, I will be able to maintain this cycle of growth and learning. All of this will strengthen my art pedagogy and my ability to serve as advocate for what we do in the arts and as teachers.

Teaching

Through this arts-based research and this process of creating, journaling, reflecting and analyzing I could see how my art making process fed and informed my teaching. I could see how my influences of other artist's that I was looking at and the way that I worked came into my teaching. I incorporated the ideas of my process in my own artwork, the use of chance operations but also a formal aesthetic, are incorporated into my lessons I gave. The students are given projects based upon looking at other artists' work and thinking about the way they created or the techniques they used, but I also allowed and encouraged the students to make their own discoveries and use their intuition on how to create their own artwork. I also tried to incorporate metaphor into their projects but I discovered that they are just too young to really grasp what that concept is and how to incorporate it into their own work. I based lesson plans on incorporating



natural materials, like in my still life drawing unit with the fifth graders using natural objects. Or we may look at the installation work of Andy Goldsworthy and create their own installation with natural objects. I hoped that this would give students an appreciation for what was all around them, and the everyday.

When I taught, the things that I thought about while working on my artwork came out and became incorporated into my teaching, into my classroom. These included chance, metaphor, other artist's influence, intuition, and reflection.

Chance

In my research, I had been thinking about chance operations and Dadaism, and I wanted to incorporate the aspect of chance into my lesson on ceramics. I wanted the students to either create their own poem or use song lyrics as the basis for their idea to translate onto their ceramic vessel. This was also what the potter Niiyama did in his work. In my lessons, I used Niiyama's vessels as our starting point for our ceramic vessel unit.

I also had students who finished early look at the work of Tristan Tzara and the Dadaist movement. I had them first cut out 20 words from magazines that were interesting to them either in font or meaning, this was prior to instructions on making a poem. I then gave them Tristan Tzara's instructions for creating a Dadaist poem. I wanted the students to create their own poem and then this would become the inspiration for their imagery on their ceramic vessel. The poems did turn out to be interesting. The poems came out making sense and it seemed like the construction of the poem had been thought about a lot, that it was not just by chance that those words came together. But the concept of using that as the basis of their image was something they could not grasp. Because I work with elementary students the "chance" aspect should be



very controlled. I have a short window of time with them each week and they are not ready for such a conceptual work.

I also want the student's art work to be their own. I have certain criteria that they need to follow but in the end, I want it to be theirs and not mine and not some copy of someone's work. I believe in happy accidents and I do demo and have examples for the students but in the end, it's up to them to take their project and push the boundaries of what I'm asking or push the boundaries of themselves.

Metaphor

In the ceramic lesson, I wanted students to incorporate poetry or lyrics in a metaphorical way into their ceramic vessel, like Niiyama did with his. Niiyama create one hundred ceramic pieces as interpretations of the poems of the Hyakunin Isshu (Milner Library, 2013). I showed students the artwork on the university library website and we discussed how he translated the poems into images. I found later that this was just too much for them, and they had a really hard time grasping this concept. The students went back to more realistic portrayals of whatever their poem or song was. They were not quite ready for this level of thought, but maybe this will come back to them as they enter high school or further down the road. They did, however, grasp the metaphor concept when we did the unit on Ran Hwang and her work in an exhibit on freedom, but that lesson was much more concrete than the ceramics lesson. In that lesson, we were creating a group installation piece, where each student created the same bird. The only differences in the students' work were the words that they chose to write on the bird. The word represented what freedom meant to them. They covered a red sheet of paper with the word they chose in a meditative way, like that of Ran Hwang and her repetition of using buttons.



Other Artist's Work

Other artists' artwork influenced mine, so I introduced Dada to the students and the artist Tristann Tzarra. He had a Dadaist method to create poems the students were ask to do the same and for that to be used as inspiration for the imagery for students' ceramics. Even though the final inspiration for the ceramics project was drawn from Niiyama's ceramic vessels. I wanted the students to create their own poem. I had the students create a Dadaist poem that, hopefully, they would incorporate into their ceramic vessel as decoration.

I incorporated found object work, like that of Juan Chavez into my lesson units because that was who I was looking at for my own work. Since Chavez's work connected to the community I wanted to tie this to students' own thoughts about their community, too, their school community, their neighborhood and then the larger community of their city. This led to the collaborative permanent installation at our school. For the found object unit, I gave students a large assortment of found/donated objects to bring together as an assemblage. Students first heard Juan Chavez speak about his own artwork and saw images of his artwork. The entire fifth grade them came together in the gym with local artists to assist them to create their own assemblage. I spray-painted all the pieces silver and hung in the stairwell as a permanent group installation piece. I used community as a theme for lessons is also applied when I do a local architecture/gallery walk with the fourth-grade students. I want them to get out and engage with their community and see what is all around them. I modelled this for them by being very active in my local art community and talking about this to my students. I also made it a point to go and see as many art shows or visit museums as I could, sometimes as a virtual tour. I would then bring this back to my students so they could share in the experience.



Intuition

I felt strongly that there should be a strong formalist art education for my students, along with a conceptual one. This goes into almost every unit that I do with all the students. I really try to stress the elements and principles of design for my students because I feel that it is foundational for their age. All the language of art is new to them, and they are just discovering it, the ways to talk about art, and the ways to look at the world through an artist's eye. Artist teacher, Mark Mitsuda (2016), spoke about this, also, how you must understand the medium in a different way, more in depth to teach it. In class, we went over the same media again and again and we broke it down in a different way than I may have done in my own work when creating, and my work was just more intuitive. Teaching became a different way of understanding art making than just the intuitive way that I used it in my own artwork. I also told my students to have patience and to keep practicing, keep working at it. Nothing happens instantaneously, it takes time, but if they used their time and didn't waste it that was how they could improve and grow.

Reflection

I think in one's art, in teaching or life one must be open to diverse ideas, ideas that will challenge one's own preconceived ideas. As Greene (2003) said "resisting fixities, seeking the openings" (p. 22-23). Sullivan (2014) writes about this when he stated that you need to stay open for the "dialectical debate across domains" . . . this becomes essential if we are to collaborate and connect with one another and "transform human understanding (Sullivan, 2010)" (p.278). In my research and practice I received lots of advice from my mentors or others. This has led me to think about my art and process in new ways to challenge myself. In the end, I didn't always heed their advice but I think I came to understand what I was doing more fully



because of the dialogue. Rolling (2010) wrote that educators must write and re-write our own stories otherwise we are stuck in the same system/pattern of teaching that may not be valid any longer (p.7). Quiet reflection or close observation allowed me to create and came through in my teaching. I asked the students to observe in the same way. I have students do this reflection through an assessment at the end of their projects. I hoped this would begin to get them to reflect on what they have done and start thinking about their own process.

Through discovering these themes of chance, metaphor, other artists' work, intuition, and reflection I have strengthened my focus and pedagogy. I can clearly see the connections between my teaching and my art making process and how they feed off one another and create an energy. And through this reflexive research I could see in my teaching when concepts like chance or metaphor were not taking hold. I began to adjust my curriculum to best fit my student's level of conceptual work.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Through this arts-based research I was able to analyze and verbalize my process and reflect upon it in an in-depth way that I had not ever done before, and I was able to express ideas that otherwise would be inexpressible (Barone & Eisner, 2012). This research did not produce a right or wrong answer, but outlined a mode of thinking (Sullivan, 2005).

This self-reflexivity provided insight into what I created as an artist/teacher and what I did creatively in my classroom. Arts-based research in my studio allowed for a reflexive, heuristic research that led to something new, a body of work. Sullivan (2005) argues that studio based research pondered the possible, and represented "a 'create to critique' mode of inquiry" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 8). I realized that this ability to remain flexible and open to possibilities when needed was both good for one's own artwork and for one's teaching. I allowed students to feel like that there was not a right or wrong answer, but that learning through the arts was this journey. Sullivan (2014) described arts-based research "as a creative and critical process whereby imaginative leaps are made into what we do not know—as this can lead to crucial insights that might change what we do know" (p.278). The artist-teacher opens herself to "a form of transcendent consciousness" (Medlock, 2015, p. 22). She becomes "open to experience and specifically to the vitality and mystery of the moment" (p. 18).

The connection between my art practice and teaching was strengthened through talking with my mentors and reflecting on their conversations. The conversations opened whole new avenues of thinking about the way that I worked and labeling it. The conversations also gave me insight into the way my mentors work so that I could learn from them. The way in which I taught reflected the way in which I worked. I felt a strong need for a solid formal foundation,



but at the same time I thought it is also important to think abstractly or conceptually. I used the notion of chance in my work, but not the same way that someone like John Cage did. As I teach elementary students chance cannot play as big of a role for them at this age, but I still incorporated it in my unit on Niiyama and creating a poem for their ceramic piece.

As I found objects for my own artwork, chance came into play. But even then, I made choices, and then, I arranged the works constructed from these objects formally. I didn't change the way I worked on my art during this research process. In the works I created during this research, I was aware of time constraints. In some cases, I may have taken longer with this piece or that if those constraints were not there. I hoped that through my teaching I gave my students a strong formal foundation on which to build as they moved on into junior high and high school.

I'm still trying to figure out what my students are able to do conceptually. At times, I think that I ask too much. I am laying a foundation for their later artwork or even for their thoughts and experiences in a more general way. I introduced my students to artists, architecture and art history. Through art education, my students can gain a greater appreciation for and understanding of the visual imagery that they are bombarded with every day. With luck, they will also develop an appreciation for art and for the beauty around them as I have. As Leavy (2009) states, "Visual images occupy an elevated place in memory... images are consumed differently... and can be very powerful and lasting" (p.216). One is allowed to break free of the everyday routine and think of other possibilities.

Another way in which my artistic practice fed into my teaching was through the incorporation of contemporary art and local art into my curriculum. Students were introduced to contemporary artists or local artists or to the architecture in their city. When I brought Juan Chavez to our school as a visiting artist, students began to see artists as real people to whom one



could connect, someone who was a lot like them, not an abstract being or a notion. I think that it is important for students to have that connection and to feel that they are not so far removed from the arts, that if they want to connect to the arts, they can in their own backyard. I learned of Juan Chavez' work through my pursuit of my own work and my investigation of contemporary artists.

Through my autoethnographic research I was able to discover that there is a connection between my teaching and creating my art. Through teaching I gave an agency to my own artwork and, hopefully, a voice and agency to my students and to other art teachers.



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APPENDIX A: JOURNAL ENTRIES & ART WORK PROCESS

May 4t, 2014 0 I used to start with a concept, an idea but now I let the materials decide what they want & be and it Snows from there into a concept. I try not to Ance then into being. I collect natural + man made And abjects that are intriguing to me. The have a history. A X story to tell. I combine Them Annally at Anot . New one - Maybe Rhythm"? le pieces man made + natural l'un found. That found their way togethe One piece 3/4" I angu 14" From of wood was part of som larger cabinet on possibly furniture. It has layers of worn blifte-green paint on it, with bare patches too. And two holes drilled into it. Looks like a small painting.

Figure A-1, Journal Page 1



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2 May 4th, 2014 The bear pod Seeds Will have to find The connect term) are for our Scavinges @ the park. They are so beautiful and so delicate. Die been trying to from out a way to incomponate them into my work. The base piece is Walnut (?) think and it looks like someone cut small rectangles out of it for another project. Sometimes the best places you spind are The discarded Scraps for some one elses creation. Sometimes the regative is better Than the paritive Didit Matine say that about his paper cut - ohto. I am in love with wahart shells. I love the way the guinels chew then open and no' two are ever alike Deg become these Deantight bore life tomers. A wany interesting riches.

Figure A-2, Journal Page 2



(3) Jay 4th, 2016 The last two pieces of this new piece are a piece of back typon a lind. and another manufacture pice of wood.) horizontal they both contain them lines and cincular shapes on holes. The back has wondersfelly wrinkled knot and The way it bloke tapened at each end. I try not to alter the object I afound. I try not to break on art sticks, etc. Wood I like to leave them in The sprin first discovered then in. I do alraw on the wood on metal. I don't think I in going to draw Or this piece though. Moually anange the piece and let it be for awhile before She angthing down. I asually Junke edits from them. And the piece could sit for weeks before being

Figure A-3, Journal Page 3



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May 4 2016 D This is partially due to my time limitations in the studio, with everything else in got pay a. In learning to be very patient.

Figure A-4, Journal Page 4





Figure A-5, Part of *Rhythm*





Figure A-6, Part of Rhythm, the bean pod seeds





Figure A-7, Part of Rhythm, planed walnut





Figure A-8, Part of *Rhythm*, walnut that is a bone-like form





Figure A-9, Part of *Rhythm*, bark with tapered ends



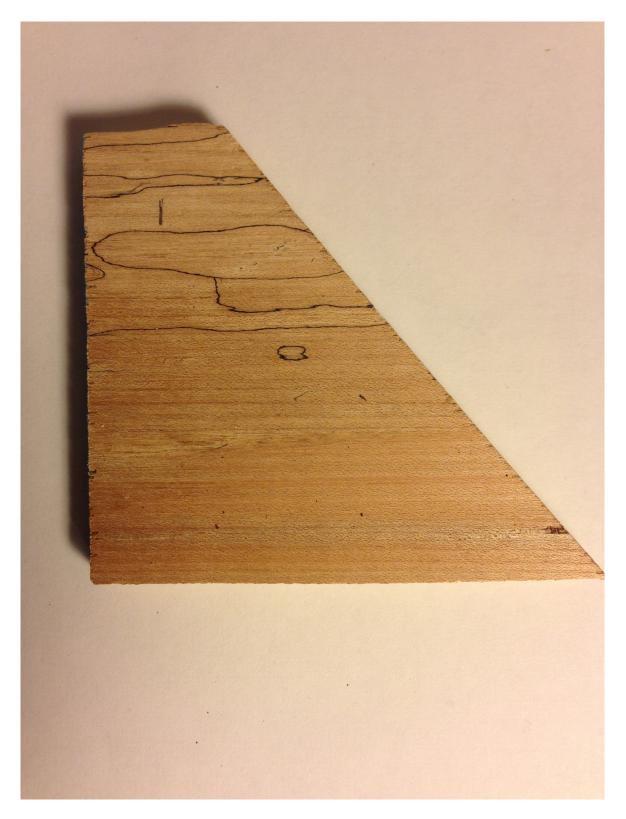


Figure A-10, Part of Rhythm, manufactured piece of wood





Figure A-11, Rhythm



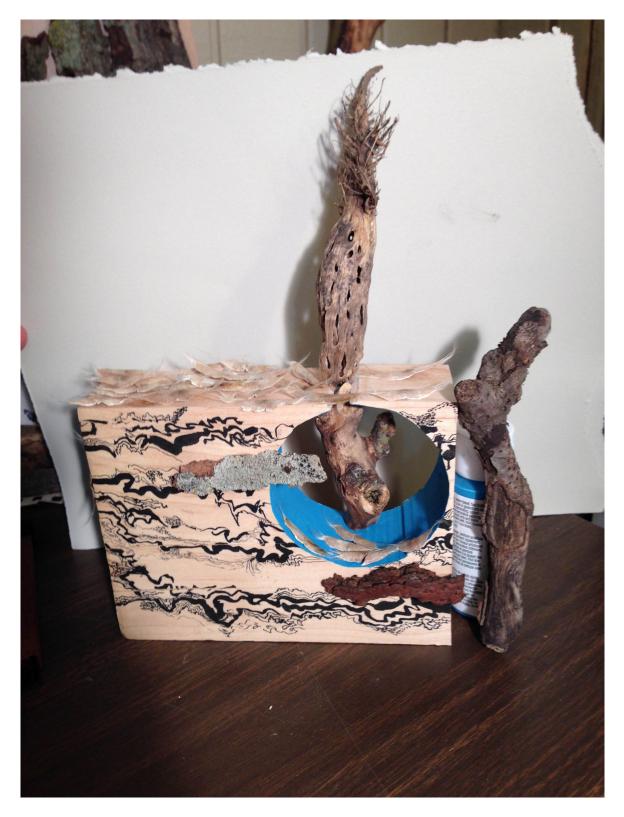


Figure A-12, Mutineers- beginning stages





Figure A-13, Mutineers





Figure A-14, Beginnings of Circle



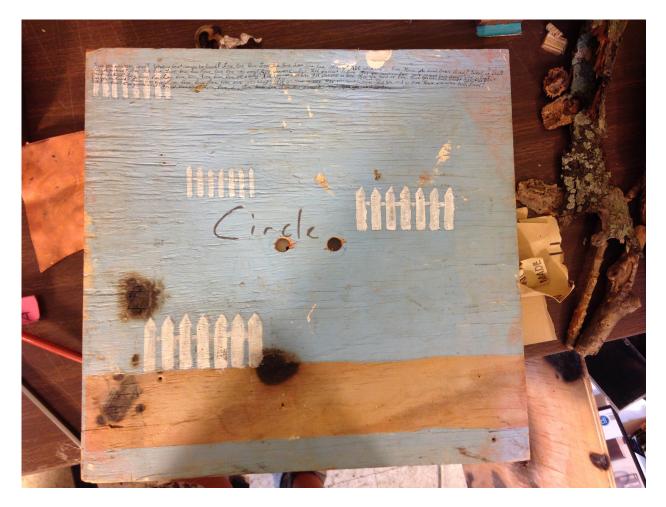


Figure A-15, Early Stages-Circle



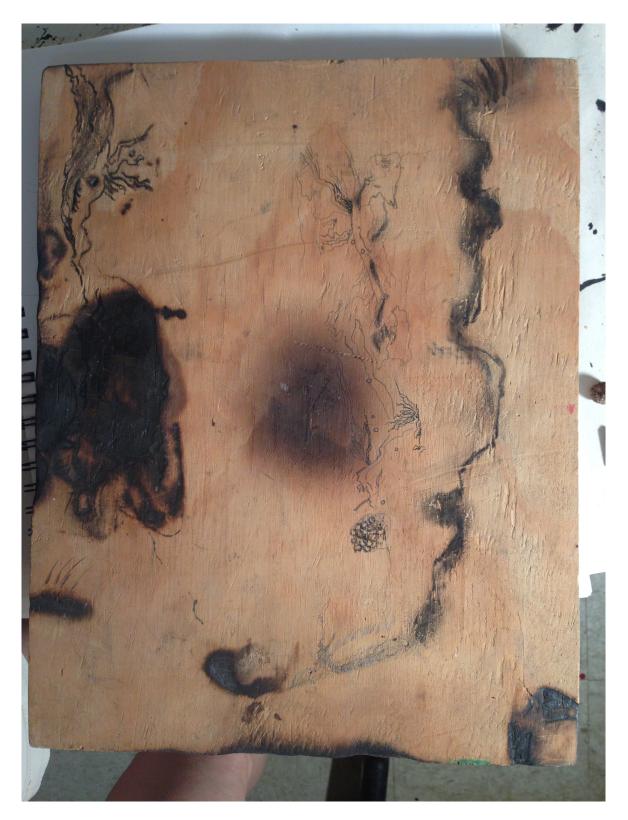


Figure A-16, Early stages-drawing on base of Elysium



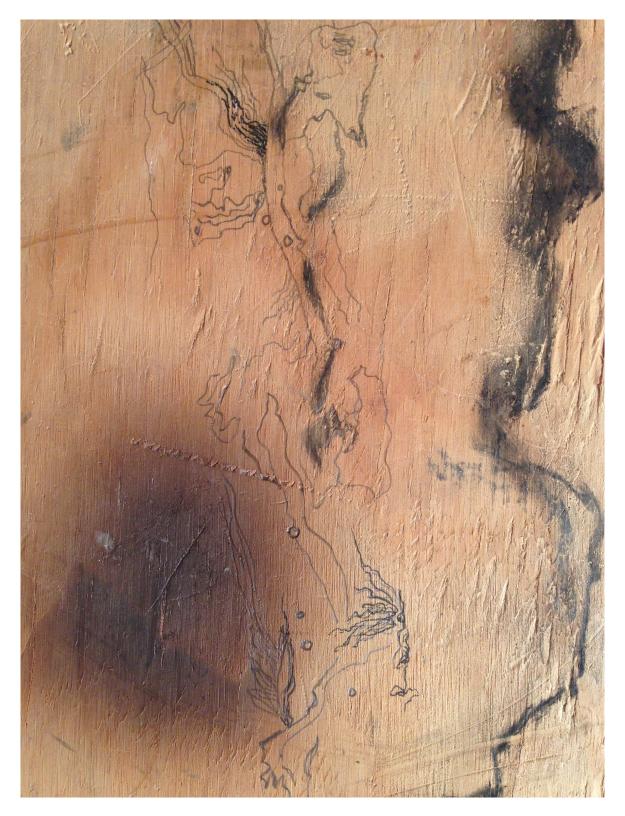


Figure A-17, Early stages drawings- Elysium





Figure A-18, Found objects arranged on top





Figure A-19, branch I drew from for *Elysium*



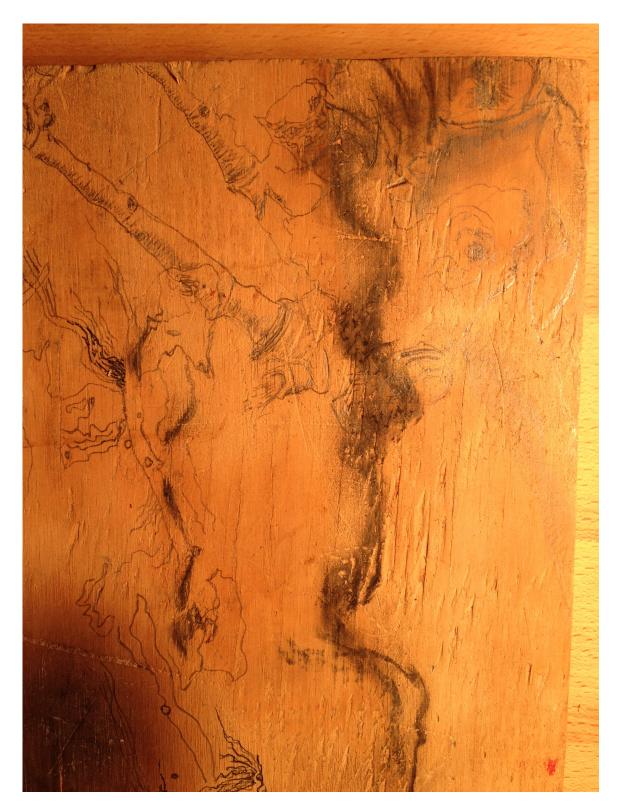


Figure A-20, Two drawings overlapping



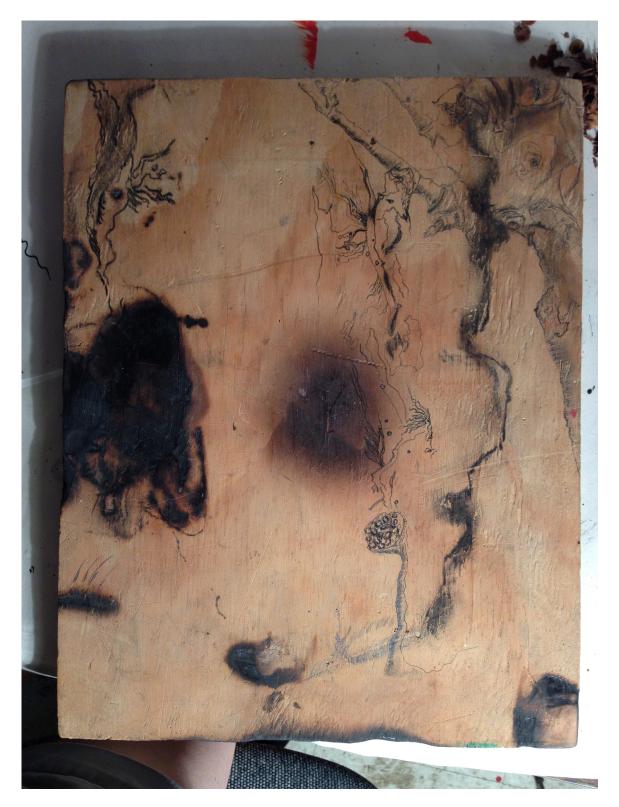


Figure A-21, lotus pod





Figure A-22, Arranging found objects on top of base board





Figure A-23, Figure like Rise



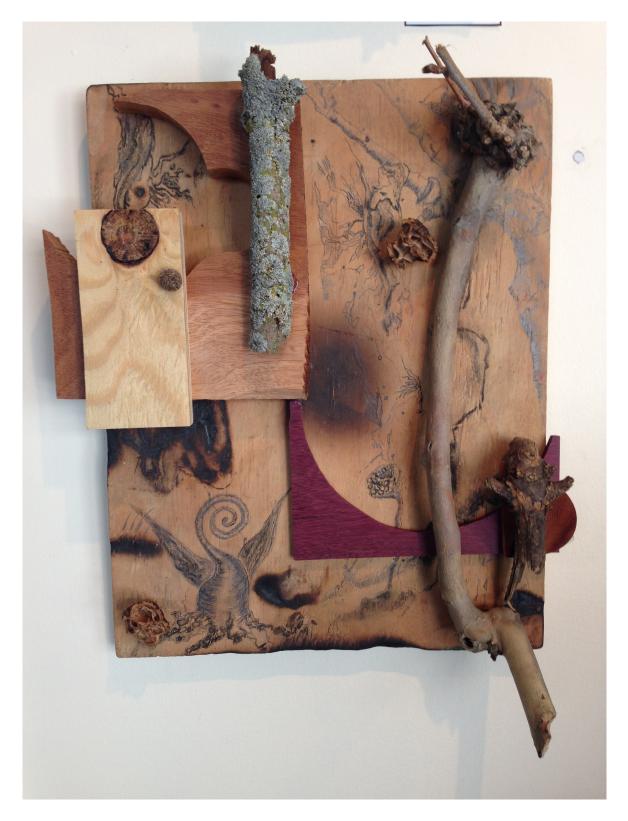


Figure A-24, Elysium



APPENDIX B: ARTIST STATEMENT

I get lost in nature, grounded and re-energized by it. I am especially drawn to trees and their anthropomorphic qualities. I find trees incredibly animated. The tree in your backyard, or the lone tree in the field puts down its roots and stays for a hundred years or more. I think about all that it has seen and experienced. How it has large gouges in it or its base is being washed away by a flowing body of water and still its roots hang on. So persistent, so patient.

My work plays with the push and pull of real and perceived space, and the meditative nature of organic shapes and lines. I am drawn to the dialectic tension between natural and manmade objects. I use items I've collected from nature, combined with found man-made objects. This is the nature of the everyday, it is not some serene, hidden, untouched place. Everyday nature is my backyard, the bike trail, the local park. Spaces that have been constructed by humans, constructed for us, but given back to nature at the same time. The line of a stick, the form of a walnut shell half eaten by a squirrel, the color and texture of fungus growing on bark intrigues me and I'm drawn to pick it up. In this ritual of finding objects and finding my composition, of growth and decay and of chance and intuition, I find balance for myself.



APPENDIX C: ART UNIT PLAN: MITSUYA NIIYAMA CERAMICS

| Central | Slab constructed clay vessel with poetic motif |
|--------------|--|
| Focus | |
| Grade | Elementary 5 th grade |
| Level | |
| Class Size | 20-30 |
| Time | 60 minutes per class: 5 days |
| Class | Bent Elementary |
| Demographics | |

National Visual Arts Standards Addressed

- VA: Cn10-5 a. Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to see surroundings in new ways through art-making.
- VA:Cr3-5a Create artist statements using art vocabulary to describe personal choices made in art-making.
- VA: Cr2-5aExperiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.
- VA:Cr1-5 a. Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for art-making.

UNIT OVERVIEW

The students will look at the work of Mitsuya Niiyama and other Japanese artists They

will connect how poetry was used to influence the art or interpreted visually. They will create

their own slab constructed vessel with a visual interpretation of their own or someone else's

poetry.



| Forms | 2D | | | 3D | | 4D |
|------------|----------|--|----------|------|-------|---------|
| Frames | Cultural | | Subjecti | Stru | uctur | Postmod |
| | Cultural | | ve | al | | ern |
| Conceptual | Artwork | | Artist | Auc | lienc | World |
| Framework | Artwork | | Artist | e | | world |

Interdisciplinary Connections

• Social studies, language arts, history.

UNIT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- 1. Students will brainstorm with 3-5 different thumbnails, creating a visual interpretation of their poem. VA:Cr1.1.5a
- 2. Students will create a slab constructed vessel incorporating their visual interpretation of a poem as their motif. VA:Cr2.2.5a
- 3. Acting as art critics students will write a descriptive narrative about their partner's piece that includes the meaning and the mood it conveys. VA: Cr3.1.5a and VA:Re.7.2.5a.

TEACHER MATERIALS

STUDENT MATERIALS

| • | Sketch paper and pencils | • | Slip | ٠ | Canvas |
|---|--------------------------|---|-------|---|--------------|
| • | Clay tools/pencils | • | Glaze | • | Plastic bags |



ARTISTS IN CONTEXT

| Key Artists | Mitsuya Niiyama, Utagawa (Ando) Hiroshige, Morita Shiryu |
|--------------|--|
| Key | Niiyama (all pieces from 1981 series): Nyudo Saki no Daijo |
| Artworks | Dajin; Shokushi Naishinno; Kwoka Mon-In no Betto. Hiroshige: One |
| | Hundred Famous Views of Edo (1797-1858). Morita Shiryu: Dragon |
| | Knows Dragon (1969); The cloud is egoless (1966) |
| | |
| Key Critical | What is the subject matter of the poetry/or ceramic pieces of |
| Questions | Niiyama |
| | Describe what you see? |
| | What sort of emotions are shown or do you feel when looking at |
| | the work? |
| | Does knowing the poetry add to the piece? |
| | Does the text that Niiyama added detract or add to the piece? |
| | Compare and contrast the different types of Japanese art. |

VOCABULARY AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

| Vocabulary | Earthenware | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | Score | | | |
| | Slip | | | |
| | Haiku | | | |
| | Bisque | | | |
| | Glaze | | | |
| | Glaze firing | | | |
| | Vessel | | | |
| | Tradition | | | |
| | | | | |
| Language | | ritique, describe, interpret, question, | | |
| Functions | etc. | | | |
| Language | Syntax | Discourse | | |
| Demands | | | | |
| Language | 1. Describe the artwork; question artwork construction; analyze the | | | |
| Tasks and Activities | meaning; compare and contrast with similarities and differences | | | |
| | using unit vocabulary; | | | |
| | 2. Interpreting the meaning of the issues in their own artwork | | | |
| | 3. Describe their partner's artwork and assess their own artwork. | | | |
| Language | 1. Handouts with questions and definitions | | | |
| Supports | 2. Class discussion and written answ | vers | | |



SPECIAL PRE-INSTRUCTION PREPARATIONS

• Research poems or create a poem of their own, complete 3-5 thumbnails of preparatory sketches for design

ACCOMODATIONS FOR SPECIFIC DIVERSE LEARNERS

Adaptations and Accommodations

- Frequent changes in the delivery styles of the lesson
- Step-by-step instructions with clearly stated expectations
- Demonstrate each step
- Have examples in all stages of construction

Enrichment and Extensions

- Write their own Haiku, create a print based on a poem Activity for Early Finishers
- Free draw in sketchbooks.

OBJECTIVE-DRIVEN ASSESSMENTS

- 1. Student actively participates in class discussion and completes handouts and thumbnail sketches with thoroughness and insight to articulate their interpretation of their poem. (Objective 1)
- 2. Students use research and independent thought to carefully craft their vessel that have personal meaning (Objective 2)
- 3. Using descriptive language students describe their partner's vessel and, provide clear rationale for the meaning construction and motif used. (Objectives 3 &4)

References

https://library.illinoisstate.edu/pottery/index.php

http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/

http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/research/edo/

http://www3.carleton.ca/resoundingspirit/morita.html



| Launch | Instruction Methods |
|---|------------------------------|
| Group instruction-Look at Niiyama's work on the ISU Milner website. Listen to poetry on website. Show the selected image of Niiyama's work. Have students write a thorough description of what they see and what they think the artists is trying to convey. Define the vocabulary words using prior knowledge | • Whole class |
| Instruction | Instruction Methods |
| In small groups: Look at color copies of Niiyama's work Answer questions on Niiyama worksheet What is the subject matter of the poetry/ or ceramic piece? How would these objects be used? What sort of emotions are shown or do you feel when looking at the work? Does the poetry add to the pieces? Does the text that the artist added detract or add to the piece? How does the shape of the piece affect the work? How does Niiyama play with space in his pieces? Do you have a family tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation? Or could you think of one that you'd want to start? As a class define the vocabulary words and write on the board Power Point about artist that shows different images and that incorporate vocabulary | Small groups Whole class |
| Closure | Instruction Methods |
| Students orally share handout answers with the class. Instructor writes handout question answers into digital handout copy Homework-Students need to bring in a poem/song to work from for the next class | • Whole class |



| Launch | Instruction Methods |
|--|-----------------------|
| • Ask groups to come up with one thing that they remember about the artist or a vocab word from last week. | • Whole class |
| Instruction | Instruction Methods |
| • Show a PowerPoint of the work of Niiyama and Hiroshige. Also show slides of examples of student work and poetry used. | • Whole group |
| Students will do 3-5 thumbnail sketches of ideas for vessel. Student will need to show multiple viewpoints (in the round) and legs for vessel | • Small group. |
| • Color with colored pencils, 2 colors + white | |
| • Break into small groups, have students work on worksheet to compare and contrast the work of Niiyama and Hiroshige | |
| Closure | Instruction Methods |
| Groups share handouts information with the class as Instructor shows images from the Power Point on the Board Show power point of vessel construction, show each step and student avample | • Group presentations |
| and student exampleInstructor reviews rubric requirements and passes them out | |

| Launch | Instruction Methods |
|--|---|
| • Review the compare and contrast activity. Remind students to work with their best craftsmanship | • Whole class |
| Instruction | Instruction Methods |
| Instructor reminds students that they will be creating a slab constructed vessel incorporating their poetry into the imagery of the vessel. Instructor demonstrates slab construction and draping slab over a form. Instructor demonstrates drawing imagery or creating textures onto slab. Hand out clay, tools and form Students construct their vessel and draw imagery onto vessel | Whole classIndependent working |
| Closure | Instruction Methods |
| Instructor demonstrates wrapping up clayReview vocabulary | • Whole class |



| Launch | Instruction Methods |
|---|-----------------------|
| • Instructor reviews slides of Niiyama's work. | Whole class |
| • Instructor asks for class definitions of the vocabulary. | |
| Instruction | Instruction Methods |
| • Instructor demonstrates how to clean up clay and construct | Whole class |
| feet for vessel | • Independent working |
| • Students construct feet for vessel and score and slip on | |
| • Instructor demonstrates how to wrap clay and how it will be | |
| fired | |
| • Students take pieces to the kiln area to dry | |
| Closure | Instruction Methods |
| • Instructor show PP of Morita Shiryu's work and discusses it | Whole class |

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND LEARNING TASKS DAY / LESSON 5

| Launch | Instruction Methods |
|---|---|
| • Instructor asks for class definitions of the vocabulary. | • Whole class |
| Instructor reviews rubric requirements | |
| Instruction | Instruction Methods |
| Instructor demonstrates glazing vessels with two colors + a clear gloss (white) Students glaze vessels, working carefully and with their best craftsmanship, paying close attention not to contaminate glazes. | Whole class Independent working/individual instruction |
| Closure | Instruction Methods |
| Briefly Review the compare and contrast activity. | • Whole class |

| Launch | Instruction Methods |
|--|---------------------|
| • Instructor asks for class definitions of the vocabulary. | • Whole class |
| Instructor reviews Morita Shiryu's PP | |
| Instructor reviews rubric requirements | |
| Instruction | Instruction Methods |
| Students continue working on Shiryu worksheet | • Whole class |
| • Students share their work with a partner and complete an art criticism worksheet | • Partner |
| Closure | Instruction Methods |



| Instructor reviews guidelines for critique | • Whole class |
|---|---------------------|
| • Instructor partners up students for written critique | |
| Instruction | Instruction Methods |
| • Instructor tells students to work with a partner and list two adjectives to describe the vessel | • Partner |
| • Instructor tells students to write a descriptive paragraph about their partner's vessel using those adjectives and design principles. | • Whole class |
| • Instructor tells students to interview their partner and take notes asking them what their vessel represents and why they chose the imagery they did. | • Partner |
| • Students share with the class their findings as an art critic. | |
| Closure | Instruction Methods |
| Instructor reviews rubric requirements | • Whole class |
| • Students complete their rubric and self-reflection | |



APPENDIX D: ARTIST RESEARCH-MITSUYA NIIYAMA

Artist Research: Mitsuya Niiyama: functional/decorative ceramics



Figure D-1

Artist:

Mitsuya Niiyama was born in 1921 in Kamakura City Japan. He passed away in 2013. He was a functional potter who worked solely in Japan until the 1980's. His major work was based on his interpretations of the Japanese poems, Ogura Hyakunin Isshu. These poems were compiled in 1235, but first written in 670-1216.

https://library.illinoisstate.edu/pottery/index.php



Figure D -2 Nyudo Saki no Daijo Daijin



Figure D -3 Shokushi Naishinno



Figure D -4 Kwoka Mon-In no Betto

Cultural/Subjective/Structural Frame:

- 1. What is the subject matter of the poetry/or ceramic pieces?
- 2. How would these objects be used?



- 3. What sort of emotions are shown or do you feel when looking at the work?
- 4. Does the poetry add to the pieces?
- 5. Does the text that the artist added detract or add to the piece?
- 6. How does the shape of the piece affect the work?
- 7. How does Niiyama play with space in his pieces?
- 8. Do you have a family tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation? Or could you think of one that you'd want to start?

Art Criticism: Artwork-Poetic Japanese Pottery (An interpretation of the Ogura Hyakunin Isshu)

Mitsuya Niiyama used his interpretation of the Hyakunin Isshu as the basis of his work of 100 pieces of ceramic art. The poems are very traditional and popular in Japan. The poems are written in a form called the "tanka or waka: short, only 5 lines each with a set number of syllables 5-75-7-7" (Niiyama, vii).

Poetry is very popular in Japan and the way that it is written is easily understood and people try to write their own. The poems were made into a family card game that is played at New Year's).

Art Criticism: The World:

The Japanese poetry of the Ogura Hyakunin Isshu is very similar to the Japanese Haiku. The Haiku is a shortened version of the poetry developed in the 1890's

http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/

Audience:

Utagawa (Ando) Hiroshige's One Hundred Famous Views of Edo, 1797-1858 were 118 woodblock prints in the ukiyo-e style during the Edo period in Japan. These Japanese works also dealt with landscapes and the changing of the seasons.

Cherry flowers the image of our fleeting world no sooner have they opened then they begin to fall.



Kokinshu (10 C) - Anonymous poem

http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/research/edo/

Morita Shiryu (1912-1999) - Toyooka, Japan







Figure D -6

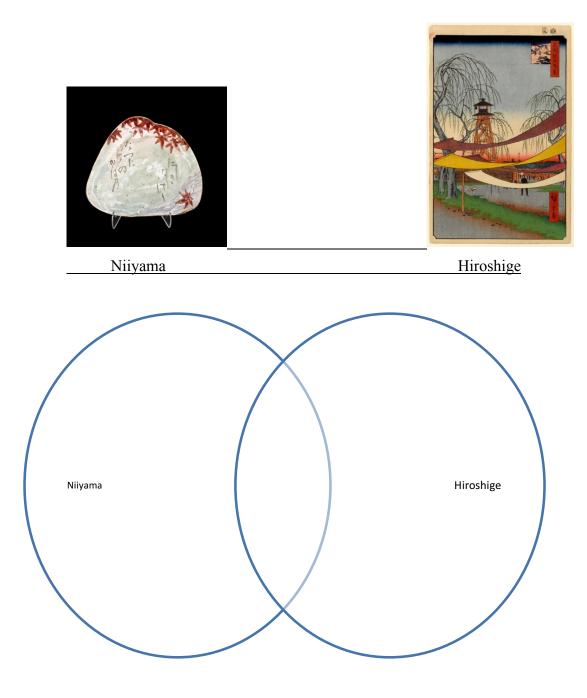
Dragon Knows Dragon (Ryu wa ryu wo shiru), 1969/ Kumo Mushin (The Cloud is egoless)1966 Morita Shiryu was a part of the avant-garde calligraphic movement Bokujin-Kai of "Ink Human Society". They "sought a common universal language that was centered on spontaneous gestural abstractions while remaining responsive to the history of East Asian Calligraphy"

http://www3.carleton.ca/resoundingspirit/morita.html

Compare and Contrast: Niiyama & Hiroshige

- In 1-2 paragraphs describe one of Niiyama's pieces and one of Hiroshige's pieces of your choice. Describe them so well that your partner can visualize them in their mind's eye.
- 2. What mediums are they made out of?
- 3. <u>What time period did the artist create their work?</u>
- 4. How did their culture influence their work?





Compare and contrast the two works above. Share your findings with your partner. Then you will share with the class.

Figure D -7



Vocabulary:

Earthenware Score Slip Haiku Bisque Glaze Glaze firing Vessel Tradition Functional/ Non-functional

Art making:

- Students will create a slab-constructed vessel
- Students will visually interpret their own poetry or that of others as the motif of their vessel.
- Students will create 3-5 thumbnail sketches of ideas for their interpretations
- Students will glaze their work and work with good craftsmanship Other extensions:
- Students will create their own Haiku
- Students will create a print in the style of the Ukiyo-e
- Students will create a Sumi-e painting in ink



APPENDIX E: ASSESSMENT

Name

Hour

5th Grade Niiyama Poetic Pottery Assessment

Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 (5 is the highest)

Attitude/Effort/Citizenship

Demonstrates respect for others and materials Participates successfully in group activities and critiques Self-motivated and productive during class 2 3 4 5 1 Concept Design was inspired by a poem or song Visually interesting design incorporated entire vessel 1 2 3 5 4 Composition Space is filled Asymmetrical balance is achieved where unlike objects have equal visual weight A variety of textures were created 2 5 1 3 4 **Technical Skill** Sketching was used to plan and plot drawing prior to adding details Vessel was created with the best craftsmanship, no cracking, breakage All added part were scored and slipped 1 2 3 4 5 **Creative Impact** Solves problem as given Solution to the problem is unique Solution to the problem is interesting to the artist and the viewers 1 2 3 4 5 Are you proud of what you accomplished? Yes No What would you do differently if you change your vessel?

