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Gateway: entering into a process of questioning pedagogical practice in South African education

Louw, Genevieve Jeanne

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to critically engage with the limitations and ethical dilemmas inherent in socially engaged art practice and to closely examine the relevance of educational art practice by entering into a process of questioning the current education system offered in South Africa. This research project attempts to reveal various problems and benefits of working within the educational artistic paradigm. By working with the concept of a ‘gateway’, issues regarding access to education are investigated through the medium of poetry, which intends to question approaches to research methodologies in academic institutions. Power dynamics in educational practice is a central point that is considered in this research, with particular reference to resistance toward archaic and colonial systems of control.

Collaborative projects and acts of resistance in art educational spaces are analysed closely in order to explore interdisciplinary approaches to education that reflect decolonial objectives and encourage transformative action. The research identifies a need for complex and dynamic approaches to educational practice and knowledge production by placing value on previously overlooked material that may be utilised in order to rethink approaches to curriculum development.

The theory and practice of intersectionality is a key component in the theoretical and practical elements of the project as it suggests a complex approach to problems in educational practice by focusing on the importance of individual positionality. The importance of self-reflexive methods and approaches to educational research practice is addressed in relation to various failures that occur in participatory projects that often have negative associations but hold inestimable pedagogical significance.