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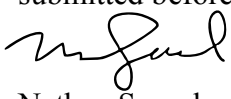
Please Tell Me Why You Are Here: The Intersection of Pedagogy and Art in Printmaking Organizations Founded by Artists in Johannesburg, South Africa and Oaxaca, Mexico

Nathan Sensel

A dissertation submitted to the Wits School of Arts, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Fine Arts Johannesburg, 4th of May, 2020.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Fine Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



Nathan Sensel

27th April, 2020

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Index

page #

5 Abstract

6 Introduction, Ethical Research
The Problem of Trust

18 Chapter 1: Literature Review and Methodology
The problem of Pedagogy, The Problem of Art
20 Examination: Focus on the variety of sensibilities and intersecting selve
22 Discourse: Expand critical faculties so that less is ignored
23 Critical Analysis: Think ethically, examine hierarchies and disrupt them
24 Emergence: Think and act collectively, think and act locally
25 Reflection: Move Toward a goal of implementing one's own learning
26 Action: Being in the world, being with the world

29 Chapter 2: Taller Artístico Comunitario, Oaxaca, Mexico
The Problem of the Machete
29 Meeting the Artists: Mora and Alex
32 ASARO: Assembly of Revolutionary Artists of Oaxaca
33 Mario Guzman and Taller Artístico Comunitario
37 Leopoldo Mendez and the Taller de Grafica Popular
38 Learning Printmaking and Spanish at the same time
42 Collaboration with Mora: 1st Attempt
49 Collaboration with Mora: 2nd Attempt

56 Chapter 3: Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg, South Africa
The Problem of the Hands

56 Meeting the Artists
60 Kim Berman and Artist Proof Studio
62 MEDU Art Ensemble
63 Collaboration with the Edition Variables: 1st Attempt
65 Collaboration with the Edition Variables: 2nd Attempt

73 Chapter 4: Cultural Production: Printmaking and Pedagogy as Culture and Craft
The Problem of Becoming
73 Why Printmaking?
74 Why these Printmaking Organizations?
75 Why Cultural Production?
76 Tension: Definitions: Art, pedagogy, and culture
78 Tension: The problem of trust: confidence and desire
80 Tension: The problem of the machete: interpretation/translation
84 Tension: The problem of the hands: identity, power, and control
87 Tension: The Problem of Becoming: cultural production
85 Please Tell Me Why You Are Here: The Problem of Cultural Production

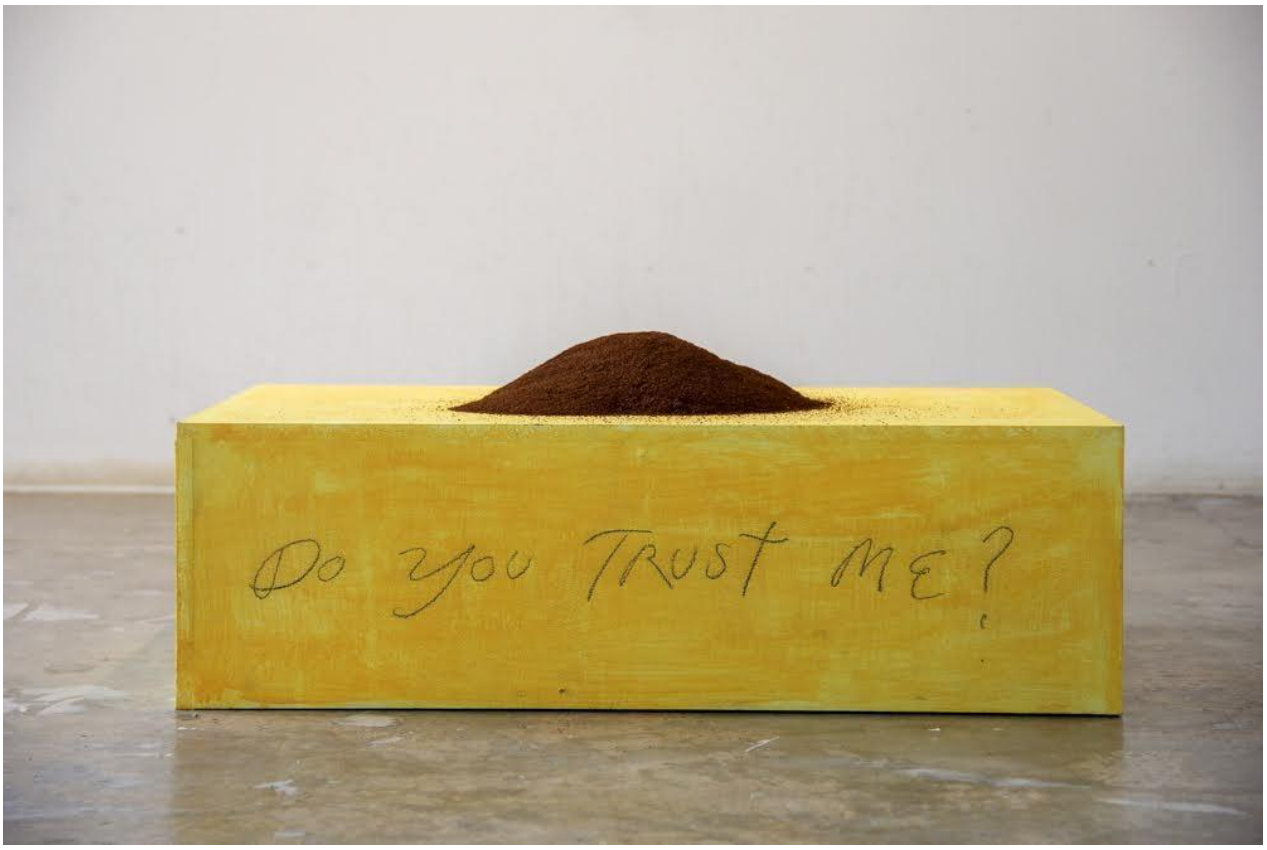
95 Epilogue: The Phenomenon of Pedagogy and Art

98 Bibliography

104 Appendix

Abstract

Pedagogy and art have long intermingled in the realm of cultural production, with each, in different areas of practice, taking the lead as process and product. This paper looks at the concepts that are common to both practices, through a process of investigating how they overlap and employing them as a methodology for collaborative, artistic research. Over the past two years I have used the concepts of self examination, critical analysis of discourse, emergence, reflection, and action to collaborate with two printmaking organizations -- Taller Artístico Comunitario in Oaxaca, Mexico and Artist Proof Studio in Johannesburg, South Africa. Through a narrative description of these experiences, which also includes a brief outline of their histories, I identify several tensions that result from and contribute to the meaningful creation of such a cultural space, and which, perhaps, are necessary conditions of the intersection of pedagogy and art.



Introduction: Ethical Research

The Problem of Trust

Two Movements from Symphony n. 1
The audience stands in line. One person at a time sits at a stool across the table from Ben, who whispers:
"Do you trust me?" Ben puts yesses on one side of the room, noes on the other. The lights go out.
Waiting; possibly tensions. Then, the smell of coffee, ground-coffee-rain, in the air, dusting over the floor.
Medaglia d'Oro.
A Fluxus performance created by Ben Patterson (Brecht, 1964)

In preparation for this research, I began to look at the concept of trust as a lens to investigate the ethical concerns regarding my desire to work collaboratively with artists from around the world. Within the intersection of pedagogy and art there is a dialectical relationship that must be attended to and this is where the original formulation of the research question for this project was lacking. I

was, originally, seeking out artists that had created a space or an organization to train other artists. I wanted to interview them, record their stories and create animations that would allow others to witness, in an entertaining way, what was taking place in the area of pedagogy and art.[1] This was to be the final work and it was to be part ethnography, part sociology, part art, and it lacked any concern for the idea of interaction, of discourse, of exchange. It preempted any possibility of reflection, of collaboration, of translation. It accepted the current state of power dynamics and reinforced the status quo. As such, it was not ethically constructed. Through conversations with my cohort of student artists and professors in the School of Arts, I reformulated the study to include a deeper dive into the nature of collaboration and discourse.

In formulating the idea for this investigation, I read an essay by James Baldwin from 1962 titled *The Creative Process,* which seemed to capture the activist ideas behind the organizations I wanted to study. He says "Societies never know it, but the war of an artist with his society is a lover's war, and he does, at his best, what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to himself and, with that revelation, to make freedom real." The idea that artists are in love with their society was not wholly new to me -- the sentiment rang in harmony with the suspicions I had about why artists were creating these spaces -- there is a love of artistry, of the potential of artists, and the potential of society to continue to work together. It is about collaboratively creating a future that one would want to live in. The idea of freedom that he mentions, the end result of an effort made toward self-actualization, I think, is something that I came to see first-hand in the work of the artists I collaborated with. Also, Baldwin's war with society was against the history, outcomes and desires of whiteness; it is one that I would like to be committed to as well and this idea serves as a paradigm through which I will be conducting my research. As someone who grew up speaking a single language and who, in many ways, was reared in a white, mono-cultural space, I embody many of the values that Baldwin writes about, and, because of this, I enter into spaces with this history, culture, and position in tow. I also grew up with a very loving family who taught me to value the life and experiences of people and to continue to learn about ways of being in the world.

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[1] In 2012 I began interviewing artists about their choices to create different kinds of organizations like gallery spaces, dance studios, poetry foundations, and theaters: being from the midwest of the United States, I looked at places in Detroit and Cleveland; I have worked for many years in New York and so I have talked with artists there; I had an opportunity to travel to Ghana and I interviewed artists in Accra, Tamale, and Kumasi; and I ventured down to New Orleans and interviewed a musician, a dancer and a filmmaker. I have made these interviews available online and created an animation of one of them as an experiment in accessibility.

And so, a few months before my initial trip to Mexico, the question loomed: How can I collaborate with artists in an honest and mutually beneficial way, i.e. in a way that actively works against the destructive traditions of white researchers entering into communities of color and extracting knowledge and resources for their own personal gain. I began to read *Senses of the Subject* (2015), a collection of essays by Judith Butler, wherein she investigates a materialist basis for considering identity and relationships. The idea that social interaction is a place of ethical importance, that as we reach for others materially we are impacting all spiritually, really stood out for me. In an elaboration of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas concerning the structure and intentionality of consciousness, she states that "I cannot feel anything but what touches me" (p. 52), and that touching is a coiling back of the body upon itself that speaks of "passages, divisions, proximities" (p. 54). Because we are touched as we are touching, we gain knowledge through the interaction, and we come to know ourselves. Indeed, our "emergence as knowing and acting beings is at stake in the exchange" (p. 62). For me, this was a call to realize that we have the tools to touch, to construct, and to recognize, and that we must act upon them with care. No matter how deeply one is embedded in the destructive apparatus of the misogynistic, ableist, racist whiteness of modern life, there's hope and even conviction that, through the interaction, communication and understanding is possible. I found this reading to be a command to continue to seek out these experiences and to do so in an ethical way.

As a teaching artist in New York City, I get to visit many schools and interact with students of all ages and grade levels, who speak many different languages, who have originated in different parts of the world and grew up in cultures very different from my own. As I walk into a classroom for the first time, I introduce myself by saying I work with such-and-such a museum, I'm an artist, and I'll be your teacher for today. Throughout the 50-minute period I am with them, I observe how the students interact with me -- I teach from a highly generative and curiosity-focused place and, most of the time, the students are right there with me, curious and excited to discover more. Perhaps this is due to the school culture and our socialization around the idea of what it means to be teachers and students, or possibly because I'm associated with an institution that they understand as having some 'authority' even if they've never been to it, or perhaps, as a white male, I am given the benefit of the doubt in most situations. But, overall, they seem to trust me.

To refer back to the work by Ben Patterson above, the students seem to choose the "yesses" side of the room in these scenarios, at least enough to get through the class. However, the few times I've explicitly asked students at some of the high schools I visited if they trust me I've received an equal amount of "noes." The skepticism the students showed in our interactions was minimal, but many said no and then continued to interact in exactly the same way as the other students. I got the sense that they were ready to participate while keeping their critical faculties alert.

When talking about trust, I'm also talking about distrust. In a conversation between Cornel West and Graham D. Burnett (2007) regarding the novel The Confidence Man, they illustrate that in the 19th century in the U.S. the word confidence, which originally meant "complete trust," took on its opposite meaning as well, that of "swindling." They point out that the 'con-' in confidence can have a double meaning, referring both to the idea of 'deception' and of 'being with or among.' Burnett continues, saying that "in the latter sense, at least, though perhaps in both, we catch a glimpse of the desire for each other -- the spiritual and material need for each other, the appetite for each other…" (p. 105). Through this conversation, they explore the idea that desire and confidence are bound up together and cannot be separated. So, what is this connection between trust and desire and how does that get played out in different settings? Affect theorist Lauren Berlant, in her book Cruel Optimism (2011), discusses the relationships and responsibilities that we have to each other, saying that because we desire a good life for ourselves and our family, we necessarily need to rely on others to help us achieve those things. In the "commons" we must trust others and that trust equals a loss of control or sovereignty over parts of our lives. Sometimes, but not always, we can make choices about what we are willing to lose in this exchange if things don't work out. But this feeling of a loss of control can be what leads to lingering fear and doubt about the actions of others. It can also lead to feelings of solidarity.

Throughout this project, I have tried to perform a self-examination, reflecting on my own identity and position and how they fit into the world; especially because I will be working with artists in different parts of the world, who speak different languages, who inhabit different cultures, and who have very different experiences in life from those that I have had. Much of this examination has led to thinking about what conscious and unconscious biases I might have and where they originate, and about myself as a white male. Without overstating it, I could be described as the

historicized, enculturated and positioned embodiment of male whiteness (deSouza 2018, p. 110) and I enter classrooms and art making spaces with all of that in tow. As philosopher George Yancey prescribes (2015), one must sit with the wound that is whiteness, one must think about it and wrestle with it. One must not forget it because one cannot escape it. Whiteness, as described by Dr. Marit Dewhurst, "is the set of social, cultural, and political ideas that uphold the belief that people with lighter skin are inherently superior to those of other racialized groups" (2018). This, of course, is a wound created by white people and it encompasses a 400 - 500 year history of the fight for social, cultural, governmental, and economic dominance around the world. It refers to colonization, slavery, destruction, and otherness. As an artist and as a teacher, I want to use all the tools I have to remain critical of the world while still being a loving, respectful, member of society. And this is how the concept of trust/distrust is foundational to this study. I want to make explicit the boundaries of our interactions and explore how the concept of confidence can be used to investigate such things as language, text, the body, and the collective. Before I begin to approach other artists about working on a collaborative project, I need to state what my methods for this interaction are and hold myself accountable to them. I need to continually enact a form of self-examination and reflection. That is what will follow in this paper, a setting out of the guidelines for myself to work with other artists and a reflection on how well I did that.

So, in the fall of 2018, I began calling up friends to ask them what they think about the concept of trust. I wanted to think through what this concept looks like from multiple perspectives and I wanted to consider the idea in a historical and conceptual sense. I began thinking about the "social contract" and the "individual in society" and wrote down questions that included what happens when we trust other people? Where does our trust in other people come from and how does it manifest itself? I wanted to know what happens when we make our ideas about trust more explicit. When I ask my friends and family about trust, I'm also asking about distrust, the desire to be in a relational space together, and what all of that means for us. I start by describing my feelings as a teacher, then I turn the conversation to the person I'm talking with and ask "What does trust mean to you and what is your experience of it?" I've talked with a dozen people this way and have had a dozen completely different conversations. One friend talked about the different levels of trust she has with people, another mentioned the importance of being vulnerable in her relationships. One person told me that they believe no one is above skepticism

and that they would never really trust anyone. One of the more recent conversations was with a friend who had only a month before broken up with his partner. His partner had, from the beginning of the relationship, expressed doubt about whether they could trust themselves to be fully honest and vulnerable, let alone put their trust in someone else.

In an effort to create an ongoing dialogue about this topic, I've created portraits of the people I am talking with [figure 1a - 1f] while also including at the bottom of the portrait a sentence or phrase from them concerning their idea of trust. These statements are a way of making more obvious the unspoken contract we all use as a bond for interaction. They begin with "Please", "Thank you", or "I'm sorry" and continue from there with a sentiment the person has a desire to express. A few examples include: "Please learn to multitask." "Thank you for laughing at my jokes." "I'm sorry no one is looking at you." Over the past few months I've returned to my friends and family with the portrait and a desire to dig deeper into the ideas we discussed. I've asked them to elaborate on their thoughts while also introducing ideas of trust and distrust from other sources or contexts. After our discussion, I've asked them if they would like to collaborate on completing the portrait with me, adding to it or transforming it, as a way to symbolize the dialogue and mark the moment. In exchange for their time, and as an exchange for the trust they put in me, each person receives a book of all of the images and phrases from this project. Throughout this on-going and ever-changing project, I am looking to make visual and explicit that which is often invisible and unspoken. And I am looking for a way to continually address the subject of my own self-trust.



Figure 1a - Maya, 2018 Screenprint on Paper 20'x20'



Figure 1b - Michael 2019 Screenprint on Paper 20'x20'



Figure 1c - Nate 2018 Screenprint on Paper 20'x20'



Figure 1d - Raygine 2019 Screenprint on Paper 20'x20'



Figure 1e - Adam 2018 Screenprint on Paper 20'x20'



Figure 1f - Cathleen 2018 Screenprint on Paper 20'x20'

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Methodology

The problem of Pedagogy, The Problem of Art

Over time, the feeling that has been poking around in my guts is that pedagogical theories I've been reading about and practicing would make for a great way to collaborate with artists, as they involve deciding on a common place to start an investigation and then, through a mutual process of growth, develop new knowledge and skills. Of course, the idea that pedagogy is a tool or a site for artmaking, perhaps even the ends of artmaking has been around for a long time. Pedagogy and art often get fused to create a process that is designed to impact one's political and social consciousness. Joseph Beuys has described his lectures of the '60's and '70's as performance art that exist in an extended temporality, or that prescribe an ongoing dialogue with the participants about democracy and the western world (Podesva 2007). More recently, artist Tania Burguera's project *Cátedra Arte de Conducta*, goes further in creating a school in which artists collaborate on a process of transformation aimed at cultural change (Thorne 2017).

To say the word pedagogy is one way to force people to say something like, "what do you mean by that?" One reply is to say that pedagogy is everything we think we do or don't do within the context of learning and teaching. I think that the word pedagogy signals we are talking about concern for the development of an individual human being in conjunction with others, about collectivity; pedagogy is an individual and collective thinking; pedagogy is an individual and collective process (Darder, Baltodano, Torres 2003). My turn to pedagogy came at age 18 while sitting in an advisory office at a college I had just started attending in Ohio. I chose art education as my major over computer science. I was interested in pursuing both careers, but at that time I considered myself an artist and knew that even artists must eat. I had no real concept attached to the word "teaching" except that I might get paid to talk about art. Over time as I moved to New York and began teaching in public schools, I became influenced by John Dewey's ideas concerning experiential learning, and studied what Paulo Freire has to say about "being with and in the world" (1970). I practiced bell hooks' ideas related to love and transgression. More recently I've been reading about Culturally Responsive Pedagogies and Trans-Pedagogies and Asset-based

Pedagogies, the ideas of which I will go into more in-depth below. I've continued to learn and teach from a highly subjective, constructive, and reflective place in my roles as an art educator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the City College of New York, and at an organization called Arts Connection. Pedagogy is part of my daily life and has been for the past 20 years.

As part of my research, I have turned with this pedagogical lens to work with artists in printmaking workshops in Johannesburg, South Africa and Oaxaca, Mexico. I have spent several weeks with artists in both places to experience the life of the workshops, to listen to their experiences of these places, and to make art with them. What has been most important for me is the discourse surrounding pedagogical concepts, which theorizes about what education should look like in certain places, or at certain times, or with certain people, and which points to the same origin, namely the individual and how the sense of self develops within a collectivity, within the commons. This, for me, is one of the many ways that art and pedagogy are linked. As a teaching artist, I experience an overlap between pedagogy and art which is all encompassing and the intense moves -- the discursive, interactive, and critical moves -- that one makes as an artist and a teacher should be considered within the political context of our relationships of dependence and interdependence. By situating pedagogy in art as a site for meaning-making that encourages all participants to be active members of the experience, we could say that most forms of arts education that engages critically with the immediate society are art (deSouza 2018). This form of art goes beyond the interior-facing 'reasoning' in art with 'meaning-making' as an outcome, (Arendt as cited in Braverman 1974) to the formation of knowledge and skills and the idea of creating a new form of thinking within the participants. This form of art as education is pointed at creating a new culture of critical engagement with the world, one that involves some form of struggle and that relies on the dialectical traditions of translation and interpretation as a medium (hooks 1994).

Following on from this idea, I would like to discuss aspects of the way that art and pedagogy overlap, and in the end, develop a guideline for action and reflection that can be used as a methodology for the artistic research project. In reading Paulo Freire's Education for Critical Consciousness, (1974) we learn about *conscientização*, or education which "predisposes men [sic] to reevaluate constantly, to analyze findings, to adopt scientific methods and processes, and to

perceive themselves in a dialectical relationship with their social reality. That education could help men [sic] to assume an increasingly critical attitude toward the world and so to transform it" (p. 30). These ideas rely on a form of humanist thinking that is an evidence-based process and that involves both individual and collective action and form the basis for a ritual which I have performed throughout this study and will be using as a method of critical inquiry. I hope to pair this with the idea of elaborated by Gloria Anzaldúa in Borderlands/La Frontera (2007). Anzaldúa talks about her process of world-transformation which involves leaving room for the intuitive, for the sensory and for sensing, and also for self-doubt. Her process includes learning and telling histories, arguing positions, and awakening the body: "I am going to clean my altars, light my candle, burn sage and copal, sweep my house. I bare my soul, make myself vulnerable by expressing feelings, I affirm who we are" (p. 110). This process of becoming relies heavily on placing confidence in oneself through ritual while also realizing the consciousness of the collective as the primary source of being and forms yet another methodological branch.

Within this methodological framework of modified and, I will be using and reflecting upon the following ideas gleaned from art theory and pedagogical thought that looks to fight duality and create spaces for becoming. This is not a step-by-step process, but rather a gathering of guidelines I will use for collaborative, emergent, socially-focused artmaking:

- Examination: Focus on the variety of sensibilities and intersecting selves
- Discourse: Examine histories and hierarchies
- Critical Analysis: Expand critical faculties so that less is ignored
- Emergence: Think and act collectively, think and act locally
- Reflection: Move toward a goal of implementing one's own learning
- Action: Being in the world, being with the world

<u>Examination: Focus on the variety of sensibilities and intersecting selves</u>

Definition: Using the force of recognition within a group, aimed both at the participants and oneself, for the purpose of identifying and celebrating the various cultural reference points and relationships between individuals.

Recognition of the individual within the group is the starting point or foundation of this practice. In recent research published about Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Hammond 2015), there is a focus on the recognition of the cultural references of all participants, wherein a learning group works to include and honor the cultural forces within which each artist has developed. This encompasses the language that is used as well as the ways that knowledge is developed and transmitted and is a practice that compels members to become fluent in the cultural practices of a group outside of their own. Agency, or the ability to have an impact on the dominant cultural forces is the desired end result of such a practice. deSouza implores artists and teachers to learn "available histories and languages (disciplines), adapt them to their present lives, and remaking those disciplines in the process" (p. 15). The process is one devoted to an anti-assimilationist viewpoint and considers the skills, knowledge, traditions, stories, etc. that each artist brings to the group an asset that all can then draw on and incorporate into their own work. And Anzaldúa, in laying bear the discourse of her Borderlands Theory, talks about how people who develop in a culture of mixed traditions, experiences, and languages are more naturally disposed to identify the arbitrariness of the categories we create to define people, while being able to move within and even stand up to the forces of a society built on a single language, or a single culture (2007). In this way, they can provide openings into the different realities in which people live.

Why is this practice so important? Without the recognition of others, we interact with, we are at risk of using them for ends that they have no interest or part in, and that may, in fact, work against the interests of everyone involved. In initiating the dialogue with other artists, I will be using as a guide a mixture of the work of Dr. Marit Dewhurst who is the Director of Art Education at the City College of New York, who continues to research art teachers bridging cultural gaps with their students (2018), and Linda Tuhiwai Smith who is Associate Professor and Director of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education at the University of Auckland, who writes about the importance of recognizing the ownership of cultural and intellectual property of groups of people (2008). I will use the following questions which have been synthesized from their writing as the starting point for a dialogue with artists at each site:

- ➢ Who are we? What is important to us as individuals and as a group?
- ➢ What are the problems we want to address through our research?
- ➢ For whom is the research relevant? According to whom?

- ➢ What knowledge will we gain? What knowledge will each of our respective communities gain?
- ➢ What are the possible positive and negative outcomes for each of us?
- ➢ To whom are we accountable?

Discourse: Expand critical faculties so that less is ignored

Definition: Researching, creating an awareness around, and participating in the dialogue surrounding dominant ideas being considered by the group, i.e. a topic, artist, work of art, etc.

The practice of discourse in both pedagogy and art is an uncomfortable space, one fraught with the confrontation of the new and unfamiliar, the dedication to vulnerability and sharing, and the reliance on others for support. When I am at New York's Museum of Modern Art as a teaching artist and looking at a work of art with 5th graders or with art teachers -- maybe we've stopped at Picasso's *Guitar* sculpture or his painting *Girl Before a Mirror* -- I'm not immediately concerned with discourse. I'm more concerned with how each person is seeing or experiencing the work and imploring them to do so without judgement. To add to the personal experience that each person is having, I am able to offer what other people have said and written of the works. For instance, we could talk about who Picasso was and who his model for the painting was or how he was taking formal ideas from Malian or Nigerian sculptures and presenting them in a new way (which gets interpreted by white writers and critics as being invented by Picasso, a white European) and discuss what our ideas are about these facts. This kind of information and questioning of the object can disrupt the hierarchical view of the artist as the only progenitor of meaning in a work and allow for contemporary social and political ideas to inhabit this space. This leads into using all senses of trust and distrust to engage with the history of the work, what others say about it, and what it makes us feel, and we can then come to a truly meaningful space that allows us to contribute to the ongoing dialogue.[2]

The work of Meleko Mokgosi is an example of this kind of discourse taking place in the realm of contemporary painting. By taking excerpts from the Museum of Modern Art's archives,

[2] This is to say that the artist's intention is only a part of the discourse surrounding the work. And this kind of discourse can take place around all forms of art and art made in all time periods, including today.

specifically the exhibitions "Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern (1984) and Objects of Desire: The Modern Still Life (1997) and pairing them with his own comments and painted images culled from sources he has gathered, he creates a space for himself and the viewer to consider anew the products that people in positions of power have created. I happened to catch an exhibition of Mokgosi's work at the Goodman Gallery in Rosebank in the fall of 2019. At the time that I entered the gallery, all of the lights were off and the gallery attendant told me it was due to loadshedding. I experienced his works by the light of my cell phone flashlight, taking in what they were proposing in an intimate way. The manner in which the works participate in the discourse, or as Foucault describes, the relationship to authority and power of the systems that are generated and practiced when considering works of art, is the life-blood of the work (Foucault as referenced in deSouza 2018). In a sense, the discourse recreates the work within the cultural language of the group that is considering it.

Critical Analysis: Think ethically, examine hierarchies and disrupt them

Definition: Developing a system of investigation into accepted categories or facts surrounding a subject or a work for the purpose of analyzing, interpreting and judging their relevance within the group or discourse.

To be critical, as in the definitions laid out in Critical Pedagogy, is to set up a system of questioning accepted categories or facts surrounding a subject or a work. Hannah Arendt elaborates on this critical process in *The Life of the Mind*. According to Arendt, processes involved in the *making*[3] of art, those of emotion/intellect and reasoning, or stated in another way, knowledge-creation and meaning-making, are marked by a form of doubt or skepticism - the role of the artist is to ask more questions, to challenge our beliefs, our feelings, our knowledge systems, to constantly undermine our feeling of safety and comfort in the world, or to create an act of "negation" (1978). I believe this is also the role of the viewer or participant of the work in art and education as they are both contributors to the discourse.

The function of disruption, of distrust, of doubt, of making close inspection and critical analysis of otherwise accepted categories or facts, is, literally, a critical one, and defines critique as a

[3] Here, I take the idea of making a work of art as needing both the artist and a viewer to complete it.

forward-thinking enterprise (deSouza, 2018) because it, potentially, works to create a new state of being for the work, even if the work has been around for over a hundred years. This is especially true when these faculties are pointed at the dominant cultural forces at work in any given situation. It can also help us to understand ourselves better and prepare us to better engage with others. As Dr. Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández puts it, this approach might require the abandonment of the very idea of something called the "arts" and a move toward what Frantz Fanon calls "invention" (Fanon cited by Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). For me as an educator, I often ask people I'm working with in an art context to consider themselves not artists, but perhaps scientists, or observers, or thinkers. Focusing more on the idea that we are here to discover what other people are communicating or what the images and objects in front of us are saying. Or, if we are engaged with making something, what the combinations of images or materials can potentially mean. In this way, we are being critical thinkers. However, in the ideas laid out in the *Undercommons* by Moten and Harney (2013), they elaborate the distinction between the 'critical thinker' and the 'subversive intellectual.' The 'critical thinker' comes under some scrutiny because as they turn their critical faculties to light upon a part of the dominant culture, they turn away from other aspects. They are also using the language and interpretations constructed by the dominant culture as the basis for their arguments. In their desire to look at something critically, they ignore or are blind to other equally or more important objects and, by using the tools provided to them, they are often stabilizing the status quo instead of de-stabilizing it. The subversive intellectual refuses to define parts of this culture using the same language and, in this refusal, they create their own language. In this way, subversion might be the only path to truly honor the contributions of those outside of or without access to power.

<u>Emergence: Think and act collectively, think and act locally</u>

Definition: Recognition of the continual and on-going creation, 'act of becoming', or process of an idea, object, relationship, identity, etc.

The connection between pedagogy and art in this instance is clear: the ability to think critically about received wisdom, to apply understanding of multiple interpretations to a situation, to consider the rights of others within this context is an important consideration surrounding both.

And pedagogy and art are concerned with individuals working collectively, or collaboratively. But how do we define collaboration? What is the quality of collaboration that makes it effective?

There is an emergent quality to Critical Pedagogy which mirrors the way that a lot of art is made. The emergent process in a classroom or studio space feels uncomfortable because it allows for multiple interpretations or contradictory meanings of an idea to be present. Adrienne Maree Brown states, in her book Emergent Strategy (2017), the use of strategic intention in emergence allows the group to focus energies -- if the group can decide first why they are there and what they want then they can "relax into collaborative innovation around how to get there" (p. 70). In this study I will be looking to create the possibility for this kind of emergence to happen and will be using the ideas put forward by Dr. David Andrew (2011) wherein he outlines the benefits of playfulness and a "make-shiftness" (p. 112) -- seeking out and encouraging moments of a collaborative back-and-forth in the making process.

In the examination of the forces that underlie a problem identified by the group, critical pedagogy asks the participants to look both at the systems of power/social structures and the actions of individuals, and to consider the interaction between them. Freire talks about the importance of consensus building in an emergent process when working with a group (1970). The problems that the group will work on must be decided using a democratic process of debate and reflection to create a consensus. For me, this idea is summed up in the poster created by Judy Seidman for the Medu Art Ensemble of a woman with shackles that have been broken and the statement: "Now you have touched the women; you have struck a rock; you have dislodged a boulder; you will be crushed." I find a particular resonance here because it speaks to both an individual and collective action emerging from a specific situation.

<u>Reflection: Move Toward a goal of implementing one's own learning</u>

Definition: A purposeful and thoughtful examination of the actions of a group or individual in relation to the process outlined above.

Through this emergent process based on a recognition of all of the actors within the group, an expansion of the critical lens aimed at the dominant culture, and a commitment to the dialectic of

the individual and society, there is a call for all actors within a group to take control of their own learning. The question remains then, how does an individual successfully implement their own learning within the collective? Freire has pointed out that people who recognize the inequalities within a culture and have a strong desire for change must work in solidarity with others, or else they risk reinforcing aspects of dominance and social exclusion (1970). Within this idea there is a call to continual self-examination and reflection to maintain the trust in others. In fact, Freire states that this trust is the hallmark of the truly collaborative and dedicated spirit - the self-examination or spirit of learning that must take place is crucial. As the artist Adrian Piper, in her work the Probable Trust Registry (2013), makes clear, one must first trust themselves in order to be able to trust others. One must be able to trust that what they say is what they mean and that they will carry through on what they say. They must train themselves to be trustworthy and they can then begin to rely on themselves to create situations of change. Taking control of one's own learning through a highly reflective practice ensures that one's specific needs will be met while also contributing a crucial collaborative component to the whole.

As artists decide what problem they want to concentrate their efforts on and they begin to work with others, how do they then cede some control to other artists. And what does that mean for the sovereignty of the individuals? How do they implement their own learning in this situation? Again, the words of Anzaldúa are instructive -- she remixes the word '*nosotros'* or 'we' in spanish to be '*nos-otras'* or 'us and others' and says "we are neither one nor the other, we are really both. There is not a pure other; there is not a pure subject and not a pure object. We are implicated in each other's lives" (p. 281 - 2). Though this idea has been used in sometimes slapdash ways, or has become a cliché to which people refer to quickly to move through other ideas, it is a meaningful way to consider our dependence and interdependence. Reflection is the tool through which we may examine and judge our movement toward the goal of trustworthiness.

<u>Action: Being in the world, being with the world</u>

Definition: Meaningful and directed participation within the structures and systems of power within a society.

As the collaboration moves through the process of examination and discourse, reflection and action, what then? What is the end toward which they are moving? As bell hooks has described in her book Teaching to Transgress, (1994) and as is necessary to complete the dialectic prescribed by critical pedagogy theory, change must take place within the individuals taking part in the collaboration and also in society as a whole. To affect these changes, the actions must be taken out to the public, the artwork must engage people where they are, in their daily lives, on a level equal to any other events in their lives.

In her piece, the Mythic Being (1973), as described by Jörg Heiser in Adrian Piper: A Reader (2018) for example, Piper, who identifies as female, puts on a mustache and sunglasses and modulates her voice so that she passes into and through the world as someone who she believes, or that society believes, is the more accepted version of a human being, that of a "macho man." However, she attends concerts, rides the subway, and responds to questions only with phrases she has memorized from diaries that she kept as a teenager which she calls 'mantras.' She constructs an interaction that allows for the possibility of people to be confronted with something idiosyncratic, something that is out of the realm of their usual experience and, in doing so, she creates a space for the confrontation of the assumptions that one person makes about another. The Mythic Being allows Piper to explore the "boundaries and structures of the sense of self" and those of the people she encounters. The ideas surrounding this work involve Piper's positionality as a biracial woman, the whiteness of the artworld (world), and the outcomes of her interactions. The coded language of the costume, the voice, and the mantras create a rupture in the social contract, and point to the reactions of other people as the real content of the work. Her actions, these truthful deceptions or invented mimetics, use trust/distrust as the primary mover of the dialectic, which work to inform our understanding of the individual and the collective without prioritizing either. They also rely on a rational/irrational dialectic that refers back to the work of Anzaldúa and Freire.

These ideas provide a beginning point for the methodology of this project. Piper's work is a guide onto the path of ethical interaction by imploring the artist and educator to "keep the sensorial apparatus open" (Heiser 2018, p. 13). She has created projects that have dealt specifically with the idea of trust and the social contract and, through all of her practices, has used training as a basis

for thinking and interacting in the world. Training implies a ritualized space for the repetition of exercises, and is pedagogically-leaning. I think this is why I was drawn to Piper's work -- she takes discourse as a starting point for her investigation into the meaning and outcomes of social interactions, philosophy, and art, and centers herself by exploring language, the self, and subjecthood, all of which contain parallels to work done by teachers and students.

As an artist and teacher, I would like to translate Piper's work into my own language, to put on my own sunglasses and mustache and find my own "mythic being." For me, this is the person who is able to be in the world in a respectful way, interacting and learning while paying close attention to the biases that affect these interactions. The "mythic being" is conscious of their sense of self and understands that interaction is a form of touching, that language is a form of constructing, that seeing is a form of recognizing. The mythic being is one that interacts with the world, that inhabits multiplicities, and that searches for an equitable social contract. They use trust/distrust, or confidence, as a methodology for art and education, and pedagogical theory as tool for artistic collaboration. And so, I put on a mustache and sunglasses and step into my own mythic being, creating a space for confidence. I ask, can I be trusted or am I a con-man? And I wonder what path I will end up on, where I will emerge in the world, and if I will find that the world is a totally different place from the one I left.

In the following two chapters, I will provide a narration of my collaborations in Mexico and South Africa. In Oaxaca, I worked with an artist named Mora who was a new member of a collective of artists who call themselves URTARTE. And in Johannesburg, the collaboration involved 6 artists, Dudu, Thuli, Thabang, David, Pule, and Raymond who are recent graduates of the program at Artist Proof Studio. In each chapter I will share stories from the experience and weave in the history of the workshop through which we were working. I will provide a bit of background about the founding artists of each workshop as well, since their overall visions have helped shape, at least in the initial actions, much of what took place. I will also attempt to reflect on the stories using the process described above, focusing on the emergent process of the collaboration which is based on a recognition of all of the actors within the group, an expansion of the critical lens aimed at the dominant culture, and a commitment to the dialectic of the

individual and society, or: Examination, Discourse, Critical Analysis, Emergence, Reflection and Action.

These ideas are sign-posted throughout the next two chapters using the notations in parentheses listed.

Examination (Ex)

Discourse (D)

Critical Analysis (CA)

Emergence (Em)

Reflection (R)

Action (A)

Chapter 2: Taller Artístico Comunitario, Oaxaca, Mexico

The Problem of the Machete

Meeting the Artists: Mora and Alex

The alarm went off at 3am on March 14th, 2019 so that I could wake up, get out the door and make my way down to the center of the historic center of the Mexican city of Oaxaca to meet an artist named Pablo Mora Rhenc, or simply Mora. We were going to head out to a school where Mora would be teaching. I was interested in observing this lesson because he is one of the ten member artists of the Taller Artístico Comunitario (Community Arts Workshop), or TAC which was to be at the center of my research in Oaxaca. I waited in the dark outside my home for too long before I realized that the taxi driver I had called the night before wasn't going to show. I made a call to another one and waited. I had only about 20 minutes to make it to where I was going, which, from my experience, has taken 30 minutes to get to. The new taxi arrived, I stuttered through some nervous spanish, and we were off. Because it was the dead of night and because the driving rules in Oaxaca are relaxed, we made it there, speeding through every red light, in 8 minutes flat.

I met Mora and the other teaching artist, Alex, at the TAC studio as they were busy packing art supplies and preparing for the visit. The TAC studio consists of 4 - 5 rooms set up with presses, ink supplies, a screenprinting area, a severely cramped kitchen and bathroom area, and, as I would later learn, a sleeping area for several of the artists set up in what I can only call a loft above everything else. This morning, there was someone sleeping on the floor next to the large press, and Mora and Alex gave me the sign that they would be ready shortly and I should just sit tight. Up until this point, I had no clue where I was going to end up. As we walked from the studio about 20 blocks south to find the taxi garage, Mora told me we would be heading out to a town in the mountains surrounding the city called Tlahuitoltepec. This was a town about 2 hours outside of the city and we would be waiting for the taxi to be completely full before taking off. While we waited, I had a chance to chat with Mora and hear about his desire to be a teacher and to be part of

TAC. He told me that he always wanted to be a teacher, that this was a natural part of who he was as an artist and that TAC was providing him a way to learn about both art and education while also allowing him the chance to work in the neighborhoods and villages, the smaller community-oriented places around the capital city of Oaxaca. Mora is in his 20's and has been living with his extended family up until recently when he moved into a small room near the city center. His mother died 10 years ago and his father currently lives in Los Angeles. I would come to learn that he was interested in starting his own version of the TAC studio.

Throughout the day, both Mora and Alex, who were teaching in different areas and concentrating on different skills, one was painting and the other figure drawing, asked me to participate in the lessons [Fig. 2a - 2c]. I helped mix colors with Mora and posed for Alex, but also was able to see what the experience of these 60 students was like. These students had never met Alex or Mora and were instructed by their teachers to participate. They were not instantly trusting of the two artists, and in fact, had to be won over. Both Alex and Mora, who are young and still learning, gave much of themselves in these encounters and went out of their way to include every single student. They were confident in their own abilities and used only positive reinforcement with the students. I was very impressed with their ability to balance a feeling of extreme seriousness with a sense of humor and accessibility. In my experience as an educator and as a trainer of educators, this is the most challenging part of teaching -- to know and believe that the subject you are teaching is a serious one that is best approached with a sense of humor and empathy.



Figure 2a - Alex and Mora in Tlahuitoltepec. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel





Figures 2b and 2c - Alex and Mora in Tlahuitoltepec. 2019 Photos by Nathan Sensel

ASARO: Assembly of Revolutionary Artists of Oaxaca

This has been the experience of working with TAC overall -- every member of the studio is serious about their work but have a fun time doing it. The story of TAC starts with and seems to emulate or at least continue the work of another organization, called the *Asamblea de Artistas Revolucionarios de Oaxaca* (Assembly of Revolutionary Artists of Oaxaca) or ASARO, which grew out of protests that erupted in this tourist-friendly city 14 years ago. ASARO, whose history is told in Getting Up for the People (ASARO, Graham de la Rosa, Schadl 2014) began in 2006 with the call for the ousting of the then governor of the state of Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. Their manifesto begins with the following: "ASARO is a gathering of artists from various artistic disciplines which creates public art for the purpose of restoring social order" (p. 1). Oaxaca -- La Ciudad de Resistencia (the city of resistance) -- has a very large indigenous population (largely Zapotec and Mixtec) with more than 16 distinct language groups and there is a huge, thriving *mercado* (market) where people come to trade from all over the state (also called Oaxaca).

The city was placed under siege in 2006 when the governor sent in federal troops against the groups of people protesting the murder of 4 unarmed teachers at the hands of the police. Barricades were set up in the city by the people to keep the troops and police out and created a group called the *Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca* (Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca) or APPO. "Ruiz Ortiz's actions in 2006 were part of a long history of discriminatory practice against Oaxacan interests" (p. 7). ASARO is a child of APPO and came together to address different subjects and create works of art, stencils, prints, photos and more, that express their concerns. They do this publicly, using the walls of the buildings in the city to communicate with the people -- the downtown or Centro area of the city is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site and attracts visitors from around the world for its beauty, indigenous culture, and more. They use alternative print media as a tool because it is easily reproducible and has a long tradition of use in the country as a means of fighting corruption and abuses of power.

Part of the process of ASARO artists is connecting the past with the present. They often use images of historical events or artworks and update them with messages related to today's society. This strategy allows viewers to feel like they recognize the image but then are forced to think about what has been changed in it and why. In much of their work, ASARO addresses the concept of "periphery" (p. 28). They have gone to the places that are outside the urban center to conduct workshops on drawing and printmaking, encouraging young people to find their own voice and to make their mark on the city's walls. They feel that the people that live in these places are treated as peripheral objects in the functioning of the city/state. ASARO has made prints with imagery that show the people who are considered outside of the mainstream public, and these works touch on the economic activities of the state and for-profit companies that are coming into these communities to extract natural resources without leaving behind any of the financial benefits. Another subject that has come up in their work is that of the migrants who are seeking a better life in the US, but who often fall prey to the negative forces associated with the crossing.

ASARO is dedicated to the idea of assembly and collective action. There are several reasons for this, but one big part of it is that there is a history and tradition of collectivism in Oaxaca. The people work together and reject the individualism that marks capitalistic societies. This rejection

is noted in the use of the ASARO name instead of individual names while providing protection for the members of the group and unites them further as they attempt to reach their goals. The members of this assembly grow with the commitment of the artists to make art with the people, not just for the people.

Mario Guzman and Taller Artístico Comunitario

One of the founders of ASARO, Mario Guzman [Fig. 3a], split with the group after a few years and founded TAC in an effort to train a new generation of revolutionary artists. I first met Mario in 2017 when visiting Oaxaca for the first time. There are as many as 12 printmaking workshops in the city center and TAC was by far the most overtly political and education-oriented space, and was helping to build a structure and narrative for other printmaking workshops and artists to be successful. Mario is a self-described Leninist and uses the tenets of Marxism as a philosophical guide for the group. Mario's shop was open to everyone that came by and the artists that worked there were interested in sharing what they were doing. I observed Mario teaching his Saturday drawing class wherein he works with 10 - 15 young artists training them in western drawing and composition techniques. On the first day I observed the class, Mario was laying out a compositional strategy that consisted of a 16-point diagram of Botticelli's Birth of Venus. The students diligently copied the lines that would form the structure for their pictures. It was during this visit that Mario told me about how he and the comrades at the workshop maintain presses and organize camps in other states of the country like Chiapas, Morelos, Mexico City, Toluca, La Costa and others. This work is conducted through the auspices of another umbrella organization of which TAC is the Oaxacan component, called URTARTE (*La Unión Revolucionaria de Trabajadores del Arte* or The Revolutionary Union of Art Workers).

When interviewing Mario, I was interested in the work that URTARTE carries out and why they are successful in recruiting young artists to participate. He told me that there are 130 million Mexicans living in the country and a little more than half of them live in poverty, with 60 to 70 percent of the youth missing opportunities to work or study. When they go into the communities, he tells them "we are going to teach you not just to paint your identity, your culture, but also to paint your dreams, but also to paint your rage, your anger" (Guzman 2018). He maintains that because of the imagery they use, such as portraits of popular figures like Emilio Zapata or images

of merchants or farmers, people recognize that the artists share the same history and the same families, that they are part of them. When TAC puts the images on walls and the sides of buildings in the city instead of in art galleries, the people recognize that the artists are not elitists, but are part of them. The people recognize that the artists at TAC and URTARTE are from the same social class, and they use materials that are readily available and not too expensive and that have a long history of being a part of the struggle in Mexico.

Mario describes how TAC also works to reclaim history, by creating images that depict forgotten historic leaders or prioritizing the life and beliefs of the indigenous cultures which makes up 80% of the population. He describes this as an example of art being used for education, as a means of consciousness-raising. In this way, and in many of the others described here, Mario's role is that of an educator and activist. He organizes groups, he leads classes and workshops, he uses his network of friends and colleagues to seek out new opportunities, and he is always making new prints. To keep the organizations afloat, all members of the collective sell individual works. The TAC studio is filled with prints from each member and that also get incorporated onto t-shirts, stickers, and bags. Mario's focus through his own artwork is to celebrate, through the use of imagery that is endemic to Mexico, people who are the caretakers of society -- those who make tortillas, the shopkeepers, the storytellers. He has a line and a textural quality to his prints that is envious and that carries on the tradition of Mexico's celebrated printmakers from the 19th and 20th centuries. But, one of the questions I wanted to ask Mario was regarding the use of imagery that is repetitive, cliché, or that has been used for many years -- the raised fist, the saber, the machete -- and why it is meaningful for them. Mario tells me:

> "There have been men who have taken the side of the oppressed and they have assumed, they have fought for dreams and freedom. So all those elements, when we use them … the machete, the peasant, the oppressed, the saber, the fist … it is necessary to use Zapata, it sets us apart today. If they already used it 20 or 50 years ago and if within 100 years the same conditions remain, the town goes like this: creating images of Zapata is necessary, [we need] people who say they will keep fighting. It's an iconography that uses elements of the people that already have meaning … because for the government, for the State, it is very aggressive that a mother and farmer raise not just the fist but the weapon because the weapon already means violence and means I'm willing, because you've been killing us for a long time, I am willing to struggle and no longer let you keep killing us. That's why choosing some of these elements, it is to bring the fighting spirit. It is no longer enough because in our society the government has many instruments and says not to fight, and do

not be violent. We are going to express this but he wants you to calm down, but he continues to use the instruments of violence [against the oppressed and] their bodies require mention. Everyone who is organizing here in Mexico, every worker or peasant who organizes, the government imprisons them and kills them. So let's say practically in Mexico there is a state of war. That is why we choose these elements."
--- Recorded interview, 2018. (E)





Figures 3a and 3b - Mario Guzman at TAC. 2018 Photos by Nathan Sensel

Leopoldo Mendez and the Taller de Grafica Popular

As I was working in the TAC studio one day, sharing ideas with Mora and trying to layout an image related to the theme of education, he handed me a book about an artist named Leopoldo Méndez. I hadn't heard of him before, but flipping through the pages I recognized a few images here and there, some that have become quite popular in Mexico and around the world, such as the *calaveras*, or dancing skeletons, that are deeply entwined with the Day of Dead celebrations. I was immediately drawn to the hands of the figures in his works -- they contain lines and lines, not just bland shapes of black and white, but hard earned paths of lines carved through the wood grain.

I read about how Méndez created multiple workshops dedicated to political organizing. His relationship with other artists was centered on political and cultural concerns, using printmaking as a tool for nurturing what he thought was the best possible future for all (Adés and McClean 2009). I began to see TAC in a much fuller historical context, one that includes many prominent artists such as the renowned group of Mexican muralists but also printmakers such as José Posada

and Méndez. In 1937, Méndez, along with several other artists, started an organization called *Taller de Grafica Popular* or TGP (Popular Graphic Workshop). Their stated goals were to connect the images they were making with the broader problems plaguing Mexico, to make them open and accessible to as many people as possible, and to relate these to events taking place internationally. To achieve this, they relied on techniques that I have heard Mario and Mora describe as strategies for making art at TAC -- working collectively to render familiar signs and symbols with the greatest possible impact and to make them accessible to people with a range of sensibilities. For TGP, this required taking as much of the individual and personal expression out of the images. As Mexican cultural historian Alberto Hijar describes, "To arrive this way at a unification between technique and signs, for concrete historical eloquence, neither for the future nor for highly developed sensibilities, appeared to pose an artistic practice of rupture with capitalist production"[4] (Hijar cited by Caplow 1999). (D)

Learning Printmaking and Spanish at the same time

As stated above, one of the techniques that the studio employs to communicate history and culture is to create portraits of recognizable figures with text. Lucio Cabañas [Fig. 3b] is one example, Zapata [Fig. 5a] is another. While I was still getting to know the studio and the artists I was working with, I decided to create an image of a person that is having a great impact on my life at the moment -- artist Adrian Piper. I chose her with the consideration that the culture I am speaking to is related to the western art world and to the university, but also very much to myself. Through a close study of several prints I saw at TAC, I began to layout the portrait with a hatching technique that closely resembled the style of Mario Guzman [Fig. 4a]. I felt the highlights in the face and the directional lines gave the portrait a fierceness and a consistency that communicated strength. I copied this technique as closely as I could. I included the text "We must begin right now to train ourselves to be trustworthy" (2013) as this statement by Adrian Piper is directly related to her work and to that which I am conducting. I think of this portrait as forming the introduction but also the foundation for what I am trying to produce through this study. As I

[4] Alberto Hijar, "El TGP: La otra práctica," in Instituto de Bella Artes, TGP: Taller de Gráfica Popular: 40 Años de lucha grafica, 1937/1977 (Mexio City: INBA, 1977), pp. 3 - 4. Cited by Caplow, Deborah, "Leopoldo Méndez, Revolutionary Art, and the Mexican Print In Service of the People." University of Washington, 1999. p. 185.

was describing this to Mora, we had a chance to talk about what trust, or in spanish, "*confianza*", means and how it relates to each of our lives. After working on it for a couple of weeks, Mora printed the work, collaborating with me on the finished piece. We both signed each copy of the edition of 10 [Fig. 4b].

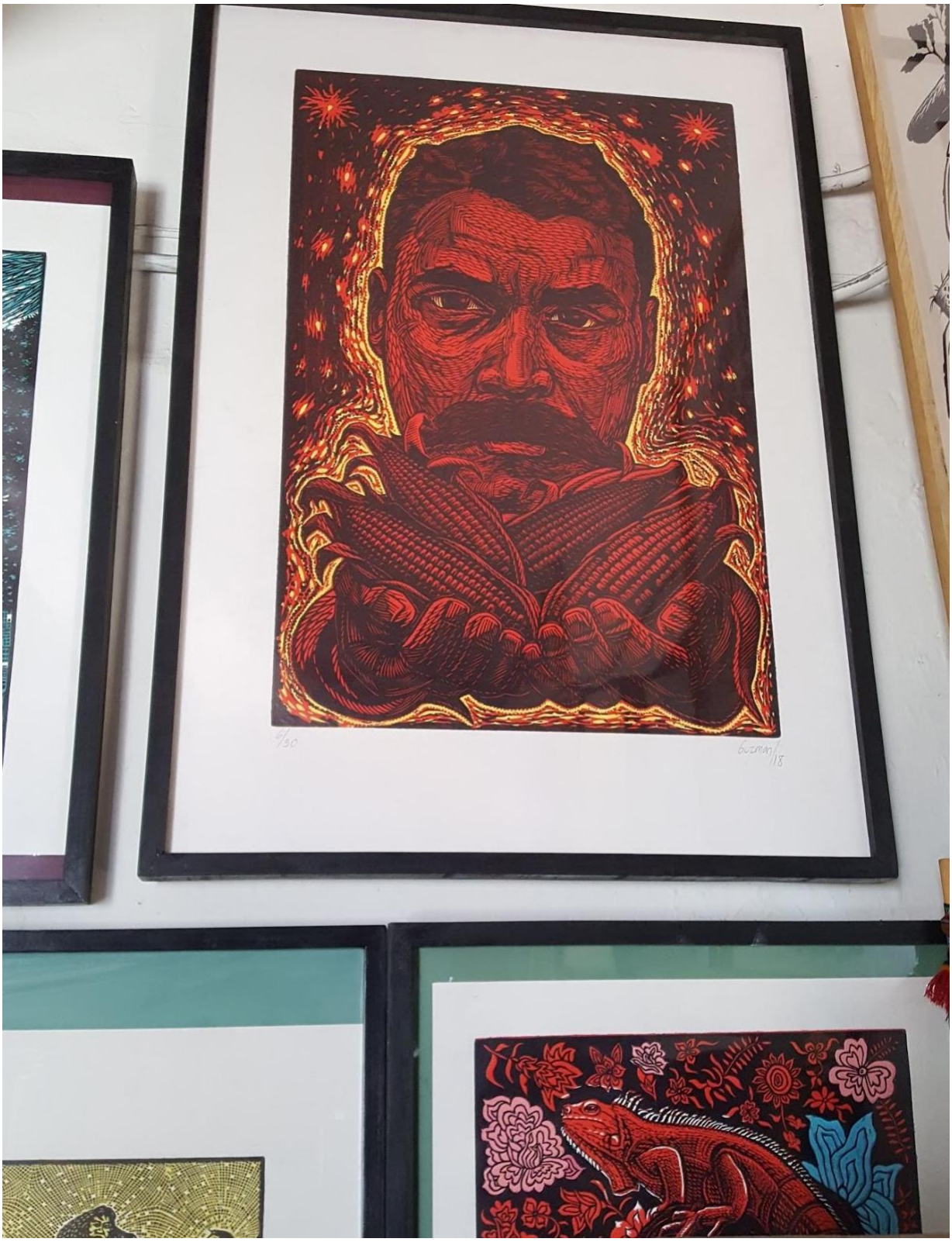


Figure 4a - Zapata print by Mario Guzman. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

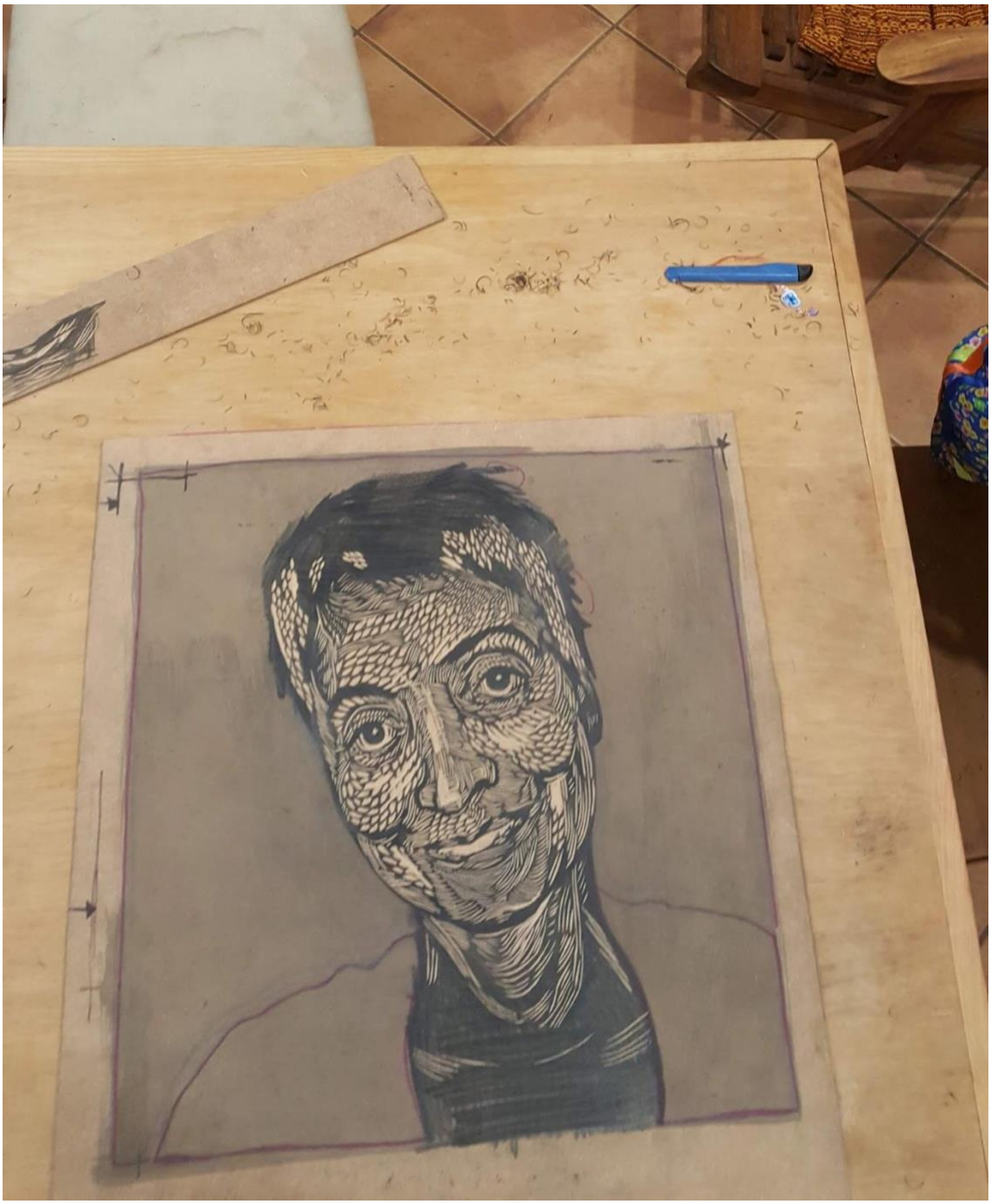


Figure 4b - Woodblock carving. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 5c - Mora (on the left) with our collaborative Adrian Piper Print. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

By this time in late March 2019, I had been studying the spanish language for many months, taking classes at a school just north of the city and speaking it with new friends as much as possible. At the start of our classes, the director of the school asked me "Why are you here? What do you want?" He would use my answers to help guide the coursework and pair me with an instructor that could best help to build the vocabulary I would want. This was not the first time I had gotten these questions. In fact, they were often put to me in places I was traveling. Sometimes, they were meant to be instructive and inclusive, as they were at the language school. Other times, the questions took on a more accusatory tone, trying to get at my motives as an outsider, wondering if I was there to exploit some vulnerability in the place. I heard it again when observing another class with Mora and Alex at a *Tele-escuela* or television school in San Raymundo de Jalpan. They were there to work on a mural in a classroom with some of the students. In this school, there were no teachers -- each classroom was equipped with a television monitor on which played instructional videos created by the federal government. Students watched the videos and then held discussions with a proctor afterward. As Alex and Mora worked, I heard the proctor ask Mora "¿Quien es? ¿Por qué esta aqui?" or "Who is that and why is he here?" After hearing that I was there to learn, he engaged me in a lengthy conversation about

language and the differences in spanish and english. It was at about this time in my studies that I had started to learn the *subjuntivo* or subjunctive mood in spanish, which has no correlation in english and which often communicates uncertainty or a lack of control; it expresses doubts and desires for the future, and the unknown. On one of the walls of the classroom was painted a poem by a pre-hispanic king called Nezahualcóyotl. The poem is called *Lo Pregunto* or I ask and goes like this:

Yo Nezahualcóyotl lo pregunto:
¿Acaso de verás se vive con raíz en la tierra?
No para siempre en la tierra:
sólo un poco aquí.
Aunque sea de jade se quiebra,
aunque sea de oro se rompe,
aunque sea plumaje de quetzal se desgarra.
No para siempre en la tierra:
sólo un poco aquí.

I Nezahualcóyotl ask,
Do you see you live with roots in the earth?
Not forever on earth:
just a little time here.
Even jade loses its worth,
Even gold breaks,
even quetzal plumage tears.
Not forever on earth:
just a little time here. (*D*)

<u>Collaboration with Mora: 1st Attempt</u>

It was during this 2nd observation of Mora and Alex out at a school that I suggested that we collaborate on a new work of art together. Earlier in the day, Alex asked me what image I would use to represent the concept of education. I assumed this was an assignment he had been given to

use in a mural at a school. He described his vision of a snake eating the tail of another snake -- kind of a double ouroboros. This is an image that the people in Tlahuitoltepec use to remember the story of people populating this part of Mexico for the first time. It's an origin story, and an education. I thought the idea of education would be a great starting place to make a collaborative print with Mora, but I had no clue where to start. I had been in Mexico for about 5 months, I had come to understand a little bit about the education unions and how strong they are in Oaxaca -- in fact, several times a week the unions shut down a part of the city in protest or in an effort to raise awareness about certain issues. But, we couldn't agree right away on what exactly our theme should be, and I'm sure my limited skills in speaking spanish kept us from truly debating matters. *(EX)*

Finally, we decided on using the image of a child as the center of our image with other symbols surrounding her. We talked about symbols used by the studio to communicate certain ideals -- the hammer and sickle representing the communist ideals of labor and the land, a book and a pencil for reading and writing. I elaborated on this, thinking about other tools that we use to document the injustices and successes in our world like the camera. I also began to consider the machete more closely as a tool of the people. We made some initial sketches and talked about the images with the other studio members but we still couldn't come to a decision on what the work should look like. There were long discussions about the state of schools in Oaxaca, most of what was said I could only slightly understand. I gleaned a lot with Mora's help about how federal money for schools in Oaxaca is given to community leaders but there is no accountability for how it gets spent. So, perhaps a new road is more important for one community than school books, and perhaps a community center for another. Schools are often not the priority because the education is taken up in different ways within different communities. There was often talk of graft and corruption within these discussions, with community leaders lining their own pockets instead of providing for schools. But, the majority of the discussion was about the ideals of a centralized philosophy of education. What should be taught and how? What are the pedagogical choices that should be made? For TAC, this results in images that refer to the history of struggle and labor, or the importance of origins and restoring gender equality. The hands of the worker -- cultural, agricultural, or other -- are central and celebrated in many of their works as they were in the works of Leopoldo Mendez. For Mora, this means that the hands of the catholic church, of

capitalism, the state, and the dominant cultural forces that condemn people for who they are the forces to work against, the symbols of what is wrong with the culture, and those that he said we should illustrate as being engulfed in flames. For our first collaborative piece, we decided that hands and the tools they carry would feature prominently, as the central focus would be on that of a young child [Figs. 6a - 6d]. *(EM)*

We worked on our drawings and composition for a week and decided we should move forward. When we began carving the block, Mora invited me to come to his flat in the southeastern part of town, near the Mercado Merced. This would allow us to work in relative isolation and provide some breathing room for the work. (We could also drink beer and smoke and chat freely.) The first day I visited Mora's flat, he played a video documenting Mexico's indigenous history for several hours. I was able to work and listen, understanding some of the history but not feeling like we had created a comfortable space for carving or of truly working together. When this continued the next day, I assumed it was for my own good -- a chance to be inundated with a history that should be part of my everyday consciousness just as it is with his.

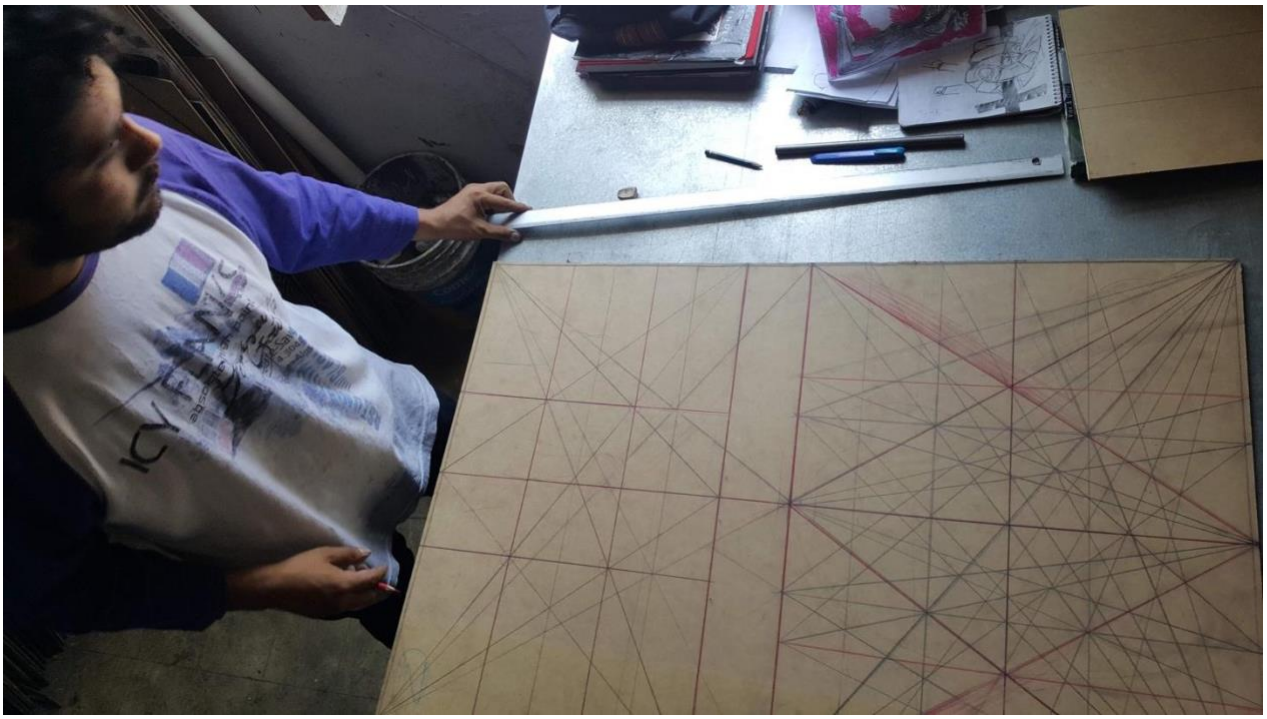


Figure 6a - Mora creating the compositional framework for our 2nd collaboration. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 6b – Mora drawing with my sketches in the foreground. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 6c - Mora sketching on our woodblock. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 6d - Mora and I pulling a print. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

We continued to work on this block for a couple of weeks and finally printed it. Though I was happy working on it and creating something concrete that we could discuss, neither Mora nor I were very happy with the result: the image is heavily carved, meaning there is too much white space creating an imbalance in the positive and negative space; there are too many symbols, negating any clear reading of the imagery and clouding our initial idea about education; the drawing looks hesitant and haphazard; I misspelled one of the words, forgetting to reverse the j in *trabajo* (work); and none of the carving is consistent or even done well enough to hold any interest. However, what resulted from this attempt was a question that forced me to consider the whole thing -- "what does the machete mean to you?" One of the studio members asked me this -- he wasn't directly involved in our drawing, but was directly involved in the working of the studio. The machete is a symbol of both the worker in the field and the warrior in the struggle for equality -- that is what I gleaned from all of our discussions. But the question kept coming up -- "what does the machete mean to you?" I have never held a machete. Mora had to correct all of my drawings of the machete, adding firsthand knowledge of the tool to provide realism. I have never been a worker in the field, I have never been a warrior in the struggle for equality. Why do I think this is an important symbol for education? *(R) (A)*

One of the recent design strategies that TAC employs is using a block cut to the shape of a machete, which then has an image or a phrase inserted inside the blade [Fig. 7a - 7b]. The resulting image is larger-than-life size and the final print is also cut to this shape before it gets wheat-pasted onto a downtown wall. The resulting image is dramatic and forthright, the meaning is clear and the design is spectacularly recognizable as URTARTE's. As Mario described above, the machete symbolizes the work that the *campesinos* or local farmers do as they toil to produce fruit, vegetables, corn, wheat and maguey. But it can also, when pointed in the right direction, become a tool of defense and aggression. This is certainly a symbol that Emilio Zapata, who as a land-owner himself, used to rouse and fight along-side the *campesinos* against the wealthy in the revolutionary war that Mexico fought in the early 1900's. It's meaning and the references it makes are clear to the people that live in Oaxaca -- the machete represents them. *(D)*



Figure 7a - Woodblocks hanging on the walls at TAC. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 7b - Prints wheatpasted on the walls of Oaxaca. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Collaboration with Mora: 2nd Attempt

For our next piece, we pictured a child holding a *guaje*, or a reddish seed-pod containing plump green peas. The *guaje* is a symbol of Oaxaca, it provides the origin for her name and is a food-staple that reaches back centuries. It is what everyone in Oaxaca will tell you to eat for good digestion. With this symbol, history and culture, centuries of knowledge and tradition, a connection to the land and to people, and a characteristic of the current landscape and provider of shade from the persistent Oaxacan sun, is communicated. What better way to communicate education, I thought -- a connection to nature and her human progeny. In front of this symbol, floating just within reach of the child's hands is the machete, symbol of the tool which humans use to both cultivate the land and to cut down what is not desired, a symbol of control -- of nurture and of violence. The question that bumped around my head while drawing this image was "How do we teach our children to use this tool?"

When I began to draw, I used an image of my own daughter, Desi, a four-year old with blond hair and pink skin, barefoot and wearing a dress embroidered with an Oaxacan pattern. Mora was going to add the machete and images of birds and banners in the background to provide

contextual clues as to our political point of view. I felt really happy with the resulting image -- it was complex and, as a collaborative piece, I thought it perfectly captured our shared journeys while communicating something about our cultural differences. And, for me, it was provocative -- there was the machete floating within the grasp of my happy child. Would she know how to use it? The next day, when Mora and I met in the TAC studio to continue working on it, the other artists in the space gave their approval. One person said that the symbols were clear and the relationship between the *guaje* and the machete was interesting enough to carry the piece. Another liked the composition. Erick came in and began to critique the drawing. Her feet weren't just right, so he corrected them. The designs on the dress needed a little tightening up. Finally, he erased the face of the girl and, instead, added what he called Mexican features, dark hair, a different smile and eyes, darker skin. He was very keen on showing off his drawing skill, which is incredible, and he was satisfied with the resulting image. Mora, too, was happy and said he would be able to complete his part of the work shortly [Fig. 8a - 8d].

I left Mexico at this point and wouldn't return for a full 9 months. In the meantime, I would visit Johannesburg and work with artists at Artist Proof Studio on a collaboration. I would then return to New York and to teaching, and reflecting on the experiences I had in Oaxaca. I feel that we were able to create a print that was of high quality and meaningful to others, and that drew upon all of our shared experiences. Throughout the weeks I spent working with the members of TAC, I was able to, even forced, to conduct the kind of examination of self that was discussed in Chapter 1. Specifically, being from the United States, I represent the kind of political and economic forces that work to exploit what they can for material gain, be that the land, the people, and any educational or art opportunity -- the kind of forces that the TAC studio and URTARTE were created to fight against. I had to consider and communicate clearly what my goals for working with them were and ensure an equitable exchange. Mario, Mora, Alex, Erick and all of the other members of the TAC studio worked with me to formulate the nature of the collaboration and what the work would look like. What emerged from our work was a critical analysis and contribution to the discourse surrounding the power dynamics inherent in the application of a philosophy of education. I believe the imagery we chose would speak to people across a broad range of cultures in Mexico as well as to those in the U.S., asking them to consider what purpose education should serve. Mora and I were both engaged in the kind of reflection and implementation of learning that

allowed us to trust one another. As we take action to make this image widely available, we look to build a dialogue across cultures, countries and continents.



Figure 8a - Desi. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

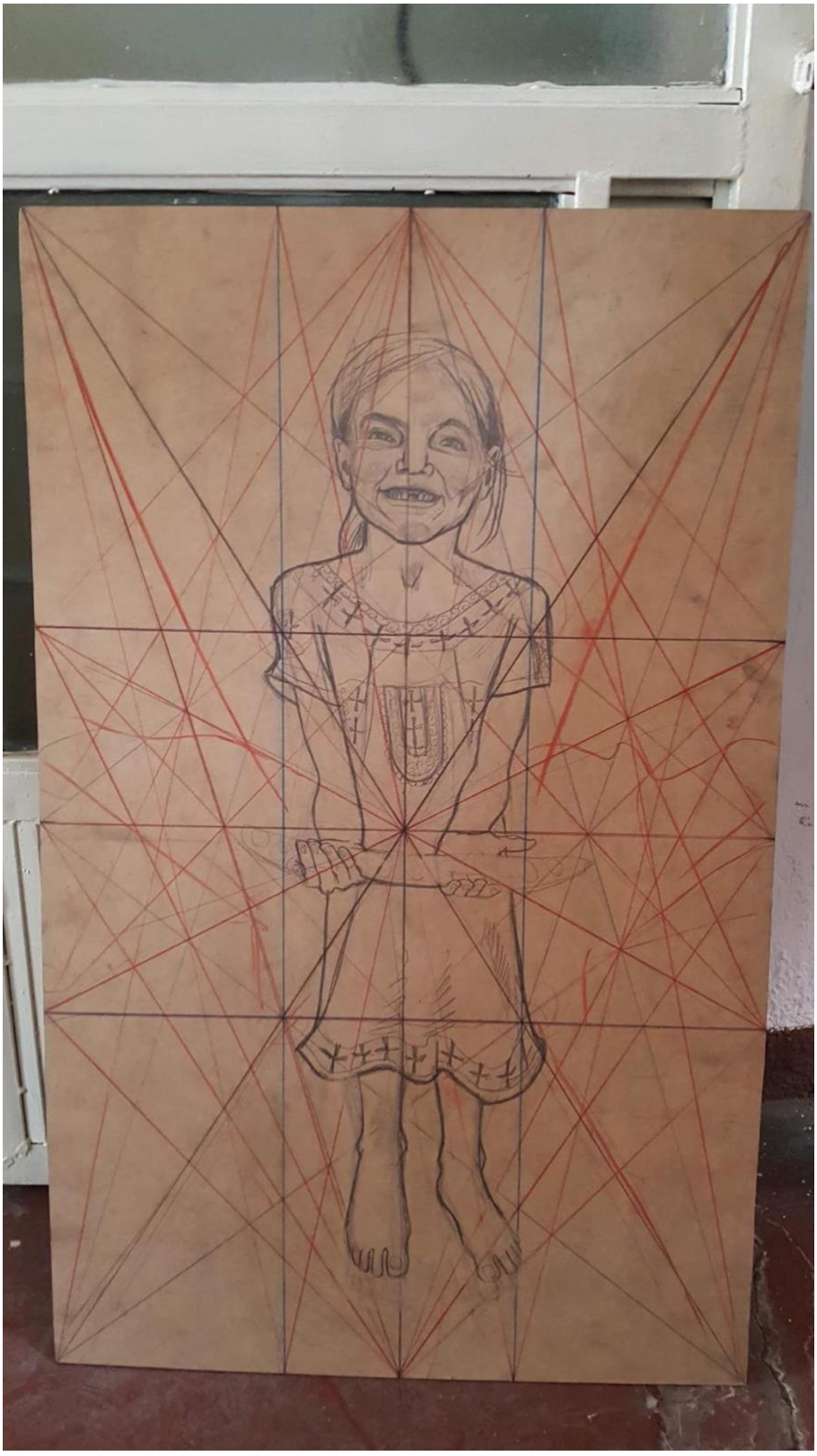


Figure 8b - Drawing of Desi on Woodblock. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 8c - Starting to carve the block. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 8d - Eric drawing on the block. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Chapter 3: Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg, South Africa

The Problem of the Hands

Meeting the Artists: Edition Variables

In June 2019, after returning from months living in Mexico, I traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa to continue researching with recent graduates of the Artist Proof Studio (APS). I have been interested in the work that APS produces for many years, having brought college students participating in a study-abroad program from the States since 2012. Each year, students from APS would organize a workshop for our students and we would learn a little bit more about the philosophy there. When I proposed an artistic collaboration, APS co-founder Kim Berman was enthusiastic and supportive and provided me with the information to reach out to the artists who, having just completed their 3rd year, were beginning to work on getting their pieces into art fairs and galleries. They had gone through a rigorous self-examination process that resulted in the creation of a unique and personal language for communicating ideas related to their identities.

I arrived at the studio unsure how I was going to approach this collaboration. Firstly, I would be collaborating with 6 different artists, not just one as I had in Mexico. I wasn't sure how much of a lead I should take -- in fact, I was very conscious of how this collaboration was structured through the school as one where an outside artist comes in to lead activities with the students and they in turn use a new technique in their own work. There was already a hierarchy established and I felt I needed to undermine or negate this hierarchy for this collaboration to work. Fortunately, in my teaching experience back home, I often set up classrooms with the philosophy that everyone brings skills and knowledge to others and we all learn together. There may be a leader, or at least a catalyst, but after time, everyone is participating on seemingly equal footing. Fortunately, in this case, I was arriving with very limited experience in the realm of printmaking and so was able to structure the first couple of meetings with the idea that I would be learning these skills from the APS students.

As we sat in the lofted studio spaces of APS in the Bus Factory in Newtown, the artists DuduBloom More, Thuli Lubisi, Thabang Molefe, David Madlabane, Pule Ratsoma and Raymond Fuyana were open with me about the kind of printmaking they were doing [Fig. 9a - 9c]. They described how they came to the final look and idea of their pieces and answered my questions about them. They told me that during their third year, they showed their work together under the name Edition Variables. They seemed primed and ready to continue working together and I felt welcomed into their space. The second day we began to think about how we could work together to create collaborative prints and drawings. I thought if we participated in a few exercises to get us used to working together, it might smooth the transition into making prints together. I initiated a group drawing exercise wherein everyone began making a drawing with any kind of imagery they wanted, perhaps something they were thinking about just then or something they like to draw. Each artist would start their own drawing but then pass it onto another person for them to add to it. I participated in this exercise, adding my own imagery and symbols. We passed the work 5 times and then hung the pieces up on the wall to discuss. At this point, the group and the atmosphere started to feel a little awkward. The artists started to get a little quiet, hesitant, inward. We talked about what pieces worked the best and why and which ones communicated something interesting to them. They settled on one piece, thinking that the imagery was the strongest and the message felt closest to home. There was a figure, lines, writing, a decay of sorts, a falling apart. We decided at that point to work on something a little bigger, and to work all at the same time on a single piece. We used the one small drawing as a basis for the larger one and started with pencil and ink. After about 20 minutes, the artists started to express some more awkwardness about the process, some hesitancy about losing their own work in the process. One of the artists wrote ‘loss of identity’ and ‘cultural decay’ right on the drawing. There was a feeling of not knowing how to proceed by the end of the day, and I was a bit dispirited. We decided to call it quits and continue the next day.





Figures 9a - 9b - Edition Variables group working on collaborative drawings. 2019 Photos by Nathan Sensel



Figure 9c - Edition Variables group working on collaborative drawings. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

The following morning, I asked about this feeling -- where was the mood of loss and decay coming from. They talked a little bit about the connection to the city of Johannesburg, and how the city forces one to give up parts of their culture and identity to be able to survive here. They talked about the process of drawing together on the same page, having to react to each other in real time. We talked about how this is like daily life -- we act and react, we express our identities and react to the expression of identity from others all the time. Our identities change like the drawings changed. We find connections and we find vacancies. I began to think that working on a collaborative piece was going to be a challenge for these artists that have been working together for 4 years, but in an isolated sort of way. I wanted to learn more about their work, the visual languages they have developed and the prints they've made. I have included the statements that each artist created for their 3rd year exhibition as an appendix to this paper (Appendix I), but, in short, we talked about the similarities that exist in the work that they've created over the past year. For half the group, healing and personal connection were through-lines. For the other half, design and feelings of exposure and covering were connections. They expressed an interest in working together, but did not have the chance previously. They split into groups and began working -- there already was a feeling that these similarities would bring them together at some

point. One of the artists said that they had recognized the connections and had made tentative steps toward collaborating in the past. As they began to work, the ideas poured out as if they had been there all along. The sense of professionalism was immediately evident as they planned how they would complete the work. There was a sense of ethics involved in the process - of caring for each other and their work. There was an ease with which they proceeded. They looked to each other for guidance and inspiration and flowed [Fig. 10]. *(EX)*



Figure 10 - Edition Variables group working on collaborative drawings. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Kim Berman and Artist Proof Studio

Artist Proof Studio has been a part of the cultural landscape of Johannesburg for the past 25 years. The founder Kim Berman, in her book Finding Voice (2018), links the journey that the organization has been through to that of the country itself. As citizens of a country emerging from the devastating effects of the apartheid era, South Africans continue to work together to "discover democracy." She describes the history of the organization as a struggle towards "healing and reconciliation, redress and resilience, and *ubuntu* and renewal" (Section Two: Building An Arts Organization).

The overarching issue that led to the founding of the organization in the 90's was political change, specifically using art to address the iniquities wrought by apartheid. Berman describes the initial work of the studio as being that of providing access to the arts for people from impoverished communities. "During the 1990s, the key issue for black South African artists was the struggle for economic and personal empowerment and access to education and training" (Section Two: Dreaming: A Story of Self and Finding "Us").

When the organization started working with young people, Berman describes many of the issues they confronted, which are precisely those identified by Paolo Freire -- the dehumanizing effects of the racist government and society had engendered a strong distrust of white South Africans claiming to want to help. Kim Berman, who is white, founded APS with artist and educator Nhlanhla Xaba, who was black (Xaba perished in a fire at APS in 2003). She struggled constantly to maintain the trust and respect of the students she was working with but was aided by the alliance and friendship with Xaba, who "proved a force for nonracism at APS and was committed to supporting the collective efforts that were clearly in accordance with the socialist aims emerging out of the liberation struggle." She says that APS set an example and demonstrated that black and white artists could work together. One of the tenets of the organization has been developing collaborative working situations -- the belief that artists working together is "a process of mutual learning and exposure to our different experiences of both life and art" (Section Two: Dreaming: A Story of Self and Finding "Us").

The collaborative nature of the organization helped them survive the devastating fire that occurred on 3 March, 2003. This fire claimed the life of co-founder Nhlanhla Xaba and destroyed the work of over 100 artists. In the immediate aftermath and during the subsequent redevelopment, Berman describes the collaborative work as transformational and, indeed, necessary as they began to rebuild. Everyone involved in the studio throughout the years contributed their voice, describing what their dream for the organization would be. They also produced artwork and participated in therapy sessions together that allowed them to heal and move forward. The concept of *ubuntu*, "A person is a person through other persons" became their touchstone and their founding democratic value for rebuilding. A year after the fire, the organization re-launched in its current home at the

bus-factory, as the collaborative nature of their work and the *ubuntu* values took on new forms and forced them to reconsider how they were being led.

Eventually, Berman says that they recognized the need for new leadership and the development of an administrative team that was led by the black artists. They took a hard look at their organizational identity and decided to tackle issues surrounding colonialism. This connection to identity extends to the work that the artists produce and has created a stylistic identity at the center. Identity has played a defining role in Berman's research over the years as well. She cites the writing of Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian-born author as influential in this regard. He wrote "the pursuit of dignity is one of the most fundamental defining attributes of human existence." The realization of the importance of this value, of personal dignity, has led to the most critical changes in the culture and mission of the organization. It's all-encompassing for her and the center and defines who they are to this day.

But why dignity? As Freire has pointed out, without dignity, without a feeling of personal worth and value, without self-love, there can be no equality (1970). A person will never see themselves as equal if they do not have the dignity to think it in the first place. This is the first step on the road to change -- humanization and respect of self. Racism, economic injustice, Apartheid … these are forces built on the principle of white-supremacy and that result in non-whites seeing themselves as non-human. The idea of dignity extends far beyond this first step, and for APS, it has been transformational. The mission of the organization is now defined by it and they have given themselves the mission of 'excellence through possibility.'

MEDU Art Ensemble

A question about this idea of dignity continues to rattle around in my head: if the world at large doesn't recognize the humanity of a person, if they remain invisible within the culture, does their own dignity have the power to make them visible? On one of my first trips to South Africa, I had the opportunity to visit the Poster Archive of the *Mayibuye Center* at the University of the Western Cape. There I was introduced to the work of the MEDU Art Ensemble who, in the 1980's created struggle posters and flyers dedicated to organizing people against the apartheid government. Often working from exile, and in danger of being imprisoned or killed by the

government police and military forces, these artists trained people to express themselves about the injustices they were subjected to. The guiding principles with which they worked included: creating artwork that spoke to all people, that should develop and express the identity, dignity, and community of the people, and should work toward developing a vision for the future. The members of the ensemble, not artists but as they referred to themselves, cultural workers, developed images and ideas collectively, prioritizing collective thinking and action over individual expression.

MEDU and the artwork it produced, functioned in much the same way that TAC in Oaxaca or TGP in Mexico City did -- it made work specifically for the people, as a way for the people to recognize themselves, to engage directly with the immediate culture, and, in this way, to impact or to create a new culture. Co-founder Thami Mnyele wrote: "For me as craftsman, the act of creating art should complement the act of creating shelter for my family or liberating the country for my people. This is culture" (Seidman 2005). *(D)*

Collaboration with the Edition Variables: 1st Attempt

I reflected on this history and my experiences of being in South Africa and experiencing the discussions surrounding current political structures after my initial meetings with the artists at APS. In all of my discussions with Kim Berman, she has stated that her goals for APS remain in the activist, not solely pedagogical, realms. Her desire is to create change within the dominant atmosphere and to develop the studio as a space to create more cultural activists to participate in this struggle. During a staff meeting at APS, she implored me to “light a fire” within the artists. I felt completely uneasy about this exhortation, as I still wasn’t sure what my role was within the group. I felt no evangelical strings being plucked within my own breast -- what was it that I wanted? I wanted to come to an agreement with the group about our path forward. I wanted the answer to emerge from our discussions, from our work together, from our shared and individual experiences. But how should I approach this?

This was a question that remained with me as I met again with Pule, Thabang, Dudu, Thuli and Raymond a month later to continue talking about what we would produce. They were excited to show me the first drafts of the collaborative prints they had made. We did a quick crit, talking

about composition and processes. Then we initiated a discussion about what would come next. Since we had a few more days to make work together, I offered that we could either use that time to complete these prints or work on creating a new collaborative print. We discussed ideas related to issues that impact them, including communication and gender equality. We made connections directly to APS -- the group said they were interested in making art about social issues and in a more politically relevant way but that the organization was more interested in teaching them about how to make artwork that sells.

I met up again with Pule and Thabang at APS after another couple of weeks and took a look at the finished works. They were amazing! They put a ton of effort into making these prints and made sure that everyone was involved, even if they weren't there every day. All of the artists contributed to a single print and it shows some real consideration of color and material. Shannin, the studio manager, and Rene, the education manager, visited while we were looking at them and commented about how great they looked. Shannin made some suggestions about the show in February such as connecting with the Education Coordinator at WAM to organize visits with school groups. I also talked with artists about organizing demonstration workshops during the run of the show. For an hour and a half, Pule, Thabang and I discussed the last meeting we had in June, talking about how we could create art about social issues that have an impact on our lives. The conversation went in many directions as we considered a range of topics which we could address in our next project. Many of the ideas kept getting linked back to the organization of APS, including those about patriarchy and female leadership. Of course, at APS, a majority of the administrative team is female and this differs from other cultural aspects of the city at large. We talked briefly about Mr. Xaba, about his biography and the impact he had on the organization. One of the big topics in our discussion and in South Africa in general concerns xenophobia and how that is dealt with on a personal level [Fig. 11]. *(R)*



Figure 11 - Pule and Thabang meeting to discuss the initial collaborative prints at APS. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Collaboration with the Edition Variables: 2nd Attempt

At one point, the conversation shifted to focus on language. Since I arrived at APS, I had heard several different languages spoken and I asked if they were all the same languages or dialects and how much each of them understood the language that the others spoke. Having just come from a place where I spent a good part of my time trying to learn a new language, I was curious about how the fact that they were all multilingual affected their interactions. They talked about how their languages were tied up with their identities, in that they often feel most comfortable when speaking their native language, telling jokes, or simply exchanging a story. But, over time, there has been an evolution in how they speak and lingual hybrids have emerged and allowed them to get creative with how they were speaking and that would allow people to be involved in different ways. Thabang shared how Raymond, who is deaf, has created his own signs for the printmaking vocabulary that they use when working together. I shared that I felt like I had been failing in my attempt to communicate with Raymond because I do not sign and, when there was not someone from the studio that could translate, he would be left out of our discussions. This is possibly why he was not present at our discussion today. And then I remembered seeing a sheet of paper with the sign language alphabet taped on a wall in the studio [Fig. 12]. This was an A4 sheet with

small illustrations of a hand making the different signs and the copy looked like it had been created from another old photocopy. Overall, the sheet seemed useful but also easily overlooked. Pule went to get it and, as we all looked at it together, we decided that it could provide an interesting foundation for a print. We began to get excited and started throwing out ideas about how a print of this should look and how we would share it. Pule and Thabang were interested in making the print as big as possible, possibly a linocut or screenprint and they thought they could post it in the APS studio as a way to get all of the other artists to use it. Thabang said we could make a game of it, asking people to learn how to use sign language to spell their name. We talked about incentives -- how could we engage people with this in a direct way. Pule thought maybe we could add on to the print itself, drawing over top of the images and adding our new signs. Perhaps this would be the reward for learning to sign your name. We left this meeting very excited about the possibilities for moving forward, but we were missing half the group. The next day we would have to continue the discussion with the rest of the team. *(EX) (D) (CA)*

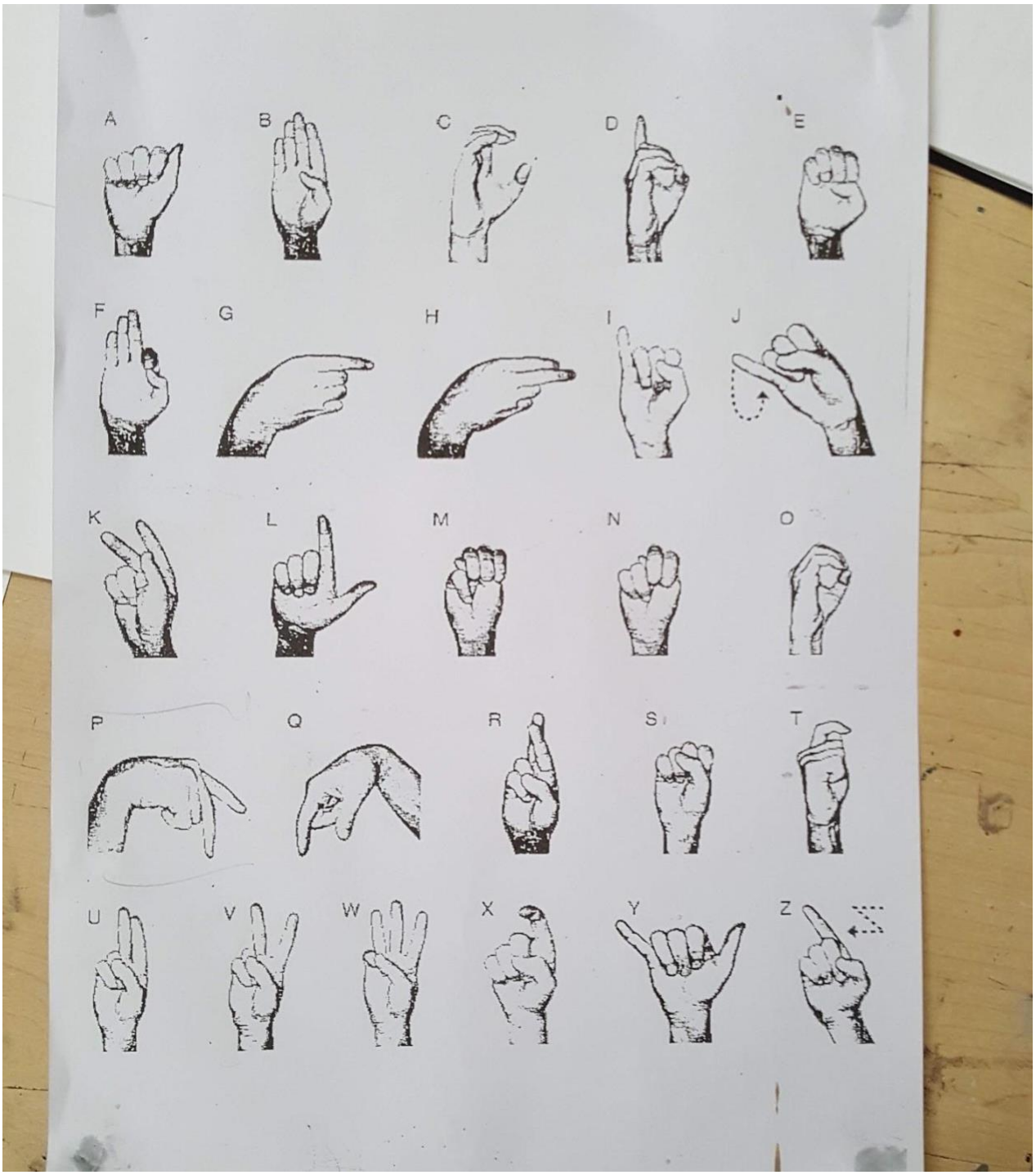


Figure 12 - A4 sheet with photocopied sign language alphabet hanging at APS. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Following an almost two-hour staff meeting the next morning, where the discussion centered around how everyone, artists, teachers, admin team, could contribute to the financial stability of the organization, I met with Dudu, Pule, Thabang, and Raymond. Thabang and Pule and I shared

our discussion about making a piece using the sign alphabet. Everyone seemed to like the idea and were on board but we needed to figure out how to execute it -- after talking about cost of materials and the different techniques that might work, including stencils, we decided to move ahead with a linocut print since we could make it very large and print it multiple times. Lino was cut, images were found, a projector was set up and we began to trace. Before the day ended we were able to start 'scooping'. *(A)*

On our final day together, we arrived at the studio first thing in the morning and started scooping the lino. It was a cold day in July and Raymond had the idea that we should try warming the lino before we cut it to make it go a little smoother. Unfortunately, the warmer was much smaller than the block and made for some cumbersome maneuvering. Soon, Dudu, Thabang and Thuli arrived and began to help out. Finally, we found a rhythm and continued to carve the block for 3 hours straight. By 2pm we were ready to print. After figuring out what paper might be procured, we got some cartridge paper from Mr. Lucas and made a test print. Two prints were made and one of those we began to cover with drawings. Several other people participated in the drawing and writing, creating a collaborative language.

Through this collaboration, I feel as though we were able to live up to a small part of what Kim was calling for in her desire to get us acting together to have a greater impact on the world. By using our power to point to an underrepresented member of our group, we are pointing to a larger idea of equal recognition within the culture at large. Through the examination of who we are and a discussion about the discourse surrounding the use of language in society and in the studio, we took a close, critical look at the impact this has on us. The ideas that emerged from this discussion allowed us to make something that will have an active impact on those in the studio space.



Figure 13a - Transferring the image to the lino. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 13b - Another artist learning the alphabet. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 13c - Starting to carve the block. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

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Figure 13d – Carving the block. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 13e – Inking the block. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 13f – Adding new symbols and drawing on the print. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 13g – Adding new symbols and drawing on the print. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Chapter 4: Cultural Production: Printmaking and Pedagogy as Culture and Craft

Why Printmaking?

Every place I've been for this project people have asked me the same question: "Why are you here?" In Mexico, in South Africa, while making prints in a workshop or painting on the side of a building, people were curious why I was in their space. This was an incredibly helpful exercise as it forced me to consider my position at every point. For this study, printmaking was a central component of the choices I made concerning who to work with and where that would take place. Its capacity to initiate social interaction and its use as a tool for artists to disseminate information widely was critical for me. What seems to be an important aspect to the craft is the collaborative nature of it, which is inseparable from the practices of training and education. Leading up to this research, I had taken a couple of classes on printmaking and had occasionally picked up the practice for a piece I was making. But I never felt the call to printmaking or a genuine love for the processes involved. In fact, I feel that there are too many processes involved and a need to be attentive to too many different aspects of it as an instructor at APS described as an "ethic of printmaking." I am attracted to printmaking primarily for its ability to make drawings reproducible and, therefore, I have treated printmaking as, essentially, a drawing process. For the series of trust prints, I drew directly onto the screens to make the prints, bringing drawing as close to the end result as possible. For the collaborative prints I made with TAC and APS, there was some attention paid to the printmaking process but mostly by those I was working with who have been training to be printmakers themselves.

Another aspect that the medium of printmaking provides for me is a chance to work on the same images in different ways, allowing the work (either just the image or the prints themselves) to be manipulated or to be added to or to evolve. This act of becoming is the one last tenet of my research that I want to focus on, and that will be present in the final exhibition of my work. I have been considering the multiple ways that this theory of evolution and change that is a core part of

our lives can be mimicked through art. Below, I have described how this played out in the workshop space of The Point of Order during the exhibition in February 2020.

Throughout my experiences, I used a methodology that focused on an emergent process of collaboration which is based on a recognition of all of the actors within the group, an expansion of the critical lens aimed at the dominant culture, and a commitment to the dialectic of the individual and society, or: Examination, Discourse, Critical Analysis, Emergence, Reflection and Action. In an attempt to analyze these experiences, to share these experiences with others, and to engage more collaborators in new experiences, I installed the prints, drawings, books, and ephemera from these collaborations at The Point of Order in Johannesburg this past February. As I was beginning to hang the work, laying open the large pvc and cardboard tubes of prints that I had carried with me from the United States and Mexico and placing the prints under boards to flatten them, I was in fact thinking about the empty spaces on the walls at TPO that I could use to make new drawings and prints, and where I was going to see a manifestation of the work of reflection and synthesis that I had been waiting to do for several months. In this final part of my paper, I explore the tensions that surfaced as a result of the research, i.e. the problem of definitions, the problem of trust, the problem of interpretation/translation, the problem of identity, and the problem of power/control, through an examination of and reflection upon the artworks created and displayed at TPO. I then elaborate on these findings with sections devoted to 'stretching' the ideas, providing suggestions for putting them into practice. These sections are supported by a reading of Conversation Pieces by Grant H. Kester (2013), who has conducted in-depth research into the theory of the Dialogical Aesthetic, describing it as "an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict" (p. 8).



Figure 14 – Outside The Point of Order. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Tension: Art, pedagogy, and culture or the Problem of Definitions

During the first 3 days of my time at TPO, I had the opportunity to participate in several meetings and workshops that were taking place concurrently as part of the Arts Research Africa consortium and the Another Roadmap School Project. I spoke with scholars and practitioners from Lesotho, Uganda, and Nigeria; Norway, the U.S. and Canada; and other parts of South Africa and had conversations and experiences that engaged with and enriched the ideas that I had been struggling to articulate in this dissertation. During the conference, I heard from Dr. Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández who calls for a change in the terms we use when talking about the arts (2013). In place of the word "arts", he calls for a rhetoric of "cultural production" that puts symbolic and cultural work central within educational projects. This move expands the idea of what he says has become a western, european, elitist (read: white) definition of "the arts" into the realm of cultural interaction, which he describes, in an act of simplicity, as something that people do.[5] In comparison, and in a further attempt to sort through the intersection between pedagogy and art, I looked to a definition of art laid out by Allan deSouza, an artist and professor at UC Berkeley. In his book, How Art Can Be Thought (2018), he defines art, also with simplification, as process. In his final formulation, after a series of semantic leaps, he comes to "a proposal, and/or action and

[5] "Actual people, under real social circumstances, in particular cultural contexts, and within specific material and symbolic relations that have experiences involving symbolic materials and forms of cultural production." (Gaztambide-Fernández 2013, p. 226)

or/object, plus discourse = process = art" (p. 27). For me, there's a direct line between these two ideas -- what people do is a process of continual development that involves a concern or interaction with the power dynamics of a given time and place or discourse. As far as I have interpreted Paulo Freire's writings, this is exactly where he locates pedagogy, as a "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1973).

After reading and listening to Gaztambide-Fernández, I find a symbiosis between all of these ideas -- a certain triangulation of their formulations: ART/PEDAGOGY/CULTURAL PRODUCTION = Process = **Proposal** and/or **action** and/or **object**, plus ***discourse***. By placing the emphasis on discourse in this formulation, I am emphasizing the relationship of one person to another in the realm of the power dynamics within society. For, if you remove the concern for the individual within the collective and their relationship to the power dynamics of a given time, you end up with the stereotypical, and perhaps all to often truthful, idea of art = market value, pedagogy = concern for knowledge through rote learning and a mind/body split, and culture reduced to heritage objects stored away in a museum. Often, these three ideas, through a western, white, scientific, anti-humanistic categorization, exist on separate planes. But placing them within the framework of the concern (read: love) for the individual and their connection to other individuals and the collective, and these in relation to the histories and theories of power dynamics (read: politics, social ideals, discourse), then the products of these ideas become the process through which we continue to grow and develop and evolve. We continue to become. This is a dangerous formulation because it constantly challenges those who sit comfortably at the societal table, someone like myself. But another danger, one that I've wrestled with in this paper, is that processes of emergence may end up reinforcing the status quo or working against those actors creating positive change in society.

Stretching: Considerations for taking action

The study of the process of collective growth, what I am referring to as the Intersection of Pedagogy and Art, deserves attention because, in the arguments laid out above, the processes outlined in this methodology are indistinguishable from all other processes involved in making artwork, (Kester refers to artwork as "a process of communicative exchange." (p. 90)).

Additionally, this methodology for collaborative artmaking furthers the arguments made by Gaztambide-Fernández in his call for a new rhetoric surrounding artistic production and, as such, has the potential to make important contributions to the field. The focus of this process -- 'cultural production' -- is, necessarily, on transformation -- transformation of the participants involved in the process and on the context within which they are acting. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that all of the participants are acknowledged, that attention is paid to their reasons for participating, and to the benefits and potential negative outcomes of the group's actions. As Gaztambide-Fernández reiterates, "engaging in cultural practices of various kinds can result in experiences that are usually not simply positive or negative, diminishing or exalting, but that are complex, open to interpretation and always, irremediably particular" (p. 225). As education can be a process of emergence or assimilation with as many destructive capabilities as there are positive ones, we must be attentive to the tensions and effects of the discourse on those involved.[6]

[6] From a discussion with Dr. David Andrew, May 2018, and a discussion with Rangoato Hlasane, February 2020.



Figure 15 - Please Tell Me Why You Are Here. 2019 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Tension: Confidence and Desire or the Problem of Trust

Upon entering the space at TPO, a visitor sees several questions written on the walls, on plinths, on artworks: "Do you trust me?" "Do you trust yourself?" The main question, "*PLEASE TELL ME WHY YOU ARE HERE,"* is written large, in all caps; it's hard to miss. It frames the space as one of intention and purpose and points to desire as the first and foremost negotiator of our experiences. It is associated with the question "What do you want?" which is a pedagogical tool in that it asks us to think about our reason for entering into this relationship with other people. The problem of Trust is making oneself vulnerable and is the first step of being open to the experiences of others (recognition) -- it asks us to consider the space as one of inter- and intra-personal relationships. The problem of trust is giving a name to desire and examining it to discover the source of its power. The collaborative trust project, as described in the introduction, was created to ask people to continue this conversation with me, adding to their portraits, building a space for us to make explicit the ideas of trust that allow us to inhabit the same spaces and

recognize each other through an elucidation of our desires. Recently I found an article in The Atlantic magazine outlining a scientific study about trust and was fascinated as I read that the researchers could determine how well a person trusts others based solely on the number of taste buds they have on their tongue.[7] They were stating that our impulse is based on a sensation of desire or repulsion -- a psycho-somatic feeling that could be easily summed up by our reaction to something like spoiled milk. This idea of having a desire to taste, or a hunger for something but then feeling repulsed by it, afraid of it, or cheated by it, this appetite is highly connected to the body and our senses -- we are only able to relate to each other through our senses and through the language we develop to describe what we feel. Could this reasoning based on a physical and cognitive relationship also be extended to our ideas concerning culture? The crude dualistic descriptions -- conservative/liberal, open/closed, black/white -- are what emerge as shorthand for our complex, ever-evolving relationships.

The reality is we all have a desire to connect with others. Whether we find this sated through connecting with *new* friends and the unknown possibilities that entails (read: liberal), or relying more on those *closest* to us and the deep connections that are created through that interaction (read: conservative), we have a hunger for each other. Braidotti, in the Post Human, discusses our hunger or desire as the force that propels us into the future as we continue to become who we are through our interactions with others. This is an investigation into ethical concerns and she says to ethically wield the power of one's desire necessitates a constant reevaluation of one's position and history. According to Braidotti, history plays an important role because the past is that which creates us in the present - the past is the story of our identity and we continue to create it as we move into the future. As we do, the question that comes up for me remains: is a constant vigilance over our desires, which often operate at a subconscious level, even possible?

Stretching: Considerations for self-examination and reflection

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[7] In the study from the Atlantic Magazine, the author of a study related to the concept of trust and how people interact in society describes the work that they and a group of researched did researchers make a connection between people's sense of disgust and how they treat other people. In the study, those that reacted with greater revulsion to images or ideas of food items that we all find revolting, such as spoiled milk, tended to act with higher levels of distrust towards unfamiliar people. This finding was then correlated to how the person identified in a political sense - as either a liberal or a conservative. This correlation was rationalized by describing liberals and conservatives as either a person with an optimistic, almost naive view of social interaction or as someone who would prefer to cut off connection with the 'outside' world in order to protect themselves from contagion. The best part of this study is the fact that the researchers could determine whether someone identifies as liberal or conservative simply by counting the number of bitter taste buds they have on their tongue.

Desire, according to Braidotti, exists in a pre-discursive and pre-conscious state. It is a force that acts upon us before we know and can articulate that it is doing so. Therefore, it seems we must train ourselves to make moves before we are ready to make moves and even before we are able to make definitions. As artists and educators, it is necessary to recognize the power we have within a cultural realm to affect -- to exert energy upon and to change -- the dominant systems and structures. This power is always achieved within a collaborative environment, and so continual self-examination is required to maintain equitable relationships within the group. Within this process, it is important to recognize our desires, ask ourselves the question “Why are you here?”, and answer honestly. Kester elaborates on the function of empathy in the Dialogical Aesthetic as a tool to “decenter a fixed identity through interactions with others” (p. 77), and goes on to describe the importance of giving attention to the context, both temporal and physical, of the actors and actions taking place.

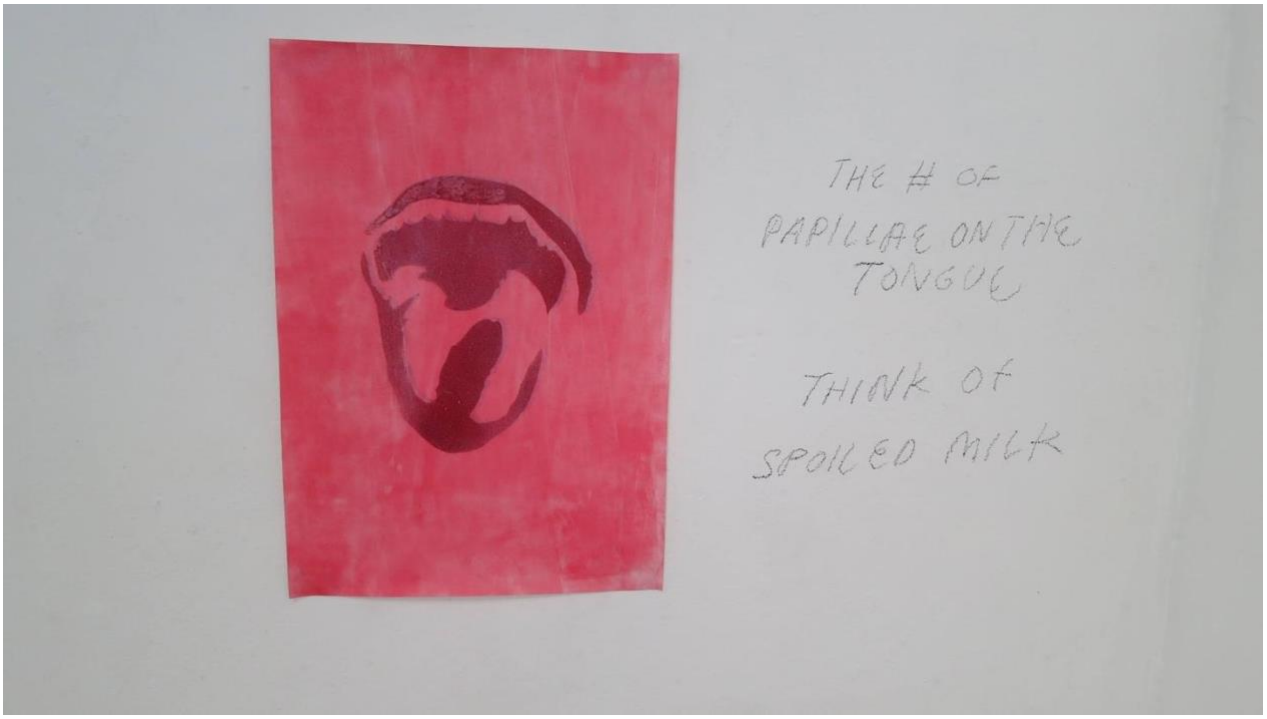


Figure 16 - Stencil print. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Tension: Interpretation and translation or the Problem of the Machete

On a long wall at TPO visitors encountered prints by Mario Guzman and Mulato Mora Rhenc from Taller Artístico Comunitario. Mario's prints included a portrait of teacher and activist Lucio Cabañas who led a revolutionary group fighting for the rights of poor farmers to educate their children. Through this print, Guzman is adapting historical information to remake the present. There were also prints of populist uprisings and marches that included representations of unions and groups from different parts of Oaxacan society coming together to protest the government. Further down the wall was the collaborative work that Mora and I created followed by several paintings I had created during the same time period in Mexico. Many of the conversations that I had with visitors during the exhibition revolved around the strength of Mario's skill, but also the use of Spanish text. One of the questions we encountered was what happens when people can't understand the language in the works. How do the images function within this context? What kind of translation is most helpful in this situation?



Figure 17a - Wall with works created in Oaxaca. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 18 - Prints from Taller Artístico Comunitário. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

In the works I was creating at this time, I was investigating the use of text and the body, playing with the languages, both English and Spanish, and the mix of religious imagery that is prevalent in Mexican art but that is also a part of my own history. In these works, I was thinking about the hands as those of a creator making things -- “no se” means “I don’t know” in Spanish, “Nah-Dah” is a mix of nada (nothing in Spanish) and tah-dah! “Hm”, “haha”, and “ok” round out the reactions. I find these works to be an explicit statement of an often-unexpressed feeling of uncertainty and searching.



Figure 19 - Works created in Oaxaca. 2020 Photo by Akona Kenqu

Our collaborative print, which began with a theme of education, became, for me, a mix of different learning experiences. We included, in addition to the *guaje* and the machete, dates and place names that referred to historical markers that most people in Oaxaca would recognize immediately. These dates within a South African context often become just imagery. The machete has a different reference in South Africa, where I heard someone talk about the *panga* and the connotations of work and violence, but also ritual and honor. The problem of the machete is one of interpretation and translation. As artists, we are working to discover the images that will help us to connect with other people. We are produced by culture, but we also (re)produce culture on a daily basis, in some instances by creating a language that requires a cultural decoding. The tools, languages, skills and ideas that make up our culture carry the weight of their own history and use, and as Gloria Anzaldúa describes, “The work has an identity. It cannot know what it is until someone has interacted with it” (p. 89). Through this work, I began to think about dualities and

how they are often less than accurate as humans exist somewhere in between the polar opposites that these words describe. This idea also addresses the remaking and replacing of history and hierarchies that is called for by deSouza (2018). And because we are constantly changing and evolving, the idea of process in artworks becomes even more prevalent for me. I've described the use of interpretation as a tool for "remaking" a work of art, but I am also interested in exploring the role of physical change within what could be called "finished" works of art. By taking a print and cutting it up or writing on top of it, perhaps inviting others to do the same, the work more closely resembles the ever-evolving nature of culture. This can become a very deliberate act of translation that welcomes everyone to take a more active role in the "creation" of a work of art.

Stretching: Considerations for prioritizing emergence

As we have defined art as a process, whatever gets 'produced' also has a life. A print, which at first seems to be the final stage of the process of making a drawing, can be the beginning if you consider that people will continue to have a different experience with it over time -- it can continue to contribute to the discourse surrounding power relationships, and may be reinterpreted upon every new viewing. Herein lies the power of translation and interpretation: how our sensorial experiences determine our language and our language affects our understanding of the experience. In the creation of a "local, consensual knowledge that is only provisionally binding and that is grounded instead at the level of collective action," Kester warns that it is necessary to examine how "the effects of cultural or symbolic capital among privileged speakers, or hegemonic models of language and rhetoric, can be prevented from biasing discourse" (p. 112 - 113). The successful emergent process relies upon a shared sense of direction or desired outcome, and, therefore, requires the members of the group to develop methods for communicating that allow each member to contribute meaningfully and equitably to the setting of the goals for the group.



Figure 20 – Works being cut up and added to. 2020 Photo by Akona Kenqu

Tension: Identity, Power, and Control or the Problem of the Hands

Turning to the other side of the TPO space, one sees 4 collaborative prints created by the artists at Artist Proof Studio, followed by a large collaborative print and then several stenciled pieces that I created during the time I was working in Johannesburg. In the fall of 2018, I had collaborated with another artist to create a few works of graffiti on the side of a building near the University. I had been thinking about the idea of training oneself to be trustworthy and had developed a few images that used recognizable symbols and text to talk about identity and trust. Because the work was so public and took on a more collaborative vibe as it was created, I felt that it led to the central problem of the hands -- that is, in a collaborative work there are many hands involved; there are many perspectives and sensibilities. One's ability to feel successful in this arrangement

can be dependent on one's ability to find joy or satisfaction in the accomplishments of others. As a person with a certain amount of power, how does one ensure that power, resources, and recognition are shared? How does one train oneself to, as Norma Élia Cantú and Aída Hurtado put it in the introduction to Borderlands, "develop the agility to navigate and challenge mono-cultural and mono-lingual conceptions of social reality" (2007, p. 7)? Questions that linger for me include how forms of knowledge get spoken and do I have the ability to hear them? What is the responsibility I have to my collaborators to develop these skills? What form does training oneself to be open to other experiences, cultures, and languages take?

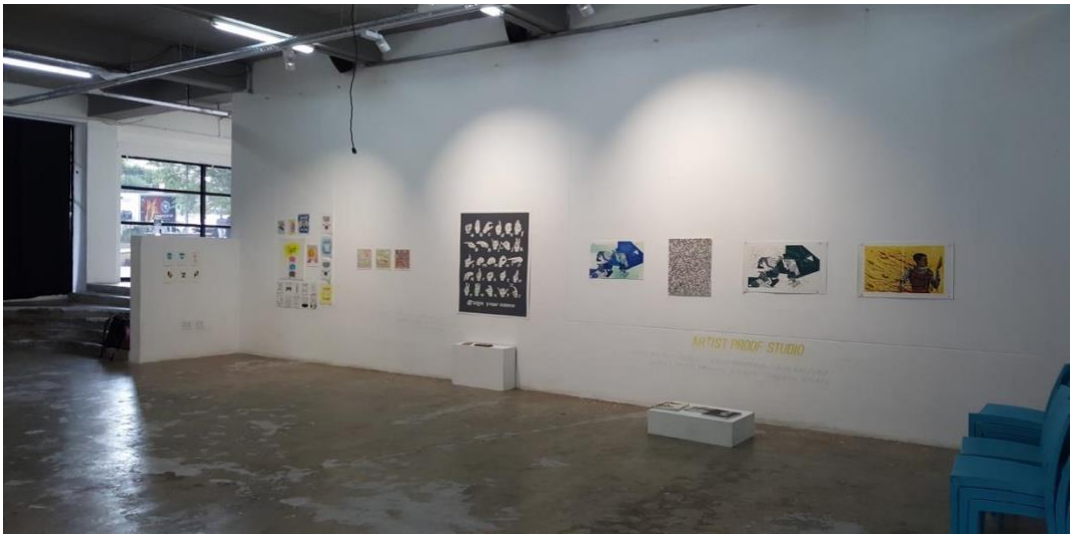


Figure 21 – Works created in Johannesburg. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 22 - Works by Edition Variables. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

As I described in Chapter 3, the collaborative prints that Dudubloom, Thuli, Raymond, David, Thabang and Pule created are a true blending of the subject matter, process and aesthetics of their individual work, and are a testament to how well they know each other and their ability to work together. However, they also represent the struggle they each went through to get to this point; the loss of their own sense of identity, the need to seek out and establish new ground on which to build something together, and acceptance of the fact of their dependence and interdependence. As we came together to create the sign-language alphabet print, the group was acknowledging their ability to influence the culture that they had developed within the studio. Through the development of this work, we demonstrated an ability to work away from the singularity and towards a plurality, developing an environment for people to interact where issues of control and power were non-existent. We each became caretakers and equal partners of the project.

The problem of the hands includes a look at our immediate situation and deciding, as a collective, to work together to change the culture. Because a change in the nature of a culture requires action, the success of an artwork that is created for this purpose must be judged by the action it engenders in others. The #SignYourName piece leans in a direction of future interaction by asking people to contribute to it and, thus, becomes less of what it was -- a print recognized as an art object -- and

more of what it is -- a manifestation of a cultural practice. Here the medium we use to engage with others, namely our body and our body's sensations, is filtered through our perception and understanding of the present moment, our memories of the moments that came before, and our imagining what the future will bring. This raises questions around authorial designations and the responsibilities of the members of the collaboration to each other.

Stretching: Considerations for developing a critical analysis surrounding the discourse of a subject

The Intersection of Pedagogy and Art is built upon the development of a collaborative investigation of cultural practices concerning the dominant systems and structures at work in our society. Collaborators are, therefore, tasked with the duty to think critically about the systems and structures they are a part of and to create a space for an investigation into the effects of those for the purpose of taking collective action against them. How members of that collaboration relate across cultural differences and how they carry out their responsibilities to each other becomes an important consideration. In response to similar questions, Kester makes the suggestion of "provid[ing] consensual ground for public acts of political speech and resistance" based upon a "strategic alliance against forces of oppression … targeting individuals" on the basis of their specific and varied identities (p. 182). This process requires an analysis of the cultural practices, governmental or organizational policies, and/or individual actions that work against the ability of individuals to seek equal treatment or freedom of movement and thought within society.

In the experiences I've described above, a print and the placement of that print within a certain context is the action that the group is taking. This action is the catalyst of further action on the part of anyone engaging with the work. Of course, there is no guarantee of this further action, unless we consider the theories put forth by … Within other theoretical frameworks, the print exists as just another physical object until someone sees it, thinks about it, makes some sort of interpretive gesture, and possibly even acts out further in response to the thoughts created. This final act creates the possibility of transformation within the viewer and the society of which they are a part. Again, there is no guarantee of this happening. But a transformative process has already been enacted through the collaborative creation of the print itself. Therein lies the ever-

important action and transformation that bell hooks describes, and that lies at the heart of the Intersection of Pedagogy and Art.



Figure 23 - Stencil and drawing pieces. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 24 - Visitors adding to our collaborative print. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Please Tell Me Why You Are Here: The Problem of Cultural Production

An important aspect of the two weeks I spent at The Point of Order was the development of a workshop space for participants to engage with the ideas in the work on view and make work of their own. My desire for this space was to make people feel welcome, and perhaps to have them get involved in the artmaking that was taking place. I generally followed the same process I outlined at the beginning, trying to find out who each person was, why they were there, and what they were interested in. I asked myself what I wanted, I let the themes, topics, processes emerge depending on where our conversations went. Interactions with folks that came through were dialogical, open-ended, and based on our shared or unshared experiences -- making became the common language we used to learn about ourselves and each other. I would ask people “why are you here?” Everyone had a different response -- they were shepherded into the gallery by the sign on the door, they were curious, they wanted to share something they had already made, they were interested in making something new, they wanted to know more about a specific work of art, they wanted to tell me about a work of art, they were hungry or thirsty, they wanted to share food, they just wanted to be.



Figure 25 - Visitors creating work at TPO. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Within this space we could share ideas and skills. During this time, as with most experiences I've had in classrooms or shared studios, a culture of production arose around the materials, with most people gravitating towards an investment of time into learning something new. People would come in and spend hours making something that challenged them in a new way, often looking to learn how to make a print or stencil, an action that they had never engaged in before. The materials became the reason to be there and the main site of interaction. For example, Thabang brought his interests in making images of the body and in printmaking and sculpture to the space. He had started making papier mache hands and created a stencil piece based on a drawing of his sculptures, and then started teaching others how to make them. There was one afternoon that he took on the role of speaking with visitors about the artwork that was on view. In this way, Thabang took on more ownership within the communal space. Jonathan came by for a week to learn about drawing, woodblock carving and printing. He is an art history student at Wits and we talked about his favorite artists and time periods, but mostly we talked about the work of printmaking. Jonathan had never spent much time drawing or making any kind of artwork, but he was very keen on learning new techniques. Over the course of a week and a half, he made a portrait of an activist from Norway and, after learning the process of linoleum carving, ended up

printing many pieces by hand. On the final day at TPO, I saw him explaining the process to another visitor in the space and sharing the skills he had learned. These experiences were similar to many others that occurred during my time there. Simphiwe and Lungile, two friends, one of whom is an artist, wanted to try something new and proceeded to make a stencil and spray-paint work that talked about love and power. Lusan is a photographer who was interested in turning some of his images into a lino print. Lolo was using the space as a way to meditate and make something new. Each of these experiences culminated with a reflection on the process, the feelings of which were sometimes frustrating but almost always positive.



Figure 26 - Jonathan with his drawing. 2020 Photo by Nathan Senssel

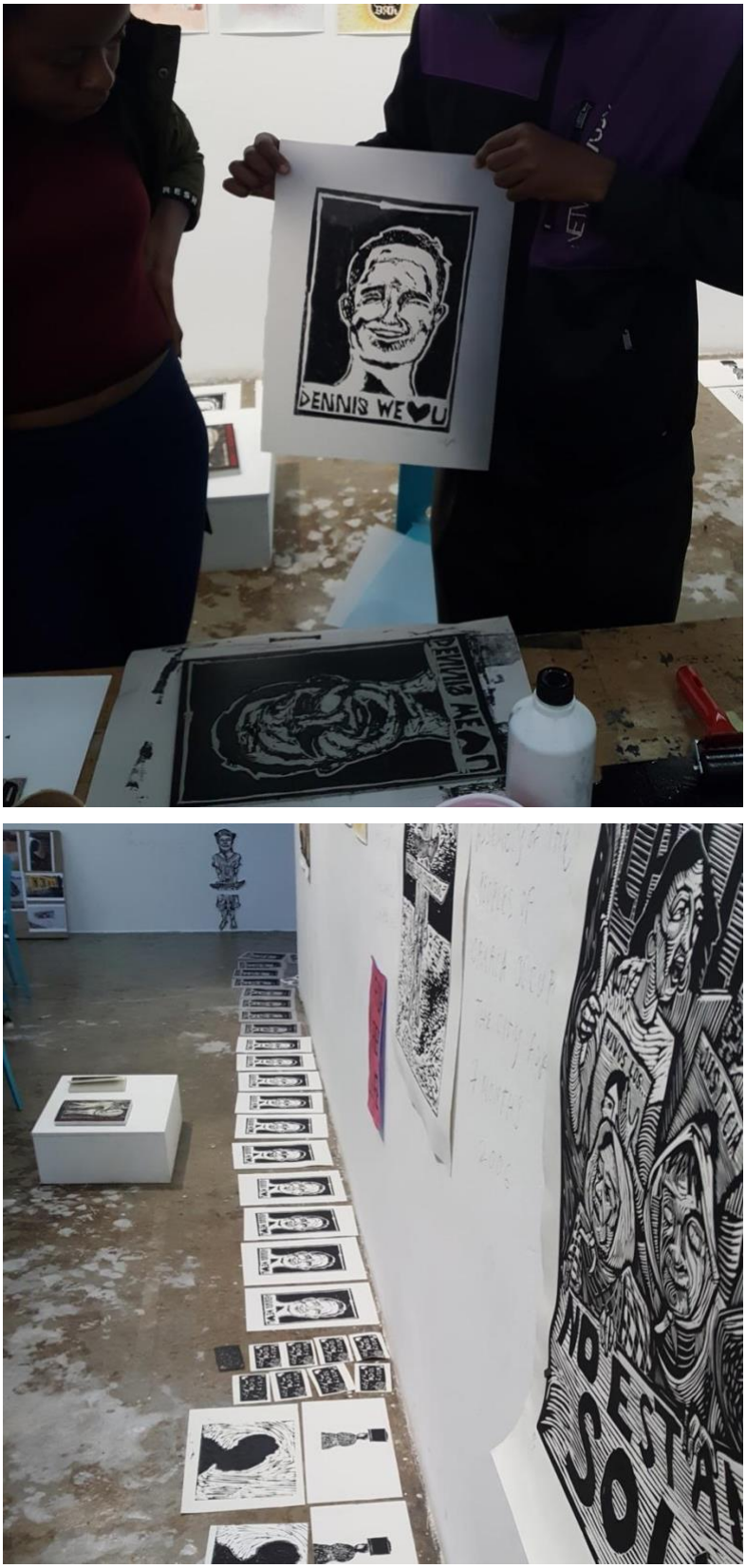


Figure 27a and 27 b - Jonathan's prints. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 28 - Simphiwe and Lungile creating stencil pieces. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

There were moments during my time at TPO that I wondered why more people weren't entering and interacting with us. So many people were outside the windows, looking in, trying to figure out what was going on but not wanting to enter. The divide between the outside world and the space was big enough that most people were not able to access it, even though we were right off the street. I kept thinking about TAC in Oaxaca and how they were taking the artwork they created out into the world and letting people interact with it on their own terms. Even though the space was set up to encourage as many people to feel welcome as possible, the vast majority did not take part. Throughout the two weeks, I also often doubted how well I connected with people. How does one measure the depth, the breadth, or the scope of our shared cultural experience? Is this something that can be evaluated or is it just a feeling? Is the evidence of such an experience the actions of someone else we consider to be in our cultural group or is it more general/universal?

One thing that I noticed was that towards the end of the week, more and more people were coming in or returning as they discovered the times and days that the space would be open, and participants began interacting with each other as they met for the 2nd or 3rd time. Had we remained there for another week, I believe the space would have been full the entire day every day. Each of the interactions I had with people were different, each brought its own challenges and its own meaning. Our conversations revolved around each person's experiences and who they are. Through these conversations I was able to learn a little bit about their past and their identity and to understand and recognize them. Through this sharing we came to define ourselves in a new way. We began to see ourselves through new eyes, to redefine our past, to exchange the touch of being together. The question that arises for me in relation to this is what is the correlation between trust and the amount of time spent together? How much time is necessary for the development of culture within a group, to significantly engage in material and symbolic culture, and to create something (an object, proposal or action) that is meaningful to them? And when we define meaning, what does the engagement with discourse look like? What form does it take?



Figure 29 - Visitors at TPO. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel



Figure 30 - Kim Berman with students from APS at TPO. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel





Figure 31a and 31b - Visitors working at TPO. 2020 Photo by Nathan Sensel

Epilogue: The Phenomenon of Pedagogy and Art

In the past few weeks since having returned to the United States and reflecting on all of these experiences, the situation in which we all live has changed in an unprecedented way. With the onset of a pandemic that has fundamentally changed the way we live and interact I am confronted with an ontological problem: our ability to touch other people has become a much riskier proposition. We can no longer gather in groups to enact culture in the way we have in the past. Our ability to sit freely next to one another and touch, to breathe each other and hear our breathing, to literally share ourselves in a most basic, biological way comes now with the potential for deadly contamination. I've based this study on the materialist idea that our identity is predicated on physical interactions with other people, that we come to know our full selves only through our senses, through the development of language to reflect on and describe experiences to ourselves and others, and then to act on ideas that emerge from these reflections. I've firmly placed my thinking in a phenomenological approach to understanding myself and the world around me and I've rooted this study in a hermeneutic framework and all of the artmaking/learning has been determined by this process. I've continued to search for the answer to these questions because they will continue to change as I investigate. And all of that, now seems very precariously in danger. The world has contracted.

This situation underscores the luxury of my position -- I am privileged to have the opportunities I've had over the past two years to travel to Mexico and South Africa, and beyond that, I was able to afford supplies for artmaking, the time to make works of art, and I have had access to spaces to show these works. I was lucky to be born into a family that values education, art, and the people around them. Sitting with and reflecting on this, I am thinking about how I can help create these luxuries, these privileges, for others that don't have them while not even being able to see other people in person. I am reminded about the MEDU Art Ensemble and how they worked to achieve a strong cultural presence of artmaking while in exile in Gaborone and under attack from governmental forces. Of course, the risks they faced are far greater than what my experience is today ... and so I consider how I can continue to work towards the creation of an emergent

artmaking space dedicated to the engagement of socially relevant ideas while not being able to be social in accustomed ways.

In the end, I've found myself looking back at the original question I had when I started this project: Why are artists creating spaces for other people to learn/engage/make? Doesn't it take away from what they should be doing as artists, which is making their own work? Through this study, which is essentially a close look at the similarities of art, pedagogy, and culture, I've entered into a discussion about one's concern for their own spiritual survival and how this is predicated upon the material and spiritual survival of others in an endless loop (Butler 2015). In Touching Feeling (2003), a series of essays by Eve Sedgwick, she talks about the bodhisattva, the figure who, though they have achieved the seemingly impossible end of their quest for spiritual awakening, waits to enter nirvana until all others are through the gate. It's an impossible vision, a mythic being, a superhero of cultural storytelling proportions. Troublingly, it's also a figure that has entered into a relationship where their identity is subsumed within that of the collective, where the individual no longer exists. I see some connection between this figure and the artists that I've discussed that have created spaces for others to learn. They are focused, with precision, on the future, on creating a world that is better for everyone. But of course, the work of creating culture is never finished and is constantly being remade. The pedagogical theories I've discussed never include a statement about how to 'finish' or 'complete' the work, it's a constantly renewing thing.

For me, as I am working to understand this interaction, I'm realizing that the biggest tension of all is finding the place where an identity is constantly interpreted and reinterpreted -- because, without the ability to accurately define, evaluate, or, as in our current situation, *enact* these cultural instances, the meaning of this work remains difficult to pin down, or exists for just a moment and then is gone often without ever being named. However, we continue to archive and re-archive our past experiences, to tell and retell our histories, we reach out and 'touch' others virtually, and we even continue to imagine the future collectively using new methods, new processes, and new language. The phenomenon of artistic and cultural production continues in the only way that it can, by remaking itself.

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Appendix

Duduzile More

Biography

Morezile (MoreBloom) More was born in 1990 and lives in Soweto, Johannesburg. In 2015 after completing matric, she enrolled at the Artist Proof Studio. She has been active in many corporate projects and commissions while studying. She was selected as one of the top 15 finalists for the Thami Mnyele Fine Art competition in 2016 and 2017.

Thabang Molefe

Biography

Thabang Molefe was born in 1996 in Soweto, Johannesburg where he currently resides. In 2015, he matriculated from Northcliff High School. Molefe was a part of an NPO called Izinkhanyezi di Naledi community development in 2015-2017. The NPO aimed to educate High School children in Soweto about career choices. Molefe is also a vocalist, lyricist, music producer and photographer. Through Artist Prof Studio, he has participated in community based projects such as revamping a primary school library. In 2018 Molefe completed his is third year at Artist Proof Studio mastering the print medium of Intaglio and relief printing. He plans to enrol for the 4th Year internship programme in 2019 to further his studies at Artist Proof Studio.

David Madlabane

Biography

David Madlabane was born in 1996, in the East Rand Gauteng. In 2015, Madlabane matriculated from Wendywood High school. Madlabane is currently residing in the East Rand, Johannesburg. Madlabane also specialises in a wide range of mediums such as drawing in ink, pencil and charcoal. Madlabane is also interested in painting, digital art and producing music. In 2017 and

2018 he was selected to take part in the Cartier collaboration with The Artist Proof Studio, exhibiting work at the FNB Art Fair where he received 1st prize for his print.

Pule Ratsoma

Biography

Ratsoma was born in Thembisa, Gauteng. His interest in art grew in 2013 when he took part in an exhibition called "Black like us". In 2015 he enrolled at the Artist Proof Studio to study professional printmaking. During his 2nd Year Ratsoma took a break from his studies to work in the family business after the passing of his father. He then returned to APS to complete his studies in 2017. He has been involved in community outreach projects and social awareness campaigns. During his 2nd and 3rd Year Ratsoma exhibited his work at the Turbine Art Fair as part of the *Pierneef Interpreted* and *Irma Stern still life* with Strauss & Co. Ratsoma aspires to practice as a professional artist and teach printmaking and art in rural areas and townships to communities where art is less accessible. His 3rd Year body of work masters the screen print medium. He plans to enrol for the 4th Year internship programme in 2019 to further his studies at Artist Proof Studio.

Raymond Fuyana

Biography

Raymond Fuyana was born in 1995 in Zimbabwe. He moved to South Africa, Johannesburg in 2009 seeking a good deaf school. He attended St Vincent School for the Deaf in Rosebank. While at St Vincent he worked with artists at the Bag Factory for a year. Fuyana joined the Saturday Youth Portfolio Development at Artist Proof Studio in 2015 as he was still in school.

Thuli Lubisi

Biography

Thuli Lubisi was born in 1993 in Atteridgeville, Pretoria. She lived in Mamelodi before her family relocated to Soweto, Johannesburg. In 2011 Lubisi completed her matric at P.J Simelane Secondary School. She then went on to do a short course in Computer Comprehensive Studies at Birnam College. In 2015, Lubisi studied Visual Arts at Funda Art Centre. She joined APS in 2016

and is now completing her 3rd year majoring in screenprint and linocut techniques. She has been involved in community mural projects in Nancefield/Klipspruit. She has exhibited her works at the Joburg Art Fair in collaboration with Cartier in 2017 and 2018. She was also involved in the Wits Art Museum ‘One Colour at a Time’ exhibition, Cartier and Hollard Murals. She has exhibited at the Turbine Art Fair in 2017 and 2018 as part of the Pierineef Impressions and Irma Stern still life with Strauss & Co. She plans to enrol for the 4th Year internship programme in 2019 to further her studies at Artist Proof Studio as a professional printmaker.