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Statement on Current Research and Creative Practice
2022-2023 Academic Year

This statement is a summary of three compelling major projects and research endeavors I am currently working on and expect to continue through the coming academic year.

Research: *Exit/us: Reversing the exodus of at-risk art educators*

Writing: *Picture This: Creativity as a Philosophical, Personal, and Professional Practice.*

Creative Practice: *Walking A/r/tography and the Movimento Project*

Exit/us: Reversing the exodus of at-risk arts educators

Prior to 2020, the statistics of U.S. educators leaving the profession in the first five years was discouraging. The pandemic has significantly worsened the problem by the sudden thrust into online teaching formats for which very few art educators were trained and prepared. Preliminary research of current articles and data collection thus far have not included separate statistics for visual arts educators, yet we know the situation is serious. We need to seek out the root causes of the exodus, including the aspects of teaching in 2020 and 2021, that are igniting the foundations of our educational institutions, that we may better understand how to build and rebuild art educator preparation programs and support networks.

This research endeavor is currently underway. Through a national online [survey](#), I am soliciting responses from K-12 visual art educators across the United States. Participants respond voluntarily with full privacy and anonymity to questions regarding their experiences in teaching visual arts, perceived support from school and district leadership, support networks, and experiences teaching during the pandemic. Responses are solicited both from art educators leaving the field and those who are staying, as this research also seeks to determine factors that will lead to a longer, fulfilling career.

The research application was approved by the IRB Board for the University of Texas at Arlington in November of 2021. The survey launched in December and ran through summer 2022. Currently I am analyzing the data to present at conferences and prepare for publication. The goal of the long-term research effort is to develop updated data relevant to our field, and to discover both problems and successes that can inform pre-service education preparation programs and school systems seeking to retain qualified and talented arts educators.

Philosophies of Creativity

Currently, I am writing a unique book about creativity called *Picture This! The how and why of creativity*. The primary objective for this book is to present and discuss a targeted range of philosophies and perspectives on creativity integrated with the practice of *being* creative. This unique ontology explores elements and stages of creativity, and perspectives on creative practice from artists, writers, and performers. The studies support pedagogical material for art educators as they teach students to deeply engage with the spectacular experiences of discovery and creativity. Under review with Davis Publications.

Walking A/r/tography and the Movimento Project

This project combines research, writing, walking, photography, and visualization through a creative endeavor with fellow artists and writers across the globe. At the InSEA conference in Vancouver (2019) I discovered a group of artists and art educators practicing Walking A/r/tography on every continent coming together to share their experiences and exhibit the visual products of their walks through a wide range of media. While researching for my dissertation in 2017, I experienced walking and being present, including lostness and wandering, as a profound methodology for data collection. I was thrilled to connect with this community through a shared creative philosophy.

Since the conference, I have engaged with Walking A/r/tography through a new creative practice called the [Movimento Project](#). We also have a book that has been accepted for publication with Springer's SABER series with the working title *Walking as Critical Inquiry*. My chapter, "Discovering Lostness: Wandering and Getting Lost as Research Methodology," investigates the role of lostness to enhance observation and awareness through research and creative expression as illustrated and experienced with my Movimento Project. Here is an excerpt from "Discovering Lostness:"

Walking on two feet, moving through unfamiliar landscapes, is for me a powerful research tool for investigation, observation, writing and reflecting. My slow kinetic encounters reveal ideas and insights about lived creative experiences unavailable elsewhere. Further, a methodology of lostness and wandering as a research practice has proved to be profoundly enlightening. More than simply walking, wandering can be hesitant and uncertain, shuffling and distracted. Wandering is kinesis with the freedom to pause, suspending movement to linger,

savor, and be immersed in a moment. Wandering has built-in space for wonder, for surprise, for discovery; it allows time for detailed observation and the contemplation of meaning. Thus phenomenological walks that allow for wandering and lostness can empower the researcher, the artist, the writer, and the seeker with unique opportunities for discovery rich with meaning.

The Movimento Project is a visual expression of this philosophy, my creative practice that involves moving into and through primarily natural spaces to make and capture a visual expression of movement. This involves exploring new places, drawing in sand or earth, or assembling local debris, then photographing the results. The gallery section of my website presents the current results of this endeavor. An excerpt from my artist's statement:

Movimento is an exploration in a wandering-ology. In the spirit of Heidegger and Husserl, our sense of dwelling is not limited to interiors; rather it includes community, place, time, and the continuous interactions between all of those. Thus movement is intrinsic to being, and particularly when creativity is an expression of being (for the artist) such wandering can dramatically enhance our sense of perception and awareness. I have made a case for embodied data collection through walking and wandering as supported by phenomenology as a philosophical framework and a research methodology. Here, I turn these underpinnings towards creative processes that rely upon the body to perceive, conceive, and generate a visual expression of movement through space, to temporarily make manifest the fleeting gestures of motion.

These creative investigations are of course affected by the global climate of the pandemic. Travel and free exploration of space continues to be somewhat inhibited, rewriting and shifting expectations. Dwelling within this context also forces new ideas, such as confronting a concept of movement-that-cannot-depart as an expression of being. It is my hope that the investigations described here will yield useful and meaningful knowledge that will be empowering to the field as well as uplift artists and educators through creativity.