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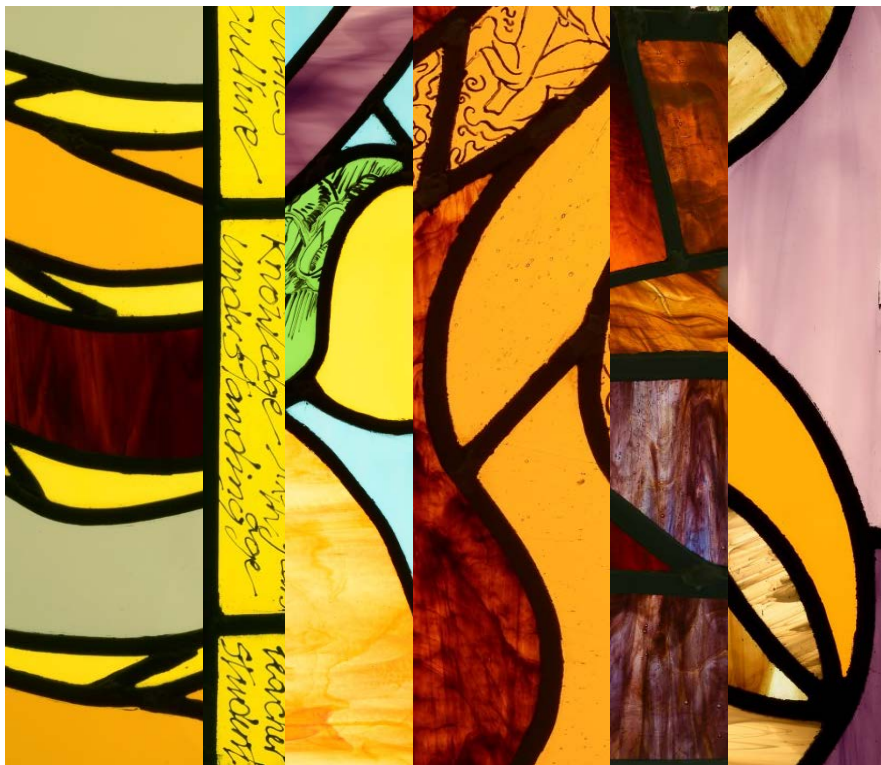
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# INTO THE LIGHT:

MODELLING ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

PAULINE PATRICK

SEPTEMBER 2014



SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION (EdD)

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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## ABSTRACT

There is a recognised tension between the different roles that teachers of art in secondary schools are required to adopt in the course of their careers. This study explores the hypothesis that a teacher who continues to practice art is better able to model artistic practices for pupils and that this is a valuable factor which argues in favour of teacher/artists continuing to practice both professions simultaneously.

This issue is approached first of all through the author's own experiences as an artist and art teacher, then through a literature review which covers the place of art in the curriculum, the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS), the gap which is perceived to exist between so-called 'school art' and contemporary art, the making process, constructivist learning theories, the artist's identity and the teacher's identity. This section provides the theoretical underpinning for the study. Chapter Three presents the methodological framework: a constructivist paradigm is used and a/r/tography is incorporated to support the inclusion of the author's visual art practice, art education research and teaching and learning experiences. The data corpus is analysed through grounded theory methods.

The main data section in Chapter Four presents the narratives of twenty participants based in the UK who reflect upon the relationships that exist between their personal and professional lives and their identities as artists and as teachers. Accounts of both past and present experiences are recorded and analysed in order to identify recurrent themes which emerge from the grounded theory process. This method consciously foregrounds the voices of the artist/teachers, allowing them to express their views in their own words. This, in turn, presents a window into their worlds, illustrating the way that they navigate through the tensions and competing demands of daily life as an artist/teacher. Where appropriate reference is made to visual material offered by the participants and forms of data drawn from schools and from the art organisations with which the schools have contact. Inclusion of this material allows a full picture of the context of the narratives to be drawn and some of the concepts, issues and teaching outcomes to be illustrated through 'concrete' examples.

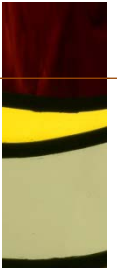


In Chapter Five the themes identified in the narratives from the preceding chapter are analysed in the light of the literature surrounding the topic and the author's own experience as an artist/teacher. These themes focus on the educational exchanges between the art teacher and the learner and the tensions which exist when an artist/teacher maintains an artist persona within the institutional framework of a secondary school. In the final chapter conclusions are drawn from a linkage between the theory and practices which have been revealed through the literature review and the narratives. One of the most important conclusions is the acknowledgement that constructivist approaches favoured by artists can and should inform their pedagogy when they become professional educators. A number of recommendations are made in the light of the findings including implications for the wider educational community.



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I owe the deepest gratitude to the following people:

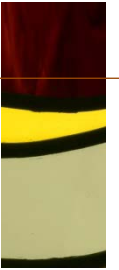
Professor Penny Enslin, Director of the EdD programme, who opened the gates for me.

Professor Alison Phipps, my wonderful supervisor, who guided me gently towards the light.

The participants who very graciously met with me during my research to discuss their experiences in art education.

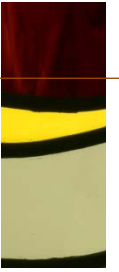
My parents, May and Jim McColl, and my parents-in-law, Janet and George Patrick, who encouraged and supported me on this journey.

My darling husband, Donald, and my beautiful boy Lewis who gave me constant and unconditional love at all times.



# DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis is my original work and that all references to, and quotations from, the work of others contained therein have been clearly identified and fully attributed.

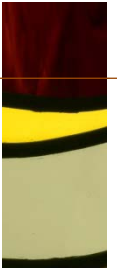


# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION







# CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

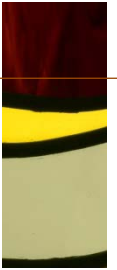
## The Research Question

It could be argued that all teachers must be practitioners of their own subjects. This raises an interesting point: should teachers be engaged in practicing their subject outside the classroom, and does it make them a more effective teacher if they are? If so, how can teachers be enabled to do this?

This question is of particular relevance in arts subjects, and has become of particular interest in my own case following my return to study after teaching art for 25 years. Having regretfully abandoned my own art practice on becoming a teacher I would like to explore further the question of whether having continued with it would have enhanced my teaching.

In the Doctorate of Education (EdD), I found considerable disparity between the literature I was studying and my experiences in the classroom. The literature centred very much on teaching contemporary art practices and concepts, whereas my teaching was focused more on modernist, skills-based courses. I had minimal engagement with current educational research and theory; leading me to question what I, and others brought to the classroom and how we were modelling artistic practices.

There is a common conception among teachers that ‘modelling’ equates to ‘demonstrating’. However, modelling goes far deeper than simple demonstrations, but means revealing certain behaviours and ways of thinking; helping pupils to see the world from different viewpoints. An example might be found in looking at a flower: an artist would perceive it in terms of colour, texture and shape; a scientist might think of it in terms of cellular and genetic makeup; and a mathematician might perceive complex numerical patterns. By passing these different perceptions on to children, we equip them to create their own, unique perception of the world around them. This then gives rise to the question of whether we, as teachers, risk losing touch with these behaviours and thought processes if we do not keep up our own practice in the subject.

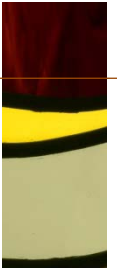


In returning to study and re-examining my own practice in the light of educational theory, it has become apparent that art and art making occurs most effectively through constructivist and co-constructivist learning. The constructivist theory of learning was first proposed by Dewey (1916), and later formalized by Piaget; in its simplest form, it argues that individuals construct new knowledge through processes of accommodation and assimilation of their own experiences (Piaget, 1974). Co-constructivism extends this theory to acknowledge the importance of interaction with others in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore the question arises as to whether, by abandoning my own practice, I have limited my own and therefore my pupils' learning.

This thesis is about art teaching and the importance of continuing to practice art. But it is also about learning and has a wider resonance for the whole educational community. For example, do music teachers need to be active, performing musicians? And what about those subjects where there are fewer or less obvious opportunities for teachers to be practitioners, such as the sciences? What place do constructivist and co-constructivist learning theories have across the curriculum as a whole? Whilst these questions go beyond the scope of this study, it is evident that they are worthy of further investigation.

### My Story

I begin this study by reflecting on the educational, artistic and teaching experiences that have been instrumental in forming my sense of identity as an art educator. It is my belief that these formative educational experiences are responsible for my pedagogical values, self-identity and attitude towards the subject. In addition, other elements such as culture, environment, gender, ethnicity and relationships have also informed my artistic and teacher self. In employing a reflexive approach, these formative memories and events provide a background to the project's inception. I am also aware of Hickman's (2013) warning that it is incumbent on researchers when writing about themselves to consider three important elements: 'veracity, utility and ethicality' (Hickman, 2013, p.18). Reflection on these three areas and my feelings about recounting my story provide a useful reference point when asking other art teachers to talk about comparable experiences and pedagogical practice.



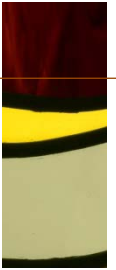
### Primary and Secondary Education

I discovered quite early in life, at primary school, that I had a certain artistic ability. My parents, both teachers, were keen to support this talent and I have them to thank for giving me a push in the right direction. As a child I was sent to Saturday morning classes at the local art gallery and encouraged through praise and a regular supply of art materials. I was successful in winning some local junior art competitions and this provided me with the confidence and motivation to spend long hours practicing my drawing skills. This was a rather solitary activity but, nonetheless, both pleasant and productive. By secondary school, art had become my main focus, perhaps to the detriment of other subjects and interests. I found the art teachers more approachable than other members of staff and they became my main role models at that time. In the early 1980s, art courses were relatively loose and unstructured with drawing, painting and printmaking forming the main content of the curriculum. As far as I was concerned, this freedom to experiment was a wonderful opportunity. I thrived on my fledgling sense of autonomy and relished taking risks, secure in the knowledge that teachers were hovering in the background to provide support if needed. These fantastic teachers adopted the role of facilitators, guiding me gently towards personal discovery and I trusted them implicitly. In my senior years, I was usually to be found in the art department, at the back of a teacher's classroom messing about with materials and experimenting with style and content. It was perhaps here, whilst observing other classes under instruction, that the notion of becoming a teacher was planted like a seed in my psyche/subconscious.

In sixth year I applied for a place at art school. In Scotland, at that time, the four art schools: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, were grouped under an umbrella application process. The student's portfolio was submitted to their first choice of school where it was judged by a panel and either accepted or forwarded to the second choice. I endured a few nail-biting weeks as I waited for the outcome, but was fortunate to gain entry to my first choice.

### Art School

I found the art school experience rather daunting. As first years, we were divided into groups and allocated a tutor. There was little contact with these tutors and I missed the mentoring I had received at secondary school. This was a different type



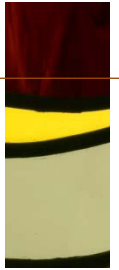
of pedagogical approach, one based on independent learning and monthly critiques. There was a distinct division between school and art school with virtually no attempt to align the two institutions and I found the transition difficult. There was also a huge difference between school art and what was expected here. Gone were the traditional still-life and figurative studies, the focus was now on concept and context. Following the general first year, entry to departments was again dependent on a portfolio of evidence and it occurred to me, even then, that in order to become an artist you had to overcome many obstacles; furthermore, that the people who made decisions about your artistic ability were in a position of power.

### Working as a Designer

On graduating, I found a job with a reputable design company in the city as a graphic designer. At first, I found it interesting and exciting. I enjoyed the fact that it was driven by client expectations, highly structured briefs and deadlines. Here I could use my talents in a constructive way with the added benefit of some financial security. However, over time, that enjoyment waned as I found myself bound to a desk for lengthy periods of time with little social contact. It was at this point that I began to think about becoming an art teacher. I realised that I could combine my talent and interest in art with the opportunity to engage with other people in the subject.

### Becoming a Teacher

The first time I entered a classroom I knew that I had made the right decision. I slipped effortlessly into the teacher persona. I met with no internal resistance on transferring identity from that of artist to teacher. I did not feel any of the fear that some of my peers felt on facing a group of adolescent boys. In front of a class, I performed with a big, strong personality and this worked well for me. I was comfortable interacting with these young people. In some ways, I had been preparing for this all my life; I had enjoyed spending time with my art teachers at school and had whiled away hours as a senior pupil observing them teach. Both of my parents were teachers and I had often sat around the dining table listening to tales of school. I also knew that I wanted to make a difference, to be fully involved with the pupils, to support them in discovering all the pleasure and the pain that making art can bring.

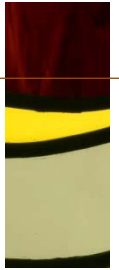


On returning to the school environment, one of the first things to confront me was the revised curriculum. The new qualification framework was a much tighter arrangement; in the third and fourth years courses were structured around three elements, with equal weighting given to critical, design, and expressive activities. This was a huge change as there had been very little study of either art theory or the design process at this level when I was at school. It was also the beginning of portfolio assessment; units of work were used as formative and summative assessment tools at all levels. There was a shortage of teaching jobs when I graduated from teacher training college and my first two years were spent in long-term temporary posts, moving around the country wherever the work took me. This was an excellent grounding; firstly because it allowed me to observe different styles of teaching, and secondly it honed my skills in classroom management.

I was then assigned a full-time permanent post as an art teacher in a large mixed comprehensive. This was a fantastic experience. The staff were friendly and helpful and the pupils were generally responsive to the subject. Along with the permanent post came a sense of autonomy again, I could take this position and make it my own. I began by turning my classroom into a haven for aspiring artists who were looking for a place to go at lunchtime to make art, listen to music and socialise with other artists. Having this space allowed me to experiment with my pedagogical practice away from the gaze of other teachers or senior management. I found that I enjoyed demonstrating techniques at the beginning of the lesson and moved around the room dispensing help and advice as the lesson progressed. Throughout this time I always tried to be encouraging and positive, always looking for opportunities to praise, and I developed some excellent relationships with the pupils. After four very enjoyable years I decided that I was ready to move on. I started to apply for department management jobs and in my second interview was successful in obtaining a post.

### Principal Teacher

The school was in an area of deprivation and the pupil population had a reputation as being 'challenging'. The department I inherited had been slowly run down, as the previous principal teacher (PT) edged towards retirement. In these circumstances, I felt that it was important to provide a fresh start, both for the existing staff and for the pupils. I started with the practical job of rearranging the

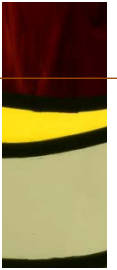


space. I worked long hours until I was satisfied with the layout and organisation of the environment. I then introduced a radio, begged additional finance from the HT and purchased lots of books (this was before technology really took hold). I also encouraged visiting artists and arranged trips to museums and art galleries. Before long, the art department was a vibrant, exciting place to be and pupil numbers increased.

This all seems relatively straightforward, but it would be dishonest of me to state that it was without its drawbacks. In fact, those early days were a struggle as I became aware that I was responsible for staff, pupils, materials and the success of the department in general, including examination results. I had many candid conversations with others, mainly senior management, over curricular changes, assessment procedures, space, time and money for materials. I was no longer as involved with my own teaching as I had been before the promotion and I missed that, I also had little time for other activities beyond the school day. Some of the pupils who initially displayed challenging behaviours became more settled as we got to know each other. This original group of pupils grew and became parents themselves and, latterly, much to my amusement and theirs, I would encounter them at parents' nights. It was this that brought me to the realisation that I had become something of a fixture.

### University Work and Study

After several years and following the birth of my son, I opted for a job-share arrangement and was then offered some associate work in two of the teacher training colleges affiliated to the universities in the area. I found this work very different from teaching in schools. The students were knowledgeable and inquisitive and I spent a lot of time just trying to keep abreast of the course reading material in order to justify my position. This experience taught me that, on a practical basis, I had much to offer these beginning teachers, but theoretically my knowledge and understanding was severely lacking. Consequently, I decided to apply for a place on the Doctor of Education (EdD) course at Glasgow University and, following an interview with the Programme Director, I was accepted on a self-funding basis. At the start of the course I was juggling three part-time jobs, raising a young child and studying. Through time, I became aware that this was unsustainable. I still enjoyed teaching, but had grown tired of the duties associated



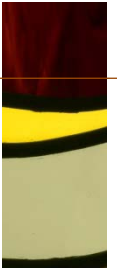
with management, so I handed in my notice at school and retained the university work for the foreseeable future.

### Rationale for the Study

When I started the EdD I held somewhat traditional views on education and art practice. I had managed to avoid most new pedagogical theories and much of what was happening in the contemporary art world. This might appear strange to those not involved in teaching, but I think it is probably quite common. Admittedly, there were several curricular changes during that period and, at those times, there was a big push to ensure that there was a smooth transition. Beyond that, I continued to teach in much the same style and with much the same content as I had at the beginning of my career in the 1980s. I find this a difficult admission to make in a public forum but I realise that the rationale for this project is contingent on my honesty. The Doctorate in Education (EdD) marked a change in my attitude and outlook. It was the catalyst that I needed to review and reconsider the content and methods of my teaching practice. It enlightened me to literature, discourse and thinking in areas that were previously unfamiliar to me. It also gave me some time and a supportive space to reflect on my personal history and explore how past experiences had influenced my practice as an artist and a teacher.

### New Possibilities

Before becoming a teacher I was an artist, but that identity had gradually disappeared, consumed by the demands of teaching. On reflection, I could see that the education system provided little encouragement for me to continue with my own creative practice (Adams, 2007). Where I worked, Continued Professional Development (CPD) based on practical skills had gradually petered out, mainly due to financial restrictions and other educational priorities. I missed making art and being an artist and believed that, if the right opportunity came along, I would be ready to embrace it. It was whilst searching for a suitable methodology for my proposal that I became aware of new forms of arts-based research in education. I could see all sorts of possibilities for myself and other creative people through combining artistic and linguistic methods within educational research projects.



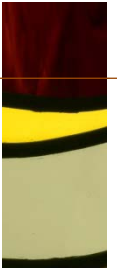
### An Opportunity

In my third year of study I was asked to select a topic for my dissertation project. Having spent twenty five years as an art educator in secondary schools there was no question that it had to be based around that subject. Those years had given me a very restricted, insular view of what art teaching was and the course literature had opened my eyes to what it could be. These views were polemic at times leading me to question my own practice in relation to others. Thus, I was drawn to study the pedagogy and practice of art teachers in secondary education in relation to the current literature and personal experience. Whilst making these decisions I was lucky to have a very supportive supervisor who encouraged me to recapture my artistic identity by including art-based methods in my study. This would entail the use of visual journals to map the trajectory of the project. These journals would in turn provide reference material leading to a series of artworks created to reflect the research process and complement the written text. I chose to work in decorative glass, a medium I had long admired and which was quite removed from my original training. Here was an opportunity to rediscover my latent artistic talent in conjunction with my written studies and I was keen to realise the potential of combining both methods.

### The Study Focus

The starting point for the study was the realisation that the creative tension between artist and teacher roles is something that deeply affects the art teacher's life and work. My own experience had left me with regrets about giving up my art practice in order to devote myself wholly to pedagogy and the demands of full-time teaching in a secondary school. Furthermore, from observing other teachers, I had come to suspect that the best teachers were those who simultaneously maintained an active interest in their own art production, even though there are clearly some barriers and pressures which make this difficult, including the need to support and secure a steady income for self and dependents. The key focus which emerged from these reflections was the relationship between an art teacher's own practice as an artist and his/her teaching. This prompted me to reflect on the ontological questions surrounding teaching, working as an artist, and combining these two activities. I was interested in how art teachers model practice to their pupils. Being an art teacher has certain practices attached to it that have emerged



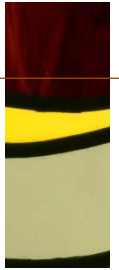


through past and present experiences and are then revealed in the classroom. Modelling in this context is not just about demonstrating, it refers to a deeper more embodied position.

Another concern was the difference between the academic literature surrounding art education which focused on contemporary concepts and practices, and my own pedagogical outlook. I was therefore interested to see if other art educators were bringing these concepts into the classroom. My studies had shown that contemporary art practices focus on progressive, experimental representations of artists and art practices, whilst 'school art' retains a more conventional approach (Burgess, 2003; Burgess & Addison, 2004; Hughes, 1998; Robins, 2003; Steers, 2005; Wild, 2011). It was also worthwhile here to question whether the curricular and assessment frameworks that regulate teachers' practice are responsible for the avoidance of risk-taking, thereby maintaining these traditional forms of art in secondary schools (Atkinson, 2005, 2011; Mason & Steers, 2007; Rayment, 2007; Steers, 2005).

In re-examining my own practice as an artist and as a teacher in the light of educational theory, it became apparent that constructivist (Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1974) and co-constructivist (Vygotsky, 1978) learning theories were most conducive to making art and art teaching. These theories, which focus on learning through interaction with the world around us, and learning in a community of artists are particularly relevant in the field of art. Not only are they useful in secondary schools, but it can be argued that artists of all ages are participating in a constructive learning process (Millbrandt, et al., 2004). Through this perspective I could see that by abandoning my art practice I had restricted my own learning and in turn limited the learning of my students. I was therefore interested to see whether other art teachers viewed their own learning through a constructivist lens or were adopting these approaches in the art classroom.

In this study I chose a/r/tography as a suitable methodology to explore my new identity as an artist/researcher/teacher. This allowed me to return to my art practice as a researcher and a teacher. In my later years in secondary education there had been minimum in-service provision especially in artistic skills-based courses. From my own experiences as an a/r/tographer I could see that practice-based research might be a useful vehicle for art teachers to continue making art



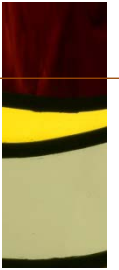
whilst exploring their teaching practice (Bresler, 2006; Bolt, 2010; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Cole & Knowles, 2008; Haseman, 2010; Irwin, 2004; Smith & Dean, 2009; Sullivan, 2005). This form of research diverges from traditional social science methodologies and methods that are reliant on the confidence and ability to write well (Barone, 2001; Eisner, 1991). Artists, and art teachers, are more visually and spatially oriented (Adams, 2007), meaning that practice-based research could be a more attractive option for them. These questions regarding the benefits of practice-based research lead to further consideration of the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) as an initiative which combines art making and art teaching towards a useful qualification (Adams, 2003; Atkinson, 2011; Galloway, Stanley and Strand, 2006; Hall, 2010; Page, Adams and Hyde, 2009; Thornton, 2013). The scheme provides courses of study to Masters level with a main focus on contemporary art. I wanted to find out if other art teachers are interested in research as a vehicle to explore teaching and artistic practice and also if they are aware of the ATS.

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review of the current literature based on the relationships between art teachers' perceptions about their identities and personal art practice and how this relates to their teaching and pedagogies. It includes the following sections: The Artist Identity; The Teacher Identity; 'School Art' and Contemporary Art; The Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS); The Intricate Processes of Art-making; Constructivist Learning Theories and Art Education; and The Place of Art in the Curriculum.

Chapter Three presents the methodological framework: a constructivist paradigm along with a/r/tography is used to support the inclusion of visual art practice, art education research and teaching and learning experiences. This is a relatively small study with a sample of twenty art educators, using interviews as the main tool for collecting qualitative data. The data corpus is analysed through grounded theory methods.

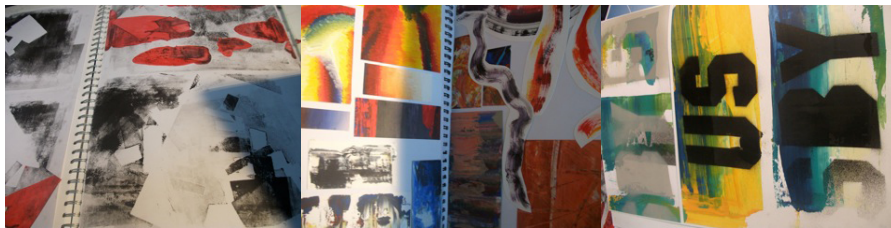
Chapter Four presents the participants' personal narratives with brief introductions and minimum intervention. It offers a space for art teachers' voices to be heard in the spirit of participatory research. In this space, they have the opportunity to reflect upon and explore the relationships between the personal and professional,

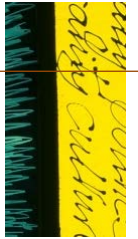


between their identities as artists and as teachers. The structure of this chapter is contingent on the categories and themes that emerge from the grounded theory analysis process. This provides an effective framework to present the participants' constructions of their past and present experiences in art education.

Chapter Five continues with the same thematic framework as used previously to provide a logical, coherent structure for the reader. In this chapter I examine the participants' responses and provide critical comment drawn from my own experience and relevant literature. This discussion leads towards conclusions and helps to generate recommendations for art education in the future.

Chapter Six brings to the fore the most salient points from both the participants' constructions and from the discussion. It also contains reflections on the experience of using an a/r/tographic approach within educational research. This information is presented in the form of a set of conclusions leading towards recommendations for art education and the wider education community.

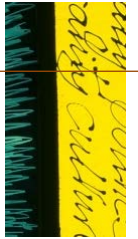




## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW





# CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

This review relates to the key question considered in this study, that is to say, whether an art teacher's performance in the classroom is enhanced by their own practice as an artist.

In reviewing the literature relating to this subject, seven specific areas have been considered: teachers' identities as artists; their identities as teachers; differences between school art and contemporary art; the Artist Teacher Scheme; the intricacy of art making; constructivism and co-constructivism.

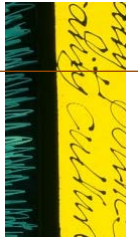
The first section discusses the art teacher's identity as an artist; in other words, how they are identified by their own artwork and practice outside the classroom. As part of this section, artist identity in general is also considered. Following on from this, identity as a teacher is discussed, with particular focus on how this differs from the artistic identity, and how this might affect their performance in the classroom.

Differences between school art and contemporary art are discussed, giving particular consideration to the way in which so-called 'exam orthodoxy' differs from contemporary art practices. Then, the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) is reviewed along with its effects on teachers' classroom practice; along with a discussion of the processes of art making.

Constructivist and co-constructivist learning theories are reviewed, and their importance to the effective teaching of art is discussed. Finally, the place of art in the curriculum is considered, and ways in which art can link to and enhance other curriculum areas are discussed.

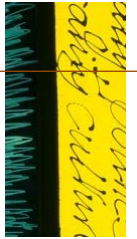
## SECTION ONE – THE ARTISTIC IDENTITY

In order to explore the topic of artistic identity it is relevant to look at the development of young artists in educational settings and reflect on their perceptions of what it means to be an artist. In 1998 Susan Rostan interviewed 39 children aged 8–11 who were pupils in an after-school art class. Each pupil was asked questions about their art projects and what they thought that it meant to be



an artist and to be creative. The study found that these children closely associated the development of skills with their focus on becoming artists – they understood that hard work was key to forming an identity as an artist. Rostan also looked at the ways in which the young artist forms his or her identity in educational establishments and found that this is dependent upon how they view the creative process and what they believe being an artist means (Rostan, 1998). The findings revealed that artistic identity occurs as a ‘self-organising natural phenomenon’ (Rostan, 1998, p.279) that is closely associated with individual choices and perspectives. Thus, a series of set tasks in a school or class environment may be individually interpreted to yield very different results between students. It also emerged that any assessment of an artist’s development must take into account the individual’s artistic interests during childhood and how these progress (Winner, 1996), meaning that parental encouragement is also relevant. As young artists grow they learn to objectively assess their talents and whether they can meet the demands of the art world.

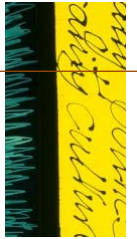
As a key phase in development, childhood brings fluctuations in identity which alter as the person grows older and encounters new experiences. Johnson (2011), for example, claims that childhood is ‘a formative stage, wherein all that happens has a lifelong and often irrevocable impact in shaping the nature of the adult’ (Johnson, 2011, p.viii). And Danuser (1999) suggests that: ‘true *artistic identity* is inconceivable without difference – that is, without discontinuities, crises, and development’ (Danuser, 1999, p.156). A school or educational environment that challenges pupils to consider the meaning of difference and the individuality of their artistic vision is thus more likely to produce pupils who are aware of their own development and who are able to reflect upon their own work and place it in a wider context. Mitias (1985) believes that *artistic identity* is ‘something made, achieved,’ and that ‘in order to have an adequate understanding of this identity we should do well to dwell upon the way or the conditions under which it was produced’ (Mitias, 1985, p.65). This element of self-construction and identity building is often the focus of school curriculums or art classes where the pupils are required to experiment with different forms and materials in order to identify the discipline they find most fulfilling.



Bloomgarden (1995) suggests that how a pupil organises their creative experiences, and how this contributes to self-image, is key to understanding and constructing their artistic identity. However, it is not easy to define artistic identity in children, or even in older artists, due to the transitory nature of the artistic process and the complex ways in which it is affected by personal factors. Bayley & May (2007) claim that 'artistic identity is always already under erasure' (Bayley & May, 2007, p.87) even as it forms, because the nature of the artist's practice is constantly evolving.

### Personality Traits

Artistic personality traits are complex and multi-layered. Csikszentmihalyi (1999) identifies personality traits to be as influential in creativity as cognitive processes, values and motivations. There have been several studies into the artistic personality with a range of conflicting outcomes. According to Wittkower & Wittkower (1963) there is a certain 'otherness' about artists that is acknowledged by the general public and that artists are inclined to be 'egocentric, temperamental, neurotic, rebellious, unreliable, licentious, extravagant, obsessed by their work, and altogether difficult to live with' (Wittkower & Wittkower, 1963, p.xix). Gaztambide-Fernández (2008) studied artists in society and found that artists are viewed as 'entertainers', there to 'arouse the senses and provide experiences that trigger the emotions in extraordinary ways' (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008, p.233). Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi (1976) carried out the first longitudinal study into artists and art practice and found that traits of creative individuals may include readiness to embrace new experiences, self-confidence, an introverted nature, and a tendency to be aloof and rebellious. In life, creative people can be unconventional and exhibit a childlike interest in their surroundings (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). They also perceive an intrinsic value in creative work and privilege this type of work over conventional money-making forms (Ibid.). Guilford (1967) claims that 'divergent thinking' – the ability to 'think outside of the box' and throw together ideas in new ways without clear logical steps – is a key trait in creative people. In the seminal text *Creativity*, Csikszentmihalyi (1999) found ten dimensions related to the creative personality, some bearing remarkable similarity with those described by the other theorists. Yet, he claims that if he were to sum up in one word what makes creatives different it would be 'complexity'



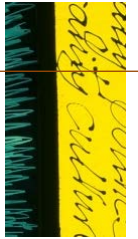
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1999. p.57). Meaning, according to Csikszentmihalyi that their personalities 'contain contradictory extremes – instead of being an individual each of them is a multitude' (Ibid.). He suggests an artistic analogy with the colour white 'which includes all the hues in the spectrum, they tend to bring together the entire range of human possibilities within themselves' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999. p.58).

Creativity is affected by a range of internal and external factors, including individual psychological well-being and emotional states. As expressed by Alper (1998) artistic identity can develop ahead of personality. He cites the example of Steve, who was a patient of his suffering from low self-esteem. In Steve, Alper (1998) identified a 'false self' due to the artist feeling 'unworthy' of the praise and attention received for his work. Ludwig (1992) in research into psychopathology and creative achievement in different careers found that artists displayed 'greater rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, mania somatic problems, anxiety and psychoses' than any of the other professions (Ludwig, 1992, p.349). Finney (2012) notes that although creative people can have high energy levels, they also need time to relax and unwind so as not to become over tired or drawn which can lead to mental and emotional problems. Finney (2012) also claims that creative people can often have high IQs but that they can tend to be naïve and highly sensitive.

For the artist who seeks to become a teacher it is necessary to be aware of how these traits might help or hinder their process of professional development. While the process of becoming a teacher requires focus and commitment it does not necessarily offer much opportunity to develop the creative process. It may be natural for the creative person to think creatively rather than logically, the transition from artist to teacher will require careful consideration and the ability to think strategically. In a work environment the creative person may have to develop their resilience in order to overcome some of the more negative personality traits revealed in the literature.

There is also abundant evidence that the transition from artist to teacher can be very successful. Not all artists will display these traits and some will have developed excellent communication skills and commercial acumen in the course of their training and earlier experience as practicing artists. These abilities are easily transferable to teaching and can be of great value in the classroom to students



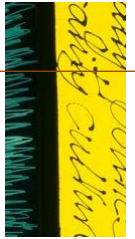


who are struggling with the competing demands of inner desire to focus on areas of interest and the social pressure to conform to the world of work.

This review of literature appears to show that the romanticised, pervasive myths about the lone, suffering artist, set apart from the mainstream are alive and well, but they are by no means the only way that contemporary artists see themselves or want to be seen. A wide variety of successful artist roles and styles are visible in contemporary society including many dual combinations such as the artist/teacher and artist/therapist. This means that we must conclude with Bain (2005) that 'whether in isolation or interaction, the building of an artistic identity is neither steady or consistent; it has varied through history and continues to vary from individual to individual' (Bain, 2005, p.42). An important implication of this realisation for the present study is to regard any participant accounts which reflect stereotypical, romantically inspired artist identity as part of the pervasive, enduring myth which is dear to artists on one level as a link with their illustrious cultural past. This avowed identity may not necessarily reflect other roles which artists successfully fulfill in the world today, many of which are based on the commercial, pedagogic, clinical or other professional values from the world of paid employment. Examining what artist/teachers do, as well as the way they describe their identity is one way of exploring this complex phenomenon of multiple contrasting and overlapping identities.

### Locating the Artist's identity in self-portraiture

Throughout the history of art, artists have explored the theme of self-identity. The use of self-portraiture to explore personal identity as well as culture, gender and sexual orientation has always been placed at the forefront of artistic practice. By presenting themselves in their work, artists can reflect on their lives and develop a better understanding of the construction of their identities. At the same time, they often frame themselves within the wider world and include semiotics to position the work within the contemporary period of its production. Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) and Tracey Emin (1963–) are two artists from different periods of time, working in different forms of media, who are best known for their self-portraits. They give different accounts of this genre of artistic production.

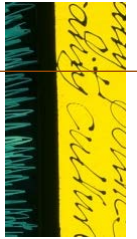


### Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican artist whose work represents national and personal interests. In 1925, she was involved in a traffic accident which left her in extreme pain for the rest of her life. Although influenced by Surrealism, she refused to be directly linked to that movement stating that 'I never paint dreams or nightmares, I paint my own reality'. Her fraught personal and professional life is described in the biography by Andrea Kettenmann *Pain and Passion* (2000). The effect of her turbulent life on her self-portraiture was to create a range of self-images which presented her changing view of herself. As Kettenmann (2000) notes Kahlo could create a 'very different' image of herself depending on what is going on in her life at the time or how she was feeling. Kahlo admitted that the reason she focused on painting herself was 'because I am so often alone and because I am the subject I know best' (Kettenmann, 2000, p.27). The different guises in which Kahlo depicts herself vary. In *Self-portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940) her figure is surrounded by a vibrant background that celebrates the Mexican flora and fauna. Beside her and behind her are a puma and a monkey, and a dead hummingbird charm hangs strategically at her throat. Symbolism plays a large part in her work. The figure is presented as almost overshadowed and overtaken by the natural world as the tendrils of a thorny plant pierce her neck and grow over her shoulders. In another – *Self Portrait with Necklace* (1933) – Kahlo is painted against a pale blue background in tones which match the pendant around her neck. Her expression is pensive and despite her plaited hair and jewellery, there is an androgynous aspect to her appearance because of the deep shadow of hair on her upper lip and the thickness of her eyebrows. Kahlo accumulated sixty six self-portraits in her lifetime, many of them intimate explorations of her broken body, her gender and her native country.

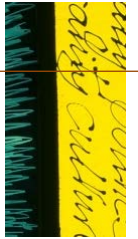
### Tracey Emin

Tracey Emin is a contemporary British artist. Her art has taken various forms, including sculpture, drawing, installation, photography, and needlework. She has courted celebrity in the mass media with her willingness to engage the viewer by revealing the most intimate details of her life, including abortion and abuse. In fact, intimacy is a signature of her work which is best known for its explorations of the links between expression and autobiography. For example, her breakthrough work



the 1997 installation *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963–1995* consisted of a tent with name plaques depicting all the names of people she had slept with sewn into the walls. Her name was written on the floor underneath. In this piece, Emin utilised linguistic narratives combined with artefacts containing symbolic meaning. The close affinity between Emin’s art and her artistic identity can be seen in how she speaks about art and its meaning to her. For example, she once stated that ‘I need art like I need God’ and that ‘the other day I hated my art so much I wanted to smash it, like you abuse a faithful lover’ (The European Graduate School [no date]). The tone of these quotations is highly suggestive of the level of passion and commitment that Emin invests in her art. While she seems to consider art as something separate to herself – a ‘lover’ or counterpart – she also seems to consider it as part of herself; so close as to be almost ‘God’. Emin’s statement – ‘there should be something revelatory about art. It should be totally creative and open doors for new thoughts and experiences’ (The European Graduate School [no date]). This reflects her personality and her readiness to embrace change in her life.

The ways in which artistic identity is formed largely depends upon how the individual regards the artistic process and the meaning of their contribution to it. In the examples of the artists discussed, it is clear that art can be a therapeutic process that can help to maintain psychological and emotional equilibrium. The artist might have certain issues to address in the transition to teaching, but this does not mean that they are not well-equipped to teach. Heightened sensitivity to ordinary stimuli and circumstances – as suggested by Finney (2012) – may cause the creative individual to be more susceptible to stress and the effects of workload. However, these attributes may also allow the creative person to offer a caring and attentive approach to teaching and equip them in the pastoral role of teaching. That creative individuals tend to understand and experience pain and suffering – as seen in the case of Kahlo – and can work out ways in which to express their emotions through art, is also a key attribute to take into the teaching world. If the young artist in a school environment can learn to channel their emotions into their art from an early age, and continue to do so as they develop, then there is the likelihood that they would be able to help nurture this skill in others at a later stage.

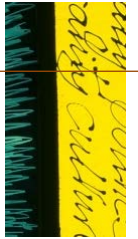


### SECTION TWO – TEACHER IDENTITY AND PRACTICE

When artists enter the teaching profession, they begin to view themselves in a different light. They take a step away from their previous identities as artists towards new identities as teachers. According to Shreeve (2009) 'the worlds of art and teaching are different cultural configurations and this requires identity work as novice teachers move into teaching practice' (Shreeve, 2009, p.152). In recent years, teacher identity has come to the fore as an important research topic (Connelly & Clandinen, 1999; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Knowles, 1992). Teachers and researchers are keen to locate a firm social, cultural and personal meaning of what it is to be a teacher in today's world. According to Beauchamp & Thomas (2009), 'a major hurdle in gaining an understanding of identity is resolving a definition of it' (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p.176). Many theorists have looked to philosophy (Taylor, 1989; Mead, 1934) and social sciences (Erikson, 1989; 1968) to gain a better perspective on the subject. But it is perhaps in Addison's (2007) definition that there is a description of the term most appropriate for contemporary times:

For many people identity is a precious thing. As a term within traditional western philosophy it has come to signal the very essence of a person or a group of people, a name that sums up a way of being in the world. The outward emanations of this essence therefore function to inform others what and who a person is, it denotes both their status in society and their individuality, what is sometimes referred to as selfhood (Addison, 2007, p.11)

This 'selfhood', however, is not fixed, it is not stable within a postmodern context, rather it is 'a complex issue of structuring and restructuring a sense of self in response to the world around us' (Shreeve, 2009, p.152). Identity is an evolving concept that is open to change throughout a person's life (Antlitz, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Dewey, 1934; Palmer, 1998). According to Beijaard et al (2004) professional identity is broadly influenced by the perceptions and assumptions of other people, that is society in general, it is also informed by their own histories and their experiences in teaching practice.

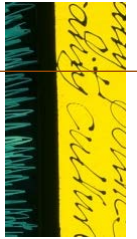


### Developing a Teacher Identity

Research conducted by Clandinen and Connelly (1987; 1988; 1990) examined the relationship of a teacher's personal knowledge to teaching practice. They claimed that 'personal practical knowledge was found in the teacher's past experience, the present mind and body, and in future plans and actions' (Connelly & Clandinen, 1999, p.1). Therefore, the teacher's past and present life events and circumstances as well as their own experience of educational settings, have a profound and lasting effect on their pedagogical practice (Connelly and Clandinen, 1999). The art student comes to the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) course with past experience in educational settings centred on art or design disciplines. According to Adams (2007) they have 'spatial and visual orientations as both practitioners and learners coming from a wide variety of backgrounds such as Fine Art, Textiles, Animation and Graphic Design' (Adams, 2007, p.3). Prentice (2002) contends that the great 'majority of intending teachers of art and design are motivated by a very strong subject allegiance and an equally strong sense of personal identity' (Prentice, 2002, p.11). A deep and full understanding of their subject area has proved invaluable to secondary specialists because 'they can then develop effective tasks, explain things at a high quality level, and diagnose students' understandings and misconceptions adequately' (Beijaard et al., 2000, p.751). However, alongside the positive benefits of possessing a sound subject knowledge, is the rather negative prospect of relinquishing the cherished role of artist for that of teacher. Adams claims (2007) that the contradictions in these two identities 'are sites of negotiation and also, importantly, of resistance' (Adams, 2007, p.6). The main cause of these tensions is the perception that 'the worlds of art and schooling are different cultural configurations' (Shreeve, 2009, p.152). These tensions can lead to difficulties when developing a teacher identity and sometimes without adequate support can result in novice art teachers leaving the profession unable to reconcile artistic and teaching orientations.

### Professional Knowledge Landscapes

It is important to consider the context in the construction of a teacher's professional identity. Within the secondary school setting, there are a variety of different factors that have a direct influence on this. These include: familiarisation with the school environment; the age and character of the pupils to be taught; the



school community, including fellow teachers and senior school management; and the systems and procedures in place that facilitate the day-to-day organisation of the school. According to Beauchamp & Thomas (2009) 'It is exposure to these formative contexts that results in important confrontations with one's identity as a teacher' (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p.184). These early encounters can often be influential in deciding on whether or not a teacher remains in the profession and there have been many studies concentrated on this theme (Bullough, 1987; Kestner, 1994; Ryan, 1970). It is my intention to look briefly at each of these contexts in relation to their impact on the construction of the teacher identity. The school built environment is perhaps the first important factor to have direct impact on the teacher. There has been extensive research carried out in the USA regarding this subject, but very little interest in Britain (Clark, 2002). An awareness of this lack of British research on the subject led to a literature review entitled *The Impact of School Environments*, commissioned by the Design Council (2005), and produced by Higgins et al at The Centre for Learning and Teaching, Newcastle University. It found that 'the physical elements in the school environment can be shown to have discernable effects on teachers and learners' (Higgins et al, 2005, p.36) and that teacher morale and therefore commitment can be affected positively or negatively.

A study in the US on the role of the school environment (Moore, 2012) points to Bronfenbrenner (1977) and social-ecological theory 'as a useful tool for the study of schools because of the complex hierarchy in which schools exist' (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.2).

In adapting Bronfenbrenner's theory to the school environment, Moore (2012) defines the four subsystems as follows: the microsystem is the classroom, the mesosystem is the school, the exosystem is the larger school community and the macrosystem is the larger structure of schooling with the systems in place to regulate schools. In referring to the different layers of the education system in this way, she attempts to simplify its structure and at the same time highlight its complexity, signalling the difficulties routinely faced by teachers attempting to navigate the educational environment. It is therefore understandable that for many teachers, the 'microsystem' or classroom is viewed as a safe place in which they are free to explore and develop their own sense of identity. It is within this

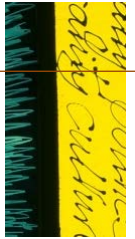


smaller, more intimate space that the teacher comes face-to-face with his/her students and where both teacher and learner identities are negotiated within an educational context.

Atkinson (2003) describes this 'process of identification and practice arising in the educational field as the forming of pedagogised identities' (Atkinson, 2003, p.93). In several studies, he focuses on the 'linguistic practices used by teachers and others and how these forms of language impact upon the identities of learners and teachers' (Atkinson, 2003, p.232). This work is influenced by Foucault's theory (1977; 1980) in relation to how subjectivities are formed where:

Much of our understanding of ourselves and others is produced in particular sites of practice within institutions such as schools which promote particular forms of practice and language (discourse) in which understanding is constituted (Atkinson, 1999, p.108).

Atkinson (2003) believes that the way pupil's artwork is assessed in school is a difficult and questionable process. He found that teachers' discourse, used to measure and record pupil's artistic ability, was central to his theories regarding the formation of identity in the art classroom. The teacher with a training in art has the power and authority to make decisions about whether the pupil has, or does not have, ability and this will identify the pupil as a successful artist or not. The problem, according to Atkinson (2008), is that the teacher makes these decisions based on 'the established and accepted practices and values of socio-cultural norms' (Atkinson, 2008, p.232). Strict adherence to these systems of assessment are therefore responsible for positioning the teacher as powerful and the pupil as subject to that power, thus resulting in pedagogised identities. This also leaves little room for difference, inclusivity, and alternative forms of representation (Atkinson, 1999). Certain theorists (Burgess, 2010; Wild, 2011) argue that it is not necessary for new teachers to unquestioningly adopt the processes of school curriculum content and assessment through which 'teacher identity and practice becomes normalised' (Wild, 2011, p.423); that it is possible to 're-imagine themselves as a different kind of teacher and the classroom a different kind of space' (Wild, 2011, p.424). Wild (2011) also draws from Foucault's work, in particular from his 1967 lecture *Different Spaces* which focused on the theme of 'Heterotopias' as spaces where different types of behaviour can be supported and where 'in the transition from one kind of teacher to another, a safe place can be



found' (Wild, 2011, p.425). This re-imagining of classrooms as Heterotopias, opens up different possibilities for identity construction. Here diversity can be embraced and 'participatory pedagogy' celebrated as opposed to the more 'normalised' power/knowledge structures that exist to encourage pedagogised identities.

### Community

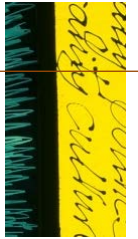
Having accepted the notion of the teacher identity as changeable and contingent (Latchem, 2006) and explored its formation within the pedagogical discourse, it is relevant to discuss identity formation within the context of social construction.

Referring to the theories of Lave and Wenger (1991), Burgess (2010) suggests that 'schools are social institutions that should be understood as communities of practice' (Burgess, 2010, p.68). The practices and organisation of a community offer ways in which learning is mastered, identities formed and knowledge is acquired and reproduced (Page, 2012; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The exploration of the relationship between the novice teacher and other experienced members of teaching staff is valuable in explaining how a new member is accepted into a professional community (Wenger, 1998). According to Burgess (2010):

In order for a community of practice to function, it needs to generate and engender a shared repertoire of ideas, commitments and memories, and it takes time for a shared sense of identity to take place (Burgess, 2010, p.91).

New teachers are initially encouraged to learn by observing and interacting with more experienced members of staff, 'those that successfully become part of the community take on the shared history themselves and align themselves to it in their practice' (Wild, 2011, p.426). Unfortunately, some of these practices are outdated in relation to contemporary practice in the outside world and newcomers are faced with the prospect of relinquishing 'their avant-garde ideals and bedding down into orthodoxy' (Hughes, 1998, p.44). The following chapter examines the relationship between contemporary art and art practices associated with schools where there is pressure to conform to the traditional expectations of the education system and exam boards.





### SECTION THREE – 'SCHOOL ART' AND CONTEMPORARY ART

This section looks at what is being taught in secondary art education in relation to the wider world of contemporary art practice at the present time. It begins with a short exploration of the current state of art in secondary schools, or what has been described as 'school art' (Steers, 2005) and examines why this type of art has flourished. Then it gives a short outline of contemporary art practices beyond the confines of school, and the relative merits of introducing these practices into current teaching programmes. Finally there is a discussion on the merits of retaining existing modernist approaches and combining these with contemporary practices to create a more 'pluralist art curriculum', tailored to the needs of secondary art pupils in a post-modern age (Burgess & Addison, 2004).

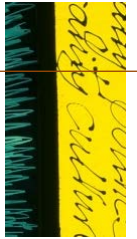
#### 'School Art'

According to Atkinson (2005) when referring to art education in schools, the curriculum is generally conservative. He considers that this is understandable because it has been developed from traditional skills and knowledge valued by art teachers and gives a solid framework on which to build curriculum content. He provides an overview of what one can expect to see in a typical art department:

Traditional practices such as drawing and painting from observation, imitations or pastiches of past movements such as cubism, surrealism or pop art, or pastiches of the work of particular artists (favourites being 20th century modernists) or of other cultural traditions ('aboriginal' art, American Indian art and so on), collage, printmaking, ceramics and to a lesser extent 3D construction (Atkinson, 2005, p.23).

Atkinson (2005) claims that these art practices and their related skills are considered to provide a firm foundation for teaching, learning and assessment. They offer teachers 'a secure knowledge and skill base from which to teach and so facilitate their pupils' learning and to identify and position their pupils' abilities' (Ibid.).

The first significant review of the content of the art curriculum in relation to contemporary art was carried out by Downing and Watson and entitled *School art: what's in it?* (2005). The findings of this report mirrored Atkinson's (2005) observations. These researchers returned evidence of art teachers transmitting



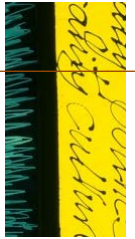
similar modernist practices and minimum interaction with contemporary art practice. The report was based on two different groups. One group had been identified as schools using contemporary art practice in their curriculum, whilst the other group contained a random sample of schools. The report identified that art departments in the latter group generally focused on the following areas which again might be considered characteristic of 'school art':

- ◆ the use of drawing and painting as the medium in which pupils work
- ◆ the use of artistic references from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- ◆ limited use of artistic references from the later 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century
- ◆ the prevalent use of male, European artists, predominantly painters
- ◆ the importance based on the development of art form skills, including the use of art materials, the development of specific techniques and observational drawing skills (Downing, 2005, p.viii).

It is of interest then to ask why these practices are still flourishing in art departments at this time. The answer perhaps lies in the structure of the curriculum designated by government authorities and those involved in examination boards. It can also be found in the pressure exerted by 'concerned Headteachers' for good results (Atkinson, 2005). Secondary art teachers find it very difficult to challenge these dominant hierarchical orthodoxies, especially when the subject has a high success rate in exam tables and is very much in-demand with pupils. Thus, from a teacher's perspective, it appears that there is very little incentive for change. According to Burgess & Addison (2004):

It is tempting to forgive teachers for their apparent lack of ambition and reluctance to take risks, acknowledging that they are victims of circumstance, trapped by tradition, timetables, examinations and restricted and restricting resources (Burgess & Addison, 2004, p.25).

These external influences present obstacles that are difficult to overcome. However, Burgess & Addison (2004) acknowledge that there are other inherent reasons for the reluctance to embrace new theories and modes of practice. They claim that teachers are 'constrained by their own education, their highly charged



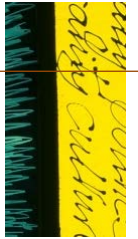
belief in modernist utopianism and their vicarious pleasure in the success of their students' (ibid).

### Visual Culture and Contemporary Art

Contemporary artwork can incorporate borrowed source material, collage and parody. In contrast with the idealistic, male artist from the past, traditionally working alone, contemporary artists employ a variety of different approaches. They may work collaboratively and incorporate film or technology. There is interaction with emotion, clutter, montage, pastiche and spontaneity and the subject matter can be motivated by personal, social, cultural, or political concerns. Contemporary art practice includes challenging the traditional stance, the mixing of styles, tolerance of ambiguity, embracing diversity, promoting acceptance and, indeed celebration of innovation and change, and stress on the constructedness of reality (Beck, 1993). Originality and identity are therefore celebrated. In contemporary times, our beliefs, our opinions, our behaviours correspond to and change with the culture we inhabit.

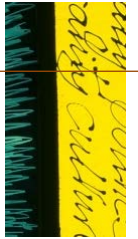
In contemporary art practice, what is understood as reality today can change depending on what we discover tomorrow. According to Baudrillard (1994), the mass media in society today has had a huge influence on how we view and understand reality. The term he uses to define this notion is 'simulcra', meaning it is a copy which has no original. When there is little distinction between the original and the copy, it is difficult to hold on to a solid set of values in present day society regarding 'truth', 'originality' or 'reality'. This concept can be viewed in Kate Salway's artwork *Collector's Items* (1996). Here we see arrangements of lizards, feathers, butterflies and insects photographed in imitation of scientific display cabinets (Miles, 2006). There are many different underlying meanings within this piece relating to 'artifice', 'dominance' 'deathliness' and 'ownership', but the relevance to 'simulcra' rests in the concept that these are 'secondary images, representing a representation' (Miles, 2006, p. 95).

*Empire* situated in Glasgow's Merchant City, is a contemporary site-specific work. This piece by Douglas Gordon is a neon-lit sign attached to a blank wall. On closer study, the viewer becomes aware that the word 'Empire' is reversed on both sides. 'The perception grows that this is a work of art because it cannot be anything else'



(McDonald, p.59, 2006). The connection between Empire and the Merchant City is recognised and the notion of reversal is read in the dual concepts of image and reality. As MacDonald (2006) says, there is an allusion to loss here, loss of the Empire and loss of Glasgow's commercial heyday. This genre of art presents a challenge to the 'viewer as critic'. There are multiple meanings in contemporary artworks and viewers are invited to find personal significance. This is in contrast to modernism, where the artist is positioned to attach a fixed or stable meaning to their creative output. In *Death of the Author*, Barthes (1977) states that it is not only the artist who creates the work, but also the viewers who 'read' it in their own way (cited in Emery, 2002). This theory encourages the notion of the viewer as constructivist, able to construct his/her own meanings in relation to a work of art.

There are some theorists who believe that it is time for art education to move away from the focus on traditional Fine Art towards a wider range of concepts surrounding the visual arts and youth culture (Duncum, 1997; Hicks, 2002; Tavin, 2000; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004). 'Western social contexts have become more plural, communications are faster with the advent of mobile phones, satellite TV and the internet are becoming more ubiquitous and invasive' (Atkinson, p.21, 2005). The contemporary cultural sensations such as 'reality TV', concentrate on the fascination with identity in visual terms. Atkinson believes that 'this fascination can be understood as an enchantment with identity, who we are, how we look, who we desire to be; we have become bewitched with image' (Atkinson, p.22, 2005). New forms of social media are constantly surfacing in a multitude of different cultural contexts. This means that people have more freedom about how they present themselves to the wider world. Unfortunately the modernist paradigm of schooling does not recognise these changes and therefore becomes more outdated in relation to contemporary society. Contemporary artists challenge Western patriarchal and elitist tenets embraced by modernism. But, modernist curriculum guidelines generally demand conformity. These new art practices embrace diversity 'addressing profound issues of race, ethnicity, faith, class and gender' (Steers, 2010, p.320). There is a need for change in education which is difficult to accommodate and the underlying theories found in contemporary art are difficult to assess because they cannot be easily defined.



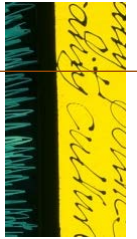
### Teaching Contemporary Concepts

In response to the traditional modernist pedagogical framework and other factors impacting on education, including the internet and multiculturalism, engaging with contemporary art is fast becoming relevant within the secondary art education arena. Pupils are freed from being funnelled into a solely modernist, universalist agenda and are invited to question, analyse and think critically and creatively using an infinite number of viewpoints and experiences (Hicks, 2002). While art students have always dealt with difficult issues in their artwork, current themes and current art practices are often very confrontational and hard-hitting. Fehr (1994) states 'as the disquieting messages of today's politicised art enter everyday life, they jolt our comfortable prejudices' (Fehr, 1994, p.213). Contemporary artists deal with difficult issues and they present difficult choices for teachers. Whilst modernism offered a rational, reliable structure for the future, adopting contemporary practices will be controversial at times. Teaching becomes dialogic and is less concerned with truth than with meaningful exchange between pupil and teacher. Therefore, art teachers must be ready to accept ambiguity and multiple perspectives about many issues.

### Reasons for a More Pluralist Curriculum

Art courses that draw from both modernist and contemporary art concepts are the most desirable option for the future. It is the case that art teachers find national level curricula limiting, but it is also the case that many teachers realise that there are more broadly based learning outcomes which provide room for manoeuvre (Emery, 2002). Modernism provides a good introduction to art making skills. It sets out a framework for developing an understanding of design based principles, improves skill with media, and provides techniques to assist in the research of themes and influences. Contemporary art instruction heightens awareness of art concepts that are disputable and indefinable. This means that art teachers must continually try to reflect on what they are teaching and the reasons why they are teaching it. According to Hardy (2006) adopting this kind of approach:

Does not necessarily mean a rejection of all that the twentieth century had to offer, but an overlaying of a critical eye and language which challenges the conventions of modernism, while picking over the tastier morsels and revisiting all that modernism rejected (Hardy, 2006, p.7).

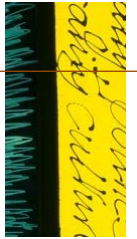


Contemporary art offers opportunities to understand the ways that pupils engage with visual culture in today's transient world. Contemporary artists offer a variety of options for art teachers as they utilise technology and, break down barriers between subjects. When art teachers integrate these elements into their course design, they renegotiate the teaching space from the isolation of the school classroom into a wider, more socially and culturally aware world.

### SECTION FOUR –THE ARTIST TEACHER SCHEME (ATS)

The Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) was introduced in England in 1999 by the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) with support from the Arts Council of England (ACE). The ATS was introduced to allow art teachers to pursue or sustain art making alongside their careers in teaching. With the dwindling of resources and finance in recent years, staff development in relation to the acquisition of new art knowledge and skills was not seen as a priority by those who control policy and budgets. The scheme works in partnership with institutions of Higher Education (HE) and galleries to offer a range of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for art educators. The first pilot courses took place in summer schools at Liverpool School of Art in collaboration with Tate Liverpool and Wimbledon School of Art with Tate Modern. These courses were very successful and after feedback from the participants and the response from the organisers, further summer schools ran in 2000 (Thornton, 2005). There are presently nine centres across England and one centre in Scotland providing ATS programmes. These courses offer flexible study negotiated around programmes of work suited to artist teachers who wish to re-evaluate their practice in a supportive environment. Many offer short courses, summer schools and postgraduate certification to Masters level. According to the NSEAD the benefits of the scheme are as follows:

- ◆ the ability to introduce contemporary thinking and practice into the teacher's own activity as an artist
- ◆ the acquisition and enhancement of knowledge and skills and the generation of new ideas

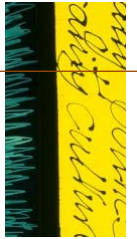


- ◆ increased satisfaction from re-charged creative practice and effectiveness of work in school
- ◆ the development of wider professional networks
- ◆ opportunities for further research.

The Artist Teacher Scheme is based on the central belief that teachers of art, design and craft who maintain their own creative practice are significantly more effective in the classroom or studio and more likely to be satisfied with their work in education (NSEAD website).

However, this initiative does not come without its problems. There are issues with the time and money needed to study; 'art teachers often have to attend courses in their own time and pay for them if their educational institutions are unwilling to do so' (Thornton, 2005, p.171). Also, certain theorists believe that it can compromise both the position of the teacher and that of the artist (Anderson, 1981; Ball, 1990; Day, 1986). According to Day, the model of artist-teacher is best suited to college or university departments where 'art department faculties are formally recognised and paid for their teaching services with the clear expectation that they continue to produce art' (Day, 1986, p.38). Higher Education (HE) art tutors and secondary school art teachers often follow similar routes until they complete their specialist undergraduate degree at an art school or university art department. It is beyond this that they follow divergent paths. Those who teach in HE tend to continue their art practice as a prerequisite for employment (Thornton, 2013), whilst those in secondary schools become deeply involved in teaching and neglect their own art practice.

Day claims that it is at school level that the model becomes problematic. His main argument lies in the idea that the artist-teacher will concentrate wholly on art production to the detriment of 'art history, criticism, or other approaches to learning about art' (Ibid.). Day cites Hammer (1984) who suggests 'when teaching, teach; when making art, don't teach' (Hammer, 1984, p.186). He also refers to Smith (1980) who claims that artists and teachers have two very different conceptual frameworks informing their work. Day refers to these theorists to support his argument that 'there are incompatibilities between the artist's agenda and the teacher's responsibilities to pupils' (Atkinson, 2005). Day's account



separates the two roles and this is not conducive or sustainable for the art teacher struggling to undertake both activities. The model of the artist-teacher promoted in the NSEAD material supports the convergence of the two roles, blending and merging them to create a new identity for the art teacher with the skills, knowledge and understanding taken from both worlds. This model visualises a reciprocal cycle, with the teacher's art making supporting his/her teaching which feeds back into art making. According to Thornton (2005), reflective practice is the key to reconciling the two roles 'sustaining practice as an artist-teacher could well depend on functioning as a reflective practitioner' (Thornton, 2005, p.173).

Research carried out on the ATS programmes (Adams, 2002; Hyde, 2004; Galloway et al., 2006; Page et al., 2011) supported the claims made by the NSEAD regarding the benefits of the scheme. The first study was undertaken by Jeff Adams (2002) who concentrated on the pilot ATS MA at Liverpool John Moores University, paying specific attention to the artistic practices of the students. His findings revealed that 'there had been significant effects on the art teaching pedagogy that could only be attributed to the ATS scheme' (Adams, 2002, p.193). Adams claimed that there was evidence that the 'artist-as-teacher experience' re-affirmed a belief in the person's competence as both an artist and a teacher. However, Adams (Ibid.) also pointed to the need for further research to evaluate the influence of the ATS on 'classroom practice and how this relationship between personal enhancement and professional practice might evolve' (Ibid.).

In 2004, Wendy Hyde's research into the ATS MA proposed to look for evidence that upheld the original ATS mission statement. The study focused on the continued professional development (CPD) of the group of artist teachers at the original Liverpool pilot scheme. She discovered that all members had renewed their enthusiasm for art and design practice, were more interested in the theory underpinning art and education; had created a community of practice with their peers, and had undergone major changes in their pedagogical outlook as a result of the ATS's MA. Again, in agreement with Adams (2002), Hyde highlighted the need for more in-depth study to ascertain the long-term effects of the ATS's MA on the participants' art practice and pedagogy.

In 2006, the Centre for Educational Development, Analysis and Research (CEDAR) at Warwick University (Galloway, Stanley, and Strand, 2006) undertook a national



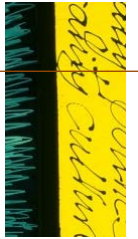


evaluation of the ATS. They were asked to 'record the experience gained' and to 'inform the future development' (Galloway, Stanley, and Strand, 2006, p.6) of the scheme. This review concentrated on ATS summer, one-day primer and MA programmes. The findings confirm many of the claims made by Adams (2002) and Hyde (2004a/b). The effect on teaching practice 'shows that many artist teachers have fundamentally rethought their practice and developed new ways of working in school' (Galloway et al., 2006). In relation to making art, artist-teachers' practice 'has been strengthened, deepened and widened in many ways and some are also using their creative work in school' (Galloway et al., 2006, p.79). On the social dimension 'within the context of the ATS course, participants recognise each other as artists, they exchange ideas attitudes, techniques and experiences in a way that contributes to their artistic identity' (Galloway et al., 2006, p.77). The authors also make several salient points regarding opening up the scheme to teachers who are presently unaware of its existence. One such point is that 'there are other existing networks (e.g. local networks of art teachers) which might be explored as routes to disseminate and publicise opportunities available under the ATS' (Galloway et al., 2006, p.81).

The ATS in the UK commissioned the most recent survey by Page, Adams and Hyde (2009) to prepare a report on 'the artistic and pedagogical practices of students on a recently established ATS's MA' (Page et al, 2011 p.277). The research focused on the MA Artist Teacher and Contemporary Practices Degree, provided by Goldsmiths University, London. There were three main areas of study: to investigate the motives and objectives teachers have for undertaking the Artist-Teacher MA programme; to investigate how the Artist Teacher MA is impacting on their artistic and pedagogical practices and upon pupils' learning; and thirdly to make recommendations for future development and evaluation of ATS MA programmes (Page et al., 2009, p.4). The report concluded that:

The ATS MA has had a positive and significant impact on the participants':

Knowledge, understanding, artistic practices and amount of time devoted to personal practice. With participants indicating that they have further developed existing practical skills, extended their repertoire of media and techniques and improved their knowledge and understanding of art theories and contemporary art (Page et al, 2011, p.292).

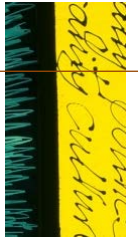


The study also noted again the benefits of ‘learning from and through a social and participatory process with fellow students and also with tutors’ (Page et al, 2011, p.293) and highlighted that this could be viewed as a model for ‘the formation of communities through professional development’. For the first time there was also evidence of the positive impact the ATS had on career progression, ‘with promotions, gaining employment and staying in teaching’ being seen as additional benefits of the scheme, and with further study in this area being required. These theorists also point to the need for future research on the ‘construction of artist teacher identities, and what it means to practice as an artist teacher in the classroom the impact on teaching and learning, new learning methods, and the endurance of these practices’ (Page, Adams & Hyde, 2011, p.293).

## SECTION FIVE – THE INTRICATE PROCESSES OF ART MAKING

‘Beyond the problems of representation, artists work in a knowledge zone of the not yet known, a field of indeterminacy that characterises creativity’ (Grierson, 2007, p.536)

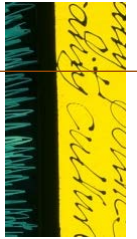
According to Jarvis (2007) it is ‘important for artists not only to acknowledge the often ‘tacit’ nature of what they do, but to attempt to articulate their practice in a variety of contexts’ (Jarvis, 2007, p.201). In present times, becoming more aware of the intricate processes of art making can lead to a deeper understanding of what contemporary artists actually do during the creation of an artwork (Mace & Ward, 2002). Walker (2004) considers that a more reflective approach to making is warranted in a climate where ‘art educators and art teachers frequently lack sufficient and tangible understandings of the processes that distinguish artistic activity’ (Walker 2004, p.6). Marshall (2007) envisages three ways in which analysing art practice can inform art education: through expanding the concept of visual literacy, providing a different understanding of art history and drawing attention to the integrative nature of visual thinking and the role of visual images (Marshall, 2007, p.38). It is also understood that this ‘articulation of practice’ can lead to art education students becoming more informed when viewing artworks (Jarvis, 2007, p.212).



Jarvis (2007) portrays Alex Katz as an example of a contemporary artist whose paintings appear to be produced with very little effort, where the process involved in creating the artwork is not visible to the untrained eye. Jarvis (2007) believes that this artist is so technically able that the actual effort involved in preparing to paint is obscured to the viewer. He argues that ‘this is the often unacknowledged part of artistic practice which is mainly unseen’ (Jarvis, 2007, p.202). This ‘tacit’ element of the artistic process is usually hidden, but in order to become more informed about making art, it would be beneficial if artists documented the creative act, thus revealing the tacit dimension. This reference to tacit knowledge and understanding in human behaviour came to light originally in Polanyi’s (1964) theory of cognition. According to this theory, cognition consists of both tacit and explicit knowledge, with tacit knowledge arising through ‘indwelling’, where the person gains knowledge through embodied experience. It is claimed that artists learn a tacit skill by ‘going through a series of *integrative acts* such as imitation, practice, repetition and complete immersion’ (Addison & Burgess, 2007, p.43). This is congruent with Claxton’s views where he defines expertise as ‘the unreflective mastery of complex but familiar domains’ (Claxton, 2000, p.35). The artist’s familiar domain lies within the materials which he/she uses to create art. In contemporary art practice, these materials can range from paint to performance, from digital media to marble, the discipline is irrelevant, what matters is the interaction between the artist and the chosen media. Here Jarvis describes his ongoing relationship with paint and the act of painting:

This process of painting is a risky technical undertaking and relies upon the artist’s deep understanding of the properties and viscosity of paint and different pigment, of, for example, how much paint needs to be thinned out to enable specific brushstrokes to be made, and which particular medium will give the optimum bloom and effect (Jarvis, 2007, p.207).

In this description there is an acknowledgement of the need for continual development and ‘mastery of materials, tacitly acquired, alongside an acceptance of one’s own limitations as well as those of materials’ (Carabine, 2013, p.36). Also, in pointing to the risk factor associated with the creative act, Jarvis is in agreement with Margaret Milner (1950) who considered it ‘a dangerous undertaking’ (Margaret Milner, 1950, p.50). Art making then is a tacit, embodied process that



requires the participant to be deeply involved in experiencing and learning about their personal interaction with materials.

### Modelling the Creative Process

In 2002, Mace and Ward carried out a research project using grounded theory methods to analyse creative practice and to construct a descriptive model of the art making process. The sample consisted of sixteen professional visual artists who were interviewed during the course of creating an artwork. The findings revealed that 'the model of the unfolding developmental process of making artwork consists of four major phases of activity' (Mace and Ward, 2002, p.182). It should be noted that there was an acknowledgement at the start of the project that the art making process is influenced by the artists' existing knowledge and experience. The selected information gives only a brief synopsis of each phase:

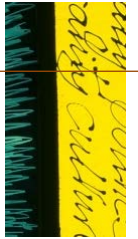
**Phase One** – Art Work Conception – Idea conception is a process of identifying an implicit or explicit idea or feeling that could lead to a potential artwork.

**Phase Two** – Idea Development – This is the complex process of structuring, extending and restructuring a particular artwork idea through a range of decision-making, problem-solving, experimental and information-gathering activities.

**Phase Three** – Making the Artwork – At this stage of the art making process the work undergoes a transformation from a purely conceptual entity to a physical entity. The process of physically making the work influences the development of the concept.

**Phase Four** – Finishing the Artwork and Resolution – As a result of implicit (tacit) and explicit processes of evaluation, the work is either resolved and considered viable to some extent or abandoned as nonviable and postponed, put into storage, or destroyed (Mace & Ward, 2002, p.182–187).

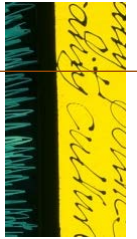
The main strength of this model lies in the description of the creative process from inception to final solution. Because it was such an in-depth study, it captured several key features of the art making process. The research found that 'creativity takes place over a period of time rather than being actualised at a single point in



time' (Mace & Ward, 2002, p.189), that the ideas or concepts behind the artwork often derive from making other artwork, and sometimes before this other work is even finished (Ibid.) and that these concepts 'emerge from a context of meaning and research that the artist has built up over his or her career' (Ibid.). Therefore, the results infer that the creative process begins at a much earlier stage than the actual act of physically making. In the model this does not occur until phase three, signalling that much of the creative process remains hidden in the conceptual and developmental stages. This is consistent with Prentice (2002) who claims that 'making far exceeds the skills of mere production' (Prentice, 2002, p.12).

### The Role of Reflective Practice

There is an argument that the key to understanding the art making process lies in the artist articulating their actions through reflective practice (Carabine, 2013; Haseman; 2007; Prentice, 2002; Walker; 2003, 2004). Walker (2004) reasoned that it was worthwhile to study the art making process in order 'to develop graduate and undergraduate students' abilities to plan meaningful studio instruction' (Walker, 2004, p.6). This concern arose from his main research interest in the practice of contemporary artists and his belief that art teachers lacked adequate knowledge and understanding of these processes. The rationale for the study was grounded in Barkan's (1962) theory that 'artistic activity anywhere is the same, whether at the frontier of art or in third grade classroom...The difference is in the degree' (Barkan, 1962, p.14). Walker's study was driven by two questions: what is it that artists do when they create artworks? and how do artists pursue meaning?' (Walker, 2004, p.7). His specific intent was to use Schön's work on reflective practice (Schön, 1996a, 1996b) as a methodology to encourage the artists to record and examine their practical activities and conceptual approaches. This meant that they were required to document their progress for the duration of a ten week course. This written documentation contained 'recorded decisions, changes, and insights which shaped their art making and thinking in regard to the art making process' (Schön, 1996, p.8) thus retaining the artists' focus in examining their thoughts and actions. The findings of this study include the idea that art making cannot be based on a formula, and that meaningful artwork emerges from 'delaying closure, risk-taking, rejecting the conventional and familiar and exhibiting tolerance and ambiguity' (Schön, 1996, p.12). Walker believes that it would be



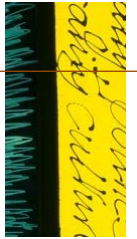
worthwhile for art teachers to raise these practices with students when exploring art making in the classroom. Finally, the report concludes with the claim that reflective practice was a 'highly significant factor' in recording the art making process; without this intervention many of the practical and conceptual insights would have been lost. This argument is taken up by Jarvis (2007) who maintains that the artist is 'the quintessential reflective practitioner' (Jarvis, 2007, p.205) because he/she has an on-going reflective conversation with materials during the creative process. He claims that 'if we accept the idea of the artist as a reflective practitioner then part of that process is a willingness to articulate tacit and more unacknowledged aspects of practice' (Jarvis, 2007, p.211).

### What Are the Advantages to Art Education?

Addison (2011) suggests that art teachers attend to 'the making of art as an affective /cognitive synthesis... to recognise its rhythms as a force to be harnessed and orchestrated' (Addison, 2011, p.375).

Having explored the tacit and explicit dimensions of the artist's making process, I will now turn to looking at why this could be valuable in the art education arena. Marshall (2007) is mainly interested in the value of art making as an inquiry tool in practice-based research. However, she holds similar views to Addison in relation to the educational benefits of exploring the art making process. She believes that the rise of enquiry through art will not just have an impact on postgraduate education, but could have far reaching consequences for art education at all levels. According to Marshall (2007), encouraging a 'more cognitive approach to visual imagery' would be advantageous for art education in the following ways:

- ◆ it expands our concept of visual literacy – creative art practice (making images) is as critical to visual literacy as deconstruction and analysis of existing images.
- ◆ it gives a different understanding of art history – it calls for a more concept-focused analysis of art where meanings and their manifestations in imagery are examined across time and cultures.

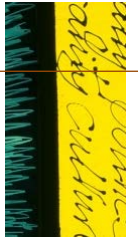


- ◆ it draws attention to the integrative nature of visual thinking and the role of visual images in research, insight, and knowledge construction in all areas of inquiry (Marshall, 2007, p.38).

In the first category, Marshall (2007) argues for students to be encouraged to expand their critical vocabulary through consciously examining processes in both their own art making practice and that of other artists, both traditional and contemporary. She claims that students should be made more aware of current research, specifically practice-based and be taught how to assimilate the associated methods into their own learning. Second, when discussing artwork linked to the past, an awareness of the art making process can enlighten students to the cultural and societal contexts within which the piece was made. It can also support the student to look for the influences behind the underlying concepts and practical construction of the product. And finally, art inquiry can allow the student to make connections across several areas of study by examining the position of artefacts in relation to other subject areas. As Marshall states in her conclusion, ‘in calling attention to centrality of visualisation in all areas of inquiry, it places art practice where it belongs at the core of the school curriculum’ (Marshall, 2007, p.39). The next section looks at how the art student makes these connections through constructivist and co-constructivist pedagogical approaches.

## SECTION SIX –CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING THEORIES AND ART EDUCATION

Most art students benefit more from opportunities to explore connections between personal experiences and the wider world. According to Gray (2013), ‘a big part of making thoughtful art is understanding how to make connections between things that initially appear unrelated’ (online source). This understanding often comes from the processes of art making, but also from the ‘scaffolding of skills’ by a supportive art teacher. Art teachers accept that what they teach and what pupils learn in the art class is unique to each pupil. This child-centred approach is quite different from say mathematics, where the teacher follows a set of specific steps and the pupil’s role is to ‘memorise and utilise (Gray, 2013). The Constructivist approach is not about rote learning or the regurgitation of



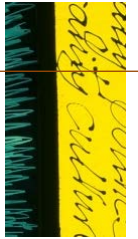
information. It concentrates on encouraging thinking, understanding and applying (Marlowe & Page, 2005) and is therefore most suited to artistic learning and teaching. This section of the review will focus on constructivist and co-constructivist theories in the context of art teaching in secondary schools.

Constructivism is a theory that proposes that humans generate knowledge from interaction between their experiences and their reflexes or behaviours. This was first claimed by John Dewey, who argued that 'if knowledge comes from the impressions made upon us by natural objects, it is impossible to procure knowledge without the use of objects which impress the mind' (Dewey, 1916, p.217). The theory was formalised by Jean Piaget, who argued that individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences through the processes of accommodation and assimilation (Piaget, 1974). This was further developed by Vygotsky who introduced the idea of a 'zone of proximal development' in order to better explain the relationship between learning and development. This Vygotskian view refers to the notion that less knowledgeable others benefit from interactions with more knowledgeable others. Vygotsky observed that when children worked on their own at a task, they were generally less successful than when working with an adult. He realised that the adult was not necessarily teaching the child to carry out the task, but that frequently it was engagement with the adult allowing the child to refine their thinking and performance, thus making both more effective (Vygotsky, 1978). This led to the development of co-constructivist theory. Co-constructivism builds on the original constructivist theory of learning by introducing collaboration, with peer interaction being an important and integral part of this.

Constructivism can be seen to have several major benefits in education. For example, children learn more, and enjoy learning when they are actively involved in the process and not simply passive learners. Constructivist learning is transferrable, with children being able to apply skills in other subjects; it grounds their learning in the real world and gives children ownership of their learning; whilst developing social and communication skills.

Critics of constructivism have argued that novices in a subject do not possess the underlying mental models for 'learning by doing', and that this type of learning can only take place if the child's individual development has reached an appropriate



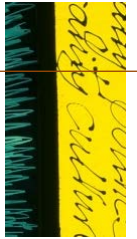


level for the task (Demetriou, 1998). Other theorists have argued that in order to benefit from this type of learning, children need to be given a certain level of guidance and support (Kirschner, et al., 2006). However, constructivism still has significant benefits to offer teaching and learning; particularly in practical and performance led subjects in the arts and humanities.

It should be noted that constructivism is not, in itself, a pedagogy. However, it does lead to pedagogic approaches that involve active learning. In this respect, constructivism is particularly useful in the teaching of art, where educators have always advocated self-expression and student choice (Millbrandt, et al., 2004). Dewey argued in 1938 that art is a series of interactions between organisms and their environment. Simpson (1996) extends this idea by proposing that learning is an interpretation of the environment formed through linkage of ideas and active involvement on the part of the learner; and that art rooms are full of opportunities to implement these connections (Simpson, 1996). Teaching of art involves the linking of ideas to children's personal worlds and often to other academic subjects; and by encouraging children to view works of art and interpret them for themselves, teachers are able to encourage children to reveal new understandings through visual expression (Simpson, 1996).

Art has long been thought of as child-centred (Marshall, 2005). Creating an environment where children are encouraged to relate artist's work to their own worlds through visual and verbal exploration should reinforce the idea that art has meaning in wider life. This in turn allows them to make connections between art and other curriculum areas (Marshall, 2005).

This topic of integration is one that is currently emerging in art education. This can be seen as 'issues-based' art education, which utilises art to explore social, cultural and political issues. However, Marshall argues that educators have not fully explored the possibilities of integrating art education with the academic curriculum (Marshall, 2005). She gives the example of Thomas Grunefeld, who aligns art with science and captures attention by disrupting our experiences. Marshall also cites examples of artists who have portrayed the horrors of major wars, proposing that through exploration of these images children will be able to make links between art and history (Marshall, 2005).

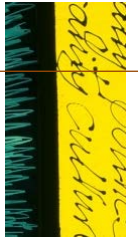


Art can also become a medium through which children can develop their visual and spatial intelligence. This can, in turn, enhance problem-solving in other curriculum areas, not only by visualisation and the use of images, but also by using mapping techniques (Marshall, 2007). These techniques have been used by scientists for many years; a notable example being Charles Darwin whose *Sketch for an Evolutionary Tree* served as a map and a model that organised and made sense of data (Natural History Museum, 2014). This sketch also shaped the further construction, understanding and arrangement of his ideas; not only by Darwin but by other scientists following on from him (Marshall, 2007).

Children learn in many different ways, and using a constructivist approach, art can stimulate and develop different learning styles: visual and auditory learning through seeing and hearing; and kinaesthetic learning through doing (Marshall, 2005). Post-modernist art, which uses metaphorical images, can be used by educators to generate ideas and stimulate children's processes of conceptualisation, allowing them to make connections between images and ideas across the wider curriculum, including more abstract images and concepts (Marshall, 2007).

Traditionally, art education has focused on a constructivist rather than co-constructivist approach. Hagaman (1990) points out that much of art education focuses on the notion of the artist as a solitary achiever producing original work: she states that 'since the time of the Renaissance, a widespread conception of the artist, at least in Western thought, has been one of a solitary person making art objects in the privacy of the studio' (Hagaman, 1990, p.149). Hagaman advocates a more co-constructivist approach by arguing that, although solitary learning has a place in art education, collaborative learning approaches such as the 'community of inquiry' can be highly effective.

In conclusion, it can be seen that constructivist learning has a central place in art education. Through allowing children to experience art through the lens of their own experience, they are able to develop their ideas and make links between their personal art making and the wider world. This in turn can be a means of supporting and enhancing their learning in other curriculum areas, as advocated in the recent curricular initiatives in Britain; Curriculum for Excellence (Scotland) and The National Curriculum (England). A constructivist approach can be applied effectively



when children are experiencing the works of other artists; and also when they are creating their own artwork.

## SECTION SEVEN –THE PLACE OF ART IN THE CURRICULUM

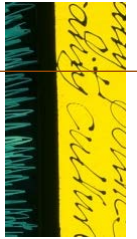
This section considers the place which art has in the English and Scottish secondary school curricula respectively. It reviews the secondary literature in this field and explores the philosophical and pedagogical reasons why art is considered valuable for secondary school students. It also reviews scholarly opinion on the current issues relating to the role of art and considers the future prospects for both content and delivery of art as a secondary school subject in these two countries and in the world beyond the United Kingdom.

### The Place of Art in the Curriculum for England

In the wake of a series of Labour government reviews of both primary and secondary curriculum and policies in the late 1990s a wide-ranging report by Harland et al. (2000) on the state of art education in England and Wales set out to achieve four aims. These aims were:

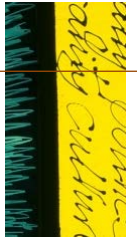
- ◆ to document and evidence the range of effects and outcomes attributable to school-based art education;
- ◆ to examine the relationship between these effects and the key factors and processes associated with arts' provision in schools;
- ◆ to illuminate good practice in schools' provision of high-quality educational experiences in the Arts and
- ◆ to study the extent to which the high levels of institutional involvement in the Arts correlate with the qualities known to be associated with successful school improvement and school effectiveness (Harland et al., 2000, p.5).

Using both qualitative case studies and interviews as well as quantitative survey and statistical analysis methods this report concluded with a number of interesting findings. In terms of pupil perspectives the report commented upon the relatively



low numbers of pupils choosing to continue art education (defined widely to include art, dance, music and even literature) at Key Stage 4, and especially in the case of boys. Particularly worrying was the fact that ‘music and art attracted the lowest percentage of non-white pupils’ (Harland et al., 2000, p. 551). It was suggested that over dependence on the Western, classical tradition may explain this but convincing evidence for this assertion was not provided. The main reasons given by pupils for choosing the Arts (again defined widely) were personal interest/enjoyment, ability in the subject and relevance to future career or employment. There were barriers to participation in dance and drama due to a lack of suitable options, but for music and art this was not found to be an issue since most schools had these subjects on offer for students. Parental support for the Arts, were also found to influence pupil choices, with middle class parents offering more support than others. In summary, the key issues relating to participation in art seemed to be a mixture of pupil interests and curriculum content and focus.

The Harland et al, (2000) report also found that many positive outcomes from arts education are identifiable in secondary schools, including increased enjoyment, improved knowledge and skills, development of creativity and thinking, better communication and the institutional effects on the culture of the school. Both practical and social skills are enhanced by participation in art classes. The position of art as a foundation subject (not a core subject) is cited as an issue of concern, along with the declining preparation in arts subjects at primary school due to the focus on literacy and numeracy, while individual teacher competence was mentioned as a critical success factor (Harland et al., 2000, p.568–569). In 2009 a review (OFSTED, 2009) recommended more linkage between art and related subjects such as craft and design, which is likely to be attractive to boys who are still under-represented at Key Stage 4. More recently the National Curriculum (2013) has been under review pending a new version which is due to run in 2014. A noticeable trend is the increasing number of schools which do not have to follow the National Curriculum, such as Academies and some private schools, for example, and an erosion of compulsory elements, including art, which is currently compulsory only in Key Stages 13.



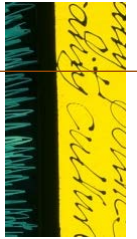
### The Place of Art in the Curriculum for Excellence Scotland

Development and reform of the Scottish secondary school curriculum has taken a rather different turn with the review of Scottish school education from 3–18 which was published in 2004. This document entitled ‘Curriculum for Excellence’ (CfE) contains as one of its many aims the achievement of ‘more space for sport, music, dance, drama, art, learning about health, sustainable development and enterprise, and other activities that broaden the life experiences – and life chances – of young people’ (Scottish Executive, 2004, p.4). This indication that more space is to be devoted to art in the curriculum is a positive signal, but on the other hand its inclusion with such a long list of other equally important subjects suggests that it may not, after all, rise in prominence due to competition for time and resources in an already crowded core curriculum.

Critics have pointed out that there is a focus on the individual citizenship and responsibility in these Scottish reforms (Biesta, 2008, p.38) and that they lack a clear theoretical basis (Priestley, 2010). One good aspect of this review, from the point of view of art education, is that there appears to be more emphasis on skills, and a move to restore at least some autonomy to classroom teachers in order to engage with students in a more relevant and up to date way. This opens up a dialogue between teachers and planners which promises, in the near future, to result in some genuine innovation both in terms of what content is taught, and how it is taught in Scottish schools. It remains to be seen how successful these reforms are going to be, and whether or not they will become bogged down in bureaucracy or resistance, but the signs are good that the basis for change is in place. At least the debate about curriculum content has begun.

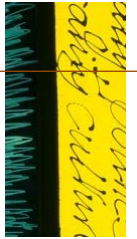
### Current Issues Relating to the Role of Art in the Secondary Curriculum

Some criticism of the way art is taught in British secondary schools is presented by Atkinson (1999) who maintains that there is too much emphasis on assessment and that the frameworks used for assessment are too rigid. The outcome of this shortcoming is, according to Atkinson (1999, p.107) a tendency for the curriculum to suppress rather than encourage the essential qualities of enquiry and difference in pupil art practice.



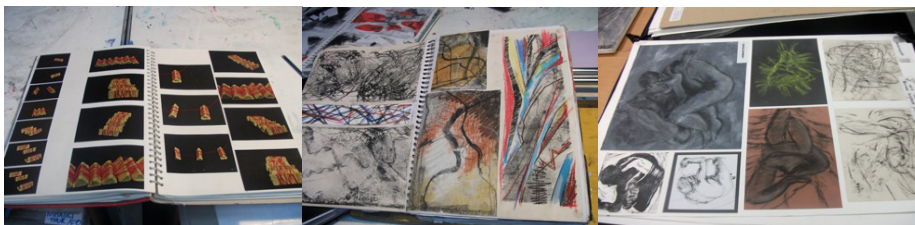
Eisner (2004) maintains that the highly technical nature of modern society creates an unhelpful focus on concrete and measurable outcomes which contribute to notions of school improvement and are instrumental and material rather than qualitative and philosophical. According to Eisner, the current fashion for materialism and technical modernism, which derive from ways of thinking which emerged during the Enlightenment, miss the main point of education which is to develop distinctive forms of thinking which can be loosely described as creative. This kind of thinking is of a different cognitive order than scientific thinking because 'in the Arts judgements are made in the absence of rule' (Eisner, 2004, p.5). Thinking and feeling, form and content operate in tandem, and there is not necessarily a fixed end in sight when a work of art is in progress, nor a clear verbal expression for what art has to contribute. It is this profound contribution from the artistic ways of thinking and knowing which risk being lost if art is no longer seen as a central and important part of the secondary school curriculum. A similar position is taken by Winner and Hetland (2007) who argue that education in the ways of thinking that are common to artists is a useful antidote to the mechanistic standardised testing that is used in so many secondary schools. The contribution that art makes to the US system is described as 'visual-spatial abilities, reflection, self-criticism, and the willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes' (Winner and Hetland, 2007, p.2). It is not hard to see that these attributes run directly counter to some of the discourse that is present in the British education system relating to the pursuit of excellence and success, leaving little or no room for these more exploratory approaches.

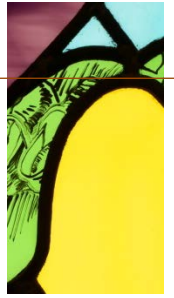
These rather negative views of the prospects of art education in the face of twenty first century pragmatism in curriculum planning and school management is echoed by Swift and Steers (1999) who proposed a radical change to art education in the form of more teacher autonomy, more risk taking and a climate of experimental enquiry, as befits the kind of thinking and practice that is recognised by professional artists in their work. In a later article Steers (2005) issues a stern warning that modern complacency and a focus on league tables and rigid inspection regimes is not sufficient to maintain the subject at a healthy level in schools since:



At best it leads to uninspiring and slow evolutionary development and, at worst, to atrophy. Uncritical acceptance of current practice in art education has dominated to the point where the subject is in danger of becoming an anachronism (Steers, 2005, p.24–25).

More recently Steers has suggested that there may be some potential for this situation to be reversed in current moves in England to make more room for creativity in the curriculum but warns again that ‘its inclusion remains problematic because the “risky thinking” involved will be difficult in the many schools that have become risk averse in the face of ever increasing accountability’ (Steers, 2009, p.126). In other words, there is at last some recognition that there may be problems in the content and delivery style of the art curriculum at the present time, but there are other priorities in educational policy which make it very difficult for most schools to address these concerns. It is a time of significant change in the British secondary education systems and there are conflicting signals about the future role of art. This means it is all the more essential to rethink the philosophical foundations and the goals of art in our schools today.



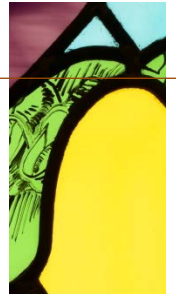


## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK







# CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

## Theoretical Grounding

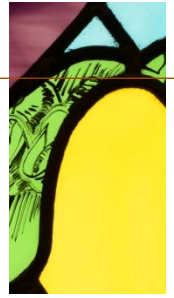
This project emerged out of an interest in whether or not the art teacher should retain their practice as an artist. I decided to focus my attention on how art teachers model artistic practice in the classroom, which I hoped would provide answers. Gradually this focus grew into a research study based on artistic practices and pedagogies in secondary school settings.

## The Approach

Since my research proposal revolved around understanding the nature and meaning of human interactions in specific contexts, I chose an empirical approach to gather qualitative data. According to Schwandt (1997) empirical inquiry ‘deals with the data of experience. Its claims are based on the evidence of observations, both those of the inquirer and the reports of people studied, that rely on the senses’ (Schwandt, 1997, p.360). I was also interested in developing a reflexive approach, or the ability to ask myself questions about my motivation for teaching and learning – also to ask critical questions about the nature of research and why it is important to be present in that research. In this inquiry I wanted to examine the culture, not only through the participants’ perspective but also through my own. By drawing on my life experiences, I could explore these processes of discovery and learning and offer my reflections, to be read and shared with others in a spirit of reciprocity. Through my own art processes my aim is to be transparent and reflective as a researcher and co-creator of the culture I simultaneously seek to understand.

## The Research Paradigm

I chose to undertake this research using a constructivist, philosophical perspective. Constructivist researchers investigate ways in which people develop constructions or attach meanings to their worlds. Constructivist approaches can focus on

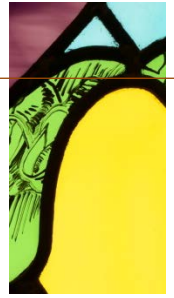


personal constructions (Kelly, 1955; Charmaz, 2003, 2006) and on social constructions (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Chatman, 1999).

A review of literature based on constructivist research confirmed that the central research issue could be positioned within this 'worldview'. The authors of this literature were co-constructing stories that clearly embodied the perceptions and experiences of their participants, whilst at the same time ensuring that their own involvement was clearly evident. This was congruent with my own aims for this project. The constructivist approach is informed by relativist ontology: reality is both personally and socially constructed as people make sense of their world. My intention was to search for meaningful constructions, both from my own perspective and from the participants as they shared their experiences. I expected these reflections and responses to reveal multiple viewpoints, thereby upholding the central tenet of constructivism that many realities exist and none are privileged over others (Merriam et al, 2002; Schwandt, 1994). Epistemologically the constructivist researcher's stance is subjectivist, meaning that knowledge and understanding are not naturally discovered but constructed through interactions between the researcher and the researched. The idea that the validation of a constructivist study comes from consensus also fits here. According to Elliot Eisner (1991) 'consensus is concurrence as a result of evidence deemed relevant to the description, interpretation and evaluation of some state of affairs' (Elliot Eisner, 1991, p.58). He claims that by attainment of consensus we have not cornered truth, we have reached 'agreement'. Since the knowledge that I hope to gain from this study will be developed through interaction with art teachers, and acknowledged through relative consensus of opinion, this paradigm again supports my position. Carole Gray (1998) captures the essence of the constructivist enquirer's role 'subjectivity, involvement, reflexivity is acknowledged; knowledge is negotiated, inter-subjective, context bound and is a result of personal construction' (Carole Gray, 1998, p.7). This statement encapsulated my position within the study.

## Methodology

I began to search for a suitable methodology that would fit with these choices and provide insight into the art teacher's world. My experience with the trial study and encouragement from my supervisor led me to return to art making and I wanted to

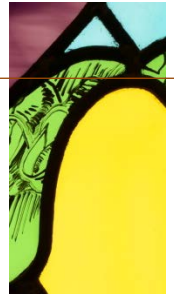


develop this as a complementary practice along with language-based methods. The trial study was conducted using a constructivist approach and ethnographic techniques, I could continue using a constructivist approach, but needed an alternative methodology to reflect my new identity as an artist, teacher and researcher. I considered using visual ethnography (Pink, 2007) and visual methodology (Rose, 2012), but they were not specifically linked to education in the literature I studied. I finally settled on a/r/tography because it provided a framework for the art educator to combine creative practice with educational research.

### A/r/tography

In order to determine the methodology which inform the particular research design, it is imperative to reflect upon the particular conceptual framework underlying a/r/tography. This entails a questioning of both the epistemological and ontological assumptions that inform and determine the types of knowledge that the research aims to understand (Robson, 2011). The methods utilised consequently must reflect such assumptions and enable data to be generated, which can meet the particular aims of this research project. Thus, it can generate understandings of the identities of artist, researcher and teacher, in relation to artistic learning and teaching practices. (Sinner, et al., 2006). Firstly, the conceptual assumptions that are contained within a/r/tography will be examined to highlight how these direct the methodology and subsequent methods.

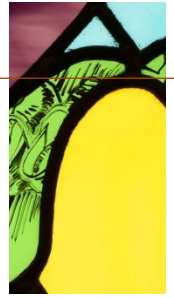
A/r/tography is a form of qualitative inquiry in which epistemological assumptions are viewed as being actively created within social relations and the processes occurring within these structures (Irwin et al., 2006). Knowledge creation and meaning therefore are constructed through the multiple identities and relationships that are constantly occurring within any context (Irwin, et al., 2006). The identities of artist, researcher and teacher are not examined in terms of what they are, but in relation to when a person is an artist, researcher or teacher, and when a particular experience is perceived as art, research or education (Beer, et al., 2006). Knowledge and understanding hence, can be achieved through the practice of ongoing inquiry into the relations between such identities. This notion of relationality is essential to a/r/tography, as unlike quantitative approaches, the research does not aim to create knowledge based on linear cause and effect



assumptions. A/r/tography research assumes that there is no beginning or end, merely a process of always becoming, in which knowledge creation is 'emergent, generative, reflexive and responsive' (Irwin, et al., 2006, p.71).

In terms of the ontological assumptions, a/r/tographic researchers view a world where there are multiple situated knowledges actively influenced through the particular social, economic, cultural and political processes and structures in place (Irwin, et al, 2007). Art therefore is no longer sited or rooted as a fixed concept, but instead constantly changing and in a perpetual state of 'becoming' (Sinner, et al., 2006). These particular assumptions that underpin a/r/tography influence both the nature of the research questions and the research design. As Sinner et al., (2006) state, a/r/tography searches for meaning through the process of inquiry and interprets experiences and situations for understanding. The process of a/r/tography itself is engaged with an ongoing art making process, which enables living inquiry into the constantly changing meanings constructed through relationships, identities and practices (Irwin, et al., 2006).

The assumptions outlined determine the values placed on the forms of data to be collected within the research process to enable the aims to be met (Sinner, et al., 2006). The methodology therefore must develop an approach that enables the researcher to engage in inquiry by selecting methods that can offer interpretations through art practices providing new visual understandings. Sinner, et al, (2006) argue that it is not so much the use of methods which are important to the research approach and methodology, but the use of 'practices'. As an artist, teacher and researcher consequently within the research process the actual practices of art making will inform the research process through the use of reflective accounts (Sinner, et al., 2006). As described by La Jevic and Springgay (2008), the action of art making, researching and teaching within a/r/tography are living practices in which all involved have a say in how the research process should be conducted. The research design will therefore utilise methods or practices that can achieve creative ways of knowing and understanding that can lead to inquiries about the shifting identities of both artist and participants, and the learning and teaching processes engaged within that can enable practices and situations to be questioned and new understandings generated (Sinner, et al., 2006).



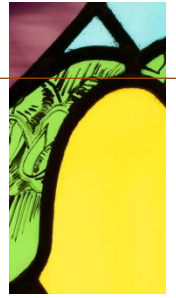
### Methods

One of the primary methods which uphold the conceptual framework is that of reflexivity as an artist, researcher and teacher (Stevenson, 2012). The research process is influenced by the professional, educational and personal life of the researcher, and this must be acknowledged through the methods chosen (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay, et al., 2005). Through the use of visual journaling and making artwork I will reflect upon both the artistic learning process and my reactions and responses to the evolving research process. As Sinner, et al., (2006) claim, artwork in the research process can be perceived as both object and action at the same time, in which understandings can be gained, reflected upon and re-constructed. As a researcher, I aim to use autobiographical experiences both past and present to encourage others to read and learn from my experiences in the spirit of reciprocity. I am keen to acknowledge subjectivity and emotionality in the research process. Such reflections are vital to the research aims as it can inform the research process and lead to further inquiry and the emergence and unfolding of new situations in which teaching and learning can be understood (Leggo, 2004; Gouzouasis & LaMonde, 2005; Sinner, et al., 2006). The study will also contain interviews with other art educators, reference to educational policy documents and photographs of student artwork thereby using triangulation to ensure validity and reliability of findings (Robson, 2011). I will now describe in more detail the methods and practices chosen to generate data to meet the aims of this research project.

### Visual Journals

‘The medieval scribe was a painter of manuscripts on the pages of which pictures and words intermingled in easy companionship: there was no radical opposition here between text and image’ (Ingold, 2011, p.178).

I began using visual research journals to record my reflections about the study experience. ‘Through the intertextuality of image and word, visual journals enable teachers and students to make meaning and inquire creatively into educational issues in a space that respects self and other’ (La Jevic & Springgay, 2008, p.68). My visual journals become a space for me to explore ideas, beliefs, and opinions through words and images. The contents of the journal comprised of notes from daily life and my studies, sketches for glass designs, drawings, pastels, paintings



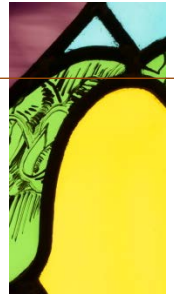
and photographs. According to Grauer and Naths (1998) visual journals are similar to sketchbooks but they differ because the use of words that ‘describe and support depictions, become graphic devices and aid reflection on personal themes and metaphors’ (Grauer and Naths, 1998, p.14). This method of investigating and evaluating personal thoughts and decisions throughout the course of an inquiry is now a recognised research tool (Gray and Malins, 2004). Furthermore, it is also a way for artists and art-practice PhD students to provide evidence of their research process in an academic world still suspicious of visual forms of knowledge. As claimed by Hockey (1999): ‘The explicit, cumulative detailing of the daily routines of making is what is needed, if practice is to be directly linked to theory, concepts to objects, processes to practice, mind to method, for a critical academic audience’ (Hockey, 1999, p.42).

It was important that I created this level of transparency in the research process. By drawing on my visual journals to support the making of artwork and the writing of the thesis I aimed ‘to make my decisions, and the thinking, values and experiences behind those decisions visible to both myself and the reader’ (Ortlipp, 2008, p.697). The journals were also an important element in building rapport with the participants in the study. I would often take them along to the interviews in order to show and discuss my work. ‘Reciprocity goes a long way towards establishing and maintaining rapport’ (Angrostino, 2007, p.33). In addition, it proved to be a useful way of getting critical feedback about media and subject matter.

### Artwork

‘The creativity of making lies in the practice itself, in an improvisatory movement that works things out as it goes along’ (Ingold, 2011, p.178).

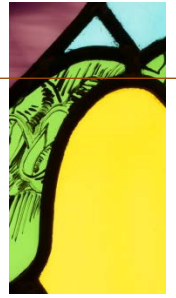
I chose to work in decorative glass for this project. This artistic medium provided me with the opportunity to master a new skill and to regain confidence in my ability as an artist (see Appendix G). Additionally, I was influenced by the growing support for the claim that a practitioner’s own art-based inquiry is an acceptable tool for research (Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Gray and Malins, 2007). A leading advocate for practice-based research, David Sullivan (2005), informs us that despite the need for original forms of inquiry, art education researchers continue to use education



theory as their prevalent position. Furthermore, art/s researchers are still using methods associated with the social sciences that were popular in the 1980s and 90s. Whilst he does not advise total rejection of these traditional methods, it is his view that arts researchers should be encouraged to embrace creative practice alongside these methods.

The positioning of the artwork within the study is defined in reference to the theories of Rust, Mottram and Till (2007). This perspective frames the creative practices of art as an instrumental part in an inquiry, a definition that upholds practice as an activity that can be undertaken in research as long as its contribution is clearly documented. In this context, practice is positioned 'as a means of communicating knowledge and understanding acquired through the inquiry' (Scrivener, 2010, p.74). Hence, I am not concerned with the artwork being the subject or the goal of the research, but a method to explore emergent themes. It is also pertinent here to refer to Professor Christopher Frayling's categories for practice-based research. In a research paper written for the Royal College of Art in 1993, he outlined his concerns regarding research within art practice. In the last twenty years many students, keen to use artistic methods, have been guided by these theories. Frayling borrowed from Herbert Read's model of education through art to argue for three distinct categories: research *through* art, research *for* art and research *into* art; it is within the first category, research *through* art that this project falls.

Frayling holds that research *through* art involves reflection on a topic and translation through artistic form. This reflective method frames the subject of the research in both cognitive and visual terms. In 1996 during an interview, Fraying referred to Bridget Riley's Op-Art paintings of the 1950s and 60s as an example of this type of art-based research. This body of work was created in response to the new ideas on the subject of perception which were the focus of scientific research at that time. Indeed, in an interview with Michael Harrison in 2011, Riley discusses studying another topic, the structure of medieval music, and the subsequent translation within the act of painting. She describes the interaction as follows: 'I have been aware that the motif is no longer *out there* in nature; the motif is *down there* on your piece of paper or canvas and so you are responding to what is



happening between you and this newly sited motif. This is a new creative dialogue’ (Riley, 2011, p.11).

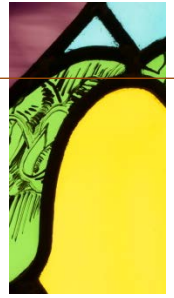
In these examples new knowledge comes to light as a result of the combination of reflections and the artworks they engender. Indeed, most artists and designers are involved in a ‘process of critical and reflexive inquiry, of testing and problem solving through the practice of making’ (Sinker, 2006, p.72). The main difference between the artist’s perspective and that of the arts-based researcher occurs in the planning and preparation stages, where the researcher systematically maps the process. As noted by Strand (1998) ‘It involves research *in* the art form, provided there is substantial accompanying document evidencing research *about* the art form’ (Strand, 1998, p.40). In my research project the ‘original contribution’ will emerge in the nexus between writing and making. It is also hoped that this contribution, through the use of the artistic medium, will reach a wider audience than is usual. As Cole and Knowles (2008) argue: ‘Arts-informed research maximises its communicative potential and addresses concerns about the accessibility of the research account usually through the form and language in which it is written, performed or otherwise presented’ (Cole and Knowles, 2008, p.67).

For many years, whilst working in art education, I paid scant attention to research in my subject. I considered that theoretical texts were full of academic jargon beyond my comprehension. I had neither the time nor the inclination to read them. According to Van Maanen (2011) ‘To those left out, such writing is chilly, masturbatory, restricted by design, and directed only to the already tenured of a special-interest club’ (Van Maanen, 2011, p.28). I wanted this design to speak to art teachers and students who find communication through visual means more accessible than traditional written reports caught up in the ‘jargon trap’ (Ibid.).

### Participants

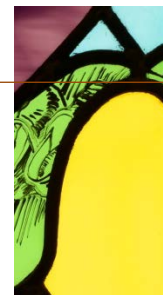
Since the intention was to explore how art teachers model practice in secondary schools, it was important to get into art departments and talk to people. Aidan Seery (2008) claims that the way in which ‘we speak of things in the world, of our inner world as well as the worlds of social and physical reality, reflects how we think about those worlds’ (Aidan Seery, 2008, p.133). I knew that art teachers





spent a lot of time thinking about their practice but they seldom got the chance to speak about it. I hoped that by giving them this opportunity, I could learn more about how they constructed their 'beliefs, values, attitudes and goals – in short, their images of their teaching' (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p.68). I understood that my position as a fellow art teacher was crucial here, that we would share many common images of teaching. According to Robson (2011) this insider knowledge should give me 'street credibility', which would lead to a more empathetic exchange, in turn encouraging 'the storytellers to focus on key events or experiences in their artistic development or teaching experiences that they feel have strongly shaped their actions' (Stewart, 2007, p.131). For me, the best way to understand the central research issue was to look for key events or experiences. This would allow me to draw out commonalities by revealing what others see as their experience thus providing a greater understanding for the reader into art teachers' pedagogical practice.

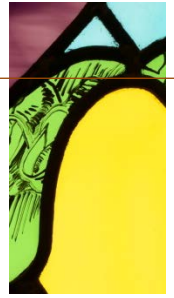
The dissertation study involved twenty art educators. Sixteen of these participants were interviewed face-to-face and four via email, due to their location. There were four men and sixteen women. The participants were at different stages of their careers. Seven were principal teachers, three were working on portfolio courses, six were full-time teachers, one was supply, one was part-time and two were presently not working (one had just returned from teaching in Dubai and the other was pursuing a full-time PhD). Denscombe (2007) describes the purpose of the sample as either representative or exploratory dependant on the aims of the research project. 'The size of exploratory samples is not governed by matters of accuracy but by considerations of how *informative* the sample is' (Denscombe, 2007, p.41). I recognised this as a good 'exploratory' sample and I was grateful that these volunteers had overcome any initial concerns to take part. The participants were mostly female, congruent with most art departments. They had been teaching for differing lengths of time, were responsible for various year groups and had backgrounds in a range of different disciplines. Most of the participants lived in Scotland and three in England – see Coding Table 1 on following page.



Coding Table 1

Location & Dept. size	Specialism	Age Group Taught	Gender & Position	Pseudonym
Urban (2) E	Illustration	Secondary	Female	Tracey Emin
Rural (3) E	Architectural Glass	Secondary	Female	Christine Borland
Suburban (2) E	Jewellery	Secondary	Female (PT)	Frida Kahlo
Suburban (1)	Community Arts	P7 – S6 in same school	Female	Bridget Riley
Urban	Painting	Secondary	Male	Andy Warhol
N/A	Painting	Secondary	Female	Georgia O'Keeffe
Suburban (4)	Painting	Secondary	Female (PT)	Tamara de Lempicka
Urban (2)	Time-based Art	Portfolio & Secondary	Female	Rachel Whiteread
Urban (2)	Painting	Portfolio & secondary	Male	Damien Hirst
Suburban (4)	Printed Textiles	Secondary	Female (PT)	Gwen John
Suburban (4)	Jewellery	Secondary	Female	Mary Cassatt
Urban (2)	Fine Art	Portfolio & Upper Sec	Female	Judy Chicago
N/A	Ceramics	Special Ed & Secondary	Female	Rosa Bonheur
Urban (3)	Fine Art	Special Ed & Secondary	Female	Suzanne Valadon
Suburban (3)	Embroidery & Woven Textiles	Secondary	Female (PT)	Annie Leibovitz
Urban (3)	Sculpture	Secondary	Female (PT)	Joan Eardley
Suburban (3)	Printed Textiles	Secondary	Female (PT)	Sonia Delauney
Suburban (4)	Sculpture	Secondary	Male (PT)	Stanley Spencer
Rural (2)	Sculpture	Secondary	Male	Henry Moore
Suburban (2)	Applied arts	Secondary	Female	Paula Rego

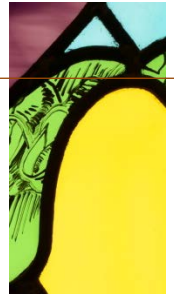
E denotes England PT denotes Principal Teacher



### Semi-structured Interviews

The qualitative research interview is concerned with understanding the world from the participant's point of view. During an interview the researcher attempts to discover what people think about 'their lived world, their dreams, fears and hopes... learns about their school and work situations, their family and social life' (Kvale, 2007, p.1). It was my aim to uncover this type of information but I understood from my trial study that a very structured style of interview would not be conducive to the flow of conversation. Hence, I employed semi-structured interview techniques to assist me in my quest for a 'natural' encounter that would yield meaningful responses. The semi-structured interview adheres to the topic under discussion, digressions and new themes, so valued in the open-ended interview, are not encouraged. According to Angrosino (2007) 'The semi-structured interview should develop naturally from out of an open-ended interview, following up and clarifying issues that came up in the more conversational format' (Angrosino, 2007, p.47). This style of interview would allow the exchange to flow freely whilst ensuring that specific information was elicited. In order to obtain maximum results a general questionnaire was drawn up which served as a guide for the focus of the discussion. In addition to this there would be probe questions designed to keep the conversation moving productively.

When employing this method I understand that the aim is to exchange views: a conversation between two people, the point being that knowledge is co-constructed between myself and the study participant. Therefore, it is important to consider the impact my presence will have on the exchange. 'One issue here is who is interviewing whom?, identities are initially attributed, but at the same time these may be revised or reconstructed over the course of the interview' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.109). In the first instance, my position is to ensure that the interviewee is relaxed and ready to take part in the interview. Thereafter it is to clarify responses in order to co-construct meaning-making and re-frame it within the lens of the research questions. I am also aware that positions can alternate as I disclose information about myself to those being interviewed. This presentation of self on both strategic and ethical grounds (Ryan, 2006) helps to build rapport and supports my position as a fellow participant in the process. Through sharing this experience, I consider myself to be a co-producer and co-author of the data

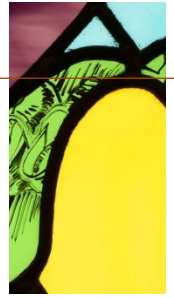


produced (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). These interviews are not just about 'collecting' data in a positivist sense but rather co-constructing meaning.

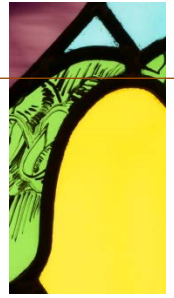
### The Interview Questions

Prior to interviewing, I prepared an interview guide or, as Robson (2011) calls it, 'a shopping list of topics' (Robson, 2011, p.285) to which I wanted to get responses. The guide contained a list of carefully worded questions but, because I had elected to use a semi-structured interview method, it was up to my judgement 'how closely to stick to the guide and how much to follow up the interviewees' answers and the new directions they may open up' (Kvale, 2007, p.57). This gave me a much greater degree of flexibility than the structured interview style I had trialled in the preliminary study. I could tailor the questions and their sequence dependent on the person's position, knowledge and understanding, thereby ensuring that I got the most meaningful/worthwhile answers from each individual participant. I also included several probes along with each question 'to get the interviewee to expand on a response if I felt that there was more to give' (Robson, 2011, p.283). This proved a useful strategy mainly because, at times, I felt that the participants were withholding personal opinions in order to remain detached from the process. I was keen to 'promote a positive interaction, keep the flow of the conversation going, and stimulate the subjects to talk about their experiences and feelings' (Kvale, 2007, p.57). The probes helped to gently tease out personal responses in a non-threatening way. Robson's advice on how to sequence questions gave me an effective framework on which to construct my guide: *Introduction, Warm-up, Main body of interview, Cool-off and Closure* (Robson, 2011, p.284). This approach eased the participants into the discussion, engendered a sense of trust and led to a more relaxed exchange.

The interview guide began with a question relating to the teacher's history as both an artist and as an art teacher. All art teachers have a history as artists and educators and 'well-formulated views' (Denscombe, 2010, p.184) on both those roles. I hoped this opening question would 'warm-up' the interviewees. The questions then became more closely linked to the 'theoretical conceptions of the research topic' (Kvale, 2007, p.57). The last question was an opportunity for the interviewee to 'cool-off' and for the interviewer to draw events to a close.



1. Could you tell me about your present position and a little about your past as an artist/art educator? (Probes: Where do you teach? Why did you choose to teach? How long have you been teaching? What is your specialist subject?)
2. What is your perception of the value of continuing to practice art whilst working as an art educator? (Probes: Do you create artwork at present? What sort of art do you produce? Does this help you to model practice in the classroom? Can you give an example?)
3. Are you aware of current research issues in art education? (Probes: Are you aware of the upsurge in practice-based methods in social science research in the last few years? Do you think that research in art education is relevant to you and your teaching? Are you aware of the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS)?)
4. Do you include contemporary art/artists in your taught programmes? (Probes: If so, can you tell me a little about who you include and why? Do you include difficult subject matter? (interviewer gives brief explanation) At what stages? If you do not include contemporary work, is there a reason for this?)
5. Do you think it is important to relate pupils' lived experiences to their creative activities in your classroom? (Probes: Does this, in your opinion, improve the teaching/learning experience? Can you give reasons? Can you give an example?)
6. We have now completed the interview/questionnaire, is there anything that you would like to add that you believe is relevant to the study?



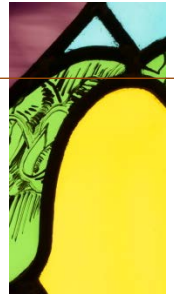
According to Kvale (2009) the success of an interview question is contingent on both 'a thematic and a dynamic' (Kvale, 2009, p.57) dimension. Thematically, the question should pertain to the research issue and subsequent analysis of the interview; dynamically, to the success of the relationships between the interviewer and interviewee during the interaction. This made sense to me and I was keen to promote both dimensions within the interviews. I also took Kvale's advice on the structure of the questions, keeping them 'brief and simple'.

### Bias Issues

By seeking to be a reflective and reflexive research practitioner I knew that I could bring another dimension to the study 'contributing to a multi-perspectival construction of knowledge' (Kvale, 2007, p.86). I understood that reflexivity required me to be conscious of my own values and beliefs and how these might influence the 'design, execution and interpretation of the theory, data and conclusions' (Griffiths, 2010, p.184). I was also aware that 'at the extreme, this approach can take the form of celebrating the extent to which the self is intertwined with the research process' (Denscombe, 2010, p.302). I had excluded 'myself' from the trial study and grappled with the authoritative voice and the impersonal social-science prose (Ellis, 1995). Hence, I agree that I was intent on 'celebrating' the inclusion of self, but aware that with autobiographical content there was also a need for balance between 'introspection and objectification' (Van Mannen, 2011, p.93). When the writer concentrates on the former the private muses and demons of the fieldworker can become a problem (Ibid.). My heightened awareness of these concerns would hopefully reduce any drift towards 'narcissism, self-absorption, exaggeration, exhibitionism or self-indulgence' (Šikić-Mićanović, 2010, p.45).

### Ethics

It was important to ensure that the participants did not feel coerced into taking part in the research. Their participation had to be voluntary and they had to have enough 'comprehensive and accurate information' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.210) about the project to guide them towards a considered decision about whether to participate or not, plus the freedom to withdraw at any time. 'These are the premises of informed consent' (Denscombe, 2010: 332). As a constructivist researcher, I invited my participants to view themselves as co-constructors of the

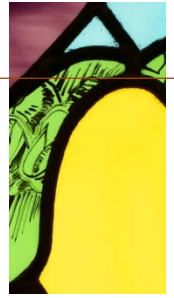


study. This reflects Yvonna Lincoln's words 'new research is a relational research – research grounded in the recognition and valuing of connectedness between researcher and researched' (Lincoln, 1995, p.287). I was not collecting data in a positivist sense, but co-authoring narratives. I was concerned not to allow my voice to overshadow the voices of the participants. Therefore I had to think carefully about ensuring that the study was 'owned' by all the collaborators, that it disclosed multiple perspectives and portrayed a complex picture of the central research issues. I knew that as a fellow art teacher there was a risk of 'siding with the participants on issues and only disclosing positive results that would create a Pollyanna portrait of issues' (Cresswell, 2013, p.60). I realised that I would feel a deep affinity with the participants but, by acknowledging my position, I hoped to guard against the concept of 'going native'.

Another ethical concern was that people should not suffer repercussions as a result of their involvement in this research. According to Denscombe (2010) 'those who contribute to research as informants or as research subjects should be no worse off at the end of their participation than when they started' (Denscombe, 2010, p.331). I knew that there could be possible consequences for my informants if they disclosed particular information about either the education system or the establishment in which they worked and I wanted honest responses. I had already been asked by some senior 'gatekeepers' to forward a copy of the study to them to peruse prior to publication. I suspected that this was to guard against any criticism aimed at their education establishments. I considered it a priority to protect my informants from this type of hierarchical interest therefore I guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity to each participant by giving them a pseudonym, the name of a well-known artist in keeping with the artistic nature of the project.

### Validity and Reliability

I adopted several measures to support the credibility of this study. I used a range of methods of data collection to shed light on the research issue. In qualitative research, this is termed triangulation (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). By triangulating several methods: interviews, documentary research, journals, artwork and photography, I hoped to provide validity to my findings. Reliability of the data was grounded by the use of digital recording, field notes and daily journal entries. This provided a systematic audit trail (Bassey,



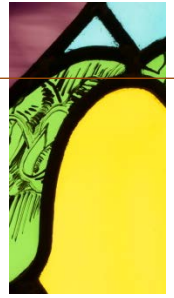
1999). I also gave copies of the transcripts to the participants to allow them to carry out member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This gave them an opportunity to review and clarify their responses as part of the co-construction process. Creswell (2011) explains that, 'rich, thick description allows readers to make decisions regarding transferability because the writer describes in detail the participants or setting under study' (Creswell, 2011, p.252). The use of detailed description coupled with quotations provides the reader with a deep insight into the participants' worlds. In turn determining whether the researcher's interpretations and conclusions are warranted (Fetterman, 2010).

### Collecting and Recording Stories

I contacted all participants by email and arranged an interview date and time (see Appendix E). Each interview lasted approximately one hour and most took place during preparation periods when there were few pupils in and around the art department to disturb the process. It had been stipulated that the exchange should take place in the teacher's own classroom setting for observation and photographic purposes. Before beginning I asked for permission to record the interview. Most participants appeared slightly uncomfortable but agreed. I assured them that the recording was to be used for transcription purposes and that I wanted to capture as much information as possible without struggling with pen and paper. Two declined and I respected their wishes but failed to get the detailed, in-depth responses I received from the others.

The transcription process proved useful because it informed the next day's exchange. I could order and present the interview guide dependent on previous results. I listened for times when I had not been entirely sensitive to a person or their mood. I could hear clearly where I had made mistakes and I was intent on learning lessons from these experiences. Donald Schon (1991) would describe this as 'reflection-on-action', the concept of taking time to reflect after the event. Also, in the process of transcribing, I became aware that I had missed certain important parts of the conversation on the day. I was so intent on keeping the conversation moving in a productive way that I did not stop to 'reflect-in-action' (Ibid.). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) 'this on-going dialect – between data gathering and reflection, between description and analysis – begins in the early





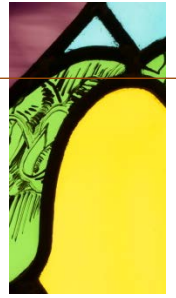
stages of fieldwork and lasts throughout the entire research process' (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p.188).

### Observation

'To observe is not so much to see what is 'out there' as to watch what is going on' (Ingold, 2011, p.223).

I had spent almost my entire life observing art teaching, art studios and art classrooms. In the early years as a pupil, then as a student, a student teacher, a teacher, a principal teacher and a moderator, I understood that experiences at art school were quite different from other higher education establishments and I knew that art departments 'have a different atmosphere from the rest of the school' (Tallack, 2004, p.107). I was not viewing the interiors of more art rooms, I was going to 'watch what was going on'. I wanted to watch these practitioners inhabit their environment (see Appendix E). I knew that this would lead to further insight into their world. I also knew that the way they presented their pupils' work, both visually and verbally, would give me the 'image' I sought. I wanted to touch and feel sculptural forms, trace the lines in the drawings, smell oil paint and ink and 'participate in the same generative movement' (Ingold, 2011, p.223). This sensory participation would contribute to my interpretation of the encounter.

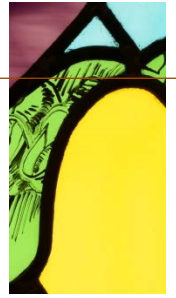
I had the opportunity to interview thirteen of the twenty participants in their teaching environments. I also interviewed two people in their studios which proved to be a very productive addition to the observation process. I scribbled field notes into my journal during these visits and although this could be awkward at times, these notes were then used for richer, more detailed descriptions presented alongside the interview transcripts. Where possible, I also sought permission to photograph student artwork. All participants readily agreed and dug into pupil portfolios to find artwork to record. These observation activities were also valuable because they could either support or oppose what was being said in the interview. For example, it would be very obvious from wall displays and the contents of portfolios whether these practitioners were or were not engaging with contemporary subject matter.



### Relevant Policies and Documents

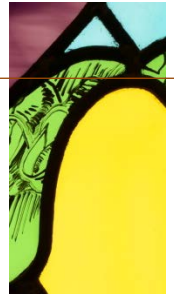
I prepared for fieldwork by reviewing current policy documents relevant to the participants' pedagogy and practice. The documents I considered most significant included: The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE); Education and the Arts, Culture and Creativity: An Action Plan; and The Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS). I began by looking closely at the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), the contemporary Scottish curricular programme originally launched in 2004 and gradually rolled out. The English National Curriculum (2008) follows a similar agenda. The CfE is the first curricular programme in Scotland to encompass education from early years to university entry level. It was conceived to encourage a more flexible, more fluid approach to teaching the curriculum. It claims to promote increased autonomy for teachers thereby encouraging the exploration of pedagogical practices linked to pupils' lived experiences and attitudes. The four main aims underpinning the course are to promote: successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; and effective contributors. The policy document appears to offer a panacea to art teachers; a platform that will support them in delivering a relevant, contemporary curriculum. However, it would be down to the participants to extol its virtues, or deny its influence on their teaching and the pupils' learning.

The second policy document is Education and the Arts, Culture and Creativity: An Action Plan. The Action Plan is another Scottish directive aimed at encouraging 'the role and impact of creativity within and across the curriculum'. The Action Plan was drawn up to disseminate good practice and increase awareness of good quality cultural and creative activity that would assist in teaching the curriculum, specifically, the CfE. The directive grew as a result of seminars held at Edinburgh University in November 2008 and December 2009. The seminars were hosted by the Ministers for Culture and Schools at the time, Fiona Hyslop (Culture and External Affairs), Michael Russell (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning) and Keith Brown (Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning). I have included the Action Plan because of its claims to support a divergent teaching model aimed at supporting contemporary art practices at secondary school level. The following assertions are presented in the document: 'Creative educators and learners challenge assumptions, are divergent thinkers, playful individuals, and risk takers. The pedagogical space is: a place where risks are taken and celebrated,



reflection and evaluation strategies are implemented, and there is access to CPD'. These statements are attractive to the teacher who longs for the freedom to exert some of their own influence on the curriculum; the freedom to model practice with a sense of autonomy. I was interested in finding out if the participants had heard of this directive and if it had informed their teaching practice in any way.

The third document, The Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS), was created in 1999 by the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) in partnership with the Arts Council. The programme is available through Higher Education institutions and offers a range of courses to Masters level. Its main aim is to encourage art teachers or artist-teachers to engage in practice-based research alongside their careers in education. I have included the scheme because four of the participants are members and I was interested to hear if it has had any influence on their teaching. The results of an investigation into the scheme by Nick Stanley in 2004 found that art teachers who continue to practise art are significantly more effective in the classroom than those who leave it behind upon entering the teaching profession. These findings were further confirmed by Page, Adams and Hyde in 2011. It is clear from this extensive research that the scheme is beneficial to the practice and pedagogy of art teachers, yet, prior to entering the EdD course, I had never heard of it. There is only one centre in Scotland based at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and several centres in England. My intention, therefore, was to question the participants on their awareness of the ATS and, further, to see if this type of qualification would be of interest to them in the future.



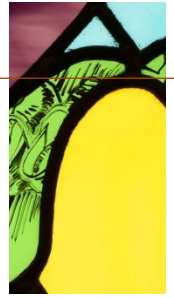
# ANALYSIS

## Capturing the Essence

Richards & Morse (2013) describe 'good' data as being 'relevant and focused' (Richards & Morse, 2013, p.123). Having used a range of methods to collect 'good' data with sufficient density, I was ready for further analysis. I had begun tentative analysis during the interview phase by writing and drawing reflections in my visual journal, this had continued until transcription was finished. According to Coffey & Atkinson (1996) 'Analysis is not the last phase of the research process. It should be seen as part of the research design' (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.6). As I came to the end of the interview process, I was keen to continue thinking creatively about the data. I wanted to construct a framework for analysis that would support this desire. I was aware that, historically, research into creativity had followed a scientific path 'trying to "measure" and "explain" the "results", rather than understand the person and the process in relation to the outcomes' (Gray & Mallins, 2004, p.129). I was sure that both art teachers' stories and the process used to gather these stories were at the heart of this project. Hence, scientific methods were not going to generate an in-depth understanding of the research issue. Tesch sees qualitative research as an art:

The result of the analysis is, in fact, a representation in the same sense that an artist can, with a few strokes of the pen, create an image of a face that we would recognise if we saw the original in a crowd. The details are lacking, but a good reduction not only selects and emphasises the essential features, it retains the vividness of the personality (Tesch, 1990, p.304).

The idea of 'capturing the essence' (Ibid.), discovering and developing several perspectives and practices to reduce, interpret and present the data was my goal. I wanted to describe and portray the evidence in an honest and creative way, rather than measure statistics to support 'reliable and objective' results. I was interested in presenting research findings that made sense to art educators; I saw them as my main audience. Thus, it was important that the writing was relatively jargon-free and accessible. In qualitative research 'the development of criteria for evaluating research quality is a discursive task, involving inter-subjectivity and negotiation' (Gray & Mallins, 2004, p.130). As a constructivist ethnographer, I was keen to work



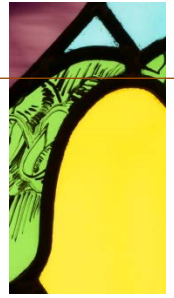
towards a negotiated outcome, to give voice to the participants and include their authentic stories in the form of verbatim quotations in the report.

### An Iterative Approach

In order to build a creative, flexible framework for analysis, I needed to adopt a reflexive and iterative approach. I would alternate between emic, emergent readings of the data and an etic use of existing theory and explanations. An iterative approach includes reflection on the researcher's interests linked to the project and current literature (Tracey, 2013). To analyse the emerging data, I chose to adapt Charmez' constructivist version of grounded theory (2003, 2006, 2009). She takes an interpretative stance and accepts that there are wider theoretical influences on research. Her argument that 'generalisations are partial, conditional and situated in time and space' (Charmez, 2009, p.141) was also congruent with my position as a constructivist researcher. I encouraged my participants to be co-constructors of data and recognised the subjectivity that influenced their lives in keeping with my value system. Charmez advocates the *flexible* use of grounded theory strategies. She emphasises investigating processes, centralising the study of action and creating abstract interpretative understandings of the data (2006). A traditional interpretation of grounded theory where the process is purely inductive might have restricted creative interaction with the data. This alternative approach to grounded theory helped me to reduce and focus the data in a flexible way, allowing for connections to be made between emerging insights and existing theory. This gradually led me to refine my focus and understandings towards interpretive explanations (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009).

### Reading

Prior to formatting the data, I read through the transcripts in a purposeful way several times. Dey (1993) argues that it is not possible to analyse without reading first. He asserts that reading for analysis is not a passive activity, but that we are reading to comprehend. I particularly enjoyed his analogy between reading and gardening. 'By digging over the ground, we loosen the soil and make it possible for the seeds of our analysis to put down roots and grow (Dey, 1993, p.83). He goes on to suggest that it is useful to have some 'fertilizer in the shape of a few ideas' (Ibid.). I had a few ideas about the research topic and these 'sensitizing concepts' were used as early reference points to explore the data.

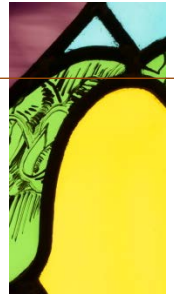


### Sensitizing Concepts

The aims and objectives of a research project arise under particular historical, social and situational conditions (Charmez, 2006). I recognised that I would bring my background as an art educator and my inherent perspectives to the research process. I could see that my past experiences would shape topics and emphasise certain concepts. This would fit with the proposed iterative approach. Charmez refers to Blumer's (1969) notion of 'sensitizing concepts' to describe the research interests or concepts that drive a project in the first place. These concepts are interpretive devices that serve as starting points or lenses for qualitative study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Tracey, 2013). They sensitize you to formulate particular types of questions about your topic. I began this study of art teachers with an interest in how they modelled practice in the classroom. From my perspective as an art educator, I had already compiled a list of sensitizing concepts that I believed influenced art teachers' pedagogies and practice. They were: 'development opportunities', 'specialist knowledge', 'history and identity', 'assessment frameworks', 'research and theory' and 'attitudes and beliefs about art'. This list provided a starting point for analysis. These concepts were used as 'tentative tools' to develop ideas that emerged in the data. Consequently, I was aware that the flexible grounded theory approach meant that I had to test the assumptions that I brought to the study, not unwittingly reproduce them (Charmez, 2006).

### Formatting

I then turned my attention to the mechanics of coding. I was sure that Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) programmes were not for me. According to Basit (2003) the choice between manual and electronic coding depends on 'the size of the project, the funds and time available, and the inclination and expertise of the researcher' (Basit, 2003, p.143). My technological knowledge was limited and the data corpus was small enough in scale to code on hard copy print-outs. I was concerned that I would become so overwhelmed with the challenge of mastering the software that I would lose sight of the data and the research goals. Johnny Saldaña (2013) suggests 'there is something about manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing codes in pencil that give you more control over and ownership of the work' (Saldaña, 2013, p.26). The actual preparation for coding also added to the process and increased my familiarity with



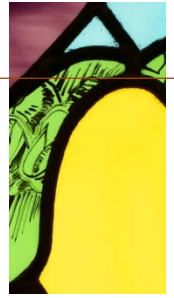
the interview transcripts. I used Microsoft Word's basic functions to display the transcripts in double-spaced format and gave each line a unique number per script. I retained a wide right-hand margin for writing notes and codes. I also separated the texts into shorter units whenever the topics changed. Gee, Michaels, and O'Connor (1992) describe these units as 'poetic-like verses' or 'stanzas of text' (Gee, Michaels, and O'Connor, 1992, p.240) allowing me to retrieve and code sections more easily. This formatting process can be viewed as an early part of the analysis enterprise.

### Data Exploration

I was searching for emerging concepts raised by the art teachers that would serve to focus my research. In order to familiarise myself with the data I explored initial coding techniques for the interview transcripts and the observation notes. Observation notes were coded incident-by-incident, while interview transcripts were coded line-by-line using *in vivo* codes when possible. Emerson et al. (2011) offered some good advice on what to consider when coding but I felt the list of general questions was too long and detailed. I wanted to concentrate on the data, not the criteria, for searching the data. Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater (2007) advise to ask yourself the following question 'What strikes you?', this seemed a more natural way to progress and they expanded on the initial question with three useful suggestions:

- ◆ What surprised me? (to track my assumptions)
- ◆ What intrigued me? (to track my positionality)
- ◆ What disturbed me? (to track the tensions within my value, attitude, and belief systems) (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2007, p.106).

This provided a more instinctive, more reflexive set of criteria to work with. Glaser (1978) recommends coding with 'gerunds' which supported detection of processes and allows you to stay close to the data. Charmez (2006) claims that 'we gain a strong sense of action and sequence with gerunds' (Charmez, 2006, p.49). This also allowed for easier comparison across cases. Line-by-line coding meant naming every line in the transcripts (Glaser, 1978). I had formatted my transcripts in



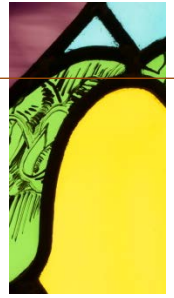
preparation for this task and manually copied the codes into the right-hand side margins.

### Example of line-by-line coding

Section of Transcript	Codes
to front. But I got into this just because I really enjoy the kinda freethinking of a lot of kids, they don't realise they've got it and it's nice to nurture that in them bring it out of them, get them excited about expressing themselves, Which is really what I find is why I went into teaching I suppose, just to get that, just to switch some people onto thinking like that. I'm not trying to create artists. I'm just trying to create, get people to think about themselves and their environment, what they're getting people to think by doing. Because all my sculpture, originally was about all the work I was doing before I started doing the more large-scale kinda architectural stuff was all about self-direction and who you are and your identity and stuff so I try to involve the pupils in that as best I can.	Enjoyment
	Freethinking
	Nurturing
	Expression
	Switching on
	Creation
	Excitement
	Making
	Identity
	Involvement

These initial codes concentrated on what appeared in the data. They were descriptive, often reflecting the activities described by the participants. I included *in vivo* codes where possible to highlight the vocabulary of the artist/educator community. I realised that I was using a labelling strategy to familiarise myself with the data and search for emerging concepts and I became concerned that this mechanistic activity was detracting from an insightful portrayal of the participants' lived experiences. The solution was to write short memos in my journals. This meant I could document my reflections and record ideas and information. These memos were often written in a few minutes and proved to be a quick way of capturing my thoughts about the emergent concepts. Miles & Huberman (1994) describe memos as 'sharp, sunlit moments of clarity or insight – little conceptual epiphanies'. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) describes them as 'Impressionistic Records', a ruminative, thoughtful piece that allows us to become increasingly focused and discerning in our work.





### Example of Memo

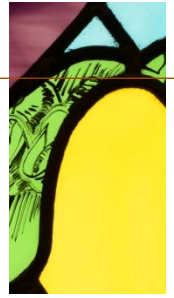
#### **I'm not trying to create artists**

A working sculptor, a professional artist for several years before entering teaching. Why had he made the transition? He became very animated as he described events. Involved in outreach community work, came into contact with children in the capacity of a community educator. His love of teaching came across when he described interacting with 'the kids' and the joy this gives him. He was especially interested in how 'kids' think. The concept of reciprocity arises as he describes what he gets from the interaction with 'kids'. He pursues the idea that he is 'not trying to create artists', he just wants these 'kids' to 'express themselves' and think a bit deeper about who they are and their environment. Initial codes 'the freethinking of kids' 'switching them on', 'involving them', 'nurturing the pupils', 'discovering identity'.

Glaser & Strauss (1967) advocate the act of writing as a method of focusing analysis. Writing these memos gave me a deeper insight into the lives of the participants and linked field notes and interview data to conceptual ideas. This activity, in turn, allowed me to chart the process of description and interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### Focused Coding

This phase of the research process was both complex and challenging. I had spent a lot of time fracturing the data with each line bearing its own code. This had provided a 'vivid, multi-textured picture of the data' (Tracey, 2013, p.190) and it was now time to reconnect these bits of data into larger segments in a second cycle of coding. Again, I found Charmez's (2006) framework for focused coding offered clear steps. Her version is an adaptation of classic grounded theory's axial coding. Focused coding 'searches for the most frequent or significant codes to develop the most salient categories in the data corpus' (Saldaña, 2013, p.213). This meant making decisions about which original codes made the most analytic sense (Charmez, 2006). These second level codes had to be more carefully selected and more conceptual (Charmez, 1983, 1995; Glaser, 1978). I began searching for



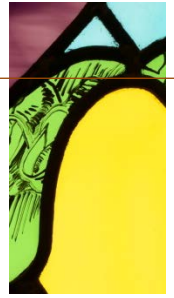
common sets of features in the initial codes, at the same time I was aware that there would be 'different degrees of belonging' (Dey, 1999, p.69). There would not always be obvious connections and strict parameters; I was looking for relationships between codes in individual transcripts.

Line-by-line codes had been generated by the data but interpretive creativity and theoretical knowledge were necessary to generate second-level codes (Tracey, 2013). Some focused codes contained just one or two relevant coded extracts; this data could not be related to other sections but they were crucial to the research focus. Also, certain data were only 'tangentially related to the evolving project interests and therefore could be siphoned off' (Tracey, 2013, p.195). Discarding or 'winnowing' (Wolcott, 1994) the data was most difficult because the participants' stories were central to the project and I was keen to give voice to their lived experiences where possible.

I plotted the focused codes and subsumed initial codes on simple tree diagrams, allowing for a visual at-a-glance representation. I also continued to use memo writing to trace the process from initial coding to focused coding. This cycle had provided a large number of these codes; too many for meaningful analysis. I then turned to reducing the volume of secondary level code to a manageable level through comparison and categorisation. I created 'conceptually clustered tables' into which I inserted the individuals' pseudonyms and focused codes that 'belonged together' (Robson, 2011, p.485). This was a simple and useful technique to compare focused codes across the other data sets to assess comparability and transferability. According to Glaser and Stauss (1967), comparison is at the heart of grounded theory, whilst Tesch (1990) sees it as the main intellectual process in analysis. Displaying data in this way identified where there was sufficient congruence to bring these codes together to create broader categories. Each code brought together within a category had some shared element which was significant to the others, and relevant to the emerging analysis (Denscombe, 2010).

### Towards Interpretation

Charmez (2006) sees constructivist grounded theory positioned firmly within the interpretive tradition. By developing theory I would increase my understanding of the studied experience. I had used memos to raise focused codes to key categories



and I continued to use this strategy to construct an interpretative framework. As I searched for the main themes running through the data, I sorted my memos by hand into a categorical scheme allowing me to remain creatively conceptual (Glaser, 2005). Experimenting with this process, I arranged memos by category and compared categories across the board (Charmez, 2006). This process showed how categories interrelate and transcend to themes (Saldana, 2013), thus forming a foundation to build theory about what it means to be an art teacher in our time. The emergent themes are as follows:

1. **Shaping** the artistic identity
2. **Turning** towards and away from personal practice
3. **Re-imagining** art teaching through research
4. **Re-defining** the canon
5. **Exploring** lived experiences through art

In order to develop my theoretical sensitivity to these themes, I turned back to the literature to gain a better understanding of issues with which I was not fully conversant. I also decided to extend the structure of the interpretative framework by including four complementary categories within each theme. I selected the complementary categories on the basis that they recurred frequently in the data and were of central concern to the participants.

**1. Shaping:** 1.1. Encountering (art education), 1.2. Specialising (in a discipline), 1.3. Choosing (to teach), 1.4. Becoming (an art teacher).

**2. Turning:** 2.1. Making (artwork), 2.2. Modelling (practice), 2.3. Balancing (art, teaching & other commitments), 2.4. Teaching (as an art).

**3. Re-imagining:** 3.1. Being aware (of research), 3.2. Fusing (research and practice) 3.3. Disconnecting (theory from practice), 3.4. Reflecting (on art and pedagogy).

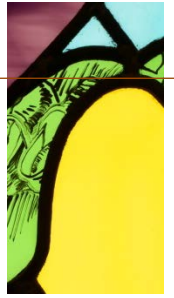
**4. Re-defining:** 4.1. Engaging (with contemporary art), 4.2. Considering (the shock factor) 4.3. Talking (about art), 4.4. Visiting (artists and gallery visits).

**5. Exploring:** 5.1. Stimulating (ideas), 5.2. Expressing (emotions), 5.3. Building (strong relationships), 5.4. Knowing (our boundaries).

## INTO THE LIGHT

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As consistent with a constructivist approach, I recognised that these categories and themes arose from shared experiences with participants and other sources of data. As an art educator, I had an insider view of the studied experience, but I was in no position to replicate the participants' experiences. In order to give them a voice, I presented their interpretations of each category in the first instance. This was then followed by my interpretative commentary based on my personal experiences, the literature review, and what I observed in the field. My role was to write about these experiences from my position as a constructivist researcher, acknowledging that the resulting theory is a shared interpretation (Bryant, 2002; Charmez, 2000).





## CHAPTER FOUR

## CONSTRUCTIONS





# CHAPTER FOUR – CONSTRUCTIONS

In this chapter, art teachers' constructions of their experience both in making and teaching art will be discussed. Construction in this context means the individual's construction of knowledge from accommodation and assimilation of their experiences (Piaget, 1974). The art teachers' constructions will be considered in light of the five themes that emerged from the analysis process.

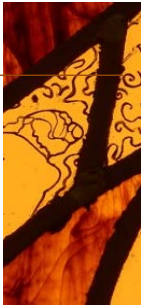
The first section will look at Shaping; that is to say, how those who took part in the study were shaped by their histories and past experience, for example at school or as undergraduates. The second section will consider Turning; in other words how the teachers were affected by their own making (or not) of art, and how this in turn affected the way in which they model art practice in the classroom.

Sections on Re-imagining and Re-defining will consider teachers' engagement with research and theory and their exploration of contemporary art, again considering how this affects their ability to model art practice for their students.

The final section in this chapter will look at Exploration and whether they are encouraging their students to become independent learners and make connections between art, their own lives, and the wider world; in other words adopting a constructivist approach.

## THEME 1– SHAPING (THE ART TEACHER'S IDENTITY)

In this section the participants discuss previous and present experiences as artists and art educators and how they inter-relate. They reflect upon their own educational journey and describe their encounters with school and art school. They give reasons for choosing to enter the teaching profession and offer their personal constructions of becoming teachers. Each category begins with an introduction and includes additional commentary to support the discussion.



### 1.1. Encountering (Art Education)

Given the range of provision at undergraduate level, different courses provide students with different experiences of the 'same' subject. This experience in turn has a powerful influence on the stance adopted by art teachers towards their pedagogies. For school pupils, art and design is inseparable from the art teacher, this means that the content of the curriculum and the nature of the teacher's responses are bound up in the teacher's personal identity. Art teachers' constructions of their teaching experiences are shaped by a combination of exchanges and relationships in various settings over a lengthy period of time. Campbell claims that 'teachers often teach in the same way they were taught' (Campbell, 200, p.64) and it was relevant to see that some participants referred back to their experiences at school and their relationships with their teachers. Others spoke of the transition from secondary school to tertiary education. There were also descriptions of employment between art school and teacher training college.

Damien was hugely influenced by an inspirational art teacher who was instrumental in both his early development as an artist and in his progression to art school. He is clearly grateful that this teacher recognised his burgeoning talent and offered him the opportunity to move beyond the confines of his upbringing:

Well, the biggest influence on my life was my principal teacher of art at Secondary School. I just had a natural painting technique really and he recognised that. He was very much a painter who was into the German Expressionists, and I could just paint like that (laughs). It was actually fantastic, a fantastic art department. There were a lot of really good teachers in it and that got me to art school from the East End of Glasgow. I don't know where I would be if I hadn't gone there and met this teacher.

This early experience of coming into contact with art teachers who were enthusiastic about the job and interested in the pupils was a catalyst for Damien's future career as an art teacher. However, not all participants had school experiences that were positive. Rachel talked about her reactions to a new teacher who she perceived to be too inexperienced to teach at a specific level:

In sixth year I got a new teacher and I didn't get on with this person. So, I put in a complaint just because he had not taught



Advanced Higher before. And I found it ridiculous that I had someone giving me Advanced Higher lessons who had never taught that course before. There was another teacher who could teach it and had taught it. I was quite outspoken at school.

Already Rachel is exhibiting traits of the creative personality (Getzels, and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). She is confident about communicating her needs, passionate about her artwork, rebellious and independent. Participants also raised issues in relation to parental attitudes towards art. Joan spoke about her father's initial, adamant refusal to accept her ambition to go to art school:

I had parents who never wanted me to go to art school and, although it was clear that that was where my strengths lay (and that was where I was drawn, working class parents, no, the whole art school thing no, you're not going. I therefore wasn't allowed to do my Higher Art until sixth year. My dad in particular wouldn't let me until I got my 'real' subjects. I was going to Saturday morning classes for deprived weans, you got your bus fare (laughs) and I went to Castle Toward and *I knew it was what I wanted to do definitely*. I eventually got in and I had to tell my dad and he was fine, he said 'if you've got the balls to do what you've done, then, you must really want it'.

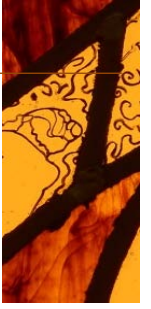
Because of her strong personality and determination Rachel finally managed to persuade her father that he could not divert her from the deep conviction that she needed to be an artist.

Suzanne told a similar story of judgement and control and relates this to well-being. She is very sure that failure to follow a creative path leads to unhappiness and discontent:

My parents said to me, well, my dad did, 'you will be an artist starving in a garret; there is no future in it'. But there are a lot of careers in the creative industries and I wholeheartedly believe that, if you are a creative person, you have to do that and nothing is going to stop you because you are not going to be happy in your life if you don't.

In this cautionary tale, despite the second person narrative at times, it is clear that she is describing her own immersion in teaching to the detriment of her artistic practice. Adding another dimension, Damien talked about this issue from the





teacher's perspective. He recalls this case from twenty years ago, from the time when he worked as a principal teacher in an area of deprivation:

I had managed to get the quality of work from people, but I couldn't get the full family backing, the family commitment. There were kids, I remember one guy in particular, he sticks in my mind, he was fantastic but ... there wasn't the drive of the parents. There wasn't this understanding that you could do it.

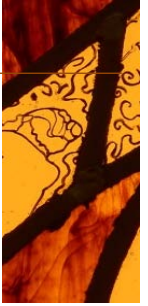
This anecdote reveals how strongly he feels about a talented pupil being denied the opportunity to fulfil his potential. He became very agitated whilst talking and the disappointment he felt was palpable.

The transition from secondary to tertiary art education often necessitates a significant shift in the young artist's understandings about making and teaching art. It is important to reflect on this process in order to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' development as artists and teachers. They had attended various higher education establishments, both independent art schools and departments in universities such as: Camberwell College of Arts; Derby University; Duncan of Jordanstone; Edinburgh College of Art; Glasgow School of Art; the Scottish College of Textiles (Galashiels); Slade School of Fine Art; Strathclyde University and the University of East London.

When asked to reflect on her educational experiences beyond school, Mary described the transition as liberating and enlightening:

I left school and completed a year at North Glasgow College doing a jewellery design course. I got a few modules there and, while I was completing that year, I did the portfolio class and used that experience to apply to art school. The portfolio course opened my eyes a bit to the work that I had completed in school which was very naïve and a bit too contained, it was a bit too restrained. Being at the portfolio class helped me to experiment a wee bit more, be a bit freer with my work.

Mary identified this transitional period as an opportunity to reflect upon her secondary art education. This juncture led to a re-evaluation of the style of work she had produced in school, previously considered acceptable but now seen as gauche and immature.



This sense of freedom was echoed in Judy's description of the transition from her home county of Cheshire to art school in London:

I went from secondary school to a foundation course in Cheshire. So that is where I had my secondary education and my foundation education. From there all I wanted to do was leave Cheshire (laughs). I felt it was culturally barren. I mean I can use that language now but at the time it was just dull; I found it really dull and boring. I needed to get away. So, *I went to live in London*. I applied to the Slade School of Fine Art and got in to do Fine Art at University College London, *Amazing!* (sniggers). I loved it, the whole experience of being away from home, living independently, the institution itself at the time.

She interpreted this as a pivotal time in her life, she was leaving behind the old, familiar past and moving towards a brighter, more exciting, new future:

It was a phenomenal experience in so many ways, the teaching that we received, access to practitioners, talking to artists, designers, makers... There was an interesting mix of people. A very, very broad range of students from different class backgrounds which made it interesting and exciting.

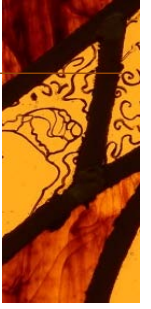
It is clear that both the content of what was learned and the social context were appealing to Judy. This view of art school was not shared by some of the other participants. Suzanne gave a divergent point of view:

Oh well, I trained in London at Camberwell, in Fine Art painting and basically you weren't taught anything. You were just left in a room and I just didn't feel at ease there. I was always in between sort of graphics and painting, so I ended up doing printmaking and working full-time in the Graphics Department. They just seemed to have a better work ethic, the technicians taught me everything I know about printmaking.

It is evident in this brief reconstruction of her time at art school that the model of teaching that she experienced, which is not unusual in an institution of this sort, was not suited to her needs, and she felt did not support her learning.

### 1.2.Specialising (in a Discipline)

When reflecting upon their artistic training, the participants were motivated by a very strong subject allegiance. Their identities as artists were bound up in the



subjects they studied at art school. They often began the interview by introducing themselves as ‘a sculptor’, ‘a painter’, ‘a jewellery designer’ ‘a time-based artist’. They were keen to talk about the studio departments they worked in and the media with which they worked. The participants came from a variety of departments and disciplines including: Applied Arts; Architectural Glass; Ceramics; Community Arts; Drawing & Painting; Embroidered & Woven Textiles; Fine Art; Jewellery Design; Illustration; Painting & Printmaking; Sculpture; Textiles and Time-based Art.

Rachel gave an account of her training which was directed away from the traditional system of the individual media-based department towards a more pluralist, postmodernist, approach:

At art school I did time-based art where I specialised in *What is Time-based Art?* at Duncan of Jordanstone in the School of Fine Art. It centred on a lot of lens-based media or art that has a duration. So, for example, there was performance to camera, video installation, light and sound, animation. So, for my degree, I did performance to camera, which became video installation.

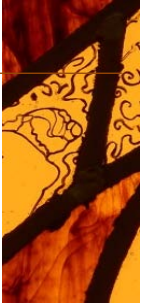
Rachel’s experience at art school followed the contemporary approach based on interdisciplinary concepts of making and thinking. There was a strong emphasis on technical skills and working with a range of contemporary digital media:

The thing with Duncan of Jordanstone is that they gave you a proper specialised training in editing equipment and working with the camera. It was almost like learning a trade, a lot of people in my class went on to work with the BBC.

She clearly appreciated this rigorous training in experimental technology and the opportunities to draw from different media traditions besides art, including theatre, cinema, broadcast and music. It provided her with a basis for pursuing artistic goals outside the confines of the single discipline approach.

In contrast, Judy talked about her experience of taking part in a traditional workshop based on paint preparation:

One of the things that I am now so damned grateful that I had, was a traditional workshop based on how to mix and make your own paint. I think that you learn to fall in love with your materials. You



could end up making something very contemporary as a painter,  
you're taken right back to the root, the powder, to the rocks...  
Fantastic, *can you imagine?* (whispers).

This description of studying a process from centuries ago shows that older methods are still of interest and are still useful to artists at the present time. Contemporary methods produce faster results and have less complicated techniques because artists these days tend to be more impatient but, in Judy's case, there is still a desire to explore more traditional materials and ways of working.

When Joan attended art school sixteen years ago there was still a strong emphasis on specialising in distinct disciplines after the general first year. This was something she struggled with and overcame by developing her own version of a multidisciplinary practice:

I'm a maker, definitely a maker, and I applied to Sculpture and I was in Sculpture, it was good, but there wasn't a lot of input from the tutors, they weren't there. But the good thing about nobody being there was that I had the workshops to myself. So, I was welding, and I thought *I love metal, I always did love metal* and I brought fabrics to it and then would go into textiles and print my own fabrics and then thought I could reduce the scale of that, I'll go into Jewellery, and then I thought, I want to try Jewellery.

Asked if there was any reaction to this from the establishment, she explained that the notion of moving between subjects, mixing and matching with other media appealed and she was unaware of the predominant attitudes surrounding restrictive departmental boundaries:

I didn't think there was a problem with it. I didn't, I wasn't aware you know, I was so naïve. I thought I need to do this and I just did it. I'm quite surprised at myself now, with the balls I had then, because now I kind of think through a thing too much. I would go in and think Oh, that's how you solder, you know, it's a totally different thing to welding. I just loved it all, loved it.

Joan described herself as being driven, but uninformed and inexperienced. This combination of motivation and innocence were central in allowing her to create artwork instinctively, without being afraid of upsetting the status quo.



Experimenting in this way allowed her to ‘play with different materials’ resulting in her own form of multimedia art.

### 1.3.Choosing (to Teach)

What motivates an artist to become a teacher is an important question. On graduating from art school few participants chose to go straight into teaching. Most opted to make a living from art in some other capacity. This meant either becoming self-employed or working for someone else in the creative industries.

Damien suggests that his decision to become a teacher was based on reciprocity: an act of giving back the encouragement and support he received from his secondary art teacher:

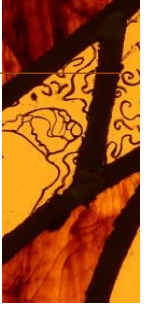
I was in Painting and Printmaking and I sort of toyed with the idea of becoming a painter. But, I don’t know, there was just something about trying to do what happened to me. Well, this art teacher had managed to get me into art school and wanting to do a similar thing. You know, whether that was just an easy way out, or not, I don’t know.

In the last line of this excerpt, it is interesting to see that, more than thirty years after going into teaching and despite having a very successful career, Damien still questions the choice he made between becoming a full-time painter and teaching.

Rosa explained that her wish to become a teacher originated from her school days and derived from a combination of altruistic motives and giftedness:

The primary reason I went to art school was to be a teacher, that thing where in school you are trying to work out what it is you’re good at. That’s how it is framed. Decide what it is you’re good at and then the pathways that follow. So, you think, I’ve been given a gift of being able to draw. So, I should use that gift, pursue it in some way. Being a teacher was a noble pursuit and it was helping people. It made sense of bringing all that talent with a purposefulness and it made sense of art school too.

Rosa’s commitment to teaching was bound up in the concept of a realistic career option that enabled her to go to art school with a specific goal. Otherwise, she says, ‘what was the use of it? I mean honest to God, what was the utility of it?’. She



maintained that she saw teaching as her foremost practice then and that there was no desire to continue her own development as an artist.

Another reason the participants gave for opting straight into teacher training college was a general disillusionment with art school. Joan describes her feelings towards the end of her undergraduate course:

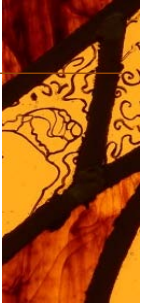
I was offered a Masters and I thought, do you know what, I cannot cope with you lot any longer, I need out of this environment. I had done was it the Benno Schotz prize? and the tutors rubbishing it, they rubbished it and I thought *how dare you*. If I've got the nerve to go down there and put it in and it won an award, *how dare you*? So, all the ill feeling was just building and building. So, then I left and got accepted for teacher-training.

Joan interpreted her choice as turning her back on something that had soured over time. Having a difference of opinion about what constitutes art caused disagreements with her tutors at art school and had led to feelings of distrust and disillusionment.

Both Georgia and Tamara were Fine Art students, on leaving higher education they had immediately set up studios and started painting. Tamara gave up within a year realising that for her 'it wasn't as rewarding as contact with other people'. Georgia was more driven and relatively successful, managing to scrape a living for nine years before coming to the realisation that it was not financially sustainable in the long term:

After graduating from art school I was a practicing artist. By that statement I mean that I set up a studio to work on my painting career using everything that I had been taught at art school. I was a member and frequent user of the Glasgow Printmakers Studio. I exhibited throughout Scotland and there was a certain demand for my work But I had no real hopes of making a living from it and after nine years I decided to return to university to study for my PGCE.

This account shows that Georgia's motivations changed over time due to increased experience and knowledge of the field. Georgia found that to function as an artist was difficult enough, but there were other demands besides the daily struggle of producing paintings.



Other common reasons for choosing to teach were that family members were teachers and the security of a regular income. Suzanne described her position prior to making the transition to teaching:

I must admit it was necessity. I had split up with the children's dad and he died. So being a single parent, my girls were five and six, I decided to do teacher training. We were living in a high rise, we'd got made homeless and they couldn't ride bikes or anything and I just felt that I should try to supply them with a better future, a more stable future.

Suzanne's transition to teaching came about because she found herself in dire need of employment in order to provide for her daughters. Teaching was not considered a first or a natural choice for her. It is clear she felt pressurised due to her domestic circumstances. However, on beginning her training, there was a realisation that she has made the right decision:

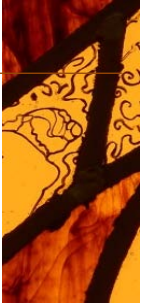
When I started it, I thought, I should have done this years ago, *aye, I did*. I don't know why I didn't come to it sooner. I suppose I felt it just seemed like a real kind of a white collar job. I think a bit scary as well to be honest. Because, you know, I'm a bit mad and I thought I don't know if I'll be able to discipline some of these big lads. I went to an all-girls school. But I found that if you have belief in your subject and what you're teaching the discipline falls into place.

Once in the classroom, Suzanne embraced her new role, and her original resistance developed into a strong commitment to her pedagogy.

### 1.4. Becoming (Art Teachers)

When the participants made the decision to become secondary art teachers in the UK it meant attending a one year postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) course. This course is structured around university lectures, workshops and school-based experience. The PGCE course provides a space where connections can be made between the student's subject knowledge and their developing pedagogy.

The participants had mixed reactions to field experience. In this account Joan describes her first encounter with a challenging class:



I remember my first placement. I went in there and could not believe what was going on. They were firing pencils across the room. I remember thinking I am going straight up to the college to confront the tutor and say *do you know where you put me?* I was in tears. He was wonderful, he sat me down and said *well we can move you if that is what you want?* and he kind of talked me out of it.

She continues to say that in fact the experience was worthwhile because it made her a stronger, more capable teacher and gave her an insight into what she might expect beyond teacher training college.

Paula had a different experience. She was placed in private schools where there were few behavioural problems and the pupils 'were keen to learn'. However, on leaving college, her first assignment was to a large mixed comprehensive which was 'a shock to the system'. She explains:

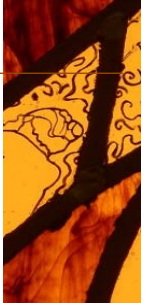
I went to the academy and the behaviour was just awful, I couldn't handle it. It was just a shock because I had been very fortunate in my placements and I hadn't handled anything like that before.

She told me that this experience had made her realize that 'ideally student teachers should be sent to a range of different placements'. In her opinion this would equip them with the tactical skills to deal with classroom management issues in future.

## THEME 2 – TURNING (TOWARDS AND AWAY FROM ART PRACTICE)

I can confidently say that all the art teachers in the study came into teaching through an interest in art or art production. They had spent at least four years honing their talents at various art schools and university departments. Some continued to grow as artists, producing work regularly, whilst others abandoned their personal art making to concentrate on teaching. I was interested to find out from both groups what had influenced the different attitudes. At the same time I was keen to examine the participants' perceptions of how these attitudes informed their teaching.





### 2.1. Making, Modelling and Balancing (see Appendix F, Table 2)

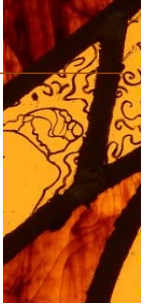
The participants were asked if they continued to make art and if they viewed this art making to be of value to themselves and their pedagogy. Of the twenty participants taking part in the project, seventeen considered that combining art practice with teaching was valuable, although not all made art. There was some doubt about what could be defined as art practice. Some participants felt that if they were not exhibiting or selling and ‘only’ making art for personal satisfaction, they did not qualify as practicing artists. Once it was clarified that all types of art production were acceptable, fifteen of the twenty participants agreed that they made art in some capacity. Three participants did not answer the question. The participants who made art and believed that this was valuable to their teaching were able to provide clear links between their art practice and pedagogy. I have chosen to present the interpretations of some of the art teachers who felt strongly about continuing to make art whilst teaching. The following discussion includes both convergent and divergent views.

Tracey continues to make art and thinks that it is ‘really important’ to do so. She maintained that making art around the pupils supports connections between what happens in the art classroom and real life:

Young people get so few opportunities to engage with artists and designers that if you are a working artist it is of huge benefit. This also fits with the ethos of CfE which encourages young people to identify where their subject areas fit within the wider world.

In relation to this Tracey talked about using her teaching environment as a studio space and how this has impacted on the pupils and their perceptions of her as a teacher and as an artist:

In the past I have used my classroom as a studio (on the days when I was not working, when I was part-time) and it was really interesting to see the pupils’ reaction to my work. I think it also gives you a certain kudos because they can see the quality of your work and it widens their perception of art and what art is. They often have an image in their heads of old men wearing berets and painting smocks.



Tracey acknowledged that the pupils in her class have benefited from her ongoing involvement with art production. She also believes that her own skills have grown and thinks that maintaining her practice has been ‘hugely beneficial in terms of developing skills, subject knowledge and confidence’. Tracey recognises that making art feeds directly into her teaching, but still finds it hard to balance the two areas. She said that ‘she never seems to have enough time to devote to either, despite having significantly more time than many other people do’. By this she is referring to the fact that she has no children, lives a short distance from the school and is not in a promoted post.

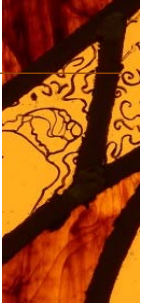
Christine concentrated on the subject of ‘roles and identities’ in her art making. In her work she ‘connects the roles of artist, teacher and musician exploring the interconnections and dependencies linking these identities’. Her artwork takes many different forms including:

Visual mappings in response to music, development of a new uniform for a brass band and a photographic collaboration with a well-known, contemporary photographer.

She has shared her work with pupils and considers that ‘this has been particularly useful in developing meaning making’. She was keen to reflect on previous experiences and how this influenced her teaching. This reflection revealed ‘that the methodologies generating during collaborative and community art projects are particularly useful when applied to the classroom’.

Andy’s degree was in Fine Art, drawing and painting, and he mostly enjoyed teaching expressive areas of the subject. He stated that he would definitely label himself as a painter and that he had continued to paint throughout his career in teaching. Andy thought that the question relating to the value of continuing to practice was an interesting one and one that had ‘bothered’ him for some time. He thought that continuing to practice art whilst teaching is very important though not always practical or possible:

Because teaching is such an all-consuming activity at times, it drains your energy physically, emotionally and mentally. In a school like this things can just kick off all of a sudden and then you are using all your resources just to contain things.



Andy had no children, did not have a promoted post and lived fairly close to the school: he was in a similar position to Tracey. In the same way, he referred to the difficulties of trying to find a work-life balance that would allow him to indulge his passion for painting. When things got tough in school (he was working in an area of deprivation in a difficult school) he found himself too exhausted to do anything other than relax with his feet up. Andy described himself as a ‘hands-on’ art teacher who does a lot of drawing for exemplars and demonstrations for pupils. He believes that this:

Keeps my skills sharp and encourages me to try new things. I find demonstrating for the pupils really focuses my eye and builds up my confidence because generally one has to work quickly and spontaneously due to time constraints within the school period.

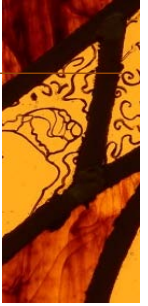
Andy found that working alongside the pupils, and demonstrating techniques, was of mutual benefit. He recognised that it supported the pupils in their learning and at the same time gave him an insight into his own ways of working. This information was then usefully transferred to personal projects.

Georgia considered it ‘invaluable’ to be a practicing artist while being an educator. She said ‘how can we inspire students if we are not inspired to make art ourselves?’ However, in the past, when working full-time, she found the combination of the heavy workload from teaching and family circumstances did not always allow for such a luxury:

When I was overseas, full-time teaching, and three young children, I did not make any of my own art, I just could not find the time in the day to do everything that was expected of me from both teaching and family life. Now, back in the UK, my children at school and myself not working, I have been able to paint again and it is absolutely wonderful.

Georgia was torn between teaching, family commitments and painting. She clearly feels that the combination of full-time work and a growing family leaves little time or energy to concentrate on her artwork. She talked about having to make a choice between one or the other:

I definitely felt like I was missing something in my life before, as if part of *me* was missing. I feel more complete now in that dimension of my life but now I am not teaching and that presents a



different kind of loss. It seems you just can't get the balance right, especially with a young family.

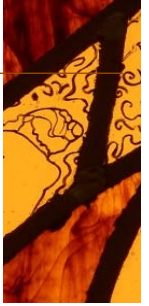
Georgia missed teaching, she missed the contact with the students, 'that relationship based on art and understandings of art', she felt that she could not let that go. She was also struggling financially but was hoping to exhibit her artwork soon and thought that might offset the loss of the regular income from teaching.

Georgia was currently painting with acrylics. In the past she used oil paint but, because she is painting in the house in a makeshift studio, she cannot have the smell of the paint and fumes from the turpentine around her children. 'Oils are also too messy, you need a proper studio to work with oil paint'. The expertise she has built up through experimenting with different forms of media was transferred to her teaching:

I also teach acrylic mostly in schools and because I am using it myself I can teach the students about the properties of the medium. When I am painting, I am often thinking quite consciously about how I can model what I do in the classroom. How to mix a certain colour, the way to get consistency of paint right etc. It is definitely a useful and valuable way to do it.

Georgia felt that, without this direct interaction with media, it would be difficult to model these skills for pupils in the art classroom. She said 'how can you teach something if you have not tried it yourself?' This is a valid point and one that needs further consideration by those responsible for providing skills-based courses in secondary art. She concluded by saying 'you know, in my experience, art teachers who produce the best results with their students are in general good artists themselves'.

Suzanne had been a principal teacher of art and found it very difficult to maintain any sort of art practice whilst working in a full-time management position. She was keen to build up her reputation as a painter and at the same time find a better balance in her life. So, when her department became a faculty, she chose not to apply for the post of Faculty Head, dropped two days teaching, and was using the time to paint. At first Suzanne was not sure if she had made the right decision, but when her work was accepted for all the national shows, RGI, Royal Academy, Paisley Art Institute, RSW and she won two awards consecutively, 'it seemed like it



was fate, an omen'. She began the interview by stating that she had had twenty years of painters' block and I was interested to know what had prompted her to return to painting:

Just by doing examples for the pupils I picked up a paintbrush again after years and one of the teachers asked me to do a portrait of her *dog* (raises her voice and laughs). So, I did it and I thought that's alright! So, I bought a campervan and went to the Outer Hebrides and I just found that really inspiring. So, all my paintings are involved with the flotsam and jetsam I pick up from beachcombing.

Suzanne told a very honest story of how she lost her 'painter's block'. She is very passionate about her work and holds very strong ideas about what she would define as art. This honesty was apparent after the interview. When I switched off the digital recorder Suzanne, having lost her original misgivings about my motives, confided in me:

You know, my dad died at forty seven and I wanted to fulfil my ambitions before I got to that age. When I wasn't painting it was like I was wearing someone else's skin, I was like a transsexual who needed to change.

She had clearly decided to reveal what had really driven her to make art, information that she had previously withheld. I was unsure about my ethical position regarding confidentiality and asked whether it was alright to include this story. She assured me that it was fine, that she had disclosed the information fully aware that it could be used in the project.

Suzanne also expressed concern about how art teachers are perceived by their pupils. That they are seen simply as subject teachers and not as subject specialists:

Especially the lads, they need role models. A boy asked me once 'Miss do teachers have to be good at what they teach?' and I said 'Who do you think we are? Do you think we just come off the street or something?' (Raises voice, outraged).

Suzanne felt that it was a 'real shame' that teachers are viewed in this light and that they do not get enough opportunities to 'show off their subject knowledge'. To combat this, Suzanne brings her work into the school and uses the school paints to produce final pieces, this allows her to model practice for the pupils and to 'discuss the process'. She said that she does more demonstrations than she did in



the past, now that she is painting again. She feels that she is 'a lot quicker and has a lot more confidence' in this aspect of her teaching.

When I asked Suzanne if she was moving towards full-time art practice, she told me that she was not ready yet to leave teaching, because she really enjoyed the involvement with the pupils and 'it helped with the discipline to keep painting'. When she was at home she could hear the school bells and it kept her focused, it kept up the pressure but, in the long term, Suzanne would like to become a full-time artist because, ultimately, she still finds it difficult to adjust to doing the two things:

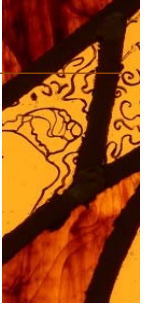
Because after the weekend I start painting and it's so intense that you just disappear into this world, and then you are back into teaching and you've forgotten how to teach, and then back to painting and you say Oh I've forgotten how to paint, where was I? It's not like you can put the potatoes on to boil and knock up a painting in a few minutes, it takes time to get back into it.

Suzanne was referring to the time and concentration it takes to create a piece of artwork and the gradual adjustment from one domain to another. Both roles, in her opinion, require time, careful consideration and lots of physical energy.

Henry thought it was 'really important to keep your own work going'. He felt that there was a real danger of teachers getting stale if they did not. He described his own position as 'coming from the outside', meaning that he was relatively new to teaching, having spent nineteen years earning his living as a 'professional artist'. He strongly believes that without maintaining some sort of art practice:

You start teaching to a formula and what happens is you don't enjoy it so much and if you aren't enjoying it, the kids aren't enjoying it either. So, I think that it is really, really important that you keep what you're doing alive and believe in what you are talking about.

Again, like the other participants, he admitted that this was not an easy thing to do. In fact he found it 'really, really difficult', mainly in relation to time constraints. His roles as teacher and sculptor were separated by the patterns of the school year. During term times, he concentrated on his role as a teacher and in the summer holidays he worked at Scottish Opera, building set designs. It is within the



latter role that he gets the opportunity to be a sculptor again. He can use the materials he loves and 'keep alive' the skills he has acquired both at art school and whilst working as a professional artist. He explained how he sees this feeding into his role as a teacher:

It keeps me connected to the opera and I take the kids to the opera and I do stuff with them there. I just had twenty seniors out last month. I took them for a tour round everything. They got to see the workshops, they got to see stuff I have worked on and because I am doing that they see that it is not all about Fine Art all the time.

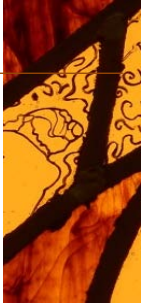
Henry saw the focus of these trips as teaching pupils that this type of creative work involves collaboration with different craftsmen from 'designers and carpenters to joiners and electricians with art as the cohesive factor'. This is a pertinent point and one that is relevant to young people considering a future in the creative industries. He went on to say that 'it is not a disparate thing away from real life, it is not somebody locked in a tower somewhere where it is just about drawing and painting'. This idea of the importance of showing the pupils how art is connected to practice outside of school was something he shared with other members of the group:

There is a reason why you come into the art class to learn about art. It doesn't have to be drawing all the time. It can be design, it can be architecture, it can be as a joiner, it doesn't matter, you are learning to use hand skills.

Henry firmly believed that teaching art is about teaching 'hand skills'. It has a lot to do with 'dexterity and communicating visually with people, as opposed to just writing something down or talking about it and with that you get a variety of ways of communicating'.

Henry also felt that teachers are not seen as artists and that it was important to try to overturn these misplaced attitudes:

A lot of junior and senior pupils ask me 'are you an artist or are you a teacher?' Art teachers are both and should be both and pupils rarely make that connection. They don't see art teachers as artists. They should see teachers as specialists; their specialism as part of their identity.



As well as taking the pupils to see his creations at Scottish Opera, he also shows PowerPoint presentations of his work to pupils and this 'lets them see that he is an artist as well as a teacher'. This encourages them to make the connection between what they do in the art class and what they could do as a future career.

### 2.4. The Art of Teaching: Teaching as an Art

In this category the teachers who chose to concentrate solely on their teaching career describe their experiences. Rachel had been teaching for a year, a comparatively short period of time in relation to the other participants. Yet, in that time, she had moved further away from her identity as an artist and closer to her identity as an educator. She said that she had continually tried to do some of her own artwork, but it always resulted in doing something for the students:

I always find that I am doing something and thinking about how to teach it in the studio. For example, I was doing a drypoint printing class not long ago and I was doing it in the hope that I could make some prints that I liked, but every time that I did it, I just wanted to experiment with the materials to find out what they did, how much they cost and whether I could afford them from the studio budget.

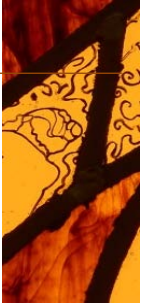
Rachel found that the pervading influence of teaching had overtaken her desire to practice art. She still believed in the concept of the artist-teacher, but felt that, at this stage in her career, she must put all of her energy into teaching. She said 'I think that you have to be an artist to teach art but, at the same time, I think that everything I make is never for me, it's for here'. She continually returned to this point, as if by talking it through she was acknowledging the tremendous impact teaching has had on her life to date. She said:

I am always thinking about how I can put what I do into educational practice. So, almost, maybe the way I teach has become my practice as opposed to the actual artwork. I find that I get more satisfaction from the interaction.

Rachel explained that when her students are accepted for art school and their folio work is on show, she knows that she has helped them with it and 'gets more pride and more satisfaction from that' than doing her own artwork.

As a new recruit to teaching Damien initially believed that he could continue painting and he did so for two or three years. He was relatively successful and had





‘a couple of exhibitions’. The main problem with this arrangement was with his principal teacher (PT) at the time. Damien ‘felt as if he was being held back as a teacher’ in the particular school in which he taught. He had a lot of ‘good ideas and was excited about teaching’ but his principal teacher, whom he liked on a personal basis, ‘was holding him back and discouraging him from doing certain types of work with the pupils’. Damien felt that the way this PT ran the department ‘wasn’t exciting enough’ and he started to realise that:

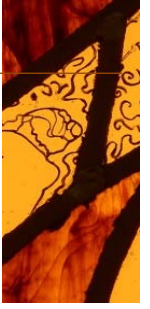
I couldn’t be in a department where I was just being told what to do, so, therefore I had to decide, well, I could just stay in this department and do my own work or get promotion. I couldn’t have suffered that kind of attitude, because I really wanted to put as much as possible into education. I couldn’t just be a painter who just turned up.

With the support of the Art Advisor at that time he got a principal teacher’s job in ‘a tough area of Glasgow’. This is interesting and relevant. Several other principal teachers, Gwen, Tamara and Joan agreed that being in a promoted post was incompatible with making art. Damien felt that he had to make a decision between being in an un-promoted post and continuing with his painting, or going for promotion and giving his all to teaching. He continued:

I believe that I could have been quite successful as an artist had I put the same effort, the same drive into art as I put into education. And to me, in some ways, that’s being an artist in itself, the fact is that I put the same enthusiasm into the young people you are dealing with. I think you need that, I think you need that.

He had clearly treated teaching as an art, devoting all his time and energy to the pupils in his care. In his experience it had to be one role that took precedence; it was not possible to be ‘passionate’ about both at the same time. He thought that ‘people who are passionate about one thing will always do better’ whether that is teaching or art.

Rosa was not teaching at that time because she was doing a PhD in art education. Rosa shared Damien and Rachel’s point of view in relation to art teachers practicing art. When teaching, she considered that was her practice and it wasn’t necessary to be involved in personal art projects:



When you go to art school and become a teacher, people always ask do you have time for your own work? And when you say no, not really, it's always a disappointment to folk and that used to drive me insane, because it kind of, it diminished your teaching practice. Your practice was about teaching at that time and the fact that you weren't maintaining this mythical art practice just because you had been to art school.

She continued to compare other subject specialists in the secondary system, and asked 'I mean if you went to university to study English nobody would ask you if you were still writing your own poems. This is quite different to Suzanne and Henry's stance: they believed that there was value to all secondary specialists being involved in their specialism beyond school and that the knowledge and passion gained could be transferred to pupils.

Rosa was deeply involved in the artistic element of her PhD and stated that she is much more comfortable thinking of herself as an artist in a research context now than she ever was as a teacher:

Creativity for me is about experiencing aesthetic things, a kind of sensory embodied deed. It's all very non-tangible but that is part of the attraction. As an artist, the PhD lets me use photographs and a drawing process as a way of thinking.

She felt that this related art practice was tied in to a method of researching and because of that it made sense to her now. It was clear that Rosa held a utilitarian attitude to making art. The idea of making art for personal pleasure did not appeal there had to be a purpose. Using her artistic skills to teach and to carry out research rendered it a worthwhile activity.

### THEME 3 – REIMAGINING (ART TEACHING THROUGH RESEARCH AND THEORY)

Whilst working as an art teacher in secondary schools throughout Scotland, I did not at any time think about turning to educational theory to inform my pedagogy. I would seek out information about a particular artist, designer, skill or technique that was relevant to my practical teaching at the time but there was an inherent reluctance to refer to written material to support my teaching strategies. It was not



until starting my doctoral studies in 2008 that I became interested in education theory and the relationship between research and practice. By research, I mean the numerous journals, dissertations and books based on art education that are published on a regular basis every year. 'Unfortunately, the contribution of research in art education toward the improvement of teaching and learning cannot be measured by the number of studies completed or the number of studies published' (Day & DiBiasio, 1983). At the time, I considered teaching to be something intuitive that could not be improved by reading and reflection. Through further study my opinion changed, leading to an interest in what other art teachers had to say about theory, practice and research.

### 3.1. Being Aware of Research and Theory see (Appendix F, Table 3)

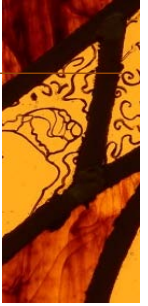
There were mixed reactions to this question. The participants offered divergent and varied interpretations of research and on how valuable it was to their teaching practice. Rachel had recently completed a Masters qualification in Art, Museums and Gallery Education and was thus very aware of current research issues in gallery education and how that underpinned her work:

The course was based on the generic issues that surround gallery education, like interpretation, the politics of display, displaying different cultures, caring for artwork. In particular we looked at contemporary art galleries, Baltic in Gateshead, mima in Middlesbrough, The Tate...

This experience had given Rachel a certain discernable confidence when discussing research and its influence on practice. It had certainly given her a lot of confidence in the studio when introducing the students to contemporary art (see Theme Four).

Annie and Georgia both subscribed to the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD). Georgia described her position as follows:

Until recently, I was shamefully unaware of current research issues in art education. But I am becoming more aware now. Again, it is a time thing, if you don't have the time to look into what's going on in the research side of art education, then you don't have the time. It is only because I am presently unemployed that I get the time to read the NSEAD magazine that comes every month or I go online.



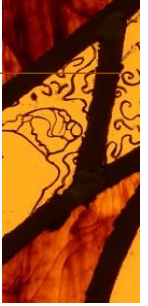
There were similarities here between the art teachers' attitudes to artwork and to research. These teachers were clearly saying that teaching is so time consuming that there is little time to create art or to read research based texts. Georgia very honestly noted that because she was not teaching at present there was actually time to do these things. She also said that 'sometimes as educators we live in a bubble which usually exists around the current school we are working in'. Ironically, in Georgia's case, the bursting of that bubble has led to a deeper engagement with both her own art and the underlying theories relating to art education. Tamara shared Georgia's position regarding the insularity of school life:

I think in schools you are possibly limited within the boundaries of your own CPD and unless you seek out a course of study yourself or research yourself, possibly you are less likely to be exposed to what is happening. I think there is a real argument for sharing practice within schools. I think we tend to become very insular and don't necessarily see what other people are up to.

From these responses, it was clear that art teachers were becoming increasingly responsible for any additional theoretical or skills-based study beyond the 'generic teaching skills and knowledge associated with new education initiatives' (Thornton, 2005, p.171). Joan, a principal teacher, had become stressed and ill because the management in her school were increasing administration procedures and insisting on strict policy guidelines. This left little room for creative teaching or personal autonomy. She then discovered the work of Sir Ken Robinson whose words resonated with her at a difficult time in her professional life:

Sir Ken Robinson, I was reading the book, *Elements*, and I've never shouted or been so elated by a book at the same time. I was thinking absolutely, this guy is right it was totally morale building. It was putting the fire back in you, plus he was easy to read and listen to. I started looking at formative assessment and saying that's not new to us, don't be afraid of CfE, there you go, all these wonderful people are saying the same thing.

Joan had found a theorist to whom she could relate and who had given her renewed vigour and the confidence she had lost. His writing upheld her original thoughts about these new programmes of learning; that they were based on the same methods that art teachers had been putting into practice for years. Another key point she made was that these texts were not written in the language of the



academy, the writing style is accessible to both herself and her colleagues in the art department.

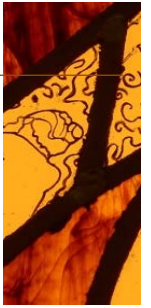
Sonia, Henry and Paula responded to the research question by relating it directly to the new curricular programme Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Sonia had recently participated in freelance work for Education Scotland, evaluating exemplars for the new courses linked to CfE. She saw this as a form of research because, besides getting the chance to review other centres' work, it enabled her to get out of the classroom and interact with other art teachers from other schools:

I saw other teachers' work and it was very conceptual. But for me that was very interesting because we have formulas, no, not formulas, but courses in place that work and are very successful and we get good stuff from them. But looking at the work I reviewed for Education Scotland it was totally different, it was good. You have to look wide sometimes and see what is going on in other centres.

It was not surprising to me that Sonia saw this type of activity as a 'form of research', she was a principal teacher and in her own words very involved in teaching with little time for anything else. In her opinion, her main focus was exam results, she used this opportunity to compare her pupils' work with others. Judy's comments were also relevant because she defended her position using her training and identity as an artist:

There is no question, for me it has to be visual. I didn't go to art school to write a paper and we live in a world where we experience everything visually. For me, I experience everything through what I see, aesthetics, that's fundamental to me. I'm not good at words or at least I don't think I'm very good with words.

This is a stance taken by many artistic people, they shy away from reading and writing about the subject and are more comfortable with communicating through imagery. There is a certain protectiveness about their identity as 'makers' as opposed to 'writers' but this oppositional attitude is not healthy for those educators who are faced with the challenges of teaching art in a post-modern world where conceptual art and its inherent theories rule.



### 3.2.Fusing (Research and Practice)

Tracey, Christine and Bridget were all members of the ATS. The ATS was created by the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) in 1999 to support art educators in their quest to develop their art, engage with research, and explore the relationship between this and their work as teachers. One of the main benefits of this scheme comes from artist-teachers using theory to reflect upon their art making and their teaching practice, thereby creating new identities as researcher teachers (Thornton, 2013). I was interested to find how these participants viewed the scheme and what impact it had on their artwork and their work in education. I was also interested to find out the views of the other participants towards this type of course.

Tracey as an active member of the ATS gave her views below:

As part of the ATS at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), I've done a lot more reading than any other teachers I know which has changed my perspective on how and what we should be teaching. I also think that my opinions have been changed as a result of the ATS. A lot of my views would sit uncomfortably with other art teachers who have been working for a longer period of time than me.

When discussing her involvement with the ATS, Tracey focused solely on the benefits to her teaching. She did not make connections between it and her continuing practice as an artist. She suggested that, since joining the scheme, she had become more aware of the importance of including contemporary art practices in her teaching. This evolving identity towards researcher teacher had caused a division between her and the 'older' members of the art teaching community and she blamed their attitudes for:

The subject being stuck in a rut and inward looking as opposed to outward looking. Many of the practices being taught are very outdated and bear little relationship to contemporary art.

Tracey had very strong, negative views about the current state of secondary art education and held seasoned teachers responsible. In her opinion, these 'older' teachers were failing to keep abreast of the current situation in the contemporary



art world and resorted to old, tried and tested methods in their courses. Another participant, Christine, made similar claims:

My awareness of practice-based research has grown out of my participation in NSEAD activities leading to my enrolment onto the Artist Teacher Scheme. I have been able to question the validity of embedded educational systems and how these are based on restraint rather than in promoting true exploration and discovery.

It would appear that the opportunity to become involved in research, whether artistic or educational, had led these members to question aspects of their teaching practice that would have perhaps previously gone unnoticed. Christine's comments echoed those of Tracey and were founded in the current debate over what should be included in the secondary art programme and how it should be taught.

Bridget, also a member of the ATS, suggested that the course was beneficial to both her art and her pedagogy:

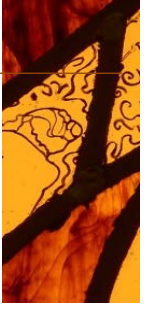
Yes, I am currently enrolled in the third year of the ATS and I have found it very worthwhile. Due to this I have read many articles and books related to recent research in art education and I do think they are relevant to my arts practice and my teaching.

She noted that her engagement with current research issues in art and design education had led to her being much better informed about both fields. This meant that she had grown personally and professionally, which had led to new understanding, increased confidence and improved skills.

### 3.3.Disconnecting (Theory from Practice)

When asked directly, 17 out of 20 participants had never heard of the ATS. Of this group, Andy gave a very honest, and I would argue, unexceptional point of view:

I am regretfully unaware of most of these except in the vaguest 'I think I've read it somewhere' sort of way. I feel that teacher in-service provision for Art and Design is abysmal. There are no courses available for us for professional development aside from the usual, generic, dry, educational flavour of the month lectures on things like CfE, AiFL, etc., etc. I have never heard of the ATS.



Andy was linking research to his concerns about the lack of in-service provision for art educators in the UK and at the same time, he was making a salient point. The ATS is a self-funded scheme that many art teachers simply cannot afford. In the past, these art teachers have often relied on the education authority to provide valuable skills and theory-based courses but with little or no in-service provision available due to cutbacks, there is a reluctance to use their own time and money to access courses that are perceived to be of more benefit to their professional lives rather than their personal lives.

### 3.4. Reflecting (on Art and Pedagogy)

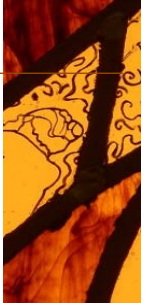
Bridget and Frida referred to reflective practice as an approach to inquiry. They were using reflective practice to inquire into their own practice. In other words, instead of relying on an external perspective from academic researchers or educational theorists, they were developing their own pedagogical knowledge and understanding. This process encouraged reflection in different ways: reflection after an event 'reflection-on-action' and reflection during an event 'reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1983). Bridget, a member of the ATS described her use of the 'reflection-on-action' strategy:

I have a reflective journal and I complete an entry for every day I teach. I was encouraged to do this by a tutor I had at teacher training college. I find it very helpful in examining why I teach something and how I teach it. I usually sit down for half an hour and think really carefully about what has happened in my classroom that day. This helps me to construct a better picture of my practice. I can then decide how to constructively move forward.

This use of a reflective journal gave Bridget a written record of her teaching journey. By drawing on her own experiences and understandings of her teaching practice she could review and develop learning. Frida also used reflective methods in her pedagogy and clearly linked it to research:

I take an active interest in research in education and enjoy adopting a reflective approach in my teaching. Whilst I am demonstrating I am also actively searching for signs that my teaching is being transferred to the pupils. If I feel that they have not understood the process I will reconsider my actions and change things in order to support them.





In this example, Frida was thinking about her actions and considering the effect on her pupils. Because she was reflecting-in-action and monitoring the pupils' responses, she could make adjustments whilst demonstrating making it easier for the children to grasp concepts during transference. Christine and Tracey, members of the ATS, also talked about the value of being in a group with similar interests and aims and how this interaction with a 'community of fellow artist-teachers' helped to support a more reflective attitude towards their practices in both art making and education.

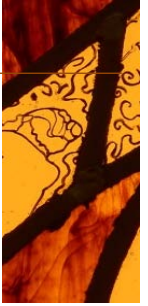
### THEME 4 – REDEFINING (OR CHALLENGING THE CANON)

The report *School Art: What's In It?* (Downing & Watson, 2004) was commissioned to examine contemporary art practice in secondary schools. The findings concluded that the majority of art departments at that time were not using contemporary practices and approaches in their curricula. I was therefore interested to find out if, nine years later, things had changed. It is very difficult to define contemporary art practice, as noted by Burgess and Addison (2004) 'any attempt to do so is bound to be reductive if it hopes to contain what is a characteristically fluid phenomenon, subject to, or perhaps productive of' (Burgess and Addison, 2004, p.18). Therefore, in concurrence with these views, I have chosen to rely upon the participants in my study to determine their own, individual interpretations of contemporary art practices in today's climate.

#### 4.1.Engaging with Contemporary Art see (Appendix F, Table 4)

When asked if they used contemporary artists and art practices in their teaching programmes all of the participants concurred and considered it an important element of their curricula. Many claimed to include contemporary art practice in all its forms, whilst others had a limited conception of art. Christine said:

Caution with relation to the inclusion of contemporary art/artists has led to a focus on a narrow range of artists with a focus on reproduction and repetition. In my experience, this has little meaning for the student and often leads to them switching off and disengagement.

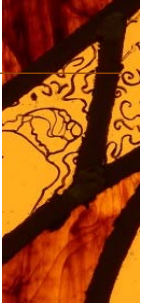


She was describing the strict adherence to an art curriculum that focused on studying modernist artists and traditional skills-based practices. She continued to say that ‘a conflict exists between the teacher’s concept of an idea and that of the student’s’. She claimed that ‘the foundation for this is the creation of a safe formula made by teachers to fulfill what they interpret as success at the exam stage’. Christine blamed these restrictive practices on teachers’ perceptions of what was acceptable for the examination board. And yet, she continued by saying that ‘the exam papers themselves increasingly include the work of contemporary artists and it is here that we can see the students’ best work’. Therefore, in her opinion, it was the teachers who were at fault, not the assessment process. From her own perspective, she embraced contemporary art practices in her teaching:

I have used contemporary art at all levels; Hew Locke in Year 7, Shepherd Fairey in Year 9 and Clifford Harper for exam courses. I use a selection of artists to promote discussion in all year groups, students respond to a range of artists and craftspeople in my new 3-D course and are able to choose their own artists for exam courses.

Christine was a very good example of an art teacher who was willing to integrate all forms of contemporary art practice into her courses. She had an open and flexible outlook in relation to different forms of art and this had led to her students adopting similar attitudes towards postmodern practices.

Andy had different ideas about what he wanted to promote in his courses. He liked to make students aware of certain issues in art such as ‘the undervalued role of women artists, especially considering the ratio of females in any school art department’. He was keen to include contemporary art and artists, but found it ‘takes a lot more time and effort than turning to a standard resource such as *The Lives of The Great Artists*’. The internet has a plethora of information on today’s artists. Therefore, I presume that he was referring to the notion that conceptual art practices are often driven by various social, cultural and political issues which might be difficult for younger pupils to grasp. He continued to say that, due to obtaining excellent resources for a few artists, he included the following Scottish contemporaries: David Mach, Barbara Rae and Avril Paton. Already in these few responses, it was emerging that art teachers have a great deal of autonomy when deciding what and who to include in their courses.

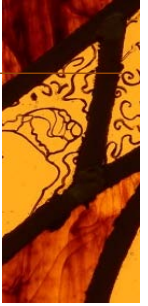


Georgia was also keen to include contemporary artists in her courses. She said ‘I think it is important to include artists who are living and practicing to students’. She referred to her former tutor from art school, Alexander Guy, because his themes in painting were tied in with a scheme of work she did with the students called *The Seven Deadly Sins*. She suggested that this relationship and the consequent knowledge and understanding of a living painter’s processes and practices had been of terrific benefit to both her teaching and the pupils’ learning. Annie and Joan found they used contemporary artists more with the upper school, they did not give a definitive reason for this. Annie listed the following artists: Peter Howson, Jenny Saville, Alison Watt and Adrian Wisniewski. Joan listed a different set: Jennifer Anderson, Gerry Burns and Simon Lawrie. Both participants were teaching in Scotland and were intentionally creating links between the students’ lived environment and the inclusion of ‘local’ contemporaries. Unfortunately, I did not make these connections at the time of interviewing, or I would have questioned the rationale behind this decision. I can only guess that the aim is to introduce pupils to artists who have similar social and cultural backgrounds, thereby encouraging them to develop relevant relationships between the artists’ practice and their own work.

Continuing with the focus on upper years’ students, Annie gave a very good example of a student using her art practice to explore her ethnicity:

One of the sixth years is doing Africa as her theme because her dad is African and her mother is Scottish. She has been looking at Basquiat’s work, which is quite politically influenced and quite hard-edged.

When students are given this type of opportunity where they are supported in directing their own projects, they can respond with ideas relating to personal experience and identity. This often results in the production of some very strong, individualised art work. Annie also focused on artists whose work was based on political commentary further down the school. She cited Banksy as a popular choice for the younger pupils. She suggested that they identified with him because they saw his images everywhere in the media and on merchandise and enjoyed discussing the concepts behind his work.



Many of the contemporaries cited by the participants were skilled figurative painters who had no association with conceptualism and this is where the rupture started to appear. There is a general acceptance of conceptual art in the contemporary art world, in all its non-traditional forms, performance, installation, film, whilst many teachers' attitudes towards these practices can be negative and disparaging. In this extract Rosa described her personal experiences of conceptual art and artists at art school:

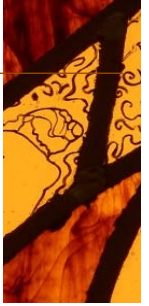
I have a love/hate relationship with the whole idea of conceptual art and artists and that's partly to do with the period of time I was at art school. That golden time of Douglas Gordon, the Turner Prize Winners, the Environmental Art department. That movement of conceptual art from Glasgow, where 'Context is King' was one of their mantras, *it used to drive me nuts!*

According to Rosa, one of the main reasons for this strong disapproval was her perception that, as far as she could see, 'these people did not have the ability to draw'. She added 'this kind of production attitude of an artist, where you didn't need to know how to do anything but you did need to know who could do what you wanted to do'. Rosa railed against this idea that these artists were no longer entirely responsible for the production of their own pieces, that the art work was 'project managed'. She said 'that's how you did an installation, and so, that's a very different way for me to think about being an artist'. This last sentence was very revealing, because she readily admitted to having a more traditional view of art and art production.

This theme was continued in Joan's response. She reacted in a similar way to Rosa when she came into contact with conceptual art practices at art school:

By this point they had brought in Christine Borland and anything I was making was from scratch. There was a lot of folk bringing in found objects, like glitter balls, and putting a big meaning behind it and I couldn't get my head round it. I couldn't see the skill in it and I couldn't make up a story. *I found that infuriating*. Plus, they were putting meanings to my work which I hated.

Joan reiterated Rosa's point, that conceptual art held little attraction because the value lies in the skill-based processes behind the production of an art work. In their opinion, there was no real artistic skill needed to produce a piece of conceptual art.



From this perspective, the attitude was that the real skill lies in the ability to tell a good 'story'.

### 4.2. Considering the Shock Factor see (Appendix F, Table 5)

The study of contemporary art can raise some difficult concepts for young people to grasp. Artists working in the twenty-first century often set out to shock and this can be potentially confusing and offensive for both teachers and pupils alike. In general, the participants claimed to adopt a liberal attitude to all forms of artwork, however, they understood that they were accountable to the hierarchy of the school and had a responsibility for the wellbeing of the pupils in their care.

In the following statement Bridget discusses the difficulties of exposing secondary pupils to some forms of contemporary art:

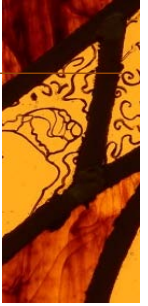
I think it is essential that students have an understanding of a range of artists and I try to expose my students to contemporary artists. I have found that students can, at first, be slightly mystified by some controversial artists like Tracey Emin or other YBAs and this challenges their understanding of what Art is.

Bridget also states that her students often find the underlying issues very interesting and that they can often relate to the narratives more easily than in some traditional examples.

Christine continues the theme of different perspectives. She believes that young people are sophisticated readers of visual culture due to their exposure to the media in various forms. She argues that adults are not fully aware of this:

Regarding 'difficult' subject matter, we should never underestimate students' understanding of the world in which they live. There is however a level of safeguarding lower down the school. But, the range of information sources for students mean that they are increasingly aware of many issues that may affect them.

The idea of 'safeguarding' was prevalent in many of the responses, the assumption being that this type of art was only suitable for upper years. Three participants taught in Catholic schools and were experiencing issues with censorship in relation to contemporary art. According to Andy:



There is some art that is deemed unsuitable for younger students in a Catholic school and I might run into trouble with management if I were to ignore that fact. We certainly would have trouble working with artists such as the Chapman brothers in a school like this.

He considers some of this sort of material to be too conceptual and difficult to explain to children under the age of sixteen. He claims that he doesn't appreciate some difficult contemporary art after years of study and therefore how can he expect his students to understand it.

Alternatively, Judy has no problems with censorship or understanding, perhaps because she works entirely with senior pupils. She firmly believed that young artists should be engaging with whatever they see around them and they see difficult subject matter all the time. In this story she describes using humour to dispel awkwardness and encourage acceptance:

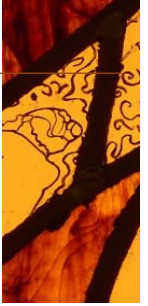
I took a group of girls to a performance last night and on the wall was a piece of work, orange in colour, on canvas. It read FLESH IS THE COLOUR OF MY PENIS *laughs*. I said to them what do you make of that? How do you feel about a work that addresses body parts? I always use humour, so I said: '*if that is the colour of his penis he better get to hospital soon*'. But one of the girls stepped up and said: 'no, he says flesh is the colour of his penis and that is what he intended to communicate.'

Judy said that she used this discussion to debate the idea of communicating visually with colour, text and image. She recognised that using humour and being forthright about these issues helped 'demystify a lot of the content in conceptual work which might be forbidden elsewhere'.

### 4.3. Talking (about contemporary art)

The participants spoke about giving senior students opportunities to select contemporary artists and research their work. They were then expected to present their findings. This gave the students additional confidence and a better understanding of the concepts underpinning the artwork.

Damien describes how he encourages the students to become more confident about discussing contemporary art:



The first thing we do is get them to talk. We get them to select objects and talk about objects and gradually that leads them to looking at a wide variety of contemporary artists. Gradually every week from August to October we get them to discuss their choices.

Damien was initially concerned that so much time was being devoted to this activity, but now he considers it worthwhile. He says ‘we singled it out because it clarifies their ideas in their mind and it actually helps the practical work’.

Rachel is also keen to promote discussion in her work with senior pupils. The main aim of this discussion is preparation for the art school interview, but the effect is a better understanding of contemporary art. She explains:

We have an open discussion about their chosen artists and it prepares them for the art school interview. They have to talk about their work and the artists who influenced them. This lets them see that there are often useful concepts and relevant meanings underlying contemporary art.

Rachel claims that giving students the opportunity to make choices about art is a good way to ensure a wide range of different artists is included in the discussion. This also helps with interviews where they can ‘sometimes tell the interviewer about an artist he/she has never heard of, which is quite impressive’.

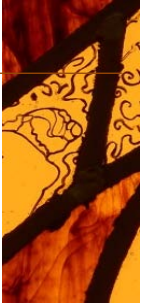
Tracey found introducing discussion about contemporary art difficult. She was new to the school and still unsure of her position. She said:

I don’t particularly include challenging subject matter because frankly the young people I work with wouldn’t be mature enough to cope with it and discipline in the school is poor. It would be a struggle to get the type of discussion, analysis and creative responses that this type of work would elicit.

This statement illustrates the importance of teacher/pupil relationships built on trust and support to engender discussions based on contemporary concepts.

### 4.3. Visiting Artists (and Gallery Visits)

Visiting artists and gallery visits were considered valuable by the participants. These activities were particularly effective when bridging the gap between school art practices and contemporary art.



Tamara was certain that bringing artists into the classroom allowed the pupils to see the process behind the product. She encouraged these artists to describe their actions as they demonstrated various skills. In this extract she talks about the artist Andrew Ratcliffe:

Andrew Ratcliffe came in and worked with the pupils on colour-mixing. He specified that they could only use the primary colours and white. He gave a demonstration. I was skeptical about it, because as a painter I normally have eight colours at least in my palette. But he actually got amazing results and taught the kids a huge amount about colour mixing.

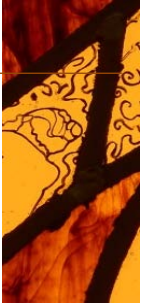
In this case a visit from this artist gave the pupils and the teacher a different perspective on an aspect of painting. Tamara also reflects upon taking pupils on a visit to the GOMA (Gallery of Modern Art) in Glasgow. She expresses her amazement that they enjoyed the experience:

We had made the assumption that the kids would hate it, because generally they feel cheated if they cannot see the process in the work, but they loved it !. They were watching contemporary film based work, then they did a sculpture workshop and used found materials to create a motion piece and film it.

The idea that school children are not receptive to contemporary art practices was a theme that emerged from the teachers' responses and yet there is ample evidence here that in fact they do.

Stanley talked about the benefits of children learning from visiting artists. He listed the following artists who had visited the department: Kenny Hunter (painter), Elspeth Lamb (printmaker) and John Stirling (graphic designer) and I was interested to know how he raised the money to finance these projects and he explained that he had to 'beg for money from both the HT and the Enterprise Department'. His willingness to pursue finance in this manner demonstrates his determination to expose his pupils to the visiting artist experience. Additionally, Stanley also runs a yearly trip to Barcelona where the students visit 'the Antoni Tapies Contemporary Art Museum, The Gaudi, The Picasso and The Miro'.





Rachel expressed the view that visiting these grand galleries was important, but that there were lots of smaller, more intimate spaces where pupils could identify more readily with contemporary artists. She explains:

You can take them to these galleries and show them the famous artists, but can they attain that? Whereas take them to The Duchy, The David Dale or The Market Gallery in Dennistoun and it is like taking them on a journey of discovery. You are showing them the steps they can take as artists and where they could be.

According to Rachel this type of experience was more relevant to the pupils lived experiences and therefore more meaningful.

## THEME 5 – EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES

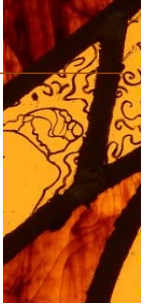
One of the best things about art education is the freedom to introduce and explore just about anything. Almost anything that is relevant to young people's lives can form the impetus for an artistic activity. Artists are constantly searching for stimulus to spark a new project. It is important to nurture this inquisitiveness in the art classroom. Art teachers can support students to reflect on their lived experiences and find ideas for original and meaningful art making.

### 5.1. Stimulating Ideas see (Appendix F, table 6)

Stanley firmly believed that encouraging pupils to explore their own lives was 'the most important thing in terms of stimulating ideas'. He explained that there had always been a philosophy in his school where the pupils got to direct their own work:

For example, there's a girl studying painting and she did a whole series of pieces on identity. It was around the theme of the government introducing identity cards. So she took a range of people in the school and did a series of little studies turned them into laminated identity cards and arranged them in groups dependent on their sexuality.

Stanley told me that the student had them created a community with the identity cards and that 'she was touching on ideas which were dealing with not necessarily her own sexuality, but how people are perceived'. He explained that these conceptualized practices were mainly reserved for upper years and that first to



fourth year was mainly about 'teaching skills and raising awareness of the world of art and design'. Stanley clearly delineates the between the younger and the older pupils, he treats his senior students as adults and gives them more freedom and the opportunity to create artwork based on their experiences and ideas.

Georgia also believed that it was beneficial for young people to create from personal experience. However, she also understood that it was not the only way to get pupils excited or involved. She says:

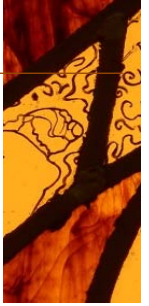
Using pupils lived experiences can help stimulate creativity, the outcomes can be possibly more expressive but I do not think it is entirely necessary. Good teaching and learning happens when the student has been stimulated and has gained interest in the subject matter. The student has to have the tools and clear instructions and guidance to make successful artwork.

Georgia uses co-constructivist learning theories to create an environment conducive to creativity. She recognises that pupils can begin from a place where there appears to be little space for using personal stimulus or conceptual practice, but can gravitate towards these positions as the project evolves. She says 'they are consciously or unconsciously dredging up memories that are relevant to their current situated identity'.

### 5.2. Expressing (Emotions)

Making art presents opportunities for students to reflect on their thoughts, feelings and emotions. Meaningful projects help students to explore personal constructs within complex family and social communities. Many of the teachers described using self-portraiture to explore self-awareness. Tamara describes a project using this genre to find connections between self and art: 'it doesn't necessarily have to be images of them, but we ask them to dig deep and find their own theme, perhaps something that has been worrying them for some time'. She claims that in some cases the emotion journey has been more important than the creative process:

I had a girl whose brother died at eighteen, very suddenly from an asthma attack, she was totally bereft, she became totally introverted. When we were doing the self-portraiture project, I confided in her that when my mum had died, I was sixteen, and all



my paintings were about grief and how I coped with it. But I couldn't tell anyone that that was the subject of the work. So, the student started to use symbolism very widely in her work.

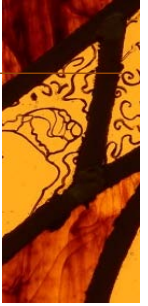
Tamara describes how the student used ticket stubs from the night he died, photographs of him and letters from him in her work. She readily admits that this is an extreme example, but that the process supported the pupil to talk about her grief, to express her emotions in her work and begin the healing process. Tamara concluded by saying that there were few subjects where a teacher and a pupil can have that sort of relationship.

### 5.3. Building (Strong Relationships)

When talking to the participants about contemporary art what struck me was the continual reference to the need for a certain type of relationship and environment to engender discussion surrounding sensitive subject matter. It gradually became clear that the typical authoritarian position of the teacher was not conducive to encouraging pupils to reflect on and engage with their own experiences as a focus for art making. What was needed was a more emotionally and socially supportive approach where it was possible to foster independence of thought and action. Georgia spoke about her perceptions of the relationship between the art teacher and his/her students:

I think teachers, especially art teachers, have a more empathetic relationship with students. The relationship between art teacher and student is usually a very close relationship built around a common goal or interest and that is producing the best possible artwork. Art teachers, good art teachers, should be encouraging, motivating, demanding and sensitive to the needs of his/her students.

Georgia's perspective was based on her own experiences of art teaching and how she perceived the 'good' art teacher. She continued on the theme of relationships by saying that 'every art student is different, they all have different demands, some art students want to be quite independent, to work autonomously, whilst others are very reliant, they rely heavily on the teacher's opinion'. She claimed that art students often view their teachers as mentors, whether 'independent' or 'autonomous', they will, at different times, look to the art teacher for positive reinforcement.



Of all the participants, Mary was most enthusiastic about building strong relationships with her pupils. She was keen to create an environment and an atmosphere where pupils felt comfortable to come and go during breaktimes and lunchtimes. In response to the question regarding introducing pupils' lived experiences, Mary associated this with art therapy and became quite animated and excited about the idea of making art as a therapeutic exercise:

Using the art class almost like an art therapy session, yes, absolutely, I would encourage that. I've got an art club actually today at lunchtime and we're doing prints, trying to get a very simple motif-based theme, something that is important to themselves so that we can try and reproduce that a few times. So yes, absolutely.

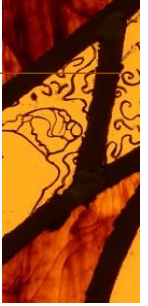
She had acknowledged previously that she was keen to get to know the pupils better because she was relatively new to the school and she said 'I think it really can't help but, you can endear yourself a little bit or create a really nice atmosphere, it's at a very basic level showing an interest in the pupil outside what they do, in what they have written in what they have drawn, you know'. Mary wanted to show a bit more of her caring and nurturing side. 'Yeah, just basically showing an interest in their personal lives which is important, absolutely'. This type of response was echoed by Tamara:

There is always voluntary supported study at lunchtimes, rooms are open every day at lunchtime. I think we are quite unique in that way. I think every school I have worked in this has been the case and I don't see other subjects maybe offering that same level of support to kids.

This willingness to open rooms at lunchtimes and to facilitate those spaces for pupils is akin to creating a 'haven' or 'oasis' (Hickman, 2010). Here these young people can enjoy making art in a more relaxed atmosphere outwith the normal allocated periods. This supportive and welcoming approach comes across in the majority of responses.

### 5.4. Knowing (Our Boundaries)

However, there were a small number of participants who did not agree with the sentiments above. These people advocated the need for caution when raising personal emotive issues with pupils. Rosa was very sure that this was not advisable:



I suppose I caution against art teachers in the state sector or any form of education assuming a therapeutic role beyond the scope of what they could cope with. And I think that this comes from the specialised experience.

Rosa had spent most of her teaching career in special education schools and she used this as a reference point when examining this question. She said: 'it's too easy to make assumptions about what might be going on in a pupil's life based on what it is they are drawing'. And she makes a very salient point to support her argument:

We are not trained to come to the classroom as psychologists, and yes, the art room and art experiences often create spaces where people feel able to open up in different ways. But I think we need to know our boundaries, to recognise that we can't open up somebody's box of monsters if we do not know how to support them afterwards.

She thought that, if the pupil is at the upper end of the school and initiates this type of focus, then that is acceptable but again she cautioned to be wary of 'teachers trying to *fix* people through the art room, a therapeutic environment, yes, but no intention to fix things or people, because it's difficult to support the teacher in what might emerge'.

Sonia agreed with Rosa and felt that this type of focus was not conducive to making 'positive' art. 'There's a lot of sixth years get emotional, when you are talking about anorexia but you tend to get negative things and sometimes it is quite difficult for them to actually show that in a visual way'. She said it would depend on the student and that each case should be looked at on its own merit, whether that was a positive way forward or would it be productive or not.

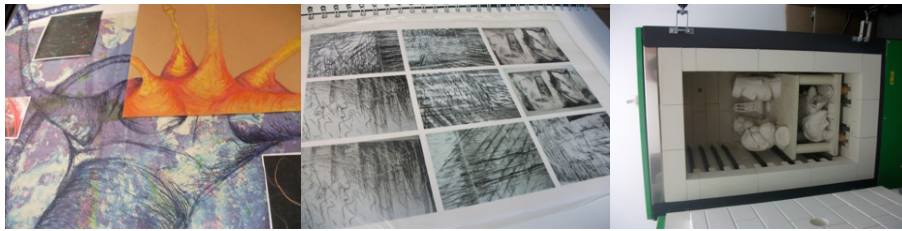
Henry said that the pupils he teaches in his present school were mature enough to enter into a dialogue about these sorts of issues but that, in the past in his probationary school, which was set in an area of deprivation, it was more difficult. The reasons were:

Number one because you are an outsider and not really involved in their society and two because you are a figure of authority and there is real suspicion because what they're doing *has legal issues* to it I suppose and they'll be scared of being found out.

## INTO THE LIGHT

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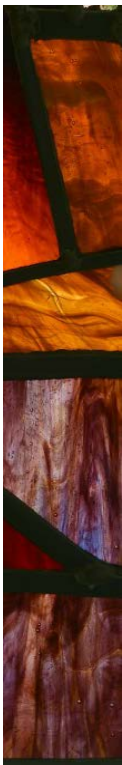
Henry elaborated on this by saying that the pupils from his old school did not trust him enough to talk about issues in their lives for fear that he would pass this information to senior management or beyond, to the police. He continued to say that, because he was viewed as an authority figure with a certain lifestyle, their perception of him prevented an honest, open debate about life and art 'despite the fact that I was raised in similar circumstances'.

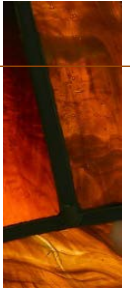




## CHAPTER FIVE

### CO-CONSTRUCTIONS





# CHAPTER FIVE – CO-CONSTRUCTIONS

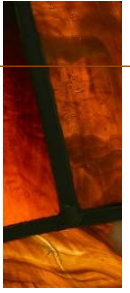
In this chapter I return to the main research question of whether an art teacher's performance in the classroom is enhanced by their own practice as an artist. In order to answer this question, I continue to expand on the themes that were discussed by the participants in the previous chapter. When I consider that further explanation would add to the participants' constructions I have introduced additional interpretations based on the literature and personal experience. Thus creating co-constructions of our experiences of modelling artistic practices in secondary schools.

## THEME ONE – SHAPING (THE ART TEACHER'S IDENTITY)

A reflective grasp of our life stories and of our ongoing quests, that reaches beyond where we have been, depends on our ability to remember things past. It is against the backdrop of those remembered things and the funded meanings to which they give rise, that we grasp and understand what is now going on around us (Maxine Greene, 1995, p.20)

Art teachers bring their own past experiences in education to their classrooms. They tell stories of art teachers who taught them and how this influenced their practice as artists and teachers. Memories of art school, both good and bad, are recaptured in order to examine how these experiences shaped artistic identities. There are tales of becoming teachers, the motivations, the shifting perspectives, the emerging confidence and ultimately the development of the teaching identity. These 'shaping' stories allow us a glimpse into the art teacher's past, firstly to see what it means to be driven to make art and secondly to make the decision to teach art.

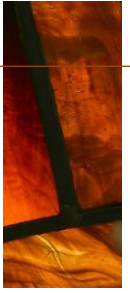




### Encountering (Art School)

Although there are many developmental stages for a young artist, several participants described the transition from secondary school to post-secondary education as one of the most challenging. This transitional phase took place in portfolio or foundation courses and, for some, the first year in art school. Many of these courses are based on the Bauhaus foundation year or Vorkurs where the aim is to sample a range of subject areas in preparation for further study (Robyns, 2003). The original Bauhaus foundation year was taught by Johannes Itten who declared that the students' mind should be returned to a 'tabula rasa', a blank slate (Elkins, 2001). Yet, on studying this period, it is clear that the Bauhaus students' work is influenced by expressionism and international abstraction, the prominent movements of the time (Elkins, 2001). Similar tensions exist for today's students. Young people enter these courses not with a 'tabula rasa' but with pre-formed ideas about art, shaped by previous education experiences. They then have to negotiate between this 'school art' (Steers, 2005) and what is desirable at a higher level, which is often an entirely different entity informed by societal influences and contemporary art styles (Hollands, 2001; Williams, 1998). Acquiring a sound knowledge and understanding of contemporary art practice is required in this context. For those participants who had experienced a school education which included contemporary art and independent, self-initiated study, the transition was generally smooth. If not, there were tensions while they attempted to navigate the new system and tutor expectations at that level.

Judy, Georgia and Henry thrived, finding the challenges liberating and exciting as they adapted to their new environment. Others, including Rosa and Suzanne, found the initiation into art school difficult and disconcerting. It took time to adjust to the different environment and to understand how things were done. The security of a close relationship with a caring and committed art teacher was gone, replaced with a different model of teaching, that of the detached/absentee tutor, more committed to his/her art practice than to the students' learning (Pujol, 2009). The issue of students' perceptions of how they were taught at this time is relevant to the case for introducing pedagogical theory seminars into the art school schedule. This introduction would give new art students a better understanding of



the rationale behind different teaching styles and lead to less resistance and faster adaptation.

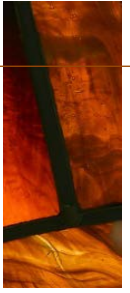
### Specialising

Things have changed for art schools in the last few decades. These changes are mainly to do with the influence of conceptualism (Madoff, 2009). The emphasis has moved away from the notion of the isolated artist towards the flow between socio-cultural influences and contemporary art. Art schools must now embrace life beyond their walls. Failure to recognise and adjust to this process renders the work produced irrelevant to contemporary times. This flow is mirrored in the opening up of old boxed-up departments (Pujol, 2009) and the rise of multidisciplinary education. The youngest participant, Rachel, recently graduated, studied for a degree in time-based art at Duncan of Jordanstone. Her training was strongly influenced by the rise in conceptualism and contemporary art culture; she talks inspiringly about mixing disciplines to create installations and performance-based pieces. She is confident in her technological abilities and readily admits that she gained her current teaching position due to these skills.

This experience is not reflected in all the biographies. Most of the participants had been teaching for more than ten years, some for thirty years and they identified strongly with the single-discipline culture of the old system where there was little inter-disciplinary collaboration. They studied in distinct departments separated according to specialism, including Painting, Sculpture, Textiles and Jewellery, but many of them upheld the notion that:

Organising a program into disciplines makes sense in an undergraduate program. You learn a specific medium and its history and attendant issues in depth. Even if you decide you want to do something later on, the discipline is useful as a framework (Schutz, 2009, p.296).

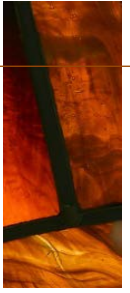
There is a place for deep knowledge that comes from a discipline-based educational organisation but alongside other theories and processes. It is important to encourage both depth and breadth (Hamilton, 2009, p.294). Judy and Joan both eloquently described experiences with media.



Talking about art school led to memories of relationships forged at that time. The social aspect of being part of a group with a shared objective links to theories based on a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Art students engage in the three key elements of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire which are all-important conditions for being part of this theoretical construct (Wenger, 1998). Leaving home and becoming involved with a new community away from the influence of family and friends is a liberating and exciting experience. Challenging or expanding tastes are viewed as one of the most important aspects of art school life and are often a result of mixing with a wide range of people from a variety of backgrounds. Being among fellow artists provides a broad education in and of itself: even if not participating in collaborative projects, art school students share tight studio spaces and learn to work with their peers, advising on media and equipment, providing suggestions and looking at each other's work. The process of creating art is tied up in enquiry and debate, discussion and conversation (Barlow, 2009). Judy gave a very good example of this social scaffolding:

One of the interesting things about college which changed the way you learned was that you were in mixed studios. I actually learned more from the fourth year students in a way than from the tutors.  
*Dare I say that?*

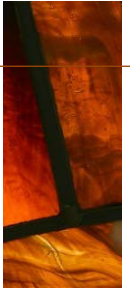
As students, many formed friendships that lasted a lifetime, influencing one another through ongoing dialogues, visiting studios, exchanging ideas and taking part in collaborative projects. When I asked Judy what the other people from her class were doing now, she could tell me that some were teaching in higher education and some were practicing artists. She was proud that a fellow student had won the Turner Prize and currently lived in New York. Almost twenty years after graduating, Judy was still in touch with friends she met at art school. She retained an interest in their progress and was aware of their career trajectories. This was not unusual, several participants commented positively on lasting relationships from this period. I recognised that the participants saw themselves as part of the artistic community and it helped them to strengthen their identity as artists. They relished close associations with the disciplines they had studied, the materials with which they had worked and the people they had met.



### Choosing (to Teach)

When the participants entered teaching, they had already devoted several years to developing as artists, therefore they carried their identities as artists into teaching (Shreeve, 2009). This is understandable since they were more experienced as artists than as teachers. Thierry de Duve (2009) claims that anyone can try to become an artist without necessarily having attended an institution. However, Ramirez-Jones (2009) suggests that attending both university (undergraduate studies) and art school (master's degree) shaped his outlook and gave him what he needed to practice art. Discussions on the position of the art school as an educational institution still centre on the belief that an art education is only for the purpose of training professional artists, yet few people ever achieve that ambition. Rosa and Andy harboured ambitions to be teachers at school and, along with many others who study Fine Art, they were aware early on that they would use this experience to become art teachers. At art school they found they were encouraged to strengthen their identities as artists and discouraged from teaching. According to Thornton (2013) 'teaching staff on these courses sometimes ignore, defer, leave implicit or even dissuade identifications with the teaching of art' (Thornton, 2013, p.43). Pujol (2009) believes that because graduate art programmes are producing large numbers of teachers, seminars in pedagogical theory would be of value. Daichendt (2010) agrees that education should be viewed as an important discipline 'yet students who study art at the highest level receive no training or education in teaching' (Daichendt, 2010, p.49). He believes that this then leads future teachers to repeat the same pedagogical errors of their predecessors (Ibid.). These theorists are making a salient point that there is a need for greater balance in visual arts degree programmes away from the drive towards professional artist status.

The participants gave a wide variety of reasons for choosing a career in teaching. 'For an artist or a designer, the decision to train as a teacher raises fundamental and complex questions about professional integrity, creative energy, belief system and self-image' (Prentice, 2002, p.11). Rosa, Andy and Bridget chose teaching because of altruistic motives. They chose to combine their talent for art with a satisfying career in which feeling valued and giving value was important (Thornton, 2013). Damien chose teaching because he was keen to emulate his art teacher and



yet, thirty years later, he was still not sure if he had made the right decision (he told me he could not sustain both). This insecurity became clear when talking about why he chose teaching rather than painting. He was still struggling with the notion that he had somehow 'sold out'. According to Thornton (2013) these feelings are not unusual, 'teaching may be seen as an abandonment of artistic ambition for the relative security of a job as an art teacher' (Thornton, 2013, p.31). This can be related back to the folklore which upholds the image of the starving artist in the garret.

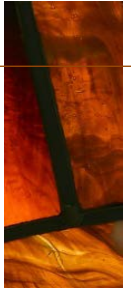
Some of the participants readily admitted that teaching was not an option for them on leaving art school. Sonia says:

Teaching was not my profession of choice at the time, I was twenty one, I was still too close to those school years and the thought of going back into a school environment was a complete no-no.

She made the decision to go into a career in textile/costume design and came to the realisation that it was a bit of a rollercoaster ride. Contracts were mostly freelance and difficult to come by and, although the work was interesting and creative, there was little stability or security.

Suzanne considered teaching to be a 'kind of a white collar job' and 'a bit scary' into the bargain. She had been 'educated to make art in an environment of relative freedom, encouraged to challenge convention' (Thornton, 2013, p.31) and therefore decided that the 'conforming culture of schools would be difficult to negotiate' (Ibid.) and threatening to her identity as an artist. She had to rethink her original stance when the need to support her family became urgent.

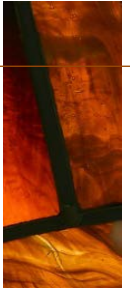
Georgia and Stanley also cited reasonable pay and conditions as a reason for entering the teaching profession. Teaching gave them a sense of security that allowed them to continue working within the subject whilst still earning a regular income. For Christine it was a need for finance to subsidise her art-making activities. Annie, Henry, Tracey and Tamara wanted to work with children. They had gained some experience of this and enjoyed interacting with youngsters: the idea of shaping young minds and sharing knowledge and the love of art with them.



### Becoming (Art Teachers)

Models of secondary teacher education systems are similar throughout the world. They consist of three main components: 'academic preparation in the subject the student will teach; theoretical foundations of education; and the student practicum' (Diamond, 1991, p.8). Art students are generally confident in their role as subject specialists because they have been able to study their subjects and practice in-depth (Thornton, 2013). The second component relating to the theoretical foundations can raise issues. 'The very emphasis on practical experience in preference to second-hand knowledge, which is a strength of the art school, militates against effective use of written language' (Boyd-Davis, 2000, p.66). Art students have a resistance to theory in general (Burgess, 2003) preferring to rely on intuitive solutions which are not based on any form of textual research. However, the theoretical component was not a prominent element of the course and therefore caused few problems at that stage. It was in relation to the third component, the practicum, that the practitioners wished to describe their experiences.

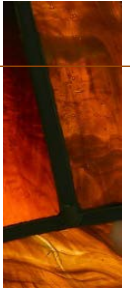
The main focus of the discussion on practicum focused on the participants' ability to supervise pupils effectively. This was an emotive subject for the beginning teachers but one that they were keen to discuss. Joan talks about encountering a class 'out-of-control' on her first placement and her immediate reaction is to blame her course tutor, the person who assigned her to that particular school. Paula had limited access to a range of schools during her training. Two of her three placements were in the private sector. After her probationary year she was assigned to a large sprawling comprehensive where the discipline was poor and she 'couldn't handle it'. She blamed the course structure for this experience. According to Atkinson (2003) students often turn to blame 'something *in* course tutors, something *in* pupils or something *in* the course' instead of looking at something *in* themselves (Ibid.). Moore and Atkinson (1998) maintain that in order to overcome this they should look into their own 'historical constructions' with certain practices and discourses. This would allow them to understand how their histories affect and inform current relations with others when learning to teach. Reflection on classroom management and pupil relationships (Schön, 1991) would



allow them to take a different perspective on pedagogical practice and avoid blaming others for the difficulties they are experiencing.

Many of the younger participants had gained further teaching experience during their induction year. Since 1999, there has been a guaranteed induction year in teacher training programmes that offers probationer teachers the chance to experience a full year of unbroken service in the same school. Several of the participants who had been teaching for over fifteen years did not get this opportunity. Their route beyond teacher training college consisted of long periods of supply or temporary work before gaining a permanent contract. Rosa spent five or six years ‘dipping in and out of different places, not getting to know anyone or anything, but that was the deal’. It could be argued that this sampling of different departments, schools, and pupils is a very valuable training ground for teaching anywhere. Henry agreed with this. He had experience of a wide range of schools during his training and in his first few years after qualifying. He says ‘I wasn’t just stuck in one place with one demographic if you like. I had a big spectrum of kids to see, it gave me a really good feel for it’. He recalled working in a difficult secondary school on the outskirts of Glasgow and finding it a bit ‘scary’ because he hadn’t worked anywhere like that before but found that once in the classroom ‘the kids were just kids, some more boisterous, but on the whole, on the same page’. Henry’s ability to reflect on his teaching practice and on his relationships with pupils had given him the confidence to realise that by having a genuine enthusiasm for his subject and his teaching, pupils will usually respond and engage with both him and the work.

These reconstructions tell us about how the art teachers felt about how they were taught. They tell us what they remembered as relevant. If it is true that teachers tend to teach as they were taught, then revisiting histories is crucial, but these art teachers want to move beyond the past and explore new pedagogical pathways, carrying ideas about how they can change things for the better.



### THEME TWO – TURNING (TOWARDS AND AWAY FROM PERSONAL ART MAKING)

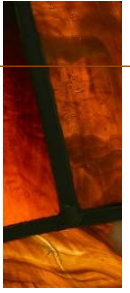
According to Thornton (2011) there are two main 'concepts of positive, professional representations of art teachers' (Thornton, 2011, p.34) and these are operating in all areas of education. The first concept refers to the person who is both a teacher and an artist and is committed to both roles. The second is the art teacher who is 'dedicated to the artistic development of students and does not necessarily practice as an artist' (Ibid.). In this discussion, I will begin by looking at the participants who fall into the first category and interpret their experiences. I will then turn to examine the views of the second category, the art teachers who do not practice as artists.

#### Making and Modelling (Art)

Tracey, a member of the ATS, believed that by using her classroom for making art the pupils reacted differently: they saw her as a practicing artist and the classroom as a studio space. This meant that both pupils and teacher renegotiated and reconceptualised perceptions of identity and place of learning. Tracey's 'studio classroom' resisted the limitations school imposes on time by being an open access area, meaning it was open at lunchtimes and after school. Classrooms are socially constructed places with regulations, practices and positions (Bourdieu, 1990). In these spaces, people are defined by what they 'normally' do; teachers teach and pupils learn. However, places do not need to remain static they can also be fluid and constantly evolving (Casey, 1998). In the same way, the traditional positions of the teacher as classroom manager and the learner as person managed can be challenged, resulting in a shared experience. Tracey spoke about relationships being renegotiated in this process of collaboration. In her opinion, this collaborative attitude led to new methods of teaching and learning. Tracey's attitude had encouraged the creation of a classroom community (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2005). There is 'mutual engagement and shared enterprise with a reconstructing of teacher and learner identities' (Page, 2012, p.75).

Again, by creating a collaborative workspace, Christine, an artist-teacher, had opened up her own practice to allow students to view her as an artist and a learner, as well as a teacher. In Christine's case this shift led to a 'development in



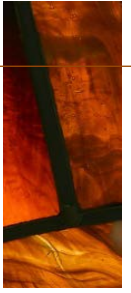


meaning making', which was encouraged by discussion and debate about socially challenging issues in her work. Changing her role in the classroom to co-creator and inviting pupils to view her artwork which was based on contemporary themes, created a flexible and adventurous environment. Within this space, pupils could explore their own lifestyles and experiment with 'issues of culture, gender and identity, often using non-traditional materials' (Hyde, 2007, p.297). Christine understood that her role was not to fill students like empty vessels with knowledge (Freire, 1970) but to facilitate debate and experimentation and to learn alongside pupils in a safe environment.

The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself (or herself) taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught also teach (Freire, 1970, p.53).

Andy believed that Freire's words were mirrored in his pedagogical experiences. Andy found that, through demonstrating artistic processes and discussing art practice, the roles were reversed and he became 'a learner, the experimenter, someone who wanted to find out, test, discover, wonder, figure out alongside pupils' (Cole, 2010, p.6). This willingness to respect the other person's viewpoint and to arrive at a common understanding led to more opportunities for creative solutions. The idea of working and learning alongside students resulted in an 'exchange of knowledge and understanding of benefit to both' (Thornton, 2011, p.33). These co-constructions are based on an exchange of teacher's and learner's ideas, emotions and concepts of art and life both past and present. Students need the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the images and symbols of their culture and the art teacher is in a position to provide information. Students can refer to him/her as a resource to support their reading of visual symbols relevant to their culture. According to Laurie Ball (1990) 'The qualities of the artist within need to be linked to the teacher, if we are to enable students to stand beside us and form their own vision of the world' (Ball, 1990, p. 59). She places emphasis on two things here, the teacher as artist and the position of the pupils; they are envisaged shoulder-to-shoulder with the teacher, instead of in the traditional arrangement.

Georgia recognised that she was not just 'relaying' a creative process to the class, but was giving her creative self as a model to others. She considered that



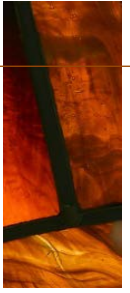
demonstrating techniques for the pupils was a type of performance and that by ‘absorbing’ the learners into this creative performance a communal experience takes place (Szekely, 1978). She relished demonstrating her painting skills and the feedback she got from the pupils. Her confidence in handling acrylic paint and her understanding of making colours and textures from this media allowed her to show off her mastery of the subject. This confidence came from her years as a successful artist, exhibiting and selling her work and from continual practice. Her art was defined by her ongoing love affair with the materials of her craft, originally oil paint but now acrylics. Georgia described the act of painting as a carefully considered activity. As Dewey said ‘the artist embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he/she works’ (Dewey, 1934, p.48). Whilst creating her own work in her studio at home, she was thinking carefully about the process in order to transfer this information to the pupils. There was an ongoing dialogue between her artist self and her work which was then carried into the classroom. Georgia believed that art making was a sensory engagement with paint, not just visual but a holistic experience of working with materials, tools and media in a very physical way.

For the artist, whether adult or child, such allusory qualities are significant because one’s movements and handling of tools and materials onto the artwork is an indexical trace of those bodily movements of which the eventual visual work is, in a sense, a by-product (Jarvis, 2011, p.314).

Through modelling practice in this way, Georgia allowed children to see that art making can include a variety of visual and tactile experiences. It gave them the opportunity to engage in a very physical experience of making art with tools and materials through ‘the hands and virtually the whole body’ (Ibid.).

### Finding (a Balance)

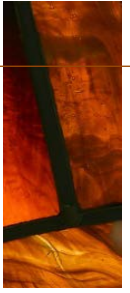
‘Expectations regarding the levels of commitment of both artists and teachers are usually such that the idea that one can do both may seem fanciful’ (Thornton, 2013, p.61). Several of the participants talked about the difficulties of trying to do both things and retaining a balance in their lives. Some found teaching physically, mentally and emotionally exhausting at times leaving nothing left for art making. Others had family commitments which meant that any available time beyond the school day was taken up with caring for their own children. A few of the



participants in promoted posts found that the responsibilities that came with the management and administration of a busy department left no time to spare for other activities. Some participants had to make real sacrifices in order to practice art, in Suzanne's case these were professional and financial, she had opted for demotion from her management position and gone part-time in order to invest more time and energy in her painting. Georgia admitted that she had only recently returned to art making because she had moved home from working and living abroad and could only get temporary teaching contracts. Prior to this, she had been unable to paint due to work and family commitments. There were participants who found no distinction between work and leisure, art and teaching and used one practice to support the other. These people seemed to have found the right balance. Some found teaching was a bonus to their art making: they earned a reasonable wage and were not reliant on selling which meant that they could work on their art at their own pace.

### The Art of Teaching: Teaching as an Art.

Turning to Thornton's second concept, I will look at the art teachers who were, in their words, 'too involved in teaching to consider making personal art'. Both Rachel, who was at the beginning of her teaching career, and Damien, who had spent thirty years in the job, saw themselves primarily as art teachers. They believed that the act of teaching was an art form in its own right. Rachel's outlook had changed significantly since she began teaching. She no longer pursued artistic activities for her own personal satisfaction. She took classes in art-based skills but these activities were used to supplement her teaching. When she attended a course to learn a specific new skill or technique she linked this experience to her work in the classroom. She stated 'maybe the way I teach has become my practice as opposed to the actual artwork'. Damien made a similar assumption when he said that if he 'had put the same effort into art as he did teaching' he would have been a successful artist. He believed 'that is like being an artist itself, the fact that you put the same enthusiasm into young people that you are dealing with'. Both of these teachers were deeply committed to their teaching practice and, despite not making personal art, remain very successful art educators.

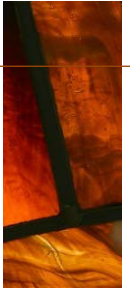


### THEME THREE – REIMAGINING (ART TEACHING THROUGH RESEARCH AND THEORY)

In the last few years there has been a surge in research in art education in the UK. This is mainly because education establishments in general are keen to adopt a research culture to gather ‘information and understanding in order to attract resources for the purposes of improving teaching and learning’ (Thornton, 2013, p.98). In addition, in the secondary sector, art teachers, along with other subject teachers, are being held more accountable for what is being taught and why. According to Allison & Hausman (1998) ‘to be able to argue that a subject is underpinned by theory is seen to be a principal indicator of academic respectability and validity’ (Allison & Hausman, 1998, p.122). The need to engage with theory is possibly even more important for art educators at this time due to the shifting nature of contemporary art. The advance of conceptual art has meant that art teachers are constantly being challenged with new concepts of what art can be (Atkinson, 2011; Burgess, 2003). Thus, developing a good knowledge of current research and an understanding of theory is desirable at secondary level in order to justify a less orthodox approach to curriculum content and practice.

#### Being Aware (of Recent Research and Theory)

Only a minority of participants reported that they were actively engaged in research. This group consisted of people enrolled on courses where an involvement in research was a requirement. Otherwise, the majority of the participants showed little interest. Some declined to answer the question before the interview began and others chose to ignore it, changing the subject to a topic with which they were more familiar. This reaction did not surprise me and at one point I considered removing the question from the interview schedule altogether. It occurred to me then that this disinterest might be prevalent within the profession. After several hours searching online for articles, I became aware that there was a distinct dearth of information. Existing material was relevant and interesting but quite dated. When I raised these questions with my supervisor, she advised that the vacuum could be an indication of the problem. Also, that participant disengagement and disparity in response was just as significant to the project as convergence and familiarity and therefore as valuable, if not more so.



The first category in this theme focuses on the group who were not making connections between their teaching and educational research. I then turn to the minority, the people who were fusing research with teaching. By doing this I could examine how the two different attitudes impact on pedagogical practice.

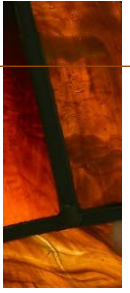
### Disconnecting (Theory from Practice)

There is an enthusiastic devotion to certain principles of lofty theory in the abstract...and there is a school practice taking little heed of the official pedagogic creed. Theory and practice do not grow together out of and into the teacher's personal experience. John Dewey, *The Relation of Theory to Practice*, (1904).

Despite the fact that a significant body of research is conducted in the field of art education every year many teachers 'continue to believe that the world of research is a world apart from their own' (Day & DiBiasio, 1983). They still think that research has nothing to contribute to their practical teaching experience. Confirmation of this view was evident in the reactions of the majority of the participants. This somewhat negative response needed further exploration and interpretation. I concluded that returning to their histories as art students and beginning teachers could provide me with clues leading to the underlying issues.

Art educational theorists have raised the issue that art graduates are reluctant to engage with theory (Hughes, 1998; Steers, 2001; Tallack, 2004) and, according to Burgess (2003), art and design teachers are 'notoriously atheoretical' (Burgess, 2003, p.115) with few exceptions. Perhaps this resistance originates from their educational experiences at tertiary level. Degree courses in art are almost entirely concerned with the visual; this leads art students to view the world in a certain way through a specific disciplinary lens (Zolberg, 1990). Also, undergraduate degrees in art and design in the UK have traditionally overlooked the development of written language skills, more so than any other discipline (Hockey, 2003). Even at Masters level, there is a predominance of practice-led degrees that require minimal textual input. This means that art students can gain two degrees with very little experience of written language.

In her response, Judy held up her artistic training as a rationale for not wishing to engage with research and theory, she was adamant that she was a 'maker not a writer'. Consequently, even before they embarked on teacher training, these

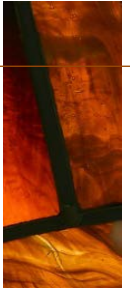


teachers had certain attitudes towards writing. They were confident in their knowledge and understanding of visual and artistic processes, but writing was viewed as unfamiliar territory. On talking to the participants, it also became clear that the PGCE experience did not prepare them any better for the demanding practice of engaging with research. Participant experience of the PGCE course focused on the practicum and, as the word infers, teaching in secondary schools is more heavily dependent upon the practical rather than the theoretical position. According to Allison and Hausman (1998) the teacher training experience consists of little more than a basic grounding in general education principles and some teaching practice in schools, focusing mainly on the practice of art. These courses give student teachers few opportunities to engage in either reflective or theoretical practice, resulting in further alienation from writing and research.

Several teachers voiced concern about having little time to engage with theory or research in a meaningful way due to teaching commitments. Annie, as a principal teacher, said that she 'just didn't have time to sit and read'. Nevertheless, she saw herself as 'privileged' because of her involvement in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) as a marker and a verifier. These positions gave her valuable insight into new developments and curricular innovations. She suggested that 'by going to these meetings, you're involved, you're hearing what is going on' but, in her opinion, her staff were not so lucky:

They are reliant on you cascading information and they are so tired that they can hardly keep their eyes open, never mind take on board what you are saying. So, I think it is very difficult for staff now to keep abreast of what is happening generally, either specifically in school or in the broader sense.

Again, similar to personal art practice, there is a general consensus among this group that teaching and the demanding nature of the job leaves little time or energy for additional development activities beyond the working day as verified by Gwen who said she certainly didn't work a thirty five hour week 'it's all-consuming, night times, weekends'... This discussion raised the issue of the decline in continuing professional development (CPD) provision for art educators. There was a general dissatisfaction among the participants about the lack of worthwhile skills or theory based courses that they could access. The following statements demonstrate participant perceptions of the current situation: 'These courses seem



to have fallen off the radar'; 'people are not getting out of schools, they are not getting external in-service courses'. Some participants mourned the past when in-service provision was plentiful. They told inspiring stories of courses that had added to their existing knowledge and understanding of the subject and had given them an incentive to experiment with new ideas and materials.

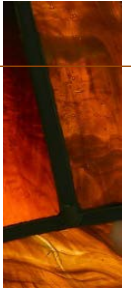
One of the participants, who had entered the profession within the last ten years, remarked that it must have been fashionable at one point to offer such courses. This is an example of how things have changed. These far-reaching changes relating to funding and in-service policies have led to an over-reliance on information being disseminated within individual schools, which can be problematic. Tamara noted 'departments can become very insular, you share practice within your department, but don't necessarily see what other people are up to'. This illustrates that a lack of interaction with others outwith the school can lead to the 'perception of sense of isolation in the classroom, or at least a sense that one may be losing touch' (Adams, 2002, p.192).

### Fusing (Research and Practice)

I will now return to the remaining participants, the art teachers who are involved in research and view it as an important factor of their pedagogical practice. One member, Rachel, had completed a Masters qualification in contemporary gallery education and was interested in, and aware of, research issues in general art education. Two participants, Annie and Georgia, mentioned getting the NSEAD newsletter every month and reading this publication when 'time allowed'. It was the three ATS members and Rosa a PhD student who showed most interest in the topic and were comfortable discussing it.

The three members of the ATS, Bridget, Christine and Tracey spoke about the lack of professional development in the subject and how this led them to enrol in the ATS. Their response supports Thornton's (2013) statement:

The ATS began because many art teachers felt an important aspect of their personal and professional development was being neglected by policymakers and continuing professional development programmers' (Thornton, 2013, p.131).



The scheme offers its members the opportunity to engage in both practice-based and theoretical research. Practice-based research and the literature surrounding the method is on the increase (MacLeod & Holdridge; Rose, 2012; Smith & Dean, 2009; Sullivan, 2005). According to Robins (2013) practices that involve embodiment and visual expression are becoming more relevant for encouraging contemporary understandings of pedagogic practice. The possibilities for this research approach have been brought to our attention by various educational theorists (Dafiotis, 2013; Eisner, 2004; Robins, 2013; Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008) but it is in discussion with the participants, all working teachers, that the benefits of this approach are realised.

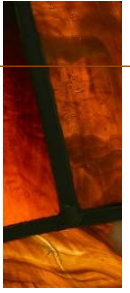
Tracey had recently completed a project based on drawing practices in local schools, she had then used this information in the classroom and had also recently presented a paper at a national conference on the subject. She stated 'I don't think that it would have occurred to me to think about this topic in this way if I hadn't been aware of some of the similar research done in this area'. According to Atkinson (2011) many students in this scheme 'have experienced processes of renewal that have moved beyond their established configurations of practice and pedagogy into new and emerging configurations' (Atkinson, 2011, p.116). Tracey had taken the opportunity to re-evaluate and further develop her own drawing practice and her teaching of that subject through her engagement with practice-based research. Bridget agreed with Tracey 'sometimes it is the content and ideas in research and other times it is simply the fact that it causes me to think creatively and address issues I have possibly not considered before'.

Rosa had completed her MPhil and was currently enrolled as a PhD student so was relatively confident about her written abilities. She had included elements of practice-based research in her studies and found that it was well-received:

I know that I've been pleasantly surprised at how much scope I've been given to explore the methodology of artistic practice in what is essentially a social sciences quantitative, empirical piece of work.

This alluded to the fact that this type of approach is becoming more accepted within the research community. On further discussion, Rosa agreed with me that the use of visual methods had given her an opportunity to revisit her artistic



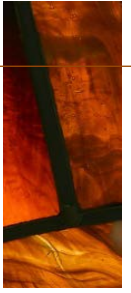


practice and that it had allowed her to discover for the first time a creative outlet that suited her skills.

### Reflecting (on Art Practice and Art Teaching)

Teachers who embrace theory and research are often reflective practitioners. According to Daichendt (2010) 'reflection is the key when analysing the exchange and interchange between art and education' (Daichendt, 2010, p.148). Bridget and Christine, referred to using a cyclical process that defined reflection in their personal artwork and in their pedagogy. Gray (2008) argues that there are two models of reflective pedagogy, 'experiential and constructive'. The first approach, experiential, 'involves learning through doing, through the immersion in and experience of creative practice and generating understandings from this through reflective processes' (Gray, (2008, p.5). For the art teacher, this means reflecting on knowledge and understanding of art practice and research to support the pupil in the learning process. It also means giving agency to teachers to 'desist from adopting unquestioningly something that someone else has labelled best practice' (Wilkins, 2011 cited in Robins, 2013, p.158). This resistance to the orthodoxy of accepted teaching programmes is raised by Christine, who stated 'reflection on classroom pedagogies with reference to my own practice and current writings has allowed me to take stock of what is actually happening in the art and design classroom'. Additional knowledge and understanding through engagement with reflection and theory has given this teacher the confidence to question the orthodoxy of the school curriculum

The second approach, according to Gray, is 'constructive learning' (Ibid.). This form of reflective pedagogy is reliant on learning within a community and involves co-reflection. Mary Belenky (1997) refers to this as 'connected knowing'. The constructivist learner or 'connected knower' finds ways of gaining knowledge from other members of the learning community. This theme was raised by several participants who talked about working together in a 'supportive but critical community of learners and teachers where they were encouraged and challenged to explore their art practice and critical thinking' (Atkinson, 2011, p.117). In this situation, learning and teaching are seen as 'participatory, dialogic and relational' (Gray, 2008, p.7).



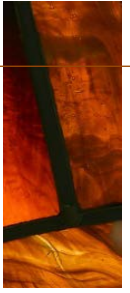
Robins (2013) claims that ‘many artist-educators experience tensions and do not find universal recognition of the benefit of supporting a mix of subject identities’ (Robins, 2013, p.159). Yet, it was interesting to see that the participants who were involved in research and art practice saw their identities and practices flowing through the different domains, each supporting the other. I would tend to agree with Thornton (2013) who upholds the case for multiple practices and identities when he states that ‘it is quite common for artists and art teachers to see these practices as a “way of life” as much as a profession’ (Thornton, 2013, p.122).

### THEME FOUR – REDEFINING (OR CHALLENGING THE CANON)

In 2004, The Arts Council England (ACE) with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in association with Tate, sponsored research to investigate what was happening in the secondary school art curriculum with particular reference to the inclusion of contemporary art practice. The study consisted of a sample of ten randomly selected schools and eight other schools, selected by the sponsors because they were known to incorporate contemporary art practice in their curriculum. In the report, the authors, Dick Downing and Ruth Watson, refer to the latter as CAP identified schools. The result was a seminal report called *School Art: What’s in It?* The research was carried out with no pre-agreed definition of contemporary art practice. The intention was to give the interviewees the opportunity to give their definition of the term, thereby not restricting answers. The findings in relation to ‘content of the curriculum’ (Downing & Watson, 2004, p.ix) and specifically those relating to the CAP schools, allude to what the authors and interviewees consider characteristic of an art department engaging with contemporary practice. I will use certain aspects of ‘the characteristics of the CAP identified schools’ that I consider valuable to this theme in order to interpret the participants’ responses.

#### Engaging (with Contemporary Art)

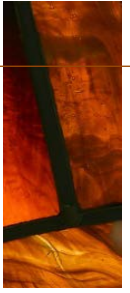
There is a recognised delay before contemporary art becomes intelligible to the general public: the Monets which were indecipherable in their day are now on every sitting-room wall (Hargreaves, 1987)



I did not give the participants any clear definition of contemporary art in relation to the question. I thought that this approach would give me a better insight into the participants' position on contemporary art. Also, Burgess and Addison (2004) state that 'any attempt to define the expanding field of contemporary art is bound to be reductive if it hopes to contain what is a characteristically fluid phenomenon' (Burgess and Addison, 2004, p.19). The participants were undaunted by this lack of clarity and spoke quite naturally about 'contemporary artists' as artists living and working in present times, and 'contemporary art' as the work produced by these people in all its forms.

Most participants agreed that it was important to include contemporary art in their teaching programmes and there were many good examples of the inclusion of contemporary artistic reference to support the curriculum (Downing & Watson, 2004). Many chose to concentrate on artists who had similar social and cultural backgrounds to the pupils. This meant that the pupils could relate more easily to the concepts and influences underpinning the work. A typical example would be Joan, who included the following Scottish artists: Simon Lawrie; Gerry Burns; Jennifer Anderson; John Lowrie Morrison and Robert Kelsey. This meets one of the criteria for CAP identified schools citing the inclusion of artists from the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. But Joan's list contains little reference to another characteristic, 'international art/culture and the work of women artists'. However, again, this criterion is picked up by Stanley, who listed among others the following contemporaries: Nicci de Sant Phalle; Andy Goldsworthy; Damien Hirst, Kenny Hunter; Tom McKendrick; Craig Mullholland; Jenny Saville; Elspeth Lamb and the Chapman Brothers. There is still a focus on home-grown talent but it is complemented by international and female artists. It becomes evident here that the decisions about what and who to include come down to the individual teacher's personal preference, based upon their artistic training and teaching experience. It is also clear that these teachers have a certain level of autonomy within the curriculum boundaries to make these choices.

Through talking to these teachers about their choice of artists, it emerged that there is a gradual broadening and redefining of the subject closer to the social world of current art practices. Unfortunately, however, it still remains at some distance, the reason being that the majority of participants chose to overlook the



rise of conceptual art in all its forms. Only a small minority embraced this form of art and believed that it complemented the work they did on the more traditional/representational forms.

Atkinson gives an overview of these conceptual forms of art:

Art practices that consist of collaborations, meetings, encounters, events which are now art practices and considered as such. The temporality and space of such practice is radically different from paintings and sculptures. Traditional conceptions of artist, work and spectator are thus disrupted, the most obvious form being the performance (Atkinson, 2005, p.23).

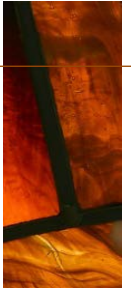
When discussing contemporary art, the participants generally referred to artists who were painters or sculptors. There was little reference to artists working in video, installation or performance as media to explore social and cultural identities (Ibid.). A possible rationale is that teachers shy away from controversial contemporary art work because it is unfamiliar and difficult to define. According to Cahan and Kocur (1994) 'they may be reluctant to introduce students to materials which they themselves feel they have not mastered' (Cahan and Kocur, 1994, p.26). In order to master new materials or stay abreast of developments and issues, teachers need specific subject-related CPD. Unfortunately, the participants saw this as a problematic area because most authorities did not offer subject specific courses, focusing instead on generic teaching skills or new curricular initiatives.

### Considering (the Shock Factor)

Much contemporary art is conceptual, sometimes inaccessible to the public and often surrounded by controversy and/or censorship. According to Lee Emery (2006) the most up-to-date art must shock if it is to have an impact on the contemporary art world. She continues to say that:

This violent, sexually explicit, disgusting and psychologically disturbing, nature of many contemporary art works make them potentially offensive, disturbing, provocative and confusing to young impressionable minds (Emery, 2006, p.33).

So what is this 'not yet tolerated, final form' of art? (Burgess, 2003). Perhaps it is most closely associated with the work produced by the Young British Artists (YBAs).

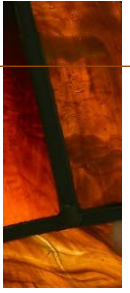


These artists were infamous for 'shock tactics, use of throwaway materials, wild-living, and an attitude both oppositional and entrepreneurial' (Bush, 2004, p.91). Many of these artists were initially collected and supported by Charles Saatchi and appeared in the *Sensations* exhibitions in the late 1990s. These exhibitions toured London and New York and were banned from Australia because the content was deemed obscene and contentious. Several YBAs went on to win the controversial, international Turner Prize. The annual Turner prize named after the painter J.M.W. Turner is presented to an artist under the age of fifty and has become primarily associated with conceptual art. It is the UK's most publicised art award and most controversial event, mainly due to exhibits such as a shark in formaldehyde by Damien Hirst, a disheveled bed by Tracey Emin and dismembered corpses hanging from a tree by the Chapman Brothers. In 2002, the Culture Minister at the time, Kim Howells, described it as 'conceptual bullshit'.

It has been suggested that the mass media have played their part in creating this type of response to contentious contemporary art. This type of art 'which is often avoided in schools is pursued paparazzi fashion by the mass media' (Burgess, 2003, p.111). The attention it attracts through this media hype is more a public curiosity for the shocking and obscene. This is perhaps one of the reasons that exhibitions of contemporary art have become very popular (Walker and Chaplin, 1997). Suzanne was perhaps the most vocal of the group in her refusal to incorporate this type of work in her courses. Her perspective and her use of language mirrored the media standpoint:

I think they feel that contemporary art pulls in the tourists. You know, it's like Sideshow Bob, it's like the Tate Modern, the stuff they had up there, a pile of rubbish, it's just to get the tourists through the door, have a giggle and point.

She was adamant that she would not show this type of work to young people and that her main job was to teach 'knowledge and skills'. This attitude was adopted by the majority of the participants. Although not voiced by the others in the same strong terms, it boiled under the surface and emerged through their reluctance to use controversial art practices in their teaching. There were also specific issues in relation to inclusion of this type of art in Catholic schools. This was a relatively small sample of twenty teachers, selected at random, and Catholic schools happened to be the only faith schools included. If it had been a larger sample with

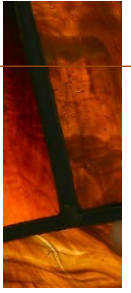


more schools of different denominations it could have raised similar issues. Annie, who taught in a Catholic school, spoke about parents complaining to her Headteacher about ‘inappropriate sexual imagery’ on a textile design. Joan told of receiving an instruction from school management not to take pupils to an exhibition based on sexuality at the GOMA. Her response was that especially ‘with upper years when they are struggling with their sexuality it was wrong not to let them explore things or to look at artists’ work’. Andy said that he would have great difficulty introducing artists such as the Chapman Brothers into the Catholic school in which he worked.

However, there were some participants who were given more freedom to experiment with risk taking and found ways to bring these artists into their curriculum. Stanley, who initially told me that he did not use ‘difficult sexual content’ in his courses, then listed the Chapman Brothers and Jenny Saville as contemporary artists that the sixth years studied. He said:

The difficulty in sixth year is getting that balance. It’s trying to get them to produce work which is obviously technically good so that we can continue to develop their skills but at the same time we get them to look at the contemporary world of art and design. For example, we have a boy who is interested in sculpture, who spent the last two weeks looking at Jake and Dinos Chapman.

I was interested here in why he had initially denied using this sort of material. Through further probing, it became clear that he saw the upper years’ pupils as ‘young adults’, independent and mature enough to determine the subject matter they studied. He continued in this vein saying ‘we have had people who brought up sexuality in the sense that they have dealt with issues that were related to homosexuality’. He relates this statement to a sixth year student focusing on the theme of identity and sexuality ‘she was touching on ideas that were dealing with not necessarily her own sexuality, but how people are conceived’. Stanley held a very relaxed, but supportive pedagogical approach. Encouraging this type of practice struck me as quite risky but, perhaps, the way forward for art teachers caught in the dilemma of including ‘cutting edge’ practices. Stanley was clearly able to combine the freedom to play and experiment with different ideas and media whilst meeting exam board expectations at the same time. It was also evident from the responses that the participants who were members of the ATS thought it was



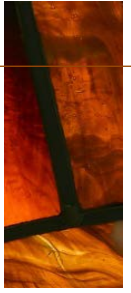
crucial to prevent this rupture between school art and these contemporary practices. Rachel and Judy found that using humour and encouraging students to confront the underlying concepts in contemporary art helped them gain a deeper understanding of their cultural and social environment.

### Talking (About Art and Artists)

With the current emphasis on educational accountability, teachers sometimes find it increasingly difficult to step out of their roles as educational gatekeepers and allow students a greater sense of agency and voice in their own learning (Milbrandt et al, 2004).

From the responses it is evident that one of the most important factors in bringing contentious contemporary art to the classroom is dialogue. Pupils often come to the subject with expectations conditioned by traditional/representational art and when asked why they are repelled by certain images or art practice, the common response is 'I don't know'. If pushed, they might respond with 'givens – i.e. everybody can see that' or 'absolutes – i.e. art is supposed to be beautiful' (Fulkova & Tipton, 2008, p.28). Both Rachel and Damien thought that students could change these entrenched views through dialogue. As discussed above, these attitudes are often encouraged by the media and based on a lack of understanding about the meaning behind the works. According to Emery (2006): 'when artists use bodily fluids, garbage, cigarette butts or mutilated figures in their art they may be offering a serious response to the way we view life in a sanitised society' (Emery, 2006, p.36) These responses can be difficult to view and challenging to understand but they are representative of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and should be raised for critical classroom debate and discussion.

In order to encourage students to engage with contemporary art, Rachel and Damien take a constructivist pedagogical approach. They offer students the opportunity to make decisions about the artists they wish to study and then support them in these choices. These teachers understand that engaging young people through 'multiple modes of inquiry – such as speaking, reflecting, questioning and acting, provides the seminal ground for meaning-making and new knowledge to emerge' (Fulkova & Tipton, 2008, p.29). Giving the pupils the space and time to explore and reflect upon new artists and new practices encourages

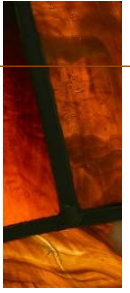


individual interpretations and different perspectives. By revealing these thoughts and reflections in a facilitated setting with a teacher and one's peers upholds engagement in the co-constructive or co-creative process. In this setting student dialogue must be valued in order to create an ethos of equality between the teacher and the learner. The value of pupil input is evident in the form of reciprocity, several participants spoke about learning through their pupils' experiences with contemporary art.

Horn (2006) claims that 'children are often underestimated in their ability to confront, discuss and produce work concerning the wider issues of humanity and the darker aspects of the human condition' (Horn, 2006, p.137). This notion of underestimating children's knowledge and ability to deal with contemporary culture was raised by Christine. She cautioned against 'underestimating students' understanding of the world in which we live'. She felt that teachers had a view of the world that was quite different from the pupils' perspective and that teachers needed to become more aware of the issues surrounding contemporary culture if they were to facilitate critical discussion. Bridget also believed that 'young people often find the underlying contemporary issues very interesting, they relate more easily to the narratives than in some more traditional examples'. These participants have read the reactions of their pupils to various forms of art and maintain that young people are not interested in the past, but the here and now.

Tracey, however, was very frank, and claimed that she would not consider entering into a dialogue about controversial art with the pupils she taught at present. She was new to the school and felt that she needed to build stronger relationships and a sense of trust before she could talk about these practices. She also described her insecurity in relation to examination procedures. An explanation for this lack of confidence was that art teacher/pupil performance is often measured on exam results. Tracey as a new teacher in the school was under pressure to perform and, whilst it is obvious from the responses that art teachers have a certain degree of autonomy in their choice of subject matter, they have never had the opportunity to be entirely independent (Burgess & Addison, 2004). According to Dennis Atkinson (2005) with Headteachers 'exerting even more pressure for good results, so many teachers feel a need to play safe' (Atkinson, 2005, p.24). Therefore, there is little incentive to experiment and 'take risks' with difficult and challenging





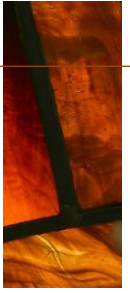
subject matter when ‘popularity of the subject and the high success rate mitigate against change’ (Burgess & Addison, 2004, p.25).

### Introducing (Living Artists and Gallery Visits)

One of the most active ways of coming to know about things is via the Method of Interaction. ‘We come to know what a lemon is like by breaking it open and sucking it; we come to know about cooking by interacting with food and cooking utensils... The point about the Method of Interaction is that we induce events in the real world which makes the real thing real to us’ (Lewis, 1980, p.151).

Returning to the Downing and Watson (2004) report, a characteristic that was ‘more likely to be reported in a CAP identified school was ‘the curriculum included visits to galleries and museums and included the use of external artists’. From the 1980s, numerous Artist-in-Residence (AiR) schemes were implemented in schools but according to Burgess (1995), too often the aims of these projects were not clearly delineated leading to schemes that were not carefully planned or developed. In 1988 the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) commissioned research into the work carried out by artists-in-schools. The resulting report was *Artists in School* (Sharp & Dust, 1990). This seminal text gives good advice about both the benefits and limitations of such schemes. I was interested to find out if the teachers in my study brought artists in to work with the pupils, and if so, what was their perspective on the contribution of the professional artist to the classroom.

Several participants talked about bringing artists into their departments and how this influenced both pupils and teachers. Tamara described a painting workshop with the contemporary artist Andrew Ratcliffe and how this changed the department’s traditional approach to working in paint. By observing this artist at work, the pupils recognised that there was a process involved in producing a finished piece of art. Prior to this, their limited experience of artist’s work was the finished product hanging on a gallery wall. From looking at how other artists solved problems (Hetland et al, 2007), the young people discovered that artists encourage experimentation, that it is not necessary to get it right first time: this is a big part of learning about the artistic process.

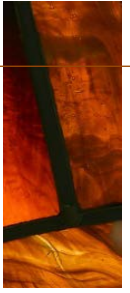


This interaction with a living artist lasted beyond the classroom experience, the pupils who were involved then showed a willingness to experiment with the artist's approach themselves. Gwen described the lasting impression of an artist's practice on her class:

It was like starting afresh and the confidence that they developed from the workshop was fantastic. So much so that at the end of that unit, the vast majority of pupils opted to do their final outcome as an acrylic painting. And those pupils are now currently doing Advanced Higher and they are using those skills in their portfolios.

Gwen's enthusiastic reception demonstrated her positive feelings towards this input. Teachers can sometimes feel isolated working alone with their classes away from other adult contact. 'Having another artist enter their domain and work with their class is a challenge that offers opportunities for reflection on their own approaches to teaching' (Sharp & Dust, 1990, p.13). Beyond the notion of being able to talk to another artist about art on a professional level, there is also the possibility of learning new techniques and keeping up-to-date with contemporary practices (Ibid.). This then raised the question of funding. As far as I was aware there were very few schemes currently in existence that granted financial assistance for this type of initiative. Recent cutbacks in education had resulted in AiR schemes being low on the list of school priorities. Stanley's answer was interesting and was based on his determination to give the pupils in his department the opportunity to take part in this valuable experience. He spoke about going to the Enterprise Department or the Headteacher's office and 'begging' for money.

With reference to the issue of limited finance to promote interaction with contemporary artists, I was also interested to find out if the teachers in my study were using galleries as a complementary location for teaching art and involving gallery educators as a way to introduce pupils to original works of art (Hall & Meecham, 2003). In the UK, under the previous Labour government (1997–2010), funding was provided which supported gallery education initiatives to grow across the country. Unfortunately, in recent times due to recession and changes in government priorities, gallery education 'faces challenges in terms of maintaining staff, supporting programme development and attracting schools that may not

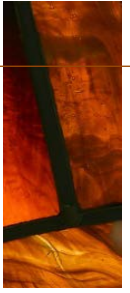


have art as a priority in their curriculum’ (Pringle, 2013, p.112). On speaking to the participants it became clear that they valued visits to galleries and saw this as a way to ‘bridge the chasm’ between school art and contemporary art. Again, there were financial issues; department budgets could not stretch to the full cost of taking pupils on gallery visits. However, teachers were prepared to plead for money to subsidise this activity. Tamara talked about taking her pupils to the GOMA and whilst there ‘watching contemporary film-based work, taking part in a sculpture workshop and using found materials to create their own motion pieces’. According to Pringle (2013):

The framing of learning as an event is a useful starting point, as it suggests how and why the learner is transformed. It draws attention to the importance of risk and experimentation and the importance of moving into a space of not knowing in order to gain new insights (Pringle, 2013, p.113).

The workshop Tamara described was a departure in many ways from the type of work in which these pupils participated at school. It was a transgression from their traditional ways of working and created a transformative effect. Tamara refers to the workshop as a risk, meaning that it could have been a negative experience, but the pupils embraced the activity ‘gained new insights’ into contemporary practices which resulted in further experimentation back in the classroom.

The above description concentrates on the actual ‘event’ but it was also noted by the participants that it was necessary to prepare pupils prior to taking part in a gallery education programme. Thistlewood (1987) describes the gallery as ‘a mixture of palace, popular monument, academy, temple, laboratory, public domain and treasure house’ (Thistlewood, 1987, p.126) and cautions that it is not an institution to which school children should be taken to ‘casually or ignorantly’. Teachers and teachers’ knowledge, therefore, are important factors in the success of this venture. According to Hall and Meecham (2003) ‘teachers have many skills that are undervalued, skills that are appropriate to learning in the gallery context’ (Hall and Meecham, 2003, p.157). It follows that planning and preparation, facilitated by the teacher, gives the pupils a more meaningful experience. Teachers are pivotal then to making the aims and objectives of the visit known to the learner and establishing links between gallery, art work and the classroom (Ibid.).



### THEME FIVE – EXPLORING (LIVED EXPERIENCE THROUGH ART)

Making art can provide opportunities for young people to develop their emotional and intellectual capacities, it can support them in creating a sense of their own identity and heighten awareness of their place in this complex, contemporary world. Focusing on personal lived experience allows students to identify where they are positioned within the modern social, cultural and technological world. Working in this way, young art students are required to engage with reflective practice, they are being asked to recall their experiences through artistic methods.

According to Gude (2007):

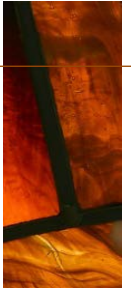
Through a repertoire of projects in which students use diverse styles of representation and various symbol systems to explore various aspects of experience, students become aware of the self as shaped in multiple discourses, giving students more choices about consciously shaping self (Gude, 2007, p.8).

As she says, teachers should offer a wide range of projects to encourage these life stories to be transmitted through different forms of art. Gude also claims that offering these opportunities to explore 'self' will encourage emotional and artistic development and give pupils more of a choice in how they shape their future.

#### Stimulating (Ideas)

Fruitful ideas must be given every opportunity to emerge completely and with all their baggage. To do this, one must go with them, be dragged anywhere by them, help them even to come apart or to form other or opposing ideas (Brown & Korzenik, 1993, p.61).

Several participants found that encouraging pupils to use their own experiences stimulated ideas for artwork. Stanley considered 'it was the most important stimulus' for relevant and exciting study. He described various self-directed projects that generated a range of interesting and exciting experimental processes and outcomes. The projects begin with students selecting a range of other contemporary artists and analysing their practice. The pedagogical goal here 'is to understand conceptual approaches to art-making and comprehend how specific

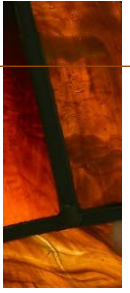


artistic practices enable conceptualisation’ (Walker, 2004, p.7). Once they find an artist they like, they need to communicate their interest both verbally and visually in order to learn from other artists’ practices. This is not just a case of copying but of coming to understand these practices and using them to inspire their own artworks. According to George Szekely (1988) ‘It is important to disclose the artistic process by showing how we are inspired and how we follow up our inspirations’ (Szekely, 1988, p.13). The Guardian recently ran an article called *Top Artists’ Creative Inspiration* (2012) which focused on contemporaries from different fields and included a response from the visual artist Isaac Julien:

I have a magpie attitude to inspiration: I seek it from all sorts of sources; anything that allows me to think about how a culture comes together. I am always on the lookout – I observe people in the street; I watch films, I read, I think about the conversations I have. I consider the gestures people use, or the colours they’re wearing. It’s about taking all the little everyday things and observing them with a critical eye.

He also talks about ‘building up a scrapbook’ of ideas and finds inspiration in ‘looking at other peoples’ artworks’. This example serves to demonstrate that it is sometimes enough to concentrate on the small things in daily life, that they can provide stimulus just as easily as big emotional events. It also shows that established artists look at other artists’ work for inspiration along with their own observations and experiences. Stanley encouraged his students to ‘follow-up’ their studies of artists’ creative processes by reflecting on their own circumstances and emotions ‘to create artworks that extend beyond themselves to tell us something about human experience’ (Anderson, 2003, p.59). Georgia also advised her students to keep their options open during the art making process to allow the materials to lead and new ideas to follow. She advocated keeping an open mind and seeking new directions, rather than concentrating on the more conservative, conventional possibilities. This constant ‘reflection-in-action’ gradually leads students ‘to seek the novel and the original over the reliable and safe’ (Walker, 2004, p.11).

Rachel, who worked part-time as a gallery educator whilst teaching, talked about supporting pupils to see connections between the work of contemporary artist Richard Hughes (based on the loss of community) and their own personal



experiences. She thought that visiting this exhibition and talking about the work created a realistic platform for discussion and change. The other participants acknowledged that reflecting on relevant social and cultural issues in the classroom provided students with material to explore and communicate what was happening in their own lives. Secondary school pupils in particular ‘need to struggle with art that has meaning and relevance for their lives, for doing so can encourage them to continue to look, discuss, and discover more’ (Schilz, 2006, p.32). Studying ways of being in the world is a continuous, reflective and reflexive process. In art, it means exploring what is important to students, and according to Garber (2010) it also means play:

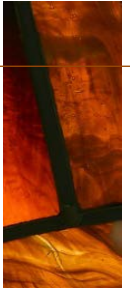
Play includes trying on different identities using different artistic styles or conveying different messages which allows the maker to put him or herself in a different role than they usually see themselves (Garber, 2010, p.124)

The concept of identity formation through creative practice and play is valuable, but self-awareness is not the only goal. It is hoped that it will lead to pupils stretching the boundaries of their own social and cultural spheres to become ‘border crossers’ (Ibid.), open to studying and understanding other peoples and their cultures. This pattern is visible in Stanley’s approach. He began a sketchbook series with a theme entitled *All About Me* and gradually encouraged the pupils to work towards the second theme *The News* where they explored other ‘political, social and cultural arenas beyond their own experiences’. It is interesting to see that the third and last sketchbook was based on *The Journey*, which could be a vehicle used to describe navigating the distance between one’s own identity and the exploration of other cultures.

### Encountering (Emotion)

Our ability to make symbols and images is, in part, a reaction to our own suffering and the suffering of others. In times of crisis, mourning, grief and loss artistic expression helps us to convey and cope with powerful emotions, to repair and transform feelings, and eventually to restore wholeness (Malchiodi, 2002, p.148).

Most of the participants agreed that it was important to give the students a real context for making art, one that related to their own lives and their own experiences. Tamara gave what she termed ‘an extreme example’, relating her



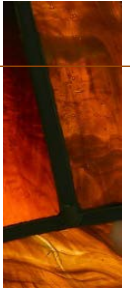
response to the experience of working with a pupil who was dealing with the trauma of the death of her brother at a young age. Tamara described how the girl was stricken with grief, unable to communicate with her peers or her immediate family, including her parents. She explained that her own experience of unexpected death, that of her mother when she was sixteen, allowed her to provide comfort and support. Tamara explained to the pupil that she found an outlet through her art and encouraged her to use this to find some solace. Through this empathetic teacher's support and encouragement the young artist brought symbolism into her work. According to Malchiodi (2002), symbols in art can 'bring attention to something you need to repair within yourself, or generate the energy needed for change' (Malchiodi, 2002, p.78). By using symbolism to express her love and her loss, this pupil was gradually drawn out of an emotional crisis towards a process of healing.

### Building (Strong Relationships)

The teachers in the study found that sharing experiences engendered a closer relationship between pupil and teacher. Georgia pointed out that art teachers have a 'more empathetic relationship' with their pupils in general. These relationships are underpinned by 'shared commitments, purposes and goals' (Line 137). The common goal, according to Georgia, was to produce the best possible, most meaningful artwork. In the art classroom, practical skills and subject knowledge are transferred between the teacher and the pupil in ways that are difficult to discern. This process usually means learning by example followed by learning through experience. Experiential learning methods, such as repetitive practice and experimentation, are common in an artistic environment. According to Jarvis (2007):

The avoidance of formal instruction is partly about encouraging the development of a distinct visual language but it is also because the experiential and tacit nature of practical work make articulating practical concepts and procedures difficult (cited in Carabine, 2013, p.37).

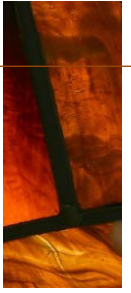
But art teachers are not only concerned with the transference of practical knowledge; they are also there to convey what Carabine (2013) calls a range of 'mental or psychological capacities'. She lists these mental capacities as follows:



‘being able to tolerate high levels of excitability; periods of nothingness; chaos; uncertainty; and not knowing’ (Ibid.). The role of the art teacher in introducing pupils to this part of the creative process is pivotal, teachers are aware that these mental characteristics combined with artistic skill are to be mastered in order to become a confident artistic practitioner. The teachers in the study recognised that their position in this process was to absorb the student’s worries and concerns. They understood that it was important to stay with the student until he/she resolved the problem and to be reassuring and considerate about the student’s work. According to Trowell (2010) ‘sense-making encourages the making of meaning in relation to an endeavour or encounter’ (Trowell, 2010, p.144). Encouraging students to think deeply about their work and to feel the creative ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) facilitates embodied, meaningful experiences. It is little wonder that these nourishing relationships often lead students to view their art teachers as mentors, with some students, not all, becoming quite dependent on that mentor’s opinions and validation.

Mary, one of the younger, more inexperienced participants, was keen to build stronger relationships with the pupils in her care. When interviewed, she had been in a variety of temporary posts for short periods and found that her ‘hands were tied’ because she was viewed ‘differently’ to the other permanent members of staff. She felt that she had little agency to bring either her thematic or artistic preferences to her teaching. However, she believed strongly that she could make a difference through developing close relationships with the pupils. She was happy to provide a liberated ambiance at break-times and lunchtimes, where pupils could play music, make artwork, relax and eat and where she could talk to them about their lives beyond the school gates. Some students are overwhelmed in a typical classroom environment where large numbers of people jostle for attention. Mary found that at other times of the day beyond scheduled working periods and ‘within a trusting environment, their tentative spoken responses would build in confidence’ (Matthews, 2008, p.140). This notion of the art classroom as a ‘haven or oasis’ (Hickman, 2013; Tallack, 2004) can lead to a more therapeutic environment which was viewed by some participants as a positive situation and by others as problematic.





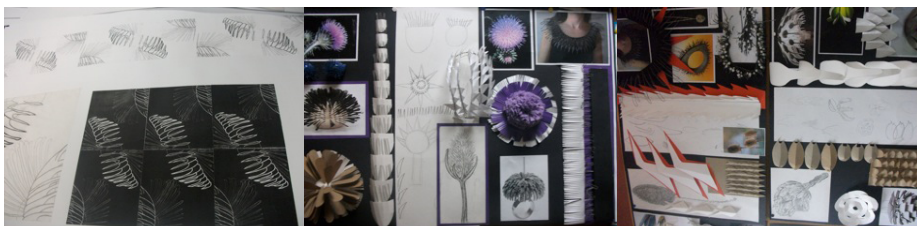
### Knowing (Our Boundaries)

Rosa considered that it could be detrimental to the health of all concerned if art teachers were to adopt the role of therapists. She suggested that it could lead to ‘untrained pseudo-psychologists’ who, through lack of specialised training, could actually do more harm than good. This sentiment is echoed by Edwards (1976) who refers to:

Cautionary strictures which, no doubt quite properly, seek to discourage art teachers from thinking of themselves as therapists, thereby from risking unwitting psychological damage on the one hand and the reduction to rubble of art educational intent on the other (Edwards, 1976, p.63).

So, not only could it be damaging to health, it could also detract from educational objectives. Rosa had spent thirteen years in special education and advocated caution when ‘opening up somebody’s box of monsters’. She maintained that if teachers were to ‘try to fix people through the art room’ they needed to be aware of what might emerge and trained to support the person in the aftermath.

Sonia did not feel comfortable about raising personal issues with her pupils. She had been involved in a discussion about anorexia with a group of sixth year students who had become very emotional and she had found it difficult to deal with this. She believed that there was a tendency ‘with this type of thing’ to dwell on the negative and that it was difficult ‘to represent those feelings visually’. Henry also spoke about the challenges he experienced whilst attempting to build relationships with pupils in his last school, situated in an area of deprivation. He told me that the students did not trust him because they perceived him to be different from them, an ‘outsider’ and therefore representative of authority. He realised that they would not engage in discussion and debate about lifestyle issues because the things they were doing carried possible legal consequences.

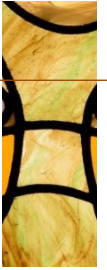




## CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSIONS





# CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSIONS

I began this thesis asking the following research questions – should art teachers be engaged in practicing their subject outside the classroom and does it make them a more effective teacher if they are? I chose to research this question by examining how art teachers model practice in the classroom, and I can now say based on my research, that the answer is an unequivocal yes.

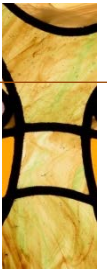
In the following conclusions I review the last two chapters and summarise the most salient points raised by the art teachers who took part in the project. I then return to reflect upon my own experiences within a/r/tography and look at how this methodology has enabled me to return to my own art practice as a teacher and a researcher.

This then leads towards two sets of recommendations, one has specific resonance for the art education community and the other is directed more towards the wider educational community in general.

## Conclusions

In this section I reflect on the findings from the five major themes which were identified and considered in relation to the role of art teacher at the present time. In section one, the theme of identity was explored, examining how an art teacher's identity is constructed and shaped through many experiences and influences and through 'a reflective grasp of our life stories' (Greene, 1995, p.20) which emerges out of a long process. The artist's past life, including the experience of going to art school and learning from others, is important in a teaching context because it helps to form the identity that the art teacher then presents to his/her students in class. This proves to be an interesting parallel with the act of creation itself, since there is a process of shaping that goes on, partly through conscious effort using deliberate strategies and techniques but partly also through intuition and a subconscious vision of what the outcome should ultimately be.

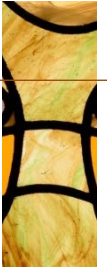
Modern art education rejects the rather extreme notion of the *tabula rasa* adopted by the Bauhaus art school (Elkins, 2001; Robins, 2003) which had suggested that an artist's mind must be cleared of previous ideas and



preconceptions in order to begin the task of studying art with a clean slate. The emphasis has moved away from the notion of the isolated artist towards the flow between socio-cultural issues and contemporary art. This is mirrored in the opening up of old boxed-up departments (Pujol, 2009) and the rise of multidisciplinary education. Nevertheless, the interviews revealed that there are still some rather longstanding traditions and pressures which continue to influence the way art is taught in colleges and universities today. The transition from secondary school to higher education was a significant moment for some participants (Robyns, 2003). Issues raised were linked to expectations of the tutor/student relationship and knowledge and understanding of contemporary art practices.

Nowadays there is an appreciation of the fact that learning is something that takes place within the individual but it is also set in some kind of context, or what Wenger (2008) would call a 'community of practice'. This means that the influence of others and of physical surroundings makes learning a social act and many attitudes and assumptions are absorbed, often unconsciously or subconsciously, from the learner's interactions in this wider community. The experiences that a teacher has had in the past, the culture within which those experiences took place and the ways that the teacher reacted to all of this contributes to that teacher's later identity. The implications of this realisation for classroom teaching are immense since in school the whole process begins again as the teacher passes on aspects of his or her training, culture and personality to a new set of learners; in other words, he/she is modelling artistic practice. The more a teacher can grasp and reflect upon his or her own past experiences, the more that teacher can be aware of the unspoken but still powerful messages that their conduct conveys to learners. With this knowledge comes the power to modify learned behaviours in order to minimise harmful elements and maximise helpful ones. In this way the teacher is free to focus on the needs of learners rather than being engaged in dealing with his or her own personal issues.

According to Thornton (2012), a practicing artist's decision to enter the field of education as a teacher, rather than as a student, results in the coming together and overlapping of two quite different concepts, namely that of artist and that of teacher (Thornton, 2012). This is a rather positive view, seeing the transformation

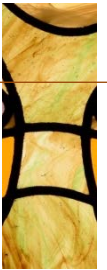


not as a step out of one domain and into another but rather a merging of two very different domains, which results in some commonality in the middle, i.e. the artist/teacher role. Outside this hybrid role, the person also maintains aspects of his or her artist identity and aspects of his or her teacher identity. An important consequence of this way of conceiving the artist/teacher role is that it allows the artist to retain the creative side of his or her identity and model this to learners. This in turn makes for confident, more self-assured teaching and an authentic learner experience as the artist component of the teacher's identity is not suppressed or lost, but retained and made available for teacher and learners as a resource.

On the other hand, a more negative view of the transition from artist to teacher is the notion that some people endure a period of considerable reflection and self-doubt as they make a transition from one identity to the other (Prentice, 1995). Teaching can be perceived as selling out to a steady income rather than becoming an impoverished artist, struggling to live from his or her art. This oppositional view of the art teacher identity, which owes much to traditional stereotypes, can lead to a sense of loss and may even harm a teacher's self-esteem precisely at the time when he or she needs to learn new people skills in order to deal with classroom and staffroom relationships. This can be a temporary phase or, unfortunately for some, a more permanent stance that can engender much negativity and resistance in the teaching profession.

Many people who make the step from being artists to art teachers may start with this attitude, but then come to value their commitment to teaching as much as they value their commitment to art. This may be partly post-hoc rationalisation and partly genuinely embracing the moral and social aspects of the teaching role. Some of the participants who have managed to resolve this dilemma reported the positive influence of family and other commitments in helping to redraw the balance between creative working as an artist, perceived as something personal, to professional work as a teacher, seen as something altruistic. Extrinsic factors like this provided strong motivation to seek steady employment.

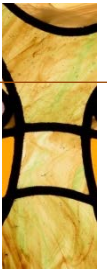
The assumption of a teacher role necessitates adaptation to the hierarchical and often authoritarian structure of schools and management of the sometimes difficult behaviour of students in class. It is this latter, more practical skill that



appears to have been the cause of much anxiety in the early stage of the art teachers' career. Self-awareness, according to Atkinson (2003), is the greatest asset to trainee and new teachers because it allows them to harness the historical constructions that they have themselves built up over the years in responding to the teachers and theories that they have encountered. Greater awareness of one's own identity and how it has been constructed does indeed appear to be very useful in building relationships with young learners, who are still in the process of forming their own identities (Moore and Atkinson, 1998). This awareness, described in the work of the renowned theorist Donald Schön (1983) author of *The Reflective Practitioner*, offers a framework for making a successful transition from the role of artist to that of art teacher. It should be encouraged, especially at the start of a person's teaching career, because revisiting history makes explicit what the teacher has learned in the past and allows the teacher to consciously choose his or her own teaching style rather than just unconsciously reproducing what has been learned in the past. If learned early, this skill is a useful asset throughout the course of the art teacher's professional life.

Section two considered the theme of making and modelling artistic practice and this is important because it looks forwards as well as back to past experiences and is applicable to the way that the art teacher identity is played out in the classroom. The theories of Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) on habitus and cultural capital show that the classroom is a socially constructed space which acquires certain norms according to the things that people do. In exploring this idea with the artist/teachers, I found that many of them rejected traditional and rather authoritarian teacher behaviours in favour of a more collaborative approach in which teacher and students engage in activities together. This has been theorised using the vocabulary of the community (Lave and Wenger, 1991) which emphasises the situated nature of learning.

One major implication of this collaborative approach is that it opens up the potential of the physical space in the classroom to influence the learning experience for the better. This goes beyond the arrangement of furniture and equipment and also extends to the timing of access to the classroom and the nature of the communication that is tolerated, encouraged or prohibited in that environment. The concept of the studio as a place where artists go to experiment

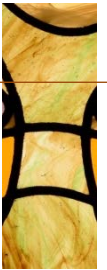


and to produce works of art, can serve as an ideal for the design and operation of an art classroom in any school. By entering into this special place and recognising how different it is from other types of classroom, learners contribute to the (re) construction of the art teacher's identity. The people and the place together create a specific community in which a more collaborative and experimental kind of learning is possible. This insight shows how imperative it is that teachers, school administrators and designers carefully consider the way that teaching space is used and the cultural messages that are conveyed in the process.

There are several consequences for the art teacher in adopting dialogic and collaborative teaching and learning styles, including the possibility that this may bring the teacher into conflict with prevailing norms in the school, for example a growing emphasis on exam success and accountability in art teaching (Allison and Hausman, 1998; Atkinson, 2013). There may also be a certain amount of risk if the teacher reveals artwork that contains deeply personal meaning and talks about it authentically in the classroom. These factors have to be balanced with the obvious advantages that arise in the mutual exchange of ideas, beliefs and techniques. By sharing with students in this way, teachers can also learn from their students (Freire, 1970) and this is of great benefit in a profession which is often characterised by high teaching workloads and heavy administrative duties, leaving little time for self-development outside the school environment.

Theme three considered the relationship between theory and practice for the interviewees and concluded that once again there was great diversity in the responses. There is a widely held view in the scholarly literature that art students (and by implication also art teachers) are resistant to theory and much more concerned with technique (Burgess 2003; Esser-Hall, 2000). This appears to originate from the way that undergraduate degrees, and to some extent also teacher training courses in recent years, have emphasised the practical rather than underlying theories. Most artist/teachers prefer making to writing and this appears to inhibit reading and research into theory and presents a barrier to engagement with updating and development activities.

A solution to this can be found in initiatives such as the collaboration between Higher Education institutions, galleries and CPD programmes for practicing teachers, especially through the award of postgraduate diplomas and degrees

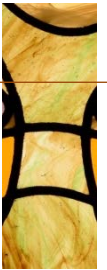


through distance and part-time study (Adams, 2003; Hickman, 2007; Elkins, 2008). When advanced theoretical learning is not divorced from artistic production and classroom practice, teachers are motivated to complete the extra work required. The interviewees involved in research demonstrated many additional positive outcomes such as enhanced enthusiasm and improved classroom practice as well as engagement with practice-based modes which in turn contribute to theory development (Dafiotis, 2013). The teachers who engaged in postgraduate study reported that this experience produced a different kind of reflection on their practice and one which brought an invigorating discovery that there are other ways of approaching familiar processes (Wilkins, 2011). Wherever possible, this kind of formal CPD should be offered to practicing art teachers at all stages in their careers.

Theme four of this research explored the extent to which the canon of the secondary school art curriculum is currently being redefined, or challenged. Although the interviewees generally responded with positive views of contemporary artists and included many of them in their teaching repertoire, it was clear that amongst the majority of teachers there is still a tendency to adhere to the safe and traditional art forms of painting and sculpture. There was a distinct avoidance of conceptual and performance art, including installations, events and video which are increasingly prevalent in contemporary art. Some of this reluctance is attributable to moral, or in some cases religious, limitations set by schools and some is due to a pressure on teachers to produce good examination results. There is, however, also a reluctance on the part of most interviewees to teach the deliberately shocking and often sensationalised aspects of today's art (Burgess, 2003). This will surely lead to an underestimation of the capability of students and the teaching of a curriculum which does not even try to engage with contemporary culture. Interaction through gallery visits, or with artists coming into school, should be more widely used in art education because these experiences provoke the kind of dialogue that can begin to address these contentious issues. Such activities require thorough planning in advance, extensive de-briefing after any visit and suitable financing arrangements to underpin this kind of learning.

In theme five, which considered the art production of learners, there appears to be a need for more emphasis on the learners' own discovery of self in their art and on





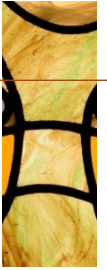
stimulating ideas which arise out of learners' individual experiences. Linkage with social and cultural issues can provide meaning and relevance for learners, allowing them to explore the artistic process and at the same time expand their own self-awareness and understanding of the world (Anderson 2003). Good examples of this were cited in the interviews. It is necessary, however, to set professional boundaries for teachers and learners in the school context especially when serious psychological issues such as bereavement or mental illness arise, as they surely will in any teaching which encourages students to express their inner feelings through their art.

The formation of the artist/teacher identity is therefore an on-going and, at times, difficult process but it is essential that it should be achieved consciously with reflection on the past and consideration of present and future choices if the tensions involved are to be resolved productively to the benefit of learners and artists alike. Another key finding in this research has been a recent and very welcome trend towards the promotion of multiple and altogether flexible identities. This shift away from rigid and outmoded views of an either/or distinction between artist and teacher allows artist/teacher professionals to move back and forth along this spectrum and encourages a variety of different types of CPD. The future possibilities here both for artist/teachers themselves and for the field of art education are very promising indeed. Some training can be experiential and classroom-based, some professionally based and some much more formal and academic, leading to innovative research outcomes. It is this hybrid and flexible career model which will best equip artist/teachers to deal with the challenges of making and teaching art in the twenty first century.

### Reflections on A/r/tography

#### Practice-based research

This project was driven by two main concerns: firstly, to research further into the world of the secondary art teacher; and secondly, to reflect on the process through writing and art making. The intention was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between art and teaching practice. I was relatively confident about the traditional research process, having completed a trial study in the previous year and produced a provisional proposal setting out a framework for the structure of the study. However, I was less confident about practice-based research and how



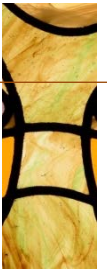
that would support the writing. I had read extensively on the subject but could not entirely visualise the positioning of this element. In addition, I was also very concerned about whether I could still work as an artist almost twenty-five years after originally abandoning my practice.

### The ritual of buying art materials

I had not ventured into the art school shop for several years and was overjoyed to be back. Shops like these represent endless possibilities for making art and hours can be whiled away exploring the qualities of different types of media. It is an important part of the artistic process and anyone who has experienced it will understand why it is relevant to include a description. I took a wire basket and collected a 'Bushey' black, bound sketchbook, the type instantly associated with art students (this was important) and several pencils in different grades of graphite. I also picked up some tubes of gouache, paintbrushes in various sizes and a box of very soft oil pastels, which were very expensive. At the till I proffered my student card to receive a discount, all the time thinking I'm a bit out of place here among the young artists. I observed the young man behind the counter for signs of amusement but he appeared totally unsurprised.

### Recalling those first steps

Back home, I took out the sketchbook without really knowing what to do with it. I had never kept a diary before for fear of losing it and someone accessing my private thoughts but here I was proposing to keep a visual journal, open to public view. Before writing this section I searched out that first journal to help me recall those early events. I found it in a crate buried deep under a pile of other journals completed during the project. The date read September 2012. The opening pages were a tentative mix of writing and art-making but the words worry, despair and procrastination stand out and I remembered that fear of making a start to something so precious was overwhelming and initially rendered me inert. However, like many artists, those emotions proved useful and, as I emerged from my catatonic state, I wrote about my feelings and described them using dark, muddy colours and abstract imagery. Very quickly, I decided to find a focus; a natural subject that would mirror the evolving research process, such as flowers, plants, trees or the weather. I encountered a small volume of poems entitled *Through Wood*, containing verse written in 2009. This group of poems was based



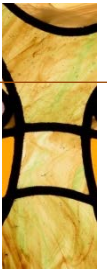
on the concept of 'reconnecting to the forest' and led me to settle firmly on the theme of trees.

### Back to school

At the same time, I began attending classes in decorative glass at the art school. This gave me an insight into being a learner again and into the pedagogical practice of art tutors from a more mature perspective. Admittedly, while I struggled as a learner unfamiliar with my new status, the tutors were more attentive and more involved than I recalled from my art school days. Naturally, it has to be acknowledged that teaching mature adults is quite a different experience to teaching young students and the same follows for learning. Glass as a medium was quite different to anything I had worked with previously and, if I am truly honest, twice as difficult. At times I became frustrated, unable to bend this material to my will but gradually I mastered the various tools and techniques. I photographed my early attempts and added them to my first journal along with further insights into my progress. Once I had gathered enough information, I selected the essential elements and drafted a blueprint for the glass design. I knew that I wanted it to be sombre and brooding, representative of my own dark state of mind at this stage. The first finished piece portrays inky trees against a murky background of deep purples and browns. During the painstaking construction of this panel, I took photographs in order to better describe my artistic journey and continued working in this way for the duration of the project. Towards the end, I had completed a series of six substantial decorative glass panels: *The Darkness* (as described); *Roots* (representative of the participants' histories); *Digging Deep* (analysis and the coding process); *The Guardians* (guarding curriculum content); *Tempus Fugit* (time flies); *The Fruits of Our Labour* (findings, conclusions & recommendations). The concepts and processes implicit in the creation of these panels are fully developed and described in the accompanying journals.

### A/r/tography

My experience with practice-based research led me to acknowledge the true value of continuing to practice art in relation to my professional life. In the past, I had struggled to come to terms with the fact that I had abandoned my art practice for a teaching practice. It had been my conviction that working within both disciplines was not compatible with a balanced way of life. Yet, through a/r/tography (see



Chapter Three) I realised that I could combine my emerging interest in research with teaching and art-making to become an artist/researcher/teacher.

### Artist/researcher/teacher

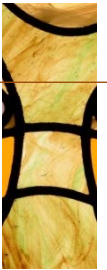
I met lots of new people through attending glassmaking classes, many of whom had more experience and knowledge of this process than I had. These others helped to scaffold skills and became co-constructors in my learning. This was also true with regard to research. The EdD offered opportunities to engage with other researchers and tutors both online and at study weekends. This allowed me to see how valuable it was to be part of a community of learners.

Making art again improved my sense of wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence. I created a separate studio space in my house where I could retreat from the demands of work and family life in order to make art, reflect and write. I renewed my interest in attending exhibitions, making a special effort to visit galleries that held contemporary art collections. By trying to understand the concepts and processes encapsulated in these new art forms, I became less dismissive and more appreciative of a wider range of art practices. As an art educator and researcher, the use of visual methods to reflect and record information became tremendously important to me. The opportunity to use artistic practices allowed me to analyse the data in a deeper, more reflective way. Being involved in research and learning about the theories underpinning progressive art education led to new understandings about my own teaching practice.

Furthermore, investigating my practice as an artist had a huge impact on my teaching practice: it gave me further insight into what it means to be a learner again. Making art allowed me to participate in a constructivist learning process which impacted on my attitudes and behaviours in the classroom. I now understand that it is important to give pupils time and space to find their own answers and develop their own interpretations and I acknowledge the role of the teacher as facilitator with the pupils forming a community of learners.

### Recommendations for Art Education

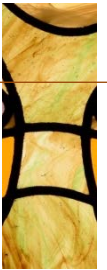
The research project helped me to gain further knowledge and understanding about secondary school art educators, their art-making and teaching practices. It



raised issues that led to several recommendations for the art education community.

The study showed that the teachers' perceptions about art, art teaching and art making are influenced by their earlier education experiences. The accounts uphold the concept that the formation of the art teacher's identity is different for each person. However, despite diversity in the responses, there is convergence and this required further investigation. The transition from secondary education to higher education is one such point where there was relative consensus. The teachers spoke about having to relinquish expectations of close facilitative relationships in exchange for a more remote form of tuition based on critique. In addition, the type of art promoted at school was considered outdated as they moved towards more contemporary modes of practice. This period was deemed difficult because there was limited communication between secondary art teachers and senior pupils about expectations, and minimal contact between art teachers and higher education tutors. Possible recommendations would involve art teachers integrating additional measures to ensure a smoother transition; and increased collaboration between these two sets of educators. This would be particularly advantageous in relation to finding some common ground between school qualifications and portfolio courses; it was reported that students keen to gain entry to art school struggle to fulfill obligations to both courses within the year.

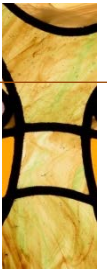
The next significant stage in the formation of an art teacher's identity is the PGCE course. This is where the transition from artist to teacher is initially encountered. Several participants claimed that there was little time to become acquainted with many important aspects of becoming a teacher. It was also noted that the complex relationship between previous educational knowledge and future understandings of being a teacher (Prentice, 2007) was often ignored. Some participants struggled at this time with personal and professional values, a lack of time and energy to pursue their own creative practice, and their changing identity. In addition, there were issues to do with the practical concerns of teaching, including dealing with the management structure of schools, assessment systems and behaviour problems. Most current PGCE programmes give students a good grounding in the practical side of teaching, mainly because the course is heavily weighted in favour of field experience. However, there is minimum guidance on how teachers respond



to cultural, social and emotional changes. A useful proposition would include scheduling time for students to engage in reflective practice (Schön, 1983, 1991). This would include opportunities to consider how past histories inform current values and beliefs in relation to adopting new identities as teachers (Atkinson, 2003). This is also a viable platform to promote the concept of lifelong learning and the value of CPD to support personal and professional practice.

Once qualified, the participants reported that the transition to a full-time permanent post was rarely smooth. Most had to take temporary and supply positions at first and found it difficult and exhausting because of a lack of time to forge relationships and limited agency to create course content. As soon as they gained a position, the priority was to create a space conducive to making art. The teachers who had maintained their art practice spoke about creating a studio environment, both in physical and in social terms; in order to support a different, more creative culture (Hetland et al, 2007). Apart from physical concerns, such as layout and a ready supply of materials and resources they encouraged an open-door policy. This means that pupils are welcome to visit the art room beyond scheduled classes; to bring food, relax and chat whilst making art. It also means that the pedagogical approach is focused on contemporary constructivist theory (Millbrandt et al, 2004) where the pupil has more freedom to participate in their own constructions of knowledge within a particular context (Perkins, 1999); they are in control of their own learning in a shared space and the teacher is no longer in a position of being the sole expert or authority.

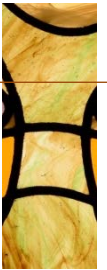
These factors contribute to the creation of a community of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2005) which encourages a more collaborative and experimental kind of learning. Many of the teachers who continued to practice art said they were more confident about demonstrating techniques and would bring artwork into the classroom to let pupils see that they were artist/ teachers, but also learners. This co-constructive approach to art teaching was viewed by many as most conducive to artistic learning in the secondary school setting. This study has shown that it is beneficial for art teachers to continue making art and recommendations would include the recognition of art practice as a relevant and worthwhile development activity.



The majority of participants did not engage with research. This position is concurrent with an overview of academic literature on the topic. Unfortunately, this attitude could mean failure to see connections between contemporary art practice and classroom activities, resulting in outdated approaches and course content. The small number of art teachers who did embrace research were ATS members and had found a balance that suited their lifestyles by merging research with art and teaching practices. Having increased knowledge of underlying theory also gave them more confidence to introduce contemporary content and practice. Courses such as the ATS can offer a structured framework, providing useful information on reading material and academic writing strategies, along with opportunities to interact with other people from similar professional backgrounds.

The discussion surrounding contemporary art and artists was generally positive and teachers could list names of living artists included in their teaching programmes. However, there was a general consensus that it was safer to adhere to traditional forms of art such as painting, printmaking and sculpture, and a general avoidance of conceptual art, performance art, events and video; again leading to a school curriculum that didn't reflect the contemporary art world. The way forward is to find opportunities for art teachers and school pupils to engage with contemporary practice, both theoretically and practically. It was also found that those who wanted to update their knowledge and understanding found that visiting artists and visits to art galleries was an ideal way to introduce new and different practices.

The idea of integrating personal and socio-cultural issues into teaching programmes was generally accepted, with the majority of teachers using pupils' lived experience as stimulus. It was acknowledged that senior pupils benefited most from this type of inquiry with some very good examples describing the use of reflective practice. However, issues emerged when the line between art practice and art therapy was crossed and it was agreed that integrating pupil-lived experience into programmes of study was generally advantageous; but boundaries were needed to prevent a crossover to therapeutic practice which required further training.



### Contribution to Wider Issues

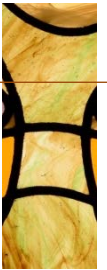
This study contributes to the literature relating to artist/teacher identities, teaching and learning in art education, and the continued profession development (CPD) of art teachers. The study focuses on practice-based learning for art teachers, demonstrating the significant relationship between the teachers' histories, art practices, beliefs and attitudes and how they model practice in the classroom. In other words, the study looks at how teachers bring their own ontological perspective to the act of teaching. All of this relates to secondary school education and whilst the study focuses specifically on art pedagogy, it has resonance for other subjects too.

The art teachers who took part in the study believed firmly that their artistic practice had a positive and beneficial effect on their teaching; however, they found that there was little recognition for this by schools. Schools in general are driven by the need to produce exam results; in art, this has led to a 'school orthodoxy', where pupils are encouraged to produce work that will achieve good grades; this does not necessarily relate to contemporary art practice, nor does it allow pupils much scope for self-expression.

This gives rise to wider questions about education policies relating to CPD. In the case of art teachers, this study indicates that there is a definite argument for their own art practice to be recognised as CPD. This would have wider implications, for example if teachers' own practice is recognised as CPD, it should then form part of performance management and pay progression. A study of policy documents confirms that there is little, if any recognition of the validity of practice-based learning as a form of CPD. Likewise, school policies do not specifically accommodate this form of CPD; school leaders tend to want to focus resources on areas which will give direct and measurable results.

In other arts-based subjects, it would follow that practice of their own art would also help teachers to perform better in the classroom. Therefore, the music teacher who takes part in a choir or orchestra should be allowed to count that as CPD; as should the drama or dance teacher who takes part in performances. This then leads to questions related to other subjects; for example, what about the PE teacher who plays a sport in their own time? Or the English teacher who reads? It





becomes apparent that there would need to be some sort of requirements laid down for the point at which practice becomes eligible to be counted as CPD. For example, in the case of the English teacher, it might be required that they lead a reading group; the PE teacher may be required to coach rather than simply participating.

In other curriculum areas, opportunities for teachers to develop as practitioners are fewer and less obvious; for example, few science teachers have access to a fully equipped laboratory in their own time. Should schools then provide science teachers with opportunities to carry out their own research using school facilities? It is possible for science teachers to carry out their own research by reading scientific journals and some teachers who have done this have reported that it has improved their classroom teaching; in particular by helping them to keep up to date with scientific developments.

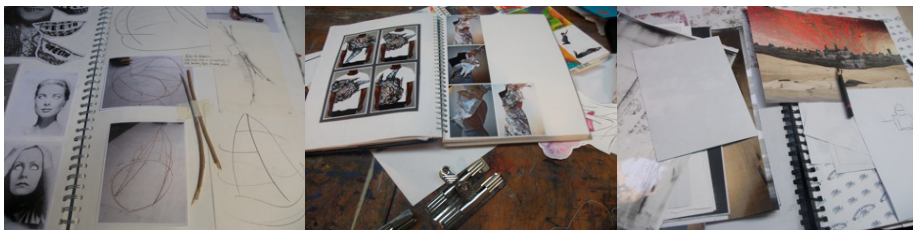
The members of the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) who took part in the study found that this helped them to update their own skills and knowledge and therefore represented a return to learning. This then improved their ability to model practice in the classroom. Courses such as the ATS are designed to encourage teachers at secondary level to return to their own practice; through the scheme they were enabled to make links between their own art, contemporary art, and art in schools. Teachers participating on the course were very positive about its benefits; therefore this is a good example of the type of CPD that policy makers should be looking at. In particular, policy makers should consider whether this scheme is applicable to other subjects such as music and drama.

What I experienced and what the participants revealed about the benefits of returning to practice art should also be true for music teachers who have stopped making music; for modern linguists who have stopped learning languages or visiting countries; for drama teachers who stop being part of drama groups. Hence, policy makers need to be aware that those teachers, who have any kind of active, creative practice, should be enabled to return to their practice through CPD opportunities. The justification of this is that they then bring this practice back into the classroom, so that the classroom becomes more porous to other experiences outside of it.



In terms of learning, this study shows clearly that artists tend towards constructivist and co-constructivist processes. Artists construct knowledge through assimilating and processing their own experiences (Piaget, 1974); they also learn through their interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). The study has shown that the constructivist learning process works particularly well in the art classroom; it is likely that constructivist, practice-based learning would have benefits for teachers of other subjects. It would be interesting in the future to find out whether practice-based learning for teachers might introduce a more constructivist element into those subjects where the teaching style tends to be more behaviourist, for example mathematics.

By developing themselves as artists, teachers participating in the study found that they were better enabled to help children develop their skills and self-expression; and to relate this to the work of other artists in the outside world. The implication is that in order to teach others to practice art, the teacher must themselves practice it. Therefore, schools should acknowledge that this is a valid form of professional development for art teachers; they should also recognise that time spent in their own practice is beneficial to teaching and learning, and should not simply be regarded as a hobby or recreational activity.





## APPENDICES





## APPENDIX A



University of Glasgow | College of  
Social Sciences

Ethics Committee for Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Postgraduate Research: NOTIFICATION OF ETHICS APPLICATION OUTCOME

Application Details

Application Type          Amendments to check    Application Number:  
**CSS20120218**

Applicant's Name          Pauline Patrick

**Project Title**    Into the Light: Modelling artistic practices in schools

Date application reviewed          05/12/2012

Application Outcome



Fully approved

Start Date of Approval    15 October 2012          End Date of Approval    01  
September 2015

If the applicant has been given approval subject to amendments this means they can proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval, however they should note the following applies to their application:



Approved Subject to Amendments without the need to submit  
amendments to the Supervisor



Approved Subject to Amendments made to the satisfaction of the  
applicant's Supervisor

Some amendments only need to be submitted to an applicant's supervisor. This will apply to essential items that an applicant must address prior to ethical



approval being granted, however as the associated research ethics risks are considered to be low, consequently the applicant's response need only be reviewed and cleared by the applicant's supervisor before the research can properly begin. If any application is processed under this outcome the Supervisor will need to inform the College Ethics Secretary that the application has been re-submitted (and include the final outcome).

☐ Approved Subject to Amendments made to the satisfaction of the College Ethics & Research Committee

The College Research Ethics Committee expects the applicant to act responsibly in addressing the recommended amendments.

A covering note (letter or email) must be provided highlighting how the major and minor recommendations have been addressed.

☐ Application is Not Approved at this time

Please note the comments below and provide further information where requested. The full application should then be sent to the College Office via e-mail to Terri.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk. You must include a covering letter to explain the changes you have made to the application.

☒ Amendments accepted. Application complete.

This section only applies to applicants whose original application was approved but required amendments.

### Application Comments

Major Recommendations (where applicable)

Not applicable.

Minor Recommendations (where applicable)

Not applicable.



If amendments have been recommended, please ensure that copies of amended documents are provided to the College Office for completion of your ethics file.

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~~~~~Reviewer Comments (other than specific  
recommendations)

None.

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Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics Secretary, in Room 104, Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF.

End of Notification.



## APPENDIX B



University of Glasgow | College of  
Social Sciences

### Plain Language Statement

#### 1. Study Title and Researcher Details

Into the light: Modelling artistic practices in schools.

University of Glasgow

School of Education

Pauline Patrick Email: paulinepatrick@btinternet.com

EdD

#### 2. Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others, if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

#### 3. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to consider if the teacher who continues making art is better placed to model artistic practices for pupils. Thus drawing pupils slowly into a deeper relationship and understanding of multiple forms of art.

#### 4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a member of the art teacher community.



5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not you want to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be invited to participate in an interview session of 40 minutes where you will be asked your views. In the interview you will be asked your views on art-based research and its impact on your teaching. Your answers will be recorded using an audio digital recorder.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research, will be kept strictly confidential.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

They will be written into a thesis which will be made available to you.

9. Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

N/A

10. Who has reviewed the study?

College of Social Studies Ethics Committee

11. Contact for Further Information

If participants have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project they can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer by contacting Dr Valentina Bold at [valentina.bold@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:valentina.bold@glasgow.ac.uk)





## APPENDIX C



Consent Form

Title of Project: Into the light: Modelling artistic practices in schools

Name of Researcher: Pauline Patrick

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I agree/do not agree (delete as applicable) to be interviewed on a one-to-one basis.
4. I agree/do not agree (delete as applicable) to interviews being audio-taped, copies of transcripts will be returned to participant for verification.
5. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.



|                     |       |           |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| _____               | _____ | _____     |
| Name of Participant | Date  | Signature |

|                 |       |           |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|
| Pauline Patrick |       |           |
| _____           | _____ | _____     |
| Researcher      | Date  | Signature |



## APPENDIX D

### Access to Settings

The first three councils I contacted yielded no returns. Development Officers had sent out emails requesting volunteers and there was no uptake. This was a worrying and stressful time. I became very concerned that the project would not go ahead due to a lack of participants. I was keen to contact departments directly but was told that this was not the usual procedure. There were now three councils left. Fortunately, a Director of Education in one of those councils had taken a personal interest in the study and wrote a letter of recommendation; this was a very valuable mode of introduction and led to several contacts. Finally, I had my first local authority on board. This authority has a population of 104,570 which means it lies in the mid-range of Scottish local authorities and covers an area of 77 square miles. It comprises a mixture of urban and rural areas and has ten secondary schools.

The other two remaining councils had research departments with designated protocols. This actually made things much easier and more straightforward. Within weeks of the applications approval was granted. 'Issues about access vary to a considerable extent with the kind of task you are carrying out and the nature of the organisation concerned' (Robson, 2011, p.400). These larger organisations were clearly used to dealing with requests for research-related access. Whereas, with other departments, there was no specific person delegated to deal with such requests and I was either put on hold or referred from pillar to post.

The second local authority to approve access has a population of 1,755,310, is described as a 'metropolitan city-region', and has 30 secondary schools. Along with a letter of approval from this authority came the advice to consult the art coordinator regarding possible volunteers for the project. This authority, because of its size, employs an art coordinator based in a contemporary arts venue on the South side of the city. As well as being responsible for advising the various art departments, he runs an extra-curricular programme for senior Art and Design pupils interested in applying to Art School.



The third authority to grant approval, with a population of just over 311,000 people is one of the largest and most diverse areas of Scotland. The council covers 180,000 hectares, stretching from a few miles from the centre of Scotland to close to the Scottish border and has 17 secondary schools. I received a letter from the Director of Education identifying specific schools that I had permission to contact.

‘Gatekeepers, or other powerful figures in the field, sometimes attempt to select interviewees for the ethnographer. This may be done in good faith to facilitate the research or it may be designed to control the findings’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.104).

This recommendation involved two participants and, being aware that I had retained the leeway to select the others, the data collected would not be controlled by either ‘gatekeepers or powerful figures’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In any case, these people were in a position to guide me towards certain settings that they considered would promote their educational values but they were not in a position to control the responses of the participants during the subsequent exchanges.

I now had access to schools in three councils and thought that this would be sufficient for my purposes. My next step was to make contact with the people who really mattered to the project; the volunteer participants.

I began by emailing all Headteachers in the first authority with a summary of the project, a brief description of my background and the letter of introduction from the Director of Education. Very quickly I had five willing volunteers. I then contacted each volunteer by phone or email and set up interview times and dates. Additionally, I requested that the interviews take place in their classrooms. I had chosen a natural setting because I was interested in ‘seeing them behave and act within their context’ (Creswell, 2011, p.45). I did not intend to watch them teach; having monitored students in my own department I knew that this created an unnatural situation. More importantly, I wanted to see where they worked and the type of work their pupils were producing. I was also hoping for permission to photograph their surroundings and a sample of pupil portfolios, if the participants agreed. This would yield a more holistic account of their practices.



I was now gaining confidence and contacted the art coordinator in the second authority. He readily agreed that I could come along and talk to him about the project and he would refer me to the various departments in his region.

The coordinator was very relaxed and enjoyed talking about art education. However, in the course of the morning, I became aware that there was a misunderstanding about the focus of our meeting. He proceeded to give a very good overview of his career to date, making some interesting and relevant points. Unfortunately, as agreed, I had come to discuss access to schools and therefore had not brought my digital recorder. On leaving, I continued to question this misunderstanding. On returning at a later date, I had the opportunity to observe him at work and it became clear that this person acted on instinct. At times he could be animated and gregarious, at others, taciturn and reflective. On the day of the original meeting he had opted for a spontaneous description of his career, regardless of the previously agreed agenda. This encounter taught me some valuable lessons: I had to be more flexible and better prepared for any eventuality. I also had to learn how to exert more control over these interactions. As noted by Denscombe (2010) 'there is a tacit agreement that the proceedings and the agenda for the discussion will be controlled by the researcher' (p.173). Eventually, I did manage to arrange another interview and this time I came fully prepared.

The introduction to this contact did prove valuable to the project in the long run. He supplied me with some useful contacts and introduced me to his fellow tutor who had recently completed an MA in gallery education. She was very supportive and understood the difficulties involved with recruiting participants for research. She agreed to an interview and suggested some other teachers who might be interested in taking part. This was a good example of snowball sampling 'often used in conjunction with qualitative research based on small-scale exploratory samples' (Denscombe, 2010, p.37).

In the third council, I contacted the Headteachers of the nominated schools; two replied, giving details of the art departments and relevant personnel. I emailed these teachers and we agreed times and dates for the interviews. In the meantime, a couple of teachers I had worked with in the past heard that I was carrying out research into art education and expressed an interest in taking part. Additionally, two of the participants from the trial study also volunteered. I could now identify

with Rosemary Deem, a researcher, who said ‘what has occurred has frequently been contingent, rarely linear, sometimes accidental and often serendipitous’ (1996: 6). At certain points in this process, I had doubted that I would ever get enough people on board voluntarily in order to proceed with the study; now I had a full cohort of twenty volunteers gathered through a mixture of serendipity, patience, diplomacy and boldness (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).





## APPENDIX E

### Participants and Observations

#### Sonia Delaunay

Sonia had been teaching for just over thirteen years, and had been a Principal Teacher (PT) for almost eight years and she found the job all-consuming. Sonia had initially trained in Printed Textiles at the G.S.A. She had then moved to London to do 'costume stuff for Channel Four', which was 'great when you are working', but otherwise difficult to make a living. Teaching had not been her original 'profession of choice', but on returning to Scotland, it offered security in the form of a steady income. She was enjoying her present position describing the school as 'brilliant, absolutely brilliant' and teaching the kids as 'a really good experience'. The interview was held in Sonia's art room, the walls were covered in senior students' artwork. There were wall displays with a wide variety of very competently executed drawings and paintings. It was clear that there was an emphasis on skills-based teaching and figurative art. There was also plentiful evidence of her specialist knowledge (textiles) in the form of ghostly mannequins dressed in students' fanciful costumes occupying every corner of the room. The windowsill was littered with their severed heads, wearing headdresses influenced by Star Wars and Cirque Du Soleil. I imagined pupils having fun here but perhaps, in such a high-performing school, that fun might be tinged with the need to succeed in the world of assessment and exams.

#### Georgia O'Keeffe

Georgia had specialised in painting at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and on leaving had rented a studio and 'tried to make a go of it'. Despite there being 'a certain demand' for her work, she 'gave up any great hopes of making a living or a comfortable living' after nine years and turned to teaching. I had taught beside Georgia for a year before she upped and moved across the world with her husband. She had three children overseas and said that 'life was definitely financially better and the teaching rewarding'. We had kept in touch by email, sporadically sending photographs of her growing family via the internet. She had now returned to the UK and when I sent out an invitation to become involved in



the project she had responded with interest. I interviewed Georgia in her 'practice room' where she still painted when possible, allowing for family commitments. Georgia was struggling to get a job at the time, she now had the time and the energy to paint but was clearly missing teaching and worrying about the financial implications.

### Rachel Whiteread

Rachel was teaching in a contemporary art gallery setting. Her roles involved creating educational programmes for school children, tutoring on a portfolio course and teaching at a summer school. She had specialised in Time-based Art and had recently completed her Masters in Contemporary Gallery Education. She was employed at the studio to use her technological skills to assist portfolio students with digital projects. She agreed to meet me in the studio and, following the interview, gave me a tour. I was introduced to the students and given permission to photograph their artwork. She was a very bright, confident character who proved to be a helpful contact, opening doors for me that had previously been closed. Being relatively young, with a research background, digital skills and a good knowledge of contemporary practice, she complemented the senior tutor perfectly. He had specialised in painting and had taught art for over 30 years.

### Andy Warhol

Andy was interested in participating, he is an active painter and felt strongly that art teachers should be encouraged to continue to be involved in personal projects. We agreed to meet in his flat, the interview to be carried out in his studio. I was immediately struck by the strong contrast between his living accommodation, which was an uninspiring, pared down environment, and his studio at the rear of the flat. Here the walls were covered in postcards, photographs and magazine cut-outs. There was a large easel in the centre with a painting half finished and a palette covered in globules of brightly coloured oil paint. Jars of various sizes and shapes overflowing with paintbrushes perched on the windowsill. A covering of newspapers strategically placed on the floor beneath the easel resembled one of Jackson Pollock's action paintings. Andy, in this space, became a different person to the one I knew as a school colleague: he was animated and excited as he talked about his life and his work.





He told me that he had drifted into Graphic Design on leaving school. It wasn't until several years later that he enrolled to study Drawing and Painting at Edinburgh College of Art. He hoped that this choice would give him a broader range of experience, advantageous for teaching. Following his teacher training, he had taught for a number of years at a centre for young men with social, emotional or behavioural problems. This had been a difficult and unsettling experience, he described it as a 'harrowing, brutal introduction to teaching'. He was happier now in his part-time post in a large mixed comprehensive: he enjoyed teaching and still had time to paint.

### **Judy Chicago**

Judy was working as a co-ordinator for a portfolio day course when I contacted her. She had visited the art department where I worked on several occasions to conduct portfolio surgeries with the senior students. Judy was clearing out her office during the course of the interview and eating a sandwich at the same time. The place was in chaos, strewn with cardboard boxes, students floated through the office, looking for advice on their current projects. Judy's appearance is striking, jet black hair cut in a chin length bob, she is adorned in chunky silver jewellery and always sports bright red lipstick. A vivacious character, her sense of humour is infectious, even when transcribing the interview days later, my husband enquired as to why I was laughing so loudly.

Judy had left Cheshire following her foundation year because 'it was culturally barren, really dull and boring' and headed to London where she attended the Slade School of Art to do Fine Art. This was 'a phenomenal experience'. On finishing her degree, she taught summer school at the Slade and took a variety of other jobs, some menial, to finance her continuing practice as an artist. During this time, she had worked as a fashion consultant with a well-known design house, an experience that made her yearn to return to study fashion. She had finally found her niche in her present position in the Continuing Education Department which required 'hands-on teaching and planning'.

### **Annie Leibovitz**

Annie was the Principal Teacher (PT) of a large comprehensive in a sprawling suburban area. Annie was very approachable and most accommodating. She came



down to meet me in the foyer of the school on a busy school day, completely relaxed and with a huge smile. I could see that she would be the kind of nurturing, caring teacher that the kids would warm to. Annie had been accepted at art school from 6<sup>th</sup> year where she had specialised in Embroidered and Woven Textiles. From art school she had gone straight into teaching. She had been teaching in secondary schools for thirty-three years, twenty-five of those in her present position. She had never entirely escaped the educational system and yet she had lost none of her enthusiasm or drive. When asked if she still enjoyed teaching art, her answer was emphatic, 'Yes', she said, 'I've had such great experiences in art, I definitely love it'.

### **Rosa Bonheur**

I had taught beside Rosa in a teacher training college for three years. Depending on timetabling, we would bump into each other in the teaching studios occasionally. I thought she would make a good contribution to the project because she had such a wide experience in art education and educational research. She very generously agreed to be interviewed and we met in the art department at the university. Her first words were 'Don't you just love these old-fashioned art rooms, messy and full of light'. Rosa had a history of teaching in special education which she had enjoyed until the advent of a certificate programme had resulted in assessment procedures that she felt were not entirely child-centred. She had then completed an MPhil in Art, Design and Architecture, resulting in her involvement in a range of art-based research projects, often within an educational context. She was now working towards a PhD

### **Stanley Spencer**

Stanley was a PT in a prestigious secondary school in a middle-class suburb of Glasgow. He had been teaching in the same school for seventeen years. Stanley had responded to a circular from the Director of Education outlining the project aims and requesting volunteers. He had trained in sculpture at the Glasgow School of Art (G.S.A) and, on leaving, had spent a year in India working as an artist-in-residence at the Sanskrit Kendra, part of the university of Varanasi. Prior to teaching, Stanley worked for a while at the Glasgow Sculpture Studios in Maryhill and did some commercial work for bars and nightclubs, as well as exhibiting on a regular basis. Stanley was a committed teacher, his interest in the subject and in his young charges was evident. He was very open and honest throughout the



exchange. On completion of the interview he offered me a tour of the department and the opportunity to take photographs of pupils' artwork.

### **Joan Eardley**

Joan had been recommended by the Art and Design Co-ordinator in her authority. Initially she proved difficult to get a hold of but I was quite determined that, if agreeable, she would be interviewed. The co-ordinator had an excellent reputation in the field: if he was recommending this teacher then she would be a worthwhile candidate to interview. I eventually got in touch and she agreed to meet me early in the morning at her school. By her own admission she came from a working class background where her parents had tried to impede her progress to art school. Having determinedly overcome this initial obstacle, she had specialised in sculpture at the Glasgow School of Art, swiftly followed by a PGCE. She had worked in several secondary schools in Glasgow, mainly in areas of deprivation. This type of teaching suited her she said. She had been offered jobs in the private sector but had turned them down. She was now PT Art in a large inner city school. The interview was conducted in the art base, an area cluttered with still-life materials, resources, coffee-making paraphernalia and paperwork but perhaps the most telling insight was that the space was occupied by both teachers and senior pupils. It was clear from observation that this unusual arrangement had engendered an ethos of trust and a shared sense of the common goal to make art.

### **Damien Hirst**

Damien held a senior position in art and design. He had an excellent reputation as being very knowledgeable about the subject and had been teaching for well over thirty years. Despite being really busy, both in his position as co-ordinator and as tutor, he readily agreed to meet and discuss the project. Fast-talking, constantly in motion, energetic and expressive he was small and wiry, wearing a black jumper covered in holes and paint, skin-tight black jeans, and Doc Martin boots. He was good-humoured and eloquent, with a heavy East End accent, which belied his position. He studied painting and printmaking at art school where 'there was really nothing else at the time' and gravitated towards teaching because his art teacher had been a major influence on him. "I don't know where I would be if I hadn't gone there and met this teacher'. He started his career working in schools in 'tough'



areas of Glasgow. He was promoted to PT within a short period of time and was then appointed Development Officer when Higher Still came in.

### Henry Moore

Henry had readily agreed to take part in the project when approached by the Director of Education of his authority. His school was located in a small market town in a rural area two hour's drive from my own base. Farms were dotted throughout the countryside on the approach into the town. I drove past the grand, Victorian, sandstone building that had previously housed the school towards the newly-built model; all glass, steel and red brick. This style of school architecture had become quite familiar to me as the government continued its school building schemes across Scotland. The interview was conducted in the art room which looked out over the rolling fields. It was evident before I asked the first question that Henry had a love of three-dimensional form. His environment was littered with evidence of clay work and found objects used for making. He had specialised in sculpture at the GSA and then 'spent fifteen years as a professional artist' prior to entering the teaching profession. Previous employment consisted of a variety of interesting and unusual occupations ranging from 'art transportation around Europe' to creating sculptural forms for commercial enterprises. He had not severed these links and continued to work building scenery during his school holidays. He had been teaching for four years when I interviewed him and he still considered himself a 'rookie'.

### Suzanne Valadon

Suzanne teaches in a 'tough' school on the south side of the city. As I waited for her in the foyer it was break time and the throngs of adolescents surrounding me were shouting, swearing, swiping at each other and swapping mobile phones. Initially, on meeting Suzanne, I could sense a wariness in her attitude to me; she was unsure of my motives. In the middle of hanging Christmas decorations, she was clearly not happy about being disturbed. I tried to put her at ease by sharing stories of my teaching experiences and being empathetic about hers and she did warm up a bit but it was an unsettling experience. She was quite defensive of her position on various subjects throughout the encounter. Suzanne had trained at Camberwell in London in Fine Art. She had gone through a rough patch following art school, splitting from the father of her children who died shortly afterwards.



She had then drifted into teaching, special education at first, then teaching art, then PT until the department had become a faculty and she 'wasn't interested in becoming a faculty head' and had opted to go back to teaching art in a part-time capacity. She felt that being part-time was 'almost like being in a new job', and really enjoyed 'having the balance back' in her life.

### Gwen John

Gwen is PT Art in a secondary school in a suburb of Glasgow. She is relatively new to the position, having been there for a year when I interviewed her. Her previous employment included PT Enterprise, art teacher, and textile designer. The school was huge, both in size and in population, housing approximately 1800 pupils and it was quite overwhelming. The interview was conducted in the staff base where there was a lot of interruption from the other art teachers coming and going and the kettle boiling in the background. Gwen was quite nervous to begin with but relaxed as she warmed to the subject of teaching art. She had studied Textiles and Fashion Design at The Scottish College of Textiles in Galashiels. She stated that this had not been a particularly enjoyable experience for her and she had then decided to change to Duncan of Jordanstone School of Art at the end of the first year. After training, she had tried to 'go it alone for a year doing freelance work and sending it down to London'. This option was not financially viable and she admitted that she had been a 'bit young and naïve at that stage'. Following this, she chose to go into teaching and 'went from strength to strength'. It was clear from speaking to the other teachers and pupils in the department that Gwen was held in high regard; she was described as being dedicated to the job.

### Tamara de Lempicka

Tamara was working in the role of guidance teacher/art teacher. I had interviewed Tamara for an art teacher's position in my department and, due to her very strong communication skills and bright, bubbly personality, she became an invaluable member of staff. She had stayed with me for five years and then been promoted outwith the school to Assistant Principal Teacher of Art (APT). She had then taken a job as a Guidance PT and had just completed her Scottish Headteachers' Qualification (SHQ) in order to apply for Deputy Head Teacher (DHT). In her interview Tamara describes being 'taught the ropes' by me but in fact it could arguably be the other way round. She was without doubt one of the best art



teachers with which I ever had the pleasure to work; she had boundless energy, was strongly motivated and had an interest in the children in her care which went well beyond the call of duty. I was not in the least surprised when she opted for a combination of roles in both guidance and art. She now worked in a comprehensive secondary school in a Glasgow suburb but had been just as successful in schools in areas of deprivation.

### **Paula Rego**

Paula had left school after her GCSE year with the sole ambition of going to art school. She had then completed a two year foundation course at Carlisle Art College and then went to Derby University to do a degree in Applied Arts. She graduated in 2000 and moved to Dundee to do a printmaking course at Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA). This led to teaching work, both there and at the Glasgow Printmaking Studio, and eventually to a formal qualification in teaching. When I met Paula she was teaching in a school on the outskirts of a large Scottish city. She had just secured a permanent post after three years of supply and was 'loving it'. The interview was conducted in the staff base; it was a faculty situation and the location was lacking in any form of privacy. Paula was very nervous throughout the exchange and it was difficult to put her at ease. This situation was further hindered by the presence of the faculty head who, despite being very welcoming and friendly towards me, was intent on making her presence felt. At one point she elected to work at her computer in the base within earshot of the conversation, rendering Paula almost completely mute. This was understandable as a new recruit, aware of the fragility of her position, she was concerned that her responses might be wrongly perceived by her 'boss'. This situation continued for an hour; if we were alone Paula was talkative, when the faculty head appeared she clammed up, giving clearly rehearsed, monosyllabic answers. I was not granted access to art rooms or to portfolio work. The reason given was the exam schedule. This interview was perhaps the most awkward and unsuccessful due to the very controlled atmosphere and I regretted not agreeing to meet elsewhere.

### **Mary Cassatt**

Mary was a young mother on a temporary contract in a large, prestigious comprehensive in a city suburb. My youngest participant, she had been teaching for only three years, most of that time spent in supply and temporary contract



work. She believed that she was not getting the opportunity to really express herself as a teacher. As a temporary member of staff, she had little say in what she taught and how she taught it and these restrictions had been set by the expectations of the PT in most of the school placements she had been assigned to date. Despite this, Mary was enjoying her present placement and liked the staff and the pupils with whom she was working.

On leaving school, she had attended a portfolio course at North Glasgow College which had allowed her 'to experiment a wee bit more and be a bit freer' with her work. Then followed four years at the GSA, a general first year experiencing various disciplines, followed by three years specialising in jewellery design. On leaving art school she had worked part-time in a contemporary jeweller's shop, which helped fund her freelance commissions for family and friends. She then spent some time as a pupil support assistant in a school in an area of deprivation, an experience she described as a 'real eye-opener' but enjoyable because of the atmosphere in the school. She had 'really enjoyed being in and around the pupils'. She then attended Jordanhill Teacher Training College and gained her PGCE but there were not many jobs around and with a baby son, she was content to accept part-time, temporary contracts.



## APPENDIX F

**Table 2 – Responses to Question 2  
The Value of Continuing to Practice**

| Pseudonym        | Value of continuing to practice art  | Do they produce artwork at present?   | If not, why not?  |
|------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Tracey</b>    | 'I think it is really important.'  | Yes, paper cuts, layered to make objects or images.   |   |
| <b>Christine</b> | 'Methodologies generated during art projects' are useful in teaching.                                    | Visual mapping to music, development of brass band uniform, photographic collaboration.                   |   |
| <b>Frida</b>     | Important to her to keep her own personal, creative projects going but often related to schemes of work. | Yes and no would be the only reasonable response here. Personal projects only related to schemes of work. | Gives reason as 'I have very little time to make my own art'. |
| <b>Bridget</b>   | 'Invaluable in re-establishing artistic confidence and drive.'   | Yes, but no elaboration on that.  |   |
| <b>Andy</b>      | 'Very important but not always practical or possible.'   | Drawing and painting, mixed media collage. A mixture of abstract and realistic approaches.                |   |





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| <b>Georgia</b> | 'Invaluable to continue practice. How do we inspire if not inspired ourselves?'  | Painting in acrylics at present – in the past oils.   |  |
| <b>Tamara</b>  | Invaluable, but frustrated at present because pursuing other course of study.  | No, but has worked in the past in painting, printmaking and pastels. Figurative.  | Doing an additional qualification for management, teaching full-time, family commitments.                    |
| <b>Rachel</b>  | Yes, 'sometimes I think that you must be an artist to teach art'.  | No, Time-Based Digital Art  | Never has time to do her own artwork. If she does courses, they always end up being about the teaching.      |
| <b>Damien</b>  | 'Yes, how you could do that without being an artist first? I think that people who are passionate about it will always do better.' | 'I still do bits and pieces.' Does not say in what form but was a fairly successful painter in his early years of teaching. | 'I wanted to put as much as possible into education. I couldn't merely become a painter who just turned up.' |
| <b>Gwen</b>    | Does not say.  | Does a lot of skills-based courses, self-financed but they feed directly into teaching. Textiles.                           | 'I just do not have the time with the job. I don't work a 35 hour week, it's all consuming.'                 |



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| <b>Mary</b>    | I would like to do it, but I don't have time.   | No, jewellery designer.  | 'I don't have time, what with my baby, my hands are pretty full.'   |
| <b>Judy</b>    | 'I think it is absolutely paramount that you continue as a practitioner in some form or another.' | Yes, she is still making, but does not elaborate on the product. She did painting and mixed media at art school.   | 'I have a very small amount of time to work on my practice. I spend more time teaching than doing my practice.'   |
| <b>Rosa</b>    | Does not say, however, has had to give up teaching to rediscover her artistic identity.           | She did ceramics at art school but her practice now is to be found in her research which includes artwork.   | She considers that when she was teaching, that was her practice. She complains that people would ask why she was not 'maintaining a mythical art practice'. |
| <b>Suzanne</b> | 'Yes, and I bring it in to show the pupils.'  | She is a painter, uses acrylic paint. Has had a lot of success since she started painting in 2007. Is now part-time because she wanted to use part of the week to paint. Painter/Printmaker. |   |



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| <b>Annie</b> | 'I would reckon that it is absolutely vital that you dabble in your own work to some extent.' | She does 'some kind of artwork' – works in collage, mixed media. Makes cards and other artefacts for friends and family mostly. Embroidered and woven textiles. |   |
| <b>Joan</b>  | 'I think you've got to keep going, the minute you stop learning, give it up, give it up.'     | 'I don't often say I will do this purely for me. I used to make furniture and jewellery for Nancy Smillie and I never got the same buzz.' Sculptor              |   |
| <b>Sonia</b> | 'Well... I don't exhibit anywhere, I don't do substantial pieces of work.'                    | 'If I am going to do something at home it would be Fine Art pieces and it's purely for myself.' Textiles.   | 'I find the Principal Teacher's job [all consuming. There is] absolutely no way I could do the job and do something significant in the time left, you know, time is such a valuable commodity.' |



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| <b>Stanley</b> | 'I think it helps to continue making artwork.'   | 'I still exhibit, I still do art and occasionally sell it. I still do exhibitions.'<br>Sculptor working in mixed media. |  |
| <b>Henry</b>   | 'Yes to all really, I think it is really important that you try to keep your work going.'              | 'I do a lot of work for Scottish Opera when I am not here building their sets.'<br>Sculptor.                            |  |
| <b>Paula</b>   | 'Well I definitely do want to continue my own work. I think it helps that I continue to make artwork.' | Does a lot of courses and odd bits and pieces, is making a wooden clock at present. Degree in applied arts.             |  |



**Table 3 – Responses to Question 3  
Knowledge and Understanding of Research in  
Art Education.**

| Pseudonym        | Question 3 – Research in Art Education.  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Tracey</b>    | ‘As part of the ATS at the UWS, I’ve done a lot more reading than any other teachers I know, which has changed my perspective on how and what we should be teaching. Of course research in art and design education is relevant to our teaching, or it <i>should</i> be.’. Lines 1–5. ‘I recently presented a paper at the IJADE conference on the importance of re-evaluating drawing practices in Scottish schools....’ Lines 5–9. ‘A lot of the views I have would sit uncomfortably with other art teachers who have been working for a longer period of time than me.’ Lines 12–14. |
| <b>Christine</b> | ‘My awareness of practice-based research has grown out of my participation in NSEAD activities leading to my enrolment onto the ATS. Reflection on classroom pedagogies with reference to a range of theorists and current writings has allowed me to take stock of what actually is taking place in the art and design classroom.’ Lines 1–5.   |
| <b>Frida</b>     | ‘I take an interest in research in education and enjoy adopting reflective approach to my teaching. However, I am not aware of this scheme.’ Lines 1–2.  |



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| <b>Bridget</b> | <p>'Yes, I am enrolled in Year 3 of the ATS and have found it very worthwhile. Due to this I have read many articles and books related to recent research in art education and I do think they are relevant to my arts practice and teaching. Sometimes it is the content and ideas in the research and other times it is simply the fact that it causes me to think creatively and address issues I possibly had not considered before.' Lines 1–6.</p>   |
| <b>Andy</b>    | <p>'I am regretfully unaware of most of these except in the vaguest 'I think I've read it somewhere' sort of way. I feel that teacher in-service provision for Art and Design is abysmal. There are no courses available to us for professional development aside from the usual generic, dry, educational flavour of the month lectures on things like CfE, AiFL, etc, etc. I have never heard of the ATS.' Lines 1–5.</p>  |
| <b>Georgia</b> | <p>'Until recently I was unaware of current research issues in art education (shamefully). But I am becoming more aware now. Again, it is a time thing, if you don't have the time to look into what's going on in the research side of art education then you don't have the time. It is only because I am presently unemployed that I get the time to read the NSEAD magazine that comes every month or I go online.' Lines 1–6. 'Sometimes as educators we live in a bubble which usually exists around the current school we are working in.' Lines 7–8.</p> |



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| <b>Tamara</b> | ‘OK, I am aware of the ATS, but I am not hugely aware of practice-based research, although I imagine there is plenty being done particularly with the new curriculum. I think in schools you are possibly limited within the boundaries of your own CPD and unless you seek out a course of study or research yourself possibly you are less likely to be exposed to what is happening. I think there is probably a real argument for more sharing of practice within schools.’ Lines 10–17. ‘I think we tend to become very insular and you also share practice within your department but don’t necessarily see what other people are up to.’ Lines 18–20. |
| <b>Rachel</b> | ‘My Masters was called Art, Museums and Gallery Education. There are generic issues that surround all these areas, like interpretation, the politics of display, displaying different cultures, caring for art work. It was particularly looking at the contemporary art galleries, Baltic in Gateshead, MIMA in Middlesbrough, The Tate and Baltic.’ Lines 1–30 – all about her Masters’ programme.   |
| <b>Damien</b> | Very involved in the creation and development of teaching programmes in Scotland but no research interest stated.  |
| <b>Gwen</b>   | Stated that she did not wish to be asked the question because she had little knowledge or involvement with research in Art & Design education.   |
| <b>Mary</b>   | “I have to be honest and say no, I am not aware of research issues in education.’. Asks about the ATS and appears interested.  |



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| <b>Judy</b>    | <p>'A little, I kind of follow it, I can see what is going on. There is no question, it has to be visual and I didn't go to art school to write a paper, we live in a world where we experience visually. For me, I experience everything through what I see, aesthetics, that's fundamental to me. I'm not good at words or at least I don't think I'm very good with words.' Lines 1–5.</p>  |
| <b>Rosa</b>    | <p>'I know I have been pleasantly surprised at how much scope I've been given to explore the methodology of artistic practice in what is essentially a social sciences, quantitative, empirical piece of work. So visual methods, photography, filmmaking, they are all really established social sciences ways of approaching stuff, so I was able to say, this stuff exists but we don't pay attention to the maker, to the filmmaker, the photographer and the processes that they go through to create these images.' Lines 1–10. Good response based around her PhD study which links artmaking to writing.</p> |
| <b>Suzanne</b> | <p>I didn't ask this participant this question because it was a difficult enough interview at times, awkward and unsettled. The participant seemed unnerved by any questions that were outside her comfort zone or that she had a strong view about. The question on contemporary art was a prime example.</p>   |





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| <p><b>Annie</b></p> | <p>'To be fair the NSEAD is more focused down south but they're desperate to get more involved in Scotland. They always have been but because we've got the EIS up here and the other unions. Because they are a union and a professional body combined, there's been less of an interest up here but obviously, I get all these e-updates and being part of the qualifications team for the SQA you're abreast of what the developments are as regards the new qualifications.' Lines 1–10. 'By going to these meetings you're involved. You're hearing what is going on, you don't have much time to sit and read I've got to say. I'm hearing people say, the SQA, Oh, but teachers are not responding. I can sympathise, you know, my staff have got a bit of extra free time, but they are running about preparing classes....' Lines 11–26.</p> |
| <p><b>Joan</b></p>  | <p>'Sir Ken Robinson, I was reading a book, Elements, and I've never shouted and been so elated by a book at the same time, thinking absolutely, this guy is right... It was totally building morale. It was putting the fire back in you and plus he was so easy to listen to, the same as Dylan Williams.' Lines 1–26. 'I started looking at formative assessment and saying that's not new to us, look we've been doing this for years, don't be afraid of CfE. There you go, all these folk who are wonderful, saying exactly the same thing.' Lines 27–32. She links her reading of this research-based work to undertaking CfE and that is where the value lies.</p>  |



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| <b>Sonia</b>   | <p>She talks quite lengthily about her freelance work with Education Scotland. 'I saw work from the Visual Arts and work from one of the teachers at Holyrood and they were both very conceptual but for me that was very interesting because we have formulas, not formulas, but courses in place that work and are very successful and get good stuff. Looking at the work I reviewed for Education Scotland it was totally different, it was good. You have to look wide sometimes and see what else is going on in the other centres.' Lines 1–10. This is quite interesting because she has done some research work for the new teaching programmes in conjunction with Ed. Scotland and it has opened her eyes to other ways of working.</p>  |
| <b>Stanley</b> | <p>This response is very much based on CfE and the participant sees the work he is piloting in the initial stages of CfE as being a form of research.</p>   |
| <b>Henry</b>   | <p>'I don't know anything about it to tell you the truth. What do you mean by research?' The interviewer gives a brief outline of practice-based research in the social sciences and talks about the ATS. 'I would be interested in doing something like that but I think the problems I have got are that I am at a stage in my career where there are a lot of curriculum changes here just now, we're basically reinventing a new course. Personally I've got three young children and they are all at a crucial stage where they need input. My wife has also gone back to working full-time. So at this time, I wouldn't be able to take on board anything like that, maybe in the future.'</p> <p>Here the respondent gives various reasons as to why he is not engaging with research. Personal reasons, professional reasons, time etc.</p> |



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| <b>Paula</b> | 'Well, I am just thinking that, say, with the new curriculum that there are people on the internet who have done, developed units of work for National 5. But I've not read you know, like kind of papers that you have perhaps read.' |
|--------------|--|



**Table 4 – Responses to Question 4 Part 1**  
**Do You Include Contemporary Art/Artists in Your Taught Programmes?**

| Pseudonym | Do you include contemporary art?   | Who and why?  |
|-----------|--|---|
| Tracey    | Uses contemporary reference where possible 'particularly in the design courses' Lines 1–2. | No further information  |
| Christine | 'I have used contemporary art at all levels' Line 10.                                      | Hew Locke in Year 7; Shepherd Fairey in Year 9; Clifford Harper for exam courses Lines 10–11. 'I use a selection of artists to promote discussion in all year groups, students respond to a range of artists and craftspeople' Lines 12–13. Quote 'Contemporary artists really are the way in to creating a new place where real and relevant learning takes place.' Lines 20–21. |



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| <b>Frida</b>   | Believes that it is 'essential that students have an understanding of a range of artists and I try to expose my students to contemporary artists.' Lines 1–2. | 'I have found that students can, at first, be slightly mystified by some controversial artists, like Tracey Emin or other Young British Artists (YBAs) and it often challenges their understanding of what art is.' Lines 2–5. 'I find that they often find the underlying issues very interesting and can relate to the narratives more easily than in some traditional examples.' Lines 5–8. |
| <b>Bridget</b> | Uses a range of contemporary artists. Line 1.   | Uses contemporary artists as lesson stimuli or as a basis for a mini-topic. Lines 1–2. Uses Peter Howson because he is Scottish which is relevant to her pupils and because the themes he explores are linked to West of Scotland life Lines 7–10.   |



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| <b>Andy</b>    | Would like to include more contemporary artists but it takes a lot more effort/time than turning to a standard resource such as Lives of The Great Artists Lines 3–5. | Includes Scottish artists David Mach, Barbara Rae and Avril Paton. He includes them in both practical and critical activity Lines 7–8. He likes to make students aware of certain issues in art such as the undervalued role of women artists especially considering the ratio of females in any school art dept/art college. Lines 24–26.  |
| <b>Georgia</b> | ‘I am keen to use contemporary artists in my programmes of study.’ Line 1.  | ‘I think it is important to introduce artists living and practicing to students.’ Lines 2–3. Uses Alexander Guy (her tutor at college) because his themes in painting particularly tied in with a topic of a scheme of work for BTEC year 10 and 11 classes, The Seven Deadly Sins Lines 3–9. Also studied him in Contextual References in Art & Design courses, looking at pastiches, the artist and his style of painting. Lines 12–14. |



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| <b>Tamara</b> | ‘Yes, we do in certain contexts.’ Line 1.   | ‘The contemporary work that we include in the curriculum tends to be selected because the kids relate to it, so we’ll get in designers and contemporary photographers to work with the kids.’ Lines 1–3. Andrew Ratcliffe – contemporary portrait painter – does demonstrations with colour mixing. Lines 6–16.   |
| <b>Rachel</b> | Is a contemporary, digital artist. Describes herself as ‘very digital and contemporary’ Lines 29–30. Masters degree in Contemporary Gallery Education. Lines 46–49. | ‘The artist who is on just now (in Tramway) is Richard Hughes, so it’s getting the pupils to talk about him, do practical activities in relation to his work, critical enquiry, discussion etc.’ Lines 68–79. GI Festival – contemporary performance art. Lines 84–89. ‘I have found that the kids are quite responsive to the exhibitions in Tramway’ Lines 83–84. ‘It is important that they discuss the work and that their opinions are listened to.’ Lines 99–114. |



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| <b>Damien</b> | <p>'You would pick up contemporary art potentially as a by-product and I would quite like it, but ... I never ... took the time to understand it as well as I should have done.' Lines 185–193. This suggests to me that he is not completely confident about either discussing contemporary art or teaching it, although, due to his position as Co-ordinator of Visual Arts, he has to.</p> | <p>'They are in a contemporary arts venue and they seem to take the work far more openly than <i>even I would</i>. (again qualifies his position on contemporary art). Even though the fact that I am supposed to be being open about it because I've got to understand it, deliver it and be positive about it.' Lines 240–244. We get them to look at travelling between two places, selecting a range of objects and talking about them, this leads to them gradually looking at a wide range of contemporary artists.' Lines 248–253.</p> |
| <b>Mary</b>   | <p>'We have been referring to people like Peter Howson in the critical side of things.' Line 2</p>  | <p>Contemporary artists in relation to critical activity Howson Lines 2–3.</p> <p>'I have used examples of people at the art school doing jewellery, people with workshops that are still working as jewellery designers.' Lines 8–10. Difficult due to temporary position.</p>   |





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| <b>Judy</b> | 'Yes, yes, yes.'  | 'I feel that it is about the here and now for them and they should be engaging with what they see around them.' Lines 8–9.   |
| <b>Rosa</b> | 'I have a love/hate relationship with the whole idea of conceptual art and artists.' Lines 1–2. | 'The golden time of Douglas Gordon, Turner Prize Winners, that whole crew were there and that department, Environmental Art, the movement of conceptual art from Glasgow, where context is king, was one of their mantras, it used to drive me nuts, because no one could draw.' Lines 3–9. 'That's how you made your artwork ... that's a very different way for me to think about being an artist.' Lines 10–12. |



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| <p><b>Suzanne</b></p> | <p>Uses contemporary artists, but is very opposed to conceptual work of any kind. Some really good quotes in this transcript regarding conceptual art and the public and her own opinions of it.</p> | <p>‘I suppose we are doing George Wylie birds, they would count ... they’ve been making George Wylie folded boats, they are going on show in the Mitchell Library. They relate really, really well to that because he was in the shipyards and they’ve all got grannies and granddads who have been associated with shipyards.’ Lines 1–8. ‘They discussed Damien Hirst, but they don’t get it, it’s almost you know, what Pop Idol does to classically trained musicians, they feel that anyone can do it and it could be any old rubbish.’ Lines 10–20.</p> |
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| <b>Annie</b> | <p>'We definitely include contemporary, particularly in upper school.' Line 1</p>                                       | <p>Peter Howson, Adrian Wisnieski, Jenny Saville, Alison Watt lines 3–5. One of the sixth years is doing Africa as her theme because her dad is African and her mother is Scottish. She has been looking at Basquiat's work which is quite political and hard-edged.' Lines 29–31'. 'Banksy further down the school, he is making a lot of good political comment and it's a style of art that appeals to the kids.' Lines 32–34.</p> |
| <b>Joan</b>  | <p>'Absolutely, absolutely.' Line 1. 'We do go back and forth but contemporary is a big thing for us.' Lines 21–22.</p> | <p>'Simon Lawrie, Gerry Burns, Jennifer Anderson, Red Rag Gallery Website.' Lines 2–9. These artists and sites are mostly used for the critical study of art and design in the upper stages.</p>  |



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| <b>Sonia</b>   | <p>'Yes, yes, well currently.'</p> <p>Line 1</p>             | <p>'We are teaching costume design to third year and fourth year pupils.' Lines 6–7. Tricia Biggar, Star Wars designer, Colleen Atwood, Edward Scissorhands and Alice in Wonderland, Cirque Du Soleil lady, Issey Myake. Lines 39–50. Ian Clark – Contemporary Photographer. Lines 36–37. Ken Currie, John Byrne and Joan Eardley. Contemporary Scottish artists. Lines 17–19.</p> |
| <b>Stanley</b> | <p>'Yep, we use lots.' Line 1.</p>                           | <p>'Tom McKendrick, Damien Hirst, we use Andy Goldsworthy, Issey Myake, Alexander McQueen/Fashion, Peter Chang/Jewellery, Craig Mulholland, Kenny Hunter, Niki de Sant Phalle.' Lines 1–7.</p>   |
| <b>Henry</b>   | <p>'I try to deal with artists that they can relate to.'</p> | <p>Gives a very nice example of working with Paolozzi as an influence Lines 23–32. 'I mean they are looking at robots, so they look at his collages, it's very relevant and you are dealing with modern issues to do with technology and consumerism.' Lines 29–32.</p>  |



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| <p><b>Paula</b></p> | <p>'Yes, I mean... not conceptual art.' Line 1</p> | <p>'We are doing Timorous Beasties at the moment with fourth years. They are also studying contemporary Scottish painting We did Simon Lawrie, yes contemporary Scottish artists, but not conceptual stuff.' Lines 2–5. 'I think it is for all years to look at, yeah, I mean, now we're talking about it, it is something that I need to do. I need to bring more contemporary art in. I mean, I think I need to look at more contemporary artists and designers.' Lines 34–37.</p> |
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**Table 5 – Responses to Question 4 Part 2**  
**Do you include difficult subject matter?**

| Pseudonym | The inclusion of 'difficult' or 'challenging' subject matter in taught programmes  |
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| Tracey    | 'I don't particularly use 'difficult' subject matter because frankly the young people I work with wouldn't be mature enough to cope with it and the discipline in the school is so poor it would be a struggle to get the type of discussion and analysis, creative responses this type of work would elicit.' Lines 6–7. She believes that once the pupils in the school begin to trust her, she will be in a better position to introduce this type of work. Lines 7–10. |
| Christine | 'Regarding difficult subject matter, we should never underestimate students' understanding of the world in which they live. There is a level of safeguarding lower down the school, however, the range of information sources for students mean that they are increasingly aware of many issues that may affect them. We just didn't ask them before!' Lines 15–19.  |
| Frida     | 'I have found students to be slightly mystified by some controversial artists, like Tracey Emin or other YBAs and it often challenges their understanding of what art is. However, I have found that they find contemporary issues very interesting and can often relate to the narratives much more easily than in some traditional examples.' Lines 5–8.   |
| Bridget   | No information (NI)  |



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| <b>Andy</b>    | 'There is some art which may be deemed suitable for younger students in a Catholic school and I might run into trouble with the management if I were to ignore this fact. We certainly would have great difficulty working with artists such as the Chapman Brothers in a school like this and I would also think that some of that sort of subject matter is far too conceptual and difficult to explain to kids under 16.' Continues in this vein. Lines 10–22.  |
| <b>Georgia</b> | NI   |
| <b>Tamara</b>  | 'We do expect Advanced Higher kids to be out looking at contemporary artists and the kids who go to portfolio classes are exposed to it all the time, so we are expecting them to work independently and expecting them to develop their own tastes.' Lines 21–25.   |
| <b>Rachel</b>  | 'When we did our placement at the Baltic we were originally supposed to work with an artist called Jordan Baseman. Baltic had commissioned him to do new work, he is a video artist. The school signed up to take part. However, when we got a clip of his upcoming show there was a lot of stuff about sex and drugs, really heavy subject matter and our tutor said we can't use it.' Lines 297–328. She carried on to explain that because the school had not been previously warned about the subject matter it was a no go area. It was about getting permission. 'I think that at fifth and sixth year level with what they see on telly, this stuff isn't going to be shocking to them at all. They are already exposed to these things, you might as well put it in context.' Lines 335–338. |
| <b>Damien</b>  | NI   |
| <b>Gwen</b>    | NI   |
| <b>Mary</b>    | NI   |



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| <b>Judy</b>    | <p>'I feel it is about the here and now for them, they should be engaging with what they see around them and they see difficult subjects or whatever you want to call them on the news every day. I think they should see artists and designers, makers actually addressing those subjects, so we discuss it.'</p> <p>Lines 8–12. Gives a very good example 'Flesh is the Colour of My Penis' Lines 12–36.</p>  |
| <b>Rosa</b>    | NI  |
| <b>Suzanne</b> | <p>'I think they feel that contemporary art pulls in the tourists. You know, it's like Sideshow Bob, it's like the Tate Modern, the stuff they had up there, it's a pile of rubbish and it's just to get the tourists through the door have a giggle and point. You know, I wouldn't show it to the kids, we don't have enough time anyway.' Lines 50–53.</p>   |
| <b>Annie</b>   | <p>'As to the content of it, we have to be slightly careful, particularly being a Catholic school. There are certain areas where it is just not worth going down the line because you could get parents complaining. We used to do a lot of textiles lower down the school, we showed a film of Timorous Beasties, there was the Japanese Toile in the background with a slightly sexual content. We had a parent up screaming and bawling at the HT.' Lines 16–23. Lines 24–28 are also valid, as are 42–48.</p> |





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| <b>Joan</b>    | <p>'There's big problems here with difficult subject matter, it's a Catholic school, there are big problems. For example, a couple of years ago there was an exhibition in GOMA. It was about sexuality and we got an email saying that we weren't to go near and I thought, fair enough, it was only one part of the exhibition.' Lines 23–29. 'But I think with the upper school, you can't shut them away from this, I think they need ... this....some are struggling with their sexuality and I think it is wrong not to let them explore things or look at artist's work.' Lines 32–48. Good comments on life-drawing, need parental permission at this age to do life drawing with them. Lines 35–39.</p> |
| <b>Sonia</b>   | <p>'I was going to do the guy from Tron, he's our standby, because his illustrations are quite sexual.' Lines 49–50. 'We encourage the sixth year to have that freedom.' Lines 62–63.</p>  |
| <b>Stanley</b> | <p>'We do use political content, but sexual content, I would say no, I would avoid that but we do deal with issues that are often very personal. The sixth year course, for example, is directed by the sixth years, they tell me what they want to do and we try to facilitate that.' Lines 8–15. Later in the interview this participant then reverses this statement by saying that they use Chapman Bros and Jenny Saville and describes a project by a student that focuses on sexuality and identity.</p>  |



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| <b>Henry</b> | <p>'I mean these kids, first years even, are really switched on to practices that we wouldn't have talked about when we were first years because of the media influences now, we will talk about absinth... I don't go into any real depth with it, these things come up when you're talking about artists, it makes it more human.' Lines 7–21. Discusses a project based on equality that he is doing with the third year pupils. 'She has written round the cage words like: bent, gay, homosexual. They ask can we use offensive words? and I say yes you can for a project like this.' Lines 55–59. 'Great, you know, I think it's great that they get these issues, they understand them at an early age.' Lines 68–73.</p> |
| <b>Paula</b> | NI  |



**Table 6 – Question 5**

**Relating pupils' lived experiences to creative activities.**

| Pseudonym | Is it important to relate pupils' lived experiences to their creative activities in the classroom?   |
|-----------|--|
| Tracey    | 'The more you link their activities to their interests, the harder they work and this creates a higher level of engagement. They respond to you; did you make it clear that you are trying to respond to their ideas.' Lines 1–3   |
| Christine | 'In response to Shepherd Fairey (contemporary artist) students are encouraged to build their own research by collecting news stories that interest or concern them. This in effect shifts ownership to the student and they can plan their own learning.' Lines 2–5. Benefits include increased engagement, opportunities to discuss and share opinions on current issues and art making that becomes increasingly individualised.' Lines 6–8. |
| Frida     | 'Older students respond well to projects that allow them to explore personal issues and topics. It engages them in the work and encourages deeper development and better sustained investigations.' Lines 1–4. She qualifies this by saying that not all students want to engage with personal experience in their art work. Lines 4–7. Stronger relationships, platform to 'get to know' each other.  |
| Bridget   | 'Real context makes it more relevant to pupils and as such easier to incorporate into their understanding.' Lines 1–3. Breaks down the divide, lifelong process, not just transmitted facts.   |



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| <b>Andy</b>    | <p>'I encourage students to look close to home (particularly in the upper school). If doing portraits, self-portraits, not celebrities. If [we are] doing [the] natural or built environment – consider close to home, not faraway places like New York.' Lines 1–7.</p> <p>'This makes involvement more personal and inspiring, makes resourcing more personal and selective as opposed to images on the internet.' Lines 9–14.</p>  |
| <b>Georgia</b> | <p>'Using pupils' lived experiences can help to stimulate creativity, the outcomes can be possibly more expressive, but I don't think it is necessary.' Lines 6–7. Teachers, especially art teachers, have a more empathetic relationship with students. The relationship between art teacher and student is usually very close, it is built around a common goal or interest and that is producing the best possible artwork.' Lines 11–14.</p> <p>'Every art student is different, [and has] different demands, some are quite independent, some are reliant on their mentor's opinion.' Lines 16–19.</p> |
| <b>Tamara</b>  | <p>Portraiture with Higher, self-differentiates, opportunity for kids to relate it to their own experiences. 'We've had situations where the process has been almost less important than the emotional situation, the emotional journey that they have come through.' Lines 7–15. Description of the girl who had a brother who died young and how she used symbolism in her artwork Lines 17–31.</p>   |



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| <b>Rachel</b> | <p>'The exhibition that we have on downstairs (Richard Hughes) is about the loss of community or a vandalised environment. It looks at things that have been abandoned by people that used to have a use. A lot of the school groups that we've had in looking at artwork have been from areas of deprivation. They relate the things they see here to where they live, to the sort of issues that they experience within their local community.'</p> <p>Lines 317–329. Gives a very nice example Lines 334–343. 'As far as more credible artwork goes, you have to put yourself and your experiences and what is happening in the world into it.' Lines 341–343.</p> |
| <b>Damien</b> | <p>'It's fundamental to try and give them a real understanding of what is going on in the world. This appreciation of art and design, how can you do that without being an artist first?'</p> <p>'Page 4 over to page 5.</p>  |
| <b>Gwen</b>   | <p>'We look at the emotional health of Picasso who went through his different phases and Van Gogh as well, how that influenced his approach to art. So we would look at how people would get across their emotions through different ways of using media.' Lines 3–7.</p>   |
| <b>Mary</b>   | <p>Homework exercises 'View From Your window', 'The Area in Which You Live' They can bring in a found object from home' Lines 1–5. 'Using the art class almost like an art therapy session, yes, absolutely, I would encourage that.' Lines 6–7. 'I run an art club at lunchtime and I think that this really helps, you can sort of endear yourself a little bit, it's like at a very basic level showing an interest in the pupil. Showing a caring and nurturing side.' Lines 13–17.</p>   |



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| <b>Rosa</b>    | <p>‘That’s a tricky one, you are making assumptions about what they are, or possibly creating situations.’ Lines 1–4. ‘I caution against art teachers in the state sector or any form of education assuming a therapeutic role beyond the scope of what they could cope with and I think this comes from the Special Ed experience.’ Lines 14–16. ‘We are not trained psychologists, the art room and art experiences create spaces where people can open up but I think we need to know our boundaries, if we open up their box of monsters, can we support them afterwards?’ Lines 22–27.</p> |
| <b>Suzanne</b> | <p>‘They’ve all got their own themes that they choose and they have to have some sort of ownership of their work.’ Lines 1–3. ‘Bring in something precious to you, something that you couldn’t live without. One girl brought in a locket her granny had given her and then explored the theme of childhood through to adolescence.’ Lines 7–11.</p>  |
| <b>Annie</b>   | <p>‘They do a project based on taking one thing to a desert island. They can take their rosary beads, their iPad, their trainers or something. One boy, his grandpa had made him a fishing cage for river fishing. He drew that and talked about it.’ Lines 1–8. ‘Advanced Higher, one girl had anorexia last year so she went through a hard time, these life experiences have influenced her artwork.’ Lines 23–26.</p>   |
| <b>Sonia</b>   | <p>‘There’s a lot of sixth years get emotional when you are talking about anorexia, yeah, it comes up, I mean it is encouraged but you tend to get negative things and sometimes that is quite difficult for them to actually show in a visual way.’ Lines 5–8. ‘So it would depend, we would decide if that was a positive way forward or not, is it productive or not.’ Lines 7–10.</p>   |



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| <b>Stanley</b> | <p>'There has always been a philosophy here where kids get to direct their own work. They come up with the ideas and we help turn those ideas into pieces of art and design.' Lines 1–4.</p> <p>'There's a girl at the moment collecting loads and loads of train tickets and turning them into sculptures.' Lines 11–13.</p> <p>'With sixth year we give them the opportunity to delve into certain areas. We have had people who brought up sexuality in the sense that they have dealt with issues that have been related to homosexuality.' Lines 29–30. Example of girl looking at sexual identity – very good example Lines 31–45. Lots of really good stuff in this response. Too much to include here.</p> |
| <b>Henry</b>   | <p>'Well, everybody needs a voice, you can't just hand a package to somebody and say that's it, there's the answer, without the understanding.' Lines 1–3. 'They need to take it on board in their own terms, visually, morally, physically, they need to understand it.' Lines 4–7. 'I think in order for an education to have any worth it needs to be, to know where it has come from, it's not an easy ask.' Lines 15–17. Makes a good comparison between teaching in different types of schools. How you as the teacher are viewed.</p>   |
| <b>Paula</b>   | <p>'They do portraits, looking at their history and bringing in objects that are special to them. It's more looking at their background.' Lines 1–6.</p>   |

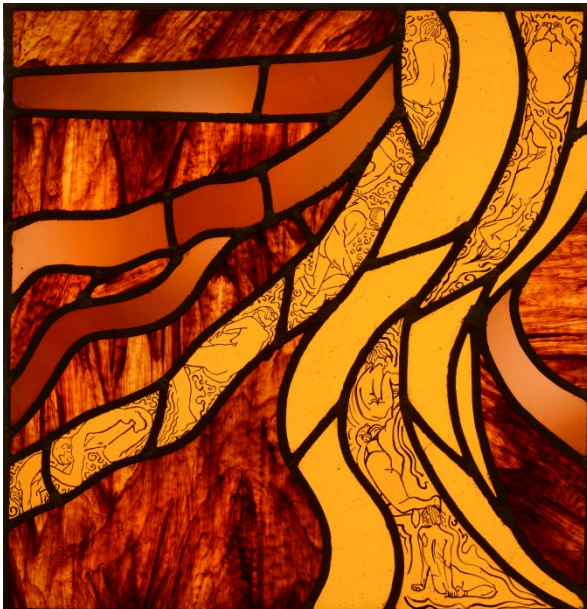


## APPENDIX G

The coloured images that index each chapter are taken from stained glass pieces that the author has produced recently. They are deliberately abstract but derive from figurative narratives.

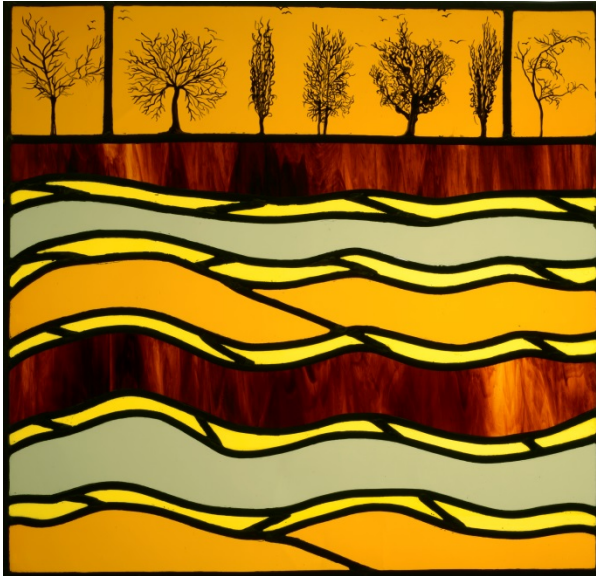


The Darkness



Roots



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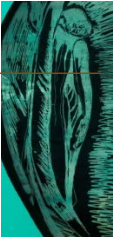
Tempus Fugit



The Fruits of Our Labour

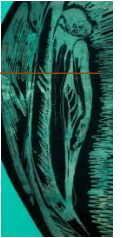
The sketchbook images used at the end of each chapter are students' work of interviewees for the thesis.

All parties have given permission for their work to be used.



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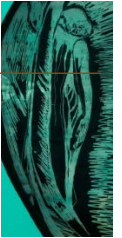
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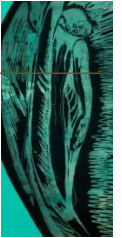
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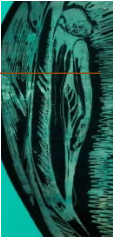
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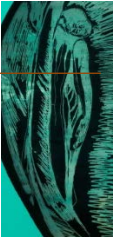


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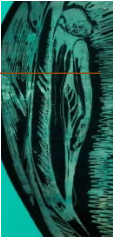


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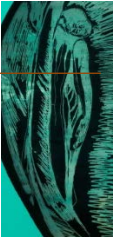
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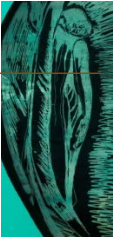
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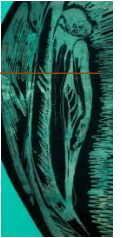
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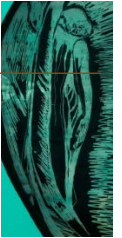
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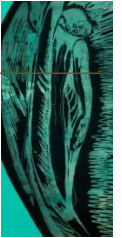
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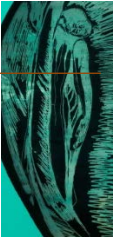
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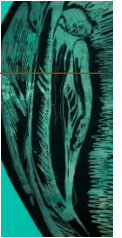
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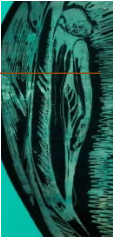
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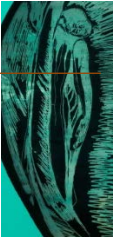
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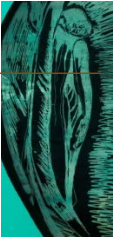
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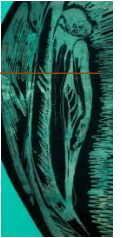
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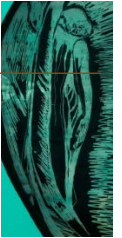
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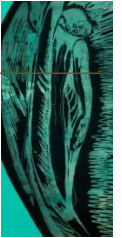
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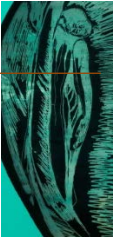
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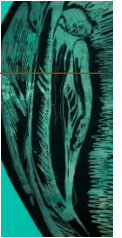
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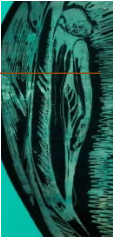
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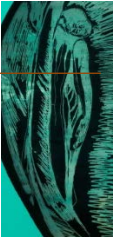
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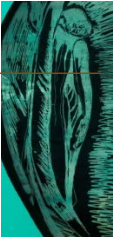
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