Transnational tomorrows today:

Graduate student futures and imaginaries for art education

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The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal promotes multi-disciplinary research in the Arts and Education and arose out of a recognised need for knowledge sharing in the field. The publication of diverse arts and cultural experiences within a multi-disciplinary context informs the development of future initiatives in this expanding field. There are many instances where the arts work successfully in collaboration with formerly non-traditional partners such as the sciences and health care, and this peer-reviewed journal aims to publish examples of excellence.

Valuable contributions from international researchers are providing evidence of the impact of the arts on individuals, groups and organisations across all sectors of society. The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is a clearing house of research which can be used to support advocacy processes; to improve practice; influence policy making, and benefit the integration of the arts in formal and non-formal educational systems across communities, regions and countries.

INTERLUDES

GLOBAL COLLABORATION THROUGH TIME AND PROCESS
A VIRTUAL EXHIBITION

AUTHORS

Nao Kameishi[1], Motoki Wada[1], Jackie Wexler[2], Natalie Pavlik[2], Sarah Pearson[2] and Sylvia R. Erlichman-Gross[2]

OUR CONCEPT STATEMENT

When thinking about how each of us engage with the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations through our everyday lives and practices as art educators, we found it helpful to define three themes or phases of our inquiry: First, the morning, where we experienced the input of information. The afternoon followed, where we engaged in the processing of said information. Lastly, the evening, where we produced something in relation to the first two phases mentioned. We set out to explore how these three phases may be interpreted differently by each of us through video, based on individual and shared interests, cultures, and environments. Throughout these processes, we discovered many rich similarities along the way as well as uncovered the value in each of our unique approaches.

KEYWORDS

walking; video art practice; time of day; SDGs #3, 4, 11, 12

We live in different places and speak different languages. However, we are all connected by our love of art, and more importantly, by the common language of 'art'. Empathetic feelings for each other, for artworks, landscapes, and nature, are not hindered by physical distance or time. (Kameishi 2021)

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Figure 1.
Pearson, S. Morning (Input). Capture of video, digital mixed media.
Dimension 16:9 (1920 x 1080 px). Duration 3:55. 2021.

OUR PROCESS OF MAKING TOGETHER

Through virtual conversations and the exchange of photos about our lives in Japan and Canada, a common theme of wellbeing and connection with nature emerged, which our team agreed was significant and aligned well with SDG #3, Good Health and Wellbeing (United Nations n.d. Goal 3) and #4, Quality Education (United Nations n.d. Goal 4). In response, our process of making together was informed by walking locally as a mode of inquiry that served as the action and method linking the six of us together globally. When we co-constructed our video series, we were further inspired by SDGs #11, Sustainable Cities and Communities (United Nations n.d. Goal 11) and #12, Responsible Consumption and Production (United Nations n.d. Goal 12), which propelled routines of walking, nature, and environmental sustainability to a higher level of awareness within our team.

In this series, we recognize the cyclical structure and flow of movement within our themes, practices and rendering of videos. For instance, the SDGs are present in each of our contributions to meetings and to the videos in finished form, and sustainability served as the inspiration for our collective

understandings and experiences as artists, researchers, and teachers. The decision to then collaborate in creation across multiple digital mediums while maintaining awareness of our natural surroundings emerged from our growing curiosity of the SDGs.

In relation to the SDGs, walking as pedagogic inquiry linked us with a/r/tography (Irwin 2013) and engaged our interests as educators and emerging researchers to further unpack relationships of time and process. For example, art appreciation and engaging with public art (Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art n.d.) exemplified how and why learning with empathy and sustainable art mediums and practices matters for the future. As art educators, we focused on documenting and participating in generative communication as an essential practice as it relates to accessibility. Walking with nature, attending to materials, writing reflectively, and creating digital photographs then acted as a window of insight into each other's worlds from a distance. This sensation of distance was further amplified during the pandemic, where across continents we instigated distance differently - with distance presenting itself in literal terms, as well as in the framework of 'the everyday', which required physical distancing in public while we came to know one another intimately in a virtual world.

Collaboration, language, exchange, and process led to an action of 'ripening'. Other mediums such as drawing, visual journaling, and natural materials are also included in each video. All our choices reflect a willingness to collaborate, and to explore a collective and personal connection with, in and through digital mediums (video works and digital photography, digital illustration, etc.). As a time-based medium, video complimented our group's collaborative process. We ultimately set out to explore the phases of creation as it unfolded through our daily lives, with different processes taking place at different times of the day. Video allowed us to utilize both auditory and visual processes to communicate the outcome of our inquiry, paralleling our primary means of connection throughout this collaborative endeavor via Zoom. This mode felt like a natural choice to convey the differences and similarities from each of our approaches/processes. This harkens back to how we made and discussed these connections as a collective through online collaboration to

begin with. Our personal arts and research interests as graduate students and individuals in the art world reflect how our encounters and beliefs about the emerging discourses of art education futures, global education, and sustainable pedagogy can work together.

And while we live in different places and speak different languages, we are all connected by our love of art, and more importantly, by the common language of 'art'. Empathetic feelings for each other, for artworks, for landscapes, and for nature, were ultimately not hindered by physical distance or time, but strengthened and shared.

Jackie Wexler

Figure 2.
Wexler, J. Evening (Output). Capture of video, digital mixed media.
Dimension 16:9 (1920 x 1080 pixels). Duration 2:50. 2021.

OUR VIDEO SCRIPT

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

When thinking about how each of us engage with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) through our everyday lives and practices as art educators, we found it helpful in defining three themes or phases of our inquiry. First, the morning, where we experience the input of information. Next, the afternoon, where we engage in the processing of said information and the evening where we produce something in relation to the first two phases mentioned.

We set out to explore how these three phases may be interpreted differently by each of us based on interests, culture, and environment, but we discovered many rich similarities along the way as well as uncovering the value in each of our unique approaches.

Figure 3.
Wada, M. Morning (Input). Capture of video, digital mixed media.
Dimension 16:9 (1920 x 1080 px). Duration 3:55. 2021.

FIRST VIDEO: MORNING (INPUT)

https://youtu.be/I5gipDkQk4I

We found that, for many of us engaging with nature, being outdoors and walking served as a rich starting point for input. This facilitates a connection to the third SDG, Health and Wellbeing as throughout the pandemic many have developed meaningful walking and other various outdoor practices to ensure good mental and physical health – breathing fresh air, engaging with nature, visiting public spaces, and collecting natural objects to facilitate connectivity and meaning-making. For many of us, the input phase also brought forth valuable interactions with public art whether that is conventional public art such as sculptures within the urban landscape, natural occurrences like the changing autumn colour palette or unconventional art, such as a garden.

This engagement with public spaces and public art is also tied into themes of the fourth SDG, Quality Education in terms of accessibility for all.

Figure 4.
Erlichman-Gross, S.R. Afternoon (Process). Capture of video, digital mixed media.
Dimension 16:9 (1920 x 1080 px). Duration 2:14. 2021.

SECOND VIDEO: AFTERNOON (PROCESS)

https://youtu.be/5ZxPHXzuXx8

The second stage, processing, provided a window into what the 'turning gears' of an artful brain looks like to us. We can see how each of us undertook processing the information gathered, the many questions which are brought forth and how the search for answers can manifest. Specifically, this involved personal reflections in relation to photo documentation, the collection and treatment of objects like leaves and flowers, and written or sketched investigations. For others this prompted more time spent outside, walking, or nurturing gardens, and even the need to connect with others and engage in unexpected conversation. Processing brings forth questions of historical context, social influences, environmental factors and impacts, as well as place-based considerations.

Figure 5.
Pavlik, N. Afternoon (Process). Capture of video, digital mixed media.
Dimension 16:9 (1920 x 1080 px). Duration 2:14. 2021.

THIRD VIDEO: EVENING (OUTPUT)

https://youtu.be/B8k3h7AFDdA

The third phase of our exploration highlights the most visible range of difference in our practices as artists, researchers and teachers. This final stage of output deals with responding. Responding to questions that arose, delving into the connections made, and jumping at the opportunity to produce. For many on our team, this was presented as visual production – drawing, painting, collaging, or digital manipulation. However, it also pushes the bounds of what is considered 'art' through the exploration of other artful practices like writing, storytelling, and even cooking. The individual productions that emerged all demonstrated a sense of peace, tranquility, and ease of mind, harkening back to the initial intent of this inquiry: to fostering good mental and physical health. Additionally, the ability for each member of this collective to engage with the work produced by one another throughout each phase provided a valuable glimpse into the lives led by those locally and internationally, as well as helping to foster global citizenship and empathy locally.

This is our vision statement of global collaboration of time and process.

Figure 6.
Kameishi, N. Evening (Output). Capture of video, digital mixed media.
Dimension 16:9 (1920 x 1080 pixels). Duration 2:50. 2021.

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