



Transnational tomorrows today:

Graduate student futures
and imaginaries for art education

Guest Editors:
Anita Sinner, Kazuyo Nakamura
and Elly Yazdanpanah

UNESCO OBSERVATORY
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY eJOURNAL IN THE ARTS

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ABOUT THE e-JOURNAL

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

THE GESTURE OF TIME

A VISUAL ESSAY

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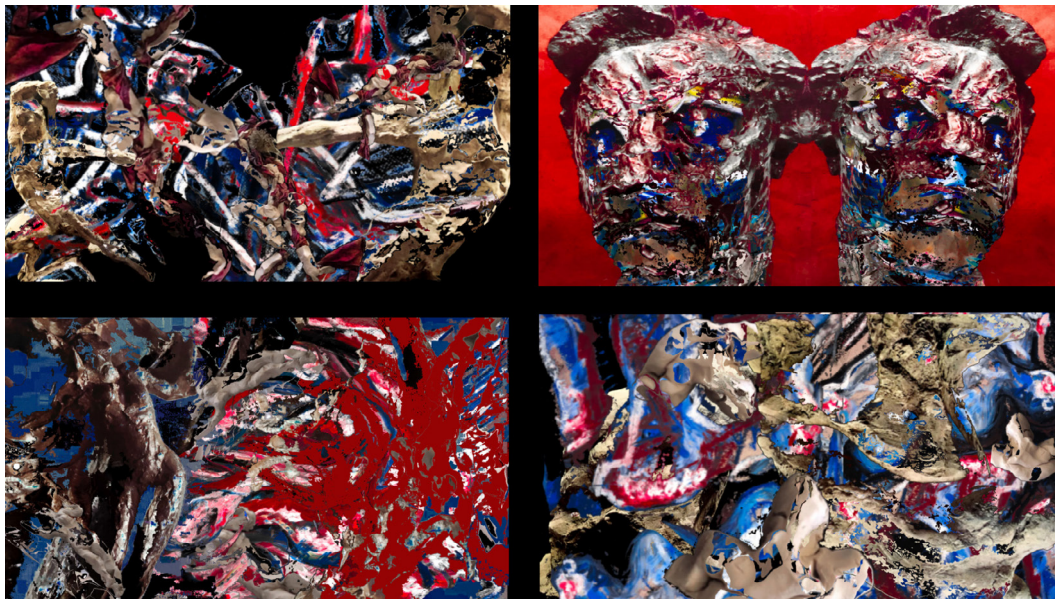


Figure 1.

Author, 2021, The gesture of time.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/676329186>

KEYWORDS

gestures; when; collage; process

THE GESTURE OF TIME.

DAY 1, INSPIRATION, INQUIRY, PLANNING.

As I began to think about how to share seven days of my experience as an art educator, I reflected on intriguing concepts that inform this inquiry. Specifically, the understanding of *artwork scholarship* as gestures, as well as embracing the experimental and experiential inquiry of *when*. These concepts were still quite abstract to me, yet they were already rooted within my identity as an artist, researcher and teacher. In response to this, over seven days, I have used my artistic practice to better understand theory.

I began my process by searching for inspiration in a pile of secondhand art history books. Within the exploration of the concept of *when*, I decided to begin with previously owned books that discuss the past, and explore how I could bring their contents into a state of being. I came across a book about Antoine Bourdelle, an important late 19th and early 20th century French sculptor and teacher (Bourdelle & Crispolti 1969). While flipping through photos of his work, I began to examine the intriguing concept of immortalizing these spectacularly gestural three-dimensional sculptures onto the 2D surface of paper. I linked this inquiry with the concepts of *artwork scholarship as gesture*, as well as a questioning of *when*. Gesture drawing and sculpting has always fascinated me, yet I had not pushed myself to explore these artistic skills, so the goal of this project became clear. I wanted to teach and encourage myself to create work that focused on materializing the gesture of Bourdelle's historic work, in the present moment. This led me to the central phrase that I explored through different avenues over these past seven days, *the gesture of time*.

DAYS 2-5, CREATING AND DOCUMENTING.

I created eight works in the following four days. I began to sculpt out of clay and discarded materials, gestural shapes inspired by the photographs that I selected from this book, and video recorded my creation process. While sculpting I encouraged my hands to perform the gesture I observed in each work. After completing this process for each piece, I moved on to drawing

the work with oil pastels, attempting to translate the tactile experience of the sculpture into the movement and tempo in my drawing. I aimed to materialize the gesture of Bourdelle's sculpture, pushing them to exist in the movement of the present moment. After filming these works each day, I edited them by cutting them apart and zooming in on moments of captivating marks and motions. When I began editing the videos, I realized I was watching the expression of my hands, and had the role of both the audience and the performer. I see this as a tangible representation of metacognition, and this degree of separation allowed me to analyze the gestural movement, flow, and tempo of my process. Through recording the making of these analogue artworks, I transposed them into the digital realm, and my process of creation was entrapped in a state of endless motion. Through this level of self-analysis, I began to conceptualize when and where *the gesture of time* resides.

DAY 6, REFLECTING.

On day six, I began to reflect on my multi-layered exploration of the *gesture of time*. I began to consolidate my inquiry by creating four digital collages, one for each day of making. I have deconstructed and layered the imagery from the pages of the book, my sculpted objects, and my drawings. By activating negative space within these images in the digital realm, I have added a new dimension with the intention of illustrating the concept of tempo and gesture. As they begin to shift, the porous layers are puzzled together through interactions and transformations. These layers of materials are a metaphor for the possibilities of connectivity in negative space, the potential of the *gesture of time*. These flowing works each come to a pause, a snapshot that I believe illustrates *the gesture of time* within each work. Within these compositions, tangled lines and intertwined reflections enlighten the alluring intricacy that can result from metacognition, which is a focus in my practice as an artist, researcher, and teacher. I imagine that these 2D images that examine the concept of when could be inserted into another book in another pile at another time.

DAY 7, PEDAGOGIC INSIGHTS.

On day seven I reflected on my creative inquiry and investigated the learning and pedagogy that took place over the span of this project. Through experimentation and play, I was able to explore the themes of *gesture*, as well as *time* on an aesthetic and conceptual level, connecting practice and theory. This includes the *gesture of time* within reimagining art history, the *gesture of time* within the sculpting process, the *gesture of time* within the drawing process, the *gesture of time* within transitioning from analogue to digital, the *gesture of time* within collage, and overarchingly, the *gesture of time* within sharing seven days as an art educator.

Exploring the concept of artwork scholarship as gestures, as well as embracing the experimental and experiential inquiry of when led me to a deeper understanding of ontology, the study of what is being, becoming, and existing, which was embodied by the concept of time. And epistemology, how knowledge is constructed, which was embodied by the concept of gesture. This creative opportunity led me to materialize theory and has illuminated additional areas of interest I would like to further investigate in my evolving practice as an artist, researcher and teacher.

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