

The Graduate School of Education  
at The University of Melbourne present

# UNESCO Observatory Multi-Disciplinary Journal in the Arts

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SPECIAL ISSUE

## A/r/tography and the Visual Arts

Volume 3 | Issue 1 | 2013

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Guest Editors

*Rita L. Irwin*

*Anita Sinner*

Editor

Associate Editor

Designer

*Lindy Joubert*

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## ABOUT THE E-JOURNAL

*The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is based within the Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne, Australia. The 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.*

ISSN 1835 - 2776

Published in Australia

Published by

The Graduate School of Education

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The University of Melbourne, Parkville,  
Victoria 3010.



# Special Issue: A/r/tography and the Arts

## Guest Editors

*Rita L. Irwin | Anita Sinner*

### THEME

To be engaged in the practice of a/r/tography means to inquire in the world through an ongoing process of art making in any art form and writing not separate or illustrative of each other but interconnected and woven through each other to create relational and/or enhanced meanings. A/r/tographical work are often rendered through the methodological concepts of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations and excess, which are enacted and presented/performed when a relational aesthetic inquiry condition is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text, and between and among the broadly conceived identities of artist/researcher/teacher. A/r/tography is inherently about self as artist/researcher/teacher yet it is also social when groups or communities of a/r/tographers come together to engage in shared inquiries, act as critical friends, articulate an evolution of research questions, and present their collective evocative/provocative works to others (see <http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/Artography/>).

This special issue of Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts invites original creative and scholarly inquiry that engages in critical debates and issues regarding a/r/tographical methodologies; are exemplars of critical approaches to a/r/tographical research; and/or extend the boundaries of inquiry-based research. Contributions are welcome from disciplines across the arts, humanities and social sciences and in a wide range of formats including articles, essays, and artistic interludes, which explore diverse forms of the arts from drama, dance, poetry, narrative, music, visual arts, digital media and more.

# Displacement: The mandala guides me home towards different ways of knowing

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores how an a/r/tographic journey can bring to light the complexities that surround displacement, and the physical relocation from a place of familiarity into the new. It is only by moving into different, unknown and sometimes uncomfortable spaces that we can come to know and live them differently. Displacement and its effects shape our perceptions of lived experiences, and it can affect our sense of belonging and identity. In this inquiry the circular form of the mandala is used, as a substitute, to search for the safety, stability and comfort that is often lost when relocating into the new. This process allows me to question my own creative relation to the world and my displaced reality. Through the use of the mandala I have come to understand what complicated tensions arise from the yearned-for safety in a home. The space between home and not home invites us to explore new ways of seeing, feeling and understanding the world. Both a/r/tography and displacement dwell in transitional and in-between spaces, however these spaces do not lead to definitive answers and solutions, instead they can become gateways to new possibilities.

## KEYWORDS

*displacement, home, mandala, in-between, relocation, space, belonging*



*“The art born as the echo of God’s laughter, created the fascinating imaginative realm where no one owns the truth and everyone has the right to be understood.” (Kundera 1987, p. 164).*

A/r/tography is a research methodology that contemplates the in-between spaces that disrupt dualisms, resulting in a movement and displacement of meaning (Irwin & Springgay 2008). David Beare (2009) believes a/r/tography arises from the questioning of unfamiliar spaces; it is a way to examine complexities and unpredictable connections, which in turn do not lead to definitive answers and solutions, but open up gateways to new possibilities. This never-ending inquiry process remains open to re-interpretation by understanding that the construction of knowledge is infinite, and that meaning is alive – always moving, always growing (Beare 2009). By emphasizing living enquiry a/r/tography resides in the intercorporeal space and attends to the forms and folds of living bodies (Irwin & Springgay 2008). The research process becomes an exchange that emerges from the intertwining of mind and body, self and other, and through interactions with the world (Irwin & Springgay 2008).

Displacement may not be a term that is prevalent in a/r/tography, however, it is crucial to the process whose aim is to intentionally unsettle perceptions and complicate understandings (Irwin & Springgay 2008). It is only by moving into different, unknown and sometimes uncomfortable spaces that we can come to know and live them differently. My inquiry explores displacement and its effects on our lived experiences of the world and how it can affect our sense of belonging and identity. I have turned to the circular form of the mandala to help with this process of questioning, as I try to find centeredness within the tensions that arise from being relocated within the new (Ahluwalia 2007). A few of the mandalas from my reflexive quest have been incorporated within this paper, they are in no chronological order, and can be viewed as small openings or windows into past, present and future of an unfolding process, echoing the excess that accompanies transitions and transformations.

For a minimally decent life in a minimally just world, an ideal safety – a home – that is not based on exclusion and oppression, and that is not a place of violence and abuse, is essential (Weir 2008). However, reality is not ideal and circumstances do not always make it possible to have that home. I therefore use the circular form of the mandala as a substitute to find the safety, stability and comfort that I have been yearning for in a home. My approach to the mandala may not be as spiritually inclined as the Buddhist understanding, yet I am intuitively drawn to it as a place of wholeness and healing. For Buddhist monks the process is seen as part of their meditation, a reflection of their own spiritual journey, they develop intricate designs with colored sand within the circle (Marshall 2003). Carl Jung's interpretation of the mandala draws deeply from the Buddhist tradition, as he understood the mandala as a symbol of individuation, and believed it was a way to access the psyche and lead the individual toward a peaceful center (Mayhan 2005). He believed that through the construction of a central point to which everything is related the circular image compensates the disorder of the psychic state, it inspires a kind of self-healing which does not spring from conscious reflection but from an instinctive impulse (Parker 2011).

The roundness of the mandala holds a simple purity in its shape, inviting the beholder into the center, without apprehensions of sinister intentions waiting behind edges and corners, to me it therefore seemed like a very safe place indeed. I feel that it is important to mention that I had a similar introduction to the mandala as some of the case studies that I have read, I did not seek it out, the mandala came to me. Unaware

of its use and the theory and therapy that surround it, my introduction with this method was a spontaneous and chance occurrence. It happened as I had just relocated from half way around the world and I felt the anxiety of having being displaced once again.

## DISPLACED

Displacement, particularly the physical relocation from one place to another can in itself be seen as an a/r/tographic experience. As the body moves into a new location, the mind and heart linger in liminal, in-between spaces, neither here nor there, longing for the familiar left behind and coming to terms with the sensory stimulus of the new. It is understood as a form of exile from older certitudes of meaning and selfhood, a possibly permanent sojourn in the wilderness (Krupnick 1983). This is the vast wilderness that I feel I am roaming, confronted with experiences that force me to take on different points of view as I am thrown into new cultures and environments. These are sometimes harsh transitions that create a fragmented world and identity. Derrida points out that taking leave of something forces us to consider its significance (Ahluwalia 2007), and it is usually in leaving and moving on that I try to grasp what I have abandoned.

I have moved around the world and been displaced more times than I would like to remember. Often these relocations were the last resort of desperation, not planned adventures, but a means of survival and preservation. My personal journey is marked by my current inability to return to my place of birth, as it has become too hard to survive in my South African reality that is dominated by violence both inside and outside my home. This has resulted in a certain urgency and intensity to ground myself in every new location, to imagine home through the windows of houses I pass by, and to dream of safety behind their front doors. Chow and Healey (2008) explain that place identity becomes most apparent when the bond between person and place is threatened. Moments of change or transition that result in a loss of place tend to provoke strong social and psychological responses, because it implies a loss of self (Chow & Healey 2008). Often I have contemplated my roots, as the third generation in a row having to re-immigrate I feel suspended in a space that is between a European heritage and an African reality. I carry the aftermath and burden of World War II, communism, and Apartheid. Born to Polish immigrants in South Africa that had faint ties to the local community, I forged a strong connection with the natural environment. I believed it was the warm earth that would recognize my shadow, and the wind that would know my name and whisper it back. Having lost this place and its song, I feel the lack of a distinct fatherland and mother tongue. On a symbolic level, the lack of a mother tongue is also the absence of a maternal dialogue and guide in life. Whereas the fatherland, that is not there, results in the absence of feeling a grounded and dependable support. Adrift on the turbulent waters of global change, I feel at the mercy of the currents of international politics. Krupnick (1983) reminds us that as long as there is reciprocal relocation between items, they will create an oscillation. "The ground slips beneath us: vertigo once more." (Krupnick 1983, p. 6). Homesickness becomes a permanent state for those cast out into this unstable reality.



Displacement, per se is not theoretically articulated by Derrida's writing; however, Krupnick (1983) understands that it is central to his de-centering mode of critique. A critique that Ahluwalia (2007) challenges is rooted in the tensions that reflect his colonial past and the tensions that arise from being relocated within a new culture. "Is the fate of Derrida, of belonging and not belonging in both French and Algerian culture, of occupying interstitial space, part of his own alterity which inevitably makes its way into his writings, relevant to understanding his work? Is it the sense of exile, of being on the margins that allows him to challenge Western theory?" (Ahluwalia 2007, p. 326).

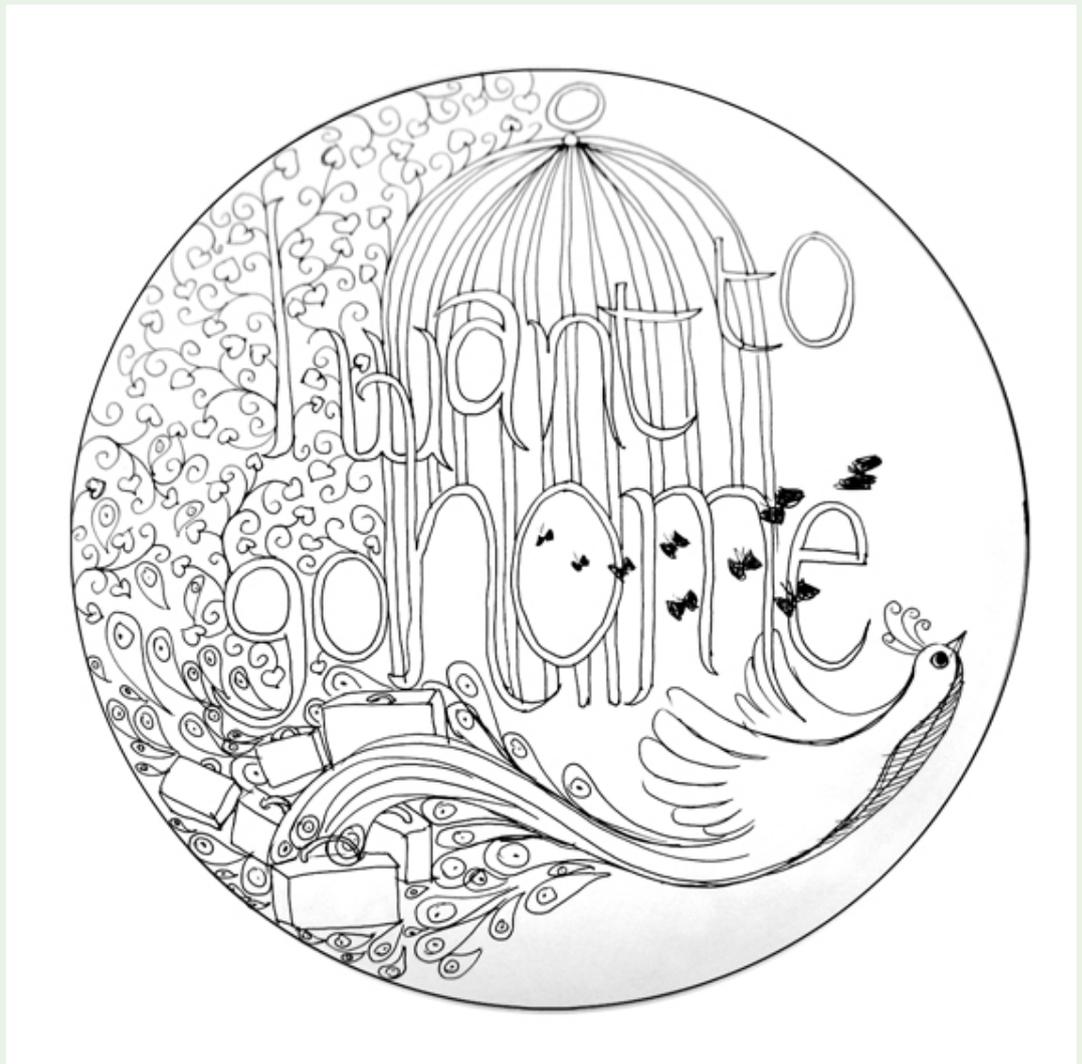
I find myself in a similar situation, having an identity that is fragmented, tattered and rootless. I define myself through multiple perspectives from the different physical localities I have lived in, while lacking a unified center, and in desperate search for an origin or defining point of reference. Ahluwalia (2007) considers whether Derrida's rejection of the origin and his concern with displacement as a constitutive reality was the result of his adoption of France where his "beginning" disappears into the present as he expressed an estrangement from his roots. He is inevitably caught between the two worlds of his Franco-Maghrebian genealogy (Ahluwalia 2007). My constant search of this elusive origin and sense of belonging, a simple rooted feeling, is in stark contrast to Derrida's perception of origin itself as the condition of displacement. According to Derrida there can be no beginning, we begin where

we are (Ahluwalia 2007). By constantly beginning anew I wonder what is lost and replaced, what is gained, and what sense of longing comes from always looking from the outside in?

## A LONGING FOR HOME

Perhaps the dwelling we call home could soothe my longing to belong. However, important questions are raised by the desire of wanting a home. What is home? Is home the place where you were born and raised, where your parents live or lived (Ben-Yoseph 2008)? Is home the place from where you were dislocated, or where you live now (Ben-Yoseph 2008)? What does it mean to long for home (Ben-Yoseph 2008)? Cresswell understands home as something we create and recreate every day, a sanctuary imbued with deep feeling and vested in emotion and memories (Chow & Healey 2008). Could it be possible to create and recreate this sanctuary in multiple locations? Surely this sanctuary would be founded on rituals that are born from a familiar environment, people and places. Is home a place we pause in, to remember the past and look to the future? Would one not make these pauses in a safe and familiar environment? Perhaps the answer is in Derrida's own sense of estrangement from his roots, this amnesia could be seen as a way of overcoming his own crisis of identity (Ahluwalia 2007). My personal crisis is marked by my desire to transplant remembered rituals into the new body of experience, but this precarious operation does not always revive the loss, and old rituals often have to be laid to rest. Constant displacement and the burial of old rituals becomes a ritual in itself along the journey of life towards home.

Home can mean so many things to so many people, yet the lack of one can create a universal feeling of displacement and dislocation. I believe that when Proshansky explains the concept of "home" as a key element in the development of people's sense of themselves, and the concept of belonging to a place, he had in mind not only the structure of our private dwellings (Chow & Healey 2008), but also a deep-seated familiarity with the environment and sensual surroundings. In relocating from one place to another it is usually the intangible elements that we miss the most. It is precisely the space and the relationship we had with it that is lost. Our sense of self that we developed from interacting with the environment, our intimate and sometimes unconscious understandings of the light, smells, tastes, sounds and the perception of our familiar space that leaves one feeling bare and alone in a foreign environment. "The meaning of home (literally and metaphorically) crystallizes through the journey away from (and the absence of) home itself" (Chow & Healey 2008, p. 364). Could this be interpreted as the further away you are from having a home, the closer you are to understanding what home is?



In Allison Weir's article "Home and identity: in memory of Iris Marion Young." She reflects on the feminist understanding of home, particularly as a metaphor for identity (Weir 2008). Drawing on Young's work, Weir (2008) argues for an alternative ideal of home, one that involves the risk of connection, relational identities, relational autonomy and connection to past and future. Weir (2008) contrasts Young's interpretation of home against feminist theorists such as Biddy Martin, Chandra Mohanty, Teresa de Lauretis and Bonnie Hoing, who believe that home is a site of repression, exclusion and the policing of borders. They argue that the normative values associated with the ideal home such as safety, individuation, privacy and preservation should be criticized or rejected (Weir 2008). Safety should be replaced with an openness to risk and danger, the ideal of individuation with an acceptance of a nonunified self, the ideal of privacy with a critique of the public-private split, and the ideal of preservation with an orientation toward the future and towards change (Weir 2008). On a theoretical level these ideas may carry merit, however from experience I have noticed that displacement often results in the absence of safety, individuation, privacy and preservation, and for extended periods of time can have the reverse effect, especially when it is forced onto the individual and does not come from the comfort of personal choice. As with any push, resistance arises and in these kinds of circumstances, with no respite and no end in sight from this displaced uncertainty, a panic and survival mode kicks in, where the greatest concern becomes that of shelter, safety and preservation, theoretical contemplation is lost

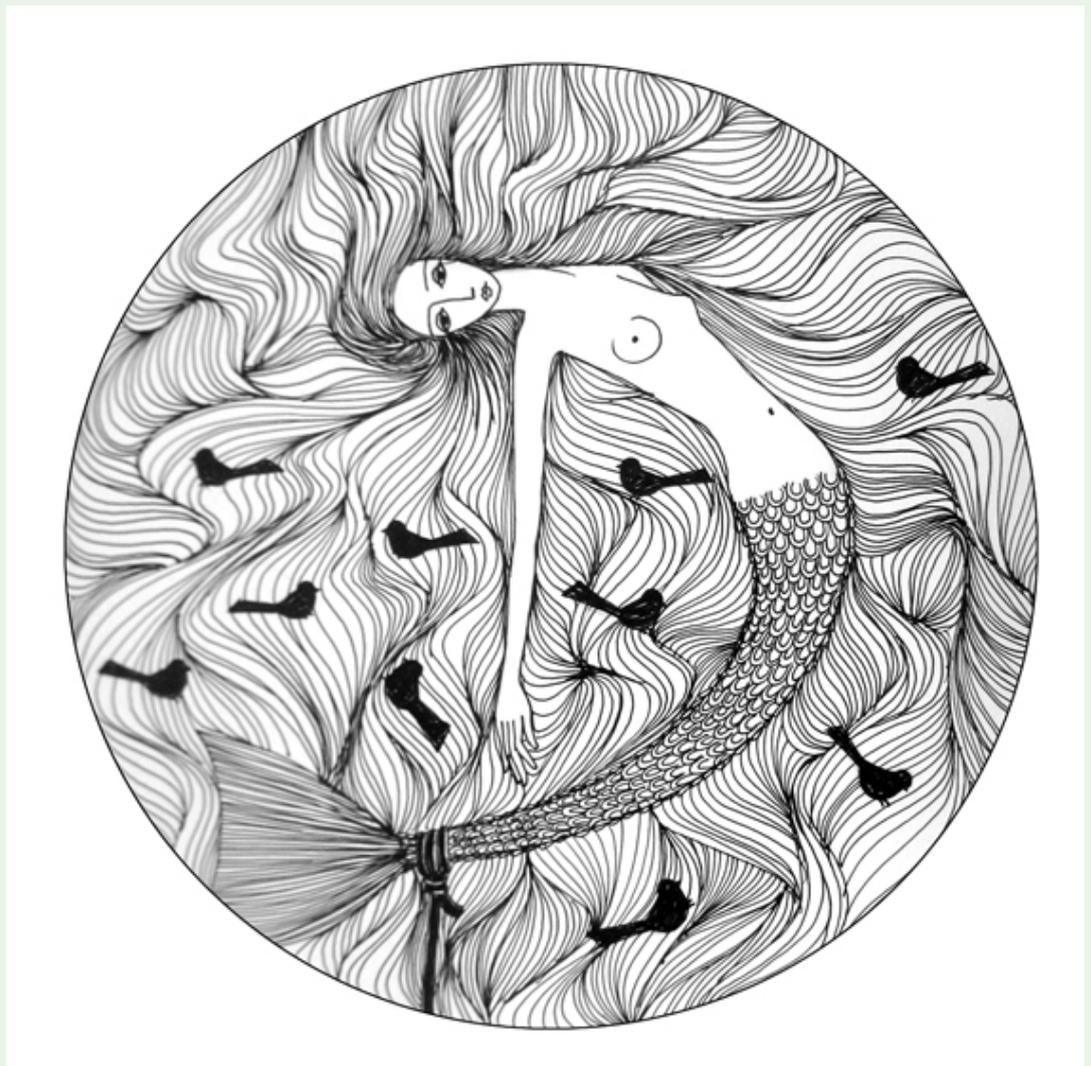
in this confusion. In a world where millions of people are homeless, refugees or immigrants, Weir (2008) views the argument that we ought to reject the safety of home and embrace risk and danger as an expression of privilege, “perhaps we could say, then, that the privileged need to question their cozy homes, while the oppressed need to have access to them.” (p. 8). bell hooks affirms how crucial the safety of home can be as a site of protection from and resistance to oppression (Weir 2008).



Teresa de Lauretis maintains that woman have never been at home, for home was never really home in the first place, and she urges us to embrace and affirm our displacement from home (Weir 2008). Martin and Mohanty support this thought and equate home with oppression and exclusion, as many are denied the normative value of safety within it (Weir 2008). From personal experience, I am familiar with the notion of how home can become a site of violence and abuse, governed by an assertion of right to dominate the other within the walls of our supposedly protective boundary (Weir 2008). However Weir (2008) makes an important point here by quoting Young who argues that, “while politics should not succumb to a longing for comfort and unity, the material values of home can nevertheless provide leverage for radical social critique” (p. 5). France became Derrida’s leverage for his philosophies, and in turn displacement became an indispensable term of the new post-structural theory (Krupnick 1983). Ahluwalia (2007) notes how Derrida, in his acceptance of

France, went so far as to make it a point that he is a monolingual individual for whom French is his only language, though not truly his own, he rejected any Arabic or Berber influence. Could this indicate that even Derrida saw the possibility of only ever having one home?

While Martin and Mohanty acknowledge the desire for home, they argue that the yearned-for safety is illusory, a protection that is bought at the price of the exclusion of others and built on their struggle (Weir 2008). Minnie Bruce Pratt finds the very desire for home, for comfort, safety, and protection suspect, she uncovers in each of her comfortable homes the layers upon layers of lies, fear, oppression, denial and resistance (Weir 2008). For Pratt to live a more truthful life, she realizes that she has to learn to live in a space that is less comfortable, less safe, but maybe less lonely: “I will try to be at the edge between my fear and outside, on the edge at my skin, listening, asking what new thing I will hear, will I see, will I let myself feel, beyond the fear” (Pratt as cited in Weir 2008, p. 6). Pratt’s courage is inspiring, and perhaps by being displaced into these uncomfortable and in-between spaces one can take on multiple points of view and life becomes less of a one-dimensional struggle. Is it possible though that this is the luxury of a calculated risk? Knowing that we may be sure that we will not fall over the edge, as it seems that beyond this edge the reverse effect is achieved.



Displacement and living a “life on the edge” (Weir 2008, p. 17) is a convenient discomfort when we know in the back of our minds we have something to fall back on. I would argue that true risk would bring forward a mode of fight or flight where we no longer have the capacity for reflection; instinct takes over as a means of survival. It seems that there is a delicate balance of courage and comfort at play here. Martin and Mohanty’s position becomes more complex when they argue for the acceptance of the irreconcilable tension between the search for a secure place from which to speak and act, but to remember the price at which that safety was bought and perhaps learn to live with the tension between home and not home (Weir 2008). Krupnick (1983) reminds us that the word is *déplacement* and not *dépassement*, by displacing ourselves we may move things about, but we should not be flattered into believing that we may pass beyond. Home is a controversial site, it can be seen as a safe sanctuary as well as an oppressive structure, yet if we were to find a balance within these tensions, and learn to navigate the in-between places, and embrace its many sides, we may well find a way to transcend and not merely rearrange the space. This alternative ideal will help us risk connection in our political lives, and will help us be more realistic about our expectations of home, and perhaps eventually we will move beyond the traditional narrative to recount a different story (Weir 2008).



## THE MANDALA

Carl Leggo (2010) believes that we cannot live without stories and wonders whether “a person who is story-poor really a person without a voice?” (p.10). If you don’t have a voice, who are you? Is “voicelessness” like an existence as opposed to living, a numbness of feeling no connection to the world and others? Leggo (2010) explains that we are awash with stories; they are all around us, but what happens when we are unable to release them, when words and language fail us? Do we become weighed down by the stories that collect within? As this weight accumulates do we lose lightheartedness as brightness becomes obscured by their mass? Elizabeth Ellsworth maintains that some knowing cannot be conveyed through language (Irwin & Springgay 2008). Her argument that there are some forms of knowing that escape the efforts of language (Irwin & Springgay 2008) supported my need to find my own form of expressing the confusion surrounding my perpetual displacement and a fragmented identity. I needed to ground myself in something that would give me safety and security, a leverage to tell my story. Instead of “lifewriting” (Leggo 2010, p. 68) I had chosen “lifedrawing”: I wanted to try and convey my story through illustration and drawing.

As an educator Young (2001) believes that drawing allows us to access our experiences without any kind of linguistic mediation. However, first I needed to find or recover my illustrative voice, something that I had lost a long time ago. As I struggled to recover this voice through the process of drawing the mandalas, I contemplated the reasons I had abandoned it in the first place. I believe the education I had received may have had a lot to do with it. Young (2001) points out that our schooling process has become standards-driven and accountability-focused; in such an educational system the Self is marginalized and sometimes lost. I was always a dedicated art student, and relatively early in my school career I realized that good marks were awarded to art works that replicated reality. A technical drawing or well-observed still life, where rules of perspective and shading were labored over, would be highly prized. I soon abandoned any daring fantasies and creative expressions for the satisfaction and guarantee of a high mark. I started to produce art that could get me ahead in the meritocratic race. Art was no longer a sanctuary; instead it had become a competitive sport, as it lost its power of transformation in the race to win in the school system. This syndrome continued into my tertiary education, until I found that I could no longer draw from the heart, but only from the head and from what the critical and analytical eye had observed. I acknowledge the value of learning the classical properties of drawing, but they should not come at the cost of spontaneous creativity. Gablik believes that we are losing our sense of the divine side of life, of the power of imagination, myth, dream and vision, (Young 2001). However as a culture we can recover from the rational bias of Western society that hypnotizes us, and Gablik urges us to dream forward and reclaim the power and importance of vision (Young 2001).



David Beare and George Belliveau (2008) explain that through the process of creation we affirm our existence, that we are not alone. “It makes me feel like I am part of something, part of humanity, part of the universe.” (Beare & Belliveau 2008 p. 142). As I started the process of creating my own mandalas I was not alone, however I did not enjoy the company I was with. I felt I had lost the ability to speak visually from the heart, and didn’t know how and where to start. The process was marked by many frustrated and failed attempts to let go of my fears and rationality. It was almost as though my hand was held back, restrained by the clasp of an overbearing authority reminding me of how it should be. I craved textbooks or any kind of reference. I needed just one quick look. I needed to know the “right way” to draw something. In desperation I decided to be less rigid in my approach, and initiated the drawing process by first using a pencil. Drawing in the initial ideas and then allowing the pen to guide me further, as I tried to feel at home within the circle. “McNiff encourages artists to trust the process, enter the unknown, stay in uncertainty long enough for something new to emerge, and remain in the difficulty or aporia space in order to find the way through.” (Kind 2008, p. 167).

Possibly I had stayed in the unknown long enough, or I had started to trust the process more, but my final attempts left me feeling more balanced and centered and I felt able to complete my first mandala. It also gave me the confidence to pursue further, and I started to look forward to the next time I could find myself in the

safety of the circle. Slowly this round shape was starting to become my sanctuary where I could lose myself in the meditation of repetitive lines and patterns. Kenneth Beittel understands the practice of art as a spiritual discipline offers a powerful antidote to an age of suffering from a loss of center (Bickel 2008). He believes that human consciousness is in need of a big shift away from the mental and egoistic, toward more spiritual ways of being and knowing (Bickel 2008). Beittel's words may mark our coming of age and can be seen as a counteraction against the alienation and fragmentation of the world we live in (Bickel 2008).

My own fragmented identity may not only be the result of multiple displacements and the necessity to anchor and re-anchor myself many times throughout life, but may also have developed from the loss of self felt by suppressing my creativity into a logical-positivist epistemology (Young 2001). The mandala experience has given me a glimpse into how tightly I hold onto my modernist foundations, becoming my only source of dependency, I am reluctant to let go, and frightened of what Doll (1993) describes as "the collapse of stability, of the order we have known, of the values we hold dear." (p. 281). He goes on to explain that the collapse of the simple, linear, preset order does not lead to disruptive turbulence and lawlessness; instead it leads to a complexity, a chaotic order, that is also pervasive in nature (Doll 1993). "Indeterminacy, nonlinearity, and randomness seem to be woven into the fabric of the universe" (Doll 1993, p. 282). Grosz (2008) takes this one step further, stating that art is of the animal. "It comes, not from reason, recognition, intelligence, not from a uniquely human sensibility, or from any of man's higher accomplishments, but from something excessive, unpredictable." (p. 63). This is in stark contrast to the crowning achievements of Western civilization and the positivist sciences, including physics, chemistry, economics and psychology (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Any opposition to them is seen as an attack on reason and truth (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Sadly, too often we lose our sense of identity, if not all of ourselves, by adhering to their rigid structures.

Palmer believes that we teach who we are, but clearly we may not always be aware of who we are and what implications it will have on a future generation of students (Young 2001). Through this living inquiry, I have come to know the complexities and contradictions within myself, and as McNiff prescribes I have become more interested in acknowledging and feeling the contradiction rather than in fixing it (Young 2001). Through this reflexive journey, I have come to see more than just my art and drawing differently, I have come to know myself in a new way.

There are many ways to interpret the mandala. To some the initial use of pencil may indicate my insecurity and lack of trust in the process and myself. I also never made a conscious decision to reject color; it may be that at this time I do not feel color in my life. However I feel that adhering to definite "rules" of working within a mandala defeats the purpose of the transformation toward individuation and self-realization. As I reflect back on my mandalas I am struck by their somewhat dreamlike quality. Perhaps they represent the fantastical place that I am already at home in. For do we not all inhabit a place of possibilities that our imaginations will redirect us to, if we will only listen? This creative place can be used as an antidote to the harsh "realness" of our struggles. Displacement can often be a rough and isolating experience and my writing about home carries a critical quality to it, which makes me wonder why in the face of such stark contemplation the mandalas have remained soft and whimsical.

Perhaps the home I am making is reflected in the mandala, a light and gentle place. As with a/r/tography, I believe that my inquiry process within the mandala is not complete, but rather, it is the beginning of an exploration into new ways of seeing and developing soulful art, if not from “God’s laughter” (Kundera 1988, p. 164), then maybe at least from my own creative laughter, so that art may again become a transformative force in my life.



The circle has no end, and it may be seen as a symbol of recursion. Doll (1993) explains that recursion “refers to the act of a mind or self ‘looping back,’ ‘turning round’ or reflecting on itself, and in this way actually creating itself as a conscious self – the highest expression of human awareness.” (p. 289). By working through the mandala, I have found comfort in the knowledge that there are other ways of being and finding a place of safety and security when home is not present. In 1994 Bammer wrote that displacement is one of the most formative experiences of our century. Smith (2006) argues that even in Canada, the number of children in schools who have experienced the displacement and trauma of war, malnutrition, and family disruption is increasing. Amidst the dissemination that unsettles everything, the one certitude you can count on and the only thing we may be certain of and remains constant is displacement, “we might say that ‘displacement’ sums up the spirit of the present age.” (Krupnick 1983, p. 4). Like Derrida, I feel that I have partaken in a

kind of “philosophical therapy” (Ahluwalia 2007), however in Derrida’s writings the message was to convey that there is no cure. Whether there is a cure or not, we all need a refuge in which to heal and from which to tell our stories. Don Domanski believes that we cannot grasp the world nor put it into order, we can only experience it (Leggo 2011). The mandala and a/r/tography have helped me find new ways being and knowing my experiences.

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