Through the fence: Painting, walking, and drawing at the intersection of nature and humanity

by

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Abstract

With this paper, I document a year-long art-based research project that explored walking, drawing, and painting. Using enabling constraints made from my methods and environments, I explore how painting could enact effects on me and the way I see the world. I use Barbara Bolt's perfomativity as a lens through which to examine my work, in the form of questions. I explain what significance the subject matter of my paintings came to have. Through narrative, I describe the process of making the paintings as well as the effects they had on my practice. Finally, I answer the questions posed at the beginning, and look to the future of my teaching, painting, and learning.

Keywords: art education, performativity, enabling constraints, painting, art-based research

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to Geoff, who listened to me talk about fences for two years;

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Alison, for encouraging me to go bigger.

Chain/link

I had recently moved away from Victoria and was back for a visit. It was hot, and I was waiting for my partner to finish with some errands. There was no shade, and the sun was high. I was impatient to get moving and feeling sweaty and tired. I turned around to look at the empty lot we were standing beside. It had probably been empty for a long time, as there were plants everywhere: mostly grasses, with sweetpeas crawling up everything. They were in bloom, pink and purple everywhere. The lot was enclosed by a chain link fence. At one point there would have been a building here, but the land had been left to decay. I smelled the hot grass, the flowers, dry and sweet. I observed the vines growing up and into the fence, searching upwards. I was a little less impatient, a little less bored, although still hot and thirsty. I took some pictures and enjoyed what I could see. The lot was unkempt, ignored, wild. It made me wonder what had been there before, and if there were plans for its future. It was in an in-between state, and there was no active intervention.

I rattled my hands along the fence and heard it resonate. It reminded me of being a kid, waiting for the school bus, waiting for school to be over for the year. It was loud, disruptive in the relative silence. I walked back and forth rattling the fence. I was sad about having left Victoria. I loved being in the city, and seeing where nature encroached on what people had claimed. But I enjoyed the time I had here while I could and paid a bit more attention to the grasses growing up through the cracks, the fireweed finding spots of dirt underneath a fence.

This was a moment that stayed with me. It is a mundane moment that does not have much significance on its own, and I assumed it was simply the aesthetic experience of the sweetpea flowers combined with my longing to stay in the city that made it stick in my mind. But I have come to realise it was more than that. I was interested in how the plants behind the fence defied

the usual ordering of things, where they should be confined to their place behind the fence, waiting to be acted on (Edensor, 2005). As the empty lot was left to become a ruin it also became full of potential. I tried to paint it, draw it, each time trying a new method, but each time failing to fully realise the effect I was trying to create. The colours were too dark and I had trouble recreating the hot summer light. The overlapping pieces were confusing and I kept giving up. I left it alone for a while.

While completing the last year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria and starting my teaching career, I had mostly set art aside to focus on work. When I moved to Squamish for a teaching job, I at first had no dedicated studio space or time. I was feeling stifled. When COVID-19 hit and we were attempting to teach from home, I suddenly had a house, normally full of family, to myself, and nothing but time. So, I started painting again, and it was like all this 'lost time' of not creating was coming out all at once. Eventually, with my rediscovered skills, dedication, and a move back to Victoria, I tried to paint the empty lot again. This time I started with a neon yellow tone on the panel, and I painted into that. I had created a new understanding that was built in and originated from practice (Bolt, 2006). Though I was not yet writing about my artwork, I spent time thinking about the failures preceding this new attempt, and that thought would eventually transfer into my theory. It was the two pieces together, my previous attempts and my thinking about them, that created new understandings of painting.

Having given my painting practise a chance to regrow I applied for the Masters in Art Education program, again at UVic. I took a class on art-based research, and developed a small project to think about my painting practice, and discover what in particular was so interesting to me about fences.

Figure 1.

Stangowitz, H. (2020). *Chainlink 1* [painting].

I developed a walking-drawing practice using enabling constraints where I would walk, draw, photograph, paint, and journal. I pushed against the constraints and moved where my paintings led me. I asked: how can deeply thinking about my practice help me to understand the place around me better, and how can I create constraints that will guide me while also letting me be free?

My walking created a space for me to be free, to think about how I interact with place, and to think about how the built and natural worlds intertwine and disconnect (Haley, 2021). I had started out blind contour drawing as I walked, but soon I moved away from what I saw and towards what I felt; my arm moved as I walked and the pencil crayon tracked that movement. As I walked quickly the lines were abrupt and angular. When I stopped at a crosswalk the lines became dense and concentrated. The environment had started to participate in the making (Watson, 2021). I used these lines to start new paintings where I would paint landscapes into them, from photos taken on other walks. Every new painting contained a fence. My walking had created a new way of thinking about the world (Haley, 2021).

When I first moved back to Victoria in 2021, I had a group of students in a mixed grade nine through twelve class. I decided to do a painting project I often do with the nines and tens in which they take a famous painting and recreate it with their own twist. One student has chosen Lawren Harris's 1930 painting *Mount Leroy*, to which she added little skiers coming down the hill. She was careful and dedicated, wanting to blend every smooth curve and replicate every colour Harris had made, in order to make her version able to fool the viewer from a distance. She told me she had not done much painting before. Her new technical skills in painting and her subtlety in the changes she made were appealing, and I admired her attitude around it. She had an intuition for the materials and was willing to try over and over to get the effect she wanted.

Even when frustrated she was immersed in the satisfaction of making. I found myself thinking about that moment often as I painted. It was also how I felt about what I was doing, but to see it in another was a different thing. Painting itself did something for her.

I explored what the act of painting itself was doing for me through the lens of Bolt's performativity (2016). I let my painting lead the way and began to describe it as a method of thinking. I noted, as I had while first exploring the chain link fence, what made me feel excited, or frustrated, or confused. I began working bigger and noticed that I used my whole body to paint. Bolt explains performativity in art-as-research as about force and effect, and something that grows from repetition with difference. The act of painting, as well as the painting itself, enact effects on the world. She writes that "the painting takes on a life of its own. It breathes, vibrates, pulsates, shimmers and generally runs away from me. The painting no longer merely represents …. Instead, it performs" (Bolt, 2004, p. 1). Each painting, even of the same subject, is its own thing. New experiences are generated, new relationships between the image, the material, and my body form as the work gathers speed. Further, while the act of painting over and over again creates boundaries by solidifying what we call an artist's style, it also creates room for changes and differences within that repetition.

She argues that a performative paradigm aims to "map" the changes, differences, and cuts that are created in artistic research. In my work new knowledge was created through not just a single act, but the repetitions that were themselves changed each time by what I had learned before. In mapping these changes, I sought to answer the following questions:

- What methodological shifts occurred through this process?
- What was revealed through the work? What did it do?
- Does the work shift the way [I] perceive the world? (Bolt, 2016, p. 141)

These questions guided my journaling and at the end of this paper, helped me to evaluate the research I have done. In the process of this research, I created small changes in each successive painting and mapped the effects in writing. I found new background colours to create different atmospheres, added detail and covered over again. I was sometimes hesitant to change my process, as I thought I was on a good track. But I knew that doing the same thing over again with no changes would lead me nowhere new, so I reached into not knowing, bit by bit, and prioritised my senses instead of relying on control (Fisher & Fortnum, 2014).

Not knowing extended into my walking. I walked in new directions, defamiliarizing my neighbourhood and experiencing the place before seeing it (Watson, 2021). I walked in countries that were new to me and behind different people. Looking at the decay of abandoned and empty lots defamiliarized places in a different way; by looking at strange places, the 'normal' places were changed, and I looked at them from a new point of view (Edensor, 2005). In my paintings I started thinking about how to capture that feeling of strangeness and include different versions of the spaces I visited, moving beyond visual accuracy in representation (2021). I experimented with how much of the landscape to show, what to obscure, and what to erase.

The way I travel in space changed, as did my mental map of Victoria. The city has so many intersections of green space and concrete available for me to explore, where wild scribbles of nature and rectilinear human structure meet. These are the places that take up space in my mind and in my paintings, where it goes from stable and ordered into disorder and decay (Edensor, 2005). The act of painting and writing helps me to understand this relationship, and in return these spaces help me understand my painting. Each period of my life where I have been able to focus on painting whether through study or teaching has given me something new.

Wayfinding

In the Fall of 2022, I took an arts-based research course as a part of my Master's program at the University of Victoria, where we were tasked with creating our own arts-based research project. I knew I wanted to pursue painting, and I decided to explore the fence that had been on my mind for years. Why was I drawn to the aesthetics of this scene? The flowers were beautiful, but why did I care about the fence? I went into the project with three guiding goals. I wanted to explore the fence, use my daily walking and commute as a source for artworks, and explore the new knowledge that came from my studio practice as it developed, rather than go in with a specific question. I often use walking as a way to get out of my head, and think freely about whatever comes to mind. Irwin, drawing from de Cosson (2003), describes walking as "a steady heuristic action offering spiritual, sensory, and perceptual awareness to everyday experiences (Irwin, 2006, p. 124). I aimed to harness a process of "physical immersion and mental wandering" (Edensor, 2010, p. 70), in order to see more deeply into my painting practice. I would walk and think about where I was, what I was looking at, and what I was thinking about. Journaling afterwards was intended to help me organise my thoughts and provide data to draw from. In the background was also a desire to have creative constraints, hoping that would help me stay focused. In the past I have let constraints around my work build themselves, until they become too much, and I rebel and move onto something totally different. I wanted to see where that line might lay, and how I could have rules that were not too rigid or too open.

Walking through

Drawing from Cutcher and Irwin (2017), I developed a protocol of walking, taking photos, and journaling, and tried to repeat this every day. My constraints were the sequence of events I was to follow. As I walked, I took pictures of fences, empty lots, and places that are often ignored. Then I would go home to paint from the photographs. The next day I would walk, photograph, but use my previous day's painting as my source, repeating that two times before moving onto a new photographic source. The intention became to increasingly abstract the original, moving away from representation into the feeling of the space or my experience of having been there. This was my first attempt at focusing on the sensorial experiences of walking.

Cutcher and Irwin describe a process of "mindfully and artfully centring [themselves] within [their] walking practices" (2017, p. 116) where they walked separately and together, calling the walks mapping events. They created a collaborative artwork that worked as a map of their experience. As I created small paintings of the spaces I saw on my walks, I was trying to assemble my own map of the neighbourhood, but there were still pieces missing from the process that later became vital.

It was at this point I found myself stuck. Having repeated the process twice more, I found the outcome and lines of thought too similar, and I needed a shift in my thinking and process to move further. Each sequence of paintings was connected to themselves, but there was little relationship to the whole. I was walking and taking photographs, but the painting coming from still images seemed disconnected from why I *started* with walking. With this, I shifted into Linda Knight's methodological protocol of 'inefficient mapping' (Knight, n.d.), where I drew while in the places I was trying to represent. She describes the maps as inefficient because "trying to

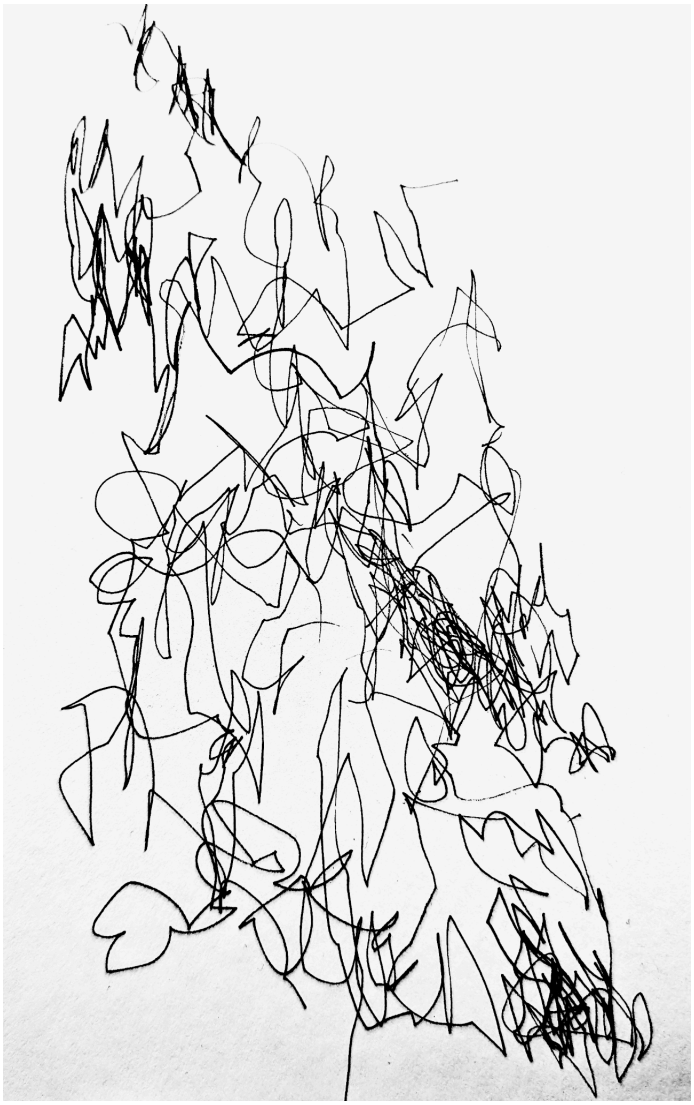
capture lively movements in entirety is impossible and futile" (n.d.), and thus they can only record part of the interactions between time, space, matter, and feeling. I drew on paper with pencil crayons as I walked from my home to my studio, and on my commute to work in the mornings. I changed colours at stoplights or when my hands got cold. I mapped the objects I passed on the bus; the jostling of the bus as it started and stopped; the rhythm of my steps. The drawing became performance and the bus a key agent in the mark-making. The environment in which I was drawing changed the character of the lines. As I walked quickly home in the cold the lines were strong and forceful. If I bounced while I walked the lines followed an upwards pattern. If the bus drove quickly around the corners my line swayed across the page. By engaging with the environment in different and unpredictable ways I created many different views of the same place (Watson, 2021). Through this reproduction emerged a rhythm that showed my neighbourhood as I was experiencing it, and how it changed and stayed the same day-to-day (Edensor, 2010).

Engaging with this practice of drawing while walking allowed me to also engage with slow scholarship (Cutcher & Irwin, 2017); I leaned into the experience of walking and the drawings became less about documentation of my commute and more about the sensation of travel and movement. Cutcher and Irwin describe slow scholarship as a method to "stretch time, to prolong experience, to deeply and gently engage with our wonderings and wanderings, experimentally (2017, p. 118). The process of walking-drawing became meditative and prolonged my engagement with and examination of place. I took the walking-drawings back to my studio and used them as sources for new paintings. These blind contour paintings tried to capture the nature of the road I was walking on a bigger scale. I wandered through painting and viewed the mark-making as layered paths through my neighbourhood. They were quick,

immediate, and soon I knew I needed to go deeper again. The paintings were not doing anything new that the walking-drawings didn't do.

I cut up these paintings and started to paint into them further, using my photographic sources from the original walks. I created multiple viewpoints of these places through the creation of ten paintings.

Figure 2.



Stangowitz, H. (2022). *Blind contour sketches* [drawing].

Figure 3.

Stangowitz, H. (2022). *Walking studies* [painting].

Figure 4.

Stangowitz, H. (2023). *Sinclair and Inglewood* [painting].

Each piece was a unique perspective on what I had encountered in my walkings-through. Individually these places are not of importance to many people; they are not ‘productive’ pieces of land, they do not house anyone or provide specific services. But as I put each painting together they became a map of where I am situated in space, and how I relate to the places around me. The neon lines weave in and out and create a path that follows through the paintings individually and as a set. Put together, they match up to create a larger map, with the spaces in between serving as viewfinders into points along my journey. There is a fleeting and mobile sense of place (Edensor, 2010).

After the arts-based research class was over, I wanted to keep pursuing this line of work so I kept following my formula of walking, doing a small study, and enlarging it. Everything felt the same and I was again stuck, until I bought a larger canvas. From there I had new obstacles. I would need to do some planning in order to find a good composition, and I would need to let go of the white of the paper in favour of toning my canvas. I painted my canvas an olive green and chose a previous painting to base it on.

The fence in this first large painting is simplified but also bright in value against the dark forest in the West Vancouver ravine. It joins with the walking lines that move in and out of the scene. The pavement is a bright and unnatural blue. As I painted I discovered a need to cover things up; I used the paint like an eraser as well as a creator. Working larger forced me to step back and consider the whole image more often. I walked back and forth in my studio, and sometimes spent more time looking than making marks. I was worried I was losing the bright quality of my works on paper but in actuality, I was doing something that I could take farther than I had using paper.

Figure 5.

Stangowitz, H. (2023). *Princess Ave* [painting].

Figure 6.

Stangowitz, H. (2023). *Playa Los Picos* [painting].

The next paintings looked quite different; I was trying to depict time more explicitly in these works. I did this by creating little areas of different colour, like windows into a different season. I painted a closeup of the original fence that had drawn me in, with dark greens and pinks like a lush damp summer rain, broken up by bright green spring. I realised that I was experimenting when I had yet to even decide what was working or not working about the larger paintings. I had let go of my constraints a little too much, and needed to reel myself back in. I moved back to using farther shots instead of closeups, and focused on keeping the components the same but playing with feeling. My next two paintings were orange, with fences I saw on a trip to Mexico that January. There I walked every day, drawing my lines as I followed other members of my party. There were many empty lots, but with a different context than the ones I saw at home. These had different fences, dry grasses, a different reason for being empty, and a different rate of development. This context called for different colours and compositions. The orange helped my paintings to feel hotter, dryer, and got me closer to the quality of light I was experiencing during the trip. They also felt a bit lonelier to me, solitary trees not part of a forest. The walking-drawing squiggles were more prominent, the cool shadows contrasted more against the hot orange background.

The last development was a move away from fences and towards stairs and railings. These things were more about demarcating a boundary, and not holding things in or out. It was still about the interactions of the natural and man-made worlds, where they meet and combine, like bushes slowly enveloping a railing that guides you down stairs. I painted stairs leading down to a beach along Dallas Road in Victoria. The stairs were well used, and I painted them in solidly, more resolved than the rest of the scene.

Figure 7.

Stangowitz, H. (2023). *Dallas Road near Douglas* [painting].

Figure 8.

Stangowitz, H. (2023). *Kettle River dirt road* [painting].

The sea cliffs are covered in vegetation which dissolves into the background. This painting and the ones that came before it created experiences for me. I see my painting practice as performative; the action of painting, of looking, and of feeling are just as important if not more so than the representation of the landscape (Bolt, 2016). Each painting is slightly different in process and product, and the lack of exact repetition between them lead to new knowledge and 'truth' about where I am going.

Seeing through

The fence or the railing acts as a viewfinder. From afar I see it as it appears: a fence around land that is empty. As I get closer, I start to see it as what it *can* be: a place full of aesthetic potential, and never empty (Handel, 2019). That potential is there whether I look or not, but looking brings it into focus. The fence provides a way to see into a place that is cut off, that we are not allowed to enter. It blocks my movement into space, but lets me see in. The lines I paint from my walking-drawings get in the way but are also an integral part of the artwork. Taking a different stance or approaching the walk from another angle allows the viewer to see how this 'empty' space can become a housing development, an ecological reserve, a shortcut through to somewhere else, or breathing space between buildings. Looking at something familiar from a new angle can transform it into a new thing (Bryson, 2011).

As the fence allows the viewer to see into a place they cannot go, my walkings-through into painting allow me to see into my studio practice and examine the act of making, creating, and representing viewpoints, and how making itself can be a window into what we share as

people (Piper, 2013). The fence as a visual motif became a constraint in itself, but I discovered that it was an enabling constraint (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2008) that I could use to think about what is seen and unseen in land and 'empty' spaces. It was through the constraints of the fence and the routine of walking, drawing, painting, and writing, that I was able to examine the fence I have been painting since the day I took the original photos more closely and find out why it held such a significant place in my mind.

These enabling constraints evolved over time, largely because of my journaling. I would write about struggles and 'failures' as a way to work through them, discovering new solutions that might not have come to me through other methods than waiting, thinking, writing.

Answering questions

Through this project I asked and answered questions about myself as a painter: What drives my practice? Where do I push against my own self-imposed structures? What can I do with more intentionality? I have found these answers through painting. In order to evaluate the success of the project as a whole, I return to Bolt's (2016) questions:

- What methodological shifts occurred through this process?

I embraced repetition with difference as a way to work with constraints that would otherwise feel too binding. I let things shift naturally as I worked through each piece of painting and writing. I also let the painting lead the way, rather than the reading I might normally start with for an academic project. The question that started my inquiry was "why do I keep painting this fence?" but I did not start finding the answers until I had explored the paintings thoroughly. Questions were added as I discovered it wasn't as much about the fence as it was about the empty lots, and then the relationship between the man-made and natural worlds. This happened *because* I put the painting first and started with practice. I had moved away from thinking in the

way that I was used to in schooling and towards thinking with painting. The new knowledge I was creating for myself emerged through the use of my tools, and my materials; in other words, the new was emerging through practice (Bolt, 2006).

- What was revealed through the work? What did it do?

Through the work, I learned the *why* of what I was painting. It was revealed to me as I thought less about the physical object of the fence and used it as a metaphor for our relationship with land, and where the man-made and natural worlds combine and mix. I saw through the fence and into the world.

I also started to see the act of painting as a way of learning. There is only so much that students can learn through theory and practical skill-building. Mistakes and struggles and failures are excellent tools if reflected upon. In the first phases of this project, I struggled to find the visual language that I wanted to use, to find the appropriate palette for certain places. In paying attention as I laid down each mark, and later as I wrote, I allowed myself more time to be deliberate and reflect, and eventually found what I was looking for through painting. I gained knowledge of myself as a learner. This process reminded me again of my student in 2021 who had not painted much before. She was learning through painting; learning how the colours interacted, how to create a smooth transition, but also how to think about light and shadow, how to create a feeling, how to be slower and more considerate in her action, how to interact with paint. I could see the change this made in her work in subsequent projects. Her art practise taught her (LeBlanc, 2023). This student and I both learned through enabling constraints that created boundaries; these boundaries helped to cultivate emergent behaviours for me, and helped me to let go of predetermined outcomes (Davis & Sumara, 2010; Jebe & Hetrick, 2020; Springgay & Truman, 2016).

- Does the work shift the way [I] perceive the world?

I changed the way I walk through the world, due to this project. I observe more carefully, especially as plots of land in my neighbourhood develop or decay. I make an effort to take more observational notes in the form of walking-drawings, pictures, and sketches (Haley, (2021). I am also thinking more about the passage of time in these spaces: underneath a chainlink fence outside my school is a little sprout, soon it grows tall and flowers, winds up the fence. Petals fall and the plant topples over, dries up to hibernate for next year. As I travel along my commute every day I note these small changes in my mind, store them for later.

I learned about myself as a learner, artist, and teacher, through interruptions in my work (Shields, et al., 2023), which led me to see a new way to think about teaching studio art. The project led me towards thinking in process-based rather than product-based ways more explicitly, and I am thinking about process as a series of generative events. Students would benefit (as I did) from examining the in-between stages, patterns of thought, and problem-solving – all interruptions in their own way – that come with creating. What can we learn from the act of painting itself? What can the materials and the movements tell us? What happens when you try again, again, again, again. Disruption helps us to discover the emerging relationships between artist, materials, and subject (Cutcher & Irwin, 2017; Frederix, 2019; Richardson & Walker, 2011; Springgay & Truman, 2016; Watson, 2021).

In examining the outcomes of this project specifically through the lens of myself as a teacher, I discovered that my teaching is just as process-based as my painting. Though I have outcomes to aim for, much of my planning and adjusting happens in the moment and responsively, just like a painting. I have worked like this intuitively but understanding it will help me to embrace a path that meanders more, when it can. I learned this about myself through

thinking about how I could teach the components of this project to my students; what would I leave vague, where would I be explicit? I was considering the students at my STEM-focused school, who often look for clearly defined outcomes that are found on a narrow path. How can I encourage them to stray a bit farther outside comfortable clear criteria? I can have plans and products that I want them to create, but the way there is variable and cannot be prescribed.

I want to keep moving forward in my painting and teaching, and keep thinking about how they inform each other. I would like to create the feeling of a studio in my art classroom, where things can be in flux and changing, and where students can take risks and embrace not having a set outcome. I want them to see what artmaking itself can do for them. In my painting I will keep finding new little changes to make, tweaking my process as I go. I'll see what my next 'fence' is.

Annotations

Bolt, B. (2006, April). *A non standard deviation: Handlability, praxical knowledge and practice led research* [Conference presentation]. Speculation and Innovation Conference 2006, Brisbane, Australia.

In this article, Bolt explains the notion of practice-led research, handlability, and how to use exegesis as a way to understand and create new knowledge. She uses Hockney's enquiry into how Ingres achieved excellent likeness at small scales to explain these concepts.

Bolt argues that Hockney had special insight into how Ingres might have worked due to his experience as a practitioner of drawing. He was shocked by the realism Ingres achieved and investigated it by using optical advice that he had used before; his practice led him to scrutinise and test the problem by drawing because his knowledge came from drawing. Bolt calls this material productivity, which is a mode of thought that emerges from engagement with tools and materials.

Bolt also uses her own encounters with painting landscapes in Australia as an example. She had experience painting landscapes before but this place was different, and she found that her usual tools were failing her. The blinding sun challenged her notions about how to paint a landscape. She writes that moving from logical thinking to material thinking through handling "revealed the limits of conceptual thinking" (p. 9).

Her exegesis on this failure is what becomes significant. Though the specific topic of painting through a difficult landscape is particular to her, the discoveries that emerged from handling the materials offered new conceptions of the artwork itself. These discoveries become generalised and create theory. Bolt argues that the job of the exegesis is to express new knowledge and how it might change the discipline.

This article is relevant because it explains how practice-led research can be useful to the field specifically through the paired use of exegesis and artwork. It helped me connect my writing to my painting beyond simple reflection. It also describes the importance of using 'failure' to challenge preconceived notions in painting. Lastly, it has implications for teaching pedagogy in terms of the relationship between materials and ideas. (Word count: 320)

Bolt, B. L. (2016). Artistic research: A performative paradigm? *Parse, 3*, 129–142.

In this article, Bolt explores what happens when art becomes research, and asks what the characteristics of a performative paradigm are. In defining the terms, Bolt turns to J. L. Austin, who claims that speech describes the world but also has a force that generates consequences. Bolt next brings in Butler's understanding of performativity and iterability. Butler says that performativity is a reiteration of norms, but there is room for disruption through this reiteration.

Repeated creation produces boundaries that can then be crossed and twisted which creates new knowledge.

Next, using Austin's performativity through the writing of Butler and Derrida, Bolt discusses how artistic research can make truth claims. Creative arts are seen as subjective and untestable, unlike science which claims 'objective truth' and finds it through correspondence between findings. Bolt argues that is the very lack of correspondence that creates data in art-as-research, and it is there where we can justify our truth claims. Knowledge and 'truth' in artistic research comes from change and difference in repetition. Bolt also proposes that force and effect is the metric by which one can measure the success or failure of the research. The artwork will have a function that it performs as well as an effect on the viewer, and a performative paradigm can map those movements. The article ends with questions to assess impact and map movement in understandings, with a reminder that the artist-as-researcher is the first viewer, and bears responsibility for assessing the multidimensional effects of artistic research.

This article is important because it provides a framework for working within practice-led research. It has questions to ask myself along the way to assess the success or failure of my research and artwork. It is a way to look at what the art itself *does* within the greater context of my research, but also what it does standing alone. It also provides a way to think about the a/effects on audiences other than myself. (Word count: 325)

Cutcher, A. L., & Irwin, R. L. (2017) Walkings-through paint: A c/a/r/tography of slow scholarship. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, 14*(2), 116–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/15505170.2017.1310680

In this article, Cutcher and Irwin use "peripatetic inquiry" as c/a/r/tography, eventually creating a collaborative painting. They describe a/r/tography as a method that allows researchers

to consider how knowledge is created and understood. They also use Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the map as an affective space that allows for experimentation, movement, and entanglement. The authors focus on this cross-section of affect, movement, and maps, and how it is tangled and untangled by themselves and the viewer.

Their initial aim is to walk mindfully and artfully, at first alone, while documenting their perceptions through journaling and photography. They find opportunities to walk together and frame this walking through the lens of slow scholarship, which they describe as a method committed to excellent research and combining the personal with the political.

The authors decide to paint collaboratively and create a protocol of painting together in the mornings. They use the paintings not to document their walks but to further explore the sensations and affect they experienced while walking. The paintings are also an embodiment of slow scholarship. Their studio becomes a refuge in which they can slow down and linger in sensation.

Finally, the authors arrange their collaborative painting with writings from Frederic Gros. They find trails and paths in the details that reflect their walkings-through together. The images and words are arranged in a way where no two viewers will find the same path through. The viewer and artists become co-way-finders through the tangled marks.

This article is significant because I drew from it a framework of walking-and-drawing. The authors were responsive to the need for change, as well as the need to have restraints. The article also discusses ways to think about and use mapping to examine affect and sensation. Lastly, I am interested in the slowing of time that the authors describe experiencing as they are painting, and how that could apply to my own practice. (Word count: 324)

Davis, B. and Sumara, D. (2010), 'If things were simple ...': complexity in education. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice, 16*, 856–860.

In this article, Davis and Sumara explore how complexity theory can be used to reframe education as a system. They write that learning is naturally a complex, dynamic, and nested process. Their aim in this article is to look at hard and soft approaches to complexity thinking and how those can apply to teaching and learning.

From hard research, they find that complexity thinking reveals flaws in how we frame formal schooling. School is traditionally a linear, hierarchical place with many dichotomies, such as student vs. teacher, that the authors disagree with. The contributions of hard science complexity research reveal that phenomena can be understood by looking at the levels of their emergence. As new systems emerge, so do new possibilities, and new ways for systems to join together. The authors argue that seeing these systems as connected and nested provides a way to get past binary thinking and reframe the practicalities of teaching.

From soft research, the authors draw from the notion that every moment is pregnant with possibility, and through complexity thinking, we can use that premise. They also describe learning as full of simultaneities rather than dichotomies. Events and phenomena can exist at the same time, and are not necessarily balanced but are harmonious and co-emerging.

Finally, the authors describe their use of enabling constraints to find these simultaneities. They argue that emergent behaviours come from being within borders but using the space between to create something new. They conclude by saying that the education system has been moving towards complexity thinking even if it does not fully embrace the theory.

This article is significant because it disrupts formal systems of learning and teaching in a way that creates new knowledge. It melds together research from hard and soft fields and removes binary thinking in favour of complex and dynamic systems. It also provides a definition

for enabling constraints that I used in creating boundaries for my artistic practice. (Word count: 322).

Frederix, L. (2019). Mapping as a visual arts practice: social geographies of contemporary Beirut. *International Journal of Cartography, 5*(2-3), 304–315. https://doi.org/10.1080/23729333.2019.16143

In this article Frederix describes his process of asking and answering two questions: can his art practice help him think in new ways about an urban city, and are the theoretical aspects of his research worth pursuing as an artistic subject? He does this by exploring alternative methods of mapping in Beirut using Landscape Urbanism.

Frederix writes that Beirut is a rapidly changing and complex city that is considered to be unmappable. To get around people must use landmarks and collective memory. Frederix argues that new methods of mapping that account for fluidity and socio-cultural aspects could complement traditional maps.

The author describes histories of alternative mapping, including the Situationist's method of dérive, which he describes as wandering the city. They made maps of many images combined to create a sense of the city rather than a form, defying preconceived notions of city spaces.

Next Frederix describes his methodology and outcomes. He uses machinic analysis of the landscape, which he describes as a more process-based and flexible method that is connected to procedures that deterritorialise. He discusses his artwork in terms of the themes he has created and the methods of creation, sometimes explaining roadblocks he came up against. As he progresses, his maps move away from traditional forms and into sculptures of found objects that symbolise a particular piece of the urban landscape.

Frederix concludes by writing that while working he noticed qualities of temporality and ephemerality. He also argues that though they are not recognisable as maps, these artworks can open discussions about what drawing can be, and how theoretical research can become art.

This article is significant because it discusses alternative methods of representing landscapes in the urban setting, and how one might walk in a place. It also brings maps into a place beyond wayfinding and urban form and into the socio-cultural. Lastly, he describes his artistic process and how it changed in response to the materials and subjects. (Word count: 323).

Haley, D. (2021). A Walk on the Wild Side: Steps towards an ecological arts pedagogy. *International Journal of Education Through Art, 17*(1), 135–152. https://doi.org/10.1386/eta_00054_1

In this article, Haley describes how walking can be used to create a better understanding of how and where we live, and how it disrupts traditional pedagogy. The project happened over twenty ‘walking performances’ across 14 years. Situated in non-formal education, each collaborative walk gave participants the opportunity to examine and observe the relationship between the environment and themselves. They walked and talked and took careful observational ‘notes’ in the form of drawing and taking pictures. Haley argues that the participants created transdisciplinary knowledge across natural science, social science, and art. Much of their conversation concerned climate change, urban planning, and how those fields intersect now and how they might in the future.

Haley argues that careful observation is a skill that has been diminishing due to the increase in digital tools such as geographic information systems and virtual reality. He also discusses the notion of phenomenological drawing, or how the thing draws itself. He uses this to describe certain encounters participants had with their surroundings, such as an old bridge becoming a biodiversity corridor even though that was not its original use. Haley also describes

the walks as a way to abandon control and practice a new way of thinking. Though the route was planned the roles were not hierarchical or transactional, and all participants were encouraged to embrace not-knowing.

The author concludes by describing this process as an example of Freire's notion of eco-pedagogy, which Haley understands as the process of "connecting formal, informal and non-formal ways of learning about our interconnectedness with the world" (148).

This article is significant because it describes a way to see the connections between the natural world, the urban world, and us through walking, drawing, and asking questions. It connects art to social and natural sciences as a way to discuss ecology. It also creates a non-traditional pedagogy through which I can use lived experience to question how I and my students exist in this world. (Word count: 323)

Jebe, E. K., & Hetrick, L. J. (2020). Building a Case for Complexity Theory in the Construction of Art Education Curricula. *Visual Arts Research. 46*(2), 1–14. https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/773992

In this article, the authors build a case for the use of complexity theory in art education and approach what they view as a gap in the literature. They begin by explaining complexity theory, relying largely on the work of Davis and Sumara. They describe it as dynamic, non-linear systems where multiple functions are happening simultaneously. Complexity thinking is the practical application of complexity theory. The authors list eight necessary qualities: Self-organisation, bottom-up emergent, decentralised network, short-range relationships, nested organisation, ambiguously bound but organisationally closed systems, structure determinism, and far-from-equilibrium. The authors describe what these qualities are and how they can relate to education, with practical examples.

Several of the qualities deal with the interconnected actions that cause systems to emerge without something governing the individuals. Students are individual complex systems that function within a larger system, and according to the authors, students will work best when they can go in their own direction. They argue that formal learning usually moves through a central agent (the teacher). If a teacher instead focuses on creating opportunities for emergence the learning will be more meaningful.

The authors next explain how complexity thinking can be applied to the art education context. They argue that complex approaches to teaching will create a more flexible curriculum that helps to create more democratic and socially aware citizens. Decentralized approaches to teaching are more accessible than in previous decades due to the increasing use of technology by students and teachers. By using enabling constraints and letting go of preconceived notions about learning outcomes, students will be empowered to take more risks and be more creative.

This article is important because it directly applies complexity theory to the art education context in practical ways. It provides brief examples of how the criteria could be used which could be expanded upon. It also helped me to reconsider my own preconceived notions about artistic outcomes by use of enabling constraints. (Word count: 320)

Joy, C. (2018). Fresh air: Space–time and new models for landscape painting. *Journal of Contemporary Painting, 4*(1), 147–70, https://doi.org/10.1386/jcp.4.1.147_1

In this article, Joy explores the concept of space-time, and how time and space play a part in landscape painting. She describes landscape as an understanding of a type of space, and landscape painting as a mode of representing it. Joy writes that space-time is chaotic, temporal, and sometimes hard to predict, so in order to use painting (a medium that is inherently material) to describe it one needs to consider the qualities of unpredictableness in painting.

The article asks whether landscape painting is useful in creating new knowledge and interpretations of space-time. She does this by examining several artists' mapping or mapping-adjacent practices. The first three examples Joy considers to be part of a new model of landscape painting that creates a framework for examining space-time in this field. Smithson's earthworks show an interaction between the natural and built landscapes across a geological scale of time. Boetti's paintings create a sense of distance through the space they have physically travelled.

The author next examines three modern examples of contemporary landscape painting, and how they may connect to issues of space-time. Mehretu and Morris both create multiple perspectives of their subjects through different means. De la Cruz's paintings bridge into sculpture and interact with the space around them.

Joy concludes by writing that as artmaking has moved away from painting, conceptions of landscape have changed. There are multiple approaches that can shape our understanding of time and place, and the field must ask what landscape can do, and what relationship it has with painting.

This article is important because it provides a new perspective from which I looked at my own relationship to space-time, and how my work portrays and creates it. It also puts an emphasis on the aspects of painting that can be unpredictable and temporal. It expanded my notion of 'painting' as well as 'landscape'. Finally, it creates another entry point into mapping in art. (Word count: 318).

Osler, P. (2021). Walking with and in-between: Interrogating tensions in a public garden space. *International Journal of Education through Art, 17*(1), 153–162. https://doi.org/10.1386/eta_00055_1

In this article, the author describes a public garden space and how she walked through it to examine the relationship between the human and the non-human. The garden is part of a heritage museum that puts on landscape design and architecture exhibitions. Through walking in the garden the author, drawing from Barad, examines the entanglements between nature, the built environment, and walking, and how those intra-actions change how humans engage with a landscape.

Alongside the exhibition are interactive interfaces designed to complement the features of the garden and allow participants to engage phenomenologically with the installations. They also turn the installations into audio events as well as aesthetic events. The installations are also non-linear which the author argues disrupts the romantic nature of the history of the space. Together the audio-visual experiences create new ways of understanding the geography of the space.

The author describes two specific walks that she took. In the first she explored the history of the original garden, examining the co-creation of space by the gardener and landscape. She focused on two tensions; one created by the original vision for the garden versus how it changed with seasonal flooding, and one created by how we view ourselves as both being within and responding to a landscape. She also discussed the seen and unseen actors that take part in changing an environment. Her second walk was more whimsical and the audio-visuals encouraged playfulness. She recognised patterns that were created over multiple visits.

This article is important because it focuses on the sensorial aspects of walking in a landscape. Though the author is in a semi-curated space, I took from the article a way of noticing the world and the intra-actions between nature and the built environment in particular. It also discusses the notion of patterns and knowledge being created over multiple visits to a space, with

differences being created by repetition. Lastly, it evokes thoughts about how environments are changed and by what or whom. (Word count: 324)

Richardson, J., & Walker, S. (2011). Processing process: The event of making art. *Studies in Art Education, 53*(1), 6–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2011.11518849

In this article, the authors discuss the process of artmaking, its importance, and how we conceptualise it. They do this by using the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari within the context of artmaking. They argue that these theories complement traditional educational theories, and are useful in discussing non-traditional ways of learning.

They write that an artwork can be seen as the result of planning, thinking, and learning, but this notion does not consider what was learned in the making and viewing of the piece, which is part of what they call the *process of process*. It is further explained as how the artist/student moves through the relationships that are created in artmaking.

The authors discuss the importance of time, and how it effects and is affected by artmaking. They describe time as non-linear, overlapping, with repeats and rhythms, with a relationship to space. It works in the background, only coming forward when we need to organise it into sequence. An artwork is the byproduct of time and process mingling.

The authors use examples from a graduate-level art-education class. One student struggles with the conventionality of her work representing her hometown. Using Deleuze's deterritorialisation by employing disruptive verbs on her artwork, she reveals the difference concealed by representation and creates something wholly new to her. The authors conclude by reflecting on how process-event contributes to thinking about artmaking.

This article is significant because helped me to conceptualise my own artmaking process in a new way, and by extension how process can play a part in the art classroom. It aligns with other readings that deal in time and extends it further into the artmaking realm. It also creates a way to think about the disruption of habitual artmaking and how that can help to find new relationships and pathways to knowledge. (Word count: 301)

Saari, A. (2018). The experience of the uncanny as a challenge for teaching ecological awareness. In R. Foster, J. Mäkelä, & R. Martusewicz, (Eds.), *Art, EcoJustice, and Education* (pp. 36–46). Routledge.

In this book chapter, Saari discusses how we think, or avoid thinking about, ecological problems, and how encounters with the uncanny can be used to confront our ecological anxieties. He argues that education tends to avoid talking about climate change, but ecopsychology is a tool to reveal these repressed anxieties through the use of the uncanny.

Throughout the chapter, Saari refers to the book *Man in the Holocene* (1979) to grapple with the relationship between the uncanny, aesthetic experience, and ecological problems. At first, the story fits into the Romantic era; the importance lies in reconnecting with nature. Saari argues that Romantic notions of nature cause binary thinking where nature is separate from us, which hides the places where “nature” and “culture” are entangled. In the story it starts to pour, the land undergoes metamorphosis, and the protagonist becomes anxious. There is an inversion of subject and object as the environment starts to change.

The author discusses Freudian and Lacanian notions of seeking something that is lost. In this case, it is an undifferentiated experience. We long to be with nature in order to find something that never was in the first place; that is, a separation from the environment.

Finally, Saari describes how we can use these ideas in teaching. He argues that we can overcome alienation by creating aesthetic experiences and approaching ecological issues without pretending we have control over nature. Art can be a way of dealing with these anxieties without repressing them because it creates a safe space where we can feel melancholy and find each other. It can also be a place where we face the things we do not want to know.

This chapter is important because it reframes the way I think about my relationship with nature, and explains why I might be drawn to painting certain places. It erases the boundary between human and more-than-human. It begins to explain how these concepts can be used in education. (Word count: 325)

Springgay, S. & Truman, S. (2016). Propositions for walking research. In K. Powell, P. Burnard & L. Mackinlay (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook of Intercultural Arts* (pp. 259–267). Routledge.

In this article, Springgay and Truman describe how walking can be used as a research practice through the frame of propositions. Propositions are explained as written or spoken statements about what walking as research has the potential to do. The proposition describes how events occur, but is also a part of the event. It is not linear or preplanned, and new propositions are born out of the previous event. Throughout the article the headings are written as propositions for walking. The authors argue that walking is, much like the propositions, the event in itself. They use two examples to illustrate how propositional walking can be a research practice.

The authors, drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's idea of "de-territorialization", argue that both examples use walking as a de-familiarization tool. De-familiarization is explained as a way to disrupt habits and look at things from a new perspective or with different senses. An

example of this approach is offered by the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit, which is a group that hosts public walks, using enabling constraints to create an artistic output. The enabling constraints act as pedagogical prompts for participants to focus on as they walk. In the example, participants walked through a market and used literary synaesthesia to describe the different smells, disrupting the way one normally experiences smells by describing them through the other senses.

In the second example, the authors describe how the founder of the Artist Placement Group created opportunities for artists to connect with communities, and then used these sites for participatory walks. The walks are used to de-familiarize the sites and the group itself.

This article is significant because it outlines how walking can be used as a research tool, and describes ways to use walking to disrupt the habitual, and create orientation shifts. It offers methods that have been used to expand beyond the usual senses and to begin a cycle of proposition, walking-creating, proposition, and over again. (Word count: 320)

Ursino, J. M., Irwin, R. L., Lee, N., Morimoto, K., Mosavarzadeh, M. (2021). Pedagogical affect and the curricular imperative in a moment of poesis. In A. Lasczik, R. L. Irwin, A. Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, D. Rousell, & N. Lee,(Eds.), *Walking with A/r/tography* (pp. 17–38). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1007/978-3-030-88612-7_2

In this collaborative book chapter, authors Ursino et al. explore what it means to be on xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) land, through an a/r/tographic walking retreat at UBC. It is a part of their ongoing effort to unsettle their practices and centre Indigenous scholarship. Their aim in this retreat is to look at how they as teachers, artists, and researchers generate meaning, and how making and doing on Indigenous land plays a part in their practice. First, the authors read Simpson's article entitled *Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious*

transformation (2014), which describes land as both context and process. Their book chapter in turn pieces together their individual experiences and relates them to each other.

After reading, the authors walk individually through the Main Mall at UBC, ending at the Reconciliation Pole. They document their walk by drawing, photographing, and writing. They each describe the ways their walks take place, and how their bodies moved in space. Each author focuses on a different aspect of the environment, and different ways of documenting their experiences.

Finally, the authors come back together to each make a book of documentation which includes pages from the other members. They draw from a framework of materiality, considering what the pages want them to do. This process entangles their experiences, dissolving the identities of the data and becoming one together. The books take on a life of their own and cause the authors to reconnect with each other. They describe the importance of this retreat as an opportunity to reflect on how their scholarship relates to the land.

This chapter is significant because it offers a method of walking and working collaboratively that causes the authors to connect with not only the land around them but also the spiritual significance of a place and its history. It describes how experiences and data are relational and entangled. (Word count: 311)

Watson, A. (2021). Painting encounters with environments: Experiencing the territory of familiar places. *Journal of Visual Art Practice, 20*(1-2), 113–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702029.2021.1925856

In this article, Watson explores how the environment can actively participate in the making of paintings, and how she can find new understandings of place. Drawing from vital materialism Watson looks at herself, her materials, and the places she visits as actants that create

new understandings through their interactions. She also aims to represent multiple modes of seeing and experiencing.

Watson draws from two contemporary painters to contextualize her work. She describes Ingrid Calame's painting *#219 Tracing up to LA River.* Calame used a team of people to trace things from the banks of the river and turned those tracings into a large, overlapping composition. Some lines are covered and indistinguishable, some are clear, and the viewer is left to decipher. Watson writes that it cannot be read from a single point of view, and is an understanding of the place from different levels. The gestures are linked to the site.

Watson next references Julie Mehreu's painting *Cairo.* This is a mix of architectural drawings and gestural marks. It references the place's long history and political associations, and like Calame's painting, portrays multiple experiences of a place.

Watson explains her own method of painting in this study as 'wrapping', which she came to after trying more traditional approaches that left her wanting more engagement with the environment. She places loose canvas over surfaces and lets that affect how the paint spreads and pools. This produces a gesture that feels immediate and in conversation with surfaces. The places she chooses are off the main road, creating defamiliarisation, and together these elements embrace the unpredictable. She responds to the environment and the constraints they place on her.

This article is significant because it describes a method to defamiliarise something known and places it within the larger contemporary painting world. It also outlines how artist, material, and environment can become equal actants in an encounter, and that these encounters can create a new way to see. (Word count: 323)

Wunderlich, F. M. (2016). The aesthetics of place-temporality in everyday urban space: The case of Fitzroy Square. In T. Edensor (Ed.), *Geographies of rhythm: nature, place, mobilities and bodies* (pp. 57–68) Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315584430

In this book chapter, Wunderlich explains how time is felt in urban places and discusses the notion of place-temporality. She writes that cities and places within cities are characterised by a sense of time that is intersubjective and place-specific and can vary based on the aesthetics of time. She describes temporal aesthetics as sensual and affective, characterised by flow and sound, and rhythmically expressive. She also describes temporal aesthetics as a performative aesthetic that needs the involvement of bodies as performers. This is experienced by using all the senses and being in touch with the place.

To explain these concepts, Wunderlich uses Fitzroy Square as an example. She describes the tempo of the square as having *slow time*, with a sense of enjoyment and belonging. The square produces a strong sense of flow because of its strong sense of time. People are drawn in and involved unconsciously. The movement is not choreographed but the performers fit into the rhythm. The author next writes about the soundscape that the square creates with people moving, the wind blowing, and taxis driving. She writes that hearing plays a part in how we perceive time. Sounds cross and intersect each other and help the listener to find where they are. They repeat and resonate, and create familiar patterns. Lastly, Wunderlich describes the rhythmicity of the place. As people move about they dance and create *time-space* routines. The square is a regular place in a large city that creates a sense of time through its architecture, its bodies, and its seasons. These rhythms overlap and create a sense of time.

This article helped me to better understand the moments and places where I stopped on my walks. It gave me the language to describe why I might slow down in certain places, and

better connects me to the space through a sense of time. It also provoked ideas about how I could more specifically depict time in my painting. (Word count: 324).

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