Inside the Visible

youth understandings of body knowledge through touch

Stephanie Springgay
The University of British Columbia
2004

For my mother

flesh: a table of contents

acknowledgements 6
abstract 8
an assemblage of threads 10

openings of entanglement 11
folds 22
tactile epistemologies: an introduction 23
the research site 32
the body project as curriculum 34
the research study 39
a/r/tography 42

Chapter One:
mouth speaking flesh: touch as intercorporeality 56
the sense of things 61
touch as intercorporeality 66
body knowledge in and of the fold 73
folds: excess 82
excess, the un/familiar, and economies of touch 85
the body as singular 89
inside the visible: visual culture, the body, and education 100
a/r/tography as living intercorporeality 107

Chapter Two:
the fantastical body and the vulnerability of comfort 111
body image and the fantastical body 112
un/attainable comfort: student understandings of body image 128
folds: embodied light 151
skin boundaries 152

Chapter Three:

corporeal cartographies: materializing space as a textual narrative process 163

un/writing corporeal cartographies as trace 164

un/folding boxes: the agency of mapping as un/folding 186

toying with sculpture: mapping space through sound 190

folds: ineradicable stain 200

Chapter Four:

small gestures of the un/expected and the 'thingness' of things 202

living intercorporeality through complicity 207

folds: don't be surprised if someone gently touches you while passing by 217

cybernetic folds 218

cupcake crumbs and seeds: the 'thingness' of things 222

the becoming of the gift as an opening to being 229

cookies for peace and intercorporeal generosity 234

Chapter Five:

shadows: pedagogical bodied encounters as 'other than' 250

Notes 262

References 270

acknowledgements

There are many folds that constitute this research text and my journey in graduate school: family, friends, colleagues, professors and strangers. Each encounter has provoked the way I think about art, research, and teaching, challenging me to question tactile knowing, to explore difficult spaces in teaching and learning, and to find the laughter, the pleasure, and the discomfort of becoming a graduate student and a scholar.

I hold a very special place for my supervisor, Dr. Rita Irwin, who taught me the integrity and aesthetics of educational inquiry. I could not have accomplished this without your patience, guidance, and wisdom. You un/fold me.

To my committee members, Dr. Tom Barone and Dr. Linda Peterat I appreciate your encouragement and insightful questions that helped shaped this research.

The students and teachers, without whom this work would not have been possible, it is my sincerest wish that your words and images continue to un/fold in living inquiry. The students continue to inspire me, evidence that *thinking through the body* is both necessary and inevitable.

I would like to thank everyone in Curriculum studies, particularly Graeme Chalmers, Kit Grauer, Gaalen Erikson and Tony Clarke for their constant support of my studies, and a special thanks to Bob, Brian, Henry, Saroj, Nicole and Paul you always had a smile, an answer, or at the very least a camera and a lap top.

I could not have done this without the support of friends and fellow graduate students, including Sylvia Wilson Kind and Alex de Cosson whose own a/r/tographical journeys are woven into this text.

In recognition of the Spruce Harbour ‘gang’ for the late nights reading philosophy, and especially to Cheryl Meszaros and Nancy Nisbet for constantly reminding me that I am never alone. I also wish to thank Alison Moore, Stephanie Yarymowich, and Virginia Dean for their wonderful sense of humor and friendship.

A special thank you to Kirsty and Phil Robbins for their technical assistance, Leah Decter for help with the red felt covers, and to Paras, for technical support, home cooked pizzas, and unending love.

To the beauty of Vancouver and the west coast of British Columbia. When words fail, there are always mountains.

And for my mother, a gardener and my first and always teacher, whose weekly phone calls, snail mail, and motherly wonders provided me with energy when I thought I was absolutely expended. I love you.

For you I write, stitch, and learn this dissertation—you taught me to be passionate about words and images and to find knowledge in the un/familiar.

abstract

In the West we are accustomed to thinking of knowledge and perception solely on the basis of vision, which is distant and objective, a perspective that posits the separation of mind and body. The other senses marked by the body's effluence were historically separated from reason and knowledge. Understood as interior sensibilities, touch, taste, and smell establish boundaries between private and public, normal and abnormal, familiar and strange.

In contrast, body knowledge through touch poses proximinal understandings of knowledge production, troubling the boundaries between inside and outside, self and other. Tactile epistemologies can be understood in two ways: as physical contact of skin on matter, or a sense of being in a proximinal relation with something. In visual art and culture this has been addressed as synaesthesia. Synaesthesia refers to the blurring of boundaries between the senses so that in certain circumstances 'seeing' becomes a synthesis of imagined and material experiences, where evocations of touch, taste, warmth, and smell are possible. Feminist and post-colonial scholarship has taken up proximity in terms of bodied encounters, or being(s)-in-relation, understanding knowledge production as an exchange between self and other. Both modalities express active engagement and involve the body in the process of meaning making. Touch poses different ways of 'making sense' of the world, challenging the mechanisms of visual perception.

It is precisely because touch is a bodied sense that threatens boundaries that it becomes a powerful and disruptive theory for thinking through bodies, visual art and culture, and education. Touch poses a relationship to the world that is relational, contiguous, and sensual. It informs how we experience body knowledges as encounters between beings. As a contact sense touch is a way of *thinking through the body* as opposed to *about* particular bodies. Touch is a mode of inquiry that dislocates binary opposites questioning the role the body plays in the construction of knowledges.

This dissertation examines student understandings of body knowledge through touch, in the context of creating and interrogating visual art and culture. During a six-month curriculum project students created a number of visual art works, using a diversity of material explorations as a means to think through the body as a process of exchange and as a bodied encounter. The student's art and their conversations inform this research study, suggesting that knowledge with, in, and through the body is open, fluid, and formed in relation to other bodies.

My purpose is to reveal body knowledge as un/familiar and as excess, not as conditions to be expelled or disciplined, but rather as becomings of something else altogether. Body knowledge through touch proposes that knowledge arising out of bodied encounters between being(s)-in-relation is dynamic, generative, and vulnerable. It refuses to be contained within borders, folding inside the visible, such that meaning making is always unstable, becoming, and uncertain.

The dissertation text itself performs in this space of body knowledge through touch, un/folding image and word such that both are entangled together and in tension. Using the methodology of a/r/tography, I explore the places where image and word slip alongside each other, are felted and folded together in such a way that meaning making is hesitant, fluid, and sensuousness.

an assemblage of threads

un/wind the red thread
un/fold the red cover
discover pages intentionally torn, stitched, and folded.
perform the first knowing with your hands.

touch me it breathes.

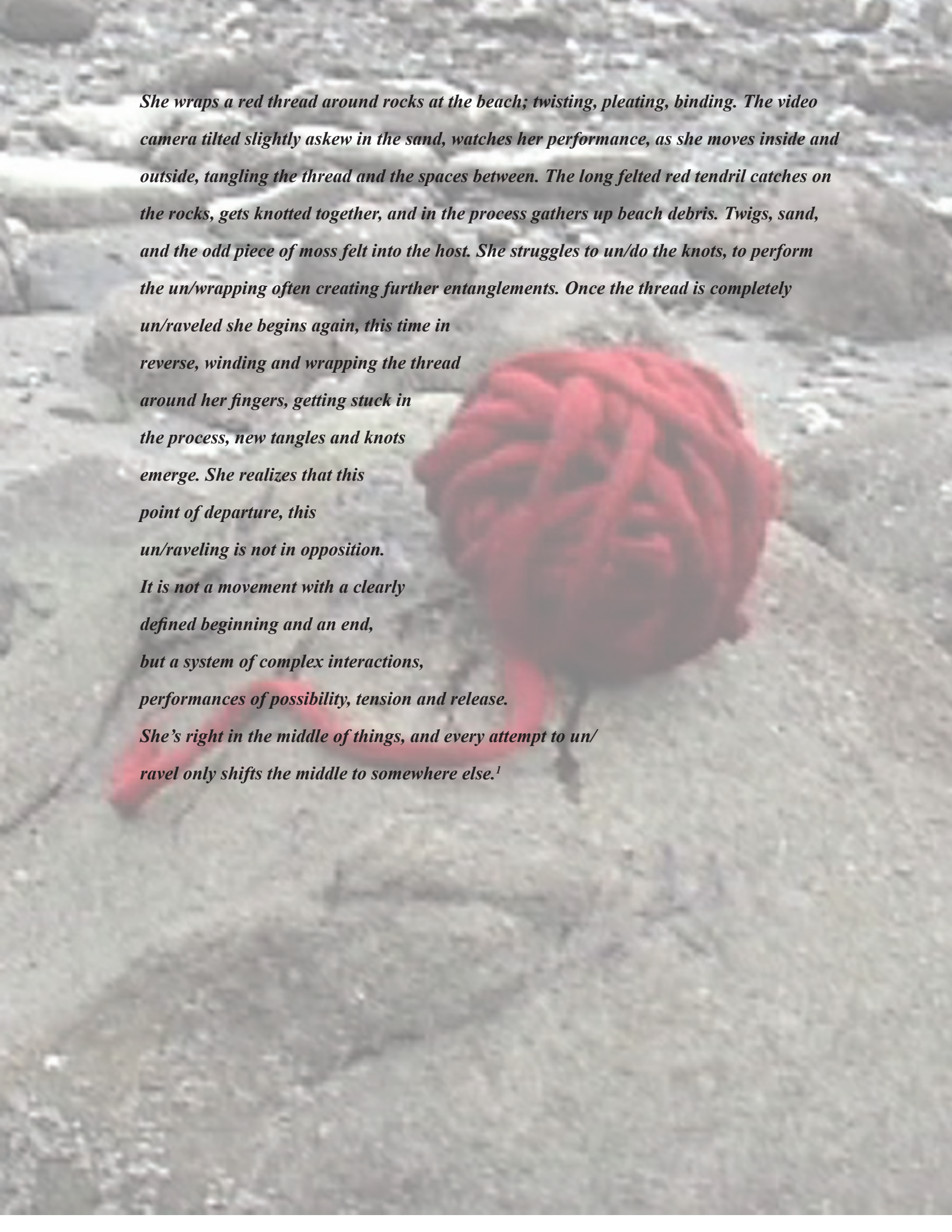
Accompanying this paper-based dissertation is a CD Rom or a DVD. This digital form of the dissertation includes the seven videos attended to in the paper form, in addition to a PDF file of the research text. Reproductions from the PDF file will be missing the insertion of hand made paper, pages copied on vellum, hand sewn pages and attached fabrics and thread: tactile epistemologies.

A similar CD Rom was given to all of the research participants.[1]

Videos in order of appearance:

mouth speaking flesh
Never stop thinking
This is my war
Monkey Puzzle I
Stuck
Cookies for peace (full video)
Cookies for peace (3 minute edited clip)

openings of entanglement



She wraps a red thread around rocks at the beach; twisting, pleating, binding. The video camera tilted slightly askew in the sand, watches her performance, as she moves inside and outside, tangling the thread and the spaces between. The long felted red tendril catches on the rocks, gets knotted together, and in the process gathers up beach debris. Twigs, sand, and the odd piece of moss felt into the host. She struggles to un/do the knots, to perform the un/wrapping often creating further entanglements. Once the thread is completely un/raveled she begins again, this time in reverse, winding and wrapping the thread around her fingers, getting stuck in the process, new tangles and knots emerge. She realizes that this point of departure, this un/raveling is not in opposition. It is not a movement with a clearly defined beginning and an end, but a system of complex interactions, performances of possibility, tension and release. She's right in the middle of things, and every attempt to un/ravel only shifts the middle to somewhere else.[1]

In a high school art class a student is engaged in the act of entanglement. Using torn out phone book pages, he randomly crosses out names and telephone numbers. Pencil lines begin to connect points that would not have been previously linked together. This act of crossing out is neither a process of annihilation nor a destruction of identifying markers, but rather, it is a process of articulating another dimension, multiplicities undergoing metamorphosis. In the act of connecting names and numbers through lines, these very same lines divide and sever the alphabetized list, rupturing the linear pattern of point to point. The act of crossing out maps a movement, a displacement of events that is not reducible to units or determinate intervals. This crossing out, a simple gesture of entanglement, is a rupture that is open, full of excess, and uncertain.

This is a research study that *thinks through the body* posing questions about body knowledge, art education, curriculum theory and artistic forms of creating and enacting research. It explores the ways in which youth understand the complex, textured, and contradictory discourses of body knowledge, and seeks to intentionally create pedagogical and curricular spaces that are un/certain and folded. In addition, the dissertation attends to the methodology of a/r/tography, a form of research that entangles image and text performing what Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) refer to as a rhizome.[2] A Rhizome is an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum. It is an immanent force, creating multiplicities that do not rely on hierarchical categories. A rhizome has no root-origin; it spreads out, becoming, an asignifying rupture. A rhizome:

> [H]as no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, intervening. The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle.
>
> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.25).

Contrary to dichotomous relations, in a rhizome something passes between two terms such that they are both modified. It operates by variation, perverse mutation, and flows of intensities that penetrate systems of classification, putting them to strange new uses. It creates the un/familiar. To be rhizomorphous is to become, a becoming that effaces stable identities. It is performative and gestural. The rhizome is a space of entanglement where bodies, visual art and culture, education and forms of research are interrogated and ruptured. The diversity and complexity of entangling subverts the expectations of a linear, progressive development that flattens or maps out in any simple way youth understandings of body knowledge. Entanglement becomes a rich metaphor precisely because it embodies a complex web of meaning making that shows the *relationality* between body knowledge, art, and education.

Moreover, entanglement bears witness to difficult knowledge where in the act of crossing out or un/folding one writes oneself into existence through un/certainty, discomfort, and equivocal means.

The red thread that performs my entanglement is not a woven thread but a long piece of felted wool. Felt, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), is an anti-fabric, "impl[ying] no separation of threads, no intertwining, only an entanglement of fibers obtained by fulling…It is infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction; it has neither top nor bottom, nor centre; it does not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distributes a continuous variation" (p. 475-476). The materiality of felt displaces binaries. Unlike a woven fabric or textile, which can be unraveled to reveal its constitutive parts (warp and weft), the un/doing of felt is not its opposite, but rather results in additional felting, further entangling the material.

Comparably, in a fold, say in cloth, the outside is never fully absorbed. It is both at once exterior and interior. Unlike felt which has no 'sides', a fold produces both interior and exterior simultaneously, and in a fold these 'sides' are doubled; what is exterior is also at once interior. While tension (fulling or friction) produces felt, it is the fold itself that occupies the space of tension and excitement. This doubling between folding and unfolding displaces the possibility of reversal. The un/doing of a fold may result in additional folds, not through the elimination of folds, but rather the entanglement and doubling of interiority and exteriority. Un/folding resists unification; a fold is not absorbed, nor rendered neutral. Terms are doubled, as neither and as both simultaneously, only to be disrupted and appear again as further folds. Un/folding performs in the very space between and of boundaries, where entanglement becomes an activity of intercorporeality.

What becomes evident in this performance of entanglement is that to begin in the middle emphasizes the multiplicities and the complex mappings of understandings that result from the play of the fold. Entanglement explores and produces spaces where seemingly disconnected ideas come together in provocative and inventive ways without ever becoming

resolved. The performance of entanglement creates openings and raises questions rather than seeking certainty or clarity. *How do we learn and make meaning with, in, and through the body? How are visual art and culture informed, created, and intersected with body knowledge? What are the implications of teaching and learning through touch?*

I begin with the research question: ***How do youth understand and interrogate body knowledge through touch?*** I approach this project from a position informed by feminist writers, who like Elizabeth Grosz (1994) examine the role the body plays in the production of knowledges. Like Grosz (1994), I believe that the body needs to be recognized and interrogated not as a point in a binary pair, but as the threshold or boundary where meaning is produced, encountered, and lived. While an interrogation of what it means to know and to encounter with, in, and through our bodies guides this research project, I appeal to a process of living inquiry that continuously generates questions, throughout the research study and the writing stages. The un/folding of multiple questions are informed by the theories that I engage with, the student's artworks, and my living exploration as an artist, researcher, and teacher.

In writing this dissertation I draw on sources within and outside of feminist theory, educational scholarship, contemporary visual art and culture, post-colonial theory and phenomenology.[3] Feminist theories of bodied knowing, which have roots in Merleau-Ponty's (1968) phenomenology of perception and thesis of Flesh especially inform my explorations. Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome supports the structure and methodology of my research, a non-dualistic model of corporeality, and intersects with theories of touch.

Of significance are the artworks created by a group of secondary school students, which are entangled with contemporary visual art and my own artistic practices. All of the artworks that I examine are works of theory themselves. They are constitutive, intercorporeal encounters that produce and transform knowledges as a process of exchange. The artworks are not objects, which need theory applied to them, nor are they illustrations of language.

They are ways of knowing and being in their own right. As much as possible I engage with these artworks intertwined with theoretical writings, folding them into my arguments. Un/folding these works I attempt to understand how meaning occurs between bodies, as encounters that include sensory experiences.

Yet, this too is difficult, as embodied sensory experiences cannot be easily described or translated. Writing requires that I impose a form but so too I must allow the art to point beyond my words. They remain ruptures. They slip and touch, only to break apart once again. Like body knowledge, art creates openings, a making room for something else to emerge. Openings are also places of struggle, where meaning making is hesitant and confusing, a place of penetration and deep inquiry.

While the body has been dramatically re-conceived and re-defined implicating its place in the production of knowledges many research studies intersecting adolescence and the body still mark the body as passive victim and static stable identifier. Furthermore, this research primarily falls within the disciplines of health and physical education and continues to analyze the body as object, rather than investigate the ways adolescents make meaning through the body (see Oliver & Lalik, 2000). This research approaches the adolescent body from the perspective of disease insisting that educational imperatives need to repair, heal, and mend the body. Not only does this position continue to leave absent the living body, it continues to think of the body in dualistic terms.

In contrast, scholarship within contemporary visual art and culture and postmodern feminist theory has recognized the importance of intercorporeality as profoundly conditioning experiences of self and other (e.g. Grosz, 1994; Meskimmon, 2003; Price & Shildrick, 1999; Weiss, 1999). Similarly, some attention has been paid to tactile epistemologies and the construction of knowledge through touch. More recent turns in art education and curriculum scholarship have begun to address the body and its role in meaning making (e.g. Bresler, forthcoming; Garoian, 1999; Irwin, 1999a, 1999b, 2003; Slattery, 2001).

Within the field of art education, scholars are responding to research that places art making as a process of knowledge production (e.g. Garoian, 1999; Sullivan, 2003). This shift in awareness from art as objective and illustrative of culture, towards an understanding of art as a way of knowing and being, is a displacement that calls attention to the body and the ways in which we come to know with, in, and through the body (Springgay, 2003, 2002, 2001). If we align ourselves with the perspective that experiences are mediated with, in, and through visual art and culture then it follows that questions need to be asked about the ways in which the visual is negotiated as a bodied encounter.

Inside the Visible is important because it explores body knowledge as living inquiry.[4] It proposes an understanding of body knowledge that is vulnerable, un/familiar, and as excess, not as conditions to be expelled or disciplined, but rather as becomings of something else altogether. Body knowledge through touch poses that meaning making is formed between bodies, refusing to be contained within borders, offering non-dualistic ways of thinking through the body.

In addition, curricular and pedagogical perspectives are cultivated insisting that meaning making is a process of interrogation, a position that understands visual art and culture as living, dynamic, and relational. This approach has significant implications for the field of art education, emphasizing the social interstices of visual art and culture.

Entangled amidst these important conceptualizations of body knowledge and art education, the dissertation further enriches and offers evidence of a/r/tography. A/r/tography is a process of un/folding image and text together. It is a way of living and being in the world as an artist, researcher, and teacher. It is a research methodology that intentionally un/settles perception by living and creating research that is redolent, evocative, and that bears witness to difficult knowing.

Yet, these important research implications should not be viewed as discrete and separate, rather each are intertwined and felted with, in, and through one another. A/r/tography as living intercorporeality attests to the possibilities within un/familiar encounters that shape an understanding of the body in and of the world.

Throughout the research text you will encounter images, poetic un/foldings, and narrative sections some of which will bear the title *Folds*, others may be unannounced. These sections are moments of entanglements that I encounter as I become aware of body knowledge through touch.[5]

In addition, the images that are threaded throughout these pages are not illustrations of the text. While some attempt has been made to include them in proximity to the sections in which they are addressed, they are also material embodied signifiers in their own right, performing additional and alternative narratives, maps, and body knowledge. They are living inquiry.

I have intentionally included images without the usual identifying markers that one might find in visual art and culture texts, where artist's name, materials, date of production and dimensions help frame and mark the works of art. Refusing to be static and embalmed products that represent knowledge, the images invite bodied visual encounters through touch. They question and interrogate what it means to know and live with, in, and through the body visually and as being(s)-in-relation.

folds

an eddy of bones. scattered shells
a burst of bubbles. utter silence.

a nude woman calmly moves through water
brief close-ups of her hair, a hand, a thigh
water dribbles from her nose.

always glimpses of a red cord

bubbles roll across the surface of her sk(e)in.

tactile epistemologies: an introduction

Tactile experiences shape the knowledge of my body in and of the world. I come to know through the coarseness of wool, the fleshiness of a rose petal, and the visceral experience of touching human hair. I often choose to use particular materials in my art for their tactile qualities and the symbolic meanings that reside in their material matter. This tactile epistemology extends to the ways in which I experience the visual world and encounter visual art. Instead of seeing from a distance I have often discovered resonance with perceptual signifiers that embody material senses such that seeing becomes touching, tasting, smelling and hearing. Touch though, as I will explore in greater detail in Chapter One, is not only a physical materialization of skin on matter but attends to an awareness of our body in relation to other bodies and objects. Touch materializes as a concept whereby we come to experience and to know through the body as living experience and in proximity. Tactile epistemologies inform how we experience body knowledges as encounters between being(s)-in-relation.

The ambiguity of the term touch resides in the fact that it embodies multiple meanings. For instance it can refer to a particular sense—touch, but it is also employed as a concept that envelopes all of the senses simultaneously—vision, taste, smell, sound and touch. Thus touch becomes a perception that resonates with multiple sensory knowing. In other contexts it refers to encounters between things, and the permeability and un/folding of interior and exterior, often described as intercorporeality. All of these meanings are contingent on the concepts of *proximity* and *relationality*. Rather than separating each interpretation from the other, I prefer to tangle these meanings together complexifying touch. This complexity is important because it embodies the equivocation of body knowledge.

Often tactile epistemologies are difficult to translate to the written word. Many scholars treat tactile knowledge as prediscursive and hence natural. This is a position I dispute. Rather, tactile epistemologies penetrate our bodies; they are inside the visible, un/folding but never fully becoming an object (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). This 'visceral philosophical space' is not an unconscious act of self-expression, but rather a language full of intention, a latent ambiguity that materializes and is cultivated as body knowledge; the body in the world, active and aware.

The translation of this tactile epistemology to words is a difficult task, one that attests to a kind of elliptical morphology where neither word nor art are completely transparent or opaque but rather there is a slippage that always alludes to hesitation, nervousness, and discomfort. In this way, while I began the research study with a conceptual problem or general area of investigation (how do youth understand body knowledge through touch), the continual process of art making and un/folding enables, or one might even say, forces a constant interrogation, to pry open the research, and to allow the inquiry to penetrate deeply—to be touched.

I will try to explicate this further. This past week I reached a point at which I could not write any further. Having devoted myself for a month to the task of writing I felt overwhelmed and exceedingly despondent, I was drowning in all of the theories, pages of paper, and endless amounts of data. I decided that what I needed was to go back to that place where the visceral and material collide. I needed to return to my studio, to dwell in that space without words, an embodied aesthetic place of inquiry. This week I felt the weight of too many metaphors and theoretical points of departure, and somehow I wanted to figure out how they all inter-related. I needed to re-connect my artistic practice to the research text and the school site where I enacted my research study. For reasons that I will expand on in Chapter Two, I have chosen the name *Bower* as the pseudonym for the secondary school where for six months of last year I worked with a group of secondary art students on the theme of body knowledge. My question, today in the studio, is how the Bower, which is an Australian

bird who constructs very unusual nests, embodies the fold and the rhizomatic process of un/folding. *How is the Bower a boundary that is not a container, but a threshold of touch and the body in the world?*

In the studio I began dying scarlet woven braids of hair, torn shreds of fabric and wool. I constructed wire armatures onto which I wrap and tie the different materials. The tactile experience of working with my hands, becoming aware of my body in that threshold between art and text, I arrive at an elliptical materialization of what I could not figure out through writing alone. I do not want to give the idea that resolution or answers are achieved or even sought, but the experience of being embodied, of moving with, in, and through aesthetic knowing enables the generation of new possibilities and enfolded connections.

This opening narrative is important because it emphasizes that art is meant to slip alongside words, catching slightly, only to break apart and completely miss one other at times. They are not explanations, but together image and word provide a richer, more meaningful, and more complex understanding of what it means to know with, in, and through the body. Furthermore they are places where as an artist I can explore tactile epistemologies continually touching and being touched.

My aesthetic inquiry was not always studio-based. I did not write one day and work in the studio the next, nor was I able to balance daily art making in the school. Aesthetic inquiry is a messy endeavor that intentionally disrupts previously conceived patterns. I maintain that sitting here in front of the computer is as much a part of this aesthetic journey as when I am dyed scarlet red in my studio. While I do admit that writing and creating art can be two separate inquiry processes, they also wind their way between and through each other. Aesthetic inquiry at all stages in the research—the curriculum project, the data collection phase, analysis, the writing stages and art making practices—is a process of interruption and dis/repair. *In other words, how do I aesthetically attend to art, research, and teaching in such a way that I interrupt patterns in order to find new spaces of investigation and meaning making?*

While some interpretations of the word aesthetic place it within a philosophical study of taste and beauty, I embrace the concept of aesthetics as sensual perception, a more embodied definition. Moreover, aesthetic inquiry or artistic inquiry, and I use these two terms interchangeably, penetrates assumptions, it searches for un/familiar spaces, and it beckons towards un/named possibilities. Similarly, it does not approach art, research, or pedagogy from the perspective of mending, but attempts to cut open texts, to pierce a needle through fragile material—acts of dis/repair. To this extent I have tried to write and create this dissertation as a process of aesthetic inquiry, un/folding image and word, continuing to explore what it means to know and to question with, in, and through the body.

Recently the notion of ‘dropped threads’ was brought to my attention, and as I reflected on its use and context I discovered an image of Bronwyn, the art teacher, sitting in the class un/knitting. I also remember my grandmother having to unknit something because she had ‘dropped’ a stitch, which meant that there was a mistake in her pattern, a place that she needed to return to so that she could re-knit her project. This form of unknitting is linear, traveling a path backwards to a place of origin, to a dropped, missed stitch, in order to repair and correct the knitting. Bronwyn’s un/knitting was altogether different. These were not dropped threads that she was trying to mend, but rather she was involved in an active process of ‘dropping threads’, intentional acts of disruption. Using previously knitted objects, Bronwyn un/knits, and I use the slash in this instance to ‘image’ the idea of unknitting and knitting simultaneously, in order to create something new. Her knitted art pieces are interwoven combinations of ‘dropped threads’, entangled wools of different colours and textures. Bronwyn’s un/knitting is aesthetic inquiry, it is a process of interrogation, and because she intentionally questions, examines, and reflects on it’s meaning in relation to her art practices and pedagogy, it also becomes an a/r/tographical gesture. Jean Luc Nancy (2000) articulates this concept of un/knitting when he argues that meaning is created when it “comes apart” (p. 2). This philosophical shift is important because common sense posits meaning as a linear assemblage, as something that is added to and built upon. Instead un/knitting insists that meaning is an exposure, a rupture that emphasizes an opening up.

Dropping threads and dis/repairing textiles are difficult metaphors to contend with given that education has often rewarded students and teachers for finding the correct answers or mending knowledge as opposed to searching for painful questions. The act of dropping threads, of dis/repairing this dissertation is intentional. To create separate boundaries between art making, research, teaching and understandings of body knowledge would continue to perpetuate dichotomous relationships and impose a false sense of order. I encourage the reader to embody the gesture of dropping threads as a process of interrogation that un/knits

new directions, new meanings, and folds aesthetic inquiry, intercorporeality, and a/r/tography together.

Returning to the Bower art installation I would like to further develop the theme of aesthetic inquiry and interrogation that are essential aspects of touch and a/r/tography.

Aesthetic inquiry is a process of meaning making that materializes as an embodied exchange. For example, when experiencing art the viewer's senses or bodied awareness are activated, in other words one does not only see, but smells, tastes, touches, and hears (or any configuration of one or more of the senses). This could also be true of the artist in the process of making art, relying not only on visual experiences but those, which are registered with, in, and through the body. However, while the visceral embodied response to making and viewing art are part of tactile epistemologies, what I want to explore is how such a bodied experience with a work of art enables an encounter or exchange *between* bodies such that knowledges of self and other are produced. This interrogation implicates touch in the production of difference.

For instance, in the Bower piece the viewer will eventually walk through the structure of hanging tendrils of wrapped hair and wool and experience a sensory knowing. They will not physically touch the art but they will interact with it in such a way that it will coax the silent registers of the body, and the space between art and body will thicken with active meaning. This type of meaning making is sensory and tactile. However, in addition to this sensory inquiry, I want the viewer to interact with the art in such a way that they begin to ask questions about bodied experiences. I want the viewer to explore the interface with the art so that they begin to un/ravel and interrogate body knowledges as sensuous *and* as encounters between being(s)-in-relation. Similarly, the artist will also be involved in bodied encounters with the work of art, examining and questioning body knowledge.

For example, a structure made from human hair and dyed red wool of crisscrossing lines suspended in an exhibition space suggests barriers, fences, and spatial thresholds. There is a sense of being enveloped by the work, a proximity that is both disturbing and delightful. The tendrils offer a rippling surface that combines suggestions of divisions with umbilical cords or tendons, creating an understated awareness of danger, a threat to our sense of detachment from the object. All of these different sensations are intended to begin to pose questions about bodies and borders, subjectivity, and measures of distance, without literally translating into any specific given topic. Sensory awareness entangles with bodied encounters interrogating assumptions and convictions while shaping new knowledges in the process of aesthetic inquiry.

Enfolded within aesthetic inquiry is the process of meaning making as interrogation. An interrogation is a process of questioning, but I also borrow from Efrat Tseëlon (1995, 2001) the notion of interrogation as a performative gesture (see Springgay, 2003). Tseëlon uses the term interrogation in her work on masquerade and femininity, proposing that masquerade as opposed to masking, which conceals or reveals, is a performative articulation of inquiry. Masking, she argues operates within a binary, it is either or. Masquerade, alternatively, is the interstitial space of meaning making where in the process of inquiry a type of corporeal morphology happens, a transformation that is in continual and perpetual motion. One might argue that this transformation and interrogative process is rhizomorphic.

I embrace interrogation because it implies an aesthetic inquiry that is deep and penetrating, that seeks to create meaning by asking questions. It is a form of meaning making that un/folds and in the process of un/knitting, new folds, new knowledges, and new experiences are encountered and emerge. Furthermore, interrogation is intentional. It is not that encounters with visual art just magically produce new knowledge. That would imply a passive body. Posing questions with, in, and through art and the body is deliberate and difficult. Shoshana Felman (see Felman & Laub, 1992) expresses this sentiment when she writes that sometimes it is more painful to ask questions than to look for answers, reminding us that interrogation is un/settling and disruptive.

The body in and of the threshold of the world is active and aware. It is a body that is open to interrogation and the endless meaning making process formed within encounters. As I continue to question and interrogate body knowledge through touch my research questions continue to un/ravel.

How do secondary students experience encounters with visual art and culture in such a way that they are able to interrogate body knowledge?

And in doing so how might theories of touch, which enable sensory awareness *and* posit the body as living experience, inform an understanding of intercorporeality?

Or put differently, how do we make meaning creatively as being(s)-in-relation?

In the following sections I continue to develop the entanglements between aesthetic inquiry, interrogation, touch and a/r/tography, however first I turn to the research site, curriculum project, and the research study in order to image a context for this dissertation.

the research site

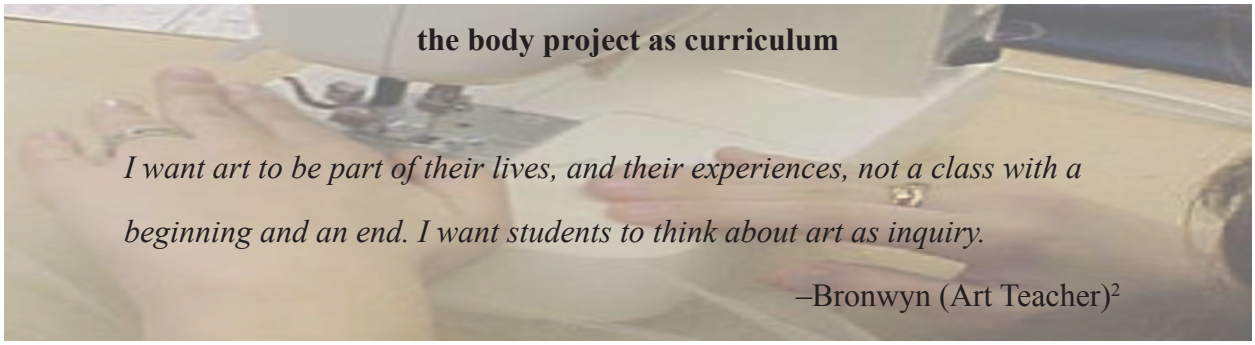
The research setting is an alternative secondary school in a large urban city in Canada. The school, although part of the local public school board system, operates within a different philosophical paradigm. Key to this philosophical shift in curriculum and pedagogy is the absence of punctuation points, such as bells that mark the beginning and end of classes or the school day. The school I have named *Bower.*

A Bower is the name given to several Australian birds belonging to the Starling family, remarkable for their habit of building bowers or 'runs', and adorning them with feathers, bones, shells, etc. Bowers are not used as nests, but built as structures by the male bird to attract a mate. They are less a protective house-like mechanism and more similar to the peacock's plumage. It is also a term used to describe someone who collects ornaments, and odds and ends that are bright and shiny. A Bowery is often used to designate either a leafy arbor space, or an area of squalid and wretched character (Oxford English Dictionary, retrieved January, 2004). In Chapter Two I will go into greater detail as to why I have selected this name to describe the school. However, it is a term I have chosen based on my analysis of student understandings of body knowledge in relation to the concept of community experienced at their school.

The school identifies itself as alternative because of its small size (a total of one hundred and fifteen students from grades eight through 12 attend this school), self-directed student learning (students attend classes but often determine their own projects/assignments that they would like to engage with within the curriculum), and a recognition of the importance of building and fostering community amongst students and teachers, including the practice of addressing their teachers by their first names. The principal and other school administrators are also absent from the school building. Their offices are located in the larger, more traditional high school which is located "up the hill" from *Bower*. The student body is comprised of students from different racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Students apply to attend this school in grade eight, although students can opt to begin in later grades

depending on space availability.[1] When questioned about why they and/or their parents selected this school, students responded with a diverse range of answers, including the flexibility of the curriculum, past experiences at other elementary and/or secondary schools, and siblings and friends already in attendance. Students described the school in terms of size of the student population, the openness of teachers, and the absence of identifiable markers of regulation and control that shape a traditional school: the absence of school administrators, the absence of punctuation marks in the school day, and the absence of locks on lockers. One can't help but notice the brightly painted lockers that run the length of the hall, a visual site quite different from the austere gray of most secondary schools in Canada. However, even more intriguing within the context of these lockers is the absence of locks; doors swing open, contents spill onto the floor, and groups of students share a series of lockers, identified through a group mural and/or painted theme.

The lockers play a significant role in students' understandings of bodies in relation to other bodies, and their understanding of community, self and other. A more detailed analysis will un/ravel in Chapter Two. For now I'd like to turn to the curriculum project and the research study.



the body project as curriculum

I want art to be part of their lives, and their experiences, not a class with a beginning and an end. I want students to think about art as inquiry.

–Bronwyn (Art Teacher)[2]

I developed and implemented a curriculum project that formed the basis for the research study. The curriculum project was designed for the senior art class (grades eleven and twelve combined), although students in other grades joined the project out of interest at different times throughout the research. There were a series of rationales for generating a teaching and curriculum component within the research study. First, it was important for the students, art teacher, and the school to benefit from my participation and presence in the school. I wanted to offer something in return to the school for allowing me to work with the students and the art teacher. In addition, by implementing a curriculum project any students who were unable to participate in the research study due to parental permission or who were not interested could still chose to be actively engaged in class thereby reducing the sense of exclusion amongst students. In fact many students in grades eight through ten joined the curriculum project at different times throughout the six months I was at the school. The art teacher encouraged all students to join classes or to work on the curriculum project during breaks, lunch hour and even after school.

The second rationale is tied up with my presence in the school as an artist. I was invited by Bronwyn to work with her class as an artist-in-residence, developing curricula around contemporary art. Bronwyn wanted to introduce her students to contemporary artist practices, but she did not want to do this through a series of lessons built on traditional models of viewing art through slides, in which students were expected to critique and respond to static images having little connection to their own lives and understandings.

Rather she was interested in the intersections between contemporary art and the student's own meaning making through the *doing* of art; art as living inquiry.

Similarly, Bronwyn wanted students to explore installation, performance, and new media work, and she was delighted that I was willing to introduce students to video art. However, the curriculum project was not driven by the acquisition of technical skills nor did it focus on one medium of art versus another.

The curriculum project was designed around the concepts: *thinking through the body* and *art as interrogation*. Lessons and class explorations were not intended to instruct students about bodies, or about particular techniques, rather art became a means through which students could think through and negotiate the lived experiences of their bodies. If a student needed to know how to 'make something' myself, the art teacher, or even other students initiated demonstrations. Bronwyn's own teaching philosophy embraces art as living inquiry, a curriculum model that does not begin and end within the time frame of art class.

Bronwyn, like myself, desires to foster an art curriculum that encourages students to interrogate visual experiences and to make meaning with, in, and through the body. As a textile artist herself she is interested in an approach to teaching that includes the practices of being and becoming an artist.

> I see that art should be part of their lives. I don't want it to be something that they go to and sit there for an hour then leave again and do something else. I want it to be part of everything, more organic. I don't want it to be so structured that when they leave they say well now we're done art for the day and we should do something else, rather it should feed into all those other things. So I try to make that kind of atmosphere where it almost seeps in. (Bronwyn)

Bronwyn and I expected students to experiment and explore a variety of material possibilities. Students were encouraged to conceptualize an idea or to generate an area of inquiry. When and if they needed assistance in actualizing this idea then I would offer material suggestions or technical support. It was not that one project was to focus on video

and another on sculpture, rather students were encouraged to chose materials that were appropriate to the types of explorations they wanted to initiate.

As we discussed the potential of the curriculum project, I began to see that it might shape the basis for a research study and proposed spending an entire term with the school. Bronwyn was delighted.

Bronwyn's involvement in the project was invaluable. She allowed me to assume the role of teacher, to develop and implement the curriculum project I had designed. Nonetheless, I would argue that we co-taught many aspects of the project and I appreciate all of the support and enthusiasm that she provided. She was also an extra hand in the class, assisting students when they needed help, monitoring deadlines and reminding students when I'd be in the school for interviews, and she even acted as participant observer using the camera on occasion to document the students working on the art projects, when my own 'hands' were tied up with another group of students.

The curriculum project took place two days a week during class time for approximately six months, between January and the end of school in mid June. Official class time was approximately two and a half hours a week, split between three class periods.[3] In spite of the 'block' allocations, I tended to spend two full days at the school and often came to school on additional days as well. Students worked in the art room during their spare periods, before and after school, and at lunch hour. It was one of a few social spaces in the school where students simply 'hung out'. Infusing myself into the school environment, attending the student run meetings, and assisting students in all grades on art related matters, I believed I was embracing Bronwyn's belief that art is a living inquiry that it did not start and end when I came and left the school. In addition, spending time with the students was important in my role as researcher. I wanted students to be open to take risks with me and for that they needed to know I was dedicated to their ideas and their work; I could not simply run in and out of the school in two and a half hours. On a practical level the research study, which included conversational interviews took a considerable amount of time and I was grateful to the students and all of the teachers for allowing me to be at the school on a full-time basis.

The curriculum project had three themes: *body surfaces*, *body encounters*, and *body sites*. Each theme included class discussions, small group activities to get students thinking about a conceptual problem or an issue, and the viewing of contemporary artists works in addition to the making of art. For instance, the first theme body surfaces, analyzed the concept of a 'surface' and investigated works by Stelarc, Orlan, Jana Sterback, and Aganetha Dyck amongst many others. The second theme focused on globalization, communication, and consumption, while the third theme, looked at the body's relationship to space. The students were expected to create a minimum of one art piece (they could work in groups) for each of the first two themes, although many students created multiple works. The third theme, undertaken at the end of the school year while students were pre-occupied with studying for final exams, was completed as a class project where we erected our own temporary site-specific sculpture.

the research study

It tells me not to hurry
to make my movements carefully
to be mindful
on my best behaviour
every petal must be gently cradled
held against my palm
I have to draw the needle through
ever so lightly
if I don't
it will tear and scar the flesh
flesh writing.

Petals pinned to walls
decaying compositions
the artwork refuses to
cooperate
with viewers' traditional
expectations
of passivity and
disassociation
the certainty of a
contained view.

Every so often a petal
dislodges itself from the wall
flutters to the floor
startling audiences conditioned
to accepting specimens as silent, static,
and monumental
long tendrils of dark hair
follow them through the building
lodged in the folds of garments, cuffs, and collars.

On the first day of class I sit in the art room gently sewing red thread through a dozen or more rose petals.[4] Students enter the art room and begin working in their art journals, while others join in sewing rose petals. A few more simply gravitate towards a conversation with each other. A few moments later I begin a discussion about *surfaces*: I ask students to describe surfaces, inviting responses about possible symbolic meanings of surfaces and the material ways of creating different surfaces. We talk about the function of surfaces and their relation to how we might understand ourselves and other things. I finish the discussion with a brief look at some contemporary artists such as Aganetha Dyck.[5] During this time students continue to sew or work in their visual journals. Art is part of the conversation. Even the teacher becomes part of this process purposefully un/knitting a large square, a long trail of cast off wool winding its way through the classroom.

This living inquiry where art becomes an interlocutor in the practice and experience of everyday life begins a six-month journey into the world of touch and bodied experiences. As the weeks un/ravel I continue to make art on occasion in the art room. Initially my intention was to do more art work in the school but I found I was overwhelmed with the responsibilities of teaching and researching, so that my artistic explorations often took place days later in my studio.

In place of red thread I could be seen throughout the school, video camera in hand (when it wasn't being used by the students) or alternatively a tape recorder followed me around as I worked with individual or small groups of students on the art projects. Data was collected through a diverse range of methods including: observation annotated in a visual journal, digital video and still images, interviews, written exercises, and student created and researcher created visual art.

At times it seemed as if the entire school body was in the art room, already crowded with computers, cameras, weaving looms, dyed fabric drying along one wall and a toy train that slowly took over a corner. The students moved in and out of the classroom, all of them eager to learn, to question, and to making meaning through art. However, thirteen students agreed to participate in the research study.[6] In addition, the classroom teacher was involved in all aspects of the research, and a student teacher, on a thirteen-week practicum contributed to two interview sessions.

a/r/tography

The methodological framework for the curriculum project and the research study is ***a/r/tography***, a form of visual arts-based educational research as living inquiry (e.g. de Cosson, 2003; Irwin, 2003; Irwin & de Cosson, in press; Springgay, 2003; Springgay & Irwin, 2004; Wilson, et. al. 2002). A/r/tography is informed by aesthetic inquiry and interrogation, further entangling the process of meaning making with, in, and through visual art and the body. In this section I will attend to the nuances of a/r/tography followed by a discussion of the enactment of this methodology as a pedagogical practice and an artistic form of research.

A/r/tography is a practice of living inquiry. It is a methodology of embodiment, never isolated in its activity but always engaged with the world. Recently I worked with Rita Irwin and Sylvia Wilson Kind to further articulate this new field of study through six renderings that bear witness to a/r/tography's evocative presence (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson Kind, in press). Related to other forms of arts-based research, a/r/tography inhabits six renderings: *living inquiry, contiguity, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations* and *excess*. These renderings offer possibilities of enacting research as a shift, a rupture, and a loss—a movement and displacement of meaning. Renderings allow for the complexity of meaning; they un/ravel in un/certainty and ambiguity.

Renderings offer possibilities for engagement with art, research, and teaching (a/r/t). They are theoretical conceptualizations of aesthetic knowing and being. Renderings enable artists, researchers, and teachers to interrogate the interstitial spaces *between* things, for example image and word, text and audience, and the practices and processes of art making, researching, and pedagogy. Like the red thread that performs my opening of entanglement, a/r/tography creates spaces where seemingly disconnected ideas come together to form complex mappings and understandings. Similarly, a/r/tography is a process of un/knitting where meaning making becomes an intentional act of dis/repair, disruption, and tension.

Renderings are performative gestures of meaning making that un/fold and in doing so alter the over all texture and meaning of a text. “Folding holds out the potential to diversify endlessly without falling into the logic of binary oppositions. This sense of the fold thinks matter as doubling back upon itself to make endless new points of connection between diverse elements” (Meskimmon, 2003, p. 167). Thus, renderings are moments of aesthetic inquiry that interrogate the process of knowledge production and in doing so present alternative models for living and engaging with the world.

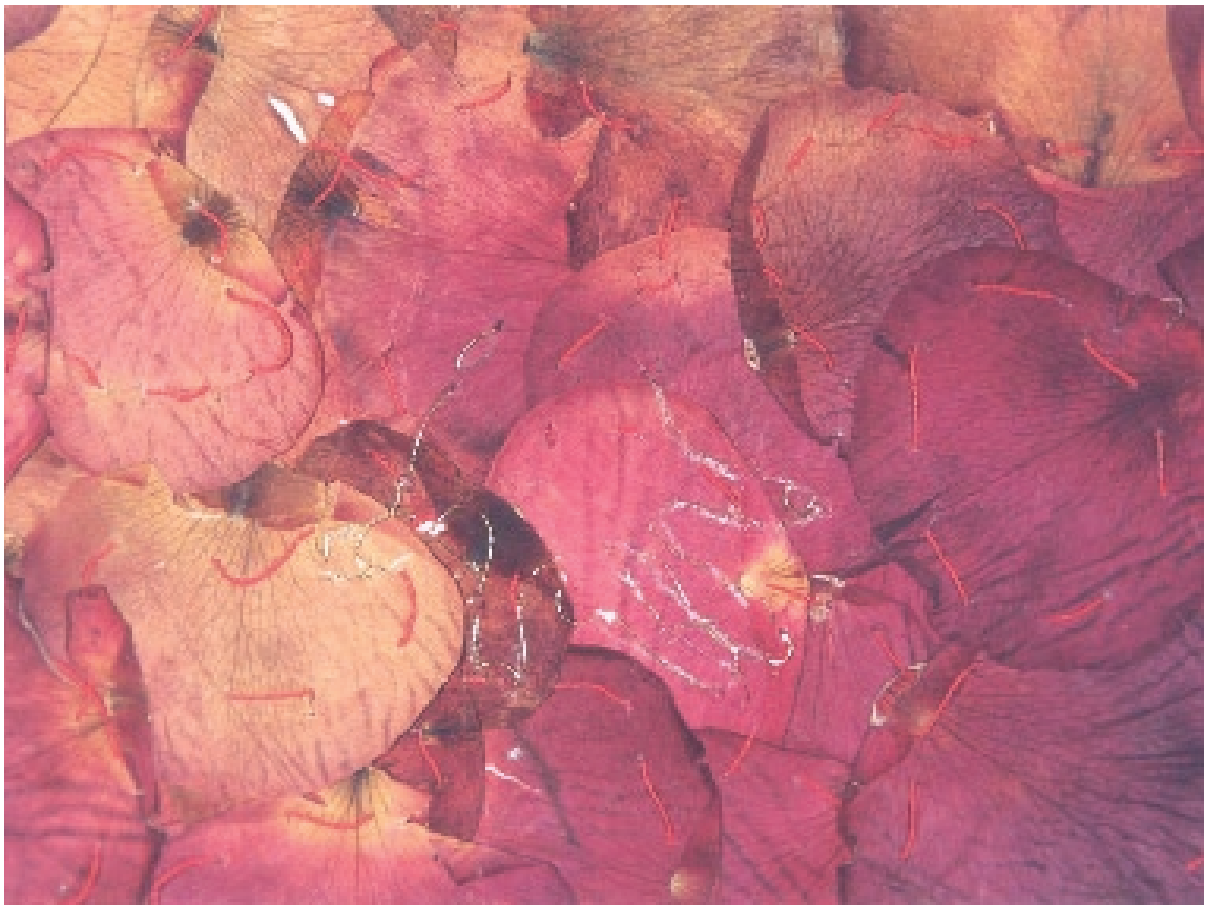
Like other forms of arts-based educational research a/r/tography emphasizes living experiences of research.[7] A/r/tography requires that one live a life open to inquiry that is aesthetic and embodied. As a methodology, a/r/tography seeks to alter traditional understandings of research that are based on linear, progressive developments. Furthermore, a/r/tography is not a methodology that can only take place within the practice and space of what is formally called research, rather it is a way of living, knowing, and being in the world. It is not a criterion-based model that establishes a set of assumptions or procedures instead a/r/tography is a philosophical space of inquiry. In philosophy, the concepts with which we approach the world become the topics of exploration, questioning the structures of thinking while exposing their foundations. In this sense a/r/tography is what happens when a practice becomes interrogative or reflective.

Once again, I turn to the work of Nancy (2000) to conceptualize this point. Meaning, he argues, is not something that we acquire rather we embody meaning. This is not to say that we are the content of meaning, but that meaning is produced and interrogated within us (fully implicating the body in the meaning making process). Meaning becomes an exposure to something, not a judgment. Meaning is formed in the instant that things come together in contiguity and in the instant of letting go, a movement that continuously displaces meaning. Furthermore, as Nancy (2000) argues, it is the intentionality of interrogating meaning that is meaning itself. Thus meaning is a constant process of becoming, a stretching out and

a folding. A/r/tography moves within this space of meaning making that is intentional, disruptive, and embodied and it points at language that cannot be fully named.

A/r/tography as living inquiry is a process of becoming; research enunciated through emergence. It is a gesture of-the-everyday, an attention and attunement to the body, the senses, and their activity in and of the world. A/r/tography as a methodology is unique in that it examines and explores the liminal spaces between the practices of artist, researcher, and teacher. It posits a proximinal relation between each such that they are entangled and folded. Rather than viewing my involvement in the school through separate and distinct categories of artist, researcher, and teacher, or blended together into one unified position, a/r/tography moves between, such that art practices, research, and pedagogy are un/folded, intertwined and felted together. Each is connected, yet also distinct and singular, emphasizing not only the practices but the un/named spaces, the thresholds of possibilities between, where un/foldings allude to something else altogether. Similarly, a/r/tography is a process of aesthetic inquiry where questions are posed in such a way to open, rupture, and distress the research site and/or text.[8] It is a process of un/folding, a felting that tangles knowledges through intentional fulling. In felting processes, individual strands of material, in most cases wool, or in my own art human hair, are rubbed together in such a way that they knot together creating new assemblages and new knowledges. It is a process of intention and dis/comfort, an embodied tactile experience, moving both self (artist's hands and even full body) and object (hair) simultaneously, but not in similar directions. A/r/tography like felting requires that I search for meaning that is un/certain, eclipsed, and in tension. It does not propose to find answers or absolutes rather it seeks difficult knowing through continuous questions and interrogations.

Sylvia Wilson Kind (see Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Kind, in press; dissertation forthcoming) writing about her own a/r/tographical practices places emphasis on the creation of holes, cuts, tears and frayed edges. As opposed to mending, repairing, and restoring fabric she emphasizes textile processes that find meaning in openings and dis/repair. Likewise,



I sew unusual materials such as rose petals, butterfly wings, and human hair that tear and scar—fragile tissues that call attention to un/knowingness and to dis/comfort. Similarly, stitching creates holes, as the needle pierces through the flesh of petal or fabric; it leaves marks, scars, paths and maps that are meaningful precisely because they attest to the corporeality, materiality, and difficulty in creating a seam. A/r/t that emphasizes the *seam* is a practice not simply open to discovery, but one that also recognizes the need to intentionally disrupt patterns and to pull threads ever so gently. The seam emphasizes that art making, researching, and teaching leave traces and scars on the lives and bodies we encounter (including our own). These marks of touching subsequently inform our practices, while also creating and shaping present and future bodied encounters.

A/r/tography also includes both art and graphy or image and word as interstitial spaces that allude to and ellipse one another. A/r/tography shifts the relationship between the familiar and the strange, the known and the unknown, such that they are always mediated, embodied, and created through relational encounters. In this sense a/r/tography "is an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual *understandings and experiences* rather than mere visual and textual *representations*" (Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Kind, in press).

A/r/tography, becomes a way of living and being in the world within and through all the multiplicities of practices and encounters. The students and teacher also became a/r/tographers as they interrogated what it means to experience body knowledge through touch, visual art and culture. The continual process of meaning making invited them to consider the un/familiar not as something to be expelled but as an un/certain and fluid space of knowing and being.

Fundamental to a/r/tography is a belief that art is a living engagement. Art should not be viewed as static and distant, thus connections were continuously made between the curricular themes, contemporary art works, and students own understandings of popular and visual culture. For example, in the second thematic phase of the project I addressed issues of

communication and globalization. Some students wanted to explore graffiti art and together we created a lesson around graffiti and mural art. We used images from local graffiti artists and the students own experiences with this style of image making to generate discussions around the circulation and consumerism of images transculturally. While the focus of the curriculum project was primarily on contemporary art and visual culture students often brought in references, when necessary, to historical works of art. I approached these works through an active engagement of living inquiry forming links between these works of art and other images that inform and shape our visual experience in the world in-the-everyday. In this way art became alive and meaningful beyond the art curriculum.

As living inquiry a/r/tography is both a research methodology and a pedagogical practice. As I write the above passages detailing a/r/tographical renderings of research I find my teaching thread woven and dropped in/between. A/r/tographers perform in the places of art making, researching, and teaching and the un/named spaces between. As a pedagogue I understand teaching and learning as vulnerable, deliberate, and in tension. Teaching and learning aims to resist closure and containment; teaching as openness. Similarly, teaching and learning points at language as intimate and material. Pedagogy then becomes a bodied encounter that provokes and interrogates subject positions and knowledges, finding meaning in excess and the un/familiar.

In addition, teaching and learning through aesthetic living inquiry insists that art and visual encounters be understood beyond self-expression. If we continue to create exemplary art curriculums that encourage students to create art based only on personal self-expression we fail to consider how meaning is interconnected between things. For instance while many of the students created parts of their art works intuitively and through ‘play’, the process of asking questions, of engaging in a living interrogation, meant that they began to understand the consequences of living and encountering visual signifiers. Thus, a/r/t as living inquiry is

a practice not based on assumptions, but a means through which we actively shape ourselves and the world we live in.

Enfolded within a/r/tography are other methodological theories and practices including action research (e.g. Carson & Sumara, 1997) and visual methodologies (Pink, 2001; Rose, 2001). However in this instance they are not separate methodologies, but perspectives entangled with, in, and through a/r/tography. So too, I embrace a/r/tography from the perspective of feminist pedagogy and research (e.g. hooks, 1994; Lather, 1991; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000), and feminist understandings of visual art and culture (e.g. Jones, 2003; Meskimmon, 2003; Rogoff, 2000).

In the remaining part of this section I will consider how a/r/tography was enacted, attending to the visuality of a/r/t, the process of interrogation and reflection, teaching and learning strategies including interview processes and the choices that I made in analyzing the students' artworks and conversations.

As the curriculum project and research study un/folded I made visual observations of the research, collecting digital video and digital still images of students working in the class and their art projects. These images provided me with a means to 'visually recall' information throughout the curriculum project, research study, analysis and writing stages. Visual observations present different layers of the research text, allowing the researcher to look at things continuously and from different perspectives. A/r/tography employed in the analysis stage embraces the notion of art as constitutive and theoretical in and of itself, therefore I deviate from most traditional models of visual methodologies which render images as static objects and adopt practices from contemporary visual culture that understand works of art as embodied material interrogations. What this means is that rather than assuming that the image is a representation of a situation or an artifact, it responds to the cultural significance, social practices, and power relations in which the 'image' is embedded. This

extends to critically thinking about the constructs of knowledge that are produced, articulated through, and can be challenged through the process of imaging. Thus, as Gillian Rose (2001) articulates in her textbook on visual methodologies in the arts, *visuality* refers to the way in which vision and/ or images are constructed. Expanding on this concept I argue that visual art and culture, which are often summed up as 'images' need to ask questions about the construction of knowledges that are constituted through visual embodied encounters.

I also want to note that visual methodologies do not require that researchers take 'pictures' of the research site, rendering it static and immobile. This practice, which grows out of anthropology and ethnography, encourages the collection of images to be "classified and interpreted" according to internal semiotic significations (Pink, 2001). Instead, visual methodologies entail *approaching* curricular and research projects through aesthetic and visual means, using what Rogoff (2000) calls a "curious eye". A/r/tographers need to be attentive to the *visuality* of art, research, and teaching.

As I have already argued aesthetic inquiry and a/r/tography embody a process of interrogation. While there are many ways that interrogation is folded into this dissertation, including a philosophical approach to understanding meaning, I also encouraged students to become interrogators. In much the same way that I continuously ask questions of the curriculum and research texts, and of myself as an artist, research, and teacher, I cultivated a pedagogy of interrogation. However, I did not sit the students down and 'lecture' them about interrogative processes, rather I modeled aesthetic inquiry inviting students to ask questions, to rupture open their visual encounters, and to become aware of the multiple ways that meaning shits and changes. In order to facilitate this process I engaged the students in class discussions where I used contemporary visual art as a process of interrogation. Contemporary visual art became a means to think through visual encounters and body knowledge.

In addition students were expected not to think of an art product that they wanted to create, but rather to consider an idea, or a question that they wanted to explore through art and aesthetic inquiry. At different points throughout the term they discussed their projects with other students or the whole class. These discussions were not opportunities to describe their art projects, but to raise questions about the cultural significance, social practices, and power relations in which the 'image' is embedded, and they ways in which these visual encounters were conditions of body knowledge.

This method was quite different from student's previous school experiences and the students initially struggled with the idea of visual art and culture as a process of interrogation. Many of their prior art experiences had focused on technical skill or personal self-expression that was more decorative than interrogative and often produced in isolation. For instance in most art education programs students are assigned a project, which they complete in class and then submit for grading. Although the 'art critique' has become popular in recent years, most often students use this opportunity not to question the work, but to describe it to their peers. In addition, students had not been previously exposed to a process of critical viewing of contemporary visual art. Their understandings of art were limited to painting and drawing. This type of art curriculum, I believe, continues to render static art 'products' and fails to examine the intersections between the body, art, and living inquiry.

I used these 'interrogative moments' as part of the interview process, audio taping the discussions. Questions were posed to students as points of departure to think about their art from a different perspective and to begin to trouble some of the assumptions they might have about a particular concept. In order to facilitate this interrogation process I gave the students a written handout that included some of my thoughts, maybe a quote from a contemporary artist, a reference back to a particular work of art that we had discussed in class, or a theme that surfaced in class discussions. The practice of writing down some of the initial questions was modeled after common practices adopted in the school. Some students worked better through verbal means while others needed the written form to begin their process of inquiry.

Sometimes I integrated concepts that emerged in previous interviews. I did not ask the students to answer these questions. Likewise the interviews were not meant as verbal/written explanations of their artwork. Instead what I wanted them to do was to interrogate meaning making, understanding, and the activities that they were engaged with through art—to engage in aesthetic inquiry and a/r/tography.

Students could respond through visual means, they could write, and for a few students I gave them the option of using the video camera or the tape recorder to record their ideas. Students could respond in their visual journal and a few students went so far as to create much larger and more involved artworks as their weekly responses. Some of the students had difficulty with writing (diagnosed learning dis/abilities) and I modeled the schools philosophy of allowing students access to different means to create assignments. The students were usually given a week for this process, recognizing that many of them were taking a number of subjects at school and they had a lot of work to do each week. I would then collect the responses and read through them, writing further 'inquiries' and thoughts in the margins, or even re-image within their responses. Sometimes I would create a work of art that would be returned to the student as a response to their response. One student and I engaged in this exchange for over a month, almost daily 'gifting' an image-response to each other. These image responses would be used as focus points during taped conversations. In some instances this re-representation would be given back to the student and we would continue this process through image and text, for others I used this inquiry as a point of departure for a 'conversational interview'.

I framed the interview sessions as conversations. I often spoke with students while they were in the midst of working on their art projects. I used this strategy in part because the camera or tape recorder made them shy and nervous. But, as a pedagogical move, I didn't want the 'interviews' to be teacher/researcher directed. I was interested in how they were making sense of bodied experiences through the activity of creating, viewing, and thinking through visual art and culture. It was important that these conversations appear less like

interviews and more as opportunities to probe deeper into their visual and bodied encounters. In this way the interviews became part of the curriculum objectives and instructional strategies along with being a method of data collection. My intent was to create an art curriculum based on thinking through the body as a process of interrogation.

The conversations varied between one-on-one, to two or more students and myself. I also used a similar approach with the student teacher and the art teacher. One student was extremely shy in front of the tape recorder and found it very difficult to talk about her ideas. However, she informed me that she was very chatty on email as it allowed her time to think through her thoughts and to work at home. She and I engaged in email conversational interviews, much the same way that I conducted face-to-face conversations in class. She also connected through email with other students in the class extending her conversations and bodied encounters.[9]

I chose to vary the ways in which I collected information from the students for a variety of reasons. First, having worked with secondary school students on a prior research project I knew that the tape recorder often made them nervous and at times students gave responses that they thought the researcher wanted to hear. I wanted the responses and conversations to be part of the curriculum as opposed to something that they needed to do for the research project. By varying the manner of collecting the responses I hoped that students would not start to form structured answers but would always be challenged to think within the un/familiar. Furthermore I wanted the interviews to be part of living inquiry not separate from the practice of creating art. Thus, it was crucial that the interview strategies reflect the diversity of image making and inquiry in the classroom.

I was interested in how students made sense of bodied experiences and how their interrogations through art making challenged, negotiated, and mediated body knowledge through touch. In much the same way that students worked on different art projects (there were no class projects where all of the students created a sculpture or painting of a particular subject matter) the conversational interviews, inquiry-based method of questions, embraced

my philosophy of art as interrogation. Rarely did I view this as data collection. Rather I viewed it as a teaching experience and I modeled the practice of a/r/tography enacting pedagogy and research as living inquiry and interrogation.

I too constantly needed to interrogate art, visual encounters, and body knowledge (both my own and the students) throughout the curriculum project, research study, and months later in the analysis stage. In the analysis stage I meticulously transcribed the interview tapes and reviewed the video footage of classroom experiences and art projects. In doing so I began to notice particular themes emerge. The diversity of art projects and taped conversations meant that it was impossible to include all of the students' work in the dissertation. My selections began with the different themes that started to emerge and an attempt to honor each student that participated in the research. As I moved further into the analysis stage themes intersected, moved apart, and created a very tangled and messy space. One of the tensions that I faced as an a/r/tographer was creating patterns between the art and the students' conversations that at same time refused to be categorized and coded. I wanted to allow for the complexity and multiplicity of meaning that each artwork embodies and yet, in order to impose some form I needed to group certain works together. Notes in my journal reminded me of these very tensions that the students and I had faced in class discussions as we were thinking through their visual encounters. As I moved through the art, the transcripts and my journal notes, three themes became evident: *comfort, mapping*, and *giving*.

In the fall I returned to the school to discuss these themes with the art teacher and a few of the students, asking them to think about the connections that I had made. A few of the art works were shifted from one theme to another, and a few others we all agreed could easily point to more than one theme in addition to the spaces between the themes, where other concepts and meanings could be formed.

A/r/tography embraces this ambiguous and hesitant process of meaning making. It resists static coding and contained borders, allowing the art to felt together in complex and equivocal ways. Already, months later I have begun to see other questions and possibilities surface, pointing to a/r/tography's presence as a becoming, an emergence of something else altogether.

As a new methodology a/r/tography has primarily been enacted and theorized from the perspective of self, analyzing the intersections between one's own art, research, and teaching. In this research study I was interested in the intersections between self and other, or between being(s)-in-relation, thereby enabling an exploration of my own art, research, and teaching, but also the ways in which student practices and understandings of a/r/tography are folded together. *How can a/r/tography entertain questions about the social aspects of visual art and culture? How is a/r/tography living intercorporeality? Or in other words, how is the methodology of a/r/tography felted between theories and understanding of body knowledge through touch?*

In the same way we shall need to reawaken our
experience of the world as it appears to us in so
far as we are in the world through our body,
and in so far as we perceive the world with our body.
But by thus remaking contact with the body and
with the world, we shall also rediscover ourself.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 239)

Everything, then, passes *between us*. (Nancy, 2000, p. 5)

Chapter One

mouth speaking flesh: touch as intercorporeality

mouth speaking flesh. she touches it
to make it tell her present
in this other language so difficult to
translate.
the difference.

she is writing her desire to be,
in the present tense,
retrieved from silence.[1]

it is not simply about leaving marks but
also the possibility of their erasure

I chew and swallow in endless repetition. First rose petals. Then long dark tendrils of hair, which I shove into my mouth in handfuls. The hand held camera wavers and frames images of skin, wrinkles, and scabs—the flaking detritus of the body. In contrast and equally disturbing, folds of white cloth spill onto the video screen. This epistemology of disorientation and revelation, movement and space, creates a moment of dis/comfort coupled with the un/familiar. But there is a dialectic of proximity at work here. A poetics of un/covering, like the peeling back of flesh to display interior matter. The body is exaggerated distorting the boundaries of the body. There is an uncertainty and a vulnerability to these dislocations. The body is never fully represented, displacing the viewer's conventional desire to contain and to consume. The claustrophobic and engrossing sound further implicates the viewer in the processes of dis/orientation. There is a haptic quality to the work, fabric and skin caress the viewer as the differences between the senses translate one another.

The installation—a TV monitor perched precariously in the corner of a black room emerges from piles and tufts of shorn hair. As the weeks pass, dark tendrils begin to creep up the walls and small curls cling to the face of the monitor. The work pulsates and breathes.

the sense of things

Sense The primary meaning of sense is ‘faculty of perception’, where external objects are registered in the body. In the sixteenth century, sense also comes to mean instinctive knowledge. In the seventeenth century sense acquires the meaning of judgment.

Sensible The original meaning of sensible was to feel and to perceive through the senses. Throughout history it has had varied meanings including an actuate power of sensation, or the capacity of delicate and tender feelings—to be sensitive. The meanings of sensible dominant today is to be reasonable and judicious.

Sentient Possessing powers of sense or sense perception. Having sense or feeling.

Touch Touch means to perceive by the sense of feeling (sentient) and to bring something into contact with something else—to connect.[2]

In the West we are accustomed to thinking of knowledge and perception solely on the basis of vision, which is distant and objective, a perspective that posits the separation of mind and body. Vision, associated with light and mind is the sense of power and knowledge (Foti, 2003; Vasseleu, 1998). 'I see' commonly understood as 'I know or I understand' reveals the use of sensory terminology to convey mental processes. Distant, objective vision is a means by which to judge or examine phenomena.

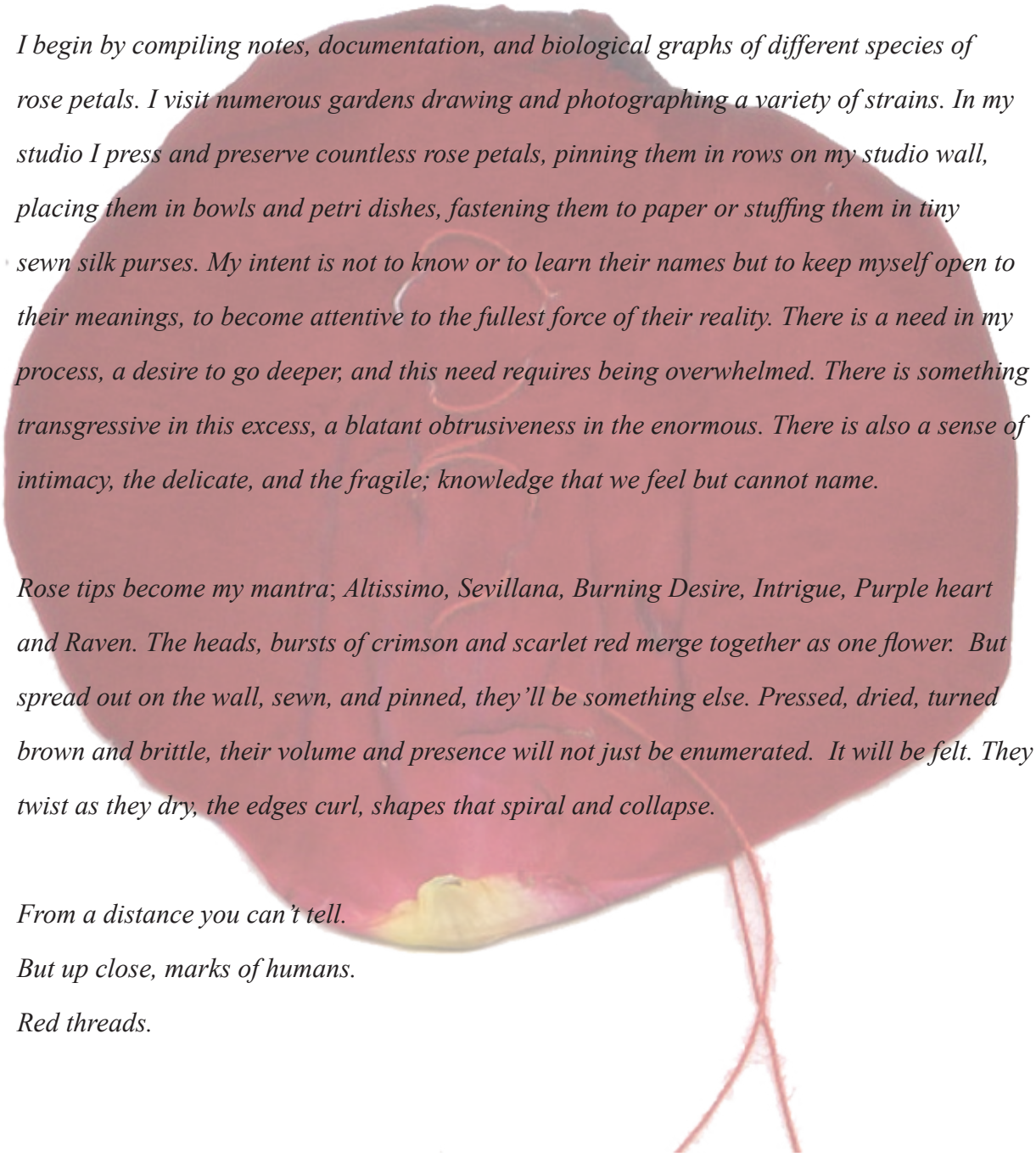
The other senses marked by the body's effluence were historically separated from reason and knowledge. Engendering the body, the senses smell, taste, and touch became associated with women, characterized by proximity, birthing, and the home (Classen, 1993, 1998). Understood as interior sensibilities, touch, taste, and smell establish boundaries between private and public, normal and abnormal, familiar and strange. Western sensibilities mark the senses as physical rather than cultural, a hegemonic practice which, controls and objectifies bodies, categorizing them by gender, race, and class. In contrast clean, pure light was a symbol of ultimate mastery.

Light became a founding metaphor in philosophy and metaphysics with many scholars extending the signification of this mythological form. Irigaray (1993) concurs with this orientation but argues that it upholds the power of exclusion, where light reduces everything to the same. Difference can only be conceived of as absence or invisibility. In the absence of light, darkness was often reduced to metaphors of a cave or configured as a loss—images Irigaray argues are analogous to the womb, signifying women's displacement from the space of metaphysics and signaling a process of limitation. The visible (intellect), defined as objective consciousness expelled difference and the invisible (darkness often associated with Hysteria and lack).

Sight is a non-temporal sense. We 'see' things simultaneously. It operates iconically and does not presume causality, thereby establishing unity and distance. Touch is also an iconic sense. However, as a contact sense it offers contiguous access to an object, turning distance into proximity. Touch is differential and comparative while sight only intimates

this on the level of judgment. It is a temporal sense bounded in space and time. Touch as a tactile contact sense alters the ways in which we perceive objects, providing access to depth and surface, inside and outside. Tactile terms for thought express active involvement with the subject matter. In a specular economy which privileges distance and separation, touch threatens borders and signals potential danger as a mode of knowing through proximity. Touch poses different ways of 'making sense' of the world, challenging the mechanisms of visual perception. As a way of knowing, sensory experiences are expressed with, in, and through the body.

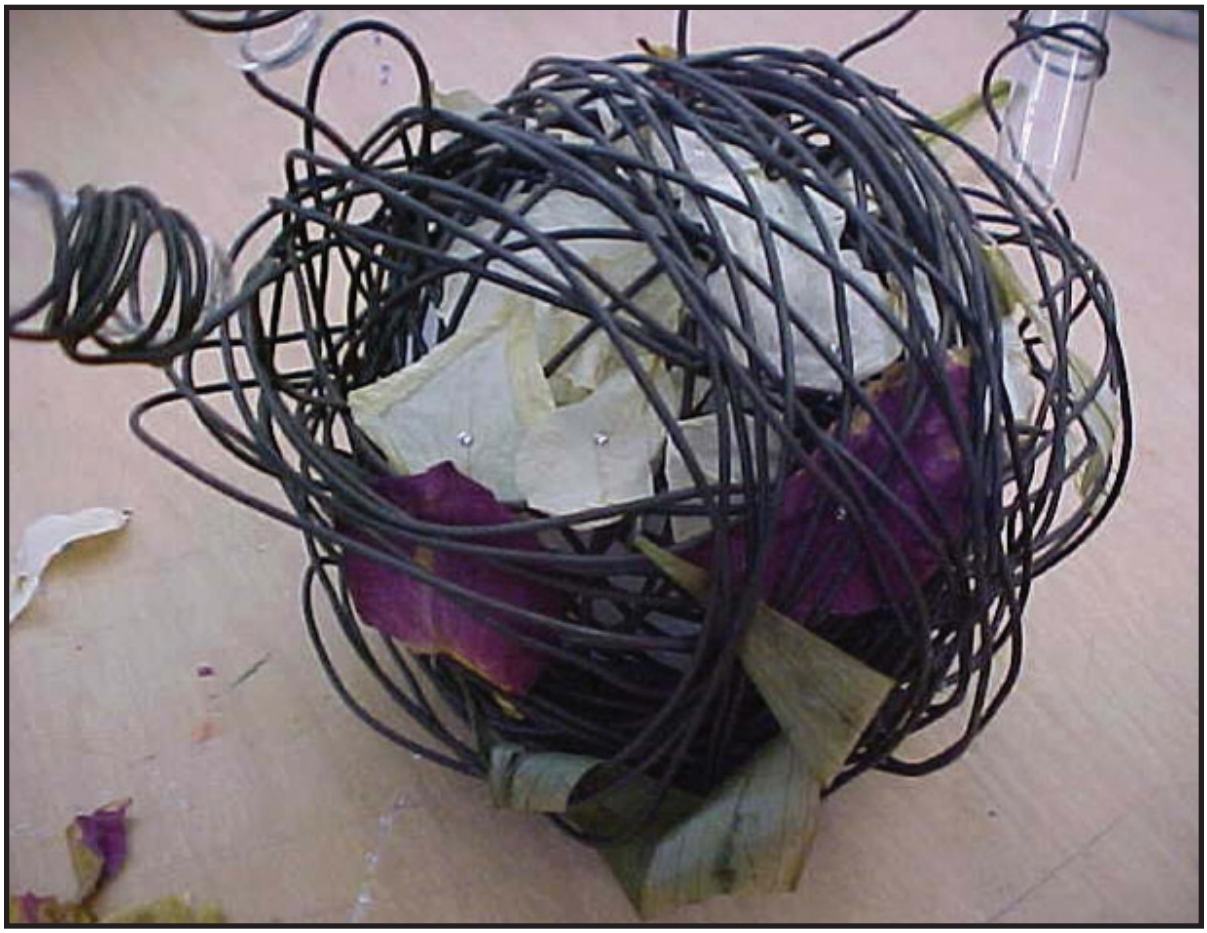
It is precisely because touch is a bodied sense that threatens boundaries that it becomes a powerful and disruptive theory for thinking through bodies, visual culture, and education. Touch as a mode of knowing brings the body *inside the visible* such that the boundaries between interior and exterior become porous and folded. In this chapter I will analyze Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1968) theory of touch as *Flesh* intersected with the readings of feminist philosophers, post-colonial theorists, scholarship from visual culture and artist's practices that engage with this evocative sense in an attempt to re-position an ethical and ontological understanding of 'bodies' and being-in-the-world in the everyday as intercorporeality.



I begin by compiling notes, documentation, and biological graphs of different species of rose petals. I visit numerous gardens drawing and photographing a variety of strains. In my studio I press and preserve countless rose petals, pinning them in rows on my studio wall, placing them in bowls and petri dishes, fastening them to paper or stuffing them in tiny sewn silk purses. My intent is not to know or to learn their names but to keep myself open to their meanings, to become attentive to the fullest force of their reality. There is a need in my process, a desire to go deeper, and this need requires being overwhelmed. There is something transgressive in this excess, a blatant obtrusiveness in the enormous. There is also a sense of intimacy, the delicate, and the fragile; knowledge that we feel but cannot name.

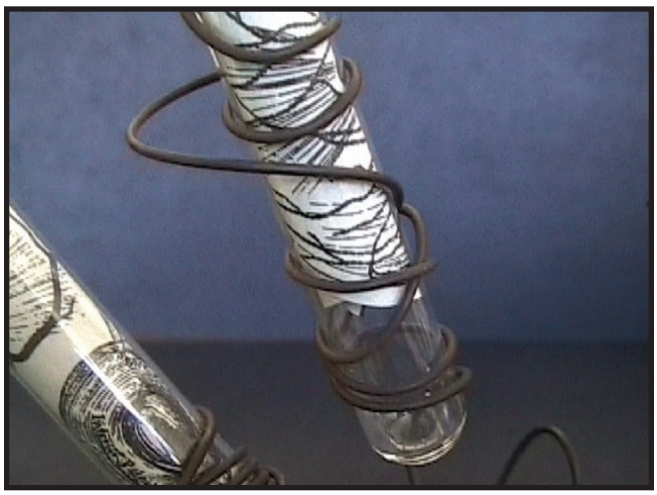
Rose tips become my mantra; *Altissimo, Sevillana, Burning Desire, Intrigue, Purple heart and Raven. The heads, bursts of crimson and scarlet red merge together as one flower. But spread out on the wall, sewn, and pinned, they'll be something else. Pressed, dried, turned brown and brittle, their volume and presence will not just be enumerated. It will be felt. They twist as they dry, the edges curl, shapes that spiral and collapse.*

From a distance you can't tell.
But up close, marks of humans.
Red threads.



At first glance *External Openings* seems to embody a somewhat literal rendition of the hard outer shell of the body contrasted by a fragile, earthy interior. On closer attention one realizes that the rose petals aren't so much on the inside as they are woven between and intersecting with the wrapped wire structure, altering the overall surface of the form. The wire and flowers are swathed in an irregular pattern, crisscrossing threads of metal and dried flesh. A few petals puncture the boundary of the skin. The fingers, glass test tubes, protruding from the wire base are filled with pages torn from a medical book, each finger an illustration of the body's codification and structure. On display the hand is unsettled, appearing gigantic in a world of the miniature. Although physically not much bigger than an average adult hand, its materiality and distorted stretching renders it gigantic and somewhat disoriented. This

distortion reveals what is concealed or held in suspension, uncovering and differentiating between the body's boundaries, un/folding interior and exterior.



The body is our mode of perceiving scale (Stewart, 1993). It is a measurement for what is interior to us, and what lies outside, external demarcations, and prohibitions between self and other. Exaggeration becomes a slippage, unfolding in time and space of the everyday. This time, writes Susan Stewart (1993) "is *textual*, lending itself to the formation of boundaries and to a process of interpretation delimited by our experience with those boundaries" (my emphasis, p. 13). In Heather's careful exploration, boundaries and scale are ruptured open; there are no stoppers on the test tubes, the paper strips wind their way out of the glass containers, wire and flower fail to cohere, confusing, un/doing the functional logic of the body. Splayed open the hand reaches out— touching, grasping, caressing.

External Openings is emblematic of touch as intercorporeality, a doubling between proportion and disproportion, inside and outside, control and excess. It is in/between two terms that the body resides. The body is threshold to the world. The in/between precedes and exceeds the binary terms; it is uncontainable in them. Thus, in/between—the body—space becomes embedded in existence. "The body is not *in* space; it is of it" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 171). Experience is in and of the body. An active, attentive, and aware body.

Merleau-Ponty's critical project was to destabilize the pervasive binary categories that distinguish western philosophy. The Cartesian legacy incised the mind and the body as distinct and separate. This separation poses thought or mind outside of the body and as the

nexus of existence and conscious reason. According to Elizabeth Grosz (1994) the body has inherited from Cartesian thought three concepts: the body as nature, a physical and organic substance; the body as a passive vessel or a tool which needs to be controlled and disciplined; and the body as conveyor of personal and private thoughts, feelings, and ideas. These views posit the interior and the external worlds as separate and distinct entities. Underlying all three views is the passivity and transparency of the body. The separation between the body (inside) and the world (outside) is characteristic of dualistic thought. Dualisms such as human or animal, culture or nature, mental or physical, analysis or intuition, rational or irrational, vision or touch and so on, implicate the mind or body split within them. The splitting objectifies, classifies, and orders existence, privileging one term over the other. Dualisms further reinforce inequalities of sexism, racism, ability and other such bodily boundaries.

> Dichotomous thinking necessarily hierarchizes and ranks the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other is suppressed, subordinated, negative counterpart. The subordinated term is merely the negation or denial, the absence or privation of the primary term its fall from grace; the primary term defines itself by expelling its other and in this process establishes its own boundaries and borders to create an identity for itself. (Grosz, 1994, p. 3)

Dualisms also inscribe a separation between self and other. Individual consciousness is viewed as private, self-contained, and invisible. The formation of existence, consciousness, is removed from contact with other minds or bodies and it is perceived as 'outside' of space and time.

Yet Merleau-Ponty (1968) challenged this Cartesian philosophical order claiming that: "to comprehend is to apprehend by coexistence" (p. 188). Nancy (2000) re-iterates this concept maintaining that meaning is constituted between beings. This between is not a connective bridge, but an unnamed space of contiguity, but not continuity, where in proximity distance is opened up and ruptured. Thus, feminist re-conceptualizations of body knowledge must consider the possibilities of interactions between bodies; body knowledge through

touch. To conceive of the body as being(s)-in-relation, between interior and exterior, invisible and visible, sensible and sentient, the body becomes a space of interrogation between terms. Inside the visible the body shifts the boundaries that demarcate separate domains, rendering the visible as a porous, fluid, and ambiguous space of knowing. Intercorporeality permeates the visible challenging us to 'see', 'to know' and 'to understand' through touch and as being(s)-in-relation. *What are the lived experiences of being(s)-in-relation? What interrogations are possible through proximity and touch? What might it mean to think through the body as embodied sensory experience?*

Thinking through the body is an approach that attends to the forms and folds of living bodies (Ahmed & Stacey, 2001). It is a thinking that reflects on inter-embodiment, on being(s)-in-relation, where one touches and is touched by others. Touch poses the questions of how knowledge is experienced as being-in-the world, knowledge that is open, knowledge that is felt. Embodiment becomes a process of exchange both as transition (movement and displacement) and translation (a form of encounter that is different from and independent of the origin). Intercorporeality engenders a way of thinking that is not separated from the body but emerges through an intertwining of mind and body, and through our interactions with the world.

A fold is both exterior and interior. In a fold inside and outside remain distinct, but not separate, rather they are doubled. Un/folding is not the reverse of a fold, but may result in additional folds. Thus, the fold appears interconnected, embracing touch and intercorporeality. The condition of the fold is the premise that it is not a void or an absence in the sense of nothing. Rather the fold is being as turned back on itself—touching.

A few scholars, I discovered, have written about theories of touch and the fold. Despite these shared interests my goal is not to develop a comprehensive survey of touch, nor to reveal the various gaps in their thinking but to puncture these theoretical perspectives with material explorations and bodied knowing, creating new understandings of what it means to know through touch. The student's artworks also provide numerous entanglements of un/folding, further enriching my thesis of intercorporeality.

Looking for something else one day
I discover a tiny white linen handkerchief embroidered with purple heather
I vaguely remember this item as being in my grandmother's possession
Its crisp, starched whiteness suggests that it was a keepsake
not for 'everyday' use
it faintly smells of lavender
or so I imagine
remembering the slight mixture of lavender soap
and sour milk of my grandmother's wrinkled cheek.

At a second-hand store I find eight white table napkins
each stitched with a tiny red flower
red threads flesh marking
in the studio I fold them
conscious of their surfaces being at once inside and outside
I sew rose petals and human hair into the folds
pleating, twisting, bodied memories.

Flesh folding back onto itself
revealing interior and exterior simultaneously.

body knowledge in and of the fold

Merleau-Ponty's essay '*The Intertwining—The Chiasm*' and his earlier writings in '*Phenomenology of Perception*' have been dedicated to the thesis that maintains a relationship between interior and exterior.[3] Rejecting a model that produces an isolated body, separate from the external world, Merleau-Ponty remains submerged in the notion that the body is the threshold of experience. Emphasizing lived material experiences he wants to return to immanence, a prediscursive experience before the imprint of language, reflection, or codification through conscious reason (Grosz, 1999). His ontology of openness displaces the subject-object distinction between self and other. "The bodies of others are not objects; they are phenomena that are coextensive with one's own body" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 118). It is a turn to carnal knowledge; a sensuous, feeling, touching body knowledge. Yet as Grosz (1999) reveals, this turn is not to impose the body outside of social conditions, but to discover within the sensible what makes the body open to others, objects, and the world.

Merleau-Ponty's contribution to scholarship has been in re-determining lived experience through the body. "I cannot understand the function of the living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far as I am a body which rises toward the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 75). It is through the body-in-the-world as an active and dynamic subject that objects present themselves, shaping experience through lived encounters. Merleau-Ponty's re-conceptualization of corporeal and sensory relations provides feminists with a way to think of sexed subjectivity through lived experience in the world. I might add that access to body knowledge through living experience is paramount for educational discourses. However, education has often mis-recognized lived experience, constituting the subject "I" as autonomous and without regard for the relations formed and shaped *between* beings. Similarly, sentient knowledge has often been reduced to simple abstract understandings of experience, neglecting the complex and contradictory manifestations of sensible knowledge. Sensible experiences should be conceived as intentionally, enfolded, and meaningfully related to one another.

What I intend to focus on through the work of Merleau-Ponty and feminist philosophers is body knowledge through touch; sentient knowledge constructed through encounters between being(s)-in-relation—body knowledge as intercorporeality. This move is an attempt to re-think communities of bodies not on the basis of individual subjectivities bound together through pre-existing commonalities (gender, race, class, ability etc.) but as an exposure to each other; an exposure that is marked by movement, excess, fluidity and un/familiar encounters.

The concept of *Flesh* emerges as Merleau-Ponty's ultimate designation for an ontology grounded in the body. Flesh belongs to neither the material body nor the world exclusively. It is both subject and lived materiality in mutual relation. It cannot then be conceived of as *mind* or as material substance. Rather, Flesh is a fold "coiling over of the visible upon the visible" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 138). It is a chiasmic space in/between the body and the world, where it folds back on itself in an intertwined and enmeshed relation. Flesh as Being gives rise to the perceiver (seer) and the perceived (seen) as interdependent aspects of subjectivity. The seer must take her place within the visible, becoming part of its very fabric. To see one becomes exposed. Understanding the self and other as a tangled chiasm, Merleau-Ponty insists that the dialectic must be understood as a reversal, a mode of being touched and touching. "Flesh is being as reversibility, being's capacity to fold in on itself, being's dual orientation inward and outward, being's openness, its reflexivity, the fundamental gap or dehiscence of being" (Grosz, 1999, p.154). To illustrate this Merleau-Ponty implements the metaphor of one hand touching and grasping the other hand, which in turn touches back. "A hand that touches is simultaneously an object touched. The two hands represent the body's capacity to occupy the position of both perceiving subject and object of perception" (Vasseleu, 1998, p. 26).

Thus, in the chiasm or the space of the fold, the body inserts itself between subject and object, interior and exterior.[4] "It is because there are these 2 doublings-up that are possible: the insertion of the world between the two leaves of my body…the insertion of my body between the 2 leaves of each thing and of the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 264). Perception is formed in proximity, reversible in and through the body. "Tactile perception involves perception of our own bodily state as we take in that which is outside of that state… The pressure involved in touch is a pressure on ourselves as well as upon objects" (Stewart, 1999, p. 31). The act of touching inverts the subject-object relationship conflating the boundaries between self and other. Touching engages the object in perception (i.e. touching a pile of hair is equated with a particular texture) but so too touching invites an interrogation of the self and the other (imbued memories of hair, loss, cutting, decay, and social relationships like going to the hairdressers). *This motility of touch* "transverses the boundary between interiority and externality and reciprocally returns to the agent of touching" (Stewart, 1999, p. 35).

Merleau-Ponty's thesis of reversibility poses that to see opens up the body as seen by others. This claim is quite different from traditional philosophical models, which designate vision as distant and separate, controlled by the seeing subject. It is within the chiasm or the fold that perception is doubled, embodied, and tangled.

Deleuze (1993) translates the fold as sensuous vibrations, a world made up of divergent series, an infinity of pleats and creases. Un/folding divides endlessly, folds within folds touching one another. "Matter thus offers an infinitely porous, spongy, or cavernous texture without emptiness, caverns endlessly contained in other caverns" (p. 5). Challenging Descartes, Deleuze is mindful of the fold as matter that cannot be divided into separable parts. A fold is not divisible into independent points, but rather any un/folding results in additional folds, it is the movement or operation of one fold to another. "The division of the continuous must not be taken as sand dividing into grains, but as that of a sheet of paper or of a tunic in fold, in such a way that an infinite number of folds can be produced…without

the body ever dissolving into point or minima. A fold is always folded within a fold" (p. 6). Perception is not a question then of part to whole but a singular totality "where the totality can be as imperceptible as the parts" (p. 87). Perception is not embodied in perceiving the sum of all parts rather it is distinguished by and within the fold.

The fold is the body between subject and object, a doubleness that "teaches us that each calls for the other" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 138). This between is a between that includes both terms, as in 'and' but also points to the uniqueness of each, and the limitless possibilities of their beyond. Between is the body in the threshold of the world, awake, enactive, and sensuous. The fold enables bodies to come together, to touch in a proximinal relation, to form knowledge as intercorporeality. "What is open to us, therefore, with the reversibility of the visible and the tangible, is—if not yet the incorporeal—at least an intercorporeal being" (p. 143). "Thought is a relationship with oneself and with the world as well as a relationship with the other; hence it is established in the three dimensions at the same time" (p. 145). However, having presented Flesh as reversibility, Merleau-Ponty then emphasizes that the two hands do not take up the same space. They are not unified as one being in space, but interpenetrate each other. We cannot experience touching and being touched at the same time, rather we pass from one role to the other. Flesh as differentiation is the "dehiscence" of being—the opening of being, or as Nancy (2000) states, where meaning "comes apart" (p. 2).

Irigaray's (1993) concern with metaphors that perpetuate women's absence from legitimate knowledge finds fault with such a distinction and argues that Merleau-Ponty's thesis of reversibility does not account for radical difference and therefore does in fact foster a theory of the same. Yet, Irigaray has also been criticized for essentializing women's experience. My arguments allow for each scholar to resonate and fold into each other, extending their theoretical positions of touch.

Committed to the primacy of perception Merleau-Ponty maintains that the senses cannot be separated from each other as they interact and are therefore translatable. This move allows him to develop his theory of Flesh, touching and touching back, to explain perception of the seer and the seen. In fact, scholars concerned with acts of looking and seeing in the visual arts have taken up this transfer, referring to the qualities of synaesthesia that are experienced when viewing a work of art (Carson & Pajaczkowska, 2001). Synaesthesia refers to the blurring of boundaries between the senses so that in certain circumstances art becomes a synthesis of imagined and material experiences, where evocations of touch, taste, warmth, and smell are possible and we are immersed "in a world where we can hear painted images" (Stewart, 1999, p. 24).

Film critic Laura Marks (1999; 2002) has written extensively on sensory experiences within intercultural cinema. Her theoretical position, which she terms 'Haptic Vision" draws on synaesthetic epistemologies that include both the artist's attempt to translate to visual art knowledges of the body, as well viewer responses that are embodied and sensual. The works of art she examines trouble the space between vision and the body and point to the limits of passive absorption and encourage a more active engagement with the work. The sentiment that prevails throughout her work is the premise that haptic vision moves along the surface of the work of art as fragmented and often elliptical sensations that the viewer is able to perceive as textual. Haptic perception "privileges the material presence of the image" (Marks, 1999, p. 163) and involves the body in the process of meaning making. Marks also extends her theory from audience reception and meaning making to the field of art theory and criticism arguing that haptic vision replaces critical historical frameworks with models of embodied engagement that are textual, porous, and open.

I begin my explorations of touch from the position of synaesthetic knowing, a knowing immersed in the body in and of the world. However, what I want to expand on or bring together are theories of touch as synaesthetic knowing and theories of touch as knowledge formed between bodies. Both approaches share an awareness of touch as

relational, proximinal, and opposed to dichotomous thinking. To this extent I use the term intercorporeality to embrace both understandings of touch.

Feminist scholars like Irigaray (1993) and Grosz (1994) argue that Merleau-Ponty's philosophy privileges vision over touch. While I might be inclined to agree to a certain extent that the momentum of Merleau-Ponty's project was propelled by vision, many feminist scholars while arguing for the primacy of touch sterilize it of its synaesthetic nature and leave absent those aspects of tactile epistemologies and sensuous knowing that Merleau-Ponty was so careful to include in his exploration of Flesh and the body in and of the world. Thus, I embrace and find resonance in both perspectives and argue that questions need to be posed that examine bodied encounters that include sensuous, synaesthetic knowing.

In addition, Grosz's (1994) feminist critique of Merleau-Ponty's work, insists that he assumes a universal body, read as masculine, and thus did not account for sexed subjectivity. One could follow such arguments and make claims that he did not allow for racial, sexualized, or differently abled bodies either. Such a reading further reduces bodies to specific identity categorizations. Instead what I focus on from feminist theory is the primacy of touch and its relation to difference within knowledge production.

Irigaray (1993) alleges that Merleau-Ponty's use of tactile metaphors to elucidate vision do not account for the specificities of the maternal body, and continue to place the senses in a hierarchical relationship. Irigaray claims that vision and touch are not reciprocal and inter-dependent. Furthermore, while Merleau-Ponty borrows maternal-feminine metaphors to explicate his theory of Flesh, they continue to privilege a specular economy because he disregards their maternal-female specificity.

Merleau-Ponty is not alone when he argues that to be born, to be able to see, is the beginning of knowing and being (Vasseleu, 1998). Yet, Irigaray (1993) and Shildrick (2001) maintain that tactile sensations begin in the womb, a space of darkness and moisture, filled with a rhythmic contiguous tie to another (the mother)—being(s)-in-relation. Even the passage into light is marked by touch (the birth canal). Touch (and Irigaray also offers sound) is the first sense of knowing, placing the tangible within the invisible.

The image of the womb becomes all the more exegetically poignant in Jean Luc Nancy's essay *Painting in the Grotto*. Here Nancy (1976) conjures up the motif of the first primal painting—the hands printed on the walls of the caves of Lascaux. It is in the Grotto that consciousness is born as the painter recognizes the trace of his hand on the wall. The moment of creation is signified in the gesture of a hand touching a wall. Being is revealed in a stroke. Inverting traditional aesthetics where in mimesis painting (art) becomes a copy of the world, Nancy (1996) writes: "Painting is not a copy of the Idea: the Idea is the gesture of painting" (p. 78). Gesture involves the sense of touch both as an activity of the hand and through its etymological root *gerere*—to bear, to carry (Nikolopoulou, 2003). Nancy's philosophical move turns consciousness as reason towards gesture/gestation as a coming into being through touch and creativity. Reinvesting the moment of creation with the sense of touch Nancy extends Merleau-Ponty's translatability of touch to vision, emphasizing the primal presence of touch through gesture.

Merleau-Ponty's thesis of reversibility is, according to Irigaray, impossible. There are two impossibilities noted by Irigaray. First, Merleau-Ponty's theory of non-coincidence is premised on the fact that the two hands are from the same body. This he argues amounts to difference not unification. Irigaray (1993, 2001) disagrees contending that in fact that touch implies "two", the first "two" being mother and child. It is in the recognition of "two" that difference is possible. Second, and in accordance with her first disagreement is that the metaphor of reaching out and grasping is an asymmetrical relationship of power and possession. Irigaray re-images this as two hands joined in prayer or two lips touching. While the maternal-child touch she argues is the primary sense, the 'two lips', both from above and below, represent the way in which women's sexed subjectivity is always defined through touch. Thus, touch is fundamentally a sense through which beings come to know their lived experience with the world.

> The hands joined, palms together, fingers outstretched, constitute a very particular touching. A gesture often reserved for women…and which evokes, doubles, the *touching of the lips* silently applied upon one another. A touching more intimate that that of one hand taking hold of the other. A phenomenology of the passage between interior and exterior. A phenomenon that remains in the interior, does not appear in the light of day, speaks of itself only in gestures, remains always on the edge of speech, gathering the edges without sealing them. (Irigaray, 1993, p. 161)

While Merleau-Ponty's ontology of non-dualism through a double enfoldment places the body in the world, it doesn't account for the radical other (Vasseleu, 1998). Extending Merleau-Ponty's conjecture of the body as between the two leaves of the world, Irigaray suggests that instead of the body as the threshold of experience, mucous becomes a more apt metaphor.

Mucous, "which always marks the passage from inside to outside, which accompanies, and "lubricates" the mutual touching of the body's parts and regions" returns experience to the primacy of touch (Grosz, 1999, p. 160). Irigaray (1993) argues: "*the tangible is*, and *remains*, *primary in its opening*. Its touching on, of, and by means of the other. The dereliction of its ever touching this first touching" (p. 162).

Mucous is neither subject nor object but the inter-determinancy between them, unmediated by external sensibilities (Grosz, 1999). Mucous is a more visceral, pulsating and active body knowing. The mucous can also be understood on the level of maternal-fetal bond where blood courses through and is shared by both bodies. For Irigaray, feminine morphology is never complete: “The birth that is never accomplished, the body never created one and for all, the form never definitively completed” (1985, p. 217). Thus, touch is not only the first sense but remains the primary mode of knowing.

Mucous escapes control. It cannot be grasped in its fluidity, or contained. As a lubricant it slips and seeps investing touch with more of a caress than a grasp. It is precisely the fluid embodiment of touch that threatens boundaries, sustains excess, dislocating system and order.

In *mouth speaking flesh* the repellent sound and un/settling images are grounded in a visceral and synaesthetic experience. There is also a letting go of form, a detachment emphasizing an opening, an exposure. It is ephemeral and ambiguous, an enchanted instant in an uninterrupted flow of repetitions. Destabilizing the gaze by provoking other sensations the video emits a series of oscillations. Seeing becomes hearing and tasting through texture. The body is in and of the fold.

Un/folding entangles and intersects lines and spaces through dynamic movement. It is an active process of reverberation in a continuous interplay of meaning making. Folds of theory and art are constitutive of each other—enmeshed. I read and make meaning through philosophy and language. But I come to know through the visceral body in and through encounters. This knowing is not a replication of established signs, but a penetration of the invisible, through touch and the materialization of art. They are not separate nor applied one on top of each other. Art becomes body knowledge; redolent, open, and full of excess.

Folds: excess

On entering the space one encounters an un/expected relationship with the work. The familiar becomes grotesque, and the grotesque reveals itself as familiar—human hair trapped and entangled, soft tendrils that cling to a host. Hair, a seemingly stable substance is un/done becoming something else entirely. Thus, the piece is experienced twice, first as something familiar and reliable, then as a more intricately contrived world of interacting materials and elaborate visual patterns. Curiosity gives way to further curiosity, examination gives way to further examination: the piece breathes like a living thing.

The body is revealed rather than represented; is delivered as fragment, effluence, or field, rather than as form or picture. The materiality is literally that which falls from the body, an excess through which to enact touch; and with its associative chain of cobwebs, dust, and mourning, it is a haunted touch, the space's atmosphere of loss memorialized in the fetishistic ritual of gathering and weaving locks of hair. But the loss is troubled by the in/temperance of hair crawling, growing, and feeding on the walls. It wants to take over. In this instance the space reverberates between an excess of loss and an excess of fecundity, where in tension and uncertainty, the doubling questions the bodies boundaries re-locating the body as relational and intercorporeal.

excess, the un/familiar, and economies of touch

Bodily fluids, including mucous, have often been addressed as aspects of the body that threaten closure and containment. Similarly, the grotesque and mutant body disturbs classic, ideal 'norms' (Shildrick, 2001, 2002). The grotesque body, the mutant body, and mucous all have in common what Julia Kristeva (1982) refers to as abjection. Abjection is the body's effluence, which are always present but which are contained, repressed, or envisioned as lack as the body emerges towards a clean and proper state. The abject cannot be completely expelled from the body, but is always already present, disturbing and endangering the limits of the body. Bodily fluids entertain the permeability of the body, and attest to the disgust of the un/known. They mark the body as unstable and uncertain, formed through proximinal relations of touch.

Theories of abjection suggest that the fundamentally unstable corpus is always already present, threatening to reveal the corporeal vulnerability of the self. For instance Margrit Shildrick's (2001, 2002) research on conjoined twins attests to the threat of a body without any clear borders, "an unnerving doubling of the one in the other" (Shildrick, 2001, p. 390). As opposed to the normative body, which posits the separation and proper constitution of bodily form, the figure of excess folds self and other through proxminal relations. Therefor Irigaray's mucous needs to re-configure excess as a fantastical corporeality that is imaged and lived out as uncertain and vulnerable.

To re-define excess through touch we need to recognize difference not as lack but as "*lack of containment*" (Grosz, 1994, my emphasis). It is a body constructed within complexity, a formless flow, a viscosity. *And what if this seepage is not a condition of the monster and contamination, but a way of being that resists the structures of domination, systems of codification, and control? How might we re-consider body knowledge as fantastical and in excess?*

Shildrick's (2001, 2002) research on concorporation and the ethics of separation challenges us to think of touch not as a risk to be averted, but as openness. Unmodified concorporation challenges us to re-think the secure subject body, as a leaking, flowing body, blurring the boundaries between self and other. Skin becomes "an organ of communication", a fluid, contiguous space of difference as a "living, moving border" (Shildrick, 2001, pp. 401-402). Shildrick's thesis reasons that we need to consider an economy of touch in order to mobilize new configurations of the subject. In so doing, difference is not created through separation (i.e. that only through separation the conjoined twins become autonomous selves) but that being(s)-in-relation create difference through proximity. Instead of understanding touch as something to be averted, we might begin to un/ravel its corporeality as open, fluid, and shifting. The vulnerability of touch should not be averted but interrogated as the site of differentiation and difference.

> Touch is always an embodied gesture that may sustain a reciprocal sense of solicitude and intimacy that is grounded in the mutual instabilities of our corporeal existence. To touch and be touched speaks to our exposure to, and immersion in, the world of others, and to the capacity to be moved beyond reason, in the space of shared vulnerabilities. In the move away from the fantasy of the wholly unified and self-complete embodied subject…we may lose the illusion of autonomy, but gain access to a more sustaining mode of becoming with others….a space of holding together in which radical difference replaces pale reflection. (Shildrick, 2001, p. 402)

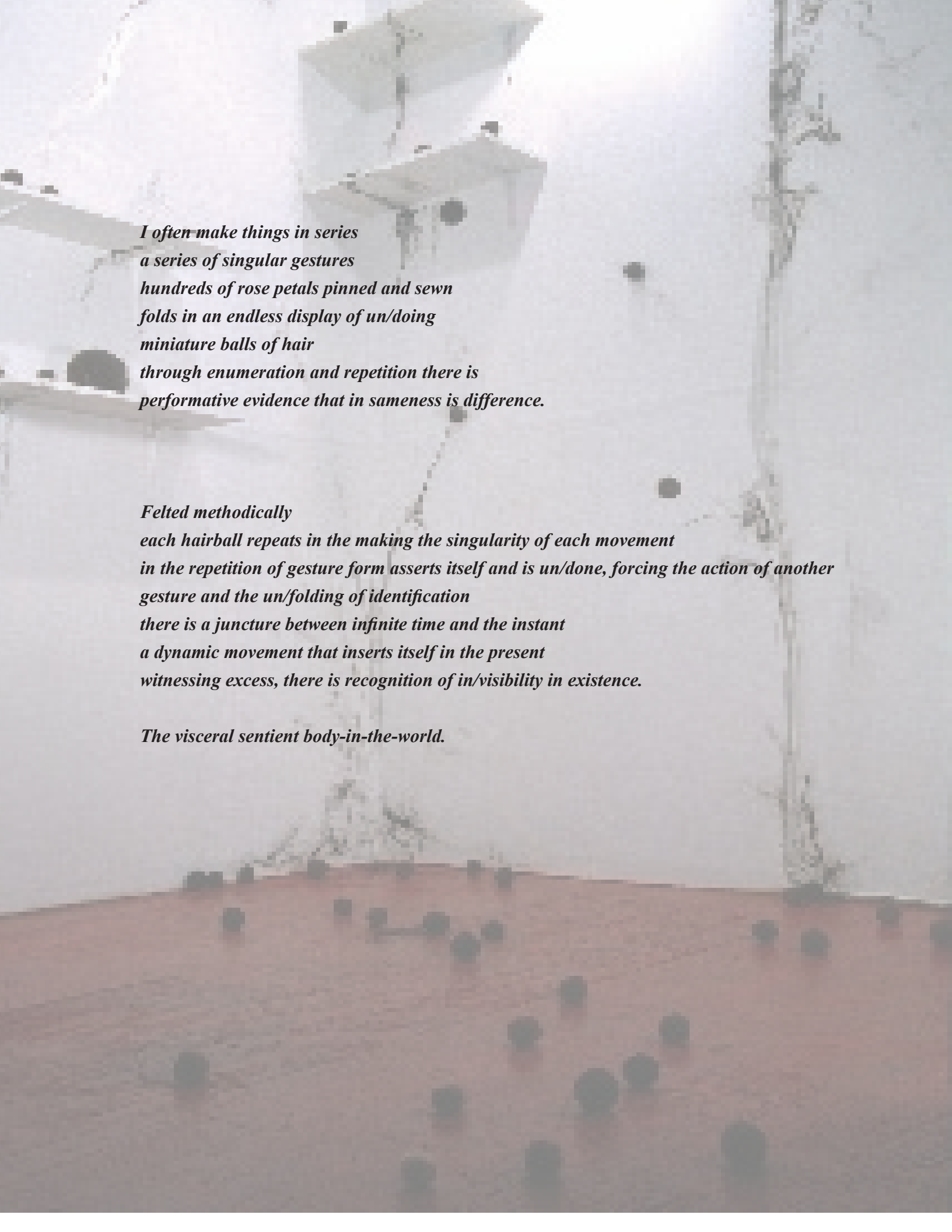
It is within these paradigms of difference mediated through encounters that Sarah Ahmed (2000) composes yet another layer to the fold. As a feminist postcolonial scholar she contends that touch needs to recognize the surface of the skin as a site of touching and being touched. Skin is a surface that registers different types of touching and in the moment of recognition (being touched) difference is produced and produced differently. In *Strange Encounters*, Ahmed *thinks through skin*, in such a way that the figure of the stranger is not someone we fail to recognize, but a body marked strange and un/known through proximinal

relations. These revisions contend that encounters produce the un/known and un/familiar. Identity is not defined as bracketed categories of race, gender, class etc., but is re-constituted through lived encounters as being(s)-in-relation. She asks the question: How do bodies come to be lived differently precisely because they are differentiated from other bodies? In other words how does intercorporeality produce different knowledges differently? Ahmed challenges feminist scholars to re-define body discourses that position the body as normal, that romanticize the abject body (exotic other), and that assume encounters are neutral and transparent (hybrid body or nomad). Theories of touch need not be replaced, but interrogated and re-constituted through *economies of touch*, that account for radical difference without reducing difference to specific categorizes of identity. Touch remains a primary and compelling way of knowing and being-in-the-world. Again, my questions continue to un/fold:

How can *excess* and the *un/familiar* which are formed through proximinal relations become not moments to expel or resolve towards completion, but understood as uncertain and shifting ways of knowing and being?

How can we conceive of intercorporeality as excess that creates body knowledge as un/familiar?

For example, how might a student like Heather interrogate body knowledge as excess and the un/familiar, aspects of which are integral to theories of touch and intercorporeality, through a sculpture like her piece *External Openings*? Instead of creating knowledge that translate the strange(r) into familiar understandings, a practice I argue neutralizes and normalizes body knowledge, how might the process of embodiment be interrogated through the practice of "making strange" (Mulvey, 1991)? In this sense, how might Heather understand body knowledge in and of the world in-the-everyday as un/familiar spaces of strangeness that produce and differentiate knowledges?



I often make things in series
a series of singular gestures
hundreds of rose petals pinned and sewn
folds in an endless display of un/doing
miniature balls of hair
through enumeration and repetition there is
performative evidence that in sameness is difference.

Felted methodically
each hairball repeats in the making the singularity of each movement
in the repetition of gesture form asserts itself and is un/done, forcing the action of another gesture and the un/folding of identification
there is a juncture between infinite time and the instant
a dynamic movement that inserts itself in the present
witnessing excess, there is recognition of in/visibility in existence.

The visceral sentient body-in-the-world.

the body as singular

Post-modernism and feminist epistemologies have continually insisted on the categories of gender, race, class, and sexuality, as situated knowledge (e.g. Grosz, 1994). Difference is structured through cultural narratives, power relations, and desires. However, in naming and identifying all of the material and cultural complexities of a subject, these categories in themselves reduce bodies to static, stable descriptions that do not attest to the multiplicities, ambiguities, and itinerant configurations of subjectivity. Moreover, they inscribe a centre or a point of origin.

In contrast, post-colonial scholar Peter Hallward (2001) submits a delineation of a singular post-colonial paradigm from a specific understanding of individuation. His singular concept has its roots in the Deleuzian fold and the rhizome. His arguments also resonate with the work of Jean-Luc Nancy (2000) and Luce Irigaray (2001) delimiting a singular ethical understanding of what it means to live, to inquire, and to be—being(s)-in-relation.

Singularity, according to Hallward (2001) is distinguished from the specific. The specific poses commonalities and relationships shared between things. It is produced and constrained by external forces. Common traits are gathered together through external laws as the sum of parts. Specific individuation is categorical, classified, and historicized. The gendered body. The racial body. The dis/abled body. The Queer body. The body identified by location, origin, and speech. The specific is situated subjectivity, positionality, and plurality. Specific subjectivity locates the speaker as 'being from a particular' location and therefore 'speaks' from this position. It assumes a relationship with others that share similar qualities.

The singular, on the other hand, is unique. It expresses in a singular meaning—multiples. Thus, unlike specific subjectivity, which is plural, the singular expresses its multiplicity through One. An example in language is the use of the slash in my writing style denoting that the word 'un/familiar' means both familiar and strange, and possibly neither while also attending to the space between the terms. "The singular proceeds internally and is constituted in its own creation. The singular, in each case, is constituent of itself, expressive of itself, immediate to itself" (Hallward, 2001, p. 3). Criteria are not external to the singular but are determined through its own action and creation. Singularity is not to become universal. Rather the singular in an on-going differentiation.

Respectful of the rhizome and the fold, the singular is not the sum of parts but the whole belonging to a single ruptured moment. It is infinite, excessive, and fluid. It is intra-being. Subjectivity is not shared between beings but unique to each being. Accordingly, singular meaning requires that you step outside of it, that you let go of the familiar and refuse specific positions in order for meaning to be created.

Hallward's use of the singular and the specific informs his understanding of post-colonial theory as it pertains to literary scholarship. Contrary to post-colonial theory that is grounded in specific locatedness, singularity poses complete immersion that ruptures and creates new situations and subjectivities. Working against postmodern abstractions that resist normalizing practices by attending to context and the plurality of subject positions, Hallward proposes a singular view. This he claims is crucial because post-modern trends towards fragmentation and complex understanding of difference have in fact become homogenized simply by over pluralizing situations. Furthermore the specific insists that "all postcolonial positions must be seen as 'embedded in specific histories', as part of an 'empirical specificity'" arguing that the migrant and the hybrid remain particular and partial knowledges deeply rooted in a past (Hallward, 2001, p.22). The ubiquitous pattern of specifying categories of gender, race, and other such affiliations needs to be replaced by a model that resists specification but not differentiation. Post-colonial theory that tends towards

the singular is in constant self-transformation, it does not place holds on roots or origins, and "it creates the dynamic medium of its own existence" (Hallward, 2001, p. 23). Thus, the singular becomes its own reference point.

Why a singular body?

A thesis of touch as intercorporeality is premised on the conviction that body knowledges are formed through being(s)-in relation. Each encounter produces differentiation that simultaneously produces difference and different knowledges. Thus, we need to question the oppositions between self and other, and move beyond a position that always privileges one term over the other. Furthermore instead of thinking of the specifics of a particular body, we need to begin thinking about the *particularities of encounters* through which knowledges and beings are produced. That is we should move our attention from the specifics of self and/or other towards the singularities of encounters themselves.

For instance, as Nancy (2000) and Ahmed (2000) argue, not only are bodies different, they are different from one another. They do not differ from an archetype or generality, but are singular differences. For instance understanding the body as singular moves away from the hegemonic practice of establishing a set of conditions that infer that there is a 'normal' body that all other deviations radiate from. A singular approach would recognize the differentiation within all patterns of recognition instead questioning the conditions that create and perpetuate hegemonic practices. The singular is not what is shared, but what is exposed.

A singular body does not accumulate but becomes, generating and creating a new set of conditions. It is dynamic, multiple, and folded. The singular body is its own reference point, it cannot be reduced to norms, nor is it understood through binary relationships. The singular creates.

Irigaray (2001) states that to know through proximity does not reduce the other into the self-same rather it is irreducible. It is a knowing of two who are unique. “What makes me one, and perhaps even unique, is the fact that you are and I am not you” (Irigaray, 2001, p. 16). “To be irreducible to one another can assure the two and the between, the us and the between-us” (p. 14). When we recognize that alterity cannot be divided into discrete categories that are shared among strangers, thus rendering the other more familiar, we come to understand that self and other are formed in relations of touch where both are attentive to each other as difference and as un/familiar. Perception is created through a singular encounter in the present. The singular body erupts.

Resisting dichotomies the singular body allows for an interiority that is neither transcendent nor invisible and inferior, but an interiority that is premised on a fold “an inside more interior than the extreme interior, that is more interior than the intimacy of the world and the intimacy that belongs to each” (Nancy, 2000, p. 11). This interior is both inside and outside simultaneously, and it is neither, respectful of the spaces between the folds. Opposed to abstract universalism the singular body is immersed in sentient knowing, a body that requires touching and being touched.

The singular body creates and is created in the between, in proximity. Between, argues Jean Luc Nancy (2000), is not a connective tissue or a bridge “it is interlacing whose extremities remain separate even at the every centre of the knot” (p. 5). Being, he argues “cannot *be* anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the *with* and as the *with* of this singularly plural coexistence” (p. 2). ‘Being singular plural’ recognizes that not only are all individuals different they are all different from one another. They do not differ from a norm, from a centre or radial axis. Being is not one opposed to two, but one among many. The singular is not single; it is “the plural singularity of Being of being. We reach it to the extent that we are in touch with ourselves and in touch with other beings” (Nancy, 2000, p. 13). It is a becoming of being; it is coming to presence through the un/familiar. “A singularity is always a body and all bodies are singularities” (Nancy, 2000, p. 18). A singular body is not

beings-in-common but beings-in-relation, revealing, exposing, and between. The singular is indivisible. Any un/folding produces further folds. Thus, a singular body un/folding in each instant creates itself; it is infinite, excessive, and deterritorialized. Being with and between is not a sum of bodies, it is not incorporation or consumption, beings-in-relation are intercorporeal. Therefore, a singular body is not contained by history, logos, or property. Instead it increases, mutates, and becomes something completely other. It is excess as presence.

Perhaps a visual encounter would be beneficial.

The artwork of Korean-American artist Kim Sooja displaces and exceeds a feminist framing that affirms the power of the female body. Sooja uses the iconography of the Korean Bottari to explore issues relating to transculturalism and embodied subjectivity. Bottari a multicoloured patchwork cloth, stitched from remnants of discarded fabrics similar to western quilting practices, is used to cover food, bedding, or for wrapping luggage, gifts or other items in transit. Kim Sooja describes Bottari:

> As a medium, bottari is traditionally feminine. In Korean the expression to 'bundle up a bottari' means that a woman has lost her status in the household and has been forced out. Bottari also has significance as a container, or vessel, for carrying and transporting all sort of goods. It can be unwrapped just as it can be bundled up and in this regard I see our body as being, in the subtlest kind of way, a kind of bottari. (as cited in Sunjung, 2001, p. 131)

Although the feminine practice of sewing and the domestic associations of the Bottari are arguable themes in her work, limiting a discussion of her practices in this way only reduces her complex visual explorations to a specific body with a specific history. Such discussions create nostalgia for a sense of belonging, arguing the Bottari as a point of origin rooted in a sense of identity. This specificity imprisons the body as a souvenir.

> The souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia. The souvenir generates a narrative which reaches only "behind," spiraling in a continually inward movement rather than outward toward the future. (Stewart, 1993, p. 135).

In absence an object of desire is substituted for the original context.

> We might say that this capacity of objects to serve as traces of authentic experience is, in fact, exemplified by the souvenir. The souvenir distinguishes experiences. We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather, we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of narrative. Through narrative the souvenir substitutes a context of perpetual consumption for its context of origin. (Stewart, 1993, p. 135).

However, Sooja refers to the Bottari bundles through their relationship to the body, skin, and the tactile qualities of cloth, moving away from identity politics to an analysis of the body within the production and circulation of knowledges. "I regard botarri as the body itself. Like botarri, which can be bundled and unwrapped, the presence of the body lingers and departs. The cloth, in my view, is like our skin" (as cited in Sunjung, 2001, p. 133).

Sooja's initial visual explorations played with the surface qualities of Bottari cloth, stretching and hanging them in unusual configurations throughout the exhibition space. These surface experiments developed into explorations of space where the Bottari bundles conceptualized the materiality of cloth as assemblage. Wrapping and winding the Bottari fabric, Sooja examines the relation between cloth, bodies, and memory, an exploration that is guided through material-semiotic relations and sensuous knowing. "Cloths are more than matter, they touch the skin and are one with the living body" (Sooja, retrieved 2002), disrupting the cultural narrative of nostalgia, pushing viewer into an alternative set of relationships about bodies and spaces. Using the concept and figure of the Bottari, Sooja

positioned these body-like forms throughout exhibition spaces so that they appeared to inhabit space; the body as space. In later works, Sooja loaded the bundles into a flatbed truck and took them on a journey across Korea and eventually into India and other geographical locations.

In *2727 kilometers Bottari Truck*, Sooja displaces the Bottari bundle as static art object by taking them on a nomadic journey where both the journey and the resting points along the way constitute the art experience. Sooja's Bottari truck works insist on the multi-inhabitation of spaces and the transcultural circulation of bodies, knowledges, and social relations, rather than the notion of specificity and positionality linked with identity. These artworks speak to movement and displacement that is itself the object/subject of interrogation. Instead of movement being understood as a journey between 'home and away', which implies a binary reading of either belonging or unbelonging, Sooja's Bottaris produce a field of inter-textual meaning of their own.

Specific interpretations of luggage and travel position the suitcase (in this case the Bottari bundle) as a symbol of loss and exile, a nostalgic framing of movement and transition. Like the souvenir, this signifying interpretation renders the Bottari as a static marker. Instead a singular view, one that is argued by Rogoff (2000) insists that luggage be understood from the perspective of excess, or what she refers to as Derrida's notion of 'the supplement'. Derrida writes (1997): "The supplement adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the fullest measure of presence. It cumulates and accumulates presence" (p. 144). Thus, as supplement the Bottari is more than a marker of cultural displacement but the very fabric of existence of translation and transition. It is a body in and of the world un/folding.

However, it is Sooja's most recent works entitled *Needle Woman* that affects most successfully the idea of the singular body. In these performance and video documented installations the body reveals the instability and uncertainty of image not as mirroring, but as doubling, asignifying ruptures. There is an invocation to her work, a fluidity that resists

containment. In these performance pieces Sooja transforms her own body into a needle. A needle she writes is a metaphor for breathing and communication. “Previously thread and needle sewed cloth whereas this time my body is a medium that sews wide cloth that is nature” (Sooja cited in Sunjung, 2001, p. 141). These performances, like the truck series take place in different cities. Here Sooja’s needle-like body, which stands completely still on a crowded street, confronts the viewer, who reacts differently to this un/familiar encounter. Some give her a passing glance; others stop and stare intently. However, these encounters frame her body as a boundary, a needle that pierces and punctures an un/seen relationship with other bodies. As needle her body disrupts space creating an instantaneous opening that is characterized by un/certainty and the temporality of time. Instead of a discourse that divides her body from a viewer’s body, a discourse that constructs borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’, *Needle Woman* locates the singular body as the site of knowledge production. Rather than viewing her body as a boundary that marks some bodies as belonging and some bodies as strange, a process of division and dichotomous thinking, one needs to examine her work “as the actual border itself, demarcating and embodying the actual lines of difference” (Rogoff, 2000, p. 136). This displaces meaning from a pivotal axis with two sides, towards a singular approach that examines her work as internally creative and resistant.

How can I reconcile feminist epistemologies of situated knowledge with a singular conception of subjectivity?

Feminist theories have been critical in undoing the traditions of universal knowledge, insisting that race, gender, and location are epistemological categories (e.g. Grosz, 1994; Harding, 1986; hooks, 2000). Positionality and situatedness are critical models of feminist and post-colonial thinking while also arguing that translations are always interpretive, partial, and contingent (Haraway, 2004).

However, as Sarah Ahmed, Jane Kilby, Celia Lury, Maureen McNeil and Beverly Skeggs (2000) argue in the introduction to their edited volume on feminist thought, feminist theory must not only seek transformative practices it too must undergo a transformation. Thinking through feminism needs what they term "an ethics of address" asking: "What might be 'better' ways of encountering others, of speaking and of hearing, and of responding to difference and disagreement?" (p. 3). Contending that feminist theories themselves are not universal these scholars suggest that new models of inquiry should examine how politicized identities are lived, experienced, and shaped. Countering the idea that feminism *has* a standpoint, which assumes specific and authoritative knowledge against others, feminist trajectories should *take* standpoints. Thus, feminist transformations should not be seen as overcoming identity but a reflection on the limits of categories. Focusing on categories, they maintain, makes it difficult to adapt or make changes. Most poignantly these authors assert that thinking through feminism may require a process of *unlearning* whereby feminists learn to learn differently. Such encounters between beings necessitate an awareness of the multiplicities of difference that are in constant change and mutation, rather than as fixed positions of difference.

A singular approach to feminist thinking would not erase difference, identity, or location, it would however, argue that one position should not be privileged over another. Singularity un/does any possibility of norms, origins, and central axis through which to judge, order, and categorize identity. Similarly as Sarah Ahmed (Ahmed et. al. 2000) suggests, feminist thinking must refuse to understand difference as additive. An individual she argues must not be thought of as gendered in one instance and racialized in another. Alternatively, "these forms of identification work *simultaneously* to produce specific subject positions" (Ahmed et. al. 2000, p. 112). In this sense identity moves from accumulative towards complexity, a complexity that un/folds towards the something else yet unnamed. It is distinct, unique, un/familiar and indivisible. Difference becomes an interaction between bodies. This model of feminist thinking is not simply about celebrating difference and the

politics of identity, nor is it a return to essentialized liberal accounts of unified 'sisterhood', but considers the very structure of the between, the boundary or the border that produces difference allowing us to inhabit the local and the transnational concomitantly. Encounters between singular bodies recognize that we do not inhabit the same place, but that we come together and pull apart, rethinking subjectivity as a complex interactive social field. Such a way of thinking engenders a theory of intercorporeality as an ethical model for living in the world as being(s)-in-relation.

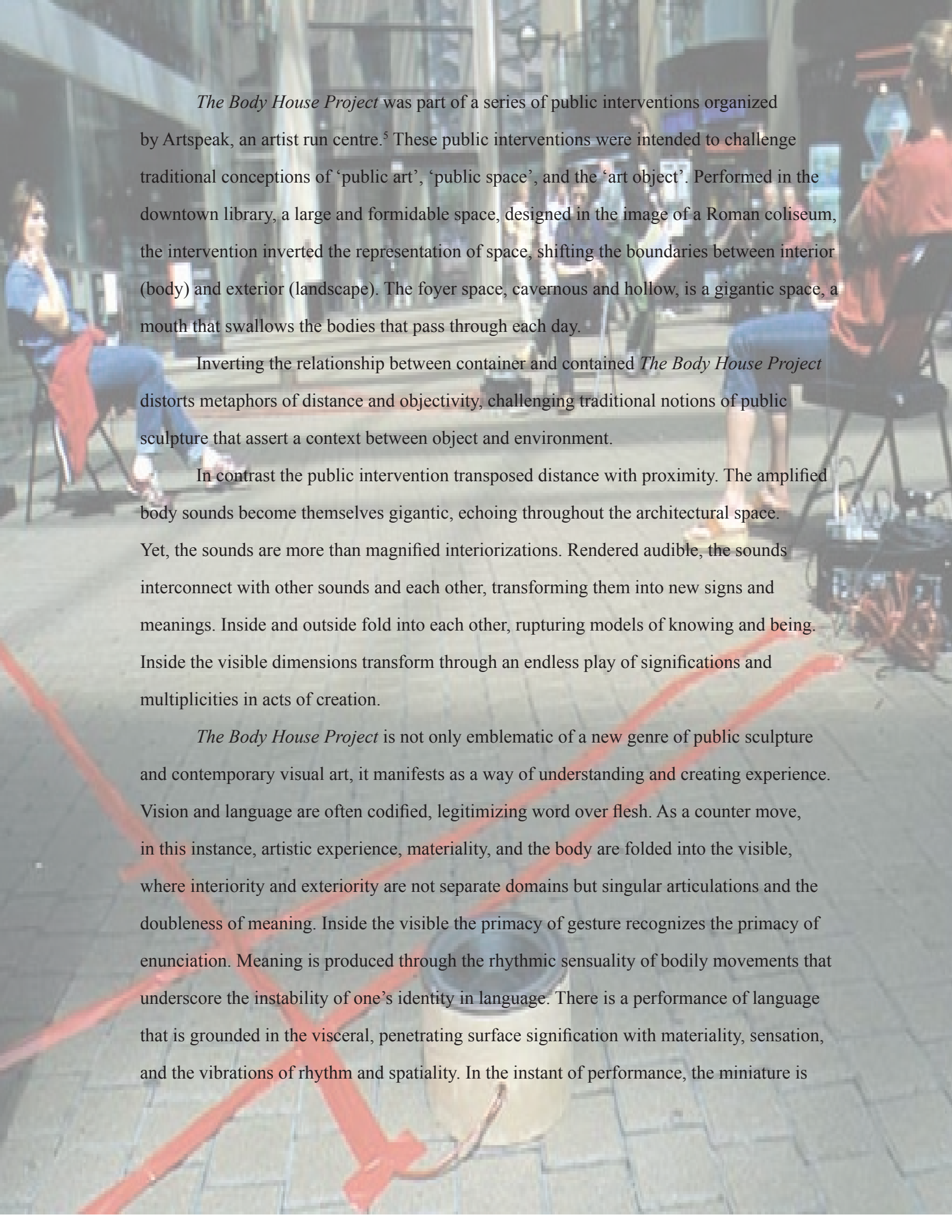
In the context of the dissertation research it is necessary to understand that I do not designate a specific body and more importantly do not subscribe to developmental theories that reference a particular adolescent body. This does not mean that I believe that the adolescent body is in no way differentiated from an adult body, however, what I propose is that such differentiations are produced and encountered through bodied encounters. My investigations into student understandings of body knowledge through touch ask questions about the conditions that produce different knowledges in the very process of bodied and visual encounters. For example instead of looking at race as a set of given conditions that mark student learnings in specific ways, I ask questions about how understandings of skin and boundaries are produced through bodied visual encounters.

On another level, the move towards a singular understanding of the body is paramount in art education, where student created artworks have traditionally been categorized as 'school art', valuing them outside of contemporary art practices and visual culture. Intentionally I disrupt this space folding discussions of contemporary art works within my analysis of student work. This folding, I will argue is how students themselves perceive their visual experiences and encounters. Students do not artificially create boundaries between their art and contemporary art, nor do they understand art and visual culture as separate domains. A singular discourse of bodies, visual art and culture, and education folds inside the visible, rupturing the ways in which knowledge is created, lived, and interrogated.

inside the visible: visual culture, the body, and education

> The work of art does not reside in the visual image, physical artifact, suggestive title or descriptive parenthetical line, but emerges in their relational play, a play engendered by an embodied, corporeal subject.
>
> -Marsha Meskimmon, *Women Making Art*, p. 5

Three bodies sit perched on chairs in the foyer of the downtown public library, located in the urban core of a large city in Canada. Each individual holds a medical stethoscope wired with an internal microphone fed through amps to speakers positioned throughout the lobby space. The three women, all artists place the stethoscope on different parts of their bodies, magnifying and amplifying their body sounds into the public domain. Through holes cut into cotton t-shirts we move the cold metal steel of the medical device along the contours of our bodies. Bodies become an auscultative apparatus. A flick of my wrist in a continual movement creates a particular rhythmic pulse that inter-connects with another's magnified breath. Each movement, each slight shift of the body is imbued with significance, the miniature is magnified, threatening the order of the external world.



The Body House Project was part of a series of public interventions organized by Artspeak, an artist run centre.[5] These public interventions were intended to challenge traditional conceptions of 'public art', 'public space', and the 'art object'. Performed in the downtown library, a large and formidable space, designed in the image of a Roman coliseum, the intervention inverted the representation of space, shifting the boundaries between interior (body) and exterior (landscape). The foyer space, cavernous and hollow, is a gigantic space, a mouth that swallows the bodies that pass through each day.

Inverting the relationship between container and contained *The Body House Project* distorts metaphors of distance and objectivity, challenging traditional notions of public sculpture that assert a context between object and environment.

In contrast the public intervention transposed distance with proximity. The amplified body sounds become themselves gigantic, echoing throughout the architectural space. Yet, the sounds are more than magnified interiorizations. Rendered audible, the sounds interconnect with other sounds and each other, transforming them into new signs and meanings. Inside and outside fold into each other, rupturing models of knowing and being. Inside the visible dimensions transform through an endless play of significations and multiplicities in acts of creation.

The Body House Project is not only emblematic of a new genre of public sculpture and contemporary visual art, it manifests as a way of understanding and creating experience. Vision and language are often codified, legitimizing word over flesh. As a counter move, in this instance, artistic experience, materiality, and the body are folded into the visible, where interiority and exteriority are not separate domains but singular articulations and the doubleness of meaning. Inside the visible the primacy of gesture recognizes the primacy of enunciation. Meaning is produced through the rhythmic sensuality of bodily movements that underscore the instability of one's identity in language. There is a performance of language that is grounded in the visceral, penetrating surface signification with materiality, sensation, and the vibrations of rhythm and spatiality. In the instant of performance, the miniature is

made gigantic, and three bodies multiply in endless conversation; *mouth speaking flesh* and intercorporeality.

In seeking a place from which to speak, to signify and create self and other, these gestures of the body communicate an interiority that is an infinite exteriority. Connective wires, visually suggestive of feeding tubes, umbilical cords, and the intrusive manacles of cyber/medical experiments, wiggling distended tendons are ejected from the body, furthering the monstrous and absurd quality of the spectacle. Metonymically, these tendons suggest a more intimate narrative, where the assemblages between each body lay open the mechanisms of encounters as active agents of transformation. Tangled lines of cords and sounds invite viewers to discover the limits and traps of their own perception. Evoking the languages of the body material-semiotic relations are formed, un/folding and imaging new signifiers. The body's participation and performance inside the visible disrupts past patterns of knowing, understanding becomes material, immanent, and social.

The *Body House Project* is also indicative of the move to critically engage with contemporary art *as* visual culture. While some scholars separate these two domains, defining visual culture as artifacts from popular and material culture, the *Body House Project* demonstrates how visual experiences and culture are folded within contemporary visual art, embracing the notion that visual culture is a shift in the field of vision, a turn from looking at cultural artifacts as reflective of historical situations towards understanding them as constitutive (Rogoff, 2000). In other words, visual art and culture are experiences that shape our understanding of the world; they are not simply visual representations. Encountering (performing in, viewing, or for that matter reading about) the *Body House Project* constitutes a process where language, meaning, and the body are continuously interrogated. This argument is further articulated by art critic Nicolas Bourriaud (2001), who maintains that the role of contemporary artworks "is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real" (p. 13). Art does not illustrate concepts, it *instantiates* them; it creates visual situations that question and examine

the social conditions and power struggles that constitute our contemporary visual world (Meskimmon, 2003, my emphasis).

As opposed to visual methodologies that use methodological apparatuses to uncover the meaning of an image, suggesting that the 'object' of analysis is static and that it possesses a discrete set of codes that simply need to be revealed, I understand visual culture as constituting a set of conditions that are theoretical in nature. Irit Rogoff (2000) explains that visual and textual encounters are not analytic of each other. They are not discourses laid on top of one another in the hopes of transferring meaning from one textual realm to another, but interconnections that speak in conversation with, in, and through art and text such that encounters are constitutive rather than descriptive. Marsha Meskimmon (2003) concurs arguing that works of art theorize, implicating the active and participatory nature of visual culture.

Works of art become fluid mutating forces, potentialities to act and be acted upon. The artworks in this dissertation address encounters between beings and the continual reinvention and interrogation of aesthetic experience. This understanding is important, I argue, because students do not understand visual culture and visual art as two separate domains, and in fact their art making practices, art works, and conversations point to the social and lived interstices between visual art and culture. This has significant implications for the field of art education.

Visual culture as a phenomenon and critical approach to teaching and learning has been instrumental in shifting traditional approaches to interpreting and creating images within art education (e.g. Chalmers, 2002; Duncum, 2001; Freedman, 2003; Garoian, 1999; Tavin, 2003).[6] While there has been a plethora of divergent arguments as to the viability and significance of visual culture education, the urgency of these claims are primarily focused on visual culture as new content for study and as a critical model for understanding the increasingly visual world that we live in. The implications of this education paradigm have

resulted in creating opportunities for students and teachers to make connections between a wide variety of images, texts, and experiences. However, the pervasiveness of visual culture in art education has continued to privilege the visual over other sensory experiences and has not included an inquiry into how visual culture impacts and creates body knowledge. A recent article in *Studies In Art Education* by Paul Bolin and Doug Blandy (2003) promotes the field of material culture studies because it attends to the materiality of artifacts and experiences. However, while their article is concurrent with my research into sensory experiences I am not sure that replacing the term visual with material is sufficient, as it removes a critical approach to understanding visual through material-semiotic relations. In addition, while this approach investigates sensory knowing, it fails to account for bodied encounters in the production of meaning making.

Similarly, replacing the art curriculum with diverse forms of visual culture including film, television, popular culture without attending to the ways in which visual culture is taken up and addressed in contemporary visual art only further emphasizes the boundaries between the arts or flattens all visual phenomenon into a discourse of the same. Instead of adopting the position, as Kevin Tavin (2003), does that high art and popular culture are separate divisions, disregarding contemporary visual art as critical, the interconnections of visual art and culture as a teaching and learning model should understand how images circulate, are produced, consumed and their role in shifting boundaries. Similarly, art education needs to examine students as producers of visual culture and ask questions about how such bodied visual encounters in turn produce knowledges.

Tavin's (2003) proposal that visual culture can be located as three interrelated concepts are, however, useful in assessing the impact of visual culture studies in art education. Understanding phenomenological, substantial, and pedagogical implications conceptualizes the inherent intertextuality, ambiguity, and complexity of visual art and culture. These concepts reference both the diversity of images and the ways in which experiences, subjectivities, and knowledges are intertwined with visual encounters.

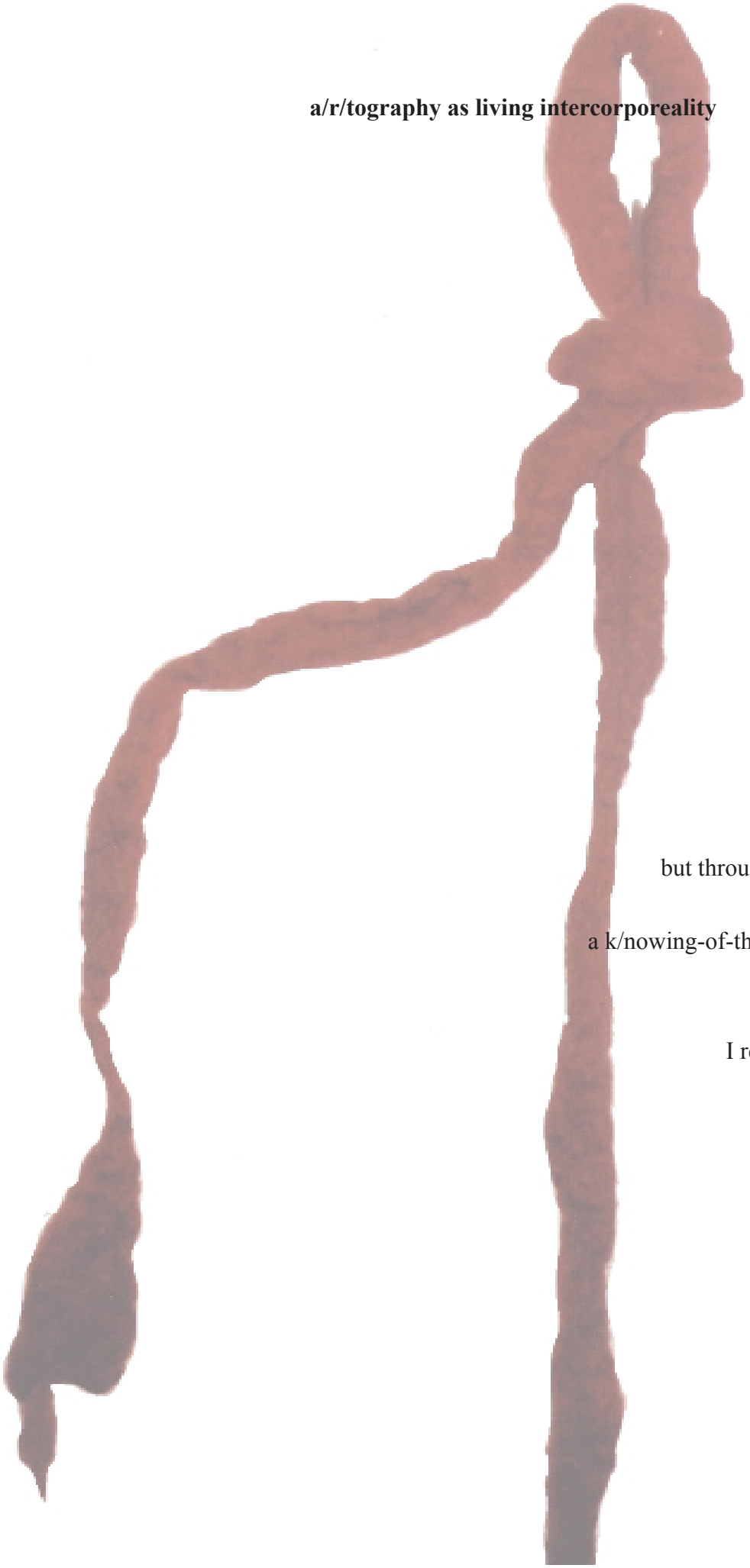
Furthermore this proposal would begin to examine how visual art itself *is* visual culture and the role such art plays in the construction of visual and body knowledge. This of course does not mean to continue the universalizing effect of current trends in visual culture studies in art education, but to re-affirm visual arts place in the space of visual meaning making.

By contextualizing the body's role in the production and meaning making of visual art and culture, art education can pose questions about how one comes to know in relation to other beings and images. Similarly, a critical examination would follow regarding the trans-circulation, power, representation, history, and ways of seeing both bodies and images.

At issue is the invisibility of the body in visual culture. Feminist art critics and scholars have articulated this lack, establishing a place for those outside the dominant model by asserting their role and contribution to the visual field (e.g. Pollock, 1988). Yet, this mode of analysis while important does not always ask questions about bodied experiences, and neglects to inquire into the ways in which bodies are constituted through visual encounters. My intent is not to exemplify the rich history of invisibility in visual culture, but to turn the terms such that either/or is simply not applicable. Inside the visible transposes the body into the realm of visual experience posing questions about encounters between being(s)-in-relation as bodies and images.

Adopting a critical pedagogical approach (see Tavin, 2003) the Curriculum Project that informs this research study included discussions about a wide range of visual images and the implications of this trans-circulation on the lives of the students. However, my intent was not to document the types of responses and students' understandings of these images or how they made sense of these images within a broader global perspective. Alternatively my aim was to embed this praxis of critical viewing within the production of art making. According to Graeme Sullivan (2003): "The artist is a key figure in the creation of new knowledge that has the potential to change the ways we see and think…The main research interest is

to investigate how knowledge is created in the process of making art…[and] therefore asks questions about the processes and products of artistic knowing" (p. 196). Expanding on this concept I argue that it is not simply an awareness of process and artistic knowing that is crucial to studio production, but to understand that critical acts of looking and seeing, components that visual culture advocates strongly, are embodied in the interrogation of creative acts. Thus, instead of separating out a curriculum composed of perceiving and responding, and making, this research study proposes art as inside the visible such that material-semiotic, sensory, bodied experiences are folded, entwined and interrogated.



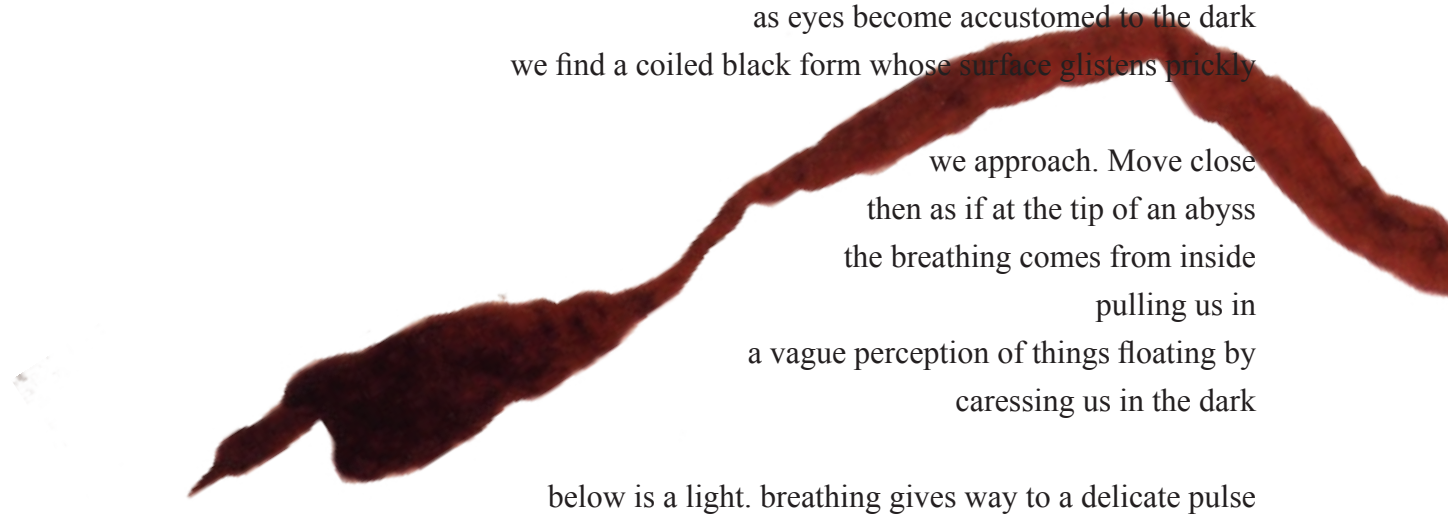
k/not knowing
but through a desire of the hand
beginning
a k/nowing-of-the-now without closure

in the infinite
I reach for the un/created
I touch it
and it un/does me.

The writing of this dissertation has been a difficult task. Every attempt to pull apart theoretical positions and/or student artworks, to write them into separate chapters, I have found myself further entangled and felted amidst their fibres. What I became aware of was a process of translation between art and writing that attests to the impossibilities of being able to cross boundaries from one discipline to another, between different ways of knowing. Instead I want to consider a methodology that is uncontained by boundaries but that focuses on the spaces of boundaries, seams, and thresholds as openings, as dehiscence, and as folds. Thus, a/r/tography becomes a practice of un/folding, allowing meaning to become something else altogether. In this way then impossibilities become potentialities, a being of possibility, exposing the amorphous body as fluid, un/certain, and un/folding.

in the total dark we hear breathing
ragged breaths as if someone has been weeping

as eyes become accustomed to the dark
we find a coiled black form whose surface glistens prickly



we approach. Move close
then as if at the tip of an abyss
the breathing comes from inside
pulling us in
a vague perception of things floating by
caressing us in the dark

below is a light. breathing gives way to a delicate pulse
surface wet with a mucous coating
and it trembles.

A/r/tography as living intercorporeality is a way of thinking that attends to the forms and folds of living bodies. It is a thinking between being(s)-in-relation, on inter-embodiment, where one touches and is touched, the body in and of the threshold. As living intercorporeality, a/r/t poses questions not about specific bodies, but looks to the ways in which bodies are stitched and folded, directing attention to the seams and felted processes of experience. It is a process of inquiry that is inter-connected, that is formed in the relations between bodied encounters. Living intercorporeality requires that we find resonance within the un/familiar and in excess. It is not a process of making meaning through generalizations or rendering the strange(r) more familiar, instead it is a movement and a displacement that seeks to create un/familiar spaces, to look for places of un/knowing, to un/ravel and un/do knowledges in order for new possibilities to be created. Intercorporeality is not a method of substitution, an 'in the place of others', but presents an exchange that is premised on the movement and circulation of meaning that immanently creates endless new configurations and potentialities.

A/r/tography as living intercorporeality is a way of *becoming 'what is'*. As opposed to ideologies that point towards abstract futures, 'what is' attests to the instant, the moment, and the present. 'What is' is intentional, embodying traces of past encounters, but takes its form and meaning through living fully in the present. Becoming 'what is', is not static or stable, but an always already becoming, allowing for meaning to reside in excess. This excess is not simply surplus to be disregarded, nor is it an unlimited meaning making process. Rather excess is 'what is' 'other than'; meaning that allows for something un/named, something else altogether. This something else could be understood through a shadow.

I started working on this research project entrenched in the idea of an absent body. Yet student art works and conversations pointed towards a body in excess. A body that is fleshy and fully present in and of the world. The students' art, my own aesthetic inquiry, and the theories that I was engaging with lead me to new investigations and to consider the body as excess. But I have struggled with a means to articulate this through words.

More recently on one of my daily walks I passed by a small commercial gallery. Through the window I could see a series of vessel-like sculptural forms hanging from the ceiling. Their woven surfaces that enclosed small cast glass objects; shells, a bird's beak, a tiny hand, conjured up notions of memory, loss, the absent body as vessel and container. Viewed in this way the sculptures were only partially interesting, as I felt this trope had long been examined in feminist art practices.

On entering the gallery space, however, I discovered something 'other than', a becoming 'what is' through shadows. Hanging close to a white wall with projected light from the gallery floor the vessel-like forms become more than themselves through the addition of shadows. The shadows were not separate from, nor were they unified or mirror images, reflections of the sculptural forms. They were 'other than', the body as excess, enfolded. Depending on where I stood the shadows changed form and intensity, at times even touched my body, passing through and moving between. Instead of a body absent, the installation was a body in excess. This excess was not a gigantic or monumental body, more suggestive of scale, the grotesque and other power relations, instead it was an abundant body that was provocatively ephemeral, in transition, and hesitant.

I'd been struggling for months to articulate this becoming 'what is' and 'other than'. To find a way to conceptualize, to describe in words what I saw and experienced in art—a fully present body, a body in excess, as opposed to an absent or abject body. Shadows. Shadows embody this 'other than', a becoming 'what is' that renders the fullest potential of the present moment, while allowing alternative assemblages to become, to un/fold, and mutate.

What might we discover if we begin to envision and embody art and research and teaching through shadows? Of course this would mean looking at shadows not as separate from, or as negative abstractions, but as 'other than' and becoming 'what is'. A/r/tography as living intercorporeality, the body in and of the world in all of its fullness, redolent, replete, a shadow constituted through excess.

Chapter Two

the fantastical body and the vulnerability of comfort

body image and the fantastical body

> To describe embodiment as intercorporeality is to emphasize that the experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interactions with other human and nonhuman bodies. Acknowledging and addressing the multiple corporeal exchanges that continually take place in our everyday lives, demands a corresponding recognition of the ongoing construction and reconstruction of our bodies and body images. These processes of construction and reconstruction in turn alter the very nature of these intercorporeal exchanges, and, in so doing, offer the possibility of expanding our social, political, and ethical horizons. (Weiss, 1999, pp. 5-6)

The study of 'body image' has been an important aspect of research on adolescent development. Researchers have argued that during adolescence body image begins to play a central role in how youth negotiate the contested terrain of their bodies (Driscoll, 2002; Oliver & Lalik, 2000). This research contends that body image becomes a 'concern' or a 'problem' that needs to be reconciled. A literature review of the field reveals that body image plays passive victim to reading too many fashion magazines, falls prey to media and advertising, or is co-opted by peers and family (e.g. Kehoe, 2002; Zuckerman, 2003). Others disclose the different socio-economic factors that lead to 'distorted' body image. In addition the dominant theoretical position is that body image, while arguably socio-culturally mediated, is experienced as individual self-knowledge. Body image research tends to represent body image as a discrete phenomenon that can be examined apart from the lived experiences of bodies and in doing so neglects to understand how body image is interconnected to embodied encounters.

In contrast Gail Weiss (1999) argues that individuals do not have one body image but rather a multiplicity of body images that are created through a series of corporeal encounters and exchanges. Body image as intercorporeality is an awareness of our body in relation to its gestures, movements, and positions in space. It is a responsiveness that is determined in relation with other bodies, objects, and the environment, in addition to the coordination and sensations of our own functioning body. This awareness in turn shapes our encounters, thus rendering body image as integral to knowledge production and our relationship with the world.

Following this philosophical paradigm I argue that rather than viewing body image as a concern or a problem, new models of inquiry need to be posed that interrogate body image as immanent and dynamic, an un/folding that is informed through interactions and processes rather than maintained by substances and boundaries. To do so I submit an alternative model for understanding body image: *the fantastical body*.[1] My question is: *How does touch inform a radically different understanding of body image?*

Confronting body image through touch I turn to the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), which I attempt to read entangled with Merleau-Ponty's (1968) thesis of Flesh and Irigaray's (1993) philosophy of mucous. Instead of documenting how body image is intercorporeal I embrace Weiss's (1999) thesis, a thorough investigation that wanders through a number of philosophers and feminist scholars. Within her thesis of intercorporeality is the notion that fantasy and desire be re-conceptualized from a feminist position through touch and not defined by possession or familial relations (psychoanalysis) of lack and castration. According to Weiss (1999) questions need to be posed that allow for fantastical possibilities of body image. Therefore, what is of interest to me is the *materiality of fantasy*, a conceptualization of the *fantastical body* that is creative and always becoming. The fantastical body is a body formed through touch including tactile epistemologies and

bodied encounters. Following this I examine how the fantastical body informs adolescent understandings of comfort offering alternative ways of thinking through community, skin, and boundaries.

To begin I summarize some traditional considerations of body image as equilibrium, which suggest that any movement or change to the body image is in fact a stabilizing momentum. This exploration is important I believe because it demonstrates that body image *is* always changing, rather it is the nature of this transformation that needs to be interrogated. I will then argue for an alternative model of body image through the fantastical body, drawing on feminist philosophy (Grosz, 1994; Irigaray, 1993; Lorraine, 1999), Merleau-Ponty's (1968) thesis of Flesh, and the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) primarily their concept of the *Body without Organs.* In the remaining sections I will explore student artworks and conversations around the themes comfort, community, skin and boundaries asking further questions about how touch shapes adolescent understandings of body image that are outside of dominant discourses of maintenance and stability. However, before I begin altogether, I'd like to briefly look at one of the student's videos in order to think about the rationales for a re-conceptualization of body image through touch.

There are a number of popular mis-conceptions and limitations of body image and how it functions as an aspect of body knowledge. During the first few weeks of the research study, I noticed a woman at my gym wearing a t-shirt with the words '*fat is not an emotion*' printed across the front. I pondered such a blatant statement and laughed at the irony of a message intended to empower the individual body but simply continued to imprison it devoid of touch, sentient knowledge, and emotion. At school that week I asked a number of the students what they thought about the saying. The students talked about how the importance of the intended message was displaced given that it disallowed, what to them was a fundamental understanding of body image—*feeling*. The message they argued was meant to suggest that fat in the strictest sense should be understood from a body mass

index perspective, and prohibited an awareness of one's body in relation to other bodies, experiences, encounters, and the environment. It was poignantly summed up with: "It reduces the body to a piece of meat and forgets about how we live our bodies". Students showed me covers of popular teen magazines both of which had similar mottos emblazoned on their covers. Body image it seemed was being obliterated. If we could get rid of body image, then perhaps youth (followed by adults and society as a whole) might adopt a 'healthier' attitude towards their bodies. This I felt was absurdly wrong.

Corresponding with the belief that the removal of body image would result in individuals becoming healthier and happier with their bodies, critical pedagogical practices that focus on body image and body knowledge argue for educational models that critique the impact of media, which includes a multiplicity of image sources from fashion, to print media, television, film and popular culture. While educators agree that body image is a complex phenomena they have often created overly simplistic curricular practices entrenched in the belief that if we can teach students to be critical of the media and to understand the 'unreal' possibilities of fantasizing and trying to achieve an 'ideal' body, only then will we be able to 'repair' adolescent body image. This educational praxis embraces the idea that adolescent bodies are diseased or unhealthy and in desperate need of control and restoration (Oliver & Lalik, 2000). This belief is problematic because it reduces body image to 'representation' and does not account for tactile and emotional epistemologies. Neither does it examine how body encounters shape and mediate body knowledge. Furthermore, it fosters an attitude that being aware of our bodies is negative and detrimental, suggesting that healthier options include displacing it altogether. While I agree that education needs to include curriculum and pedagogical approaches to body knowledge, I question models that continue to operate within the binary (passive body versus resistant mind) and define healthy by a norm that includes the removal of body image (if we critique it then we can learn to live without it). Instead as Oliver and Lalik (2000) advocate, body knowledge education needs to provide students with alternative ways of living in the world.

Heather's video *Never Stop Thinking* is an interesting visual example of critical pedagogical models of body image that fail to address the lived experiences of student's bodies in the construction of body image. In her video Heather demonstrates the ability to critique the media as she manipulates images from fashion magazines and interviews fellow classmates about their opinions of the media and its affects on body image. She and her friends are all too familiar with fashion magazines air-brushing techniques and the very limited possibilities of obtaining particular body types.

The opening segment to her video shows images torn from fashion magazines and placed in cardboard boxes. These women seem imprisoned by fashion and standardized notions of body image. As the video sequences move through a series of similar images mostly depicting fashion models and film stars the voice over of Heather and her two friends, talking candidly, alludes to the haunting reality of how youth negotiate the representation of a body image ideal within visual culture. The students are very aware of the media's manipulation of body image and offer a somewhat humorous and sarcastic account of the absurdity of many of the models poses, clothing, and body types.

In one film clip Heather captures an advertisement for *j-lo* perfume. She found an ad in a female teen magazine and the same ad in a magazine for popular music. In the female teen magazine the model's gauze-like covering was less transparent, while in the music magazine, which she and her friends believed was targeting male youth, the model was more visibly naked. Heather and her classmates could easily talk about the effects of such exploitation, the body as object, and the unreal representations of body types.

In fact their responses were almost too candid. I couldn't help but start to interpret their words as 'schooled' in the sense that the students seemed adept at critiquing the media and the praxis of trying to achieve an 'ideal' body type. Further to this there was a strong understanding of how the circulation of images globally oppressed particular body types, whether it was women, age, or race. I recognize that these girls at age fifteen to seventeen may have already benefited from educational practices on body image, however their responses also revealed a disturbing tension between the sterile understandings of body knowledge posed through media critique, and their own lived experiences of body knowledge that they defined through comfort, feeling, and sensory experiences. Thus, while in no way am I calling for an abandonment of body image education that includes media awareness, I want to enable a discussion of body image beyond the binary and that might actually look at alternative understandings of fantasy and desire in adolescent understandings of body knowledge. I believe that these considerations will further enrich educational practices that include body knowledge. But first, let me return to a brief summary of traditional body image understandings that foster a stable yet pliable body.

body image

According to Weiss (1999) and Grosz (1994) the most salient characteristics of body image are:

1) The body's plasticity and its ability to constantly change its body image in response to changes in the physical body and/or the situation.
2) The dynamic organization of the body image offers an equilibrium, which enables it to serve as a standard. Changes are then measured against this centre or origin. Thus, a single movement or change reorients the entire body.

These characteristics call attention to both the adaptability and the stability of body image, emphasizing that instability is in effect in constant renewal of a unified body image that is measured against standardized norms. A post-modern turn has argued that subjectivity, identity, and the body are uncertain and unstable. While this is true, this ambiguity it seems is actually a function of stabilization. Thus, my argument is that we need to direct questions towards the distinctiveness of fluidity and change. *Furthermore, how might touch move away from body image conceived of as absence to body image as material, fleshy, and open?*

According to Weiss (1999) and Grosz (1994) traditional phenomenological and psychoanalytic models of body image argue that any changes to the image schema are accordingly adopted into the body image thereby stabilizing and normalizing it. Although significant in recognizing the lived encounters that form and shape an awareness of our body, Merleau-Ponty (1964) respectively describes body image as a Gestalt, which derives its unity not only from its internal skeletal and muscular structure, but from the world in which the body is always situated. The gestalt adapts and changes in accordance to a momentum towards a stable and unified body.

Similarly, both Lacan (1977) and Merleau-Ponty (1964) characterize the development of the child in the mirror stage from a non-unified corporeal schema to a complete and incorporated body image. Alienation occurs between seeing one's body in the mirror and being internally aware of one's own body. This split becomes even more complicated through the child's initial failure to recognize the external image of oneself as being of oneself, yet not identical to oneself. It is this failure of recognition that Merleau-Ponty and Lacan argue becomes an alienating aspect of body image. This alienation is what allows the child to incorporate the perspectives of others into their own body image. However, while Lacan invokes a "paranoic alienation" Weiss argues that Merleau-Ponty's understanding allows the child to form strong identifications with others, implicating the intercorporeal nature of body image.

Regardless, of these fundamental differences, my point here is that body image is understood as changes oriented *towards* equilibrium. Thus, the disruption of the body image is continual; as soon as we establish it we "destroy it in order to plan anew" (as cited in Weiss, 1999, p. 17). What motivates these continual changes are internal significations and external situations. Hence the body has to adapt to these changes without losing its stability, providing us with a sense of how our body is positioned spatially. Therefore, body image must remain flexible in order to maintain this equilibrium.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) proposes the idea of "body habits" that play a stabilizing role in the development of our body image. These habits are the postures that we fall into such as sitting at a computer, driving a car, and walking. However, it is these habits that structure and bind our body. Some of the ways that we resist this boundedness is through "playing" such as clothes, decoration and other body modification (Weiss, 1999). However, as Grosz (1994) notes because the body image is fluid, dynamic and plastic, it has the ability to incorporate external objects into its postural model. For example clothing, jewelry, and other accessories become part of the body's awareness and experience in the world. These objects are no longer objects but understood as incorporations into the unified body image. Similarly,

intermediate objects, such as those defined as the abject (spit, semen, blood, urine etc.) are bound up with the body image resulting in the various investments accorded the body depending on psychical, interpersonal, and socio-historical meanings. Thus, over time even resistance is adopted into the habit body, marking and inscribing a set of norms that function to maintain the body's equilibrium.

Socio-cultural models of body image, while locating the source of change as external to the body, also establish the adaptability of the body image towards unity and stability. Susan Bordo (1997) locates two aspects of body image that are central in establishing the practice of change and stability. The *intelligible body*, which includes the academic, scientific, philosophic and aesthetic representations of the body, establishes the 'rules' and relationships of the cultural conceptions of the body. The intelligible body is perceived of as a fixed, static, and certain body, often translated as the 'ideal' body or a 'normal' body. Each society, community, group or individual has its own definition of what constitutes the ideal. So while it is virtually impossible to describe an ideal body as a particular size and shape, what we do know, according to Bordo, is that the perfect body has tight, monitored boundaries. The ability to control and modify the corporeal schema to maintain equilibrium is a symbol of emotional, moral, intellectual and physical power. "The ideal here is of a body that is absolutely tight, contained, "bolted down", firm: in other words, a body that is protected against eruption from within, whose internal processes are under control" (Bordo, 1998, p. 294). The soft, loose, excess flesh threatens the borders of the body, the stability of the individual, and the premise that one is 'normal' and in control of their life. The ideal body is excess-free, the body that has expunged the abject other, maintaining the borders between inside and outside.

To achieve this ideal body a particular praxis is required, which is the *useful body*; body sculpting, dieting/eating, fashion, cosmetics and body grooming. In extreme cases of self-management, for example anorexia, the body's desires have been rigidly contained. Weiss (1999) describes the body's maintenance of stability as the ability to accommodate

slight changes in the corporeal schema over time. When the body schema becomes inflexible the body dissolves into dis-equilibrium. Likewise, the "letting go" of self-control to properly contain and modify the body towards a unified state represents obesity. While the useful body appears as an active body that is engaged in the process of change, it is a transformation marked by efforts to defend a static and stable corpus. It is an activity aimed at regulating and working the body to fit into a normative discourse of wholeness and unity.

What is clear from this cursory glance at body image theories is that body image is defined by movement but that this activity is oriented towards the maintenance of binary thinking, and it is marked by borders and boundaries of containment. Moreover excess is either something to be expelled or adopted into normalizing practices that aim to maintain stability. Alternatively, what I want to focus on is the fluidity of body image as continuous processes that are always becoming, always immanent, and which operate in resistance to determinate organization.

the fantastical body

The fantastical body is a body that conceptualizes corporeal difference not as a condition of specific identity, but difference determined through processes of creation. It is a body that is dynamic, creative, singular, and full of excess. The fantastical body does not valorize one side of a binary pair rather it is located at the threshold of experience, a body full of plentitude, potential, and multiplicities. I have constructed the fantastical body based on very entangled readings of Irigaray (1993, 2001), Merleau-Ponty (1968), and Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1983) with Grosz (1994) folded into the mix. This is not to say that I propose a rigorous philosophical reading of each scholars' works, rather what I have done is thread them together in a manner that resonates with my theoretical position of body knowledge through touch. Therefore while this combination may be somewhat unorthodox and unusual, it is their commitment to corporeal difference, creativity, processes, fluidity, and the body understood as generative and outside of binary logic, that render this un/folding both possible and significant.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conceptualization of the body as a series of processes, flows, energies, speeds, durations and lines of flight is altogether a radically different way of understanding the body and its connections with other bodies and objects. The body, they argue neither harbors consciousness nor is it biologically pre-determined, rather it is understood through *what it can do*—its processes, performances, assemblages and the transformations of becomings. Not only do they propose very different models of materiality and encounters between bodies, they also develop a different understanding of desire, one that is not based on familial relationships through lack or castration. Instead desire is understood as processes, as what can be produced, and the kinds of assemblages that are created. It is not a desire *for* something, a desire determined and organized through a norm, but a *desiring production* that makes its own connections.

Grosz (1994) argues that this desire rather than being aligned with fantasy and in opposition to the real, a desire of distant longing and nostalgia, the Deleuze and Guattarian desire is one of articulation, contiguity, and immanent production. "Desire does not take for itself a particular object whose attainment it requires; rather, it aims at nothing above its own proliferation or self-expansion. It assembles things out of singularities and breaks things, assemblages, down into their singularities. It moves; it does" (Grosz, 1994, p. 165). For Grosz, and other feminist scholars any model of desire that dispenses with the primacy of lack is worthy of examination.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1983) create the concept they call a *Body without Organs* (BwO). Like the rhizome it is a process of becoming that affords multiple and divergent connections not based on root affiliations. It is not defined in terms of rigid borders of containment, nor is it a unified specific entity. As it's name suggests the BwO is a body without discrete organizing principles. This is not to say that it is an empty body, but that it does not organize itself according to hierarchical orders such as those associated with the functions of organs.[2] Constructing the BwO entails creating 'a plane of consistency'. "Planes of consistency, in contrast to planes of organization which transcend the formations they organize, are laid out according to immanent principles of organization which defy any specific pattern of replication" (Lorraine, 1999, p. 166). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they use the metaphor of an egg to describe the processes of a BwO. An egg (embryonic) is a system of flows and intensities. It has no boundaries and represents potentiality before individualization. It's becoming is organized through various forms that could always have been otherwise. Change is constant and inevitable. The BwO involves a letting go of determinate properties, a deterritorialization that allows for new assemblages "taking apart egos and their presuppositions" and "liberating the prepersonal singularities they enclose and repress" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 362). The BwO is a singular body.

For Deleuze (1994) difference requires a thinking that does not subordinate it to identity or the same. This requires that thought be liberated from traditional or classical configurations that refer to established identities. In his later work this becomes a process of destratification, a process that resists conformity and established norms of perception.

Deleuze and Guattari are preoccupied with positing a constitution of the subject that is in opposition to Lacanian psychoanalysis, where the subject is motivated and created by lack (a mother it can not have and a father it cannot be). Instead Deleuze and Guattari postulate a theory of subjectivity, which is based on immanent desire.

Deleuze and Guattari develop a vocabulary that is attuned to processes, often relying on metaphors from science and machines. The BwO "is imageless and organless because any image of the body and any configuration of the body into organs presupposes a specific configuration…and the BwO defies any and all such organization" (Lorraine, 1999, p. 121). The BwO differentiates movement that emerges and changes into something else. This mutable, amorphous, body knowledge resists pre-disposed patterns in exchange for assemblages that constantly mutate and transform.

Assemblages are created in infinite ways but follow no hierarchical order, familial relations of identity, or through pre-given organization. The BwO is a singular body. It is a body that is characterized through experimentation, movement, asignifying ruptures and becomings of desire. Why construct a BwO? Tasmin Lorraine (1999) argues that the BwO opens up awareness to singular creative processes by challenging "one's sense of corporeal boundedness and one's social identity as well as one's perceptions and conceptions of everyday life" (p. 171). It is a model, which challenges the traditional mind or body dualism of Western thought. By focusing on processes rather than substances the body's becomings challenge conventional boundaries and suggest new forms of living in the world.

Feminists, including Grosz (1994) argue that there are still feminist concerns that can be raised with respect to a body conceived in this way. Although re-configuring the body outside of binary thinking is a model many feminists argue for, there are challenges

to thinking of a body outside of any specific positions and that erases historical and sociopolitical traces of bodied encounters. However, as Grosz (1994) states, and I urge you to look to her writings for a more detailed account of feminist re-conceptualizations of the body and criticisms of Deleuze and Guattari, there is value in a body that is conceived of through creativity, processes, and immanent desire.

While respectful of the myriad of feminist critiques I turn briefly to the work of Irigaray, both my own readings of her texts, and the work of Lorraine (1999) who has written extensively on both Irigaray and Deleuze and Guattari, in order to address theories of touch and to construct the fantastical body.

One of the features of the BwO that makes it so useful is that it purports a model with no root origins, which in turn suggests that there is no one form of existence that is preferable or better than another. Irigaray on the other hand, while also arguing for configurations that organize our experience that are fluid and porous, is adamant that the structures of corporeal difference must be found at the level of sexual difference. In doing so she is concerned with the morphology of a lived body one that she constructs in the image of the maternal body. Thus, rather than a body with no root origins, Irigaray focuses precisely on intrauterine life and maternal metaphors to characterize not only difference but to suggest a way of living and being in the world. While many scholars have critiqued Irigaray's maternal metaphors as essentializing and privileging women's experience, Lorraine (1999) reads Irigaray's intrauterine metaphor through a Deleuzian becoming and the construction of a BwO. In doing so she returns the BwO to a lived body through touch. While the BwO with all of its intensities and flows evokes a radical departure for thinking through the body, it is a theoretical condition that is distant from experience and the lived, fleshy, material body. In its abstract form the BwO does not account for lived experiences that are personal, positional, and encountered. While the BwO expels relationships, it simultaneously fails to address relationality, or touch.

Irigaray's (1993) thesis of subjectivity, which I described in Chapter One, relies on touch as a primordial experience. Touch she posits is the first sense that continues throughout existence. Thus, while she draws on intrauterine metaphors, which imply a root, or umbilical tie to another, she does so in a way not to imply a familial tie to a specific other, but in order to set forth an understanding of subjectivity that is also formed in relation to another.

For Irigaray, subjectivity is premised on sentient knowledge, a felt and experienced encounter between beings. She too relies on bodied processes to describe subjectivitiy, most notably the caress and breath. What Lorraine (1999) suggests and I find compelling is to read intrauterine experience through a Deleuzian model of becoming, the intrauterine metaphor allows us to think of experience through all stages of life and for all subjectivities in terms of inter-connectedness, or being(s)-in-relation. Lorraine's (1999) argument is that this re-reading evokes an embodied becoming that is not distant and disengaged from the world.

While Deleuze and Guattari (1987) counter the odepial structure by ignoring it, Irigaray (1993) is concerned that the denial of the mother returns desiring machines to impoverishment of the inter-connections between beings. This she believes is an ethical concern that can only perpetuate fantasies of becoming that bear no relation to another.

Although Irigaray's critical project is to define difference beyond lack and masculine subjectivity, a traditional understanding of origins, her thesis manifests as a creative process that is infused with, in, and through corporeal experience. Thus, it is the relation between these scholar's works that undermines a stable locus of identity and that poses an ongoing dynamic condition of becoming, a becoming that I argue is the fantastical body.

The fantastical body is not created in the image of the BwO, but borrows from it key concepts and characteristics, most notably its organizing principles, processes rather than substances, and its refusal to be contained or determined by fixed boundaries. Yet, the fantastical body is material, it is fleshy, sensuous, and tactile. It is open, pliable, and disruptive and includes both real and imagined possibilities. Fluid, uncertain, and ambiguous

it attests to body knowledge through touch. It is an active and aware body. Changes to the fantastical body are not a result of maintaining equilibrium, but are modifications, new assemblages that challenge determinate organizing principles, interrogating bodied encounters, and offering possibilities and potentials to actively engage with the world.

un/attainable comfort: student understandings of body image

A soft fuzzy blanket lies folded on the floor. Nearby a large pillow from the same fabric invites you to nestle yourself comfortably within its flesh. A pair of slippers appears discarded, the body left to lounge on the soft folds of blanket and pillow. The slippers look warm and comforting until you notice that they are studded with thumbtacks, the fierce sharpness threatens your feet. The blanket and pillow also allude to this false sense of comfort. The blanket is stitched together so that it cannot be unfolded and the pillow, full of hard cardboard and paper makes it a less than luxurious place for your head. There is a tension at work between the sensuousness and extravagance of the fabric, the generous size of blanket and pillow that invite the body into its folds, and the exposure to harm from the thumbtacks. The space is fraught with conflict, frustration, and pain, while simultaneously conjuring up notions of warmth, delight, comfort and frivolity. Hot red and plush. Danger, a warning.

Un/attainable Comfort is an installation created by Jamie, Emma, and Maura. It operates on a number of different levels attesting to the un/certain and fragmented terrain of body knowing. Group discussions reveal divergent understandings of body knowledge moving between the body as passive vessel that the mind controls, to a more fantastical understanding of body image. In keeping with my thesis that the works of art are interlocutors, conversations and theories that attest to the complexity of the body, I resist any notion that the student's words simply illustrate or describe the visual investigations. Rather, what I hope to expose is the ways in which these students navigate through art the difficulties of body knowledges. As a conversational device I have tried at times to keep the students words in dialogue form to illustrate the ways in which their thoughts about art and the body reverberated between each other, allowing for their incompleteness and hesitations. In addition, there is an aesthetic to their words, both spoken and written. An aesthetic that is tangled, felted, and partial. In allowing for the conversational form and the excerpts of their writing, I want to 'image' their words so that they do not appear as explanations of the art, rather in conversation with and through the artworks and each other as being(s)-in-relation.

Jamie, Emma, and Maura are joined by some of the other female students in the class. We hover in the back of the room to talk as Trinity, with help from Emma, glues the dried flowers to the skirt of her art piece.

Alexandria: When people first see it they think… Oh… I like it. It looks warm and cuddly and comforting, and then when you are actually closer you see you can't unfold it, it's actually stuck together.

Emma: Because in fashion magazines all those dresses, the tight jeans… and its not comforting. But it looks really nice.

Alexandria: It's taking something that is comfortable and making it uncomfortable.

Emma: Jeans could be comfortable but not the ones that barely cover anything.

Trinity: Comfort is important especially in the world today, especially with Fashion. Things are advertised more as looking beautiful…not so much about feeling comfortable. I think it's important that you feel comfortable in it; that's much more important than actually looking or being a part of the trend.

Emma says that particular clothes are less comfortable than others. In this instance the girls cite the fashions worn by pop stars like Brittany Spears, fashion models, and even some of the more everyday clothing that adolescent girls wear, very low cut jeans that expose the pelvic bone, as uncomfortable. Emma personally doesn't find these types of clothes appealing. As the girls sit in a circle discussing the latest un/comfortable fads I notice that two of them have their sweat pants or *jo-lo* style lounge pants dropped well below the waist with the tops of their underwear, brightly coloured thongs, peeking out at the waistband. Another one is wearing pelvic revealing jeans. As the conversation continues and in subsequent weeks when we re-visit the theme of comfort, the girls all agree that *comfort* is an important aspect of body image. However, comfort I discover is itself not a stable and static signifier.

Comfort, they tell me is the ability to choose what you want to wear based on:

1) How you feel (emotions).
2) What image you want to project.

Emma: You can dress sporty or chic then you start wearing sweat pants and it's not that you are trying to express that you are a slob but its comfortable. You just change the way you dress all of a sudden.

Jamie: There are two different ways people can dress in whatever they feel like wearing. Or people trying to be something they are not.

Dressing differently, Alexandria explains is dependent on moods or emotions. If you feel a particular way in the morning you will choose clothes that reflect that mood. She continues to describe moments when sweats would be more preferable to dressing up, for instance when you are stressed and have a test.

Alexandria: One day you'll wear heels and a skirt to school and the next day you're in sweatpants next day jeans….one day you feel like dressing up and the next you don't care and I'm not going to shower today because I don't give a crap and then you just go to school….

Emma: Dressing goes with what you feel like and your mood for the day. If you're really grumpy or tired…clothes are a statement of how you express yourself.

Alexandria: On valentines, day not my favourite day of the year, I dressed all in black.

Maura: Also, if you get older. Different clothes mean different things. Some of my clothes express myself when I younger.

One might assume that the girls understood emotions as stable internal markers that exist prior to the signification of clothing. Contrary to this, Emma shared an example of wearing sweats, which seemed to be the clothing of choice when feeling stressed due to the pressures of school. Emma stated that the opportunity to come to school in comfortable clothing shifted her mood from anxious to being relaxed. "Sometimes I just put on sweats because I'm tired but then during the day the comfort of the clothes makes me feel less tired. I sort of feel happier."

Young (1990) reminds us that body experiences through touch are often imagined through the tactile sensation and the pleasure of cloth. The material-semiotic nature of fabric allows for both tactile sensations of skin touching cloth and sensuous bodied knowing characterized through memories associated with the pleasure of wearing clothes. Describing women's fascination with clothes, Young (1990) suggests that women's imaginative desire stems from three pleasures associated with the body: *touch*, *bonding*, and *fantasy*.

> Touch immerses the subject in fluid continuity with the object, and for the touching subject the object touched reciprocates the touching, blurring the border between self and other. By touch I do mean that specific sense of skin on matter, fingers on texture. But I also mean an orientation to sensuality as such that includes all senses. Thus we might conceive a mode of vision, for example, that is less a gaze, distance from and mastering its object, but an immersion in light and colour. Sensing as touching is within, experiencing what touches it as ambiguous, continuous, but nevertheless differentiated. (Young, 1990, pp. 182-183)

Touch as a primary mode of perception displaces the measured and distant gaze with a desire that immerses the subject in fluid continuity and a folded relation with the world. The pleasure of clothes recognizes understanding as tactile, immersive, and sensual rather than as absence, lack, or objectified gaze. It is a becoming through touch.

Touch ruptures the containment of the body as unified and discrete, rendering the body as permeable and porous. Describing touch as an "incessant escaping" where the left hand touching the right hand "never exactly overlap" and "slip away", Merleau-Ponty (1968)

infers that there is always "a shift, a spread between them" (p. 148). This split both brings together and separates the body through touch. It is in the chiasmic space where touching and touched, body and world come together in and through differentiation. This realm of the fold is a phantasmatic space, not an unreal space of longing and lack, but a phantasmorgia of un/folding significations. It is a fantastical body, material, immanent, and engaged in the world.

Young also argues that touch is a form of relating to another, a relation that is contiguous and folded, not premised on possession or objectification. Alexandria remembers a particular sweater with fondness telling us that when she wears it, it alters her mood, making her happy (the sweater used to belong to a friend). Maura concurs describing a few articles of clothing that she still has from elementary school reminding her of past experiences and encounters. Alexandria and Maura often share clothes, a bond that Young (1990) describes as intimate and relational. "As the clothes flow among us, so do our identities; we do not keep hold of ourselves, but share" (p. 184). The encounters between beings, the relations formed through clothes allow us to touch and enter into each other's lives. Knowing is formed with, in, and through the folds of cloth, the lived emotional experiences of wearing, touching, and being caressed. The emotional tactile embodied experience of clothing is often glossed over in schools. Instead too often teachers criticize students for wearing particular types of clothing or for spending so much time focused on something that is interpreted as frivolous and meaningless. Yet, clothing offers sensuous pleasure, tactile experiences of knowing self and other, and the comfort of being able to embody outwardly emotional sentient knowledge. Instead of structuring educational practices that limit student's self-obsession with fashion, understanding it as unhealthy and inappropriate, curricular practices would benefit from acknowledging the emotional and interpersonal meaning of fashion (see Springgay & Peterat, 2002-2003). While this may seem to be a rather simple tautology educators [adults] often neglect to inquire into the conditions that produce particular appeals to clothing and the emotional, tactile, and sensuous experience of clothes as encounters between beings.

Comfort is also defined as the ability and desire to change what they wear and thereby change who they want to be. For instance, the students tell me that if they dress sporty it does not mean that they are sporty people, just their *image* is sporty. Image, they define as what you project on the outside, usually determined "through clothes and fashion". Fashion is more than the objects that make-up its constitutive parts (clothes, make-up, hairstyle, jewelry, body art) but also the way you chose to wear particular clothes, an example being the underwear craze that swept through the school (underwear showing above the waistline of pants). This outside image the students believe can be different from who they are on the inside.

Ming: If you change outfits you can be something else. So that's also to do with image and not your body. 'Cause your body is the same day to day but you change clothes and you are a completely different image.

I ask her to clarify image.

Ming: Your outfit is your image. If I was to wear fishnet stockings, high heels and black eye make up I would be a completely different image I'd still be the same person the same body just a different image.

Ming: You can completely change your clothes and still be your own personality. But if I was looking at you then I would think your personality would be Goth.

Ming's articulations reflect on one hand "split subjectivity" where the seeing subject is limited, restricted, and objectified through the others gaze (Young, 1990). In a series of essays that address women's lived experiences through their bodies, Young asserts that women's split subjectivity undermines the integrity and agency of the self. Split subjectivity occurs as women become aware of their bodies as others see them. This split is alienating

and further reduces the body to a distant, non-unified object. Young advocates that women need to overcome this split thereby changing their own negative relationship with their body to a more loving one. Women need to accept the limitations of their bodies. This myth is one that is often addressed in popular media (young women's magazines) and in educational discourse (see Oliver & Lalik, 2000). Curricular and pedagogical practices that promote self-acceptance fail to account for the lived experience of the body in the world, the encounters between bodies, and the myriad of ways that body image is dynamically constructed inside and outside the body. By reducing body unity to a discourse of limits we continue to reduce the body to a passive, static, and alienating form.

Yet, I am hesitant to assign such a reading to Ming's words. She and many of the other students spoke at length about the opportunities that the fluidity of body image provided. This suggests, contrary to Young that change can be an interrogation, a masquerading possibility, a becoming of alternative and imaginary body schema that was created through intercorporeal encounters. In this way the splitting becomes a folding, an opening through touch that intertwines experience in and through the body.

In another essay, written later, but published in the same edited volume of papers Young (1990) offers an example of split subjectivity that could be interpreted as positive and fragmentary. In this essagy Young asserts that the pregnant subject is de-centered and split, undermining the integrity of the body, she also proposes a different perspective, one that attests to the body's fluid and uncontained boundaries. Young states that in pregnancy the experience of integration of one's body with another renders fluid the boundary between self and other, inside and outside. Drawing on Irigaray's thesis of touch as a primary mode of knowing that begins in the maternal-fetal bond, Young (1990) maintains that the pregnant body is a doubling, an understanding of body image from within and without. It this regard the split subject moves from alienation to a doubled subjectivity. The doubling of self and

other in a contiguous relation through touch emerges as an awareness that is attuned to both inner and outer. Self and other are folded where the fluidity of touch signifies the fecundity of transformation and change.

This intercorporeality (between bodies and between inside and outside) is an important aspect of student understandings of the fluidity of the body. Ming (and many of the other students) believes that who she is on the inside does not have to be reflected externally. This is not to suggest that internal and external body images are in opposition to each other, nor is one striving to maintain and stabilize the other. Instead, the splitting of inside and outside should be understood as a fold, where experimentation and assemblage become determining factors. Change is fragmented, vague, and not assembled by any predetermined organization. It was a change of becoming, a creative flow of potentiality. Changes to body image were not efforts to achieve an ideal norm, nor to maintain a practice of a true inner self, rather body image alterations were conditions of subjectivity in themselves. Therefore, educational models premised on acceptance of the body's limitations fails to address the un/limited potentialities of the fantastical body. Therefore, corporeal agency is found in the multiplicity of body images, which destabilize the normalizing practices of a specific body image. The fantastical body allows us to maintain a sense of corporeal fluidity.

The students believed that changes to one's body image were about *imaginary possibilities* that you could 'be' if even for just a moment, what that image projected. For example, wearing sporty clothes even if you never played sports allowed you to try out the 'image' of being sporty. Similarly, if you dressed Goth you weren't necessarily Goth, but you were trying it out for that moment. These articulations had less to do with others perceptions of you but more with fantastical options that change provided for oneself. And yet, this change was not solely a personal change. While change was not *for* another, it was created in and of an encounter, and therefore in relation to another. Others perceptions of you were part of shaping the fantasy of becoming. The perception provided through encounters did not split the subject, but rather opened up fantastical opportunities. Therefore body image needs

to move away from a position of splitting to one that embraces the idea of *dehiscence*—an open, ruptured, un/folding fantastical body. Instead of change towards equilibrium, change is a *process* that is dynamic, multiple, and full of potential.

The ability to change (literally or imaginatively) body image underscores the importance of thinking through the fantastical body as a body that is not defined by boundaries. The fantastical body is in and of the threshold of experience, and this threshold is an immanent force of becoming. Becoming offers different ways of knowing and being in the world. This shifts body image from a self-image defined by limited borders, towards an understanding of corporeality as a process of becoming with multiple points of convergence in an infinite world, out of which body images are not only formed but continuously re-worked and assembled as well. The fluidity of body image thus poses alternative possibilities for living in the world. Alternative corporeal schemas, according to Weiss (1999) provide "subversive tactics available for undermining social constraints on what bodies can and can't do" (p. 74). Thus, instead of perceiving of the body as a set of discrete characteristics, the body needs to be re-theorized from the point of view of processes.

Bronwyn, the art teacher reflects on this process of change: "We always think that when you put something on you become it. But students don't see it this way. There is an idea of things not fitting, a mutability, a trying things out." Change is welcome not because one image is more important or desirable over another, but as an interrogation of what it means to live as a body in and of the world. The fantastical body provides students with unlimited possibilities, the potential of which they understand as *comfort*. However, comfort is not a static condition, but a process marked by its own vulnerability and new assemblages.

Un/attainable Comfort is an approach that sets up ideas about subjectivity and the protective mechanisms surrounding the body. There is an illusion between the softness and the hardness of the pillow and the threat posed by the tacks. It creates a discordant perceptual system between what looks soft and easy to penetrate and something that can't be opened, used, or made accessible. It is this *vulnerability* that is open for discussion.

Despite the openness to the student's investigations there remains a sense of literalness to this piece, especially through the incorporation of materials that lend themselves immediately to issues of representation. In fact it is the title that is most telling. It is not the notion of something being uncomfortable that the girls are exploring in this piece. Although each would describe in different ways what is or is not comfortable, their piece speaks to the idea of 'comfort' as something that is un/attainable. Having used the slash often in my writing, the students picked up on this doubleness and used it in their title to attest to the vulnerability and un/certainty of comfort. Is comfort a source of strength or power that is conditional on the basis of whether it has been voluntarily embraced, or whether it has been imposed on one's subjective experience of the world?

The pieces all positioned on the floor invite viewers into a compromised proximity to the work without any physical awareness that they have crossed a spatial threshold. There is an ambiguity between being drawn to the work, our desire to touch and experience the flesh of the soft fabric, between our visual understanding of something from a distance and the reality we face when up close. There is a relational awareness of one's own body in position to this art piece.

Given that the blanket and the slippers are on a human-scale, the pillow seems over sized, looming larger that our bodies accentuating the threat of violence, insecurity, and the vagueness of belief in the comfort that these articles offer. In conversations with the three students we agreed that scale could have been manipulated even further in both the blanket and the pillow, allowing the slippers to function as a marker for our own bodies in relation to the piece. The viewer's vantage point becomes precarious, as it is necessary you

almost move over the piece to see the tacks and to pick out the stitching in the blanket and the sharp contours of the pillow. The visceral experience of invitation is pushed to a limit without even employing the human touch. There is a threat to resolution, which is displaced by the realization that new knowledge and experience does not after all provide one with reconciliation. Instead of seeing new structures that simply replace existing ones, it is in the perilous penetration of instability and encounter that knowledges past and present come together and are reworked. This installation became a focal point in class discussions around notions of community and in particular the community fostered at Bower.

Bronwyn describes the school as a community, emphasizing that this belief was often discussed at parent advisory meetings as both an important model and as a differentiating marker from the other alternative schools in Vancouver. Bronwyn's perception of community is consistent with what Etienne Wenger (1998) defines as a community of practice where participants are mutually engaged in achieving a goal. In other words practice "exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another" (p.73). A community of practice is not defined by structures, but by the daily interactions between students and teachers. Adopting Wenger's model students make decisions about their school (extra curricular events, fundraising, educational and youth programs in the community they would like to participate in, and the maintenance of the school to name just a few) at a weekly school meeting, which is facilitated by students in the senior grades. All students attend this lunch hour meeting and actively participate in creating the school environment. They even run a small canteen/cafeteria, which generates revenue for projects such as the maintenance of the student lounge and telephone line.[3]

Wenger insists that *mutual* engagement includes diversity and difference. For example, he notes that individuals may join a community of practice for a variety of different reasons and that they *bring to* the community diverse perspectives, histories, and experiences. Regardless of such differences the individuals involved in a community of practice are united

in their objectives and shared common goals. Community is traditionally described as a number of individuals having or building something in common. This could be property or a sense of belonging (Agamben, 1993; Irigaray, 2001; Lingis, 1994). Community, under this model is autonomous, rational, and universal. In its idealized and abstract form it excludes and marks particular bodies as unbelonging imposing boundaries in the process.

What Wenger fails to articulate is the implicit power structures that make mutual engagement not only unattainable but also problematic, and furthermore how encounters actually differentiate and produce difference. Communities of practice invite encounters between 'bodies'. Encounters are not neutral. They are formed through relations that mark some bodies as strangers and allow for the demarcation of spaces of un/belonging (Ahmed, 2000). In other words, encounters complicate the social experience of interacting with other bodies and the lived experiences of intercorporeality. Community cannot be reified as a unified practice where bodies interact together irreducible of difference and power. As Ahmed (2000) defends, the stranger is not someone who we fail to recognize at a distance, but the body that is recognized in proximity as un/familiar. Thus, it is un/familiarity and excess that produces knowledges thereby differentiating difference. Alphonso Lingis (1994) offers a similar insight when he writes that one enters into community not through belonging or property but by exposing oneself. It is an exposure to the other with whom one has nothing in common.

If we begin to reclaim community from 'common', we take the emphasis away from boundaries as borders that mark who or what belongs and does not belong, a practice that maintains its equilibrium through exclusion. Instead what is in question is not the limit but the very threshold itself. Boundaries demarcate inside and outside. If we turn our attention to the threshold, the passage between inside and outside re-determining outside as this boundary that gives access to the world, we might begin to envision community beyond a conception of 'essence' but a 'being-together of existence'. "The threshold is not, in this sense, another thing with respect to the limit; it is, so to speak, the experience of the limit

itself, the experience of being-*within* an *outside*" (Agamben, 1993, p. 68). It is a disruptive move that shifts the fluidity of individual identity towards an examination of the vulnerability of knowing and being. In this space of proximity being(s) come together without being tied to common property or identity. Inside the visible community is intercorporeal and exposed.

Student understandings of the importance and instability of comfort played an important role in defining their body image awareness in school. Bronwyn recounts early on in the project that "Safety is important to them. Its what they like about this school, they get upset when safety is violated". In more traditional schools safety has been imposed through measures that structure and control the 'student body': locks on lockers, rules about loitering in hallways and public spaces and other such body maintenance measures.

The lockers at Bower are considerably different from the austere gray of most other secondary schools. Lockers are painted with colourful murals and often a series of lockers contribute to a collaborative group theme. In addition, there are no locks on the lockers, contents spill out onto the floors and accumulate in piles on tops of lockers. The students tell me that the no lock policy is one of openness and comfort. It fosters an awareness of each other and a responsibility towards collective space. A student informs me that the small size enables this distinction. If someone were to steal something they would not go unnoticed. On another level the openness of these lockers attested to student understandings of boundaries that were not about property and containment, but boundaries that in themselves constitute change and difference.

I chose the name Bower for the school because it reflected this idea of a boundary as open rather than contained. Unlike many other schools in the city whose names are associated with geographical locations or names of individuals, this school's original name was actually quite literally a description of the type of community that parents, teachers, and school administrators believed it fostered. In choosing a pseudonym I wanted to express the students' understanding of community as it related to comfort. In doing so I chose the name *Bower*.

Although the students preferred the term comfort, Bronwyn's own reflections focused on the idea of safety. "We usually think of safety as locked up and contained. But safety exists in openness, fraying edges, nests that are perched on precarious places. Nests aren't closures, they are safe because they are hard to get at, protected by what is around them." Bronwyn spent days photographing nests around the school and ones she discovered on one of the small islands that dot the Vancouver West coast where she lives during the weekends. She also began to stitch a nest out of discarded fabric and other odds and ends. Watching her tactile experiences I began telling her about my encounters with the Bower bird in Northwest Australia. The male Bower builds mating nests out of sticks or reeds, constructing the walls upwards, rather than as a bowl shape more commonly associated with protection. The nests are not built in trees or on rocky ledges but on the earth often in very exposed places.

The floors of the nests are lined with shiny objects, perhaps shells, stones, or even human debris like aluminum pop can tops, pieces of glass, or any other bit of coloured material. Sometimes the Bower uses berries to stain the walls of the nest. These nests are not places of protection rather they *invite encounters*.

I recall how fascinated I was with the construction of the Bower nest, the flashy shells and glass, the unusual wall structures. The Oxford dictionary (retrieved January 2004) defines a person who collects things most notably small objects to be a Bower. Similarly, the term Bowery has been used to denote either a leafy green arbor or a seedy area in a city. The brightly painted lockers with things spilling out of them, the art room stuffed to the rafters with miscellaneous objects from junk heaps, fabric shops, and dollar stores all reminded me of a Bower. While I neither want to imply that the school is a leafy green arbor, nor akin to a seedy area in town, I chose Bower as a name because although a noun it seems to describe a process of encounter, an activity less about traditional notions of comfort as safety, and more intertwined with the vulnerability and exposure of comfort. I wonder: *How is the Bower a boundary that is not a container, but a threshold of touch and the body in the world?*

According to Bronwyn, the parents and school administrators believed that they had created an ideal community, a leafy arbor where their children were 'safe' from the perils associated with larger schools, such as violence, drugs, and alienation associated with not-belonging. The students also articulated similar 'leafy' ideals stating that the small size of the school meant that students were less likely to judge each other harshly, to steal from each other's lockers, and that students aimed to work together to sort out differences and problems. However, they were also quick to comment that even at Bower students faced the pressures of belonging, judgement, and a sense of dis/ease. Yet, rather than understand community through imposed and closed boundaries defined by what is common, the students articulated an understanding of community and body awareness through comfort. Body image moved from 'representation', static images that contain the body as passive victim, towards body image through lived experiences of comfort, a comfort that was un/attainable, vague, and open.

One of Heather and Alexandria's projects was to take an old school chair that I had recovered from a dumpster at the University and use it to facilitate a graffiti style project about logos. Heather had glued popular logos on the chair in random places and attached coloured markers by string to the chair. Her intent was for students to contribute to marking the chair, altering the logos in the process. The chair sat in the front foyer of the school and for months was the 'hang-out' place of choice. The chair is still sitting in the lobby and students continue to add and subtract information. However, Heather noticed that what began as a project about logos turned into more of a statement about how students in the school interacted with one another. Initially a few students commented on the logos, usually by ripping them off the chair and adding their own mottos like "Don't do drugs". Heather initially thought they were in fact mocking the kinds of logos commonly found in secondary schools. But within a few days the chair became a space where students articulated their thoughts about the school and each other.

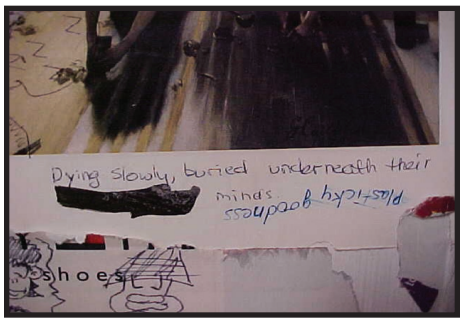
Heather: A lot of students don't get along. A lot don't like each other. And some even don't like the school. But unlike in other schools where it is ok to say that, here we can't so I think people used the chair for that.[4]

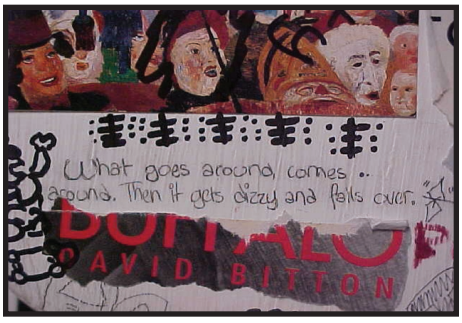
Alexandria: It wouldn't come up otherwise. So the chair gave the people the opportunity to do it. It wasn't as if it was private, I mean everyone could read the chair, it was right at the front door of the school. I guess we figured teachers just wouldn't. But some did. I'm not sure. Maybe the chair was just uncontrolled. Like the markers were there and we could do anything we wanted.

Heather: I think it shows that even in communities that make it all seem like it is neighbourly and everything is ok, when I don't think it is. Especially because community is about diversity but with diversity there are conflicts. Here everyone thinks we are safe. We don't use that word. They do. Its not safety that we want. More like comfort, but it's just understood different. Kinda more unsure.

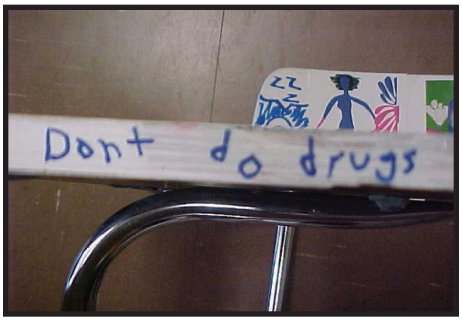
Alexandria: Its impossible to think of any school that way [referring to safety]. I mean for the most part things are better here but they can also be bad. You have to be careful with what you say.

Heather: I think at this school there is the illusion of comfort. Especially this year. Not everyone has the same idea of why they are here. The same idea of the school and what it means. So we can't all be expected to be the same. For me it's more about comfort and that is different than all of us being the same. Comfort is different for each person and it changes all the time.


Dying slowly, buried underneath their
minds


What goes around, comes ..
arounds. Then it gets dizzy and falls over.
DAVID BITTON

life is fun"
BAD!


Dont do drugs

Heather and Alexandria's words display the hesitancy and tensions in coming to terms with the idea of boundaries and comfort. Student's recognized that boundaries could be restrictive, containing bodies in a false sense of safety. Instead of the term safety (which the art teacher used frequently) students described their body awareness in terms of comfort. Comfort is not a space that has no boundaries rather it is a threshold. This threshold though is a space that allows new and alternative assemblages to be created without any pre-determined model of organization. The threshold differs from a boundary in that it is not a limit that holds things in place, but is the experience of a limit, an experience of being exposed, open, and folded.

Instead of understanding body image as a limit, an awareness of one's body marked by inside and outside, body image awareness through comfort becomes a means to interrogate limits, understanding body knowledge in and of the threshold. Boundaries that are constructed based on protection are not only closed they mark limits as distant and unknowable. Comfort challenges us to think through touch and proximity such that limits are recognizable precisely because they are un/familiar, and it is in the un/certain terrain of un/familiarity that body knowledges become un/raveled.

This is my war is a video that further challenges student understandings of comfort and boundaries. In this video, which is set to a popular soundtrack from which it takes it name, we see Maura in various locations throughout the city, most notably spaces of isolation. We see her sitting alone on a park bench, on the beach, and shots of chain link fences and walls further convey the image of remoteness and seclusion. Maura is often seen walking away from the camera or turning her head as if to suggest further solitude and disconnection. There is no dialogue in the video but words and symbols are written on her body: a broken heart, and the words freedom and peace.

Presenting this video in class, I was overwhelmed with the responses that other student's had for Maura's video, and their subsequent interrogations. Louie immediately commented that Maura had put herself in the video, something she had not considered for her own video, remaining behind the camera instead.

On a particular level the video seems a rather straightforward narrative of a student's unbelonging and feelings of isolation. However, this reading was not what either Maura or the other students described. Maura informs the class: "I'm not on the other side of the wall or the fence, I tried to shoot it moving in the car so that it would seem like I was the fence. That I was in it. And then there are shots where I am moving away from the camera, like the one on Granville Island, and its me walking away, not that I'm moving away from people, but from the wall which is the camera, which is also me. You have to think about the video as if it is pressed up against the camera, I tried to make it seem like I was inside it at times, or that you are. It gets confusing but I didn't want it to seem like someone was just watching me. It's supposed to be me or you or whoever inside it. So at times when I move away from the camera it almost seems like a double, so that there is always movement back and forth, not just away from the camera".

Later, as she and I refer back to these statements, she tells me: "Ok, so I'm probably not making sense, because it's hard to talk about this, but the idea was not a video about me exactly. I mean it was in a way, but it could be anyone in this school too. I kept thinking about walls and fences and I was trying not to show one side of them or the other, but just them or being inside them, and I guess I also wanted them to move. The words on my arms are about the walls. Actually before class I didn't really think of the word 'wall', I kind of liked more of the idea of a space, something that didn't keep me in or out". I ask her to tell me more about the broken heart she carefully painted on her chest (I can't see the connection), and she launches into an almost completely different narrative. I realize that there is no one story to this video but a multiplicity of contexts, some of which contradict each other, but otherwise point towards a sense of being inside, of being in a space of tension and dis/comfort, of facing something. If you read the video one way it appears like a nostalgic longing for being included, read in the way that Maura interpreted, the closeness and proximity of being inside the camera, it is altogether quite different. I have to admit her intentions were not always successful, and sometimes I did get a sense I was watching

an adolescent music video. Regardless of this, some of the film clips are informative given class discussions and student interrogations of community and comfort. In particular it is the concept of being inside that is not an inside in contrast to an outside, but a being within an outside, a being in the threshold, an un/folding.

So often we tell our students to take risks and that risk taking is about crossing borders, thinking outside 'the box'. But this notion of risk taking is impossible if we consider border crossing as privileged and inaccessible to everyone. Furthermore border crossing insists that a boundary is about containment, and that risk taking is contingent on being on the other side. If we want to begin to think about risks in education and body knowledges that do not take sides, we need to think about being in the threshold, a being within, and that this within is a space of movement and dislocation, where meaning hesitates, slips, and un/folds.

TIRED
IM SO

folds: embodied light

> Light is a powerful substance. We have a primal connection to it. But, for something so powerful, situations for its felt presence are fragile. I form it as much as the material allows. I like to work with it so that you feel it physically, so you feel the presence of light inhabiting space. I like the quality of feeling that is felt not only with the eyes. (James Turrell, 2003)[5]

On a recent visit to Seattle, Washington I encountered the work of artist James Turrell and architect Steven Holl. Stepping into Turrell's Ganzfeld (whole field) piece titled *Spread*, one is immediately immersed in a field of blue iridescent light that envelops and penetrates the body. Inside the room that is awash with blue light one experiences the sense that space continues infinitely while simultaneously being pressed up against and passing through the body. It is a disorienting sensation. The light removes any sense of foreground/background challenging traditional expectations of perspective, placing the viewer amidst the art. Light is experienced as touch, an embodied, sensuous knowing.

Similarly, Holl's Chapel of St. Ignatius infuses light with architectural space. Referencing his design of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, Kiasma, Holl transforms space into a series of folds that reflect and radiate light, enveloping the visitor. The space seems to touch the body, to present space and spirituality in proximity, as intimate and physical. Experience as intercorporeal, seeing as touching, touching back in contiguous reverberations.

skin boundaries

> To differentiate between the familiar and the strange is to mark out the inside and the outside of bodily space; to establish the skin as a boundary line. (Ahmed, 2000, p. 42)

Skin is often employed as a metaphor for the fragility and temporality of existence. Depicted as decaying, marked, and ephemeral artists have used a number of materials to evoke this body boundary, suggesting its determination to make meaning, memory, and to signify change. Transparent paper, delicate flowers, and even butterfly wings signify the body's life cycle, the fecundity and richness of bodied experiences, while simultaneously alluding to the exposure and transparency of skin as a protective layer, a shell, or armor. Skin is a rich symbolic space of fluidity and metamorphosis, while also imprisoning the body and subjectivity within a container. As a contact sense touch emphasizes skin as a location of different kinds of touching thereby creating different bodies. Skin is a border that feels; it is open to other bodies, interacting and taking on different shapes. It is in this opening to others through intercorporeality that touch differentiates bodies requiring us to examine the boundary not as a division but as the very location, a threshold that produces bodies and knowledges. "So while the skin appears to be the matter which separates the body, it rather allows us to think of how the materialization of bodies involves, not containment, but an affective opening out of bodies to other bodies, in the sense that the skin registers how bodies are touched by others" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 45).

Ahmed (2000) continues her address of skin, arguing that a re-conceptualization of lived experience needs to include intercorporeality, but that at the same time one needs to ask questions about the phenomenology of touch that opens bodies to other bodies. In doing so she proposes that interrogations turn towards the threshold, the opening that differentiates between bodies, and complicates the move from one body to another. Thus, intercorporeality is a site of differentiation rather than inclusion, supplemented with an understanding of the

economies of touch. In this way a thinking through bodies requires that we not just think of skin as an exposure to another or as something that conceals and protects, but a site of bodily differentiation that is tactile and visual.

Vacancy and *Worn Out* are two dress-type pieces that suggest clothing as a second skin, a membrane that separates and joins. The dress, as a symbol, has been employed in such a way as to examine gender, femininity, and the material experience of the body. Art critic Renee Baert (1998, 2001) has written extensively on the 'body through dress' an artistic practice that explores the textuality and corporeality of the body without representation. The empty dress she contends, takes on particular significance in feminist art practices transmitting a host of cultural messages, particularly as they circulate with, in, and through the body. However, rather than focusing on the dress as an absent body made present through material-semiotic relations I want to focus on the dress as *skin*; a boundary that is *always present*, the threshold of touching and being touched.

Worn out is fashioned from a discarded rusted muffler and a skirt made of rows and rows of dried flower petals and leaves. The hard metal of the muffler immediately contrasts the delicate flowers and yet both offer an image of decay and deterioration. There is something discordant about their proximity to each other. The excess of flowers glued and pressed so tightly together creates a surface that vibrates and hums, almost like a murmur. It seems to over power the rusty metal, which is cracked, torn, and falling apart, and almost unrecognizable. The dress as skin appears as if it is inside out, imperiling the very notion of boundaries and containment. The acrid odors of the dying petals further augment the fleshiness of the figure. It is heavy, thick, and engorged, the weight of the skirt pulling on the metal bodice, a threatening impression.

In contrast *Vacancy* almost seems to float and hover in the air, neither grounded nor soaring off into the expansiveness of space. Made from white tule the feminine dress pattern encases a large, scarlet red, organic form—perhaps a heart, a kidney, or a lung. Its

1263

ambiguity only distinguished by reference to location on the inside of the dress. Unlike *Worn Out,* which appears turned inside out, looking at *Vacancy* our sight passes through the dress distorting objects on the other side. The dress is machine sewn giving it a uniform or generic appearance, a pattern that represents a classic trope of gender, femininity, and sexual desire. Virginal white. Pristine edges and seams. Inside the organ pulses, fleshiness, edges fraying and basted together with loose uneven stitches, which un/ravel and hang loose from the body's form. Both pieces draw attention to skin as a boundary as a threshold, an un/contained within.

> Skin. The first thing I think about when one says skin is of course the coat that covers our body. Our skin is a very important matter because it protects our body—an internal body from harmful things. Aside from clothing skin is our cover, our shield, our mask. It is another layer. The difference between skin and clothes is that it cannot be removed. You can't wear another person's skin. Therefore skin doesn't always protect us. Sometimes it can tear. It can even get stained.—Trinity

Trinity wrote this passage in her journal as part of a written exploration of her piece *Worn Out*. Trinity was initially attracted to the muffler and the petals because of the tactile and synaesthetic qualities that they evoked. Many of her journal entries reference this aspect of art making and a knowing that is bodied and sensual. "When I first saw the muffler in the alley near the school I just knew that I wanted to make something with it. I could almost feel its roughness in my hands. It looked so delicate lying in the mud. I left it there, this was months ago and then when you talked about our first art project I went back to see if I could find it again". As the weeks passed and Trinity and I met to discuss her piece we thought about other signifying traces in her work.

Trinity says of her dress: “It could be a shelter, a cover, a mask—I guess a camouflage. So it almost acted like a bubble and created a world of its own. It gave me a sense of release and my own little space”. I asked her if she could have conveyed her ideas another way. “Hmm, maybe a cage. But that would give a different message because it is a cage”. I wondered what she meant between her own space and a cage and so pressed her further. “A cage is associated with things like animals and stuff. Thinking of it as a shelter makes it think that you were put there for a reason. That it wasn’t your own choice. Your hopeless kind of thing and you don’t have that power. And you’re not released. You’re in isolation almost, so it’s kinda opposite to this sense of space. And it doesn’t have that sense of comfort”.

This comfort and sense of space has two references. First, the act of making or the process of becoming embodied through art, and second her own body image awareness and its connection with school.

As our conversations come un/done we begin to see how *Worn Out* signifies the possibilities of touch and skin as a *threshold* of existence. In a short paragraph about boundaries, Trinity writes that boundaries are limits that impose borders on what one can or can’t do. However, she continues writing that these limits are not imposed from outside as external markers, but individually determined. “Boundaries are the extent of our imagination and creativity”. “Boundaries are things that happen through experience”, she tells me. “Boundaries are created when we come in contact with other things. They are open to change because they are associated with comfort”. Asking her to clarify, she reminds me comfort is similar to the materials she has chosen, decaying, temporal, and in constant and inevitable change.

The skin of her piece, its decaying and fragile materials are in conflict with its largeness, the weight of the petals, and the sense that we are looking at both inside and outside simultaneously. Trinity informs the class that originally she had this idea of making a dress, but that as she worked on the piece it wasn't a dress any more. Andrew asked her to explain how it wasn't a dress. She responds:

> Well remember the dress pieces Stephanie showed in class, and we thought that the body was absent or hidden. I don't think my piece is about a hidden body. The body is very much here. I mean you can quite literally touch and feel it. It's kinda of beautiful and gross at the same time. Bronwyn is worried that it's going to get damaged in class, because of the flowers. But really no one wants to touch it. It's too much like flesh. It even smells rotting.

This prompts another student to respond: "Yeah, I see it as scars. The patterns of the petals. Or it could be not scars in a bad way but just marks on the body, maybe tattoos". And another with: "So instead of a dress as a metaphor for skin, it is just skin. But not skin like a covering more like if we peeled back skin, the inside and outside together".

What is apparent from such descriptions is that the body is made meaningful not through its absence but through its abundance and the body as excess. This excess points to meaning that is 'other than', that is something un/named and un/familiar.

Alexandria's dress *Vacancy* is another complex example of student understandings of skin, and the inside and outside of the body. In class discussions some of the students raised comments regarding the somewhat 'ideal' or perfect external shell of her piece, reflected in the white tule fabric and classic dress design. They wondered if she had intentionally wanted to describe the outside of the body as clean and tidy, and the inside, represented by an organic and more roughly designed form, as messy. This Alexandria thought was an

interesting interpretation, but reminded the class that a viewer never saw either the outside or the inside without the other. When looking at her piece the transparency of the tule allows the viewer to see both the tule form and the red organic shape simultaneously. Also, as James noted in a class discussion, other objects in the classroom could be seen through the dress, somewhat distorted and altered by the fabric. Alexandria explained that her piece was not about a specific kind of skin. “Instead of perceiving the body as separate parts”, she writes in her journal, “I wanted to think of how the inside and the outside of the body is really inter-connected. I guess I’m not sure what I mean by the inside and the outside. Maybe that is what I’m trying to say that the definitions of what is inside and outside are different. It was really important that I find fabric that you could see through but that also distorted what you saw. Sort of the traces of the fabric where part of what you were looking at. Like the body is part of everything we experience.” In this instance the threshold is an awareness of proximity through depth. Instead of describing experience as distinctive parts, *Vacancy* points towards the dynamic conditions that generate perceptual knowledge by challenging boundaries, opening knowledge onto multiple connections with the world. Alexandria’s body cannot be reduced to parts, rather it engages with a process of assemblages where multiplicities are signified amidst other multiplicities.

Skin also posed interrogations of contact and touch. Heather writes that skin tells us a lot about what a person has touched. For instance if someone's hands are rough or smooth it might tell us about some of the things that this person has been touching. "In terms of touch, skin can be very sensitive, which I think is really interesting. Because even though it works as a protective shell, it is still extremely sensitive to stimulus." In another passage she continues with this reflection:

> I think a big part of touch is emotion. Like if your hand brushes against someone else's hand who you are attracted to. It is a physical touch, but you would have a somewhat emotional response. I think for most people the best way to learn is through touch. It is through touch and experience that one begins to understand how things work. I think contact with any and everything constitutes touch, which basically means that I view touch as the affect that any person, object, or situation can have on a person.

Trinity's reflection expresses a similar sentiment.

> Touch is a difficult thing to describe because it's the sense of feeling. When someone tries to explain or describe to you what they have felt by touch, I usually cannot understand them until I myself have touched it. I think to fully understand the description of touch one must first experience what one is trying to describe or at least come in contact with it.

I wondered if Trinity was trying to say that she could only understand and make sense of things that were familiar. However, she told me in another passage that it's not about things being familiar or not, but about being in a situation where touch helps us to understand. What she was describing then is the concept of proximity as knowledge production. Jamie concurs writing: "I find that I use touch to understand things because I am closer to it." Emma furthers this when she says that "touch implies more than one thing, it takes place between things". Instead of reading the surface of thing (skins), or looking beyond the skin (penetration), touch accounts for the effects of surfaces, how knowledge is produced in the between, in and of the threshold. Skin is a border that feels. It is the threshold between bodies, the site of interactions and encounters. It is the space of exposure. Therefore, while it can separate and contain bodies, skins as thresholds, are openings of bodies to other bodies (Ahmed, 2000). Thus, touch calls for recognition that skin is not simply a private matter, that it is formed and marked between beings, an site of inter-embodiment, where difference is produced.[6]

Locating touch and the body at the threshold of experience moves away from discursive analysis of the body's absence. I was fascinated by the student's understandings of the body as plentitude, fecundity, and through excess. Previously, I had explored research that examined the dress as a marker for the absent body (see Springgay, 2001, 2002). Allowing for a particular feminist reading, dress stood in for the body, suggesting and imposing a boundary between presence and absence, inside and outside. Educational imperatives suggested rupturing the boundary, penetrating it and valuing both sides of the border. But the

student's art and conversations shift away from a boundary of containment to the border, the site of contact itself, not as inside and outside, but as a threshold. Touch as a threshold in and of the body, is a body that is always already present—fantastical, vulnerable, and un/certain.

Months into the curriculum and research project Bronwyn abandons her nest project. Instead she too takes up the space of boundaries as the threshold of embodied experience. Retreating to her island home one weekend she asks if she might be able to borrow one of my video cameras. The next week she returns with a short film. On the island she tells me are a number of 'public' walk ways and paths that lead to various beaches and wander throughout the island. The island however, she believes has become a closed community, one that does not like outsiders who come to explore the beauty of the island on weekends and holidays. Many of the residents put obstacles in the paths, large tree trunks and old metal appliances, anything large that impedes and blocks the paths. That weekend, Bronwyn and her older daughter set out on a project of clearing the paths. They remove some of the detritus and then Bronwyn's daughter uses the lawn mower to clear the over grown grass along the paths. The film documents this process and meanders around the island on these now exposed boundaries. It is not a removal of boundaries, but rather contact with, an un/covering of borders, that opens them up to new knowledges, difference, and encounters between being(s)-in-relation.

Chapter Three

Corporeal cartographies:
Materializing space as a textual narrative process

un/writing corporeal cartographies as trace

The discordant sound of a violin played out of tune is heard throughout the school for more than two months.

A train interrupts the art room.

A shopping cart takes a trip to the beach.

I love the idea of maps. As a nomad of sorts, a dreamer, traveler, and mover (I have lived in nine cities in four continents with a considerable amount of time spent dwelling in/between) I find maps an important means of orienting myself to new spaces. Maps facilitate new knowledge of the world. They enable discovery, exploration, and un/ending possibilities.

However, the maps I find most compelling are narratives, sometimes found in guidebooks, others posted on websites, and then there are those that are novels, short stories of places and travel adventure. I love to read these narrative cartographies, imaging places and encounters, searching, disclosing, and inventing the world in which I live. These types of maps are experienced, imagined, and offer possibilities of what is yet to come, rather than simply reproducing what is known. These maps are less about orienting myself on the grid, and more to do with 'losing' myself in discovery and the un/known.

Contemporary mapping theories argue that mapping is a creative activity that focuses on the *process of mapping* rather than on the object of maps (Cosgrove, 1999). As opposed to traditional views of maps as stable and complete, contemporary cartographies recognize mapping's partial and provisional nature. Thus, mapping is not just an archive of projected points and lines onto a surface, often referred to as a trace; it is a dynamic and complex actualization of un/foldings. While traditional maps chart and graph the lay of the land, codifying, naturalizing, and institutionalizing conventions, contemporary mapping that finds its place in visual art and culture, views maps for *what they can do*, the potential and possibilities of the un/named. This mode of thinking finds the agency of mapping in its ability to uncover or to un/fold (Corner, 1999). The mappings that I find so compelling are ones that inaugurate new worlds, opening bodies to other bodies and encounters. Furthermore, mapping as process argues that the "experience of space cannot be separated from the events that happen within it; space is situated, contingent, and differentiated. It is remade continuously every time it is encountered by different people, every time it is represented through another medium, every time its surroundings change, every time new affiliations

are forged" (Corner, 1999, p. 227). Therefore space and bodies are created in the process of mapping.

Instead of thinking of mapping as iconographic deduction or representation I want to think of the practice of mapping as inscriptions that are material intercorporeal becomings. By challenging the idea of a map as an orientation that relies on points, I want to explore the possibilities of narrative cartographies (both real and imagined) as textual interconnections between body and space. In doing so I question: *How do students understand and construct body knowledges as intercorporeal cartographies that materialize space as textual narratives?*

In this chapter I examine three videos and an installation (that was video documented) investigating how these works of art question subjectivity, representation, and memory in relation to bodied space. In doing so I draw on contemporary mapping theories that conceptualize the process of mapping as disruptive, differential, and which enable alternative ways of inhabiting space. Theories of the fold will also shape an understanding of corporeal cartographic meaning making with, in, and through touch.

Andrew and Tyler have spent hours filming each other, classmates and various activities around the school. They inform me that they were just playing with the camera, fooling around and having fun. This is their first experience with the digital video camera. To a large extent the video footage is random and experimental infused with an adolescent desire to perform for the video camera.

Andrew and Tyler have just begun to edit the initial video footage using i-movie®. We sit together and discuss their initial selections. While I would agree that much of their initial filming was random and included a series of performances for the sake of the camera, this conversation marked a point of departure for their project (and subsequent videos).
To begin editing, Andrew and Tyler remove the audio track from their video footage and

commence with an assemblage of video clips. Part of this process is also experimental as the students familiarize themselves with the i-movie tools. However, there are many conscious decisions made, and Andrew and Tyler explain that these decisions are in part influenced by particular gestures and movements made between bodies. Tyler notes: “I wanted movement and people—interactions”.

Portions of the audio have been replaced with a soundtrack recorded by Tyler on his violin. It is not what one would traditionally refer to as a melodic sound, and Tyler describes the sound as "2001". Not familiar with this movie reference, I ask him to explain further. He describes the sound as multiple individual voices as in a choir all chanting, somewhat chaotic but at the same time there is a certain structure. This unpleasant sound haunted the classroom over the next few months as Tyler meticulously developed its tune on his violin. Andrew says: "you look at people differently when you can't hear what they are saying; like there is an extreme close-up of my face and I am clearly saying something but you can't hear me. It sort of gives people a different context". He continues when we approach a clip in the movie where he and James have their faces very close to the camera. "I do actually like the talking part because it forces you to think about our body language. Right there [referring to the video] I am concentrating on what I am saying not how I look but all you get because we took the sound away is how I look".

I'm conscious in this space of meaning making, and later when I review their artist statements, that they are thinking through the languages of the body, the interstitial spaces between flesh and word. The first artist statement or reflection on their work was in fact a tape recording. Like the discordant violin sound, the tape captures the three students, Andrew, James, and Tyler making verbal sounds. They graciously also provide me with a written map, to guide me through the exploration of sounds. They write:

In producing this piece, our foremost intention was to reject any and all forms of formalized literate communication. As such, it cannot be accurately perceived as a direct response to the questions we were asked to respond to, in that one of the piece's very reasons for existence is to invalidate the concept of linguistic structure. As a collective, we feel that such structure, regardless of its form, is inherently limiting to the process of creation….

Despite our views toward structuralized language, the material on this cassette does answer all of the questions that we were requested to answer, and does so without any explicit reference to our own aforementioned socio-linguistic agenda…

Additionally, our cassette has strong implications regarding the role of the body in society at large, both in the way that it is coded and used to convey established communication and in the way it can become an expression and resistance to social conventions…

Finally, on a practical note, it is best to play the cassette on speakers of low sound quality. We have found that to do otherwise is likely to result in the further structuralization of sound and knowledge.

Their thesis is ‘anti-language’, a language that moves with, in, and through the body. In later conversations with James, who has a particular interest in anti-language, he tells me that they were not referring to pre-language, or to the notion that the body and its activities precedes consciousness and hence language. In this view language and the body are separate. Equally important in this regards, James informs me that their understanding of anti-language is not in opposition to language, but just assembled in a completely novel way. James says: “It is sort of an expression of thoughts with no regard to any sort of system that is put in place to allow one to make oneself understood to others. It could be seen as a middle ground between anti verbal communication and verbal communication in that it is not directly assumed in a formal system or generally universally understood. The anti language is not without structure it is just that the essence of structure is different [at this point in the conversation, James adds an aside that this is his interpretation of comfort and the school]. It also serves as a more intense display of emotions”.

Their intent was to describe verbally what they felt they were trying to construct with their video, *Monkey Puzzle*. They recognize that it was almost impossible to translate the two, as the sounds do initially come across as gibberish or noise, possibly, they reflect, because we already have a referent for such sounds. They agree that what they created on the audiotape was not exactly the kind of anti-language they were thinking about, but that it served the purpose for the exercise I had asked of them. The video on the other hand is constructed through a host of un/named possibilities and connections allowing word and flesh to un/fold.

Returning to our initial conversation, Andrew stops editing and adds: “All of these actions we’re doing there is because we are being filmed [again he is referencing the clip where his face is close to the camera]. So our body language is actually changed by that. I’m not normally staring directly at one point while I’m talking, but here I am. So already, there was a change of context and a different meaning. Then we remove the sound and it doubles again”. Tyler jumps in: “Body language by itself means something different then when it’s coupled with words. Often someone will say something and make an action but people are

talking about completely different things than their body language". He continues: "Body language tells us a lot more than we can actually say. When you take something away the meaning changes". We talk a bit about body language, but Andrew argues that the video is not about body language in its traditional sense, for example the movements and postures of the body that convey meaning. He agrees that this aspect of body language is present, "hey there are bodies in the film after all so you can't really do away with body language… but it is more the way that language moves through the body and is able to be re-coded and re-named". Tyler agrees but insists that either way the idea is that they are changing, transforming, and mutating meaning. The references to language (including the discordant violin sound) are veiled in such a way that structural language doesn't become the vehicle through which you arrive at a certain set of information. You have to sense your way through, allow for the languages of the body to guide you on your journey.

I'm reminded of the artist Ann Hamilton's installation at the 1999 Venice Biennale entitled *myein*. The piece featured a site-specific installation that worked with the structures of the American pavilion, which Hamilton thought resembled a common neoclassical form found in many banks in America. On the walls was a text—Charles Reznikoff's Testimony: The United States 1885-1915—translated into Braille, a historical document charting court records from the turn of the last century. Over the Braille cascades intensely colored fuchsia powder, catching, roiling, falling off the text and then accumulating on the floor. Echoing throughout the space was Hamilton's voice reading another historical text, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, in international phonetic code. A table, the only object in the piece, stood at the exterior to the room and was covered with white cloth. It was a gesture towards Hamilton's textile heritage and art making practices, while also reminding the viewer of earlier forms of record keeping. Hamilton notes that the reference to *myein* means 'to close one's eyes or lips'. The installation concerns itself on one level with haunting presences that are barely detectable, and yet somehow persistent, the invisible histories and languages that are absent in the official texts of American history. It is an absent body made present through its absence.

However, while the absence and erasure of knowledges is certainly one aspect of Hamilton's art, she also takes a stand in her work that is less a critique and more a critical engagement with a process that is intended to shift meaning, to place the body in and of space. Like many of her other installations, Hamilton was interested in the idea that while writing leaves traces, *reading* doesn't.[1] Thus, she shifts the focus on language from text as written to text as read, placing the body amidst the activity and space of reading. Reading doesn't erase the text, but obscures it, makes it transform into something else. It inhabits the text, materializing its textuality through the body. Reading thus moves from absence to presence, the materiality of ideas bringing the body into the space in its fullness. The haunting presence that one might first understand of her work is replaced by an awareness of the body as text, reading and turning with, in, and through the body. Instead of understanding text as a mere vehicle of ideas, the practice of reading invoked and involved all of the senses.

Feminist art critic Marsha Meskimmon (2003) contextualizes this as: "the act was not simply to read *through* transparent texts, but to have gestures return the body to the body by reinstating reading as a fully physical, multi-sensory act" (p. 154). It is a performance of the physicality of text, and thus speaks of the materiality and practices of knowledge. In many of Hamilton's art pieces the text is re-made and re-created through the embodied act of reading, making meaning through the interactions of text and bodies. It is a corporeal knowing that resonates through the senses opening the body to encounters with the world.

Meskimmon (2003) maintains that reading and writing as embodied processes are connected to contemporary cartographic conceptions that envision mapping as spatialized and relational, rejecting a more traditional understanding of maps and texts as fixed descriptions of spaces and bodies. Rather than critiquing texts that are monolithic in structure, Meskimmon argues that Hamilton's material textual processes emphasize spatial connections between body and text, and allow for creative agency and the possibilities of shifting and engaging with new knowledge. She writes: "*myein* did not so much place printed text into the constructs of an installation, as materialize the space within the US pavilion as

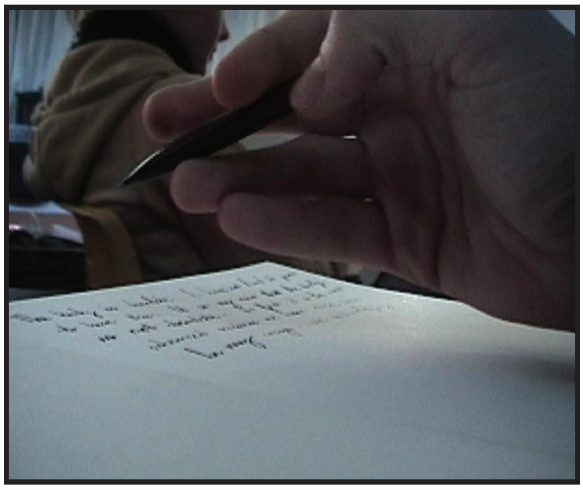
a textual, narrative process. In this way, the space can be conceived more as an event and the installation itself as a multi-sensory experience of textuality" (Meskimmon, 2003, p. 163). The reading of texts resists universalizing and assimilating the various narratives of the space, both the official rhetoric in addition to the stories that un/fold between space and bodies. In addition, writes Meskimmon, viewers used the fuchsia pigment to inscribe their own marks onto the installation walls, thereby taking up the invitation to embody narratives and to interact and make meaning with, in, and through corporeal cartography.

The intertwining of bodies in space is the action of the fold, a place of doubling where endless new points of connections are made. The action of the fold is an intercorporeal textual space where knowledge is gained through interconnections challenging the transparency of the map. So too, *Monkey Puzzle* un/folds multiple assemblages creating bodied space in the process.

Continuing with the video, we spend time focusing on a section in which Tyler is writing in his journal. The students have discovered the possibilities of the reverse function in i-movie so that the act of writing moves backwards. They find this exciting and as we sit and explore this section together they begin to ask questions and think through this gesture. Andrew tells me they are "un/writing". "Clearly", he says, "it's like the un/writing takes away the writing and leaves just this pristine page", and Tyler interjects "it's cleansing". I ask them if they see this as a negative affect. Andrew is quick to respond: "It's not an act of destruction like if you took a part a Leggo® house, it is not being deconstructed, it is more like different knowledge". He continues, "It's not really positive or negative—it's in-between". At this point in our conversation Tyler interrupts "It's not just about our bodies, but how things affect our bodies and how our bodies affect things".

Following Tyler's statement Andrew continues with the idea of un/writing, relating it to the concept of "un/doing". "Another thing I like about this un/writing is that when you reverse it, and you are witnessing this action take place at some point along that point in reverse you realize that it is something that has been reversed then by the time the un/writing is finished you've figured out its in reverse so in fact he is actually about to start writing so it is almost that what you just saw didn't actually happen. Because you are actually at the start now. At the end you realize it's the beginning and what you have witnessed has never actually occurred".

As they continue to discuss the un/writing, Tyler says: "there was one other thing that I noticed here. I'm going to play part of this clip. At one point I erase something and that's putting something back in". Andrew responds: "Now that would be a different angle". I'm not so quick and I have to ask: "What do you mean putting something back in". Tyler explains: "Because when you are using an eraser [remember they are using the reverse tool] it's doing the exact opposite the tools are reversed. Its like a double reverse of writing".



The idea of peeling away successive layers of meaning, of looking beyond or beneath the surface takes the notion of *trace* as a starting point. The palimpsest is a perfect metaphor for this process of layering. A palimpsest, according to one source, is a medieval manuscript where text is erased in order to make room for subsequent writings (Gerber, 2003). Viewed in this way, the act of erasure is a "making room" for new information. In this act of erasure removal is never complete. Traces are left, in some cases literally, but also metaphorically,

embodying the memory and history of the trace. Other configurations of contemporary palimpsests include torn posters on billboards, signs with missing letters, stamps and envelopes with traces of travel and even a chalkboard. These suggest yet another, but similar meaning to the word palimpsest, where the object becomes a vessel or container recording the history and memory of its experiences. A number of artists including Robert Rauchenberg and Johnathon Miller have explored the idea of the palimpsest, where in the instant of erasure something else is created. In this sense the erased becomes more than just a negative or a non-attribute. In *Monkey Puzzle* the un/writing scene and the doubling of erasure did not simply remove text and return the piece of paper to its previous stage, in the process of erasure the remnants of pencil becomes a deliberate making of new possibilities.

The metaphor of the palimpsest lends to Derrida's (1997) concept of "sous rature" or writing under erasure, where in meaning there is an always already absent present. Gyatri Spivak in the preface to Derrida's *On Gammatology* translates Derrida's text: "This is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both word and deletion. (Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out, since it is necessary, it remains legible" (in Derrida, 1997, p. xiv). In other words, the trace of the word remains present. It is the idea of 'trace' that Derrida puts under erasure, a word, writes Spivak "that cannot be a master-word, that presents itself as the mark of an anterior presence" (in Derrida, 1997, p. xv). Accordingly one could transcribe the word 'difference' here as well. The trace of a word is its absent "something else" or one might even call it a binary, premised on the idea that every term embodies its opposite meaning, or that which is necessary and yet crossed out. For instance when we write the word 'mind' it carries with it the opposite word 'body'.

While neither a philosopher nor a deconstructivist scholar my reading of Derrida's text leaves me a rather different understanding. Derrida's chooses the French phrase 'sous rature', which, like the concept of mappings as process, implies that his focus could be turned away from settling on the opposite meanings of terms, towards the *activity of crossing* something out that leaves a trace. This trace is no longer a static point of meaning but instead

has been transformed in the process of erasure. So while in *On Grammatology*, trace is translated as track, a meaning more inclined with traditional maps, and points of origin, I'd like to consider the *trace as a process*.[2] Thus, I'd be disposed to re-think the metaphor of the palimpsest from vessel or archive of past meaning, which would imply a container of closed boundaries, to a more rhizomatic configuration, where the *act of crossing out* turns from a remainder or an absence, towards a re-configuration of mark making as not only new knowledge, but knowledge that points to possibilities that are yet to come, further tracings.

In the student's video the act of erasure is not a making room for something else, but alternatively a process of foraging new connections and understandings. Erasure shifts from the removal of something to the act of creation, a being in the midst of.

It's been almost a year now since the first video, *Monkey Puzzle* was created and I've been asked by Andrew and Tyler to come visit them again, *Monkey Puzzle II The Director's Series*, has now been finished, and they'd like to show it to me. I arrange to spend the day at the school and the students agree to look at the videos in class with some of the other senior art students.

The second video is a spin off from the first. The film opens with a scene narrated by the cameraman (Tyler) who is interviewing the director of the first film (Andrew). Various scenes unfurl and in each scene a student (Andrew, Tyler, James) assumes a character role, quite often with elaborate costumes and kitschy stage props. i-movie special effects have been taken further, with a segment stylized as an old black and white film and in another section a water pistol has been transformed into a ray gun, crackling lines of electric current flowing from the gun on the video screen. The sophistication of editing and composition, and even a stronger narrative thread, is apparent. I have been told they have been making movies all year.[3]

The voices of the narrator (sometimes cameraman, sometimes someone else unseen) and the actors locate you within a fictionalized realm with characters and routes that lead you through the film's spaces with stories that intersect with other stories, and that take form

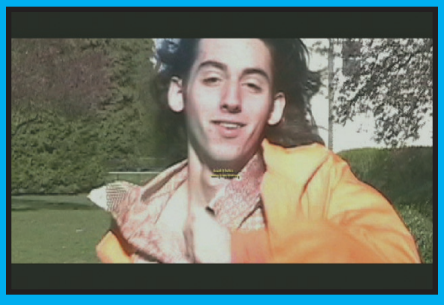
through your own experiences, thoughts, and memories as you wander along with them. The film is an inexhaustibility of narratives, peopled with strangers, and the uncanny. The stories are elusive and fragmentary; thoughts and perceptions shift, threads and clues are hinted at, dropped, circled around and pursued. Your senses are heightened. The atmosphere remains taught and compelling as the film un/folds with much that is reminiscent of detective stories and even quite possibly film noir. There is indeed a sense of participating in the film as you are caught up in the narrative, aware of its fabrication (with its directions, inter-cutting voices, and bursts of music and special effects) and at the same time immersed within the space-between it creates (between fiction and reality as the sounds merge with those around you and you are present in the classroom with these same students, the stage settings, and some of the props). The film is a palimpsest of meanings.

Scene Two. Take 153. A director's 'clap board' has magically appeared at the school. Props surface and students spend time fashioning costumes and stage sets. I put another video 'onto the reel'.

STROLLER AND WHEELCHAIR
ACCESS ON LEVEL
MALL ENTRANCE
Mall

It's Like A Breath Of Fresh Air!

Robert "Booker" Hoskins
Legitimate Film Producer



A shopping cart takes a trip to the beach. The scene is dusk, blue light casting moonscape-like shadows along the shore. The tide is out making the sand soft and rippled. A young man steers the cart, pushing it awkwardly in the sand. It gets wedged in the sand, inciting the title of Louie's film: *Stuck*. The pushing movements appear directionless, the young man is neither going towards the sea nor further in land, he is simply struggling with the wheels of the cart that sink further and further into the soft darkness. The struggle un/folds in split time as shots move between the cart at the beach and an underground parking lot, where a young woman, face solemn, pushes the cart between rows of parked cars. Again spliced camera angles create a sense of movement that is a drift, wandering.

While there is a direct confrontation with urban space and outward surroundings the film creates an inward awareness and almost a detached sense from the urban scene. We see the characters but imagine and feel their invisibleness, as if the people are part of the backdrop of beach and garage and we are watching a solitary shopping cart on a voyage. Voices and sounds have been removed, replaced with a soundtrack of a popular song. Only the opening segment where the cart speeds away from the camera and the final segments in the parking garage do the sounds of the outside world, the urban core, filter in, creating a sense of tension between the physical space of the city, and the materialized corporeal space of the film. Although 'the city' is limited to scenes of a beach, with sprawling urban growth visible in the distance, and a parking garage, the shopping cart is an emblem of urban life, consumerism, and a marker of habitual time—shopping. Yet, the cart is empty, accentuating the coldness of its metal structure, allowing it to become a cage or border between the viewer and the person attempting to move the cart. In her journal notes she's written: "It's staining us this excess of stainless steel".

Unlike either of the *Monkey Puzzle* films where actors and cameramen change places, *Stuck* is filmed and directed by Louie, bringing the surface of the film even closer to the viewer, as if we are inside interfacing with the 'skin of the film' (Marks, 1999).

The differentiated and shifting perspectives between beach and garage becomes a means of moving between stories and exploring multiple selves that haunt space. Questions about representation are applicable as the film shifts between spaces and locations. There is an awareness of interconnected views that explore the relationship between bodies and spaces, the expansiveness of the beach and the concrete mass of a parking garage. The shopping cart as its moves between experiences precludes any simple linear narrative as memories jostle amid a shifting present. It opens up a prospect of a passage through which we discover spaces that exist within space, and the body's relationship and weaving with, in, and through space.

There is an idea of a walk or journey at work in the video. Walking suggests paths that others have walked before, a collective walking; a walking that is not solitary but joined with all of the past and future walkers and places. These multiple walkers break down the idea of an individual autonomous self, an interconnection, an invasion of sorts between bodies and spaces.

Cartographical scholar James Corner (1999) proposes four thematic ways in which new practices of mapping are emerging, and each of them produce certain understandings of space as embodied, relational, and intertwined: *drift, layering, game-board*, and *rhizome*. I want to focus on the interconnections between these themes and the videos.

Walking as drifting creates a condition of lived experience that produces un/expected encounters between bodies. Corner (1999) contends that drifting allows for a process of "mapping alternative itineraries and subverting dominant readings and authoritarian regimes" (p. 231). More a form of embodied mapping where the body becomes part of the space and social surroundings, drifting is ephemeral, vague, and explores the un/familiar terrain of meaning making. Drifting produces excess.

Kirsten Forkert's walking project entitled *Public Time* examines the places one moves through everyday, but where one never stops, because you have no reason to spend time there. Her project gathered a group of people together and walked through a section of an

urban city in Canada, examining the spaces between destinations—the gaps and moments that one does not readily pay attention to. Her intervention also required participants to actively engage in the process of walking as opposed to being distant observers. Instead of claiming space, the movement or drifting engaged questions such as what it means to define a public, a group or a collective experience, as an interconnectedness between bodies and space in-the-everyday. In an urban environment that privileges efficiency and the directedness of destinations, Forkert's walking interrupts bodied encounters of walking and space.

Walking becomes a corporeal cartography where distance is measured through un/certain means. The walk inter-connects body and space enabling a particular set of events to create meaning through alternative gestures. Traditional mapping is contingent on making something visible, tangible, and concrete. Forkert's work is temporal, relational, and sometimes invisible. Invisible in this sense does not mean, cannot be seen, but rather it is visible through other perceptions than sight alone. Inside the visible understanding gives way to all of the senses and mapping becomes a process of knowing and being through the body.

All three videos map and reveal space, not as representation but as intertextual narratives that call attention to the body's relation to text. In place of narrative threads that are meant to bring points together through common connections, the obscurity of narratives is reminiscent of the rhizome and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) multiplicities or lines of flight. As opposed to text as a discrete unit or an object with a linear traceable history, lines of flight are becomings that connect in unpredictable ways. In place of points or an iconographic representation of mapping, becomings are created through a series of lines. One extracts concepts by mapping the lines, providing a cartography that can be pursued in any number of ways. "The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12). Mappings are intertextual interstitial spaces that indicate 'other than' and point towards different stories. Mappings complexify things instead of reducing them to universal points or markers.

Monkey Puzzle and *Monkey Puzzle II*, investigate the construction of subjectivity as narrative. They are testaments to the students urge to construct scenarios and narratives around everyday encounters that fringe on the bizarre and yet are strikingly real. Watching the films as characters move in and out of boxes, or don vibrant red 'smoking jackets', there is an underlying presence beneath the narrative that we are not simply watching, but participating in a world that dramatizes life, to make it real by making it filmic.

Corner's (1999) third thematic development of mapping is the game-board, a metaphor, which draws on the contested and competing terrain of 'combat'. Corner argues that game-boards facilitate a common ground where adversarial groups enact various scenarios. Given the findings and theoretical positions presented throughout this dissertation and in particular in Chapter Two regarding 'common' property, I disagree. In game-culture there is always one 'character' that is transposed as the dominant force and the other as an 'underdog' based on rather stereotypical understandings of bodies and spaces. However, his use of the game-board metaphor prompted me to think about 'game-boy' and other technologically animated 'combatant' zones, where bodies encounter and *interface* with one another such that strategies un/fold and maps evolve generating conditions for the emergence of ever changing situations. Corner's use of the game-board metaphor is to move away from tactical mapping, which presents inventory and empirical presentations of resources and strategies. Rather the game-board isn't derived from the usual statistical array of data but is presented in relation to direction participation within the space itself (Corner, 1999). Thus, in his use of the term game-board mapping is active rather than passive, incorporating and engaging the various lived experiences and imaginations of all participating. What I take from this theme is the belief that mapping is not premised on authority or a single directive, but on multiple processes that create openings for new body-spatial encounters.

The *Monkey Puzzle* videos demonstrate a concern not only with exploring spaces that are dynamic and undetermined, but also with memory. However, it is not the excavation of memory, a palimpsest as vessel, but a narrative intertextual cartography of the body that is patterned on new assemblages and meanings.

In *Monkey Puzzle II* the students adopt different characters throughout the film. There is no feedback loop though, as say, Andrew appears in a variety of roles, and sometimes the same role surfaces with a different student playing that role, so that it too shifts and slides. Without these points in the film to ground the narrative (he plays this character, this character does this, and assumes these characteristics) self-identifications become ever more complex. Devoid of the need or desire for identification, the subject is free to travel, to map, with the intensity of each new moment, but without building these moments into stable structures. Subjectivity becomes part of a flux of forces with no stable pattern. He can exchange himself within himself, just as he may exchange himself with others. Without points of origin in the films there is no repeating formation of the same. Similarly, memory is no longer structured on the trace as, the successive layers that link back to an original surface. Un/writing writes the body with, in, and through space, engaging its ambiguities, activating and interrogating in/betweens, and un/layering the trace as a process of erasure. Un/writing refigures the body as a site from which and for which youth can create multiple spaces of agency, subjectivity, and representation.

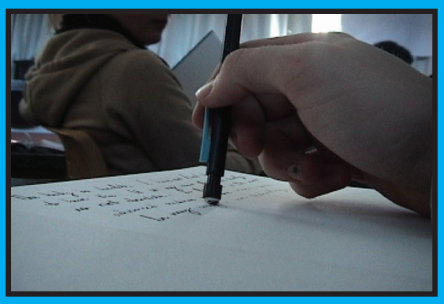
There are references to a past, but even these references are elliptical rather than successive. For example in the opening scene of *Monkey Puzzle II*, Andrew as director is accounting for how and why Monkey Puzzle was created, but he moves into a completely 'other than' narrative. Scenes later James is the director, and his account, again references previous films/scenes, but takes on its own interpretations and mutations. It's memory within memory not as a fixed trace but as mapping. Traces filter into the present tense, reminders of previous steps that may not have existed, intertwining memory with the present, not through linear tellings, but as evocative new constructions and stories.

The theme of disappearance runs through *Monkey Puzzle II* and *Stuck*, but not in the same way that one traditionally views the disappearance of history, memory and artifacts fading from the presence, leaving only ghostly traces. Instead, disappearance happens suddenly as scenes abruptly shift, only to perhaps appear again in another form. There is a disruption to space, like in a dream where the fixity of space and the linearity of time give way. In the gap between the scenes, as they are seen by the viewer, described by the sometimes narrator, and experienced by the actors of which you are apart, questions arise about the (in)stability of what is transformed before you.

What I'd like to consider is how these cinematic encounters are palimpsests understood as acts of erasure that forage new meanings and materialize intercorporeal textual and spatial relations. Again, Corner (1999) offers layering as a thematic development in contemporary mapping discourse. Layering he argues is a thickening process, where each layer is considered independent of the other. Layers are not "mappings of an existing site or context, but of the complexity of the intended programme for the site" (p. 235). The layering of layers produces a stratified spatial arrangement, stratified being another rhizomatic-based term. The resulting structure is not simply a 'track-trace' of original layers, like ghosts, but "a complex fabric, without centre, hierarchy or single organizing principle" (Corner, 1999, p. 235). This process of layering functions to establish the indeterminancy of meaning making remaining open to new and multiply configurations and inter-textualities.

Layering thus becomes un/folding where like felting the addition and movement between layers creates further combinations and assemblages. In this way the palimpsest moves from vessel of historical topography, towards a intertwining that suggests something else altogether. Instead of the palimpsest containing traces that are absent, the palimpsest becomes a spatial surface, a threshold, that in excess and the fullest of presence points towards an 'other than'; meaning that is un/familiar.

120x



un/folding boxes: the agency of mapping as un/folding

It's a clear blue crisp day. Inside the classroom I move between students, helping one thread a sewing machine, another add a music soundtrack to an i-movie, and stop to talk to two others as they search the web as part of their artistic inquiry. Sounds of laughter add to the already noisy room, and I glance up and out the window. Nate has boxes on his feet and is comically attempting to walk up the sidewalk toward the front doors of the school. In front of him, Tyler and Andrew direct his movements, a video camera cradled in their hands. I smile as I watch Cameron stumble, the enormous boxes disrupting his movements as he propels his now over large 'feet' up the stairs.

Later, Bronwyn beckons me into the hallway. There, the students have arranged the two boxes and are filming different students getting into and out of the boxes. Weeks later in a class discussion Bronwyn suggests that schools put people in boxes, a comment that embodies the pedagogical directive 'to think outside the box'. But the students disagree with this statement, not objecting to the notion that education occasionally encloses students surrounding them with stable objectives and fixed results. Their disagreement has more to do with what they imagine the re-configurations and assemblages of the boxes *can do*. Thus, instead of reading the meaning of the boxes as static identifiable markers, the students were interested in the activity and process of the box.

Andrew responds. "But these boxes are too small, the students bodies—much larger. The boxes are also open. The boxes are about mobility and change. We can get in and out whenever we want wear more than one at once, discard them at random". Over the coming year as I returned to view the video *Monkey Puzzle* I paid close attention to the activity of the boxes and their transition throughout the school. These boxes, unlike the boxes Heather used in her video *Never Stop Thinking*, did not contain bodies, they were not vessels into which information was placed, but rather the boxes moved in/between, in the threshold of bodies and space.

Recently I discovered an artist who un/folds boxes virtually. John F. Simon Jr.'s virtual art installation is a computer designed artwork that un/folds a cube (box) at the 'click of the mouse'.[4] When you enter the site you find a blank cube. The viewers activated response from their mouse causes the cube to un/fold in infinite patterns. Each folding produces lines or traces of past un/foldings that previous participants created. On the Guggenhiem website the unauthored curatorial statement reads: "For example "each leaf of this "book" that has been turned four times in the past is marked with four vertical lines; a horizontal line, meanwhile, stands for ten such unfoldings; and left and right diagonals denote hundreds or thousands of previous clicks. The pattern of lines thus changes over the course of the project".[5]

In contrast to presenting a single image, *un/folding object* presents every possible permutation including those that are 'other than', ones that are yet to be conceived and articulated—infinite possibilities and materializations of space. Any change to the pattern of folding results in an entirely different set of possible images. What does it mean to look at an image that continually changes towards infinity?

Simon describes his work as "an endless book that rewrites itself and whose use dictates its content" (as cited at http://www.guggenheim.org/internetart/welcome.html).

Simon's work is also performative; its mutations allow for the latency of the body to un/fold in space and time. The infinite creation un/folds the something else moving beyond representation towards the infinite possibilities of experience. Rather than simply mathematical *un/folding object* is tactile, participants touching and connecting within a cyberfold.

The students' boxes continue to un/fold in space as the video progresses and continues into later videos. Boxes appear again in *Monkey Puzzle II*, multiple un/foldings and interactive mappings of bodies and space. Instead of transforming the boxes through a 'click' of a mouse, the boxes are moved, worn, cut into, disassembled and circulated suggesting the potential for new possibilities and fresh discoveries. In fact 'the box' dies, a memorial service is performed, and a number of students and teachers are interviewed in the school asking them to say a few words about the box. In the memorial scene a line drawing of a box sits between two students.

Opening either bodies or boxes, we break the links that we assume automatically exist between things, words, spaces or bodies. Tyler informs me on my recent visit that the boxes are entangled, they are threads between all of the various videos, but they are not boxes that contain or hold things in the ways that we traditionally think of boxes. In trying to describe to me the concept of the box in their videos, he tells me about their most recent video adventure. They are now creating what they call a low tech science film in which they have 'reclaimed' discarded art objects and other such 'trash' which they are reconstructing into characters for the video. For instance, student ceramic sculptures that have been thrown out become part of the video, not as a backdrop or as props but as actual embodied narratives. In the same way the box re-surfaces, not as the same box, but an un/folding of new stories and imaginations.

In place of ‘thinking outside the box’ a more apt metaphor might be to un/fold boxes and spaces, to materialize knowledge, to touch it in such a way that endless, infinite, and un/fathomed processes can be explored. Outside the box imposes order and containment to the inside, separating it from what lies external to it. In contrast un/folding does not separate inside and outside, rather it opens each onto the other, rendering the ‘map’ as a fluid, anamorphous space. Un/folding invites the corporeal body into the threshold, a dehiscence of difference that is inside the outside, rupturing the visible, the map, and discovering new sensory becomings.

toying with sculpture: mapping space through sound

Tyler has a fascination with trains. So intense that for each and every art project we discussed in class, Tyler begged and pleaded with Bronwyn and myself to be able to construct not just a toy train, but to actually have the train take over and inhabit the space of the school. Tyler's vision included drilling holes between the classroom walls and suspending from the ceiling a train track throughout the school. Not only did the art supply room not have a drill appropriate for such an endeavor, drilling through thick concrete and brick, the legal issue of actually 'changing' school board property was completely out of the question. Tyler was adamant and had some very interesting conceptual ideas about what such an art installation would question. So I worked with him trying to develop an alternative plan, to scale the final concept down to a more manageable size, however, Tyler made me promise that I would alert you, the reader, of his original intentions because the size and scope of the project, and the concept of it moving between all of the various classrooms was important to his idea. Instead he had to devote himself to creating his train-piece in a corner of the art room, much to Bronwyn's dismay, even this train seemed to take over the entire art room (she was ecstatic the day it was dismantled, although I just returned a large section of paper maché mountain to Tyler and I saw her face contort, with the horror of it's possible re-birth).

To assist Tyler with the structure of his train installation I showed him a particular work by Canadian artist Kim Adams, thinking that perhaps we could find a wagon or even a bicycle or other such moveable apparatus on which to pull the train throughout the school. Tyler didn't like my suggestion, but I'm going to refer to Adams work briefly as I believe it and the train explore similar ideas.

The *Bruegel-Bosch Bus* is created from a Volkswagon van that has been cut and reassembled using model kits, toys, and action figures to create various areas like possibly those found in an amusement park. The different areas include a steel plant spewing out toxic waste, grand museums, a group of workers on strike, a movie complex and a space where

John Lennon teaches "peace" to frolicking superheroes. "Like the historical artists for which the piece is named, Adams creates landscapes and scenes of daily life that stress the absurd and vulgar but are also imbued with zest and fine detail" (Fleming, retrieved February 2003 and 2004). It is a mobile (although from what I can tell the van is no longer mobile) hybrid creation that continues to grow (he is still working on the piece) somewhat of a parasite, attaching itself to a host.

Tyler's train, regardless of being able to actually physically move through the school certainly attached itself to a host, spreading out and circulating. When he wasn't working on a film, staring in someone else's video, or rehearsing his violin, Tyler and whomever wished to help, could be found in the art room painting sponges into moss and rocks, adding sections of track, or meticulously painting the small miniature buildings that became part of his installation. Unlike Adams' van, Tyler chose not to deviate from 'traditional' toy train parts, his rationale being that the train was not an object onto which he was imposing form and thus a critique of society. Instead the train was the concept, a train that moved, circulated, and contributed to the exchange of ideas and goods.

Fenklebaum, A. H.[6] The Life and Times of Electric Boogaloo, Esq. V.C. (post.) Originally, the plan was to build a trans-school railroad, in order to galvanize the school in a way not seen since the prior unpleasantness. Unfortunately the venture was reformed due to the difficulty of the terrain and differences of opinion regarding the political expediency of such an undertaking. Consequently, it was decided to build the railway on, and in a small scale, contrary to the original plan's requirements of a three car passenger train every hour on the hour.

So reads the wall label from Tyler's train installation.

Tyler's train took over the classroom. It grew in size and scope, attaching itself to desks, semi-permanent walls, and bits and pieces of it could be found leaving trails throughout the school. Tyler's initial idea was to create a train that would circulate throughout the school, moving between the classrooms and the hallways. He wanted to place it suspended from the ceiling. Drilling holes into concrete walls wasn't such a good idea I told him, hoping he'd move onto another idea. "Ok, fine. How about just in the art room?" I let him struggle for a week attempting to assemble long pieces of plywood, which would act as supports for the track. Bronwyn was incensed: "He can't hang this from the lights or other structures on the building; school building codes and all". I brainstormed alternative ideas hoping that we could shift the idea of circulation of the train on a track to the circulation of the installation of the train as concept. Tyler wasn't convinced, stating that the aim was to have something *interrupt* the school space. He also wanted the train to work, and all of my suggestions limited the amount of track he could use, thus restricting the movement of the train. Unlike Adams' art pieces that incorporated bits and pieces of toys that did not function, Tyler was insistent that the train be operable. "It had to go around and around as if to no-where in particular", he informed me.

The next week I arrived at the school to discover Tyler had co-opted a large desk and encamped in the middle of the room, paper maché, train tracks, moss, gravel, and paint spewing forth. I ignored the excess for a period of time letting the project of the train unfurl on its own. It was abandoned periodically for the video camera and a visual journal. It became this thing right in the middle of the class that seemed to expand and take over, and yet never arrive any closer to completion.

In this section I want to examine Tyler's train, which ceases to be a nostalgic replica for official discourse, as an intertextual relational encounter between body, sound, and space. How does the train embody textures of daily life in such a way as to interrupt school narratives through an embodied engagement with sound?

It was metal, nothing elaborate or overly decorative. It had belonged to my mother and my aunt, and most of the tiny furniture and dolls had long since disappeared. But there it sat, on the table in the back room of my grandmother's house, waiting for my arrival, longing in absence. Once there, I would spend hours making furniture out of jello-boxes and coloured construction paper. Tiny thanksgiving feasts out of clay. I cut and sewed fabric curtains on one visit, managed a TV and a bathtub from pint-sized berry boxes and egg cartons. The furniture never really fit into the house. They were always so much larger in scale than the domestic surroundings afforded, but this perception between the gigantic and the miniature rarely concerned me. It didn't matter that the tiny plastic dolls were swallowed up by these cardboard creations, and it didn't matter even if they became tattered or lost. My mother tells me I never "played" with the dolls, acting out female rituals of socialization. Instead it was the making and doing, the scissors, paper, glue, and the occasional clay, that I found intriguing. What mattered was how they feasted my eyes, their little shapes, and the memory of them I carried in my hands and aching legs from crouching for so long. Touching them my body remembered. Touching them was satisfaction of some embodied urge to make shape. Touching them was quite enough.

The dollhouse, Susan Stewart (1993) tells us, is "a house within a house" (p. 61). As a signifier, "the dollhouse not only presents the house's articulation of the tension between inner and outer spheres, or exteriority and interiority- it also represents the tension between two modes of interiority" (p. 61). Historically dollhouses were miniature replicas of larger furniture and artifacts. Intended for adult amusement, the dollhouse was a signifier of wealth and nostalgia, a fetish or longing for what might otherwise be unachievable in daily life. For example, small replicas of chairs or porcelain were intended to supplant the desire for their larger and more expensive forms. Thus, "use value is transformed into display value" (Stewart, 1993, p. 62). These houses were intended to be viewed from a distance making the body and sensuous play inaccessible. As a signification of fantasy the dollhouse "represents

a particular form of interiority, an interiority which the subject experiences as its sanctuary (fantasy) and prison (the boundaries or limits of otherness, the inaccessibility of what cannot be lived experience)" (p. 65). As a hermetic interior the dollhouse was a promise of longing, nostalgia and containment.

Looking back, my dollhouse experience was not characterized by a distant desire, one in which interior fetishes supplanted larger wholes. Instead my desire was intimate; it was tactile and felt. My body was stitched open. My interior longing was not contained by the boundaries of the dollhouse, but spilled out in excess onto the floor and moved within my body, interior and exterior folding in a contiguous relationship. I cut the construction paper, sounds of metal teeth tearing flesh. A squirt of glue. Desire becoming, un/done, folding with, in, and through bodies. This was a desire of touch and the sensuous pleasure of making. Similarly, Tyler's desire to create this train sculpture stemmed from an interest in materializing something that he was passionately interested in. He loved trains and was equally engaged in local debates about the restoration of the Poplar corridor (a major street where an old track was no longer in use. Residents were divided on a city proposal to restore the track and have a train run through the centre of the city).

It is all too easy to recognize the difference between a dollhouse-displayed and a dollhouse-played, and yet, the dollhouse in all its restraints, restrictions, and regulations signifies schooling and education. We miniaturize students, reminding them that there is a "real world", an exterior environment which schooling prepares them for. We make gigantic—teaching, disciplinary control, and testing. We contain, normalize, and render neutral the bodies and interior desires of our students. The sensuousness and tactility of materials and knowledge are often silenced. Openings, gaps, spaces are filled in as we embalm students in our collection; souvenirs of teaching and learning. We hide the seams of existence check marking bodies present or absent.

How does Tyler's train disrupt the nostalgic longing of a souvenir, an embalmed static world that separates outside from inside?

After finally agreeing to construct his train on a smaller scale Tyler spent months fabricating his train, the tiny miniature paper maché mountain, rocks, fake running water, and he even painted tiny houses dedicating each building to a student in the class. It was important that the train be understood from the perspective of replica, thus rejecting any additional props that were in Tyler's opinion out of place. In addition, the train had to function, moving around the track. Interestingly enough one of his classmates thought that the train signaled a lack of communication because it only went around and around in a circle, to no where in particular. Tyler disagreed stating that in fact his train could 'dock' at the train yard, a small 'y' section of the track that enabled the train to move off the main track and become stationary. In fact, this he told the class was not put in place to stop the train, but so that he could reverse the train's direction. Regardless of direction, movement was important.

Many images of trains concentrate on a nostalgic longing, conjuring up memories of a mode of transportation that was so influential in colonizing the west (of Canada). I asked Tyler if he wanted to memorialize the train, to render is as an object from the past. Tyler mentioned that they had studied the train as part of their social studies class (hence the galvanized reference in his wall text) but that he really wasn't thinking of history as he created his piece. Although he wanted to stay closer to an actual model train construction and not add in un/familiar objects (as did Adams) he felt that he was not creating a historical train. Tyler didn't want the focus to be on 'critiquing' the train or the development of the Canadian west instead what he wanted was to use the train to interrupt school space.

His initial idea included not only a train hanging from the ceiling but also small tinkling bells, so that when the train passed over a section of the track the bells would be set into motion. The train he envisioned had numerous cars (again he had hoped the school would buy these for him) so that multiple cars could trigger the bells simultaneously.

Tyler is a very accomplished musician. He studies the violin outside of school and has been recognized in a number of national competitions. Like the discordant violin sounds and the accompanying sound track as artist statement, for him sound was a very important aspect of visual culture. His train was less about the construction of a replica train and more to do with the 'sounds' that a train could produce in the school or the class. His rationale for choosing a more traditional replica was so that any added information would not detract from his concept. Like Adams who employs the use of toys to create a world that critically engages with social space, Tyler adopted a toy so that it would *interrupt* space. We did get one bell working at one point, but the engineering of this concept required more resources than we had available at the school. The train track, whistle, and just Tyler's constant hammering was interruption enough, mused the art teacher.

Interrogating the concept of interruption, Tyler mentioned similar ideas to the video *Monkey Puzzle*, contending that sound as language enabled alternative means of communication outside of structured language. However, in the instance of the train, there was less focus on language he felt, and more on the penetration of space with sound. This was a school that was rarely quiet, so it was not just about 'noise' or a sound that was non-school related. In fact had the bells functioned as planned, the train would actually create a melody. Furthermore, this sound was intended to come from above. Tyler thought that if

the sounds were above people they would fill up the space, embrace it, inhabit it and seep throughout.

The sound wasn't meant to be separate from space, to make distinctions between inside and outside, but to be fluid, subtle, and permeable. Tyler at one point thought of the sound as breath, linking the body to sound and space. In addition, Tyler thought that by placing the train above there would be less focus on the image of the train and more on its sound.

As the train would move throughout space the bell sounds would increase and decrease with intensity depending on which room in the school the train was passing through. Yet, there would remain a vibration of sound, a reverberation and trace of sounds. As the sounds interconnected new sounds and possibilities would be produced.

The work was designed to invite listeners to pay attention differently to space, to engage aural and visual senses. Similarly, the soundscape would evoke visual images and sensations through audio triggers. In creating a depth of sensory experience, the train encourages audiences to move beyond the general perception of sound as being transitory and intangible (and thus insignificant).

All sound occurs in space, since sound, as a physical phenomenon is simply vibrations in air. These vibrations are transmitted to the ear, where the eardrum responds with its own vibrations, stimulating nerve ends which send messages to the brain. The physical definition of sound, however, cannot encompass the powerfully affective qualities of aural experience—the sound of a friend's voice, fingernails scraping on a chalkboard, or the sound of very energetic students in a small classroom space. Tyler's installation attempts to understand the subjective, as well as the objective characteristics of sound, thereby characterizing a medium, which communicates beyond the physical and physiological.

Neither visual nor tactile, allusive rather than expository or descriptive, sound art requires the visitor to listen rather than merely hear, and to read allusions from a series of

sonic signifiers and sensations. Sound art is elusive foraging an interconnection between bodies, senses, and space.

In this sense Tyler's interruption is less about turning our attention away from something, a loss of focus, and more to do with becoming attentive to the multiple layers of the senses, including sound. It is knowledge that un/folds with, in, and through the body. Similar to the *Body House Project*, described in Chapter One, where bodied sounds and body knowledges inverted and disrupted space, Tyler's train shift our awareness from knowledge as text based, to tactile and ephemeral experiences.

In the class, the train soundscape did materialize even if slightly different than originally planned. As the train moved around the track, the whir of the motor, the racket of the tracks and the occasional and sometimes constant whistle (there were other taped recorded sounds at one point as Tyler worked through his process) intertwined different sounds with the already present audio environment of the school and classroom. Even when the train was not moving students and I noticed that it had been turned off, which prompted a conversation amongst some of us about 'silence' as sound (not the absence of sound). It was interesting that a project that was initially interpreted by students through historical references to communication and the circulation of information, was eventually replaced with a deeper awareness of sound and space, not contingent on an absence, but on the excess of which created new understandings and new encounters.

In addition, the train did not signify a longing for an absent past, a nostalgic reference to memory or to a particular replica of a toy train, signification that would separate inside and outside. Rather it was an interruption through sound, a dizzying array of audioscapes that moved through the spaces between bodies, sounds, and school narratives. Sound became an important aspect of corporeal cartographies that produced new and multiple body knowledges.

On another level, Tyler's train called attention to the idea of 'interruptions'. Bronwyn and I discussed the ways that teaching is always interrupted, whether it is because of official announcements of the PA, or because particular students need different types of attention, or even sometimes interruptions come in the way of curriculum, like tests, field trips, and school events. She and I both counsel our student teachers that learning to be an effective teacher means learning to live with and adapt to interruptions.

But this view embraces an interruption as something that distracts us from focusing on our lessons or the task at hand. What if we re-considered interruptions, not as distractions, but as interventions that force us to become aware of the 'other than', that shape meaning through excess and the un/expected? What might we learn from teaching as an interruption, where we constantly ask of ourselves as teachers and of our students to interrupt the everyday, to listen, to be attuned, to hear and read and map a corporeal cartography of space?

folds: ineradicable stain

I'm eagerly awaiting the mail these days. You see I'm waiting for my 'word'. Yes, a word. I have agreed to participate in artist Shelly Jackson's artwork entitled 'skin'. Participants agree to have one word from her short story tattooed to their body. The text will not be published anywhere else, and only those participating in the living story will have access to the full text. So far 1600 words have been given out of a possible 2095. Participants cannot choose their word, but they may choose the location on their body for the tattoo. The only limitation being that if you receive a body part word, you may not have that word tattooed on that specific body part. Some participants will not get a word, but a punctuation point. All tattoos must be created in a classic font and photographs of the completed tattoo should be sent to the artist.

"The participants will be known as "words". They are not understood as carriers or agents of the texts they bear, but as its embodiment. As a result, injuries to the printed texts, such as dermabrasion, laser surgery, tattoo cover work or the loss of body parts, will not be considered to alter the work. Only the death of words effaces them from the text. As words die the story will change" (Jackson, retrieved 2004). Of course the story will change as words travel, as their lived experiences transform and shape their lives. There are already multiple stories embodying each word, further multiplied and assembled through encounters.

What word will I inhabit?
What parts of the story will
I embody and un/fold?
Encountering other bodies
I imagine partial sentences,
assembled stories,
a narrative map of our inter-connections.

I'm still waiting for my word.
For now I practice
inking possibilities onto my skin,
materializing text,
becoming flesh and word.

Chapter Four

small gestures of the un/expected and
the 'thingness' of things

A telephone booth at the corner of Greenwich and Harrison streets in New York City acquires a certain presence during the fall of 1994. Decorated with paint, writing pads, red roses, an ashtray, two folding chairs and the current issue of Glamour magazine the artist Sophie Calle 'cultivates a spot' in this seemingly anonymous city full of strangers. On the night of September 20th she inhabits the phone booth, dusting and polishing it, painting the floor green. In addition to these tasks she covers the phone company logo with a sign reading 'HAVE A NICE DAY'. The following day the sign is changed to 'ENJOY'. Some of the decorative objects change too. Calle installs a tape recorder under the phone. She sits in one of the folding chairs recording the details of encounters with the phone booth, the calls made, and the exchanges between individuals. How many smiles given? How many received? Someone wants to know if it is a shrine? Did someone die here? Another woman suggests adding a comb and a brush, and maybe cologne, too. Yet another wants Whiskey. A few days later Calle's notations include: "Missing: one rose and the pack of cigarettes. Additions: one pack of Winstons, carnations, Smart-food popcorn, candy, and a new "comments" sheet". Crowds gather. A man in a suit asks: "Is it a grand opening?" Photographs and written notations document people using the phone booth, sitting on the folding chairs reading newspapers, watching—encounters between bodies—encounters with the strange.[1]

Sophie Calle has a fascination with the strange(r), revealing the uncanny of the everyday. Her art embraces moments of-the-everyday. For example she hired a detective to follow her and document her movements; found a lost address book and then wrote to everyone listed in the book asking them to describe the person the book belonged to; worked as a chamber maid in order to document the personal belongings of guests in each room; inhabiting the life of a character from a novel; and hosting a birthday party for herself each year where guests were required to bring gifts that would be documented and preserved in curiosity cabinets. Her methods include meticulous documentation, observation, and surveillance. Mundane gestures that render the familiar strange(r) through bodied encounters.

Sophie Calle is not alone in exploring the moments of sociability and art of the everyday.[2] However, I find her work compelling in light of how we make sense of the un/familiar through small gestures that embody intercorporeal exchanges. During the curriculum project I presented work similar to Sophie Calle's as a catalyst for discussions on themes such as circulation, performance, and art as living inquiry. Sophie Calle was not introduced to the students during the initial curriculum and research project. Instead, curriculum was developed for the artist Germain Koh, and the exhibitions *Accidental Audience*, Toronto and *Expect Delays*, Vancouver. I had in fact forgotten about Sophie Calle. It wasn't until I was submerged under piles of paper and stacks of books writing this chapter that one of my student teachers presented to me Sophie Calle's monograph. Opening the pages I remembered seeing her '*Birthday Cabinets'* at the Tate Gallery in London years ago. As I flipped through the pages I began to think through the uneasy moments of signifying practices that displace meaning in the field of the visible.

Calle's interventions create possible moments of interaction, whether inviting people to attend a birthday celebration, or by inhabiting a phone booth in a large city. They are rituals of the instant, the moment, and the mundane. By altering the moment, making the encounter susceptible to modification, and putting things to strange new uses, Calle gestures at meanings that are not named, but that are present.

Sophie Calle's telephone booth embodies the power of linkage between signs, reminding us at the same time that there is no uniformity to patterns of suggestion, there is no point of origin, there are only rhizomatic spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). By learning to inhabit the world in a better way, artists take as their theoretical horizon, human interactions and social exchanges. Nicolas Bourriaud (2001) maintains that the role of contemporary artworks "is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real" (p. 13). Art becomes a moment to be lived through, opening un/limited conversations. Art is a system of encounters, inter-subjectivities, and the collective elaboration of meaning. Audiences no longer gaze at an art object. Looking becomes seeing, where the boundaries between seer and seen collapse into a space of proximity, where in the fold subject and object are intertwined in relation to one another.

Bourriaud (2002) suggests a difference between traditional gallery exhibitions and contemporary art that is relational. Traditional viewing apparatuses establish a universal audience. The artwork would always (save for gallery closures and the like) be available to the public in an unending time display. For example, The *Mona Lisa*. Furthermore this unlimited access to the work of art produces, in Bourriaud's understanding, an audience of the same. In other words the artwork becomes permanent and monumentalized. Today many contemporary artworks are not only temporal they invoke attention of a different nature—audiences who are summoned by the artist for a limited duration and with a specific role in mind (Bourriaud, 2002). Artwork that takes as its nexus a social interstice where the art is formed in relations between people and the social context of these interactions is what art critic Nicholas Bourriaud terms *relational aesthetics*. In the context of art education how can students engage with relational aesthetics in such a way that the encounters between bodies create body knowledge as conditions of un/familiarity and un/knowingness? What possibilities are created when we consider the experience of an event; an event that is a gift of the un/expected with an unanticipated future?

In the second thematic phase of the curriculum project, *body encounters*, I engaged the class in critical discussions on *globalization*, *communication*, and *consumption*, and the ways in which contemporary artists have taken up these themes. Students contextualized this through their own interests in graffiti and subvertizing, and in particular the journal Adbusters®. I introduced students to Canadian artist Germain Koh's coupon series and the concept of mail art.[3] Mail art projects incorporate both the postal service and the Internet. The Internet is used to facilitate participation in postal mail art projects, or as the medium of circulation through email. Discussions included the concept of a work of art *as* circulation. For example, some mail art projects require that an individual receive a mail art piece, contribute to it in some way, and then to send this mail art piece onto the next recipient. Art is the movement between the collaborators. Other mail projects are created by an individual artist and exchanged with other individuals (or groups) as a form of trade or economy. The recipients do not contribute to that specific piece, but may create their own work, which is offered in exchange.

Two students explored the possibilities of mail art, while a third student, enacted an intervention-based art project that involved giving cookies for peace. This chapter analyzes these artworks through the perspective of relational aesthetics that attends to the un/familiar terrain of meaning making that such gestures produce. Subsequently, I will analyze emotional knowledge as an aspect of bodied encounters. Explorations attend to the nature of the gift and the practice of giving, examining the ways in which bodies and knowledges are produced through such encounters. A brief section will analyze touch in relation to digital environments, asking the question: *What student understandings of body knowledge un/ravel in an email generated art project?* Educational implications will re-consider what it means to give in a meaningful and ethical way as being(s)-in-relation.

Andrew generated an email that he randomly sent to over 200 addresses.[4] He spent a considerable amount of time creating the initial email, so that it would not appear like a virus, and would thus be immediately deleted from an individual's inbox. Originally, the impetus for the piece was to focus on the transmission of email, which occasionally malfunctions, sending emails to the wrong people. Emails are often mis-directed; individuals receive mass mailings of junk mails, and viruses fill up our inboxes with random messages. Mis-directions are often said to be "lost in cyber space," as if it is an "out there" physical reality. Andrew writes of his intent: "Strangely when we receive a piece of mail through the post office that is intended for someone else we tend to blame the actual person involved, while when we receive an erroneous piece of email we assume that something electronic is to blame." To send his first email, Andrew set up a Hotmail® account under the pseudonym Marty Holsten, a name he felt sounded plausible. The email he signed MH inscribing his identity as ambiguous. The email is a rather vague attempt at forgiveness, asking the receiver to move beyond the unsaid act that necessitated this forgiveness. The actual act of wrong-doing is left unclear.

I guess we all have things we'd rather have forgiven. I think in this case we all agree that it'd be best to just drop this here and now, and move on. Personally, I'm willing to forgive anyone if they'll forgive me. It seems like we've all just kind of fallen into something none of us want, and it also doesn't look like we're ever gonna figure it out. My vote's for just moving on. Things can only go up from here. Anyway, keep up the correspondence. –MH

Andrew immediately received thirty-two responses. Some of the emails were brief asking if the email had been mis-directed. However, a few emails were more specific and wanted to know what had instigated this forgiveness, and requested Andrew/Marty, to clarify his relationship to the receiver.

Marty,

Why are you writing me, re: forgiveness, which is of course the doorway to all inner spaciousness and freedom. I don't know you.
C

Andrew began to discuss his email project with the class. What had initially transpired as a random act of forgiveness, Andrew was now interpreting through *guilt*. Andrew and a few of the other students believed that people had responded because they felt guilty. "I think if you prompt them they will [respond]. People can always come up with something to feel guilty about even if they haven't thought about whatever for a really long time. If I just walk up and forgive them then eventually they try and rationalize it by finding something that they feel guilty about." Andrew continues: "But if you look at it totally objectively there is no reason why anyone would respond to the email. But yeah people seem to feel that being forgiven for something is plausible. It could certainly happen to them." Either someone had wronged the sender and they needed clarification this was in fact an email coming from that individual, or individuals seemed to feel some sense of guilt in receiving a personal email that they believed was intended for someone else. By responding to Andrew, letting him know his email had been 'mis-directed', Andrew believed they were alleviating some of their assumed guilt.

I have received this email by mistake.
Please check you addresses and update to ensure your privacy.
J

From : XXXXXXX

To : "Marty Holsten" martyholsten@hotmail.com

Subject : Re: Apologies/Forgivness

Date : Mon, 14 Apr 2003 12:33:00 –0800

Hi Mary- thank you for your apology/forgiveness by I'm drawing a blank about what this is about? I just wanted to tell you that I'm not sidestepping your words – my computer system crashed and I'm only now getting it back into gear and back on line. Movin' on is what life is about – but of course, we carry what we've learned and experienced always within the molecules of our bodies – best to make peace always!
XX

Through interviews and in-class discussions Andrew mused that he had discovered a "cheap renewable source of guilt," but was also startled by the un/expected responses his project generated. Ironically Andrew also began to feel guilty. He believed he had invaded people's personal space. What originated as a random act of forgiveness was returned to the sender as guilt. "I think I've been developing some kind of guilt over this. I feel I need to genuinely apologize for this—because I'm tricking these people. The longer it goes on the more complex it gets. I can't keep this going without giving any details whatsoever and if I give any then its not going to work. But there is a certain point that I can't just keep having this vague conversation. I want to actually tell them what I'm forgiving them for, but if I do I'll have to make something up and they'll know it's not real."

While email and the web constitute public domains, an individual email address is connected with a private or personal identity. Andrew's "invasion" caused anguish on the part of the receiver, "who are you?", and similarly for Andrew, as he felt somehow he had deceived these individuals. The tensions and uncertainty between the private and public space, convinced Andrew to take the project in a different direction than he had originally

intended. For his second email, responding to the responses, Andrew decided that the boundaries between inside and outside had shifted, necessitating that he disclose his identity and the nature of the email as an art project. Andrew decided that what had begun as a "random message sent to thousands of email addresses" were now identified as strangers precisely because they were in a proximinal relationship with him. The return of emails had collapsed the distance between bodies producing knowledge of self and other simultaneously. The emails generated the strange(r). And it was the tension of being in touch with the strange(r) that caused Andrew to feel guilty himself.

As Andrew began to make connections between the private and the public, between bodies, alterity and self, he created a second email in which *he* asks for forgiveness for his act of forgiveness.

All right, I have to come clean here; it was, in fact, a somewhat unorthodox art project under the guidance of [researcher's name inserted here]. The original premise mutated, for those of you interested, from my attempt to provoke an honest apologetic response, into something much, much stranger. My original message actually wound up generating feelings of guilt in me, for intruding, however minutely, upon your lives, and deceiving you. I'd be interested to know your responses to this info, and to my now-sincere apology.
- Andrew 'Marty'

All but one of the original respondents wrote back a second time. Some were fascinated by the art idea and wanted more information about the project, while others continued to think through the nature of guilt and forgiveness.

From : XXX

To : "Marty Holsten" martyholsten@hotmail.com

Subject : Re: Apologies/Forgivness

Date : Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:33:00 –0700

Well that's a relief!!:) - all those sleepless nights trying to figure out who? What? Why? When? How? -!!
Your email was a stop- a pause. Not knowing the context of the apology – it was so beautifully worded, that one could not,not respond, not, not forgive – even without knowing what it was about:) - which is interesting – to me it speaks to the power of apology, of literally lying on your back, neck exposed (as dogs do in surrender an admission of the "cards are in your hands now" – terrible mixed metaphors – but hopefully you understand the gist of what I'm saying:))
Perhaps it suggests that apology as an opening move within the negotiation of difficult events is a good strategic move in terms of conflict resolution. For it opens up to the next step: what happened? Why? (from your perspective) – this is why I responded the way I did.

Trust XXX to inspire students to unexpected art endeavors!

Thanks for coming clean – now you really do have to apololgize!!:)

XXX

Andrew writes in his weekly reflections: "What interests me about guilt is that it can be viewed as an external blame or as an internal weight. We can all feel guilty for something that we have done that clashes with our own personal value system, but we can also assign guilt to external sources." If we think of guilt as an interior signification where moral consciousness judges and condemns (Ricoeur, 1974), then forgiveness or freedom from guilt is an exterior condition. This definition separates and makes distinct interior feelings, which can be controlled and abated from the outside, rendering affect as deeply personal and individualistic.

Megan Boler (1999) points out that this perspective designates emotions as natural and private conditions that individuals are taught to internalize and monitor through self-control. Through self-policing, individuals internalize social norms of emotions and their external expressions, "eras[ing] gendered and cultural differences through the discourse of universal biological circuitry of emotions" (p. 60). The 'ideal' body is thus one who controls his or her emotions through rational choice. However, as Boler's critical project so aptly demands, how might we define emotions as a mediating space between bodies? In exploring this question Boler sets out a project of critical empathy and witnessing in which pedagogical practices and educational contexts need to attend to the emotional lives of students and to re-cognize the inherent power structures and struggles in the public articulation of emotions. Her arguments for emotional epistemologies bear significant weight in re-evaluating what counts as knowledge and the ways in which difficult knowledges need to be and can be addressed in educational contexts. Through a critical praxis of emotions individuals will be able to publicly articulate different emotions, to listen with attention to all views and perspectives, and to learn to inhabit positions of ambiguity (Boler, 1999). While these outcomes are significant in the context of educational institutions that generally neglect the emotional and sentient lives of students, unfortunately her position continues to render the body as static. Boler asserts that communities (i.e. classes) are constructed from multiple identities, each of which embodies different emotions, and that critical emotional pedagogy needs to creates spaces where these multiple identities can 'give voice' to these feelings. This instance links emotion with identity and assumes that an individual's position is determined prior to a given situation. While we do carry with us bodied memories of emotions from past encounters, it is not the past that shapes lived emotional experience, but rather the act of remembering in the present. To remember a particular emotion from the past implies that in the instant of remembering in the present emotions are created (Ahmed, 2000). The act of remembering is an encounter in the present, an event that is un/expected. These encounters become part of the social interstice of lived experience. In constructing pedagogical contexts

that attend to students' emotional lived experiences, we must turn to the threshold of experience, where body knowledge is created as an encounter between bodies.

In doing so, non-dualistic understandings of emotions entail a re-thinking of the terms *reveal* and *conceal*. Instead of labeling emotions that are hidden through institutionalized, socialized, and politicized control as concealed and the act of making public these emotions as revelation, an understanding that continues to divide the two terms, we need to investigate how emotions are *created* in the act of an encounter.

In the email exchange Andrew initially believed he had caused people's emotions to simply surface. However, as he and I later discussed, these emotions, including his own, were not already given, but created in the instant of circulation and exchange. Emotions are not static. They mutate and change with each encounter, attesting to their fluidity. We should not view encounters from the perspective of revelation. Encounters do not reveal; they create. Bodied encounters produce revealed *and* concealed emotions, but not as binary opposites. Thus, what needs to be re-defined through a critical praxis in education is an understanding of bodied encounters that produce different emotions and thus different body knowledges. As an alternative model of education, intercorporeality requires that we shift empathy towards a critical praxis of complicity?[5]

Irit Rogoff (personal correspondence) argues that rapport, an ability to speak for something or someone assumes the possibility of revealing truths from the inside out. Not only is rapport impossible but it is also dangerous. Complicity, on the other hand, doesn't allow for passive empathy. It is an awareness of complexity, the doubleness of meaning, and the risk of cultural inhabitation. For example, in art practices site specific work on the level of empathy moves into a location to reveal or critique the hidden truths that lie beyond the surface. A critical praxis of complicity would operate from an uncertain position, giving up a knowing distance for a relational criticality of risk and dis/comfort. In this sense art is not a tool for critiquing a given subject/object but rather, art is a social interstice suggesting other un/named possibilities. Art is not 'something' artists produce but a process of *relationality*

where alternative connections, contradictions, and singular subjectivities give way for something else to occur.

When Andrew received the first responses to his email he assumed that people inherently have some nature of guilt within them at all times and that his email had simply caused this guilt to surface. Yet, it was the responses that eventually generated a feeling of guilt in Andrew himself, causing him to re-think this assumed position. It was the relation between bodies that produced the emotional response for both Andrew and the participants, and subsequently became the space of interrogation about how one comes to know through emotional encounters.

In responding a second time, Andrew chose to ask for forgiveness himself. This doubling of forgiveness Ricouer (1974) describes as an extreme form of interiority, where guilt anticipates punishment. Doubling occurs when we recognize that we have the potential and power to act against this guilt. It is this relationship of interior to exterior that dislodges the containment of guilt, and shifts it towards the possibility of hope and forgiveness. Through small gestures of the un/expected, Andrew's email correspondences between bodies altered the perception of guilt to the idea of forgiveness; to possibility and agency.

During the second phase of the project Andrew began to reflect on his acts of forgiveness, re-assessing the ways in which emotions are constructed. "Guilt" he writes, "can be determined by us. Guilt forms cycles, in the sense that it causes and is caused by actions and feelings. It seems that the only way to break out of this circle is to move sideways, to understand that within guilt is forgiveness".

Andrew began to understand this act of forgiveness as an exchange, an economy of sorts, something people need and want, but are unable to purchase freely at the local supermarket. People felt compelled to respond to his email for a variety of reasons, reaching out and giving back, shifting and interrogating emotions through encounters. Andrew says that "the interesting thing about forgiveness is it is a kind of virus. When someone forgives

you, you forgive back. It transmits between people. I infected all those people."

Living intercorporeality through complicity recognizes that emotions are negotiated and produced between bodies, as being(s)-in-relation. Empowerment shifts from learning to listen to different emotions, towards a complicit involvement where the multiplicities of interactions shape subjectivities and emotions in the process of circulation. Through complicity, emotional inhabitations become un/settled, ambiguous, and un/certain. Articulating, experiencing, and exchanging emotions "depends not on detachment from others, but can only arise in and through our relations with others" (Weiss, 1999, p. 158). Intercorporeality involves developing complicity, experienced and enacted through bodily practices that implicate and transform the bodies of self and other.

From : XXX

To : "Marty Holsten" martyholsten@hotmail.com

Subject : Re: Apology/Forgiving

Date : Tue, 6 May 2003 18:34:09 –0700

Well, Interesting project. Forgiveness is a topic that I have always found intriguing as it seems so hard to do. We prefer to hang on to our positions and being 'right' instead of being accepting, understanding and forgiving which would bring all of us a little closer.

I would have felt guilty too, as you never know what buttons you are pressing when this topic gets mentioned. I am personally having a crisis of forgiveness where I am the person needing it from a loved one. One thing is for sure - you can't make anyone do anything they don't want to do ever.

I forgive you - your guilt may be lifted. Although I am curious about the art project.

XXX

Writing about action research or living inquiry, Sumara and Davis (1997) argue that teaching and researching are complex phenomena. As opposed to 'complicated' systems, which are composed of units and parts, complex structures are fluid, porous, and folded. Any attempt at un/doing results in further folds and points of departure. "[Living inquiry] understood in this way, is not merely a set of procedures that enable the *interpretation* of culture; [living inquiry] is an instance of "culture making" in which the various actors are wholly complicit. As such, [living inquiry] is a living practice in which research are, ineluctable, morally implicated and responsible" (Sumara & Davis, 1997, pp. 301-302).[6] Intercorporeality through complicity requires that we become attentive to encounters, learning to explore how subjectivities and emotions are precariously formed in relation to one another. Emotional and bodied knowing becomes a complex, dynamic fold of being(s)-in-relation. This leads to the question: *How might digital environments contribute to an understanding of emotions as bodied encounters? What student understandings of body knowledge un/ravel in an email generated art project?*

folds: Don't be surprised if someone gently touches you while passing by

She'll bump into you on purpose. Your elbows will meet on the bus. Instead of swerving out of the way, she'll lean in and graze your hand when you walk by. There will be a connection made, and it won't be an accident. There will be contact when exchanging money or time or directions. You will be the subject of her commitment. You live in a city. You will be touched by a stranger one-thousand times...

Diane Borsato desires to touch you. Drawing on research that suggests that when people are touched they report a pleasant experience, subtly improving their lives, Borsato takes up the challenge of *Touching 1000 People* in Vancouver. Walking through the city Borsato brushes up next to people at traffic lights, reaches out a hand to caress a shoulder, strokes a cashier's hand, and bumps the outer extremities of a stranger's body. Touching becomes a small gesture, an act of subversion breaking the invisible social barriers and codes of expected behaviour in public space.[7]

Marshall McLuhan (1994) asserted that the era of information communication technologies was moving "out of the age of the visual into the age of the aural and tactile" (p. x). Cathryn Vasseleu (1999) contends that in naming "touch—as well as hearing—as a privileged sense of the electronic age, McLuhan recognized the emergence of an era of communication characterized by the disappearance of all sense of distance in a proliferation of contacts involving multiple senses" (p. 153). Sadie Plant (2000) reiterates these thoughts asserting that hypermedia allows the senses to collapse and connect. "Touch is the sense of multimedia, the immersive simulations of cyberspace, and the connections, switches and links of all nets. Communication cannot be caught by the gaze, but is always a matter of getting in touch, a question of contact, contagion, transmission, reception and connectivity" (p. 332). Touch constitutes an embodied experience that is not detached from the world, nor reducible to the body itself. Touch poses an alternative theory of vision, where vision is not structured as distant, separate, or in advance of an encounter, but formed in relations between subjects. Vision thus becomes an embodied interaction with the world.

McLuhan's reference pertains more specifically to touch as contact, where the physical aspect of typing on the keyboard or moving the computer mouse alters our sensibilities towards text. Claudia Castaneda's (2001) research on robotic-cyborg skin extends this model, incorporating the material-semiotic nature of the body. Early feminist writings, including Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* argued that cyborgs become useful in re-theorizing embodiment because they provide alternative re-figurations of the body. More recent feminist and post-colonial scholarship questions the nature of hybridity as an alternative ideal, claiming that boundary crossing, a metaphor employed in hybrid theory, continues to inscribe longstanding forms of inequality (Ahmed, 2000; Hallward, 2001). Instead, cyborg embodiment must be interrogated precisely at the instant or space of the boundary, as an interface between experience and image.

In her essay on robotic skin, Casteneda considers two AI robots: Hans Moravec's robot 'bush' and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)'s 'Cog'. Both robots employ touch as a sensory mode of knowing, which they re-materialize as 'vision' or semiotic 'information packets' that quantitatively generate different interpretations of touch. The robots' visual sensing comes solely from their capacity to be 'force sensitive', or in other words to touch. Casteneda (2001) notes that this translation:

> [S]uggests the lack of any absolute distinction between vision and touch, which in turn troubles the very ground of objectivity, again in and *through* embodied touch. That is, it refuses any strict distinction between distanced (objective) vision and the subjective, embodied contact. (p. 229)

Not only do the robots challenge distant and objective vision, they in fact re-conceptualize touch as a boundary-site of material-semiotic understanding.

> Touch does not have to involve direct physical contact, in this formulation, but it does require some form of embodiment, or 'skin'. This skin cannot be a border in the abstract sense, nor is it automatically a site of communication or mutuality. Instead, the skin becomes a site of possibility in which the nature of the encounter is established through the process of 'touching', one body in *relation* to another. The quality of the encounter, its 'feeling', is not established by the toucher or the touched alone, and so cannot be judged in these terms. (Casteneda, 2001, p. 234)

These qualities or economies of touch establish a relationality, which cannot be reduced to sameness nor likened to endless differentiation. Touch becomes meaningful precisely because it produces difference at the border.

Research into robotic touch re-emphasizes the importance of considering touch as a primary sense that expresses an inter-embodied relation with others. *How might this conception be evoked, altered, translated, and extended through information technology? Or, how might student understandings of touch un/ravel in an email generated art project?* Adopting the assumption that contact is possible through the Internet, a critical approach

to embodied cyber-encounters needs to be interrogated, raising questions about the role of technology in body knowledge.

Like many individuals today, Andrew initially believed the Internet to be a space of unbounded possibilities, an open, endless space. Although he and the other students articulated these thoughts, his email project demonstrates the tensions he faced in grappling with the complex nature of information technology and his relationship to it. Andrew's original idea was to examine the ways in which email is mis-directed and how people blame cyber space for this loss. He and James laughed and joked at the common mis-giving that people have (including themselves) over a 'lost' email. Andrew remarked, that individuals construe cyber loss (experienced for instance when an email does not arrive at a particular destination) "as an email that floats around in some vast open space called cyberspace. As if cyberspace is a real place and no place in particular". In addition, Andrew was interested in the relationship contemporary society has with machines, most notably in this case—computers, adding that when things fail to work on a computer, individuals often blame technology. In his journal he writes: "Depressingly, any forcing of this issue reveals the somewhat disturbing idea that our blaming of machines is just another step in a long sequence of finding external scapegoats when in actuality there's only ever been humans." These articulations are understood through a sense of divided presence that is occurring here and elsewhere at the same time—a traditional understanding of the invisible. Virtual space is understood as dis-embodied, dis-connected, and distant. It is something we can't see or grasp. Technology becomes a tool that humans manipulate and control. This sentiment places the body as separate from cyber/technical connections. Instead how might we begin to consider digital technologies and online space as material, immanent, and inter-embodied?

Vasseleu (1999) claims that virtual touching develops a unique sense of intercorporeality. Touch produces an opening through which we become sentient beings. Touch as perception is important because it is established prior to any fixed entity or formal schema. It is a knowing through doing rather than through conscious acts. Thinking through

ticklishness as a metaphor for the tactility of digital communication, Vasseleu elicits this sensation for its uncontrollability.

> Regarded in this way, digitally manipulated currents flowing through contact points in electronic circuits become transmissions of excitement that can be taken to various extremes of intensity. This measure would act as a perpetual reminder of the uncontrollable tactility of a sentient body.

She continues:

> With its dual emphasis on maintaining contact and infinite communicability, digital technology is producing new ways of being moved, of being transported from context to context without reference to a formal body, or self-defined in relation to any overarching schema. (Vasseleu, 1999, p. 159)

It is not that technology discards the body, but that it replaces any formal schema of the body with a materiality that is multiple, unstable, and instantaneous. It is an embodied materiality that is uncontrollable and undetermined. Borrowing Katherine Hayles characterization of the body in virtual space as a "flickering signifier", Garoian and Gaudelius (2001) are compelled to argue that it is the un/expected that constitutes an embodied critical pedagogy. They write:

> Flickering between the randomness of digital information and its patterning, the body's identity is continually negotiated and re-negotiated, a play of resistance between the disjunctive attributes of cyberspace and the conjunctions that occur as the subject coalesces meaning and interpretation. (p. 338)

Cybernetic folds are important in the context of education reminding us that learning is never an isolated affair.

> The experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interactions with other human and non human bodies. Acknowledging and addressing the multiple and corporeal exchanges that continually take place in our everyday lives, demands a corresponding recognition of the ongoing construction and reconstruction of our bodies and body images. (Weiss, 1999, p.5)

Digital environments thus shape an important aspect of embodiment and bodied encounters, creating proximinal encounters where knowledge between bodies is produced.

cupcake crumbs and seeds: the 'thingness' of things

James decided that he would like to approach the idea of circulation through a mail project that he would send via the post. The initial impetus was to subvert Canada Post and to circulate mail without stamps. To do so, he discovered that if he put the "To" address in the space for the "Return" address and did not affix a stamp to the envelope, Canada post would return the mail to the "Return" address which is really the "To" address. While an interesting concept, beyond subverting the postal system, the small gesture terminates once the mail has reached the intended recipient. I asked James if he could think of something to include in these letters that might in fact provoke a response, to start a conversation of sorts. I thought he might actually write about his theories of the Canadian postal system as an institution of power and control, and his "no stamp" scheme. Instead he described in a letter his preference for cupcakes based on their superiority over muffins.

When I asked him why he had chosen this topic, his response was: "I was thinking about cupcakes. I just needed some sort of content in the letter to provoke a reaction and I thought cupcakes would do as well as anything. I wanted to express an opinion". I was curious to know if he received the letter in the mail how he might, or if he would, respond. "I'm not really sure. I'd find it amusing. I'd be happy to get it. If I did respond I'd write something, counter the argument. Or, I don't know if I'd respond just out of laziness but I would have thought about it for sure".

Dear Sir or Madam,

Cupcakes have been on my mind lately. They aren't necessarily the best-tasting pastry available to the food-buying public, but they possess a distinct charm that has not, to my knowledge, been replicated in any other confectionary. In an objective conceptual context, cupcakes represent a subversion of the idea of muffins; though they are baked along the lines of the muffin template (i.e., a pastry with a cylindrical lower half and a larger upper half that is almost spherical in shape), their individual baking protocols entail culinary conventions in which frosting, chocolate, and excessive sugar are crucial elements. This stands in stark contrast to the baking protocols and conventions of preparation applied to muffins, which, though sugar and chocolate are not invariably eschewed, lean much more toward a philosophy of nutrition and efficiency. This can be seen by the fact that bran muffins are, in general, more widely available to the public than chocolate muffins, chocolate chip muffins, or even chocolate-banana muffins. Though bran indubitably meets with the tastes of some, I refuse to believe that the majority of any region's population could prefer its brittle, faux-nutty flavour to the giddily Dionysian gastronomic sensations that chocolate offers; however, the nutritional value of bran is undisputable, while whatever nutritional value chocolate contains is overshadowed by its unhealthily high sugar content. As such, cupcakes stand as a pointed, sensualistic rejection of the Appolonian ethos of self-preservation that has arguably pervaded Western society for most of its history. Their very existence is a metaphorical slap in the face to everything that muffins represent, and it is this subversive aspect that accounts for my intense enjoyment of them.

I would be very grateful if you could respond to this in some way. The response need not be in writing; drawings, photographs, or any other medium will be equally appreciated.

Sincerest regards,

In addition to the envelopes sent without stamps I provided him with stamps for an additional twenty-five envelopes and suggested he include self-addressed stamped envelopes in order to facilitate ease of response. He used his own home address as the return address, commenting that if he used the school address people would assume it was a school project, which he didn't want. He chose to mail the piece to fifty addresses[8] around the lower mainland, noting that he targeted what he considered to be communities where "alternative thinking individuals lived".

A month passed and no letters had been returned. Somewhat disappointed, James thought that perhaps his letters had not in fact reached anyone, having been lost in the mail, something both he and Andrew found amusing given the initial context for Andrew's email project. James and Andrew discussed the fact that James had randomly pulled the addresses out of the phone book; the recipients of his letters were unknown to him and he was unknown to them. Many of the mail art projects use the web to sign-up to receive mail art, thereby bringing the unfamiliar into an already established proximinal relationship. They wondered if James' project perhaps failed to generate a response because the piece of mail was so random and distant it was simply discarded as another piece of junk mail. In fact they realized that because the "To" address was really just an arbitrary address, and the receivers address was in the "Return" space, many people might read the incorrect "To" address, assume the piece of mail was not for them and had been delivered to the wrong address, and thus forward on the envelope. The possibility of this continued exchange had the two boys quite excited as they dreamt up possible destinations, and encounters. You see, James had not used the phone book for the "To" address, so the potential for the 'un-real' addresses to become identified as 'real' was an unsettling and yet pleasurable concept for Andrew and James.

James added yet another perspective, suggesting that regardless of whether or not people had responded, he was sure his letter had caused people to at least think. As a thinker himself, this was sufficient. However, a few days later James came racing into class, wearing the hugest smile, and exclaimed with delight: “I got Mail!” In his hand a small gesture of attention.
A gift of communication and exchange. Inside the envelope: a cupcake wrapper and some crumbs.

Mail art (amongst other forms of contemporary art practices that include circulation as art) transforms known objects into slightly different configurations or situations. This displacement stimulates thought about how such objects are normally used and our usual forms of behaviour. Dislodging the familiar becomes a means of altering the ways participants become aware of their responsibility in formulating the meaning of events. Mail art sets up situations where artist and audience interrogate the means of social exchange, asking questions about how we interact and the gestures we use. Similarly there is an idea in making work that changes or disappears, whose limits are difficult to identify, complicating patterns of exchange in the process. Examining the phenomenology of the event as a rupture and an opening to new experiences and meanings emphasizes the un/expected nature of being and knowing, forcing us to confront and think through the un/familiar.

On the one hand James mail art created a situation where recipients of his letters where asked for a brief moment to pay attention to everyday objects; cupcakes and muffins. By extolling the virtue of the cupcake through humorous and poetical means James was not interested in people's opinions of cupcakes and muffins, rather it was intended as an examination of the '*thingness*' of things. A notion is defined as an idea or an opinion; an impulse, or any small article ingeniously devised or invented.[9] James' exploration included a re-examination of mundane objects, as they function as signifiers for sensory information, knowledge, and memory while highlighting the interwoven nature of our perception and the interplay between art and life.

A number of weeks after the first envelope was returned, James arrives in class with another response. He has been sent two collage type text-images and a few 'cupcake seeds'.[10] *James has some interesting ideas about the manner in which people have chosen to respond to his work.*

The two image-text collages have been created on the inserts for two different Canadian magazines, *Canadian Art* and *Canadian Living*. Both magazines are publications that extol the virtues of gentrification and legitimization of what are exemplary art and or life-style practices. These magazines are part of the corporate economy of exchanges that mark some bodies and objects as being of greater or lesser value, and dictate the commodification of visual culture in Canada. However, it is the text on the cards that James is most interested in: 'You can have your cake and eat it too', Art/Life/Eat". While one respondent sent back the devoured remnants the other offered textual interpretations of sensory experiences and provided him with 'seeds'—gestations and future possibilities. James says: "Its almost like I sent them an intangible product and they intangibly consumed it, and then they compensated me for it by sending a thing or a notion back. Its like a phantom economy of eating".

Devouring art is a sensual, tactile response. Digesting and consuming, not as mastery or control, but in and through the senses, attesting to the body's participation in knowing and meaning making. Eating is connective. It does not render something meaningless. Eating does not absorb the object of consumption so that it no longer exists; it transforms it, re-constituting materiality in and through the body. Eating takes place in and through time.

Time is always a becoming. The eventuality of time allows for unpredictability and chance. Time is invisibility, not as transcendence but the within the without. It is a dimension of invisibility implicated within the visible (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). The coming of time 'advenire' has as its Latin roots the verb *enenire* from which event is derived. Time as becoming is an event. An event is something that is un/expected, a surprise, or an accident. The event constitutes something as excessive to the usual representation of time as continuous flow. It dislocates time, ruptures it with an unanticipated future. An event splits time between past and future. It is a dehiscence of time, an opening to a new world and meaning. Such an openness allows for experience to become, to be constituted as un/familiar, rather than programmed sequences of events. The event is an impossibility, an un/

knowingness, which happens in spite of everything else. It is a gift of the un/expected, an excess that brings new meanings and possibilities to the world.

Artists, offers Bourriaud (2002), learn to inhabit the world in a better way. Instead of trying to construct it based on familiar and preconceived structures, the artist dwells in the circumstances the present offers her, transforming the everyday into possibilities of the un/familiar. It is a process of un/covering the un/expected, of searching for and living with moments that are strange(r), finding meaning in holes, in the peculiar, and the unexplained. The thingness of things is provocative; it moves and mutates.

the becoming of the gift as an opening to being

The enterprise and economy of the gift has been widely theorized by a number of scholars throughout history and in a variety of disciplines. Mauss' classic theory illuminates the nature of circulation and obligation inherent in any concept of the gift. Mauss defines a gift as any object or service, including social pleasantries that are given within a web of social interrelationships. According to Mauss a gift involves obligation. A person gives to another person because one is required to act in this way based on imposed systems of exchange that are socially driven. Prestige is bestowed on the recipient with the moral obligation to return. The gift as obligation keeps it in perpetual circulation.

Furthermore, Mauss believes that a gift always embodies traces of the person who gave the gift, suggesting that the gift is always connected to the giver. "One must give back to another person what is really part and parcel of his nature and substance, because to accept something from somebody is to accept some part of his spiritual essence, of his soul" (Mauss, 1990, p. 12). Thus, the gift possesses an animate characteristic of the individual giver and creates a lasting bond between persons. Mauss stresses three aspects of obligation, which are essential to the theory of the gift: to give, to receive, and to reciprocate.

This cycle of giving forms a structure of obligation that constrains both the giver and the recipient. The gift would always be both voluntary and obligatory. Within this bind are two more features of the gift: ownership and certainty. When a gift is given the receiver takes on the ownership of the object in exchange thus possessing something of the giver. The very nature of obligation and reciprocity underlies a certainty that another gift will be given back in return.

Supplanting Mauss' theory of the gift, Bataille (1988) troubles the excessiveness of the gift, arguing that unlike Mauss' theory of a homogeneous gift exchange of static obligation, the very nature of the gift itself implies power, violence, and sacrifice. Bataille arrives at this conclusion through an interpretation of the American Native Potlach. Bataille

understands a Chief's giving as intricately linked to postures of greatness, wealth, and power. This act of giving, Bataille believes was premised on the act of humiliation, where the receiver, who then faced with the challenge of a counter-gift, must return something of greater value. In this gift exchange the giver sacrifices goods that would have increased his wealth, or been used by himself or the community. In the cycle of exchange items given are removed from their participation in the daily lives of those who initially possessed this wealth. For instance, Bataille offers that a Chief in trying to outdo another Chief would gift food, clothing and other valuables thereby rendering them useless to his own community. Thus, gifting is premised on surplus and waste.

Obligation that is intertwined with power and excess places the gift within an act of difference, where the surplus of the gift accounts for the givers prestige. Not only is excess collected and given away, this very act simultaneously destroys and creates surplus. The giver "must waste the excess, but he remains eager to acquire even when he does the opposite, and so he makes waste itself an object of acquisition" (Bataille, 1988, p. 72). A contemporary equivalent might be the event of 're-gifting'. For instance, we acquire a number of gifts that we simply do not need or want creating a surplus, which then circulates as an economy in itself.

Excess is what is gained and lost. It reveals something of the sublime, the horror and terror that inhabits the seemingly innocuous things we do. What is enfolded in the ostensibly mundane activities of the-everyday? What meanings are created when we attend to small gestures? What manifests in the interconnections that are immanent in the everyday actions of humans and in our environment? The email exchange and the cupcake letter re-constitutes excess not as waste, but as a fold, wherein new possibilities and complexities lie.

Derrida (1992) offers yet another interpretation on the nature of the gift, which according to him is an impossibility. Challenging Mauss, Derrida insists that a gift should not create debt. Obligation marks the gift as not neutral. From this he argues that a pure gift is one that must not come back, must not circulate, and must not be exchanged.

Derrida isolates three elements that support his impossibility thesis: gift, donor, and donee. The conditions of possibility of the gift—gift, donor, donee—designate simultaneously the conditions of the impossibility of the gift. They produce annulment, annihilation, and destruction of the gift. A gift is only possible at the instant that it interrupts the circle of exchange therefore it must not be part of present time.

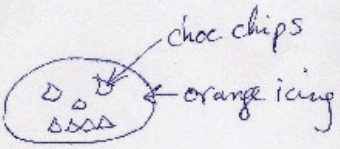
The gift is only possible at the moment when time ceases, which makes it impossible to think of the present moment of the gift. The only way for a gift to become plausible is if the donee does not recognize it as a gift. Identification and familiarization destroy the gift. According to Derrida, not only can the gift not be recognized as a gift it must necessitate forgetting. Forgetting he argues is not repression of the event, but is an absolute forgetting that absolves. Forgetting and the gift are conditions of each other.

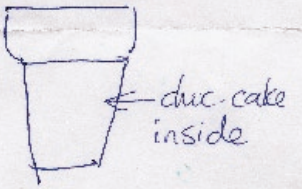
Forgetting is un/knowing. Un/knowing creates and constitutes the un/familiar and the excessive. Un/knowing is not not-knowing. Un/knowing is ripe with plentitude and un/certainty. Gifts understood in this way are un/expected encounters where reciprocity is not informed by obligation but made meaningful because it determines new connections, interstices, and folds. Un/expected gifts cause us to dwell, to pay attention to the thingness of things, to notions. This attention is not a monumental structure; it is fleeting, flickering, moving on and passing through. It is intercorporeal.

Derrida's arguments suggest that a gift is inscribed in duration and time, establishing a boundary and a measure. A gift bears within it an implied interval in which the obligatory gift must be returned; a due date or reciprocity. Thus, "the gift gives, demands, and takes time… The gift is not a gift, it is only a gift to the extent it *gives time…There where there is gift, there is time*" (Derrida, 1992, p. 41). The gift gives and takes time. Time becomes an interval, it lasts and it is expended. "There must be waiting—without forgetting" (Derrida, 1992, p. 41). Yet, in order for the gift to exist there must be no time. A gift cannot take place in the present, the instant. Rather it is temporal, un/folding through time. Hence the impossibility of the gift.

If however, we recognize the phenomenology of the event as a rupture in time, not a static instant, but a dehiscence that creates a new moment in time, then the becoming of the gift is the un/expected possibilities that the gift gives. This dehiscence resists the ordering and classifying of knowledge through an endless displacement and articulation of meaning. Thus, gifts are active, immediate, and bodied. They mutate, becoming something else completely. An event requires attention and intention, a re-configuration of new possibilities. This openness to becoming something else, to the indetermination of the future, shifts our understanding of excess as surplus, to excess as the opening of being, an opening constituted in and through touch.

Touch is an awakening to knowledge, to the body, the skin, and the senses. It is "an awakening to subjectivity, to a touching between us which is neither passive nor active; it is an awakening of gestures of perceptions which are at the same time acts, intentions, emotions" (Irigaray, 2001, p. 25). Touch is attentive to the one who touches and to the one who is touched. To touch is to gesture, a becoming of the gift, an opening to intercorporeal encounters theat re-constitute events and beings.





Dear Joseph

Hope I'm not to late. I think muffins / cup cakes are funny. My mom used to make cupcakes (chocolate) in icecream cones & decorates them with orange icing & chocolate chips for halloween (see illustration). Everybirthday likes a cupcake. As for muffins – I will only make + eat banana / choc. chips.

Yours sincerley

P.S I have included some cup cake seeds

May 2003

cookies for peace and intercorporeal generosity

Cookies themselves represent
an extreme peace
through pleasure and freedom.

—Rohan

After one particular class discussion and presentation on the themes globalization, communication and consumption Rohan approached me with an idea he had as a way to participate in the peace demonstrations. His initial idea was to create hundreds of tiny white parachutes, which would be attached to a peace symbol made out of flour and water dough. He wanted to drop these parachutes from the upper floor of the downtown shopping centre into the food court below. Diners would be surprised by these small floating gifts of peace. I wasn't quite sure how all of this would work, but set him on the task of researching how to make tiny parachutes with limited resources and materials. Rohan found a website that made use of plastic shopping bags to create a basic parachute. He experimented with different configurations over the course of a week, but was eventually frustrated realizing that the engineering of more than 100 of these would be daunting. At the same time I wasn't convinced that his idea would actually 'intervene' other than to randomly inject peace symbols into a public space. These peace symbols made out of flour and water dough would in fact implode upon impact with the floor and furniture in the shopping arcade (we tested the dropping of the dough symbols in the school). I asked Rohan if dropping parachutes that

would ‘explode’ on contact was a form of protest or if he thought that it might in fact be replicating elements of the war, repeating the very acts that he was wanting to work against. I asked him to consider not the art as object, but to reflect on the concept or message that he wanted to convey through the piece.

Rohan and I sat one afternoon talking about the war and the anti-war efforts. At some point in the conversation, which was taking place in the busy art room, a student happened to begin a conversation about cookies, somewhat unrelated to Rohan’s specific project. This proved fruitful ground for imaging the project in a new direction. Rohan decided that he would get some of the students to help him bake peace cookies, which he could hand out downtown where most of the peace demonstrations were taking place. I offered to loan him a digital video camera in case he wanted to document his ‘intervention’. It seemed interesting enough. I hoped that by giving him the camera, the gift of a cookie might be extended into something else. I was curious to see what might erupt.

The emergence of new technologies has shaped a collective desire to create new areas of interactivity and performativity with regards to cultural objects (Bourriaud, 2002). Audience participation shifts the boundaries of activity where viewing no longer assumes the art object as a fait accompli, but that the nature of viewing itself becomes part of the artistic process and meaning making. Charles Garoian (1999) engages with this notion in his work on performance art. The practice of performance art has long since been understood as fluid, proximinal, and dynamic, transforming the boundaries between art, artist, and audience. This “enable[s] members of the audience to conceptually, emotionally, and often physically penetrate the art work. Such possibilities present greater opportunities for individual interpretation. The traditional role of art spectator and audience is shifted to that of participant” (Garoian, 1999, p. 23).

Yet, limitless interpretation is also problematic. As Cheryl Mezaros, director of Public Programs at the Vancouver Art Gallery and fellow PhD Candidate articulates (dissertation upcoming, personal correspondence) leaving viewers "abandoned to drift" in the interpretive process is a mis-understanding of the participatory context of interpretation. It is not that a viewer can read just *any* meaning onto a work of art. This would suggest that a viewer has power over the visual image and that an image does not signify meaning. Interactivity has unfortunately been misconstrued as completely open interpretation. In art education this has manifested through liberal notions of self and situated knowledge that claim a viewers position over that of the work of art. Rather, *relational aesthetics* implies that it is the interstices *between* image, social context, artist practice and the viewer and other sign systems that create meaning. Meaning is not contingent on a particular set of predetermined relationships, but formed as encounters between signifiers. Audience is just one of many signifiers.

A phenomenological and embodied way of understanding participation would be through Merleau-Ponty's (1968) theory of *Flesh*, where the body is folded and intertwined with the world. Perception, according to Merleau-Ponty (1962; 1968) is the primary means by which we experience the world. Perception as Flesh takes place in the chiasm, the intersection where object becomes subject, and to touch is to be touched. Touch as proximity brings the body, sentient knowledge into the world, where encounters between beings shape and form embodied subjectivities. Proximity produces excess and the un/familiar. Knowledge is formed through being(s)-in-relation. In this sense it is not simply a matter of meaning that an audience contributes to the signifying chain of an artwork, but that in the process of witnessing they in turn are constituted. *Flesh* and *relationality* are conditions of each other.

Relationality replaces binary knowledge with the rhizome or the fold. In a rhizome "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). Un/folding the rhizome results in additional folds, expanding its connections. Ruptures or breaks in the fold start up again as new directions and 'lines

of flight'. Interconnectedness, performativity, and participation all constitute embodied intercorporeal ways of knowing.

I want to discuss Rohan's art intervention not in terms of its success as a means of protest, but to examine this artwork as a disruptive piece that doesn't play by the conventional rules of exchange. To this extent I want to explore how this artwork is a social interstice that does not aim to establish utopias, but attempts to construct concrete spaces in-the-everyday.

The following week Rohan returned to school with the camera and a host of stories about his day. Trusting him with the camera off-school property for four days had un/expectedly shifted the intervention. Rohan and his co-conspirator, Quin, who was not a student at the school, decided that handing the cookies out on the downtown streets needed to be pushed a bit further. Armed with their innocent looking brown wicker basket and frosted pink peace cookies, and fueled with excitement, Rohan and Quin approached the American Consulate where they were turned away, gave cookies to two police officers parked outside the Consulate, and then entered an office building where a number of large gas corporations have regional offices. They brazenly walked into offices handing out their peace cookies to secretaries, office staff, and company Vice Presidents video recording their encounters, and in some instances 'words of peace'.

VANCOUVER
POLICE

Do you want to eat a cookie in support of peace?

They're low fat.

Somebody has to do it.

They're excellent cookies. We baked them ourselves.

No, we're not asking for money.

brain candy.

I'm too full for peace right now.

It's a peaceful cookie.

I'll take one but I'll save it for later.

Would you like to say something for peace?

I'm speechless at the moment.

There's nothing else going on here but peace.

Do you like cookies? Yes, very much.

Are you sure they're not poisonous?

Why are you doing this?

Watching the tape in class was pivotal for Rohan. He narrated his experiences from the day's events, but the video footage provided him with space to reflect on aspects that he had not noticed before. In the video we notice that Rohan and Quin did not ask people questions about the war, which immediately establishes a context of 'for' or 'against', a conversational move that is closed rather than open. "Seeing as we were handing out peace cookies we thought we'd just get people to comment on peace. We were really interested in people's understandings of peace. Everyone has different ideas of what peace is, for some peace is the war. We also just thought it would be funny to be in a corporate gas company talking about peace. The irony itself provides a nice critique."

Weeks later, Ian writes in his journal: "What originally began as a project about corporate and public hypocrisy, through the act of dropping peace parachutes into a corporate space [shopping centre food court] was replaced by a focus on peace. Peace became the replacement message. Ironically, no one disputes the concept of peace."

At some point during their adventure Rohan and Quin were forcibly stopped by security guards from the office building. They were informed that video taping on private property was not allowed and the security guards wanted to confiscate the tape. The local police were also called to the scene. Ironically these were the same officers who had 'bitten' into the intervention outside of the American Consulate. The officers decided that the tape did not need to be confiscated suggesting that Rohan and Quin could simply delete the section they taped within the office building. Instead of 'erasing' the tape as requested, Rohan covered the lens of the camera and then pushed record resulting in a ten-minute segment of blackness, but with some very interesting dialogue between the security guards, police officers and two young males. This ten-minute segment is included in Rohan's final video documentary, which I will attend to shortly.

Back at school we began to talk about different points in the video. When Rohan and Quin first approached an individual and offered them a cookie most people shook their heads and said no. Watching the video, Rohan noticed something he had not been aware of during the 'intervention'. Although most people were pleasant when refusing the cookies, many of them appeared suspicious of the cookies. Rohan and a few other students began to talk about a 'culture of fear' that was permeating the city and the country. Yet, Rohan went even further in his reflections, moving beyond a critique of the climate of fear tied to terrorism and the un/known (this was also a time in Canada when there was the initial outbreak of SARS[11], airports had increased security, and fear of contamination from the un/known 'other' was on the rise). Rohan thought that on one level he could understand how people might be wary of a stranger handing out food, given the national media coverage on SARS. But, on another level he started to think about how his random acts of kindness were in fact producing the unsettling and uneasy tensions. "People look like they are just uncertain about what I am doing. They can't figure out why someone would want to give peace away. They don't seem to understand that I'm not selling things or asking for money. I guess it's also a bit weird that I have a video camera. But mostly I think its because they are being asked about their opinions and given a peace cookie."

Images, texts, media reports and the like, circulate in the public imagination as a series of pathos ridden or corrupt power struggles, all in the name of goodness and 'peace giving' efforts. These artifacts, which I will simply call images normalize the concept of peace. Peace becomes a static symbol that should mean the same to nations and peoples globally. Images of peace necessitate an oppositional understanding where war and terror are countered, erased, and commodified by peace. Peace becomes something those in the Western First World 'give', an abstract concept that avoids the conditions that produce it or that it in turn creates. Rohan's cookies are unsettling because they point to the ridiculousness of giving peace, confronting the impossibility of peace as something that can be given. The un/easiness of the frosty pink cookies lies not only in the horrific sweetness of their form,

and any repulsion people might have to unwrapped food offered by a stranger, but to the un/belonging of Rohan's gesture in the circulation of images on peace. He calls attention to the very thing both peace activists and nation states involved in the war promised. *A gift of peace*. Yet, his gesture is un/expected challenging us to examine the impossibility and the un/knowingness of a gift of peace.

The gesture of giving away peace cookies destabilizes the romanticism and nostalgia for peace, a longing for an unnamed possibility that is so often imaged in the public imagination. His gift forces us to think about peace as belonging to actual existence, its relationality, rather than its abstract universal qualities. As a gift that inferred no obligation of return, it ruptures the circulation and economy of goodness and peace, with peace itself, provoking us to think about our own actions and participation in the exchange. As Rohan so candidly states: "To be able to bake, consume [Rohan and Quin apparently ate their fair share of the cookies] and to give the cookies to unsolicited people including the police, represented the ultimate freedom". But what happens when the event or the gift that ruptures time is a moment of crisis or trauma as in war? How can we account for such moments that collapse the event of possibility and lose the ability to open oneself to the un/expected?

Romanticized gestures of peace that reduce the idea of peace to expected conditions and an established set of practices refuse to acknowledge the necessity of un/expected possibilities. When we make peace certain and sure, universalizing it in its own tautology, we close ourselves to the chance of surprise. If we lack the capacity to openness, to welcome the un/familiar, we refuse the opportunity to examine and question encounters and the nature of being itself.

Another section in the video shows Rohan and Quin in an elevator. They offer a cookie to a woman who joins them there. She does not respond at all, but immediately starts digging in her purse for something. The camera focuses on her activity until it becomes apparent that what she is looking for is money, loose change, an offering and obligatory

gesture in return for a cookie. While a critique of Mauss's theory of obligation and exchange is fitting in this instance, Rohan describes a slightly different understanding of this gesture. Rohan says: "I don't think she was paying us for the cookie. I think she was just doing what she thought was necessary. It had nothing to do with the cookies. She didn't take a cookie. She didn't want one. She was giving money, like you do with the Salvation Army people on the street. People often give without any thought to it at all". Re-watching this scene un/fold in the classroom Rohan and a few other students sharing in the conversation, made connections between this gesture and foreign aid, and even linked the cookie project to Andrew's email and guilt. Andrew offers: "Do you think part of it may be that people have this vision of life and how you should do things for others and in fact real life is maybe not that selfless and hard? People in fact do give you things but your not supposed to get things. Selflessness is really a good thing pride isn't." Another student jumps in: "Yeah, like knitting socks for people in Africa. Are they really doing it for themselves or the people in Africa?"

Perhaps education needs to re-think the nature of 'the gift' and what it means 'to give' in an ethical and meaningful way. Schools often ask students to give. Whether it is to contribute to local food banks, to give time through voluntary/mandatory hours of public service, or to donate time, money, and skills in fundraising efforts for the school, teachers and students rarely think through the nature of giving itself. What we need are curricular and pedagogical interventions that inquire into the exchanges and encounters that produce generosity, and the conditions of this cultural production. Education needs to interrogate the becoming of the gift, an event that ruptures time through the un/expected, challenging us to remain open to new possibilities.

The following weekend, Rohan is attending the third annual Recompression festival, an alternative three-day event held at a camp retreat on the coast. Recompression is modeled after the Burning Man festival that takes place annually in the Black Rock desert.[12] Recompression's purpose is to create a community of people, to celebrate carnal knowledge,

tactile and sensuous experience, and art. Rohan takes with him another batch of cookies. Once again I offer the camera to him.

Shots from Recompression include similar instances where cookies are exchanged for words of peace. These encounters are visibly different. Rohan is not a stranger. While he is un/known to many of the people his presence is not un/familiar in an environment where individuals have come together to meet each other and form an alternative community. Instead of a culture of fear there is a general convivial nature to these encounters. Other footage includes the burning of a giant wooded figure as bodies dance and celebrate sensuous knowing. One section of the tape focuses on bodies joined together in a circle, holding hands and singing. If you listen closely you can hear Rohan's own voice, which because it was closer to the microphone surrounds the viewer. It creates the sense of this alternate plane, another layer, and the perspective that the viewer is inside the picture frame.

In the final video documentation Rohan slices together footage of the cookies for peace intervention with shots from Recompression, and downloaded still images he found on the Internet—images of war and destruction.[13] This was the extent of his editing, the video runs for almost forty five minutes, more reminiscent of home-movie style videos popularized by the *Blair Witch Project* and the like. Film critic Laura Marks (2002) explains that many contemporary artists choose this method of documentation as a subversive move within an already commodified visual domain. I'm not sure this was Rohan's intent but the effect is strikingly haptic.

The shaky camera angles, the cut off heads, over exposed film and excessive length add a heightened awareness of one's own body bound up in the texture of the film. There is a moment when a hand approaches the lens, appears gigantic and then swallows up the picture plane. There is a tension at work here. Whose hand is it? Mine? Yours? The relationship between the boundaries of self and other is conflicted as the gigantic becomes blurred and overtakes the picture plane.

ENRICHED WHITE
All Purpose
Flour

As I mentioned earlier there is also a ten-minute segment of blackness where only the voices of security guards, police, and two young males can be heard. The sounds are muffled. One needs to strain to distinguish the voices and the particularities of what they are saying. Without the context this void is disturbing, further amplified as we catch snippets of conversation. We overhear a conversation about the functions of particular types of security badges, a discordant snippet that on one level seems out of context and you wonder if the artist simply forgot to edit this section. However, the voices are also bizarre and eerie, both their sound without any visual reference and because of the candid nature of the conversation. You get the sense that we aren't supposed to be listening at all.

The black fuzziness might indicate the end of the film. Yet, the distortion of sounds makes one hesitate in turning away, while also forcing us to open up to other senses, to avert the visual. In class, projecting this on a large screen one of the students commented that she felt the prickliness of the static in her fingertips.

There is no slickness to the video—no distancing polish of editorial decisions. We hear the lens cap being replaced, buttons pushed, director's directions, and the brush of fabric as bodies touch and encounter one another. Viewing is touching is tasting is hearing. We are inside the visible. It's no longer simply a documentation of his various interventions, but an encounter itself. The video propels us inside a world that is slippery, wary, irregular and un/familiar. And in that moment of un/familiarity meanings un/ravel, possibilities alight, and the hesitations of the camera suggest ways for living in the world.

Rohan's video like many of the artworks produced by the students provided an opportunity to discuss visceral and sensual interpretations and meaning making. More often than not, students believed that the appropriate understandings of art should be distant and objective, rational versus relational. When in fact 'gut' responses did factor into interpretation these responses remained at the level of personal expression and often fell into the category of like and dislike. I used the opportunity in class to capitalize on visceral and sensual understandings and synaesthetic modes of interpretation. However, the focus of such lessons

was not to simply suggest that any and all feelings were applicable, but to look at the ways that sentient knowledge is *intentional* and how it contributes to the experience and meaning of a work of art; to its *relational aesthetics*. Thus, rather than understanding body knowledge as personal and or natural, I moved conversations towards an understanding of body knowledge through bodied encounters and tactile epistemologies, both of which are produced and shaped through proximity. More importantly I was interested in the entanglement of these forms of body knowledge, rather than view them as separate occurrences and categories.

Underlying all three works of art and these bodied encounters is an understanding that body knowledge is produced and negotiated through touch. This in turn necessitates an investigation regarding the ethics of bodied encounters and the implications of knowledge formed in relation between bodies. Ethical encounters are often described as being responsive or responding to others (see Ahmed, 2000; Diprose, 2002; Vasseleu, 1998). Thus, an ethical understanding of touch requires that we consider giving and generosity as intercorporeal. Viewed in this way we need to move away from defining generosity as individualistic, towards recognition that giving requires openness to others, an openness that precedes and establishes relational encounters. Giving and generosity should not be understood as utilities, which places the gift within the structures of commodity and exchange. Through reciprocal exchange some gifts and gestures of giving are valued over others, a normalizing discourse that devalues those gifts and gestures that may otherwise go un/noticed or are forgotten. Interestingly enough it is Derrida's (1992) premise that forgetting of the gift is paramount to the pure gift, and yet, what if this forgetting is selective, calculating some gifts and some bodies over others?

In much the same way Ahmed (2000) argues that privileging certain forms of touch (caress, breathing) over other forms (grasp) assigns value to some forms of encounters over another. It is an ethics that differentiates better from worse ways of being with (or, more

precisely, for) others , suggesting that some bodily "processes are more able to protect or preserve the otherness of the other" (p. 140). Ahmed questions the cost of an ethics of protection that clearly defines those who belong as the other. Instead she proposes an ethical mode of encountering that fails to be contained, that opens the encounter up to 'fail to grasp'. This way of thinking moves away from thinking about the other, and considers un/named spaces, the thresholds of possibilities between, where un/foldings allude to something else altogether.

Intercorporeal generosity is a being open to others, to the un/expected, and to excess, an 'other than' or what we might 'fail to grasp' in the present. It is not one form of giving over another, but a condition of intercorporeal existence that examines the conditions of generosity and how those conditions produce body knowledge.

Rosalyn Diprose (2002) contends that corporeal generosity move beyond Derrida's (1992) aporia of the gift, arguing that if the gift only functions if it goes unrecognized then it fails to account for intentionality, materiality, and the corporeality of those involved in an encounter. Generosity, she argues is sensible. It is affective and carnal, a primordial experience of touch. In addition, rather than characterizing openness as overcoming difference, difference needs to be recognized as being constituted within the space of generosity itself.

In light of these positions, how might we conceive of knowing and being that are generous yet also demand an interrogation of intercorporeality, and in turn defy inscribed habits of normalization and boundaries of containment? What might we learn from interorporeal generosity through touch as a response that overflows and is uncontained by boundaries? Giving then becomes animated by flesh, a becoming 'what is' that includes the excess of the body, the shadows, pointing towards un/familiar and un/known spaces of meaning making.

shadows:
pedagogical encounters as 'other than'

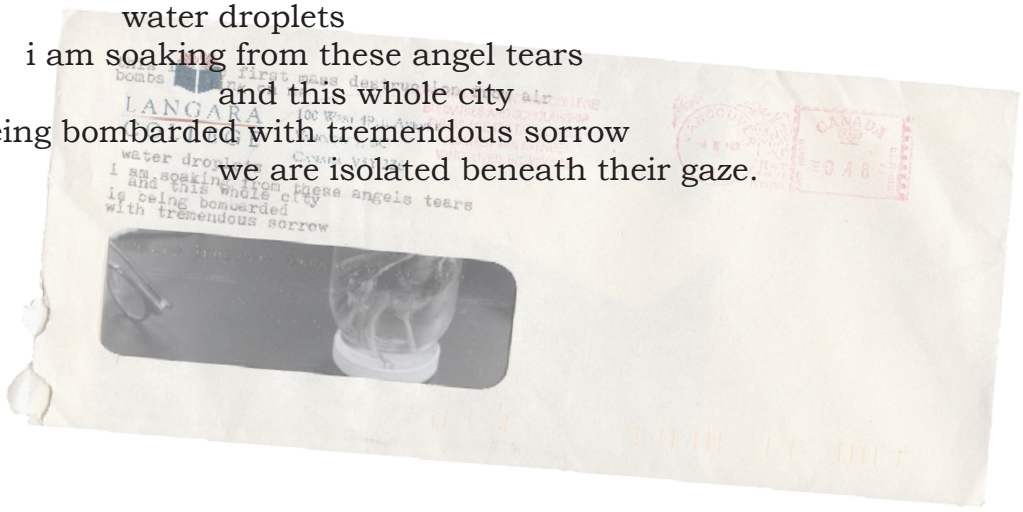
The day is gray and miserable. Rain pours down my windshield as I drive to the highschool. It's eight a.m. and I am physically and emotionally exhausted. It has been a long few months of teaching and researching, in addition to supervising student teachers on practicum, and a stressful time of being on strike as a University Teaching Assistant. Last week every possible thing seemed to go wrong. Computers crashed, a tape got caught in the camera and tore, a couple of students weren't working and I'd had to discipline them, and on top of that I felt I had so much 'data' and nothing was making sense any more. My questions were so tangled they seemed confusing, and both the curriculum project and research study seemed fragmented and messy. Ironically these are the very spaces I encourage my student teachers and the students at Bower to embrace—intentional acts of dropping threads. Yet, here I was mindful of just how difficult and painful this can be. A note in my journal reads: *But what does this all mean? Where do I go from here?*

I stop in front of the school and begin the ritual of unloading my car, laptop computers, digital cameras, and other materials, and trudge up the steps to the school. At the door Louie greets me with a smile. "Need help?" she asks, and I succumb graciously to her offer. More students join her and my car is soon unloaded. Louie is still hanging around I notice, as I talk with Bronwyn about the day's plan and fill her in on other matters. Louie must need some help, I think, and I ask her if she wants assistance with her video. "No" she says, "but I have something for you". A few minutes later when the room has settled, Louie hands me a box wrapped with paper. She disappears before I can open it.

Louie found verbal communication difficult, and she especially found it tough to conduct the interviews with the tape recorder running. She and I had agreed that she could create artistic renditions of her responses, which usually came in the way of poems and the occasional collage. That day the box got set aside as I busied myself with a day of living inquiry, and it wasn't until the last student filed out the door that I sat down to open it. Inside I discover seven recycled envelopes, each embossed with text and stuffed with photographs and other personal memorabilia. I take one out and hold it in my hands, press it up against my face, breathe in to smell ink and paper. I read:

this is the first mass destruction from air
bombs falling on me

water droplets
i am soaking from these angel tears
and this whole city
is being bombarded with tremendous sorrow
we are isolated beneath their gaze.



Inside is a photograph of a jar sitting on a desk, a student's hand visible writing notes. In the jar, which is filled with liquid, is a small baby bird.

Just when I think the fragments are slipping so far apart that I can't find my way through them, something un/does me. Louie's words, un/settling in the context of the terrifying and destructive wars that rage throughout the world, are also mindful gestures that speak of the students' involvement and their bodied interrogations. I feel my red threads begin to gather, to move in and out, finding connections, asking questions—living inquiry. *How do we negotiate fragmented and messy spaces in art, research, and teaching? What are the implications of teaching and learning through touch?*

On my way home I detour past my studio where I cut discarded fabric into strips, knotting them together. I place the tangled knotted construction in Louie's box, along with photos, and other debris, and return it to her at school the next day. Touch me—it continues to breathe. Without the tape recorder we sit and talk about this exchange. The next week I arrive to another such gift. A large old-fashioned suitcase sits in the middle of the room filled with earth. Sprouting from the earth are rows and rows of glass test tubes each one holding forth a small seed or a single bud of a flower. Over the weeks as the plants grow and/or open, their vine like stems twist around each other, creating flexible, fluid lines as a visible act. These lines are directional, suggesting movement and change. They are haptic, tactile, material—bodied elements. The threaded, entangled space is intensive, active, and aware. Slowly the lines un/do, they shrivel and decay, dried, brittle they return, fold back, not to their original state, but towards new becomings. Louie continues to exchange image and word, I encourage her to do this with other students, to use it as an opening towards conversation. A pedagogical encounter as 'other than'. Meanings become something else altogether, bodies touch creating knowledge in their folds.

The rains disappear, replaced by the startling intensity of early spring sun. Emma gathers my long skein of red felt from a chair and heads outside. I watch through the window as bodies dance against a backdrop of cherry blossoms. She begins to weave and wind the wool between and around the students. Some of them won't stand still and the wool lines

bend and sway, moving with the rhythms of their bodies; a game of cat's cradle.

Teaching and learning through touch encourages ambiguity and tension recognizing that difficult knowing ruptures opens the bodies and lives of students and teachers. In her cogent book *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks (1994) argues that 'engaged pedagogy' seeks to transform both student and teacher. This transformation cannot happen, she writes, unless we embrace the vulnerability of teaching and learning. Vulnerability recognizes that knowledge is felt, that it is sentient, embodied, and deep. Rather than a view that understands interior knowledge as inferior, teaching and learning through touch un/folds inside and outside and disrupts patterns in an attempt to create meaning through entanglements. Implicating touch in the teaching and learning process re-configures the body in the process of knowledge production as an intercorporeal act—knowledge between beings. This between refuses to be contained within boundaries, it is movement and a displacement of meaning; it is active, sensual, and aware. Pedagogical encounters through touch enhance moments in teaching and learning that are un/familiar and in excess. Touch becomes a commitment to art, research and pedagogy that is engaged, emphasizing bodied encounters that are interrogative and un/settling.

I am reminded of David Smith's (1999) hermeneutical writings on ambiguity and uncertainty in teaching. Western thought he argues, emphasizes structural order and universalism. Instead he contemplates a pedagogy premised on disorder: "Disorder also reveals the limits of language, that is, the resistance of things to be fully named, yet also to the pull of freedom which lies beyond names but is itself the silent generosity out of which things find their voice" (p. 127). What lies beyond is not an absence, but un/knowingness and the un/familiar. It is this excess that ruptures the expected, the same, and the stable. To pose questions about 'other than' is to open up possibilities, to examine the border, the limit, and to draw out "what we do not understand and for which we may not at present have words. Pedagogy then becomes a vocation to live and act within the difference between what we know and what we do not know, that is, to be drawn out to what calls us from both within and beyond ourselves" (Smith, 1999, p. 128). 'Other than' as shadows endows pedagogy with the lightness of becoming, enhancing, and expanding it. A shadow takes us places; it takes us out of ourselves, out of our customary routines and assumptions. Shadows refuse to be grasped, to be pinned down and held. They flicker and slip, effecting a release, bringing us into the world itself. All at once the shadow occurs, a touching that glides across, colliding with other shadows, pulling apart the space between.

The opening image that frames this section, a still from the video *Monkey Puzzle*, captures Nate, his feet in boxes climbing the school stairs. The shadow on the wall extends his body, hinting at un/known possibilities, agency, and an intercorporeal map that continues to become.

Shadows as 'other than' do not conceal, they are not darkness that passes over a subject. Shadows understood as potentialities create a space between body and object, they allude to something else yet unnamed. Shadows can be respected not by viewing them as isolated from the objects that create them, but by acknowledging the folded relations that are exhibited within and across them. They are openings, vulnerabilities, and in excess.

In the past year as I write and image this dissertation that page in my journal continues to haunt me—*What does this all mean?* The page has been added to—line drawings in red pen, notes creased along the margins, and cup rings stained coffee brown. Marks of my intersections and interrogations—my body knowledge. The dissertation seeks to intentionally and creatively ask questions, to move into spaces that are un/familiar and un/known examining: *How do students learn and make meaning with, in, and through the body? How are visual art and culture informed, created, and intersected with body knowledge? What are the implications of teaching and learning through touch? How do I a/r/tographically render art, research, and teaching as living intercorporeality?*

The implications of this dissertation are multiple and entangled, including a re-configuration of the body as living intercorporeality within feminist theory. However, I'd like to consider three spaces, while being mindful of their interconnectedness: **body knowledge through touch**, **art education as interrogation**, and **a/r/tography as living intercorporeality**.

Body knowledge through touch is a sensuous knowing that includes encounters between bodies in relation. Body knowledge moves from a static, hidden signifier, invisible and hence separate, into the threshold of the world, active, engaged, and aware. It is a knowledge that moves inside the visible, un/folding meaning as relational. I began the research study and curriculum project from the perspective of the 'absent body made visible' a theoretical position that is grounded in the belief of empowerment where students are encouraged to make their bodies visible. One of the first lessons focused on the contemporary artist Stelarc, whose manifesto reads, *The Body is Obsolete*, an understanding that I find both problematic and disembodied. However, I was unprepared for the students' responses to his work, and their continued bodied explorations through art—the body was fully present, not absent, but redolent, in excess, shadows creeping across the wall. Throughout the research,

while many discourses and understandings of body knowledge un/folded, sometimes in tension with each other, the most significant understanding was that the body is very much there. Thus, body knowledge through touch enables us to think through the body as a threshold, a boundary where meaning collides and "comes apart"—suggesting 'other than' potentialities.

In addition, rather than promoting a view of the self as contained by boundaries, as individualistic and autonomous, this research reveals how patterns come together in ever evolving organizations through touch, where body knowledge becomes *'lack of containment'*. Body knowledge is formed in proximity—knowledge as being(s)-in-relation. Learning becomes openness to the un/familiar. Learning as relational.

This past fall Bronwyn shows me the new high school graduation requirements pointing out that students must include in their personal portfolio aspects devoted to health. She tells me that while this has been left open for school boards, schools, and teachers to 'interpret', at a recent school meeting it was 'translated' for the staff at Bower as the documentation of eating habits, physical activity, and life style habits (such as drugs, cigarettes, alcohol and sexuality). Heather, who has joined us in the conversation, adds that this requirement normalizes student's bodied experiences while also suggesting that schools have the power to judge and control the adolescent body. Trinity wonders, "who decides what healthy is?" I'm reminded of the literature that speaks of mending and repairing adolescent bodies, and I wonder when education will understand that it is more generative to un/furl the edges, to slit open seams, to dis/repair.

I spend the day at the school talking to students in different classes. Heather and her friends decide to artfully think through the experiences of their bodies. In doing so Heather argues, they will not only fulfill the portfolio requirement, but their inquiries will also attest to the different ways that bodies are lived, touched, and encountered, challenging structured, objective, and coded assumptions that continue to normalize the body. This year not only have the students in the senior grades continued to interrogate the meanings of their bodies,

this living inquiry has seeped throughout the school, asking and responding in a diversity of ways to the questions: *How do youth understand body knowledge through touch? How do students make meaning and interrogate knowledge through visual art and culture?*

Bronwyn is angry. She wants to know how, after six months devoted to a curriculum project through bodily inquiry, something like this can infiltrate her school. Education, she says, is moving backwards. At the school meeting she was so angry she took out her knitting in protest. "I just sat there casting this big ball of yarn, on and off the needles". As an a/r/tographer she too continues to un/knit the bodies and lives of her students, not to mend, or to make whole, but as a process of dropping threads, becoming open and un/done.

Education aimed at the mastery of codes reinforces fixed interpretations, calculations, and objectives. It normalizes bodies. Rather a bodied pedagogy that shows the *motility of meaning in all texts and documents*, that shows their *desire*, opens for students a sense of possibility of their own involvement in the task of meaning making.

Not only does the portfolio configure the body as a discrete object that can be codified and documented, it understands knowledge as facts that can be assembled and accumulated. Instead education should be understood as an interrogative process. While interrogation has implications that stretch across the curriculum, I limit my arguments to art education.

Despite the shift in educational scholarship that advocates critical theory and critical approaches to pedagogy, teachers find it difficult to negotiate the gap between theoretical discourse and the lived reality of teaching in the classroom. In art education this distance between theory and practice is becoming even more problematic as the field divides itself between art and visual culture. These divisions are artificial. Rather student understandings attest to the relational aesthetics of visual art and culture and the social interstices of meaning making through visual encounters. Furthermore, art education needs to envision critical theory not as something to be applied to art, but to recognize aesthetic inquiry and interrogation as meaning itself. Thus, art moves from something we make to illustrate a concept, to a process of knowing and being.

Elizabeth Garber's most recent article in *Studies in Art Education* emphasizes this strategy. Examining a feminist initiative at her post-secondary institution that questions equity bias in art and education, Garber writes that her students' initial project proposals "fell into the information giving category" (Garber, 2003, p. 62). Students in her course wanted to educate others about issues of equity and gender by transmitting knowledge. Admittedly, as Garber notes, students had no prior experience of interrogating assumptions and thinking through art as social interaction. Therefore, she implemented 'a pedagogy of interrogation' that "would bring the student teachers face-to-face with gender issues" (Garber, 2003, p. 63). This face-to-face encounter emphasizes the need to understand and implement approaches to teaching and learning as bodied encounters; intercorporeal interrogations that making meaning through the process of asking questions not the dissemination of facts.

Art education as interrogation moves from a critique of visual art and culture towards an understanding of the *visuality* of meaning making. Interrogating creates visual situations that question and examine the social conditions and power struggles that constitute our contemporary visual world. Interrogation also folds inside the visible insisting that visual encounters are embodied and sensual. A pedagogy of touch is a pedagogy of interrogation.

Felted between body knowledge through touch and art education as interrogation is an understanding of a/r/tography as living intercorporeality. In a recent conversation, art educator Mary Ann Stankiewicz emphasized the importance of teaching student teachers to attend to a pedagogy of self, to understand their personal relationship to teaching and learning (see Irwin et. al, 2001; Wilson et. al, 2001 for a more detailed discussion of a pedagogy of self). Unfortunately this attunement to the self is often disregarded in educational scholarship in much the same way that interior sensibilities and the body are reduced to inferior spaces. Similarly, many researchers believe that forms of arts-based research are not meaningful because they attend to the self and are therefore disconnected from what might be called the 'public' or social space of research. However, a pedagogy of

self is meaningful precisely because it is proximinal and formed in relation between student and teacher. A pedagogy of self is intercorporeal. A pedagogy of self is interrogative.

As a new methodology within the field of arts-based educational research a/r/tography attests to the possibilities of meaning making that are intentional and folded. Exploring self includes an interrogation of what it means to know, to live, and to create as artists, researchers, and teachers within the intersections of self and other. A/r/tography as living intercorporeality is important because it becomes an opening to others, an exposure that touches, shifting the perspective from one to the difference created between. Art, research, and teaching are pedagogic encounters that open bodies into a limit space, a stepping out to a precipice, confronting and creating the un/familiar. To be in this process of meaning making as difference, as un/familiar, and in excess is living intercorporeality.

In addition, a/r/tography becomes a space of exploring shadows, of meaning and knowledge as 'other than'. It un/ravels implications while also dropping threads—allowing for further questions to un/fold. Already my journal is filled with questions and spaces of interrogation, future papers and research projects. For example: *How do students understand the folded interstitial spaces between race, gender, sexuality, class and other body identities? How do students understand and make meaning through a singular approach to the body? And in what ways might we continue to generate educational initiatives that are non-dualistic and that include the embodied visuality of knowledge production?*

At the heart of such transformations is the body as threshold, a passage between, a folding that brings understanding inside the visible. In Grosz's (1994) words:

> The body is an open ended, pliable set of significations, capable of being rewritten, reconstituted, in quite other terms than those which mark it, and consequently capable of reinscribing the forms of identity and subjectivity at work today. (p. 60)

Inside the visible the body becomes an incalculable limit of a being that is constantly taking form, turning to living experience and inquiry as a gesture of generosity. If our desires, aspirations, and educational concerns are to discover the fullness of the body, its fecundity and excess, it is necessary to intervene in the history of binary thought and in turn to shift the invisibility of the body towards a body that is situated as sensible, touching, and relational being. *Inside the visible* exposes the body in the construction of difference through touch, while challenging any attempt to view the world through distant, objective reason. *Inside the visible* intertwines the material and sensual, understanding and knowledge becomes tactile, textured, and 'other than'.

notes

abstract

[1] A CD Rom was given to all the students who participated in the research study. This CD Rom included two videos that were not discussed in the dissertation. In addition, the intention had been to originally create a more simplified version of the dissertation for the students, however the students requested a full version of the dissertation.

[1] In many configurations the use of the slash is understood to mean 'or'. For example the dualism of mind/body can be written as a slash. However, I employ the slash as a process of doubling as opposed to a dualistic meaning. For instance mind/body would mean mind and body or sometimes neither.
[2] The use of author's first names is a practice that is common amongst feminist, arts-based and collaborative researchers. First names will appear the first time a scholar is mentioned in the text. You will find new methods of practice surfacing in research journals and other publications (see Mullen, 2003).
[3] I understand 'educational scholarship' broadly defined. For example, texts that analyze contemporary visual art in relation to race, gender or other issues, I would envision as 'educational' even if they do not isolate curricular and pedagogic issues and implications. I embrace the notion that art itself is pedagogic, thus, my references to 'educational literature' include a diverse array of materials.
[4] I borrow the concept of *inside the visible* from Véronique Foti's (2003) philosophical interpretations of Merleau-Ponty's writings.
[5] In this instance I am using 'text' to refer to the 'dissertation' as a text or a book, which includes writing and images. In other instances in the writing I may use 'text' to specify the written portion of the 'text'. I prefer not to be so careful as to announce the difference to the reader and rather ask you to engage with the ambiguity and doubleness of this term.

[1] Students apply to enter this school in grade eight. If spaces open up at other grade levels (other students leaving the school) there is a possibility of a student starting in another grade. However, most students enter in grade eight. The students prepare an application, are interviewed, and they write an exam that tests reading and writing comprehension and skill levels. Students are accepted to the program not based on academic achievement but on a desire, willingness, and commitment to participate in an alternative school environment. Students come from a wide range of academic abilities and educational experiences including home schooling and the Waldorf system.

[2] All names have been changed to ensure anonymity. Some students selected their own pseudonyms while the others I chose and were later approved by the students.

[3] Some students were not taking art during all class periods. The concept of self-directed learning embraced by the school allowed students to enroll in classes that had timetable conflicts. Students attended art class one period a week and worked on independent projects towards the art credit.

[4] I had already worked at the school teaching a few classes the previous year so students were familiar with my presence in the school. In addition, the initial introduction to the curriculum project and research study had taken place during the last week of classes before Christmas break. Students were expecting to see me in the class.

[5] Aganetha Dyck is a contemporary Canadian artist who works with live bees to create wax sculptures. Dyck creates or uses found armatures that she places in the bee hives where the bees germinate their honeycombs over and within the armature structures. The resulting pieces embody a surface tension of sticky sweetness, the heady sent of honey, and they appear to vibrate with the hum of hundreds of bee wings. For a more detailed discussion of her work see: Pagés, 2001.

[6] One student was suspended from the school mid way through the project and did not return to art class upon his return to school. Another student in grade 10 joined the group for the second thematic project, and an additional 5 students were officially part of the Curriculum Project participating in class workshops, discussions and art making, but did not participate in the research. Many other students in all grades joined the class for individual lessons and or shared in some of the resources.

[7] Arts-based educational research is a diverse field of study drawing on autobiography, narrative, drama, dance, poetry, and other forms of aesthetic inquiry. Key publications in the field argue for the rationales of why this form of research is important and necessary (e.g. Barone, 2001a, 2001b; Eisner, 1995, 2001; Richardson, 2000). Following this example a number of scholars have continued to expand the genre of arts-based educational research, arguing for its position within scientific models (see Special issues of *Curriculum Inquiry, 32* (2) and 32 (3)), its relationship to social justice education (see Special issues of *Qualitative Inquiry, 9* (2)), and as exemplars of different artistic forms (see Special issue of Journal of *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 2002* (3)). There are many other worthy publications within this field of study.

[8] For a discussion on the use of textile-based terms to describe an a/r/tographical inquiry see Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Kind, 2004.

[9] I recognize that email interview strategies have been the subject of research studies. However, my intent was not pose questions of this nature, but to embrace a method that would assist the student in being able to interrogate body knowledge through art making.

[1] Cited from Marlatt, D. (1988). *Ana Historic*, p. 126 and p. 47.
[2] Adapted from Classen, C. (1993) and the Oxford English Dictionary, retrieved March 26th, 2004.
[3] It has been argued that Merleau-Ponty's most significant essay is *The Intertwining—The Chiasm*, which was published post-humusly in *The Visible and the Invisible* (1967). It includes annotated notes that were found scrawled in the margins and on additional pages with the incomplete manuscript. The translator has maintained this draft like form and thus, many of the quotations may appear to have grammatical errors or are somewhat fragmented.
[4] An intersecting or X-lie commissure that unites the optic nerves at the based of the brain (Oxford English Dictionary, retrieved January 2004). For a visual description see the Museum of Contemporary Art, Khiasma, in Helsinki. http://www.kiasma.fi/www/indexi.php. Elizabeth Grosz (1994) and other scholars who draw on the work of Merleau-Ponty adopt the metaphor of a mobius strip. For more information and a visual diagram see Hocking, Haskell, & Linds, 2001. My exploration began with folds in cloth, a visual metaphor that is less rigid. Folds are irregular, unstable, and fluid.
[5] *The Body House Project*, was performed at the downtown campus of the Public Library as part of Artspeak's public interventions titled *Expect Delays*. The performance is based on the work of Rachel Echenberg, with the collaboration of six other women artists, including myself. It was performed for a duration of seven hours in shifts of three.
[6] This list is by no means a full representation of research on visual culture and art education. I selected those that might resonate more closely with my work.

[1] The impetus for theorizing the fantastical body originated during a research project that I was involved in with Dr. Linda Peterat at the University of British Columbia. This research project investigated implications and student understandings of a secondary school fashion show (see Springgay & Peterat, 2002-2003). While I have expanded on this understanding of the fantastical body it is imperative to note that its conception grew out of conversations with adolescents in addition to a visual experience with their textile creations.
[2] The BwO is not empty. Like zero, which is a number, it is a place of potentiality. Anything undivided by zeros is undefined, not absent, but cannot be articulated by any other system or number. Zero is intensive.
[3] Ironically there is no staff lounge, but staff and students move fluidly through the halls, the lounge, and classroom spaces together, disrupting schooled notions of segregated student space and teacher space.
[4] Heather and Alexandria and a few of the other students often mentioned that because teachers believed the school fostered a particular sense of community that any alternative understandings were unacceptable. Students recognized the irony involved with this, that while the school was structured to empower students and foster a sense of 'comfort' in fact this 'comfort' was un/attainable.
[5] Cited from wall-text panel in the exhibition space.
[6] At times throughout the research I asked the students questions about skin, and in particular its connections to race. Some of the answers that were returned to me included narratives about body memories of scars, a few others recounted thoughts on shaving (female students), and there were a number of references to clear skin. As a culturally diverse class I was surprised that students did not have or at least wish to share with me, thoughts regarding skin and race. They felt that they did not judge others on the colour of their skin, so they did not consider the possibility that others could, or might, or would want to judge them through such means. One student offered: "I don't really think of my body or any body as a specific racial group". And another "I haven't had too many problems with racial issues, maybe because race isn't a big deal for me. It doesn't strongly affect the way I think about other people, because I have friends of all kinds of different backgrounds. I don't judge others in that way, so I like to think that others don't judge me in that way. People are just people, and bodies are just bodies. Gender's different, though. It's not like you forget you're a girl". Skin they felt reflected gender, which to them was something far more visible and differential than race (female students). I found this very intriguing and a number of questions surface that would enable me to entertain future research in this area.

[1] Trace here in this context is understood as static, monumentalizing, and objective.
[2] Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue that a trace is a traditional type of map, where fixed points affirm objective and stable representations of visual facts. Mapping they argue is the process of creating new assemblages and opening traces.
[3] At the completion of the curriculum project the school purchased an e-Mac and two digital video cameras.
[4] http://unfoldingobject.guggenheim.org/, retrieved February 2004
[5] as cited at http://www.guggenheim.org/internetart/welcome.html
[6] Students often adopted pseudonyms that bore no relation to the research project. In much the same manner that students changed multiple roles in their films, each time the piece was shown, some of the students fashioned new names for themselves. In addition titles did not always reflect the inherent meaning or the questions evoked in the piece, instead they too often changed and were selected based on the uncanny nature of labeling art that had no intention of ever being a static art object. The names that I have used in the research study have been re-checked by the students as being the most preferable, although Tyler suggested that I refer to his art using all of the different names, which would really confuse the reader and also point towards the non-linear tellings that were an important aspect of much of his work.

[1] Adapted from Calle, S. (1999). *Sophie Calle: Double game*. London, UK: Violette Editions.
[2] Many Contemporary International and Canadian artists create art as a means of social exchange and as circulation. Their works are in part informed by the *Situationists International*, which emerged as a group in 1957 in France and Germany. Among those most influential in the group was Guy Debord whose book *Society of the Spectacle* was published in 1967; English translation in 1994. For further readings on contemporary art see Nicolas Bourriaud *Relational Aesthetics*, 2002; *Postproduction* 2002, and Kim Pruesse *Accidental Audience*, 1999.
[3] Many of the students at Ideal spend a considerable amount of class time working in their visual journals so I showed them a project called 1000 journals, www.1000journals.com. On this website people can sign up to participate in a visual journal exchange. Currently 1000 bound journals are circulating around the world. If you register on the 1000 journal web site you receive a journal, have two weeks to contribute to the journal, then you must mail the journal onto the next recipient registered on the web site.
[4] I supplied him with addresses from my address book including a number of list serves at the University. The list serves provided him with mass mailings instead of specific individual email addresses.
[5] The Oxford dictionary (retrieved January, 2003) provides two meanings: An accomplice or partnership or a state of being complex or involved. Both definitions implicate proximity and relationality.
[6] I have substituted the term action research with living inquiry, following the example of a/r/tography. Although Carson and Sumara (1997) would argue that action research is living inquiry, its implications and usages are bounded with concepts and practices of research. Living inquiry on the other hand is a way of being folded in the world, intertwined and intercorporeal.
[7] Adapted from (retrieved January 8, 2004). http://www.artspeak.ca/exhibitions/event_detail.html?event_id=24. I had the opportunity to participate in the expect delays public exhibitions and was 'touched' by Diane Borsato.
[8] Fifty envelopes were sent. Twenty-five with no stamp. Twenty-five with a stamp. All contained a self-addressed stamped envelope.
[9] Found at http://dictionary.reference.com (retrieved January 15, 2004).
[10] The letter accompanying the items explains that the seeds (which appear to be sunflower seeds) are cupcake seeds.
[11] SARS (Sever Acute Respiratory Syndrome) was first publicly detected in Canada in the winter of 2003, primarily in the city of Toronto, but Vancouver had a few cases. However, the public media of this disease contorted it to the level of epidemic and a number of people, fearing contamination chose to mask themselves in public spaces, refused to fly, and even many restaurants and other public spaces were empty.
[12] The Burning Man event is a 'happening' that takes place annually in the Black Rock desert. This event encourages participants to express themselves in ways that they might not in day-to-day life. It celebrates carnal knowledge, performativity, and the coming together of community based not on shared common characteristics but through proximity and encounters. Art is an important part of the experience and each year participants are encouraged to create installations, costumes, and elaborate mobile homes. For more information see www.burningman.com.
[13] As an aesthetic element these still images seem awkward and out of place. During one of our discussions I mentioned that he might consider editing them out, that the video itself was highly successful. Rohan chose not to. When I asked him why, his response had more to do with time (end of term) than with aesthetic/ content issues.

references

Agamben, Giorgio. (1993). *The Coming community*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ahmed, Sara. (2000). *Strange encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality*. London, UK: Routledge.

Ahmed, Sara & Stacey, Jackie. (2001). *Thinking through skin*. London, UK: Routledge.

Ahmed, Sara, Kilby, Jane, Lury, Celia, McNeil, Maureen & Skeggs, Beverly. (2000). *Thinking through feminism*. London, UK: Routledge.

Baert, Renee. (2001). The Dress: Bodies and boundaries. *Reinventing Textiles*, 2, 11-22.

Baert, Renee. (1998). Three dresses, tailored to the times. In Ingrid Bachmann & Ruth Scheuing (Eds.) *Material matters*. (pp. 75-91). Toronto, ON: YYZ Books.

Barone, Tom. (2001a). Science, art, and the predispositions of educational researchers. *Educational Researcher, 30* (7), 24-28.

Barone, Tom. (2001b). *Touching eternity: The enduring outcomes of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Bataille, George. (1985). *Visions of excess*: Selected writings 1927-1939. Translated by Allan Stoekl. Minnesota, MN: The University of Minnesota Press.

Bolin, Paul & Blandy, Doug. (2003). Beyond visual culture: Seven statements of support for material culture studies in art education. *Studies in Art Education, 44* (3), 245-263.

Bordo, Susan. (1998). Bringing body to theory. In Donn Welton (Ed.). *Body and flesh: A Philosophical reader*. (pp. 84-97). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Bordo, Susan. (1997). The Body and the reproduction of femininity. In Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, & Sarah Stanbury (Eds.). *Writing on the body: Female embodiment and feminist theory*. (pp. 90-110). New York: Columbia University Press.

Boler, Megan. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. New York: Routledge.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. (2002). *Relational aesthetics*. Paris: Les presses du réel.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. (2001). *Post production*. Paris: Les presses du réel.

Bresler, Liora. (forthcoming). *Knowing bodies, moving minds: Towards embodied teaching and learning*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.

Calle, Sophie. (1999). *Sophie Calle*. London, UK: Violette Editions.

Carson, Fiona & Pajaczkowska, Claire. (2000). *Feminist visual culture*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

Carson, Terrance & Sumara, Dennis. (1997). *Action research as a living practice*. New York: Peter Lang.

Castenada, Claudia. (2001). Robotic skin: The future of touch? In Sara Ahmed & Jackie Stacey (Eds.). *Thinking through skin*. (pp. 223-236) London, UK: Routledge.

Classen, Constance. (1998). *The color of angels: Cosmology, gender, and the aesthetic imagination*. New York: Routledge.

Classen, Constance. (1993). *Worlds of sense: Exploring the senses in history and across cultures*. New York: Routledge.

Chalmers, Graeme. (2002). Celebrating pluralism six years later: Visual transculture/s, education, and critical multiculturalism. *Studies in Art Education, 43* (2), 293-306.

Corner, James. (1999). The Agency of mapping: Speculation, critique, and invention. In Dennis Cosgrove (Ed.). *Mappings*. (pp. 213-252). London, UK: Reaction Books.

Cosgrove, Dennis. (1999). Introduction: Mapping meaning. In Dennis Cosgrove (Ed.). *Mappings*. (pp. 1-23). London, UK: Reaction Books.

Curnow, William. (1999). Mapping the expanded Field of contemporary art. In Dennis Cosgrove (Ed.). *Mappings*. (pp. 253-268). London, UK: Reaction Books.

Debord, Guy. (1994). The society of the spectacle. New York: Zone Books.

de Cosson, Alex. (2003). *(Re)searching sculpted a/r/tography: (Re)learning subverted-knowing through aporetic praxis*. Doctoral Dissertation. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia.

Deleuze, Giles. (1993). *The Fold: Leibniz and the baroque*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Giles & Guattari, Felix. (1987). *A Thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Giles Guattari, Felix. (1983). *Anti Odepius: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, Jacques. (1997). *Of Grammatology*. Balitmore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, Jacques. (1992). *Given time counterfeit money*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago press.

Disprose, Rosalyn. (2002). *Corporeal generosity: On giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Driscoll, Kelly. (2002). *Girls: Feminine adolescence in popular culture and cultural theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Duncum, Paul. (2001). Visual culture: Developments, definitions, and directions for art education. *Studies in Art Education, 42* (2), 101-112.

Eisner, Elliot. (1995). What artistically crafted research can help us understand about schools. *Educational Theory, 45*(1), 1-6.

Eisner, Elliot. (2001). *The educated imagination: Fiction and knowledge*. Taped conference proceedings. American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Seattle.

Felman, Shoshana & Daub, Lorri. (1992). *Testimony: Crisis of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. New York: Routledge.

Fleming, Marnie. (retrieved 2004). *Kim Adams*. http://www.oakvillegalleries.com/Past%20Exhibitions/Kim%20Adams.htm

Freedman, Kerry. (2003). *Teaching visual culture: Curriculum, aesthetics, and the social life of art.* New York: National Art Education Association.

Foti, Véronique. (2003). *Visions invisibles: Philosophical explorations*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Garber, Elizabeth. (2003). Teaching about gender issues in the art education classroom: Myra Sadker Day. *Studies in Art Education, 45* (1), 56-72.

Gerber, Anna. (2003). What lies beneath. *Print, 57* (4), 50-57.

Garoian, Charles. (1999). *Performing pedagogy: Toward an art of politics*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Garoian, Charles & Gaudelius, Yvonne. (2001). Cyborg Pedagogy: Performing resistance in the digital age. *Studies in Art Education, 42*(4), 333-347.

Grosz, Elizabeth. (1999). Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray in the flesh. In Dorthea Olkowski & James Morley (Eds.). *Merleau-Ponty, interiority and exteriority, psychic life and the world*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Grosz, Elizabeth. (1994). *Volatile bodies*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hallward, Peter. (2001). *Absolutely postcolonial: Writing between the singular and the specific*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Haraway, Donna. (2004). *The Haraway reader*. New York: Routledge.

Harding, Sandra. (1986). *The science question in feminism*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

Hocking, Brent, Haskell, Joanna. & Linds, Warren. (2001). *Unfolding bodymind: Exploring possibility through education*. Rutland, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.

hooks, bell. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

hooks, bell. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. New York: Routledge.

Irigaray, Luce. (2002). *Between east and west*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Irigaray, Luce. (2001). *To Be Two*. New York: Routledge.

Irigaray, Luce. (1993). *An ethics of sexual difference*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

Irwin, Rita L. (2003). Towards an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights through curriculum. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 1* (2), 1-17.

Irwin, Rita L., Stephenson, Wendy, Robertson, Helen, Reynolds, J. Karen (2001). Passionate creativity, compassionate community. *Canadian Review of Art Education, 28* (2), 15-34.

Irwin, Rita L. (1999a). Listening to the shapes of collaborative artmaking. *Art Education, 52* (2), 35-40.

Irwin, Rita L. (1999b). Facing oneself: An embodied pedagogy. *Arts and Learning Research, 16* (1), 82-86.

Irwin, Rita L. & deCosson, Alex. (Eds.). (in press). *A/r/tography: Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Jackson, Shelley. (retrieved 2004). http://www.ineradicablestain.com/

Jones, Amelia. (2003). *The Feminism and visual culture reader*. New York: Routledge.

Kehoe, Patricia. (2002). *The need for peer approval: Moderating factors between the internalization of the thin ideal and body image dissatisfaction*. Doctoral Dissertation. Washington, DC: The University of Washington.

Kristeva, Julia. (1982). *Powers of horror: Essays on abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lacan, Jacques. (1977). *Ecrits: A Selection*. London, UK: Tavistock.

Lather, Patti. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.

Lingis, Alphonso. (1994). *The community of those who have nothing in common*. Blommington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Lorraine, Tasmin. (1999). *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in visceral philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Marlatt, Daphne. (1988). *Ana Historic*. Concord, ON: Coach House Press.

Marks, Laura. (2002). *Touch: Sensuous theory and multisensory media*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Marks, Laura. (1999). *The Skin of the film: Intercultural cinema, embodiment, and the senses*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mauss, Marcel. (1990). *The Gift*. New York: Routledge.

McLuhan, Marshall. (1994). *Understanding media: The Extensions of Man*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1964). *Signs*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1968). *The Visible and the invisible*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Meskimmon, Marsha. (2003). *Women making art: History, subjectivity, aesthetics*. New York: Routledge.

Mullen, Carol. (2003). Guest editor's introduction: A Self-fashioned gallery of aesthetic practice. *Qualitative Inquiry, 9* (2), 165-181.

Mulvey, Laura. (1991). A Phantasmagoria of the female body: The work of Cindy Sherman. *New Left Review*, July-August, (188), 136-150.

Nancy, Jean Luc. (2000). *Of being singular plural*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Nancy, Jean Luc. (1996). *The Muses*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Nikolopoulou, Kalliopi. (2003). L'Art et les gens: Jean-Luc Nancy's genealogical aesthetics. *College Literature, 30 (2), 174-194.*

Oliver, Kelly & Lalik, Rosary. (2000). *Bodily knowledge: Learning about equity and justice with adolescent girls*. New York: Peter Lang.

Oxford English Dictionary. (retrieved January-March 2004). http://dictionary.oed.com

Pagés, Elizabeth. (2001). *Aganetha Dyck*. Paris: Services culturels de l"Ambassade du Canada.

Pink, Sara. (2001). *Doing visual ethnography*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Plant, Sadie. (2000). On the matrix: Cyberfeminist simulations. In David Bell & Barabara Kennedy (Eds.). *The cybercultures reader* (pp. 325-336). New York: Routledge.

Pollock, Griselda. (1996). (Ed.). *Generations and geographies in the visual arts: Feminist readings*. London: Routledge.

Pollock, Griselda. (1988). V*ision and difference: Femininity, feminism and the histories of art.* London: Routledge.

Price, Janet & Shildrick, Margrit. (1999). *Feminist theory and the body: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Pruesse, Kim. (Ed.). (1999). *Accidental audience: Urban interventions by artists*. Toronto, ON: Offsite collective.

Richardson, Laurel. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In Norman K. Denzin & Yvonne S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (second edition), (pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ricoeur, Paul. (1974). *The conflict of interpretation: Essays in hermeneutics*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Rogoff, Irit. (2000). *Terra infirma: Geography's visual culture*. London, UK: Routledge.

Rose, Gillian. (2001). *Visual methodologies*. London, UK: Sage.

Shildrick, Margrit. (2002). *Embodying the monster: Encounters with the vulnerable self*. London, UK: Sage.

Shildrick, Margrit. (2001). Some speculations on matters of touch. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy, 26* (4), 387-404.

Slattery, Patrick. (2001). The educational researcher as artist working within. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7* (3), 370-398.

Smith, David. (1999). *Interdisciplinary essays in the pedagon: Human sciences, pedagogy and culture*. New York: Peter Lang.

Sooja, Kim. (retrived 2002). http://www.ntticc.or.jp/Calendar/2000/A_needle_woman.

Springgay, Stephanie. (2003). Cloth as intercorporeality: Touch, fantasy, and performance and the construction of body knowledge. *International Journal of Education and the Arts, 4* (5). http://ijea.asu.edu/v4n5/.

Springgay, Stephanie. (2002). Arts-based educational research as an unknowable text. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, (3). CD Rom.

Springgay, Stephanie. (2001). *The body knowing: A Visual art installation as educational research*. Master of Arts Thesis. Vancounver, BC: The University of British Columbia.

Springgay, Stephanie & Peterat, Linda. (2002-2003). Representing bodies in a high school fashion show through touch, fantasy, and performance. *The Journal of Gender Issues in Art and Education, 3*, 52-68.

Springgay, Stephanie & Irwin, Rita L. (2004). Women making art: Aesthetic inquiry as a political performance. In Gary Knowles, Lori Neilsen, Ardra Cole, & Tracy Luciani (Eds.). *Provoked by Art: Theorizing Arts-informed Inquiry*. (pp. 71-83). Halifax, NS: Backalong Books.

Springgay, Stephanie, Irwin, Rita L., and Wilson Kind, Sylvia. (in press). A/r/tography as living inquiry through art and text. *Qualitative Inquiry*.

St. Pierre, Elizabeth, & Pillow, Wanda. (Eds.). *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education.* New York: Routledge.

Stewart, Susan. (1999). From the museum of touch. In Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward, & Jeremy Aynsley (Eds). *Material Memories: Design and evocation*. (pp. 17-36). Oxford, UK: Berg.

Stewart, Susan. (1993). *On longing: Narrative of the miniature, the gigantic, the souvenir, the collection*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Sullivan, Graham. (2003). Seeing visual culture. *Studies in Art Education, 44* (3), 195-916.

Sumara, Dennis & Davis, Brent. (1997). Enlarging the space of the possible: Complexity, complicity, and action-research practices. In Terrance Carson & Dennis Sumara (Eds.). *Action research as living practice*. (pp. 299-312). New York: Peter Lang.

Sunjung, Kim. (2001). Kim Sooja's bottari and her journey. *Reinventing textiles, 2*, 131-142.

Tavin, Kevin. (2003). Wrestling with angels, searching for ghosts: Toward a critical pedagogy of visual culture. *Studies in Art Education, 44* (3), 197-213.

Tseëlon, Efrat. (2001). *Masquerade and Identities: Essays on gender, sexuality, and marginality*. New York: Routledge.

Tseëlon, Efrat. (1995). *The masque of femininity*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Vasseleu, Cathryn. (1999). Touch, digital communication and the ticklish. *Angelaki: Joural of the theoretical humanities, 4* (2), 153-162.

Vasseleu, Cathryn. (1998). *Textures of light: Vision and touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*. New York: Routledge.

Weiss, Gail. (1999). *Body image: Embodiment as intercoporeality*. New York: Routlege.

Wenger, Etienne. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, Sylvia, Stephenson, Wendy, Springgay, Stephanie, Irwin, Rita L., de Cosson, Alex & Adu Poku, Samuel. (2002). Performative liberation: A multilectic inter/intrastanding of pedagogy. In *Thomas Poetter, Catherine Haerr, Michael Hayes, Chris Higgins & Karen Wilson Baptist* (Eds.). *In(Ex)clusion (Re)Visioning the Democratic Ideal (Papers from the 2nd Curriculum and Pedagogy Group's Annual Conference, University of Victoria, BC, October 2001. (13 webpages). Troy, NY: Educator's International Press.* See: http://education.wsu.edu/journal

Young, Iris. (1990). *Throwing like a girl and other essays in feminist philosophy and social theory*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Zuckerman, Naomi. (2003). *The correlation between reading women's magazines and adolescent girls' body image*. Doctoral Dissertation. New York: Columbia University Teachers College.