The Self Which Enacts Learning:
A Research with/through the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA)

by

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The Abstract

This thesis reveals and clarifies through creative research practices and forms a movement towards, and a re-cognition of, embodied arts learning through and as a result of an association with the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA), a particular feminist art educational community. Interpretive inquiry on a present learning process both locates and frames this research. The components which inform this interpretation include: a study of the associated literature on feminist art communities, a participant research study with the BAAWA community presented as a notated theatrical performance script, and an exhibition. They relate to and through each other in a complementary relationship and record the various values, perspectives and orientations I have taken on at different occasions in my learning. It is the relationship and specificity of these occasions or events which point to naming my learning process as curriculum as I have understood it from, and applied it beyond, BAAWA. This research is multi-layered, multi-textured, dialogic, open and aesthetic and points to the particular complexities, needs, and practices of contemporary North American women artists in reaching to name, affirm and expand their practices as artists.

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For Leena, my friend and mentor

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Opening

As educators, most of us find our satisfaction in the achievements of others. When we do something well, the most natural response is to think of others' contributions to our efforts, to think second of struggles along the way, and to think last of the role of our own wit and hard-earned skill in various undertakings... Women of my generation in particular have been programmed... not to claim credit for what we do.

Laura Chapman, "Leadership and the Question of Professional Identity in Art Education: Some Personal Reservations"

No one ever told us we had to study our lives,
make of our lives, a study, as if learning the natural history of music...

Adrienne Rich, "Transcendental Etude"

She stands, hands clenched, feet firmly spread apart, in camouflage pants and black T-shirt, nearly bald, heavy eye make-up and black lipstick, multiple earrings, screaming in French at the audience while air-raid sirens wail --- we are assailed, rivetted by the noise and fierce vision. Suddenly the sirens stop, and in the same violent tone she states, "I-loathe-moths!"

Jeanie Forte, "Rachel Rosenthal: Feminism and Performance Art"

A Personal Context

Before coming to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I had been studying and working in theatre, movement, and the visual arts. As a result of this diverse history, I realized I had become not a specialist in one area, but a hybrid of many. This became clearer to me as I began my academic work. I chose to start from this "hybridism" and began to unravel and pick at the various parts, looking at the bits from above, below, and behind, seeing if I could "see" whatever "it" was through different frames (Patterson, 1992). I wanted to place my previously assumed fixed and known frames into question. I wanted to de-neutralize them, make them active, and get them humming again. And, as I picked, I realized that the pattern became more complex, and that tensions between these parts, and in relation to new academic forms, emerged.

I am a performance artist. Not content just with a career in theatre or the visual arts, I sought a form that would allow me to play in layers. Not satisfied with traditional visual or theatrical forms, I experimented with interrelating video, film, lights, sound, text, slide visuals and my body and voice in performance contexts.

Central to my use of performance art and to this academic research are my experiences as a woman. Where was I in all this? Where was I as a woman in this field of the arts? Where was I written in? How was I written in? Why did I choose not to follow a conventional path in my own career? Where, how, and what did I study/learn to come eventually to this point in my career? What kind of learning and learning situations did I gravitate to? How could I expand my perspectives, open my frames, and become more generous and flexible in my understandings, not only of myself, but of different selves?

The layers seemed complex, the interfaces many. It seemed interesting, but it lacked a focus. I wanted to find a passionate centre that would activate me to re-form and re-create occasions that could allow for a committed, engaged working process that would teach me anew. The site I chose to focus on was the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA) — a community which had supported and affirmed this need.

My, and the BAAWA, learning is in flux, and my research on both a process. I have more distance from BAAWA now and have had opportunities to apply its practices and processes in other situations. At the time of this writing I am working with another BAAWA member toward an exhibition/performance. We also are celebrating with BAAWA members and members of other women's communities a decade of BAAWA's history as a feminist art collective. So it seems somehow appropriate that I step into this research process again moving to the completion of this thesis work.

The layers of images, sounds, colours, and voices engulf me. I live in one image or interaction and follow it, and then shift to another. The form moves and undulates. Boundaries shift and reform. I have come to see this movement as crucial. I know that my body will recover and balance, my thoughts become connected, my performances reveal new depths, and my art invite, if I respect and listen to how I, the ideas, and the forms need to move. As in the movement of my breathing, I move from internal reflection to external action, back and forth, in and out, towards and away. I enter the research allowing the tissues of my body to feel and respond. I want to be embodied in the process. I want to re-discover pleasure through my research, to bring my selves

together in the space of the "female imaginary"[1], and to work rigorously towards a more precise and yet multiple interpretation of my studies of, around and from my associations with BAAWA as art, as presence and as learning. I hold and form a few interpretations. And, as I do, I feel a giddy sense of moving closer to the centre, to the originating place, accepting that perhaps such a centre may not be namable.

A Research Context

The purpose of this inquiry is to re-cognise and enact the particular learning within, around and as a result of a specific women's art community in Ontario, the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA). This inquiry has evolved from the shared journey of six women artists (including me) in the BAAWA group and represents my long-term and ongoing research relationship with these women.

BAAWA members and those from other groups have talked together posing certain questions: What is BAAWA? Why does it work? Where do we go from here? What form will our community continue to take? What is our role as "mentor" for women artists and the arts. Can our form/process inform other groupings?

As a vocal and dynamic community, now ten years old, BAAWA has become an established and challenging presence. The "outside" cultural community continues to push BAAWA for definition. But the group resists conventional labelling and restructuring and holds fast to its fluidity and its right to self-determination. And it is this fluidity that has appealed to many other groups.

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[1] Dr. Jeanne Randolph in "What don't women want?" presented at The Female imaginary: Symposium on feminist practice in the visual arts, Agnes Etherington Gallery, Kingston, Ontario, Jan. 28, 1995, named the "female imaginary" as a space of luxury or playfulness. This place speaks to use of interpretation rather than prescribed ideology.

This self-determination and resistance located and grounded specific considerations for me. One such consideration was based on the premise that gender needs to be acknowledged as a determining factor in women's lives. The concept "gender" can limit our drives and our dreams. As Frigga Haug & Others (1987) write, it is "not a set of actions but a state of social relations that marks out structural barriers to women's striving for autonomy..." (p. 18). How have women challenged and lived out these social relations? They look for ways, "never passive but instead constantly engaged in practice" (p. 18) to negotiate these limitations. They have dynamically moulded and shaped the parameters of their existence.

In the arts, women have been limited through a traditional gender-biased education (Collins & Sandell, 1984, p. 21-41). They have attempted for years to negotiate art(s) schooling in order to receive training toward the establishment of a professional career. They have rarely been encouraged in this education to reveal their specific female experience through their art, or affirmed in their use of traditional women's materials and techniques.

Three further considerations were also significant to me:

1. Historically, women have had to create alternative settings for their own expressions and education. While not accepted by, or even, at times, visible to the larger community, their culture has existed. As Deena Metzer (Collins & Sandell, 1984) writes:

> Separated from the "light" of the dominant society, we women have perpetuated a culture of our own, expressed in our own forms, which has frequently been transmitted, as is the case with other oppressed cultures, in subtle, uncodified ways. Not taught in schools, it is communicated in the home, through kinship lines, laterally through sisters, grandmothers, friends. (p. 79)

2. Women have been developing critical and personal skills to effect change in their art practice and

education. In Anonymous was a Woman: A Documentation of the Women's Art Festival and Collection of Letters to Young Women Artists, Miriam Schapiro (1974) writes:

> What does it mean to make art as a woman?... The more we learn about our sensibilities, the more complex and beautiful they become. We have come to redefine ourselves in this strange territory. A long process of removing social conditioning had kept our vision unformed, confused and repressed. Our marks are a poetic outcry against the void of history. We have the audacity to be faithful to this dream. (p. 1)

3. Women are now capable of building their own separate feminist art education, which could influence a change in mainstream art education and in the larger community. Art historian Linda Nochlin (Collins & Sandell, 1984) describes the catalytic affect that feminist action has had on the art community:

> It is the engaged female intellect... that can pierce through the cultural-ideological limitations of the time and its specific "professionalism" to reveal biases and inadequacies not merely in the dealing with the question of women, but in the very way of formulating the crucial questions of the discipline as a whole. Thus the so-called woman question, far from being a minor, peripheral and laughable provincial sub-issue grafted onto a serious, established discipline, can become a catalyst, an intellectual instrument, probing basic and "natural" assumptions, providing a paradigm for other kinds of internal questioning, and in turn, providing links with paradigms established by radical approaches in other fields (p. 11).

These considerations then sparked early questions: What is feminist self-education in the arts? What is unique about the practices of contemporary separate alternative feminist art communities? What is unique about BAAWA as feminist art education; how and why does it flourish without a conventional institutional structure? How can its process be embodied as a learning practice?

These questions focused my desire to look to places where women strove to grasp their life

and art practice with a greater passion, sought to understand themselves in a larger social context, and pushed to have this education and practice valued in the mainstream. I wanted to discover and share these experiences and use them as integral to my own. I wanted to generate research events as occasions to pose these questions, visualize a process and enact my learning.

I noted feminist art educational communities to be of special interest, for, as alternative structures, they tended to attend to their processes and survival. This seemed to reflect an ongoing commitment to self-evaluation, but also a need to maintain a responsive and flexible educational environment. But they are not always successful.

Most feminist alternatives, as Bunch and Pollack (1983) note, can be unstable, are often unable to reach women beyond feminist circles, and tend to exhaust the energies of their organizers (p. xiv). But, for BAAWA, this hasn't been true. I did not know why this was the case. I needed to explore this.

I wanted critical creative dialogue to be at the core of this search, allowing knowledge to be emergent, dialogic and ambiguous. I would accept the responsibility to be present in the research, to select specific concrete structures which would resonate with the phenomenon and to be committed to articulating a presence in, and making specific choices relative to, the ongoing process.

The conceptualization of this project flows from the research-to-date. The question, the methodology, and the findings will be attended to. I intend to conceptualize a research whereby I can move from simply seeing BAAWA as outsider, to knowing and learning through BAAWA implicated as insider. It is a balancing of texts and opportunities to locate, immerse, dislocate and relocate.

The thesis is shaped and balanced by my activities as inquirer-learner. I, as inquirer learner move and balance between observing a present working-learning association and reflecting on the texts of my past education with BAAWA. My intension is to unravel the learning process for women like me in/through self-directed art communities.

Introduction

The Thesis Project

The piece is very much about process; developing it. We find that working in the space is really exciting and a week is a long time to begin with and not very long in the end. And it is always at the point of reaching the performance at the end of the week that we discover all the things that we could have done and that perhaps could do in the next one. Perhaps in the future we can do one every week as it develops. We're working on the format; on how to incorporate that process into the actual thing itself.

Leena Raudvee, Co-Artistic Director, Artifacts
Spoken at the end of the performance, "Crossing the Street" at the Hamilton Artists' Inc., 1988.

Conceptualizing the Research

In this thesis, I am coming to understand the complexity of research and the learning process. I have also come to understand that who we are at any given time changes as the circumstance changes. And, the phenomenon itself can change. How we name ourselves, visualize ourselves and the world we interact with is not a constant. Given that flux, I suggest that it is useful to come to research by accepting the need to create moments in which to pause and play (Patterson, 1996), to look at a phenomenon with eyes that see at a particular moment in time, a specific sight (site). We observe this sight (site), explore it, and come to certain interpretations. As we return at a later date to the phenomenon, we create yet another research event. We come from a different place yet again, revisit the phenomenon and perhaps see another sight (site). These research events which reveal different aspects of the phenomenon, I name as modalities, equally valid and yet shifting in placement and perspective.

Research, in this inquiry, is process. It is named as interpretive and phenomenological. Its movement is neither circular nor linear, but rather cyclical and eventful. It is representative of many perspectives, placements and ways of learning. It is also representative of the multiple and varied specific learning events and the richness and complexity of a particular learning moment. It acknowledges that research on learning and hence on education and curriculum, is not only formed through textual description and analysis of data. There are also the silences, images, and sensations that take us to richer and I think, more complex interpretations of what education can be. It is a research which records the acting of self-as-learner engaged in reflection on past occasions and on present artistic collaborative practices.

The question central to this thesis addresses learning process, and asks: How do I learn? The idea is generated through this, a history of various inquiries with and around a phenomenon, a particular women's art community, the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA). The question becomes enriched: How do women artists-in-community learn? The modes that emerge and are represented in this inquiry are generated from these questions. They are the special events of learning at the site(s) where the idea and the phenomenon have intersected and engaged. The formal shapes the research takes or the ways the research speaks in each particular modality are representative of the shifts in the dynamics of the learning process and reveal aspects of the subject matter being learned.

The movement of this inquiry is shaped through that dialogue and interaction of self and phenomenon in process. This ongoing cyclical, eventful movement is at the core of the conceptual progression of the thesis. It records the activity of self-as-inquirer/learner engaged in reflection on past modalities and on a present artistic collaborative practice. It is central to what I understand learning, research and rigorous, creative, critical practice to be.

Contextualizing Research as Critical and Creative

> Until the artist is satisfied in perception with what [s/]he is doing, [s/]he continues shaping and reshaping. The making comes to an end when its result is experienced as good — and that experience comes not by mere intellectual and outside judgement but in direct perception. (J. Dewey in Willis (1991), p. 173)

Such a statement suggests the possibility of a different orientation to research. As Susan Krieger (1991) notes, it is "one that emphasizes the particularity of individual vision and that views the self and work as one. It is a view that takes as central the task of 'making the unknown known' through the creation of form" (p. 71).

"It becomes desirable," then comments Krieger, "to structure a description in terms of the emotional content of an experience. The result is a relatively open form that looks more like a mosaic than a linear progression and that communicates on an emotional level rather then as a neat intellectual package" (p. 51). It asks us to accept the possibility of research activity as creative practice. The art of research is in the reorganizing of experience so that it can be perceived in a new way.

A phenomenon animates us, calls to us to respond. We respond through and in our bodies for "it is through our bodies that we communicate with the things and persons around us" (O'Neill, 1989, p. 8-9). We return to our bodies to recover a sense of who we are, of what the core of our being is (Artaud, 1958). As Richard Courtney notes (Booth and Martin-Smith, 1988):

> Knowledge is gained primarily by and through the body. There is a "incarnate" character to such knowledge. Although it is gained through embodiment, it is not quite that mind "embodies" the action. Rather, the body attends to knowledge through itself. (p. 155)

As a performance artist, my artistic practice provides a way for me to come to this embodied knowing, to learning and experiencing. It enables me to recover and enact "being" (Vattimo, 1988, p. 66) constantly through the activities of my life. It is a passionate enterprise, and by choosing to name myself as "academic as artist," I hope to uncover for myself the art of/in research.

BAAWA, as a phenomenon, potentially holds meanings which can be revealed through honouring their/our process of making and researching through art. Dorothy Heathcote (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984) comments:

> (T)he arts isolate a factor of human experience. They particularize something to bring it to our attention... They use life and understanding of life, but they make you examine it through a particular moment of life... [A]rt has to isolate. And because it does this, it distorts... Therefore you do not see the whole, you only see a part

> through this distorted view, this particularization. As soon as you get distortion, you get the struggle for form...
>
> So, in art, you have: isolation of the human condition, particularization, distortion, and forming so that you may contemplate it. It is given shape to synthesize the importance of the distortion. (p. 114)

In order to acknowledge this art process, and particularly mine as a performance artist, I have chosen to pursue this study from a phenomenological perspective.

I intend to locate occasions or experiences in/for learning and research as modalities, immerse myself in each, dislocate and reflect on each modality within the context of my present activities and relocate this movement in/as learning.

"Both art and phenomenological inquiry strive to communicate what is primary within [an] experience." (Willis, 1991, p. 176).

> Since phenomenological inquiry is at heart an artistic process its only successful practitioners... have been those who have perceived something ... valuable about their own or others' life-worlds and who have exemplified their perceptions well in a creative medium which has permitted other individuals to experience them in their own ways. (Willis, 1991, p. 178)

This is the way I intend to proceed.

This research is an enactment of being through an understanding of the potential of creative academic practice. It is practical, passionate and intuitive. As an arts research activity, it includes both the "doing" mode of exploration and discovery and the "reflecting" mode of formation. As I move between these different modes, and between my own complementary perspectives of artist, educator and academic, I locate the movement of the re-search.

The various "enactments" revealed by, and created through, this inquiry relate dialogically. I use the notion of "dialogic" -- "not a seamless system but a temporal relationship of utterances" (Glazener, 1989, p. 116) -- to locate the ongoing inquiry. Envisioning the enactments as

complementary is also useful here. It locates a paradoxical relationship of difference and connectedness, of the creative and the critical, of the practical and the sensual. Such a conceptualization leads to more critical, exploratory, or complex interpretations (Marino, 1997, p. 47).

Progress is revealed, in the thesis, through the creation and specific uses of the academic and artistic forms.

Understanding Research as Learning in Process

To know, we as learners bring our bodies kinesthetically, emotionally, mindfully, sensually to the act of interpreting, (Bell, 1993). And in this action, we retain, record, retell, and historicize our learning (Griffin, 1987). Its ordering is not just linear or processual. In fact, there are many ways of learning and of recording this learning. We make sense of the world collaboratively, and each of us has different experiences. Peshkin (in Eisner, 1991) points to the fact that we also have many "selves". This has two results: who we are at any one time depends on the situation in which we find ourselves, and we are able to see a situation from several points of view. "Taking various perspectives is a way of examining situations from different angles. It allows us to be open to many learning experiences and to have a sense of self that is versatile, eclectic and mutable," (Eisner, 1991) and to be flexible and open with others. I suggest that we need to acquire a dynamic, plural, embodied understanding of the artistic process in relationship to others across multiple contexts (Clandinin, 1985; Noddings, 1984; Hollingsworth, Dybdahl & Minarek, 1993). This introduces the concept of relational knowing — a continual fluid questioning that leads to growth. We are active participants in our learning (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) and, as a result, have the opportunity to choose and hence frame our own experiences. We create our own knowledge (Pinar, 1978). bell

hooks (in Garber & Gaudelius, 1992) sees this choice as a basis for change (p.7). Through understanding and choosing our multiple experiences, we can begin to articulate and name how they will affect us (Garber & Gaudelius, 1992, p.7). Interpretation can then "be an act that transforms...the world... and the interpreter as well" (Grumet, 1988, p.146).

As artists, we may return again to the same problems. In our approach, we may, at times, be methodical, at times lyrical. But as we continue to look, to weave back and inward again and again, we come to a richer colouring, a deeper understanding, another perspective.

I use my perception of self and of learning process as a central organizing focus in looking into the ways I have learned and continue to learn, given the opportunity to self direct and to structure my own progress with the support, dialogue and critique of other women artists.

While I do not believe this process need be gender specific, I do believe that experience is gendered and for women problematic. Social codes and expectations can affect and limit them. Yet many women choose to resist this shaping and view themselves, their practices, their experiences as varied and different. This action happens, is experienced, in their bodies, at the "very site of the rules and etiquette which define them as a woman" (Bell, 1993, p. 22).

> (The) recognition of one's perception of the world as something at once unique, shared and different is the principal lesson I have learned from being part of the process of changing consciousness of women of my generation. The final result of a process of comparison is never likely to be the clarification of absolutes, but rather perception of the greater complexity of the web of problems that surround each individual and a recognition by the individual of where she stands in the web. (Bassnet in Bonner et al, 1992, p.10).

What informs an individual's and this thesis's progress, are notions of self, community, and activity as each relates to learning.

I support Susan Krieger's (1991) arguing "for a view of the self as a central organizing

mechanism within each individual that is experienced, to some extent, as unique" (p. 44). This notion speaks to women's desire to determine the directions for their own arts learning and creative practices. Women want to authorize "their own perspective[s] on experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). In the act of giving form to their experiences, they consider the meaning of the individual and social dynamics shaping their lives. From discrete experiences, they construct themselves and make an account, through interpretive acts, of the shape of their knowing (Personal Narrative Group, 1989, p.4).

I view community as dynamic-in-relation. This includes Griselda Pollack's concept of a "conversational community." It is an idea not foreign to women artists and certainly not to BAAWA women. Pollack (1986) notes that the feminist struggle has been a "collective one composed of distinct persons with particular and heterogenous ends and means " (p. 28). These "conversational communities" then offer "points of recognition, identification and indeed, competition through which women can locate themselves and develop related practices" (p. 28). A concept for such sites would have as its goal the development and perpetuation of a community which, while working toward communal action, does so without marginalizing or suppressing the uniqueness of others. (Young, 1990, p. 320). Community creates events/occasions for enacting the arts-learning process. It can facilitate the opportunity for transformative experiences which can be profoundly communal and shared (Turner, 1977, p.138).

The way I view activity relates to arts learning. In the arts, Courtney (Booth and Martin-Smith, 1988) comments that internal imaginative activity either becomes external dramatic activity, or is formed onto or into specific media (p. 105-106).

How this learning proceeds depends on how well we can create and sustain a safe, playful,

trusting space in which to learn and work. The desire is to produce, from this place, artistic and academic work which has both formal unity and subjective content. It is a work which relates to the particular history of each artist or learner and is representative of a self in relation to others, which complements - is both independent of, and yet merged with, a group.

Clarifying the Research as Event(s)

The subject matter of this thesis is women's self-education in the visual arts in and through an association with a women's art community, the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA). This inquiry focuses on uncovering the complex learning process that has been integral for BAAWA members. I intend to enact this learning through the process of writing this inquiry in the role of self-as-inquirer/learner. This will allow me to animate learning through my passion for feminist practice, and for the process of arts making and doing. My desire is to offer an understanding of women's self education in the arts generated through the context of an active/reflective phenomenological inquiry. As phenomenology is "the form of interpretive inquiry that comes closest to artistic inquiry," (Willis, 1991, p. 173) it brings me closer to what is primary in the arts learning experience: "Human learning... involves an ongoing cyclical relationship among the processes of perceiving, thinking and acting in which [the] deepening and refining of one's process helps further define and deepen the others" (Willis, 1991, p. 174).

The problematic for this thesis is always evolving and moving. It is lodged in an interpretive process of uncovering layers of meaning and is initially defined as: How can I, through an interpretive critical and creative process, uncover the nature of my learning in and through a community? By looking at my perception of our activities and exhibitions, and by my participating in these activities, how can I locate BAAWA and informal groupings like BAAWA as potentially

fruitful places for re-conceptualizing/re-searching learning for women in/through the arts?

A series of questions relate to this problematic:

What is meant by an interpretive study of learning in a women's art community?

Can certain forms circumscribe or inform certain interpretations?

Can such an artist's process facilitate and re-conceptualize art education research?

How do forms describe certain occasions, events, relationships and occurrences?

How does the researcher clarify and grasp the practical, specific and yet enigmatic qualities of what makes each learning situation unique?

Can academic forms complement and speak to/with the artistic?

How is this learning research?

These questions move with the analysis and with the continuing re/conceptualization of the interpretation. The evolving series of modalities and interpretations respect different forms or media. In choosing to do this, I acknowledge the diversity of ideas, people, and practices in groups like BAAWA and in the arts and education, and how such diversity contributes to a complexity and richness of meaning. By choosing to present more than one modality and frame each with present perspectives, I preserve a way of recording how interpretations develop and learnings are achieved. I also show how, moving through a series of interpretations over time, I permit the inclusion of what has been learned and formed as the basis for future learning.

Each interpretation of a modality represents a partial understanding. Research then becomes formally incomplete, for to end it with stated conclusions defeats the notion of ongoing learning and the lifelong process of an arts making/research practice.

To engage with such research, the reader must accept a research which is convoluted,

processual, emergent (Courtney, 1992, Grumet, 1981). He/she must also accept a definition of knowledge formed through the body, unfolded through doing and reflecting, responsive to an individual's striving to enact being and rooted in everyday life and ongoing experiences (Aptheker, 1989). This is a knowledge revealed in language and image, sometimes in a silence that speaks without words.

Locating Self and/in Research

My research is intentionally addressed to those in arts research and education.

While BAAWA is primarily a group made by and for women artists, it sees itself as actively engaged with the larger pluralistic community. Its internal activities relate to the larger community. So have mine.

I locate myself in this research as a practitioner of BAAWA processes and, as such, I expect that the inquiry will be representative of the fluctuating forms of BAAWA discussions, dialogues, chats, conversations, writings and visual images. I expect it to resonate with my process as inquirer/learner. I intend to enact and reflect on the formal, visual and dramatic processes/ presentations that are integral to the BAAWA learning and relate them in "conversation" to my own rigorous academic search using various modalities that are accessible to a pluralistic audience.

Hypothesizing Research as Learning and Curriculum

I suggest that the conversations in and through these modalities may expose a different understanding of the learning possible for women in self-directed arts educational communities and partnerships (Patterson, 1996). I further suggest that such conversations may, in their re-telling and re-framing, conceptualize, contextualize and locate a multiple learning through multiple voices in and through the body of a researcher/learner as curriculum, within the form of a thesis.

Framing Research as Academic

I offer these different modalities and the interpretive voice that animates them as a way to mark my learning process and my shifting orientations to BAAWA over time. These voice speaks of my growing understandings of education informed and influenced by my study(ies) of feminism(s), the arts, and embodied academic learning.

What I will present will be, in part, a feminist academic inquiry, and will also grow from a relationship in and through the arts which is particular (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984), and yet potentially complex and pluralistic (Booth & Martin-Smith, 1988). The research will be activated from (inter)action with ideas on knowledge as personal, practical (Dewey, 1938) and embodied (Johnson, 1989), as processual, emergent and contextual (Courtney, 1992), and as dialectic (Silvers, 1986, p. 27) and discursively produced (Darroch and Silvers, 1982, p. 45).

Limiting the Research

This study is limited to research events created with a core group of six members (including me) in BAAWA, one specific feminist art educational community in regional Ontario, and to the past and present extended partnerships these members have formed in other contexts. The research is limited in scope due to BAAWA's specific contexts and the culture, age and gender of its members. It is further limited by my use of specific research texts for interpretation.

But these limitations may, rather than constricting the search, act as art does (Heathcote as cited in Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 114). By choosing specific experiences, and distorting them through the "fiction" inherent in any reflection, re-storying or research practice, I may allow new perceptions to emerge.

Forming the Research

My intention is to present various modalities which identify my past research activities: a literature study, a participant research study presented as a notated performance script, and a visual exhibition. The framing activity involves the interplay of these three modalities in a dynamic academic artistic form. These modalities speak to and through each other in a complementary and dialogic relationship through the metatext of the present artistic process of learning and practice as storied by the inquirer/learner. This interplay gives dynamic form to my differing, and yet related, processes as academic, actor/teacher, and visual artist. Self-as-reflective inquirer/learner acts as animateur. She activates these modalities, creating new texts, images, sensations and interpretations.

Modalities

The first modality is a conventional literature study of feminist art educational communities. It locates and frames BAAWA within the existing structures historically and theoretically. Research on feminist efforts to create their own environments for art education is a "much neglected area" (Bunch & Pollack, 1983, p. xiii). However, various discussions have surfaced in recent years which deal with feminism's contribution to art education. These include: its impact on a discipline-based art education (Huber, 1987); its relevance to multi-cultural education (Zimmerman, 1990); the use of its educational method or pedagogy in arts education (Dosser, 1990; Sandell, 1991); and the impact of its criticism, aesthetics, and art history on art education (Hagaman, 1990; Garber, 1992, 1990). Even in the field, it is acknowledged that we need to extend our perceptions of art education (Chalmers, 1987) and learn from each other's various, shifting and, at times, opposing positions (McFee, 1991). This modality locates self-as-gatherer/compiler.

The second modality is a participant research study written in the form of a notated theatrical performance script. It describes and reveals, using ethnographic research practices, the BAAWA process in active poetic/academic form. The poetic script speaks of the dynamic interacting and gesture of dramatic expression - the "doing," the "acting" of BAAWA. It is this aspect of the modality that honours a unique and active self, that intertwines the inner experiences of the self with the phenomenon, and permits writing in a manner which acknowledges the dynamic creative process of the group-as-culture.

The notations establishes BAAWA through interviews, conversations and discussions and locates and frames BAAWA learning within a practical concrete structure. I note in this portion of the text significant ways that BAAWA women educate themselves in and through their art practice in their community. I examine how this community provides a necessary, significant and valuable context to learning and attend to the various strategies, pedagogies and principles that these women use to educate themselves and others. I also record their particular experiences which affect and inform their education. This modality indicates self-as-gatherer/ researcher/experimenter/presenter.

The third modality is an exhibition. It honours the context in which most BAAWA educational pursuits take place. Feeling, looking and sensing are key activities here for the viewer and the participant, for the modality is in visual form. It represents the vigorous shifting and shaping of thought, ideas and aesthetics into form inherent in artistic practice. This modality reflects self-as--artist.

Complementarity in conversation, the framing text, reinterprets these three modes as/through the reflective voice of the inquirer/ learner. This voice looks deeper, questions further and draws connections. It reflects on and links the various occasions of research in order to bring together the

passionate, the personal, and the pleasurable aspects of the arts with the rigour, the clarity, the critique and the insights of the academy. It creates and directs the movement of interpretation which cycles closer to an understanding of women's art education and arts educational research. It is an embodied research practice.

In the text of the thesis, the modalities will be in plain text, the inquirer/learner's reflective text will be in italic. Chapter One introduces the voice and intentions of the inquirer/learner.

One

The brain and the womb are both centres of consciousness, equally important.
H. Doolittle, Thought and Vision

In this chapter, I orient myself through the voice of inquirer/learner as a woman and performance artist. I become embodied by establishing my presence as narrator and through a reflection on my practice as artist, educator, and academic. My intention is to locate a representation of experience as multi-dimensional phenomenological text. I report on my current activities at the This Decade of Days opening; and with Leena in the development of "Fragments", a multi-media performance work. I also outline my intentions for this research and introduce the first modality, a literature study of feminist art education communities.

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I sit to write. I am tired. I am menstruating. My back aches. My hands, worn and rough, reflect the middle-aged body of a woman. My fingers pause, unable to strike the keys as I am now disabled since beginning this academic process. But I intend to "write", to record an exploration of my learning process. Images wash over me. This initial spontaneous encounter becomes more reflective. "Must self-knowledge serve something other than itself?" As I begin to write, to respond to experiences, I sense a formative process at work, at once intellectual and emotional, conscious and unconscious, objective and deeply personal.

John Dewey wrote that learning is the "representation of experience". I understand from this, as I reflect upon my experience and glean information from this process of retelling, that learning will take place. It gives me a delightful sense of a "dialectic wholeness of theory and practice" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1991). This phenomenological text directly reflects my experience and yet is theoretical in its shaping of my education.

•

I enter into this phenomenon of educational experience. As I write, I see shifting before me

patterns of my learning.

I think of the narrative modes which, with great complexity, map the various learning occasions over the last few years. As I begin this reflecting, I recall the words of Emily Carr, a Canadian painter, as she speaks in my dramatic work, "Emily Speaks":

> *To compose a picture, I have to first get an idea. I tighten the idea into a definite plan, take it through the sketch, find the threads, loose them and pick them up again and again until I don't see the threads anymore -- only the tightly woven fabric.*
>
> *It seems to me too that a picture is an on-the-way sort of thing, not something caught and static, frozen in its tracks. Oh, to have complete control of material and technique so that the thoughts could flow through. Now, wouldn't that be lovely?*

I, like Emily, feel the frustration of not always having the control of various techniques to define my learning in language that is both revealing and yet specific. It is a frustration I feel as an academic, an educator and an artist. And yet, I know that if the time should come that my various practices could be easily defined, I would feel "caught and... frozen" in my tracks.

I begin to loose the threads and to find them, reforming and remapping my occasions for learning at this point in time. The writing is non-linear, complex, convoluted, and yet I trust that patterns will emerge.

I listen again to Emily:

> *Slowly things begin to move, to fall into their places. Groups, masses and lines tie themselves together. Nothing is crowded, nothing is still. But I've got to find that direction. Yes, that's what I'm after. Everything moving together, connected movement, sympathetic movement, liquid flowing movement, all directions summed up in one grand direction. But I've got to find the direction so that the whole damn structure rocks together instead of wobbling like a bowl of jelly.*

I feel that in writing this work, I am trying to find that grand direction. I finish reworking

"Emily Speaks" in preparation for a performance I am giving at the Art Gallery of Ontario (Nov., 1999). My creative partner, Leena, is present and at this event we begin a discussion, the process of making a new project, "Fragments," that will occupy much of our time over the next few months. Fortunately we have almost twenty years of professional activity as friends and as artists and that informs our work and establishes a context. So far our activity has not coalesced into some grand direction. But there are hints, and it is to these I look.

*

We began our movement into this new performance art work through a discussion of, and an acknowledgement of, our process. We trace the years of our history, working together on theatrical pieces such as "Entrapment" to the multimedia/installation performances "Attending the Interior", "Attending II", "Detale(detail)," and "Crossing the Street". I am struck, as we view the video of our last performance work, by the comments that Leena makes to the audience about how process and our use of process are so integral to our practice. We decide to make this "process" more visible as "performance" this time, to tape our discussions, to create a meta-context with which to view and frame the work. This becomes the conceptual core, the basis of the new work. It captures us and moves us forward. The subject matter is the objects and actions that have created the moving images in our past work. The new approach becomes a fresh way for us to reframe our 'texts' to pull our history in snatches, in threads into the present, and theoretically grasp it in terms of process and learning.

*

I have always been curious about the relationship between process and movement and the finished form or text. When I talk about texts, I see "text" as the way of framing my response to, or

my interpretation of, experience. Ronald Silvers (1986) illuminates this point when he writes: "An ontological hermeneutic begins with an existential stirring within the researcher's biography, a stirring amplified by meaning as it is shared with others in discourse" (p.27). He adds:

> *[T]he existential responsibility for authorship of a research text is secured through a reflective discourse, that is a discourse which constantly turns upon itself to discover the tacit understandings of what is its spoken and written words. Interpretive knowledge is dialectical, offering descriptions of transfigurations in the researcher's understanding of self and the subject of appearance. (27)*

The three text modalities to be used here record occasions of my learning. They are moments of rest and, perhaps, reflection in this movement of learning. A "text" is for me is a still moment. Once I see the text forming, I enter a phase where generally I feel content, where I esteem myself. Marion Pitters (1983) refers to certain moments as these in "Wanna Come in and Play?" She talks about her own experiences of contentment and self-esteem, and notes them as places where play can then be generated. So too, when I rest at those points of pause and feel comfortable, play becomes possible, and then I move on again. So how can I recognise and attend to these pauses, and then use them to deepen my own learning alone or with others?

One way, I think, is in acknowledging the value different situations have in providing different learnings. These texts I generate, or pauses I understand, are not on a linear continuum. To echo Schon (in Brundage & Albert, 1986), "Neither learning nor professional practice are linear processes. They do not take place exclusively in a straight line" (p.3). They are alternate and equally valuable places where differing perspectives on a phenomenon become possible; while they may respond to each other at times, the connection may not always be easily discernable.

The phenomenon I am drawn to look at is usually one which has captured me. As I inquire, I have reflected back to me deeply felt aspects and needs that relate to what I have a compulsion

to learn in my life. As I shift my learning contexts, pausing and playing as I go, I come to an understanding of this phenomenon in new and different ways.

This particular occasion for learning has been enacted through many of the traditional academic rituals. I have read and responded to various texts. I have played with/paused on various written documents. These documents have been not only other papers, articles, and books, but also transcripts of conversations with learning partners in and outside of BAAWA. I have had to proceed slowly and with care, for in each instance along the way my own limited physical capabilities have forced me to stop, to pause and reflect. Even now, in composing this, the pain in my hand, the anxiety in my heart asks me to pause, to reflect, to alter. That too is part of how I learn.

I choose to acknowledge the partnership with my co-director of Artifacts, Leena Raudvee, as that which frames the occasion for this thesis. I am not alone; the context of a performance project and of my relationship to my friend, co-learner and fellow artist has provided me with the "occasion" to learn. And it is through this particular occasion that I frame an understanding of learning partnerships - both here and from my association with BAAWA. Leena has encouraged me to attend to all aspects of my learning - the physical, the emotional, and the intellectual - being ever mindful of how each interconnects to, or disrupts, the other.

When I enter into such a partnership, it gives my learning process a richer context. I tend to seek partnerships that connect for me with my own learning needs. My contexts change as my learning needs change, and as I grow, I come to a clearer understanding of what for me are positive learning relationships.

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Leena and I travel to the Burlington Art Centre where we are part of an exhibit, <u>This Decade</u>

of Days. This exhibit curated by BAAWA's founder Jane Gordon opens the day before the 10th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. It's intention is to mark this day, to honour and commemorate women's activities in collectives and especially in BAAWA. A website and publication are planned and present are 31 artists representing seven collectives: The Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA), Hamilton; Side By Each Collective, Niagara Peninsula; Circle Collective, Midland; Forest Fires Collective, Parry Sound; Capital Women's Artist Collective, Ottawa; Artists to the City, Scarborough; Women's Art Association of Hamilton.

This exhibit, writes Jane Gordon (1999),

> *marks a long-term program to create healing and progressive building of networks, power and connections. [It does this] by looking to women's belief in their own agency, their strategies applied to healing, their tactics applied to culture and their ambitions for artists and social groups (p. 2).*

The exhibit is ambitious, rich and complex. It represents a sketch, made from the threads of each of the Ontario women's collectives represented here at the Burlington Arts Centre.

I entwine these threads with those that I first discovered in my search through the international and national literature on women's art collectives, feminist education in the arts, and feminist separate art communities. The first modality, a literature study, resonates with this exhibit's texts. I have read how women in other North American communities have carved out their own art education just as I now read how each woman in each of these local collectives identifies their separate communities as different but similar, providing for them a focus for their learning and practice.

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My focus for the literature study has been in the margins outside the mainstream classrooms

in separate feminist art educational communities. My hope was that a study of such places would disclose innovative pedagogical practices and promote a productive discussion of these practices in extended groupings and in the art education field as a whole.

How could I form a theoretical perspective to inform my search? I found it useful to look to the theoretical concepts of Paulo Freire (c. 1970) for guidance. While Freire focuses his analysis on considerations of class rather than gender, he locates in his research a process that can ground the study of the feminist pedagogical practices of these feminist art communities and collectives.

Four tenets of Freire's were of interest:

1. Serious self-reflection and re-examination are part of the ongoing learning process.

2. Critical and liberating dialogue must be encouraged. This dialogue allows the individuals to challenge the cultural assumptions behind habituated ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling and behaving.

3. Alternative perspectives are explored that expose different value systems and ways of seeing. Critical reflexivity is fostered as these new perspectives are applied to one's own life and work. This insight leads to action.

4. Learning is not just of the intellect, but is an emotional and aesthetic experience as well.

Freire's work sits alongside other theories on libratory education. Some, like Carolyn Shrewsbury (1987), identify their educational theories as feminist. Feminist learning practices, like those of Freire, are committed to personal growth and social action. A feminist education is a "connected learning" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1985), as in Freire's "problem-posing" class, in which students construct knowledge together and actively nurture each other's ideas. Shrewsbury, however, notes an important difference. Feminist learning, she writes,

"recognises the genderedness of all social relations and consequently of all societal institutions and structures" (p. 7). It is a theory of feminist pedagogy, with other aspects of libratory education, which provided a focus, a starting place, a first occasion for this arts educational inquiry.

*

I locate gender as a significant consideration for women engaged in the learning in these communities. I do not discard the valuable research of other arts educators but rather I choose, excited by the theoretical concepts of feminist pedagogy, to explore this one small part of the arts education field.

When I began this particular inquiry, I gathered scraps of tales, text, and journals. I spent a few months meeting and talking with the members of a women's art community - the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA). We talked, had tea, visited studios, exchanged writing and had, at times, heated discussions.

I began to write. I wrote, in journal form, of my own search in alternative settings for a personally relevant art education. I then reviewed the literature. I read documents, texts, and art and academic journals, on feminist art education and specifically separate feminist art educational communities. In the following literature study, I look to how other groups, other communities, other women have grappled with defining their own art education. I reached into the academy as BAAWA has into the mainstream art community, to learn its language and engage in dialogue with it.

"A Literature Study: Why a Separate Feminist Art Education?" is an in-depth research into the literature on feminist separatist art educational communities. It serves to draw attention to the lack of research in this area and identifies, defines and coalesces the available material. It marks

the first mode of my learning process. I take on the role of compiler as I grasp an idea, loose the threads, then draw them in. It is a pause that facilitates the beginning of my progress toward BAAWA.

Two

A Literature Study: Why a Separate Feminist Art Education?

In the 1960's and 1970's, women in the West struggled to articulate and to grapple in new ways with their genuine experiences of oppression. Dynamic consciousness-raising groups evolved into active and demanding feminist collectives. Some of these were destined to remain as visible and articulate presences in society. Some found their creative and political voice through feminist art. In fact, it is hard to think of the feminist movement without art.

Art was acknowledged as a viable vehicle for influencing women's emancipation. "Art is made in a political environment," states Lesley Saunders (1987, p. 3). It is not simply a private therapy or secret indulgence. The challenge for feminists, then, became to find a content and, in some instances, a form that would give voice both to revealing women's lost culture and to deconstructing society's representation of women (Lippard, 1976). Feminist art was to put into question traditional art assumptions. It directed a research and created a practice that were to engage women's emotions, senses and thought for years. It became a focus of much rediscovery.

Feminist art practice became a focal learning process for many women - either to educate themselves as artists through feminism, or to educate others about feminism through their art. It was hoped that feminist art would prove to be representative of a different set of values, not simply a trend which when once absorbed into the art world would be viewed simply as a new stylistic movement (Lippard, 1976, p. 10).

While some might see the feminist art movement, as an educational force, or as irrelevant to mainstream arts education (Black, 1992), it was and, to a certain extent, still is understood by others as a valuable area of study (Sandell, 1979). By looking closely at the events of the feminist art movement and the practices of feminist art education, some have discovered key insights. A foundation for a curriculum for feminist art education, influenced by this movement, is being

established for mainstream use (Collins & Sandell, 1984; Hicks, 1992).

The various discussions that have surfaced in recent years dealing with feminism's contribution to art education include: its impact on a discipline-based arts education (Huber, 1987); its relevance to multicultural education (Zimmerman, 1990); the use of its educational method or pedagogy in arts education (Dossor, 1990; Sandell, 1991); and the impact of its criticism, aesthetics or art history on art education (Hagaman, 1990; Garber, 1992, 1990). Even in the field, it is acknowledged that, as researchers, we need to extend our perceptions of art education (Chalmers, 1987) and learn from each other's various shifting and at times opposing positions (McFee, 1991). Feminist art education is part of that expanding field.

Given the intense social, political and cultural readjustments that rock our world and reverberate through our art classrooms, we also need to pay attention not just to the developments in mainstream art education, but also to clues in the borderlands for guidance in the future. I intend, in this literature study, to discuss the practices and processes of alternative feminist art communities. A review of some of the literature on women, art and education will provide background in art education for women. I will then define feminist art education and examine the, at times, necessary separatist stance. Feminist art groups will then be discussed in terms of one feminist ideal of community, and their processes and practices will be explored within their larger political mandates.

My intention is to look into the "much neglected area" (Bunch & Pollack, 1983, p. xiii) of feminist efforts to create their own environments for art education. Alternative structures tend to make priorities of attending to their process and survival. This not only reflects an ongoing commitment to self-evaluation, but also their need to maintain a responsive and flexible educational environment.

Feminist alternatives, as Bunch and Pollack (1983) note, can be unstable, are often unable to reach women beyond feminist circles, and tend to exhaust the energies of their organizers (p. xiv). However, in "creating alternatives we build on our past as we learn from previous experiences" (p. xiv) and feminist art groups do continue to function. One Canadian community, Manitoba Artists for Women's Art, has been together for more than a decade and has become a useful model for others.

A Feminine or Feminist Education

Why study feminist art education and, specifically, separate feminist art alternatives? For those of us who are arts or art education advocates, such a study can be fruitful in improving the arts' status in North American society. In the process of attempting to emancipate women, these feminist art groups have been challenging not only the art world's valuing of women, but also society's valuing of art. The complex interweaving of stereotypes associated with art, women and the feminine needs to be unravelled and fully exposed so that neither women nor their art are devalued (Collins, 1979/80; Garrard, 1976). The forms in which this challenge takes place vary, and the debates are complex and heated. But the goal in the feminist community seems consistent: reject the reductionism of the term "feminine" as applied to women and art, and alter the term to "feminist", signifying an active, willed, politicized connection between gender and art (Collins, 1981).

The term feminine has been generally associated with women's character, used "to denigrate it or to mould it" (Collins, 1981, p. 85), the characteristics taken to be "passivity, dependence, delicacy, ineffectualness and a lack of seriousness and commitment.... [It has been used] negatively to characterize the female artist and her work... [and at times as] a punitive label attached to the

nonconforming male artist and his work" (p. 84-85).

While the larger society views art as a feminine pursuit or frill (McCaughey, 1988), the art community is largely dominated by males. Mary Garrard (1976) claims that male artists "seeking to escape the stigma of feminization" (p. 326) have organised the art world to their own advantage. It would then seem that "[t]he skills, attitudes, and behaviours traditionally associated with the female seem to be incompatible with the skills, attitudes, and behaviours traditionally associated with status both within this society and in fields such as the visual arts" (Collins, 1979/80, p. 62).

An argument in support of a feminist intervention in this debate would have at its core the acceptance of gender as "a factor in art production and response" (Collins, 1981, p. 86). Such a position exploits a feminist practice in art production and promotes the search for active, critical, alternative approaches to reform in the art world and in education.

The art educator who looks to feminist art groups as sources for potential reevaluation and redefinition of the feminine could increase the "human and social value of femininity along with increasing its [the feminine's] relevance and value in art" (Collins, 1979/80, p. 63). This study could be seen, as Collins suggests, as a shared concern for art and women. A study of feminist art education and feminist art communities could also inform the curriculum content and pedagogies for a more inclusive and expansive art education for the myriad of students that now occupy our classrooms.

Art Education for Women: A Context for Separatism

Linda Nochlin asked in 1971, "Why have there been no great women artists?". In doing so she initiated what was to become a continuing process of reexamining and reevaluating women's art education. She first unpacked the long-held myth of the male artistic genius - the artist who is

born, not made - and then looked to the various factors that guarantee artistic success. She felt that the lack of success for women artists through history has been a fault, not of their biology, but rather of our institutions.

Traditionally, women have been denied certain art training and professional opportunities. These have included access to nude models, art academies, apprenticeships and competitions. It is surprising that, given these obstacles, women have been able to succeed at all (Parker & Pollack, 1981; Greer, 1979). Not only were they unable in many instances to learn fully the language of art, but there were other less obvious societal pressures that made it difficult for them. Unlike male artists, they had few patrons, informal networks or opportunities to gain the necessary self-confidence and worldly knowledge for success.

But what, asks Adrienne Rich (1977, 1985), do women need to know? It is, she replies, an "ignorance of ourselves [which] has been the key to our powerlessness" (1985, p. 24). So to first reclaim the "creative work of women of the past, the skills and crafts and techniques and powers exercised by women in different times and cultures, a knowledge of women's rebellions and organised movements against... oppression and how they have been routed or diminished" (p. 24) was seen by some, such as Rich and Judy Chicago (1977, 1979), as first on the agenda. The standard university or art school curriculum did not address these issues for women. Nor have many mainstream classrooms yet shifted their methodology to provide a content in, and quality to, their teaching that affirms women's lives.

Lucy Lippard wrote in 1976 of the horror stories women told of their experiences in American art schools:

Grisly tales of maltreatment and inhumanity emerged... including those from art-

> school students whose professors classically discouraged them by historical and sexual denigration. This treatment was even handed out by well-meaning men so conditioned that it never occurred to them that they were making it impossible for many women to continue working. (p. 44)

The situation for women art students in contemporary schools has changed little (Sligh, 1990). Subtle intimidations, censure, discriminatory practices, sexual harassment are all recorded acts against women art students that indicate that, for their very survival, women may need to have their work and their lives legitimized elsewhere. It is difficult enough to break silences, to name ourselves. But it becomes even more demanding to think critically as a woman, in a man's world.

Griselda Pollack (1986) and Val Walsh (1990) analyse this situation for women art students and specifically for those attempting to build an active feminist practice. They both recognise the web of issues surrounding this situation.

Since Nochlin's first statement, a feminist epistemology of women's socialization has developed through growing discussion and debate. Contemporary feminist thought has come to see women's relations to power and institutions as something more complex. Laurie Hicks (1990) writes of power as "power-within [which] is conceptualized in terms of institutionalized relations in which we exist and have our place.... Power in this view, is a product of dynamic relations between human beings" (p. 41). For a woman to be empowered in her art education means that, while she should have access to the technical skills and knowledge of mainstream education, she should also have access to the skills to enable her to understand and critically assess "the contextual background of art production and interaction" (p. 45), to be able to understand how power operates in the mainstream art community, and have an opportunity to explore the development of personal power through different educational relationships. "The ideal is [an education and] a society in which

diversity, particularity and context are understood and valued" (p. 45).

While feminist art may still celebrate the culture of women, it can also reveal it in a new light by employing specific strategies. These "strategic practices," notes Pollack (1986), require "defending the specificity of women's experience while refuting the meaning given them as features of woman's natural and inevitable condition.... It is focused particularly around issues of representation and sexuality" (p. 28). Some feminist artists who engage in this specific feminist art practice rigorously revise their particular and personal experiences. The art then becomes a pedagogy - it produces knowledge. It provides an active place for the viewer to understand not just the "private circumstances of the work's producer, but... the social conditions within which that aspect of a woman's life intersects with aspects and concerns of other women's lives" (p. 29).

A great deal of feminist literature in the visual arts is focused on examining these strategic practices and the cultural products that result (Kent & Morreau, 1985; Wolff, 1990; Parker & Pollack, 1987; Pollack, 1988; Kelly, 1983; Chadwick, 1990). While such art may be recognised in the writings of feminist historians or critics, a student or faculty member who takes such a critical stance into an art school can do more then just irritate the established male staff. She can threaten, not only by virtue of her gender alone, but also through her art practice, the dominant modernist paradigms of art and artist (Pollack, 1986, p. 27). Art schools, while they allow self-expression and individualism, generally do not encourage or provide opportunities for students to challenge their very structures.

Feminist Art Education and Separatism

"Feminist art education is conceptually, as well as literally, a hybrid between feminism taken as an ideology and the theory and practice of art education," (Sandell, 1979, p. 18). Rene Sandell

defines feminist art education as formal attempts in which "instruction on issues and topics relevant to feminism [take] place in formal classroom and alternative learning environments" (p. 25). She and Georgia Collins (1984) map a large field for feminist art education which includes studies in: feminist art studio, art history and art criticism, feminist arts education and feminist issues in the arts. These programs can be found in, or developed for, women's studies programs, art schools, universities, teachers' colleges, and for women's co-operatives and communities. Collins and Sandell, while acknowledging the various educational efforts of the women's art movement (i.e. Sandell, 1979), are mainly interested in locating feminist art education's relevance to mainstream education. As a result, they give more attention to curriculum for formal institutions than for less formal ones. I think it of interest, for the purpose of this discussion, to look again to the (perhaps) more unusual places where feminist art education is taking place.

My concern is for the attempts, predominately by feminists, feminist artists, or feminist artists/curators/educators, to form alternative, separate spaces for feminist art education. This focuses my discussion on groups or alternative institutions which attempt to be separate, are concerned with personal education, and are self-constructed. I believe that a study of these spaces can take us closer to understanding what women want and need in their art education.

"Separatist approaches to feminist art education," according to Collins (1981), "are characterized by efforts to establish a separate women's art community with values, institutional structures, standards" (p. 88) more "consistent with women's common and distinct experience and immediate needs for power and responsibility" (p. 87). While, Collins continues, separatism sets out to redefine women's relationship to art and to redefine art to be compatible with women's experiences and needs, certain characteristics associated with the feminine sensibility are rejected

as false; these being a lack of seriousness, and a notion of inferiority (p. 88-89). "Separation is initiated and maintained, at will, by women" (Marilyn Frye in Raymond, 1985, p. 52). It is an active intervention.

Until women are no longer alienated by the "white male system" (Schaef, 1981) feminist separatism in arts education will on some level be necessary. As Janice Raymond (1985) states, "[a]n independent program that is truly woman-centred in its content and method will at the very least assert that women's traditions and knowledge will not be integrated out of existence" (p. 53). It is unlikely that the traditional methodology and discipline content in mainstream arts education will adopt a more woman-centred direction until alternative communities not only become strong enough to make an impact, but also are encouraged by the educators within the traditional institutional walls to engage them in a productive dialogue.

Judy Chicago wrote in 1977 that "women in the arts, the professions, the academies, blinded by the illusion of equality, are just beginning to grasp how profoundly alienated women and men really are" (p. 129). She saw this alienation as a result of a cultural gap between the private sphere of women and the public one of men, as determined by their different social conditioning. She felt that women needed to move into public life and that men needed to see and experience women's points of view (p. 130-131). The creation of a separate community for women committed to the ideas and values of women's points of view must, she and others (Lippard, 1976) felt, be a necessary first step on the road to women's mainstream acceptance. The separatist choice, to achieve this aim, as stated by Lucy Lippard (1976), was not to necessarily create a protective womb-like space, but rather to provide a training ground for women (p. 11).

Separate women's programs have been organised for years outside traditional institutions.

The hope was that, by working on the fringes and by retaining a position of marginality, the production of critical meaning could become possible. While the distance from the institutions may have made it easier for women to work, these places have not been recognised as "real" places of learning by the mainstream any more than women's studies programs within the institutions have been (Rich, 1985, p. 24). As Arlene Raven (1979) writes:

> The existence of a feminist community - even in concept - is in profound conflict with the general society in which it occurs. While the colleges and art institutions that have on occasion invited and hosted our feminist programs have appeared to be congenial settings for those efforts, the programs have instead acted as foreign bodies on the organism of the university and, as any foreign body in an organism, have resulted in infection, fever and ultimate rejection.... The ability of a feminist community to disrupt does not lie in its apparent separatism but in its strong critique of our culture's values and its position as a concrete alternative (p. 258).

Feminist communities reflect Raven's call for a strong critical position. Through various strategies, and despite rejection, they strive to realize this. While our present understanding of the complex power relations (Hicks, 1990) that weave through our contemporary society makes the idea of complete separation almost impossible, the attempt to create some distance for reflection is still crucial. And, while we acknowledge that the existence of supportive communities for women's culture is critical to the dialogue women must now have in unpacking their own cultural conditioning, it is also important that these groups engage in activities that facilitate shifts in the mainstream. I suspect that, even within alternative spaces, no simple solutions are evident. However, the value cited by women participating in these communities (Chicago, 1979; Butler, 1986; Germain, 1983) and the interest in researching aspects of their practices (Sandell, 1991; Huber, 1987) should at the very least give support to their continuing existence.

The feminist struggle, notes Pollack, has been a "collective one composed of distinct persons

[and groups] with particular and heterogenous ends and means" (1986, p. 28). These "conversational communities", as Pollack refers to them, offer within the feminist tradition "points of recognition, identification and indeed competition through which women can locate themselves and develop related practices" (p. 28). Some are large, diverse feminist art institutions. Some are smaller practical sites of resistance such as the "homeplaces" (hooks, 1990) of Black women where the art created reflects a political commitment to the issues and needs of the specific community.

A Feminist Understanding of Community

A contemporary feminist arts educator, Laurie Hicks (1990), proposes Iris Marion Young's (1990) "politics of difference" as a useful concept for envisioning "community" for feminist art education. This concept, states Young, would have as its goal the development and perpetuation of a community which, while working toward communal action, does so without marginalizing or suppressing the uniqueness of others (Young, 1900, p. 320).

The implications of such a theory for an alternative separate feminist art education would seem to be that participants understand, criticize and affirm each other through an engaged learning within their particular groups, and with the larger, perhaps more heterogeneous feminist art community. Where Hicks and Young differ from others, is on their insistence that difference, not a sharing of a similar world view, be the basis for the construction of a feminist community. They fear that an assumption of community homogeneity could deny and devalue difference (Hicks, 1990, p. 42). This respect for difference has certainly been a stated ideal of many in the feminist cultural community (Murphy, 1983; Lorde, 1984). Just how inclusive each feminist art group in fact is, has been often debated in the larger feminist collective (Maart, 1991).

However, while not all alternative feminist educational groups can fully embrace this

concept of a "community of difference" as a basis for formation, they struggle towards it. It is an ongoing process. Women seek to connect to other women (Gilligan, 1982). To develop this cooperative link, they "emphasize connection over separation" (Belenky, Clinchy, Golberger & Tarule, 1986, 1985). Ofttimes this relationship is based on shared activities, experiences or values. More gather and a group forms. They may be drawn together by a specific geographical location or common racial background. If they are feminist artists, though, they are committed to building a libratory art learning in which their members can not only pursue common goals but also mutually explore their diverse differences (Shrewsbury, 1987, p. 7). While they may look to commonalities to bring them together, they also struggle through differences to learn and grow. Perhaps before women can move to acknowledging the diverse experiences and different perceptions of others, they need to understand and contextualize their own. It is in the sharing of this knowledge, of creating together that a bridge between differences can form (Shrewsbury, 1987, p. 7).

These alternative feminist communities provide the practical space in which this learning can occur as well as the vocal and supportive base from which their members can then teach.

The ideal of a "politics of difference" could yet be the greater goal for women's groups and the larger women's collective community. Women artists may still need the support of their specific groups. While they may connect in a group as lesbians, women of colour, white women or older women, these women can still, however specifically focused their group's membership is, come closer to understanding the richness that diversity can reveal.

Feminist art communities struggle with these and other questions. We may need, in our search for potentially useful strategies for mainstream use, to explore the links through and between different feminist art communities. If our ideal is to create a "community of difference", then each

individual group needs to be respected in its autonomy, acknowledged in its contributions and encouraged in its interactions.

The Communities

There are communities for women artists who are white and/or women of colour, who are mothers and/or lesbians or heterosexuals, who live in rural areas or large urban centres. Not all would choose to define themselves as feminist, yet many do provide an alternative feminist art education. In these feminist community spaces the agenda can include: reclaiming and reevaluating women's art heritage; developing skills, techniques and media for a feminist art practice; critically exploring women's everyday experiences as a grounding for feminist theory; and/or providing a supportive and stimulating network for members. Many attempt to challenge the mainstream perception of the female in society and art, while developing strategies for individual growth in the immediate community.

Some members of such groups have examined their own experiences as women through the process of making feminist art (Shapiro, 1979). Some have engaged in political action against existing art institutions (Withers, 1988). Some have developed exhibitions or group art projects (Kent & Morreau, 1985). Some have formed co-operatives or resource centres providing specific services for women (Collins & Sandell, 1984, p. 61). Some have retained their connection to a specific community and have attempted to meet the needs of their membership (Pike, 1990). Some have reached out to a diverse national or international feminist community (Germaine, 1983).

Their mandates range from promoting the learning and exhibition opportunities of their membership, to educating others either indirectly through exhibitions, publications, and public speaking or directly by organising classes, workshops or information evenings. Their audiences or

participants may be from a particular women's community or from the general public. All groups have some interest in educating about women, art and education.

As separate feminist art communities, they are committed to evolving their own content, methodologies and pedagogy. They also have an ongoing commitment to a self-conscious examination and evaluation of their group process. A commitment to self-assessment is integral to a woman's growing sense of self-worth or value (Wilkinson, 1992). Such action enables her to make her own life-shaping choices and allows her to engage in the acquisition of personal power. While each individual artist may be consciously attuned and collectively encouraged to facilitate the pedagogical and political goals of the group, a commitment by the group to individual difference and growth is also important. A community's educational goal can encourage women artists to discard limited feminine stereotypes and establish powerful personal presences and personally meaningful and solid feminist art practices. Growth can occur for each through the push-and-pull dynamics of connecting with, and separating from, others. Mutual goals can be defined and achieved through relationship and connectedness. But, where autonomy and individuality are also respected, richness and diversity can evolve. These communities continue to search for strategies applicable to their different feminisms and relevant to their diverse membership. There is no ready-made curriculum.

Just as there is no essential woman or definitive feminism, there is no one separate feminist art education. I have chosen to look at three different feminist art educational communities. They are of interest in that they are either influencing other separate feminist art educational initiatives or evolving from previous attempts. Each grapples with creating a content and a pedagogy for feminist art education.

Califia

Califia Community in California started its first classes in July, 1976, with a mandate to transform radical feminist ideology into an educational program. With weekend or week-long live-in sessions in a forest camp setting, the Califia collective tries to provide an "opportunity for women to participate in a dynamic process of creating and living feminist theory" (Murphy, 1983, p. 139). The advancement of women is valued, requiring that each woman grows and takes action accordingly. "Women take your power" is a community motto (Germain, 1983).

Art, while not the primary focus, is integrated into a program that encourages acquiring critical knowledge, consciousness-raising and developing skills. One Califia participant, Diane Germain (1983), writes:

> The expression of my feelings was tolerated, my own way of communicating understood, and my ideas and fantasies appreciated.... In [the] performances we re/create an education that fosters an increase in power, a validation through women-positive stories, an encouragement to create on one's own, and a joyfulness so often missing from public and competitive "higher" education.(p. 154, 156)

Califia is a community in which women artists can educate themselves about feminism. It is of interest not only because of this focus, but also because of the community's commitment to, and validation of, diversity. Sizable percentages of women members are lesbian, Jewish, working class, and women of colour. In fact, the Califia of Colour Network organised its first annual Women of Colour Califia Community in 1982. Growing from the short-lived Sagaris experiment in Vermont (St. Joan, Sherman, Bunch, 1983), it has attempted to address first and foremost questions of community and difference. In light of this, practically all aspects of Califia's structure and programming have been seriously criticised by participants. Rather then representing a small local community of women, it draws participants from all over the state. Having such a diverse group has

certainly challenged the coordinating collective's ability to build a cohesive community. Issues of change, power sharing, knowledge sharing, confrontation have to be constantly contextualized and embraced as riddles to be solved, rather than as potentially divisive battles (Silva, 1983).

Califia envisions itself as an ever-evolving experiment in feminist education open to criticism and input from all its members.

Feminist Studio Workshop

A commitment to personal and collective growth is also on the agenda at the Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW) in Los Angeles. Here women educate themselves and others about feminism through the practice, study and exhibition of feminist art.

Judy Chicago, after a one-year experiment in feminist art education at Fresno State College, California, joined with Miriam Shapiro at the California Institute for the Arts at Valencia to develop a similar project, Womanhouse. Needing to push the idea of feminist education further, Chicago left and, with Arlene Raven and Sheila de Bretteville, established in 1973 the Feminist Studio Workshop, a separate feminist art institution.

It is not clear from the literature how diverse the participants in this program have been. However, the Feminist Studio Workshop certainly merits attention because of its successful separatist stance and its integration of feminist ideology and art practice.

In many ways, the Feminist Studio Workshop was the fruition of Chicago's earlier attempts at creating an art education that would, she hoped, meet the needs of women. At Fresno, she encouraged women, through an ongoing dialogue with their peers, to develop a critical reflective process grounded in everyday experience. This process generated valuable material for subject matter for their art and gave the women a stronger sense of personal identity. The purpose of this

dialogue was to enable women to validate, not disprove, each other's perspectives. By sharing goals, they could realize their own.

The demanding and intensive project Womanhouse expanded and clarified further this process. Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro worked with the women, whatever their artistic skills or knowledge of feminism, and nurtured their development. Through the project, women learned to build an environment for making and exhibiting art, to explore new media such as performance art, to present themselves professionally and forcefully, to take, and yet share, power and responsibility, and to make feminist art by reflecting on their lives, and through connected learning with others. Chicago's argument was that, for these women to make the kind of art they wanted to, they had to come to a new understanding of themselves as women through their work, as well as in their actions.

Shapiro refers to the group's learning process as "more circular, more womblike" (1979, p. 246). While both she and Chicago were the teachers, the group was able to transform that often limiting teacher/student relationship to one in which both teacher and student became equally accountable to the project and the group. From this point of reference, all could grow.

The Feminist Studio Workshop was to formalize the ideas from these earlier programs into a inclusive, holistic two-year feminist arts program. Two community leaders/facilitators, Arlene Raven and Ruth Iskin, state that the program's aim is to create a community in which feminist creative activity can take place; where women can "support one another, validate individual and common experience, create from that experience and share their work with the public" (Iskin, 1983, p. 172).

The Feminist Studio Workshop's hope is that women's oppression might end through

feminism's commitment to reshaping culture. Members see the creation of feminist art as crucial to this process (Iskin, 1983, p. 172). Their goal is to create a "feminist learning structure/environment... [in which women will develop] strength, leadership, expertise and creativity to help them [to become] effective, powerful participator[s] in reshaping the world according to feminist values" (p. 172). With a curriculum that includes art history, art studio and feminist theory, the Feminist Studio Workshop not only encourages the development of contemporary feminist art, but also provides a context for understanding women's cultural heritage. The aim is to give their participants a solid base on which to facilitate an education for women in the larger community. As part of encouraging this role, they ask that women who join the program already have a "degree of skills, a commitment to feminism and a certain level of consciousness" (Chicago, 1977, p. 194).

This leadership mandate is also realized through the considerable attention given to the participant's personal development. Enormous personal changes are required, states Raven (1979, p. 255), through the process of shaping an alternative community and, as was evident in the Sagaris experiment, these can break a group apart or, as in the case of Califia, demand much of the group's attention. As a result, she says, at FSW "all structures, concepts and techniques that form the process of feminist education are directed toward the development of the personal self" (p. 255). Women identify interests, set limits and define goals individually and with the group. Their call is "new form for new content" (Chicago, 1977, p. 194).

Since leadership is such an important focus, various structures provide opportunities for women to take risks and meet demands for achievement, success and competency. They use the large group as a setting to tighten leadership and organisational skills, and as a forum to voice feelings and identify personal power. In the smaller groups and classes, they acquire the skills they

need to extend their learning. They are exposed to a diverse range of media and encouraged to experiment with the many roles required for the making, curating, exhibiting of, and writing about, art. Skills needed and acquired by participants include: methodology and research skills for contextualizing women's work; graphic design and photography skills for publishing their work; leadership skills for facilitating group work, projects and teaching; as well as critical, constructive and personal skills to pursue an informed art practice. Since their study is directed towards specific projects, the skills and techniques develop as the need arises. The interest and participation of the members, not the availability of teachers, determine the direction of the work and choice of media.

More formal aspects of the program, such as the critiques, give women opportunities to test their new-found skills in challenging and yet supportive situations. Here, as in the large group settings, the community challenges the assumption that women should not assert themselves. Women can overcome their fears of speaking by voicing their feelings in a safe and appropriate space, find confidence from a dialogue with others, and acquire new knowledge as this information is connected and contextualized within the process of making feminist art.

Ruth Iskin (1983) acknowledges that this process takes time, so women are asked to commit two years to the program. By their second year they are better able to assess their progress, to take initiative more easily, to act as mentors for the first-year students and to be more clearly directed in their art practice.

Iskin states:

> We demand that each woman move from a position of blaming another (society, parent/leader, stronger peers, etc.) to a recognition that only she can ultimately make things different for herself.... to transform her sense of oppression into an ability to take leadership and power and to act on those abilities rather than on her feelings of victimization.... We are there to support growth and change, as well as to demand the

transition from "mutual oppression to mutual support." (1983, p. 184)

While critical practice and use of feminist theory is encouraged at the Feminist Studio Workshop, women are not limited in how they develop their art practice. Through critiques, they formulate, in dialogue with other community members, what they want their art to say and how it can best say it. Some draw on what Griselda Pollack (1986) defines as complex strategies - consciousness raising, personal testimony, historical and theoretical analysis - and reveal in their art, "a knowledge of the social world which endlessly plays over their minds and bodies, producing them but never entirely captivating them" (p. 30). Some could choose to work differently. And the forms these works can take could be as diverse as the individual experiences of the women who make them (Sandell, 1990). Women's experience interconnects, multiplies and becomes more visible with the support of such institutions as the Feminist Studio Workshop.

Feminist Studio Workshop has influenced the formation of programs such as one in 1975-76 at The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul (Stoughton, 1979) and the development of projects such as Judy Chicago's internationally exhibited The Dinner Party (Chicago, 1979). Participants cite these projects as valuable contributions to their feminist and art education. Personal change within the group context can be painful (Iskin, 1983). But, when confidence builds through shared effort and responsibility, the resulting experience for all can enlighten the mutual goals of the group and encourage the private triumphs of each individual.

Manitoba Artists for Women's Art

Manitoba Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) was formed in 1984 (Tivy & Ziemann, 1991) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In addition to its exhibitions and public forums, MAWA provides a collective support community for women artists and, in its Mentor Program, fosters leadership skills

and promotes connected learning. MAWA differs from both Califia and the Feminist Studio Workshop in that it grew directly from the needs of the regional women's community. As such, its formation has been gradual and its growth rooted in the particular needs of Manitoba women.

MAWA, again unlike the Feminist Studio Workshop and Califia, chose at its inception not to take a completely separatist stance. Originally conceived through the support of an artist-run-centre, Plug-In Gallery, it was founded with a desire "to integrate women into the mainstream and to change existing structures from within" (Butler, 1986, p. 24). It does not see itself, states founder Sandra Butler, as "reflecting a particular philosophy, but as a pragmatic response to an insensitive situation" (p. 24). Its objectives are "to make visible female role models, to inform women artists and to promote awareness of their concerns" through exhibitions, workshops, artist talks and studio critiques. Its mandate encompasses many views of feminism. They aim to make as much information as possible on feminist issues available to members in order to encourage them to make informed choices from which they can mould their own art practice.

Networking lessens the isolation that many women artists, and especially these regional women artists, can feel. And the community affirms their abilities and validates their art.

Through the Advisor or Mentor Program, in which emerging artists are paired with more established artists, both the mentor and student benefit. The mentor keeps informed of new developments in the art community, and the participant learns feminist theory, feminist art practices and political strategies. MAWA strives to encourage women artists to become and stay politically active as cultural producers.

MAWA's flexible form and mandate has been its strength over the years, states Bev Pike (1990). It can respond not only to its members' needs but also to political shifts in the larger

community. And these shifts have become more of a challenge. Artist-run-centres in Canada, states Pike (1990), are becoming "more patriarchal in management and mandate" (p. 17). As a result of an increasingly strained relationship with its host centre, MAWA has been forced to rethink its position. It still needs access to the resources of the artist-run community, but it now acknowledges that, by necessity, it must have some separation from Plug-In Gallery. "'[The men] tend to be reactive to what they perceive to be threats to their social control' [states Barb Hunt, an artist with the group]. 'They can't see the advantages of shared power'" (Pike, 1990, p. 16).

MAWA still works to gain acceptance for its members in the mainstream. As its members become more informed about feminist issues, more critical and confident in their discussions and more committed to feminist education, they acquire a more vocal place not only in the artist-run-centres and regional art community but also nation-wide. This feminist art community has acted as a catalyst in Manitoba and has not only engaged the women artists in Manitoba, but also energized the art community as a whole.

Separate Feminist Art Educational Communities: An Overview

Given the diversity of mandates, participants and locations, it is difficult to evaluate these three programs as a whole. It is similarly problematic to see them as representative of all alternative feminist art educational ventures. "Feminist education takes place in many forms and is not limited to the classroom" (Bunch & Pollack, 1983, p. xv). However, each program is a testimony to feminist creativity and to the urgent desire women have to develop their own ways of learning (p. xvi).

I intend to identify and reflect on some key ideas that have emerged from a study of these communities and which may be of use to other alternative feminist art ventures, alternative communities and mainstream education. For future research, an in-depth study of a feminist art

community could be useful. Also, an overview of specific curriculum material from various feminist alternative art spaces could provide valuable information to support the development of curriculum guidelines for feminist art education. One course outline compilation (Fine, Gellman & Loeb, 1978) was published by the Women's Caucus for Art, but I am not aware of any recent ones available in Canada.

What are some useful observations to be gleaned from a study of feminist art communities? While I am sure there are many, I will highlight a few that this research study has revealed. They may prove useful to feminist art communities struggling with their present structures, to those planning future ventures in alternative feminist art education, and to those developing a course or curriculum for mainstream college or university feminist art education programs.

Ruth Iskin, writing on the Feminist Studio Workshop's program, identifies the importance of developing strong individuals, sure of themselves and affirmed in their work. It seems crucial that structures be in place to assure this development. The more opportunities women have for different kinds of interactions, the easier it will be for them to find appropriate learning situations. Small group settings, large group meetings, critiques, and artist talks can employ different pedagogical styles and demand different responses. Participants can, as at Feminist Studio Workshop, do academic research or develop technical art skills, learn through conversation or structured debate. They can seek settings in which they are most comfortable, or challenge themselves in ones that are stressful for them. In each situation support will be given, demands made.

There also needs to be forums where women can have an active voice in solving group problems and in assessing the very structure of their education. Ongoing meetings to unravel group conflict, to assess the community and to allow educational growth could be useful (Murphy, 1983,

p. 144; Iskin, 1983, p. 174). Excellent group facilitators perhaps need to be available to encourage several things: that consciousness-raising techniques are used, ensuring that each woman can have an opportunity to speak; that the group stays focused on the issue(s) at hand; that confrontation is contextualized and criticism is constructive; and that each woman's contribution is valued and supported. These strategies could be useful for promoting productive dialogue.

These group discussions could cause individual distress. So, counselling could also be deemed important. Califia supplies Woman Care, their form of peer counselling. Women sign up for an hour or two at a time to sit in a secluded place to talk through various problems with other women.

Different communities also have to assess how they plan to incorporate and address questions such as racism, classism, homophobia, and ageism. Even if a community is seemingly a small homogeneous group, it will at some level have to come to these questions. They are so much a part of the larger collective feminist discussion. Obviously, some, such as Califia, which have such diverse groups, have had to develop strategies for meeting these concerns more immediately than others. Confrontation, ongoing discussion, opportunities for women to caucus in smaller all-lesbian, all-women of colour or all-working class groups and a commitment to connection and embracing positive change seem valuable strategies.

I feel it is also important to remember that women have come together in many of these places to learn about and practice making feminist art. While I think it is useful for women to critique their education, they must have a chance to just get on with learning. There needs to be a healthy balance.

The Feminist Studio Workshop's focus on a holistic program that enables both conflict

resolution and art making, skills development and study of theory, process and product seems reasonably well balanced. Even the collective projects, which give the group clear common curatorial themes, are flexible enough to permit individuals to develop their own aesthetic direction. It seems that the participants can work out their differences through the process of making feminist art. There is a joy in making art. For it will be the work, as well as the feminist artists/teachers, that will enlighten an audience about women and art.

The overall pedagogical goal of these alternative communities is an ideal of what art education could be. While each of these groups may not be entirely successful, they stretch toward this. Carolyn Shrewsbury sums up this vision:

> Feminist pedagogy is engaged teaching/learning — engaged with self in a continuing reflective process; engaged actively in the material being studied; engaged with others in a struggle to get beyond our sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and other destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance our knowledge; engaged with the community, with traditional organisations and with movements of social change. (1987, p. 6)

The community attempts to be engaged with itself, engaged with education and engaged with other communities. MAWA, in spite of its present strained relationship with Plug-In Gallery, is an example of one group determined to keep its connection with the mainstream and certainly the artist-run community. Some, like MAWA's members, feel that they cannot work entirely in isolation. If they want the art, the product of their educational process, to not only reflect the lives and experiences of their members but to also speak to those in the larger society, they must make efforts to reach out. They have a commitment to making, in most cases, socially relevant art. They then respect the need for a continuing connection and dialogue with various individuals in the diverse communities beyond their own.

Conclusion

Why a separate feminist art education? It is an education which: validates women artists' own experiences and encourages their developing a particular art practice relative to these experiences; and explores the development of a range of pedagogies specific to how women need and want to learn. While communities that strive to provide this education cannot entirely escape the mainstream, they can, if they are at least partially separate, focus on developing an alternative education for women relatively free from the restrictions and demands of the traditional system. There is no question, however, that concerns relating to the isolation of certain groups from the mainstream or the larger feminist community and problems resulting from some groups exclusive membership need to be addressed. Perhaps it is here that a formal feminist art education, as named by Collins and Sandell, for the mainstream can be perceived as a worthwhile goal. A dialogue needs to be opened.

At a time when social change disrupts our students' lives, we may be unsure as to how best, if at all, any art education could direct and stabilize them. However, those who work on the fringes grapple with this problem and strive, through developing alternative strategies, to find ways through. Feminist art groups are committed to their mandates of validating personal experience, power sharing, leadership development and supportive pedagogical practices. They attempt to reconceptualize community with a richness that "includes the autonomy and individuality of members who share a sense of relationship and connectedness with one another" (Shrewsbury, 1987, p. 11). As groups such as these continue to exist and to experiment, they may provide new insights for art, women and education in the troubled years to come

Three

If the imagination is to transcend and transform experience it has to question, to challenge, to conceive of alternatives, perhaps to the very life you are living at the moment.

A. Rich, On Lies, Secrets and Silence.

The Manitoba Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), the Canadian group discussed in "A Literature Study: Why a Feminist Separatist Art Education?", provided the spark that engaged Jane Gordon to establish the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA). As an existing group, it provided a template for BAAWA's beginnings, just as the first modality, "A Literature study: Why a Feminist Separatist Art Education" gave me a site from which to begin. After completing that modality, I was ready to move into a research of the community itself. I needed to explore the depth, dynamics and specifics of a particular site.

I picked up from my bedside Bettina Aptheker's Tapestries of life (1989) and began to read. She inspired new directions:

> *To name women's consciousness is to identify its webs of significance and meaning, to make it intelligible on its own terms. This identification, according to [anthropologist, Clifford] Geertz, is a process of cultural interpretation: 'the analysis... is not an experimental science in search of a law but an interpretive one in search of meaning... Culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviours, institutions or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can intelligibly be --- that is --- thickly described'. (p. 14).*

De-scribing rather than de-coding or de-constructing was to become more representative of my next process. I knew I needed to discover ways to investigate women's culture and make it intelligible on its own terms. Also, I had to move the research, as Aptheker also suggests, to show connections and form patterns (p. 14) but not reduce the material to dry, cold data. I wanted to reveal the layers of the BAAWA women's experiences and recognise and articulate our strategies for coping, surviving and changing the parameters of our own art education.

As I began again to rework this project, a new form emerged. It was more complex and

richly layered; perhaps at times clear and concise, at other times dramatic like a theatrical script.

In this and the following chapter, I intend to make and use an "artifact", in this case a notated theatrical script, as representative of the specific cultural activities of BAAWA.

F. Graeme Chalmers (1981) presents a case for art learners and educators to act as ethnographers, studying the artifacts of their own cultures in order "to learn to value and understand the arts as well as to produce art that matters" (p. 6). It suggested for me the possibility for finding a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural matrix of BAAWA through an ethnographic study-as-art. This study-as-art or theatrical artifact would be representative of BAAWA culture. I would then act as participant-researcher with/in the BAAWA community. My commitment would also be to a feminist practice which would also acknowledge the majority of practices of BAAWA women. The alternative research methodology for this modality that I discuss and develop and the theatrical performance script that I present, then are to be not only situated in the concept of BAAWA-as-culture but also within the dynamics of relations and activities of the BAAWA community.

*

Both a notion of dense description and an adherence to an integrative, trans-disciplinary approach to knowledge marked for me both the rich resources of BAAWA and my need to record the actual daily experiences of these women artists' lives. It is an ethnography that celebrates feeling, belief and experientially-based knowledge (Stacey, 1991, pg. 7) and it was played out through listening, gathering and recording. It is representative of the activity of inquirer/learner as researcher It is a process of bringing together all possible threads that touch the idea or

concept. It is a second modality that pauses and records my movement of learning.

*

Leena and I, in beginning a new work, tend to pull all our ideas, no matter how absurd, together to fill the space. We create a rich web from which to draw. Selections will follow.

*

The exhibit This Decade of Days as description, marks names of groups and individuals and celebrates the rich diversity of collective collaborative practice and exhibition. By naming these collectives in a public sphere, Jane Gordon creates a vehicle for a further complex mixing to occur. This exhibition has the same appearance in many ways as the earlier BAAWA exhibits. There are lots of people, stuff, media, energy, and it's noisy and messy, emotional, and exciting.

All these elements are to be reflected in and through the research process and presentation of the second modality.

*

My research for this thesis has been situated within the field of arts education, affected by my practices as teacher, actor and artist, and informed by my particular experiences of being a woman. Given this configuration, I have had a particular interest in searching out qualitative research methodologies that can explicate my experiences and those of other women artists in ways that describe how we conceptualize, practice, give form to and reflect on our art education.

Richard Courtney (1987) in The Quest: Research and Inquiry in Arts Education poses significant questions to those of us engaged in arts research: "How can we study the relationship between arts and education? Are there 'correct' methods of inquiry? How do we conduct research in arts education?" (p. 1). Questions such as these energize much discussion in educational

research.

*

"John Dewey struggles with the problem of defining a science of education and develops instead an articulate argument for studying education through a synthesis of perspectives drawn from other social sciences" (Vallance, 1991, p. 155). I take this as a useful position which encourages researchers to explore possibilities in their particular curricular studies. This potential fluidity in the field of curriculum practice is contributing to the emergence and expansion of domains of inquiry (Short, 1991, p. 6). This does not mean "anything goes," but rather new perspectives are being used to illuminate the nuances of educational life, and provide frameworks, not rigid theories, for facilitating practical action. As qualitative research is specifically designed to look to the often unusual educational settings and to demonstrate "the viability of truly alternative educational approaches" (Shulman, 1981, p. 11), there need to be methods that can best describe, explicate and inform the educational life in these places.

I argue for the importance of original perspectives, practices, and forms in research for arts education as ways of extending our knowledge of, and learning through and in the concrete particularities of specific educational sites. Ideas drawn from feminism contribute to these expanding conceptions of research.

I view "excellence" as a criterion for a critical rigorous creative process of making and reflecting. This points, among other things, to the need for responsible projects, where there is interaction/collaboration between interpreter and participant, and an exploration of ways to make biases, especially those of the interpreter, useful and visible. I value the arts as informing and expanding conceptions for educational inquiries, and point to ways of defining and refining the

artistic use(s) and creative form(s) of methodologies, so that the oscillating space between research and fiction is insightful.

This thesis's progression is being informed by Eisner's comment: a need for broader, creative but rigorous research practices; the recognition of many possible meanings in/from research; and the danger that a narrow view of research could lead to a limited understanding of how "schools" work. I have been using an educational site, BAAWA, as my "school." The educational life in this community comes to form again and again as my inquiry proceeds, informed by the interrelationship of the arts, women, and innovative educational research. This involves a complex search for a holistic interpretation.

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As a researcher in the arts and education, I have used phenomenology, feminist ethnography and narrative in various studies and projects. I am drawn to the complexity of experience as the basis of knowledge and so I have come to value personal and creative research methods.

Narrative is one form which has allowed me to connect my experiences to those with whom I study, to understand the individual relative to the social, be creative, alert to surprise and develop my ideas, theories, concepts in a way which values process and does not demand closure. I have also explored the use of thick description, and feminist analysis in ethnography, and the artistic potential found in phenomenological inquiries. But, whatever my preference, I return to the premise that research is a constructed inquiry into, and a representation of, experience, and a study of this experience involves observation of, and interaction with, real people and real situations. I feel, as a result, that rather than slavishly remaining loyal to a particular methodology, I need to develop research that grasps the patterns and perceives the configurations relevant to a particular study.

For example, in narrative, "directionality... shapes and reconstructs the situation" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 9). However, Eisner (1984) notes "Exposition is sequential; action requires the perception of configurations in space" (p. 452). Even in a form as open as narrative, I assert that nuances of gesture, expression, silence, emphasis, interaction may not be available for analysis.

Eisner suggests that "theoretical frameworks function as templates for perception - every template conceals some parts of the landscape just as it brings other parts to our attention." (Eisner, 1984, p. 450). We need to construct our own unique conceptual research methods to answer the questions being asked and meet the needs of the concrete situation(s) and context(s). In order to accomplish this, we must become immersed in the "richness and uniqueness of educational life" (p. 451), and through this immersion, arrive at expanded ideas, concepts and theories for educational practice. We need, as Eisner (1985) suggests, ways of talking about education that are "clear but not stilted... [avoid] romantic obscurantism, [and] the infatuation with vague rhetoric that has little intellectual rigour. (p. 21)"

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Specific to this ongoing discussion of my learning are my perspectives as a woman academic and artist pursuing a study of/with a particular women's art educational community. I have continued to explore multiple and original methods in a search for appropriate forms for inquiry.

Madelaine Grumet (1988) argues that women must construct a special place for themselves if their work is to achieve clarity, communication, and the insight of aesthetic practice, if it is, in short, to be research and not merely representation (p. 88-89). We need, writes Clandinin (1988), "a language close to experience, a language of... aesthetics" (p. 9) to direct us. To then map

women's experience, to understand women's artistic learning, is to look at women's poems, stories, paintings from the point of view of making women's actions and beliefs intelligible on their own terms. It is not a rigid theorizing, but a way of showing connections and forming patterns. It recognizes their practices of coping, surviving, shaping and changing their education on their own terms (Aptheker, 1989).

In BAAWA, and in many collectives identified in This Decade of Days, women struggle to give form to their experiences. The forms are often varied: stories, informal conversations, journal writing, letters, poem, images - many which are consistent with, and would support the use of narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) or ethnography (Janesick, 1991). However, their practice is focussed on art making and the forms they present to the public are art - written text, visual art, performance art. And they are women, feminist-identified, and committed to using their learning as a way of taking practical action to improve art education for women. All these are critical factors I must consider in struggling to represent how their education and my learning work.

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Before I take self- as-inquirer/learner into the next modality, I wanted to note some of the influences feminism and the arts have had on shaping and expanding the parameters of qualitative research, and of this modality in particular.

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Feminist scholars, drawing on feminism as an ideology, have celebrated feeling, belief, and experientially-based knowledge, concepts which emerged from attending to the traditional "feminine" capacities of intuition, empathy and relationship. Discussions of feminist methodology have also looked to the exploitive relations of conventional research and have stimulated feminist

researchers to seek a process characterized by authenticity, reciprocity, and intersubjectivity (Stacey, 1991, p. 112). "Feminism has completely revised our methodological practices ... and stands as an impressive and highly imaginative model of self-discovery" (Langer, 1990, p. 21). It continues to be challenged to define ever more "inclusive, multiplistic, and heterogenous orientations towards knowledge and truth" (Helle, 1991, p. 51).

Feminist models can acknowledge both multiple problems and solutions - a "tapestry... in which given perspectives and experience[s] are seen as equally valid" (Maher, in Sandell, 1991). It is a call for new "tools" (Lorde, 1984) for thinking in/for research.

Feminist researchers have been led to create new methods, because the knowledge they seek requires it. This has largely been a result of their choices to study particular groups of women formerly ignored by social science, to reach beyond a single discipline, and to integrate material not usually discussed in academic writing (Reinhartz, 1992). Such original research can employ multiple methods which express a "commitment to thoroughness, a desire to be open-ended, and to take risks" (p. 197). It attends to my own process of discovery and as such alters the conventional relationship of self to work.

Self is no longer seen as an intellectual construct (Krieger, 1991), but rather as embodying experience (Bell, 1993) - both emotional and creative.

This has led many to defining "voice" for researcher and participant - a depiction of their intellectual and ethical development (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 18), a "space" in which they can be heard (Gilligan, 1982), a linking of private thought to public action useful to others (Chrystos, 1990). For me as author/researcher/inquirer/learner, the articulation of voice becomes "an issue of multiple "I"'s," (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 10) drawing attention to the "I" who speaks

as researcher, woman, artist, curator, teacher, research participant. Voice is also a concept meant to encompass the multiple ways in which women reveal and reflect on important features of their realities - (Personal Narratives Group, 1989) and it speaks to the multi-layered texture of women's lives (Aptheker, 1989; Etter-Lewis, 1991). This means that as researchers we have to acknowledge fully the interpretive authorial self, be willing to experiment with dialogic forms that place more of the voices and perspectives of the researched into the inquiry and more authentically reflect the particularity of the research process (Stacey, 1991, p. 115), and support the idea of the specific in local struggles.

To give attention to particular "voices", to hear the multiple languages of the community (Hollingsworth, 1992) means that, as researcher and as learner, I need to be an active listener (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 11) - to hear the silences, the muted phrases, the choices, the emotion beyond the "constraint of acceptable discussion" (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 30-31) in my interactions with participants. It means I must adopt a practice, described by Nel Noddings (1984) as "a caring relation" -- an attitude of "receptivity, relatedness and responsibility" (p. 61). This practice alludes to a process emphasizing methods of interaction which supports collaboration or cooperation (Hladki, 1993, p. 105; Connelly, Clandinin & Conle, 1990, p. 57) over competition. This attention to process points to an accountability in feminist research to the self, the participants, and to the inquiry.

Product as well as process is examined - for "the research product is ultimately... the researcher['s], however modified or influenced by informants" (Stacey, 1991, p. 4). Self-as-researcher is required to accept a rigorous position of partiality. This consciously reflective position drives me to strive for excellence, to be more active, critical and accurate. I need to respect

the particular needs and wants of those at\in the educational site, to attend to practical solutions and to present the product in a form that can best accomplish this.

This feminist "call" has already significantly influenced research in arts education (Sandell, 1979; Collins, 1981; Hagaman, 1990) and directions in educational research (Bunch & Pollack, 1983; Clandinin, 1988) in general.

For this particular modality, I chose to incorporate many of these ideas. I worked with five BAAWA women (including myself) collectively over a period of years as fellow artist, writer and researcher. I struggled to maintain a position of conscious partiality (Mies, 1983, p. 23) and listened for themes, watched for patterns, always seeking and getting feedback. Methods for data collection like those in narrative and ethnography were used - field notes, journals, letters, press releases, gallery statements, art work, interviews, conversations. Once we established patterns in the data, I compiled the material, and the search for meaning began. I wanted neither a text in which possible meanings were disguised, nor one absent of meaning. I wanted instead to explore an interpretation that would transform and empower the community, the research and the interpreter.

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For this modality, I decided that the text and process should be analogous to the writing, research and presentation of a feminist theatrical performance.

The notated performance script I produced is entitled "Process in Performance".

It acknowledges the, at times, elusive, and yet dynamic practices of BAAWA. It is metaphorical to BAAWA's sense of self. "Sense" is made in the interaction between "performers". Just as the connections, workshops, networking, decisions are now made at the <u>This Decade of</u>

Days' events, so too have they been made at other BAAWA events and through the daily practices of smaller partnerships, such as Leena's and mine. It examines the "what", "what do women do?" and takes me closer into the learning process and the curriculum that is BAAWA.

While theatrical performance is the medium of choice of only a few women in BAAWA, all, refer to it in describing not only their own personal art practice but also the process of BAAWA. They also all locate the process of the body, the female gendered body, in their practice. "Performing" brings alive the gestures, words and feelings of this body. The body becomes active in the research text, and the text becomes a vehicle for participant and viewer understanding.

But what, I ask as inquirer/learner, are the particular characteristics of feminist theatrical performance?

The performance as theatrical product differs from, say, a painting or sculpture. Visual art forms are usually static objects offered for our view. Traditional visual art conventions ask that we be attentive to their colour, balance, brush stroke - elements of composition. In Modernism this attention to formal considerations has been taken to extremes. Women, for example, as objects in conventional art, have come to be viewed as nothing more than pure form, as contentless.

Performance alters that. While performance can attend to certain formal concerns, its images can never be entirely without content, for a performance constructs them both in time and in history. Feminist performance can capitalize on this. Their performances can invoke narrative and shatter conventional formal considerations.

Narrative as a process of transformation has been seen as central to feminist creative practice (Sayre, 1989). One of narrative's important functions is that "it is [a] way we can explain ourselves.... 'Narrative', as David Antin argues, is 'a mode of cognition that is probably the

paradigmatic way of coming to know the self'" (p. 98). Narrative can be understood as transformative if it becomes a question of process and allows us to acknowledge our historic situation (p. 100). Narrative operates in feminist theatrical performance to engage audience and artist in this transformative experience.

American artist Judy Chicago turned to performance in order to discover suppressed 'femaleness' or 'womaness'. She felt that she and her students were able to invoke non-formal and narrative transformational responses to their performance works by "articulating feelings that had simply never been so openly expressed in artmaking" (1977, p. 128). The intent for these and other performers through the use of various strategies such as restorying the personal is to reintroduce the audience to the materiality of the female body and of existence, and to press them to comprehend feminist narrative as content and, ultimately, knowledge.

A study of narrative research practices has extended and deepened my understanding and use of feminist theatrical performance as/in academic research. One text by Jean Clandinin has directed me. Clandinin (1988) speaks in support of creative feminist forms for academic research. She writes of the need to find "a language close to experience, a language of effect, morality and aesthetics" for research. This echoed my need for a form that would be not only metaphoric but also accountable rooted in culture and formed by the specific activity of community. For her, the research process also becomes one that "values the participants' voices and that speaks within a relationship of caring and connectedness" (p. 6). The goal of such academic research could then become the development and empowerment of mind, body and voice for both researcher and participants. This personal development and empowerment is central to my understanding of my own being and of education.

I felt that, by applying Clandinin's narrative process and extending it into research as/in theatrical performance, these three dimensions of mind, body and voice could come into play. Feminist theatrical performance as a narrative of transformation could not only allow me to reveal myself and others in the work, but also direct me to attend with care and respect to the women with whom I have studied.

The "primary language of the personal" is "simultaneously individual, social, cultural and personally historical" (Connelley & Clandinin, 1991, p. 262). Feminist narrative helps us "understand the social realities of women as actors" (J. Dilorio in Reinharz, 1992, p. 46). Feminist performance can give us a partial glimpse of the actors in action within the social, in the particular culture of BAAWA. The advantage of research as/in theatrical performance is that it can acknowledge both of these aspects.

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As the inquirer/learner and writer of this notated script, I am the final voice, the shaper of the other's voices, text and concerns. These have been filtered through me and, as such, they become a fiction, "performed" in text. Just as I have taken women's voices and images and framed them into a final theatrical performance work, so too have I taken these women's voices, images and writings and framed them into an academic study. Something may be lost. Something may be omitted. Something may be revealed. It is metaphoric.

Metaphor is the primary means by which artists frame their ideas, concepts, emotions. Depending on the form used, certain tools are chosen. BAAWA women refer to metaphor not only in describing their personal practice, but also in speaking of the process of BAAWA.

They also locate the presence of the body, the female gendered body, in their practice. A

'haptic' sensibility generated in this practice connotes the space of the hand rather than just the eye. It asks the artist and the viewer to enter into a process of integration. The eye and intellect are then to work in concert with the physical body (Gordon & Vesley, 1992, p. 6).

Dramatic acting brings alive the gestures, words and feelings of this body. As a haptic experience, the theatrical performance can be potentially transformative for the participant and viewer. The many metaphoric levels, which the notated theatrical performance script attempts to capture, re-create a haptic ethnographic analysis of BAAWA-as-culture.

This modality, "Process in Performance," then becomes the resting point in this praxis. This modality is presented as two texts: performance text and notations. Both the texts that comprise this modality co-exist. They can be read separately or concurrently. If read separately, you may capture the distinctness of each - visualize the "actors" in action and engage with the researcher in reflection; if read concurrently, you may experience how each text complements and/or disrupts the other. It is not an easy reading, but by struggling with the form and its use you will find relationships in/through the configurations. As text and subtext they include the activities of the private gatherer/explorer/experimenter and the public doer/performer/teacher.

The "performing" text embodies my voice as well as the voices of individual women from BAAWA as we search in our various roles as artists, educators and women through, and in our art practice, toward identity and meaning. The notations reflect not only the process of academic research, but also the concrete minutiae of members' daily activities that are part of being an artist in BAAWA - preparing proposals, speaking, curating, writing, and researching. They decipher interviews, conversations, discussions as the strategies, histories, principles that are of BAAWA women. This records a research which discloses a rich material base from which to select and

recreate form.

I intend this modality, the notated theatrical performance script, to reveal the complexities of this group's specific learning and practices; the notations to facilitate defining, refining, and locating the study as educational research. It is practical, concrete, intuitive and creative.

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Process in Performance

Characters

Jane G.: Founder of BAAWA, sculptor, painter, writer, curator, teacher.

Dawn B.: Present leader for BAAWA, multi-media artist, graphic artist, curator.

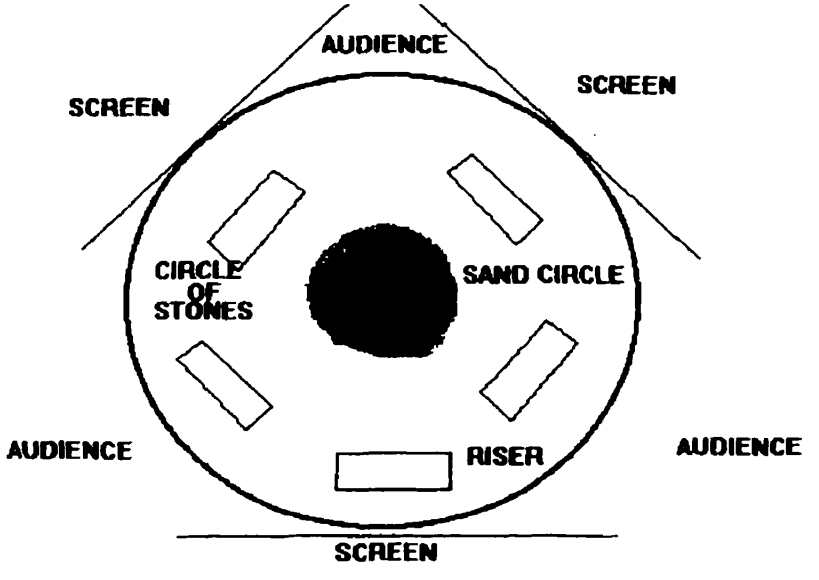
Donna I.: Painter, art activist, printmaker.

Jane A.: Ceramic artist.

Pam P.: Performance/installation artist, teacher, writer, curator, academic researcher/writer for this project.

Setting

Performance (see diagram):



The theatrical performance set is organised in a round, the centre of it a circular sandy area with a stone circle at the sand's circumference. Three large screens hang around the periphery of the space. Images are projected on them. Between the sand and the screens are five white risers. There is audience seating on the periphery of the circle, just beside the screens. Audience members are welcome to change their seats during the performance. However they remain on the margin of the performance, so that the women are always speaking with/out to them.

Notations: These are presented in academic text. It is understood that the audience/reader can read the performance through an academic frame if he or she so chooses. Just as with the choice of chair position in the performance, he or she can decide at any time to reflect on the text through the discussion in the notations.

Codes

Performance: Certain descriptive codes are used to identify sound and lighting changes and movement of performers. They are: SQ (sound cue), V/O (voice on tape, not live), SLQ (slide cue on screens numbered 1,2,3), LQ (light cue), DS (down stage at circumference of set near audience), US (up stage in sand circle).

Notations: The data are organised into three major categories. One of the major categories is subdivided into four smaller categories. My attempt is to honour the content of BAAWA's cultural mandate, the "What" of women's work, "What do women do?"; to attend to the main topics of discussion of the group; and to maintain a focus on feminist pedagogy as learning-in-process.

The categories are:

1. Naming (of woman artist as maker and BAAWA member, of BAAWA, of larger cultural context).

2. Doing:

a) Conceptualization of model (includes curator/artist relationship and role of leader),

b) Research and dialogue (of/with self, of/with group and with larger cultural context),

c) Education (of self, group and larger cultural context),

d) Role of community (for self, for group and within larger cultural context).

3. Reflecting and Assessing (of self, group and in relation to larger cultural context).

In "Naming", "Doing", and "Reflecting and Assessing", discussions come from, and are directed to, the levels of self, group and the larger cultural context. Content which deals with self or group is relatively clear within the text. However, concerns involving the larger cultural context can refer, at times, to women's culture, mainstream culture or the subject of art itself, depending on the focus for discussion. Its usage is clarified when needed. All these three levels interrelate and sometimes overlap. I ask the reader to accept the fact that it is difficult, if not impossible, to write of these levels in a strict linear academic style. So, I have chosen to write about them in relation to each other or in isolation when the choice best fits with the data and the category in question.

<u>Script</u>

Act 1: Naming[1].

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[1] **1. Naming (of woman artist as maker and BAAWA member, of BAAWA, of larger cultural context)**: This first section serves to introduce the various concerns of BAAWA members. I chose to title this first category, "Naming", for this study for a specific reason. It seemed important for each BAAWA member interviewed to name her position, her stance, her framing idea that was to ground the way she worked and produced her art.

The right to name, an idea perhaps influenced by the early civil rights movement, has been on the feminist cultural agenda since feminism's resurgence in the 1970's. This action is directed not only to other women but to the larger community. Women of BAAWA ask that the gendered experience be acknowledged. The reason for this, they feel, is that women need to learn of their own cultural heritage, and that the mainstream cultural community needs to make a place for women's cultural works and processes. For BAAWA artists this naming is an active enterprise.

"Art History has been written on the female body [too long]", says Jane G. It is time

(Set is basic, lighting is focused on US sand, slides of single stone are projected onto each of the three screens. Sound is of whispering women's voices.[2] At times actual words can be heard, sometimes just laughter or the sound of a child's cry. The audience enters.)

(SLQ: fades to black on screens. LQ: light up on stone circle and sand. SQ: whispering dissolves into a barely audible hum — different voices, different notes, tones changing.)

(SQ: V/O, voices speak)

V/O (from a poem by Dawn B.): It is the stone, the jewels. They are the symbols,[3] constructed

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that as artists and as women, writes Jane A., we "be permitted to bring forth and confront the wider implications of the process of being human."

Janet Tulloch (1993) names one group member's active relationship and contribution to this agenda. She writes of Jane G., BAAWA's founder in Artists' of Influence:

> By creating or naming (or in some cases reclaiming) a new set of symbols and rituals on a grand scale [Jane G.'s] potential to influence not only artists but the culture at large is vast. (p. 13)

While Jane G. identifies the importance of giving voice — of "speaking into the culture as women" — she also thinks that is not enough.

[2] "It's a kind of chatter", says Jane G., " But what we have to do is make the ear. So, I thought of making the ear for the voices of women and then I thought the ear is not the right image. What we are doing is opening up a cervix. It's just like labour... There is a process that I think has to be gone through, of opening the cultural nest or space or room where this material will sit."

What informs the making of this space? Jane G. reflects, "You enter a global discourse from a specific site. The specific site for women is always gendered. There is no way to avoid that." Each woman spoke of this gendered site as the one that they worked from individually and collectively in BAAWA.

Their responsibilities toward contributing to the formation of a global context for representation and discussion of women's work is marked by their commitment to incorporating educational material in their exhibitions. "We need to contextualize our work, because if we don't, other people will", says Jane G. They name the experiences of women and ask that women artists' voices, critiques and images be included in a global cultural discussion.

[3] This active naming is made by BAAWA artists through their practice of making and interpreting art. Metaphor, an aspect important in this writing and to the arts, becomes for them a way to articulate their ideas. Jane G. writes, "As always, my yearning to see brings forth something I cannot articulate... I have resorted to metaphor." Dawn B. responds, "I don't think I know how to function any other way. I'm always giving a visual image or metaphor to feelings. I think, in all of life, [metaphor is] just a magical way of transforming things called thoughts into these visual things in a way that communicates to people." This metaphoric process grounds the individual art practice, the group practice and the intended pedagogical function of the work in a gallery setting. "But this also means," says Jane G., "that the work asks to be perceived through a different sensibility. It is a tactile or haptic, rather than visual sensibility that informs the way women's cultural

signposts, designation of place...

V/O: Listen to the stones, listen to the blood, look back beyond the fables, the myths that they reshaped for us...

V/O: Correct the story.

V/O: There are too many omissions, silences, subtle twists of truth, exclusions...

V/O: Extend the story.

(SQ: Hum continues and fades into the sound of pebbles being rolled together between someone's hands. Women enter through the next section and form a circle just inside the circle of stones on the sandy surface. Enter Jane G. between screen 1 & 2; she goes to inside stone circle and turns to face DS.)

Jane G. (from exhibition text by Jane G.): I began in a shallow basket, on a window sill, lined up in ranks on a filing cabinet... if you become a stone you consume its dusty presence, it becomes an absence, an opening. Women and stones. Women. And women begat all the rest including themselves, stones, lined up on filing cabinets and in baskets under the table.[4]

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production should be looked at." It is a way of perceiving the work through the body, through touch, or sensation.

BAAWA women are concerned with work which addresses in a metaphoric language the body, their bodies, their experiences and this, they feel, not only reflects women's heritage but is linked to some of the practices of other contemporary feminist artists.

[4] In taking such a stance they voice a political position. For Jane G. and Dawn B., it is to say to those with more conventional viewpoints, "Hey people, you know this doesn't make sense." They don't want to have women's experiences traced on female bodies only by male artists. They suggest that there are other ways, other experiences, other voices that respond differently. They ask to participate as equal partners in a global discourse.

BAAWA does not intend to be exclusive but rather expansive. The group is predominantly white and middle-class but this is not an imposed limitation. As Jane G., says, "There is an openness to other types of feminists and practitioners. There is no effort to exclude people of a different race or sexual orientation."

One way for BAAWA to work toward this openness is by exploring alternative learning strategies. "This is not", writes Bettina Aptheker (1989), "to invent another theory of women's oppression; it is to suggest a

(Enter Pam P. between screen 2 & 3, goes to inside stone circle and turns to face DS.)

Pam P. (from a poem by Dawn B.): This rich place[5] fertile, safe, invisible, secret, finally revealing itself in metaphor. Me, exploring a place painfully new yet achingly familiar obsessed with discovery... every corner must be examined, a place that allows intuition, another sense of knowing...

(Enter Dawn B. between screen 1 & 2, goes to inside of stone circle and turns to face DS.)

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method of representation, a sounding, a making visible. It is to recognise women's strategies for coping, surviving, shaping and changing the parameters of their existence on their own terms, and not in contrast to predominantly male strategies as if these were the natural, normative, or correct models" (p. 14).

But, while they encourage openness within the group, this is not always their experience with the viewing public. Jane G. comments that "there is a resistance to the revealing awe of what it is like to live in a woman's body... I am occupying the site of a woman's body because I have to." And it is this site, say the four interviewed women, which is imbedded in their work.

The mainstream art community has not historically condoned this activity. "If you are a woman," says Jane G., "the only way you can participate in [traditional artistic activity] is to actually cut your bits off and leave them in the house. I absolutely refuse. It's me, all of me and I'm going to do it and I'm going to take all of [my body] with me. I think it's very important for women to do this... No matter what the breadth or the diversity of our experiences, it is always gendered and always situated in the body." All of the four interviewed expressed a connection in their practice to their female body, to a spiritually-engaged work and to the domestic as a rich site from which to work. These mesh and connect in different ways in each person's art work, and through each person's practice.

They are aware that this work, coming from such a specific and complex site, can raise questions about the nature of women's experience. They attempt to frame these questions for their audience, says Jane G., by putting them "out in a way that is appropriate and intelligent."

[5] BAAWA women are not hesitant to name their specific location as feminist artistic practitioners to the larger community. But, by doing so, they marginalize themselves from the male discourse of mainstream art "where", as Janet Tulloch (1991) notes, "a feminist voice exists as a footnote to the main discourse" (p. 30).

Some, such as Donna I. and Jane G., voice a definite anger at the exclusive and sexist activities of the mainstream art community. Donna I. comments, "I was the only woman [on the board of the gallery] at that time... Well, we were going to have an opening and someone was needed to do the refreshments and all these eyes turned and looked at me. I said I'll bake cookies if you guys all bake cookies, not your girlfriend, not your mommy - you." Donna I. has also felt unaccepted by some of her non-BAAWA peers because of the domestic content or the male nudity in her work, "It's outside people that don't get it. They don't get why [I] am doing this 20-foot-long painting of [naked] men in ties and masks."

These kinds of incidents have precipitated BAAWA's continuing existence as partially separate from the mainstream art community. Most members have felt the necessity of identifying BAAWA as a supportive and active place which gives witness to women's creation. Most feel the necessity, however difficult, to keep focused on speaking out to the dominant cultural community so as not to isolate themselves totally.

Dawn B. (from a poem by Dawn B.): In the garden with my mother, bending, digging, pushing seeds into earth. She watches and teaches, I am seven. In the garden with my mother, heads together, stories, stories repeated, that I didn't hear before. Splitting, sharing, trading. I am thirty. In the garden with my mother[6]...

(Enter Jane A. between screen 2 & 3, goes to inside of stone circle and turns to face DS.)

Jane A. (from a poem by Jane G.): I wait my turn for tending. Aching among the peas, not quite fitting inside the green curving wings of my pea pod. A jury-rigged princess bee, I wait, weighed down by earthly needs for nourishment and light[7]...

(Enter Donna I. between screen 1 & 2, goes to inside of stone circle and turns to face DS.)

Donna I. (from a poem by Dawn B.): I am busy smelling, hearing, remembering, finding, asking, tentatively touching my own existence, checking under stones to see if I am real[8]...

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[6] This cultural agenda fulfils, for BAAWA members, a variety of purposes: they become active makers of their culture, they recognize the work of women who have gone before, and they accomplish this through an active engagement with the mainstream art community. It means, as Dawn B. says, that "I will be able to build on ... history rather then being occupied by it."

[7] However, not all come to BAAWA with a political agenda. Some, like Jane A., name their need for connection with working artists as the primary motivation. "I wasn't angry with the system," she recalls, "because I hadn't even been in the system." In such a statement, she locates the isolation and exclusion from the mainstream art community that many other women artists have experienced. She identifies the benefits she has reaped from participating in a co-practising, co-learning community like BAAWA. Jane G. agrees, "That's what BAAWA is about. That's exactly what BAAWA is about, trying to get together to support each other to work."

[8] Each woman interviewed named a commitment to engaging in the BAAWA process and, through this, challenging the viewing audience. In a discussion with a BAAWA member, I noted that such a process "might be painful but [necessary]." Jane G. comments, "I can only work out of love. There is no other way for me to practice... I think I'm very committed. I don't hang back. I think commitment is the word. I say that I am and I am." Commenting on her relationship and commitment to her audience, Dawn B. notes, "I think you can still be successful but, you have to do it from the space that you know. You have to make... people turn into the real people they are and look at your art [from that place]."

Louise Forsyth (in B. Warland, 1990) writes, "In this place we meet and speak the evidence of our own truths" (p. 10). Forsyth sees this process as a way of activating dreams or forgotten memories. It is created through imaginative play, a play that attempts to break down, in the poet's case, literary convention and

(SQ: V/O. SLQ: Slides change to text "Bay Area Artists for Women's Art")

V/O: In naming ourselves we attend. In naming ourselves we commit. In naming ourselves we question. In naming ourselves we accept. In naming ourselves we challenge. In naming ourselves we finally accept our babbles' necessity. Throw down the stones.[9]

(During V/O each woman squats or stands or sits takes a handful of sand and then allows sand to run through her hands back to the ground.)

(SQ: Pebble sound cuts. Silence.)

Act 2: Doing.

Scene 1: Conceptualization of Model.

(LQ: light on sand fades quickly. SLQ: to black then on all three screens text "What".)

(SQ: V/O women's voices, variations on: "What?"[10] "What is she doing?" ... All five women

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produce alternative truths and extend women's knowledge (p. 10).

But this "play" is not a game. It is work. As Donna I. says in reflecting on her first BAAWA meeting, "I felt right away... that these were real working artists, they weren't just playing a game and acting a part. They were actually working and had the same problems that I did and... [they actually] wanted to do something about it."

[9] It is in this collective solidarity that BAAWA members experience a strength to speak out to the mainstream community. As Dawn B. says, "[BAAWA] combines the most honest searching of the individual with something that together has its power, a collaborative power.... I think that is what draws women [to BAAWA]. They probably wouldn't have contributed to anything if they felt they were the only one".

[10] **2. Doing** : Jane G., as spokeswoman for BAAWA, names the women's cultural question as "What? What did/do the women do?" She asks this of galleries, of the public, of the group, of me as researcher, and of herself. "It's important", she says, "to get women's work out there into the galleries so that it can be seen for at least 10 years and then the theoreticians can go to work." Feminist theory, she feels, must be grounded on the real experiences of women, and feminist art theory must draw on a large body of work that records the range and images of these experiences. If theory comes first or too soon, women artists may be silenced, afraid that their work won't fit an acceptable feminist ideology and women's cultural mapping may be stopped.

This category "Doing" then frames the major descriptive piece of this BAAWA study. "What?" I ask, "What did/do the BAAWA women do? How have they organized themselves? What is their process for planning and mounting exhibitions? How do they conduct research? What is education with BAAWA like? How does the community function for them?"

stride DS. On floor are metal buckets with soapy water and scrub brushes. All five vigorously scrub their hands & arms. SQ: "What" tape fades into music... rhythmic, repetitive, synthesized. SQ: V/O over music.)

V/O (from a poem by C. Watson for exhibition panel for The Eccentric Furniture Show): And so, we circle around, and circle around the boundaries of the earth. Flinching at the slavish movements we perform in honour of necessity — the bowl is washed, the knife replaced and our households ordered and managed without mystery.[11]

(SQ: music becomes quite loud. Women drop their brushes, pick up the buckets, turn and throw half of the water from the buckets onto the floor toward the sand. Sleeves are rolled up, hair tied back, shoes kicked off. They begin to vigorously scrub the floor toward the sand. When they finish they stand and throw the brushes back toward the buckets.)

(SQ: music cuts. Women freeze. SQ: V/O)

V/O (from poem by Gay Allison for The Flower Show catalogue): Finding original roots, women bend and pull, shake the earth; discover, discard, back and forth, back and forth, bodies in rhythm with the weather. Women take large steps, stride, stretch their muscles, grin; know intuitively the energy of movement. The men tell us the women's movement is too strident. To stride is to walk

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[11] **a) Conceptualisation of Model (includes curator/artist relationship and the role of leader):** The BAAWA members feel there is nothing mysterious about the way they conceive projects and model their process. Such is not the perception from outside the group. New members have felt confused. The host gallery, which has felt threatened by what it perceives as a powerful organisation, has sometimes asked BAAWA to pin its structure down. As Donna I. says, "A lot... don't understand why we don't have a secretary, a president, or a treasurer... It's hilarious." Jane G. adds, "BAAWA has this reputation of being a powerful organisation... [and]... we don't even have a filing cabinet!" A BAAWA meeting was held at one point, when Jane A. had felt overwhelmed in the leadership role, to examine whether BAAWA should have more structure. The decision was made to give Jane A. more support and allow BAAWA to maintain, for the time being, its fluidity. It is unlikely that it will take on a more traditional institutional structure. The group is forever evolving. There are always new projects happening, events being organised and members coming and going.

forward, fast, how wonderful she thinks.[12]

(Except for Jane G., all women remain at sand circle edge. They remove jackets. Underneath are layers of sweaters, shirts. They take off each garment and drop it to the ground at their feet until they only have T-shirts on. All the garments have sand in the pockets which spills out. Jane G. walks USC into the centre of the sandy area and begins to fill her pockets with sand.)

Jane G.: I suppose you are wondering what this is all about? What we are all about? Well, that's a good start. "What". "What" is the women's cultural question. What have those women done? What are they doing. What is she doing? What am I doing? What...?

(All women freeze. Dawn B. moves. The following texts are adapted from transcript material.)

Dawn B.: We're a bit chaotic. I have noticed that new people coming in really look confused and nervous. We're so loosely structured. We always seem to be apologising for the chaos that happens when we get together but the work always gets done. We are like a flock of birds all flopping around together. Suddenly we descend on something and create total chaos and leave all this stuff about on

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[12] BAAWA's membership is rarely the same from one event to the next. But, there is a strong core group. The four interviewed for this case study are part of that group. Others come and go, new members join, and a supportive audience is growing. All members actively participate with the group when they can or they need to. They are not, on the whole, worried about their process or whether or not the work will get done. As Dawn B. says, "I'm sure we'll work it all out as we go along."

Their confidence and active determination serve as tangible evidence of their belief in the concept of women artists as authors. Linda Klinger (1991), in challenging contemporary post-structuralist theories of authorship, writes:

> Women never enjoyed, in the first place, the privileges of transcendent subjecthood and authority now critiqued by post-structuralism... Collaborative... action is a particularly informative model for... feminist ideas regarding authorship... Collaboration does not stabilize the identity of the artist, it reframes her... Emphasizing production over product is essential; for it eliminates the distinction between non-specialist (leader/writer/audience) and specialist (author/artist) and allows the feminist artist to discover another identity through her solidarity with a larger body. (p. 44-45)

the ground and then we are up and off again somewhere else. It's a good thing we don't leave a lot of bird poop and dead feathers around...

(Dawn B. freezes.)

Donna I.: Sometimes we do... but the nests are wonderful. I don't see chaos myself. I see change, a kind of shaking and moving. If we did fit ourselves into a tight container, perhaps easier for others to understand, we'd freeze.

(Donna I. freezes.)

Jane A.: We exist in process.[13] Not just in how we organize our group but in the way we structure our exhibitions. As Jane calls it — we're "conceptually-based, process-oriented"... . It's not like we have a theme to work from. You know, it's like when someone says, "Let's do a show about trees?"

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[13] It is such an idea that informed Jane G.'s framing the pre-BAAWA and early BAAWA projects. She wanted to break down the specialist model of art curatorial practice and to encourage the formation of one based on the relationship of curator/artist. She recalls, "I looked into the participant-researcher model [also used in educational research]. I put things together in a conscious way and came up with the idea of doing an exhibition using that model.... It seemed a way to empower artists... to [allow them to] construct theoretical contexts for [their own] work without [these contexts] being imposed [on them] by curators not [directly] involved in art practice." But she had to alter the "shape" of this model to be responsive to difference and especially questions of gender. Jane fused "the workings of the artist-run centre with the feminist theory of difference... They could work together. As a curator/artist," she adds, "I think I am a contributor of context, not a validator, assessor or constructor of work."

This was to be the first of BAAWA models which determined and set the tone for future collective processes used in mounting exhibitions.

One strategy that Jane G. employs as a method for constructing context is that of consciousness-raising. She writes of The Flower Show process, "This curatorial project was based on the feminist intellectual tradition of consciousness-raising..." This process of group discussion and reflection, examined further in the next section on research and dialogue, is a major group activity especially in the planning stages of an exhibition.

Arlene Raven (1979) writes of the use of consciousness-raising activities at the Feminist Studio Workshop:

> Consciousness-raising is the core of the structure we use. It allows for closeness, promotes political awareness, and serves to bring up raw material for art and other creative activities. (p. 256-257)

Jane A. notes, "[It's not] just sitting around meeting every month and talking with each other but also [it's about] honing yourself to the experience, the discipline of fusing [ideas] into a project." As Jane G. adds, "The focus is on [developing] ideas rather than on specific pieces of work."

and everybody does a tree. The pieces then have nothing to do with each other except that superficially they all look like trees? But if you have a concept like growth, you can have a "egg" and a "tree" that resonate together because they are conceptually linked. That's it. Conceptually-based, process-oriented signifies not oriented to the product but how you got there.[14]

(Jane A. freezes.)

Pam P.: A project starts from a little germ of an idea. Sometimes it takes over a year to complete from when the discussion starts. For that first project, I was given a concept that I could use, that I could develop over a long period of time with other women. And they were all working in a similar direction. There was time and attention given to simply being together and talking about whatever was happening around construction, media, process. The experience gave me a specific direction for my art practice that I will have that for the rest of my life.

(Women move and stretch. They pick up their clothes and each move to a riser and face the screens. They begin to fold their clothes and put them in a pile on the risers as Jane G. speaks. Jane G. remains UC. SLQ: Slides of BAAWA exhibitions and works for those exhibitions are projected on the three screens.)

(SLQ: Slides of The Eccentric Furniture Show[15])

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[14] Projects emerge from these concepts or ideas. I found it significant that echoes of this curricular process seemed to appear in the working document, The Common Curriculum, Grades 1-9 (Ministry of Education and Training, Ontario, 1993). The proposed shift in curriculum for Ontario classrooms included an "emphasis on connections and relationships - relationships among ideas, among people, and among phenomena" (p. 1). It was to be a more "integrated programming and inquiry-oriented learning" (p. 7). Perhaps models like BAAWA's are influencing or being reflected in mainstream education?

[15] Information on BAAWA's pedagogical practices is available, though not extensively, to mainstream art educators. Each exhibition becomes the visible public trace of BAAWA's planning process. Written panels and catalogues, which accompany the exhibitions, inform the viewer of the process that accompanies the making of the work.

Jane G. (from curatorial statement for The Eccentric Furniture Show): The Eccentric Furniture Show evolved slowly over 18 months, out of a shared interest in eccentric objects or eccentricity or objectiveness, or eccentricity/objectivity - in fact all of the above. As the scope of the show enlarged to fill the gallery and encompass peripheral programming in performance, film, video and poetry, the underlying conceptual streams merged to form a deep flowing river of ideas. A rewarding environment for "plumbing the depths" but difficult to do so when ideas, images and thoughts are so many and flow so quickly and we have so little skill using the plumber's tools.

(SLQ: Slides of The Flower Show)

Jane G. (from curatorial statement for The Flower Show): Over the period of one year, a group of working women artists shared a conceptual investigation of the flower image without trying to evolve a uniform style, imagery, or conclusion. Discussions ranged from a focus on personal yearnings and experiences, to historical investigations of the equation of flower imagery with the female body. This curatorial project was based on the feminist intellectual tradition of consciousness-raising.

(LQ: Spots over each of the artists. Jane G. still UC in dark blue light. Others stand or sit and move in brighter light on risers. SLQ: Shot on all three screens of Jane G. wrapped in a grey blanket standing at a railing looking directly out at viewer. Each woman speaks to audience and to each other. Text is adapted from transcripts.)

Dawn B.: I think we're grappling with a lot on an ongoing basis. Each project shifts us a bit. We learn. But, when it all started it was on Jane's shoulders.

Donna I.: Some still think Jane is the one in charge. But, she has always wanted everyone to be in charge.

Jane A.: She really encouraged me. I finally joined BAAWA after Jane had been pushing me for quite a while. I really had no idea what I was getting into but it sounded great.

Dawn B.: It's funny. Everything happens magically with Jane. I was with a group of women and we were all talking about how we all met her. Every connection was unusual in some way.

How did we meet? Well, both our kids went to the same school here in town and the teacher had asked us separately if we'd like to judge a kite-making contest. So, there we were sitting judging the kites together and she leaned over to me and said, "I'm looking for someone to share a studio space with. Are you interested?"

Pam P.: Are you interested? Who wouldn't be! I jumped at the chance when she asked me to join a pre-BAAWA project. She seemed so determined to make it work. It almost seemed as if her will could just made it all happen.

Dawn B.: I think part of her strength is that she is so articulate. She can take ideas from all of us, then form them into a solid concept.

Jane A.: Yet, you can't call her a narrowly focused person. It's the process that's important for her. It's the intensity that she brings to the organising, the creating.

Pam P.: The will, the drive.

Donna I.: She pushes herself to grow and we have to push ourselves to meet that challenge.

Jane A.: Yes, and it worked. None of us would have got involved in a project without her faith behind us.

Pam P.: She was doing all the outside work - dealing with the public, the galleries and that gave us the permission to do our inside stuff.

Jane A.: All we had to do was make the work honest.

Dawn B.: It's almost as if she has been two steps ahead of us knowing what our directions are to be. Maybe it's so she can look back and encourage us along.

Donna I.: And rope us all back together when we stray off too much.

Dawn B.: I think her role is the biggest in the planning stages. I think she has that big vision of what it will all look like when it's done. She sees so far down the road. It can be a problem. When it comes time to realize the project, Jane's at steps 3, 4, 5 and we're still grappling with 1, and wondering... (laughs)

Pam P.: She inspires us.

Donna I.: And we lean on her.

Jane A.: And it takes us off the hook.

Dawn B.: And sometimes she caves in and we realize she's a woman just like us.

Pam P.: You know, sometimes I feel intimidated by her, like I'm being judged for screwing up.

Dawn B.: I sometimes feel that too, but when I hear comments from her about me or my work, I know that it isn't true.

Pam P.: I think it's because I respect her so much.

Jane A.: Admire her.

Donna I.: Respect her.

Dawn B.: Put yourself in Jane's position for a while. She is such a strong person that everyone treats her like a parent and not like an equal or a friend. She's really a very private and sensitive person.

(SLQ: Slides change to shots of shirts, in piles, folded. LQ: Spots out on artists. Area light up on DS space. The artists move and pick up clothes. Through the next section they lay out the shirts around the circumference of the set DS. SQ: Applause which fades to silence. Jane's blue spot

changes to bright light. She smiles and looks out to the audience.)

Jane G. (from her acceptance speech for the Woman of the Year in the Arts Award presentation, 1991. She uses this speech as a teaching opportunity. Only the first three sentences are quoted here. The remainder is adapted from transcripts.): I am a visual artist, so this is actually my first experience with applause. By nature I am a retiring individual and my first thought was to say thank you and retreat from the microphone as quickly as possible. My second thought was, "What the hell..."

I wasn't always aware that some women assigned the role to me of powerful person or super person. That feels very foreign to me. The whole point is that I'm involved in this process too. I would hope one thing that I'm good at is allowing things to happen. I try and let a situation go, let it change. I try to step away and let the lateral shift, or forward jump, or even backward turn, happen. Look, I don't try and pretend. I did initiate those projects. I did set the tone. I did act as a leader.[16] And, in doing so, I tried to motivate people. I tried to lead by example. I made

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[16] Discussing and determining a project's focus and structure are a part of BAAWA's self-generating, defining activities. Such activities can consume members' time. This is especially so for those members who have taken on leadership roles.

As is indicated in the script discussion compiled from various transcript comments, the artists are aware of the responsibilities and privileges of leadership. Arlene Raven (1979), in writing about Feminist Studio Workshop activities, notes:

> We find that women have difficulty acknowledging the authority of other women as well as assuming authority themselves on the basis of their skills or knowledge... [Women] acquire expertise in a certain field [and then] develop feelings of competence. (p. 256)

The BAAWA leadership experience is similar but, as in any other community, it differs. Each individual experience of leadership in BAAWA also varies. All interviewed seem to have no difficulty in accepting and supporting a member's role as leader. Some question however, whether they are yet suited for leadership. Jane A. comments on her own feelings, "I feel very anxious about whether I could do this curator/artist thing." She and Dawn B. are exploring, in a smaller BAAWA sub-group, different ways to collectively make exhibition decisions.

But, for the larger group and especially a larger project, a leader becomes necessary. Dawn B. has, at present, taken on that role for BAAWA. "But", she says, "You really don't get any of your own work done!"

commitments and so did everyone else. I am very committed. Maybe overly. Maybe too much. Maybe I run and everyone tries to keep up. But I didn't control everything. If there is something happening that I can't control, I take it as a gift. Leadership and control. They are very different.

At this point Dawn is taking a leadership role. I think that is changing the style of the group because she is a different style of person. It's a very interesting process. I wouldn't want to work any other way. I couldn't work any other way.

Scene 2: Research and Dialogue.[17]

(LQ: lights up. SQ: fast, loud, rhythmic music. Jane walks DS to circumference of circle. All women walk around on the shirts in a circle. SLQ: on screens slides of questions that echo questions on V/O. SQ: V/O, music continues but fades to allow voice(s) to be heard.)

V/O (different voices, adapted from BAAWA's past individual and group research questions): What am I doing? What do I feel about this? What am I saying when I do paintings of penises, lots of penises? What does my grandmother have to do with this? How can I resituate the domestic site? How can my work, the work of a woman artist be accorded respect in a public gallery? Why am I angry, sad, uncomfortable or passionate about this? What is that dream trying to tell me? How can I make that relationship into a visual metaphor? What would happen if I used handmade paper from each of those sites? How can I get this structure to stand on its own. Does anyone know how to use a power drill? What would happen if I started to do flower paintings?

(SQ: music cuts. SLQ: What? Women freeze and face inwards.)

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[17] **b) Research and Dialogue (of/with self, of/with group and with larger cultural context)**: While research and dialogue are very different activities, they often complement each other in BAAWA. Members read, study, observe and as they perform these tasks, they reflect individually and through discussion with the group and with the larger cultural community. It is in this reflection that they create context.

V/O (all voices): What! Me? I don't do flower paintings!

(LQ: lights fade SLQ: screens fade to black. SQ: music. Single instrument, perhaps a flute or oboe, slowly traces single notes. Women stand in the space between the circumference and the risers facing out to the audience.)

Jane G. (from text by Jane G. for The Eccentric Furniture Show): As I look at this show I am aware of certain images breaking on the surface like bubbles on a stream. Images of birth, fragments of text, reflections, containers, surprises - all call up their opposites in alternating pulses, decay, silence, absorption, emptiness, death. If I dip into the depths flowing underneath the stream of images I might cup a question, which by asking itself, will let me become human...[18]

(SQ: music fades away. LQ: lights up a bit. Women take sheets of note paper from their pockets on which text is written.)

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[18] BAAWA women use this process to inform and direct an art practice. Feminist theory, ideas around media use, formal questions regarding composition, and various images, sensations and experiences merge as they work.

Each investigates questions which relate to a personal search and these questions are often linked to a group project. The research process involves reading, viewing exhibitions, meeting other artists, and attending lectures and workshops.

Sometimes just performing these activities can trigger research questions. As Donna I. reveals, "I went to see the Degas show in Ottawa and I saw all sorts of [naked women] bathers... Wow, I thought, are these ever erotic and exploitative! So, I went home and had some fun doing a series on men in intimate situations."

Sometimes a search can affirm the artist's own progress. Jane A. comments, "I went to hear Liz Magor. She was the first person I ever heard [who spoke of being] an artist. She used her material to make sense of her world and her own experiences. That was so important to me."

When asked if they used experience or theory to direct their practice all artists interviewed said both. As Jane A. says, "They all go in there together." The initial problem might be a formal art one, one suggested by feminist theoretical investigation, or one located in the self. But, it is explored, even at times resolved, through the art practice. Jane G.(1992) analyses the complex strategy used by her to construct "Mixed Sizes 1978, 1982" for Of the Body, by the Body, with the Body :

> During these years I had two small children and life drawing was the major part of my practice. As I look back at those years I am aware of my need... to try and reknit the integrity of the "haptic space" within which my body moves through the world. For the mother of young children, this intimate space is never wholly her own, it is constantly broached. These drawings have a formal and linear quality which allowed me to remake a personal closure which I needed to work as an artist.

(SLQ: for the next section five slides of each of the women's faces come up and fade down on each screen. When Jane speaks all three screens have images of her face, when Dawn speaks all three have her face ... etc. The other four women stand still reading their notes while the one woman speaks.)

Jane G. (adapted from transcript): Dear Donna, I think my work is deepening. I've always been committed to speaking from a gendered site but now... I'm including elements of my past in the work that I thought I had left behind, architecture for instance. So, rather than just installing an exhibition, I'm making an installation!

Donna I. (adapted from transcript): Dear Jane A., Should I say to these critics, "My work is very personal. It's my life?" I mean, that's why I don't ask them for advice or look for their criticism. How can they criticise something that is my personal reaction to something? It's mine.

Sure I want to say something. I want a response. But, it's the idea that's important. I start with that idea. I think about how I can get it across. Okay. I'm a woman and I paint a penis but I'm not allowed to show it, it's censored. That's interesting. So I do everything I can to that image 'penis' and I get a series shown somehow. It's like I'm saying to these people, "Get used to it. This is a penis. It's not going to kill you. You're not going to die of shock!"

Jane A. (adapted from her writing, and transcripts): Dear Dawn, Last night while I was working on a series of boxes which included the steamer chest, the forensic tray, the baby box... I had a night of terror. All night I dreamed, off and on, so desperately trying to build the walls of the boxes, struggling and struggling. And I had this deadly certain knowledge that this endeavour had everything to do with holding back madness. I woke convinced of the power of those boxes. They are fortresses between order and chaos.

My faith in this, though, has come more slowly via the clay from my body. Things are becoming what they need to become.[19]

It's strange, I build and struggle and force form, while you find and gather your things or ideas and allow the relationship between them to be full of meaning.

Dawn B. (adapted from artist statement): Dear Pam, I think I am an observer of the details of living. I want to absorb all possible influences and sensations while conceiving the idea for the piece. When the physical work begins I can only hope that my hands and eyes will adequately interpret the internal turmoil and that the visual result will realize this mental and physical gathering process.

(Pam, rather than just reading from a letter, turns and speaks to Dawn and, as she does, others listen. SLQ: starts with slides of Pam then fades into slides of Pam and Dawn and then other pairs and groupings for this next section. The shots are of faces together, close up. There are only

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[19] In-depth research and committed critical self-reflection is what, I feel, makes much of BAAWA women's work deeply resonant. Jane G. recalls forming her research question for The Flower Show, "[It] was triggered by a specific comment [made by someone] in a meeting at the Burlington Cultural Centre, 'Oh, you better watch it or you're going to get all those ladies with their flower paintings down here.'... [I reacted]. If you have had an art education, you internalize that [kind of critique about women's flower painting.] So, I decided to examine it. What is this? Why do I feel this way about these women and this kind of art?... [It was] the contradiction in me that was interesting."

A self-reflective examination of these contradictions can be demanding. Jane A. comments on her own experience, "Writing this stuff is HARD. I keep going back over ideas I have written, wanting to peel them to deeper layers of honesty. It's not that easy to know what's personally true [or] what's [a] glib appropriation of the seductive ideas that are floating around."

Intense and rewarding experiences are not uncommon. Author Virginia Woolf (L. Woolf, 1978) writes of her own:

> I have to some extent forced myself to break every mould and find a fresh form of being, that is an expression for everything I feel or think. So that when it is working I get the sense of being fully energised --- nothing stunted. But this needs constant effort, anxiety and rush.(p. 213)

"To some", writes Dawn B., "this [process] may seem like a sort of narcissistic self-analysis but I believe that this exploration of the inner is a necessary process of discovery of self. And, a recognition of this place in others must be resolved before a journey toward the larger place of 'perceived reality/reality of community' is begun. But," she adds, "if you are stressed and unhappy with the process then you had better change it somehow or it will drive you crazy."

about three slide changes for each screen.)

Pam P. (adapted from transcript discussion): Something strikes me about your work, Dawn, especially in those pieces that you use text. It feels as if you are almost restorying something from your own life.

Dawn B.: Yeah, that's true. I'm also giving clues - more to me than the viewer. These clues are keys that open doors to events stored in whole areas of my brain.

Pam P.: What happens when you start to work with them?

Dawn B.: A lot bubbles up.

Pam P.: Me, I rip out nails and peer at some painful, horrid, icky thing. I give it form, look at it, let myself heal a bit and then make it into art.

Donna I.: That's what I admire when I see work like yours. It takes a lot of guts, a lot of work to make it. It's totally not safe. Jane A., your work's like that.

Jane A.: Yeah?

Donna I.: It's powerful, frightening, a new kind of aesthetic.

Jane A.: Are you sure you're not feeling your own boxes?

(Women laugh.)

Pam P.: Sometimes we do. But, Donna, when I look at your work I don't see my or another woman's reflection. Rather, I hear a woman speaking to me through the work. It's different. I feel different.

Jane G.: We each reflect on our experience and own it in our own way?

Jane A.: Right, and that is the only honest thing to do.

Donna I.: Are we jumping all over the place?

Dawn B.: Nope, this is great.[20]

(Women all begin to talk at once in small groups. SQ: tape picks up sound of group noise.)

(Women lower voices and eventually stop speaking and become still looking out at audience by the end of next V/O. SQ: group noise level drops and cuts to silence by the end of V/O.)

V/O (from text by Jane G. from The Eccentric Furniture Show catalogue): I'm interested in a structuralist theory which, using Freud as a jumping-off-spot, arrives at the notion that women shouldn't be able to speak. It's hard to believe such ideas could circulate in the same century as all the jokes dependent on the idea that women talk too much.[21]

(Silence. Women looking into the audience. Dawn speaks.)

Dawn B. (from a poem by Dawn B.): Who invited you here anyway? Just when I think that the gate is locked and I am in my safest place you enter dancing or crashing about off the furniture that I have carefully arranged... I need a rest. All you do is shake me and jangle my ends and make me peer into shadows and what do you mean? How can you say you were here first?[22]

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[20] One venue which makes use of these private inquiries is group discussion. Says Dawn B., "We talk about personal problems in a professional setting and use them as a source for work... I think that is part of the value of a group like BAAWA because you have other people analyzing what you are doing and commenting on how your life is going and how you're managing to take your art into your personal life. And, other people's experiences... reinforce and strengthen what you are trying to do in your own life."

"We learn", I comment, "from each other's obsessions."

Consciousness-raising, the traditional feminist name for such activity, functions in a group by providing, writes Ruth Iskin (1983), "a safe and appropriate setting for the expression of feelings and as a politicizing experience through which women discuss identity with each other" (p. 174). This activity is intended to support, not condemn, the individual. As Dawn B said to me about my own research, "You don't have to defend anything to us [in BAAWA] because that is who you are."

[21] Not all group interaction is intense critical debate. BAAWA is a place where there is, notes Jane G., "always that sharing of literature and sharing of ideas... [It's] very important to me to have a place where I can discuss ideas with people [with whom] I don't have to translate."

[22] But, translation is, at times, necessary. BAAWA's mandate suggests that members consciously address themselves to others outside the group. Jane G. comments, "We could turn away [from the mainstream] and do our own thing and it might be a very enriching experience for us all but, I really feel it is necessary to

Scene 3: Education.[23]

(SLQ/LQ: Fade to black. SQ: rhythmic synthesizer music. Women each move DS of a riser and take out a bucket of paint and a brush from inside each riser. Each woman holds a different colour of paint. LQ: lights up to half on risers. SQ: music fades down to allow V/O to be heard. Women paint the palms of their own hands)

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address these exclusions that occur."

Frigga Haug & Others (1987) note that this kind of "political project means... moving the [female] body into the world."

But, by engaging in such a project, BAAWA members are met with resistance. A particular situation, for example, developed with BAAWA's host gallery. Some BAAWA members were confused and astonished. Jane A. comments, "I was... amazed. Why do they think we are a threat? What did we do to them? We just pursue our own interests and our own projects. We develop programming and we bring in people [to the gallery] who are interesting..."

Dawn B., in another discussion with me analyzed the situation, "I think [certain members in the centre] were threatened by the way we put [the exhibition Lives Built on Shifting Sands] together. [There was] the chaotic way we used their resources. They were really threatened by the success of it. If we got into heavier political [programming] I'm sure there would be no backing there."

An article, written by one gallery member for the gallery's journal (Finlay, 1993), touches on his objections to the active presence of BAAWA in the artist-run-centre:

> Members [of BAAWA] are active and hold several positions on this year's board and, as with any controlling group, its mandate permeates the directions and operations of the host. They are the ones who arrange meetings, make things happen, largely in part due to the neglect of others. Recent programming has been dominated [by] feminist issues and ideology. (p. 4)

Some objections to the group and its work are not readily accessible. For example, an artist's work was removed from a BAAWA-curated exhibition in a public gallery without the artist's or the curator's knowledge. The censorship was not discovered until it came time to strike the show. No clear reason for the pieces' removal was given by the gallery director.

BAAWA feels it must respond to such actions. But this kind of activity can drain members. "Sometimes", explains Dawn B., "[having to] struggle to keep up this connection [to the mainstream]... means that we don't have the energy to put anywhere else." They become distracted from practising their art and educating their public through their exhibitions. Their agenda to teach can become deflected into their simply trying to create a space in which to be allowed to do so.

[23] **c) Education (of self, group and larger cultural context)**: Learning of women in BAAWA occurs in a range of locations and contexts, for instance from Tim Horton's to gallery curatorial committee meetings. The women are intensely involved in setting their own agendas, pursuing their own research, reflecting on priorities and concerns in group discussions, and connecting with the larger art community. Their process of research and dialogue has been discussed. However, the definition of their individual learning, the learning and teaching functions of the group, and their role as educators both in galleries through exhibitions and as resource people to the community is specifically of interest here.

(SQ: music continues under this next section. LQ: lights up on risers. Women freeze and hold up their painted hands.)

V/O (Text from "Remaking" a performance by Pam P. for The Eccentric Furniture Show): But you were looking in the wrong place. You were looking at the back instead of beneath.[24] Beneath the page is a story. Beneath the page[25] is the story. Beneath the page is everything that ever was.[26]

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[24]Some women struggle with what they feel is their lack of traditional educational credentials. After listening to a founding member of MAWA (Manitoba Artists for Women's Art) speak, Dawn B. commented, "[The MAWA speaker] thought that, no matter what, you should bite the bullet and get those credentials. [She thought] they were really important for women artists [to have so that they could achieve] national and international recognition."

Jane A. adds, "I always find that I'm saying I don't have those good letters after my name. When I draw something, I don't know whether it's a good drawing or not, because I never got an A+ on it. I don't have anything legitimate to tell me I'm a good artist or not. It's a matter of whether I feel like an artist or my work is perceived as art. That is very fragile. When I get a bad review or someone comes down hard on me, it's tough." Both Dawn and Jane A. decided not to continue with full-time graduate work and yet their education continues. It is, however, an education not necessarily accommodated in the mainstream community.

Sally Gearhart writes (Bunch & Pollack, 1983) of mainstream post-secondary education:

> Academia brooks only token deviance from its norms... It offers survival and acceptance to those who are themselves willing to be mutilated into professionals. (p. 4)

"I've managed," says Dawn, "to find my own work. I'd have to give that up and conform a bit to get those credentials and I'm not sure I want to do that right now."

[25]But their involvement in BAAWA has given them the tools and the confidence to grow. Working with the raw material of their own lives, they refashion it through their art. It is an active and conscious narrative process. Clandinin and Connelley (1991) speak of this narrative practice as "a primary phenomenon in education and a basic phenomenon of life." They take the following view:

> [T]he storied quality of experience is both unconsciously restoried in life and consciously restoried, retold and relived through the process of reflection... Deliberate storying or restorying one's life (or, as we shall see, a group or cultural story) is therefore a fundamental method of personal (and social) growth... Narrative method is the description and restorying of the narrative structure of the educational experience. (p. 259)

Dawn B. phrases this learning as follows, "I think that examining my experiences and putting them back together again has allowed me to look at issues that were always there but that I had kind of put away as unimportant art. [The BAAWA process] has sort of clarified some things for me."

She adds in another interview, "The way my life has gone, I've always been the object of another's gaze and I've sort of accepted that, but I've never allowed myself to be the object of my gaze. So now I'm switching it around."

Sometimes this self-reflective learning is an intense and challenging process. I note in discussion with Dawn, "We have years and years of programming to change. I think that makes it all the more difficult to grow." She acknowledges, "I know. It's always a surprise to me because I think that I'm beginning to enlighten myself and then suddenly I do something and I look at what I've done and I think, why did I do that?" "But,"

(The women make a print of their hands on the top of the riser. Each woman moves throughout the next scene to the next riser, until each one has put her hand print on every riser.)

Jane G. (from written statement for Mentor Programme): Unlike most other primary producers in the arts, visual artists work in isolation with complex technologies. Add to this the fact of women's isolation and you have an equation for arrested career. I've always want to give another passionately committed woman artist a leg up.

Donna I. (Adapted from written statement for the Mentor Programme): Twenty years ago I would have given anything for someone to talk to. Someone to answer my questions - someone to just understand how hard it was to be a woman artist in a male art world. I can listen to other woman because I've been there too.[27]

I reply, "I figure if I don't do this I'm never going to change, learn, or grow." Jane A. phrases this differently: "I find that I'm trying to identify what is my core of energy, my strength, my source... I've been trying to figure this out and I'm surviving."

And some of this growth and learning is being acknowledged by members in the larger art community. As Jane A. realizes, "I remember a friend telling me what an instructor said to her at Dundas Valley School, 'Well, you've taught me something. I didn't think a woman over 40 could keep growing!'"

[26]Using the self as referent, they go on to research and widen their scope.

As Dawn notes, "Now that I've discovered myself, I need to start talking about something else. I'm really interested in the environment so that's a natural progression." It seems that once women are given a chance to define a process that grounds their life experiences in their work, they can move out more confidently to embrace a comprehensive and confident practice. "The revolutionary factor [in women's art] is not a style, " writes L. Alloway, "But the identity, cultural and individual, of the artists themselves" (Collins & Sandell, 1984, p. 60).

[27]The individual artist's learning is complemented and accelerated by the group process. "We learn," says Dawn B., "to be friends and to be artists... sometimes I think it's that personal moment, not the big statements, that does the actual touching."

I commented in a discussion with Dawn, "I feel like I'm learning by example rather than being taught."

Donna I. is more specific. "Being in a group is great. You share the work, you get all this help, you share everything... No-one shakes a finger at you and says you'd better keep working or you'd better come up with something really good... If you see other women doing it, and managing even though they have... other commitments you think [well] I can do it, too."

Dawn B. adds something a little different, "I don't think the shows are the most important part of it... you learn to be friends and to be artists [in BAAWA]. It's the only group that I belong to where this is chaired.

Dawn B. (from written statement for the Mentor Programme): I like to share what I know; to use my experience of life and art to speak to another who can really hear me. I am a teacher, but also a student, a giver but also a receiver, a mentor but also a sister.

Jane A. (adapted from transcript): Cynthia came by the other day and we did a trade. She's about 24, a little younger than my daughter. She's bright, clever, a very gifted young woman. I may not have the formal education but then she doesn't have my experience. We understand each other completely![28]

Pam P. (adapted from personal narrative): One evening I was going to a critique with Dawn. We got out of the car and she said, "Look at that! That's Venus and the moon aligned together. Isn't that amazing!" I was impatient to get to the gallery, but she had stopped me and said, "Look, Pam. Pay attention!"[29]

Dawn B. (adapted from a transcript): One of my little nieces was here one time and she went home

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When you belong to an art group no-one wants to reveal their secrets, they only want to get shown. I'm in this group because I want to show, but there's more than that, too."

[28]For each person the learning needs and experiences are different. Some like the solidarity with only women artists, some the personal connections with a range of different women of different ages and experience.

But there are also some male BAAWA members. They have exhibited with the women and have spoken in support of BAAWA events. They have not, on the whole, notes Jane, been as involved and supportive, she thinks, as the men in Manitoba Artists for Women's Art.

Jane A. comments, "[The male members] haven't been that active and I'm not sure if they have felt all that comfortable. There have been a few times when it was necessary for BAAWA to be angry - angry against male institutions, against men. Guys have to have pretty strong egos to feel okay about sitting in on that kind of discussion." Also, some women feel uncomfortable about talking about certain things with men present. While men are not discouraged from joining the group, I did not have a sense that they were actively solicited. Most education with men happens outside of BAAWA meetings.

[29]Women are, however, welcomed. A plan, known officially as the Mentor Program, was planned to formally provide an educational setting for women artists. Modelled on MAWA's Advisor Programme, "in which senior women artists share their experience with women who are beginning their art careers" (Dike, 1990, p. 16), it was supported and funded by the Hamilton and Regional Arts Council (Brown, 1994) and was very successful.

and said to her mom, "I like to go over to Auntie Dawn's because she has rocks all over her house." Her mother is quite different from me. She'd be horrified to have rocks sitting around her house.[30]

(Women look out to audience. SQ: music stops. Women take paint and brushes and go to buckets DS. They drop paint pails. Using the remaining water in the buckets they wash their hands and dry them on one of the shirts. Each shirt is then thrown down on the top of the bucket. LQ: women recede into darkness, light is up on the painted hands on the risers. SLQ: An image of a giant hand made of stone - from work by Jane.)

V/O (from a newspaper review of Lives Built on Shifting Sands curated by BAAWA): The show has been a catalyst for the coming together of many who have been to the gallery and who attended Stepping Stones, the evening of poetry, music, art and performance that was held last Saturday.[31]

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[30]The education of women, men and children beyond the immediate group is already one of BAAWA's many functions. The outside community looks to the group as a resource. "I routinely get calls from people," says Jane G., "if they are doing a proposal for Artists in the Schools or writing a grant or making a decision or feeling discouraged or whatever. And I'm sure there are other people in the group who have had the same experiences."

Women who have had contact with BAAWA women gain not just practical information but also access to new conceptual frames. Dawn notes, "It's so interesting to explain the concept [of restorying a personal experience] to women who aren't artists. I can see their wheels turning as they see how they can apply it to their own lives... Every woman seems to understand that concept of self-examination."

Both Donna and Dawn commented on teaching situations with men: Donna on dialogues she has had with her son and his friends as they pose for her paintings, Dawn on reactions from her sons and husband. "Sometimes," Dawn says, "I think men are a bit dense and they only learn by example so I try and be an example... I know when [I do something that's right] because I can see their little hairs standing up on their necks... [They're] lucky to have me."

[31]This commitment to teach addresses BAAWA's public mandate which is to speak out to a wider audience. "We want," says Jane G., "to be part of that wide audience. We want to come on our own terms. It means we don't remove ourselves but in fact inject energy into, and engage with, the art scene. We act as catalysts."

And it is the exhibitions that most visibly serve this function. I speak of learning in the gallery as a form of connected knowing. I ask Jane, "Do, you think that people connect to BAAWA women's art through their own personal narratives?" "That's part of it," comments Jane G. "The [BAAWA] exhibit helps you find that connection. [For The Eccentric Furniture Show, for example,] you could use the body language of walking through a home to walk through the gallery. You cannot always take the body into a dialogue with art..."

Written texts are also part of BAAWA exhibits. They are in catalogues, on panels or as part of a

The turn-out was greater than was expected and for many who came, the evening was salutary and cathartic.[32]

(Women stand and look at USC. LQ: blue spots on women. SLQ: rocks with flowers. SQ: V/O)

Scene 4: Role of Community.[33]

V/O (from text by Dawn B.): This was my grandmother's garden. These jewels are secret words she left for me, a garden dialogue. In the house the words seemed always misunderstood, but the

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specific piece. "They don't," notes Jane G., "give a [closed] answer, which I think is very important. They do provide more information that can be integrated with the visual work to create an interpretation. But [a text] doesn't tell you what [the piece] is about."

Donna I. presents a specific example of gallery learning. "I did exhibit this one piece, "Your Turn", in which I put a nude painting of my husband on this pedestal. I then painted the pedestal with all this feminist graffiti... I walked [into the gallery] at the opening, and there were all these people — even the Mayor was there. Well, all these people were on their knees trying to read the pedestal. It was really funny. I actually got [some] guy in a suit down on his hands and knees, crawling around the gallery, trying to read [my] stuff!"

[32]While getting people to BAAWA shows is an important educational goal, members also feel it is important to promote, encourage and educate a wide audience to be supporters of the expansion and recognition of women's art production. Jane G., when accepting her Woman of the Year in the Arts Award (1991) summarized her and BAAWA's "prescription for cultural transformation." She urged her audience to go to galleries, look at women's work, ask to see women's work and collect the work of women artists. "Go to galleries and educate yourself - don't be afraid to see the 'gender thing' at the centre of the re-thinking, re-constructing, re-interpreting, re-mediating of both historical and contemporary art. Enjoy yourself - this is an exciting time for a woman to be involved in the visual arts."

[33]**d) Role of Community (for self, for group, and within larger cultural context)**: The traditional ideal of feminist community is that of being "a foundation for the sociopolitical emancipation of women. [Iris Young (1990) feels such an ideal] camouflages the assumptions upon which the concept of community is constructed. In her view this concept 'devalues and denies difference' (p. 305)" (Hicks, 1990, p. 42). Jane G. acknowledges the homogeneous membership and traditional sociopolitical mandate of BAAWA but speaks of it as community that is informed by the "feminist philosophy of difference."

Members are generally of a similar cultural and racial background and generally all concerned with similar art issues. There is, however, recognition and support in the BAAWA structure for individual agendas. And it is the balance between collective solidarity and connectedness, and individual differences and needs, that can facilitate members' growth and sense of identity.

language is different in the garden.[34]

V/O (from text by Jane A.): I find myself, more than ever going out to my garden, drawn day by day into the unending process, doing it, I am now aware, with no goal but the doing. And that, perhaps, is where faith really comes in.[35]

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[34]When these BAAWA women speak of their community, common words emerge. These are: connection, support and acceptance. They flow out of many discussions we have on the group. Jane A. says, "Your need for connectedness comes from a deeper place in you and it seems to more important, even though you are also explicitly, consciously political. At least to me that is the case... We chose each other — it's different in an art school. [BAAWA is] informal and there's mutual support." Jane G. notes, "The collective does provide support. As you go out on a limb, there's a feeling that there are other people around that tree that may be headed in the same direction."

Donna. I. speaks of particular aspects of BAAWA's support: "Sometimes it feels just awful to be alone... My husband is luckily very supportive but it is not the same as having other women artists... It's really freeing. If you have a problem you'll get an answer or somebody will try and help you... Nobody says, 'That's a stupid idea' or 'That stinks.' Everyone pulls together."

Feeling connected is also important for BAAWA women. Dawn B. recalls, "When I first started being connected with women artists it was such a revelation to me. It was so wonderful to know there really were some other people that were interested in the same things that I was and were thinking the same things I was." Donna. I. remembers, "We would get together and just talk about our work and that was heaven. I'd just sit there and think I've died and gone to heaven. I didn't even have to finish a sentence [before] all the heads would be nodding in agreement."

Acceptance was the third important aspect of community for BAAWA women. Donna. I. says, "You can just relax and put your feet up... [There's] a nice safe feeling I get when I'm with these artists." "I feel," I comment, "That I'm being accepted as a normal, fallible person, and that is [great]."

Support, connectedness and acceptance has an effect on the individual members. Says Donna I., "The validation we get by being part of this smaller community is really important. [It gives] us the strength to stick our foot [out] into the larger community." This shift in individual confidence then affects how the group can act. "Coming together," notes Dawn B., "[makes us] stronger... Our work connects and [this allows us to have] a strong body of work to present to venues... when we are working on social or political issues there's too much work for one person to take on. We do it together and we are a stronger voice as a result."

"We are all so different," says Donna. I. "Some have the attributes I don't have. Some can go [out] and be aggressive and actively curate and deal with galleries, others can write. It all balances out."

[35]However, molding a cohesive voice for a project or an event can be challenging. BAAWA's process is aimed at producing independent, outspoken women. In fact, I comment, "It is the support and acceptance from the group that helped me develop confidence and independence." Says Donna., "Everyone is on their own track... They are doing their own struggle and are on their own tangent... rather than grabbing each other's ideas." They work, as Jane A. says "in the spirit of good will and try and funnel it into one voice." She adds, "It is very hard because ultimately [a project] has to come together as some kind of unified statement."

Says Dawn B. about this process, "I have real difficulty working with other people because I'm so fixed on my own ideas... So I try to compensate for that. I try to keep a little bit back and not go charging in and organizing people... I try and see how other people are working and reacting and then see how I can fit into the structure."

V/O (from text by Pam P.): Now much older, I walk into this world of women still unable to reconcile it with the real world. But, as I lie with my young daughter beside me or visit a woman with a two-day-old child, the air seems so still. I can feel the flowers growing.[36]

V/O (from text by Jane G.) The child, the mother, the flowers in clumps. The child outside in play. The child inside the garden walls, the daughter.

(SQ: music, a series of close-but-different-notes begins and continues. Women walk slowly USC to sand circle. LQ: lights fade out DS and come up a blue colour USC on sand circle. SLQ: slide of single rock on screens.)

Act 3: Reflecting and Assessing.[37]

An experiment in creating a collaborative storefront exhibition was being planned for July, 1993: "How," asks Jane A., "do I submerge my personal work into a collective process and still do something?" "My feeling," says Dawn B., "is that people won't put too much of themselves into [this project]. That's my impulse — I want to join in, but I don't want to put too much at stake."

It is a conflict. As Susan Krieger (1983) notes in her research on a women's community, "the desire for personal affirmation from the group is great and the complementary desire for assertiveness of individuality is also strong" (xv).

It would seem that in situations where projects are clearly defined and the artists are free to explore their own interpretations of the larger curatorial statement, little fear is experienced. But, when a project which is to be generated and conceived collaboratively is planned, the independent voice that these women worked so hard to achieve, may be submerged in the collective one. However, while they are cautious, they do acknowledge the potential for growth in such collective projects. As Krieger notes, "the individual could... emerge from experiences with a better sense of boundaries between herself and others and as a result, she [could] be more aware of herself as a complete and separate person" (xiv).

[36]In spite of any difficulties — and there have been a few disclosed by those interviewed — all interviewed remain committed to the group. Jane A. states, "We know we need each other and that we nurture each other and benefit each other. We're not going to let that go."

Once some have identified and solidified their practice, the group serves a slightly different function. "It's like this place I can go back to get recharged," I comment. "I think," says Dawn, "that people will drift in and out as their situations and energies dictate, and I think that is the best thing about [BAAWA]."

Adds Jane A., "I think we all benefit from this collective process and I think we have to value it as a [place] for interchange. But I don't think anyone would call it our source or even main interest. We do need it. It's a field in which we exist and I don't know if I'd be working [now] if I didn't have it]."

[37] **3. Reflecting and Assessing (of self, of group and in relation to larger cultural context)**: BAAWA members reflect on and reassess on an ongoing basis the growth and development of their own art practice, their relationship with the collective, the collective structure and process, and the collective's ability to be

V/O (from text by Jane for the catalogue for The Eccentric Furniture Show): The world is the sleeper. The artist can offer the dream.[38]And I think that when artists create, we are giving form to this stuff whether or not we choose,[39] whether or not society chooses.

V/O (from text by Jane G. from The Eccentric Furniture Show catalogue): When art is information, new choices have to be made. Where do we go from here?[40]

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responsive, connected and engaged with a larger cultural context.

As each interviewee had time to reflect on the questions for this research project, on earlier discussions with me and others, and on the transcripts of their interviews with me, I felt their words should be the ones to provide the initial assessment. I will reflect and assess BAAWA and its members in the context of the larger research on separatist feminist art educational communities and in relation to feminist pedagogy in the summary for this project.

[38]Self reflection and evaluation are an ongoing process for BAAWA members. It informs the progress of their practice as professional artists. "We still have to work," notes Dawn B., "on valuing our process as women artists but we are getting better at that all the time... I stick with my artwork because that's where I know that I am deadly." And Jane A. adds, "I am [finally] thinking that I belong [as an artist] out there in the art community."

[39]Most women interviewed spoke of the personal growth and improved confidence they acquired partly through the support and encouragement of BAAWA members. Dawn B. comments, "I have the confidence to say that inwardly this [process of making art] is right for me and you [, the viewer,] are going to have to understand it or work to understand it... I'm not going to explain myself to death... [I think] the more critique and the more talk I have particularly with women's groups, the more that idea is strengthened within me. I never had that confidence before and that's probably what I got from BAAWA.... If I disassociated myself totally [from BAAWA] I would realize how important it is."

[40] What is important about BAAWA," says Jane A., "is the fact that it happened." They are generous in their appreciation for the positive effect BAAWA has had on their self-development and on providing exhibition opportunities. Collins and Sandell (1984) speak generally about the value of these self-educational venues:

> [This] route... has functioned as a self-constructed path by which women artists, art historians, art critics, educators, and students, can enter, transcend, and transform the existing art market and its many phases: creating, promoting, exhibiting, curating, and cataloguing, and buying and selling. (p. 64)

BAAWA's activities create opportunities for all members to learn all these skills. But art education in BAAWA is not per se the teaching of skills. Artists may share technical information but "the process [the artist] needs in order to use those skills is what art education is [about]," says Jane G. "[BAAWA's] artist/curator model can be very helpful" in framing a way to teach this process. BAAWA then can provide a "separatist paradigm of feminist art education" (Collins & Sandell 1984, p. 69).

This "paradigm", though, is still very much in process and members comment on possible future needs and directions for BAAWA.

(Women stand in centre of the stone circle and face out to the audience. SQ: music starts to fade out slowly.)

V/O (from text of speech by Jane G.): I dance the dance of a woman artist. I dance to a tune which makes the stones restless. When that boulder starts to wander, you and I can call, "Hey, come on up here. You can see a lot of new things at the top of this hill."[41]

Jane G. discusses this: "I don't know what the future is for BAAWA... It'll be interesting to see what happens and how I am going to be involved...There is [in BAAWA] a [small] group of peers, where I get support, exchange ideas and share frustrations. And then there is this second wider circle [made up of those] less secure in their practice or less experienced. Just how that relationship with me and that larger group will evolve, I don't know. I don't know how much that larger group will cling to the organization either. If there is a formal mentor programme that will obviously be a vehicle for certain concrete associations." Jane A. voices similar concerns about how the larger structure will evolve: "There's quite a mix [in BAAWA] now... I don't think we have the best system for benefitting from it... yet but I think [the situation] has the potential for being enriching for everybody."

Both Dawn B. and Jane A. also address possible problems with this distinction between core group and wider group in BAAWA. Dawn B. comments, "As the group gets larger, it becomes difficult [for each of us] to maintain an intense relationship with each [other]. I think there could be a problem [if the core group becomes]... a clique. [We need] to include all the members. I think, in some ways, we are beginning to do that already."

Jane A. adds, "Sometimes I feel as if I'm a privileged member of a closed group even within BAAWA... There isn't any official role for this closed group, it just is somehow there... being in BAAWA is in itself [already] a kind of privileged position. It would be good to see what it could be like for me further outside."

"I think," adds Dawn B., "we have a long way to go with [making a more diverse and inclusive community]. We really don't [yet] embrace and have connections with a lot of other different feminisms in our community."

BAAWA artists are learning how to like each other and how to listen to each other. But mutual respect is critical. Just one person who is unethical or irresponsible can affect, and has affected, the dynamics of the group. Honesty and integrity can challenge this and shift relationships.

A comment I made in discussion with Dawn B. was, "I have to find ways of opening my vision more, finding ways of opening it and helping other people to do that. I think that is [possibly] a strong future agenda for BAAWA as well... let's open it up."

[41]This assessment by BAAWA members is directed not only at how the group's structure and processes are evolving but also at how the group in involved in --- and can best address --- the larger art community. BAAWA exhibits have been largely successful. I feel that their shows actively reveal the personalities of the women involved in making the work and invite people to participate in the work. The work, like the women, is, I feel, honest and at times either powerfully intense or playful. Positive response to the exhibitions and exhibition proposals by public gallery directors have been few but are growing. Dawn B. notes, "When we talk about BAAWA and describe what it is to people, they are always so surprised and women particularly are delighted that this kind of networking is happening."

V/O (adapted from a poem by Dawn B.): Time passes, cultures change, societies vanish, stories, histories pass through the generations. The stories were told. Those that were written have been lost. Those that were rewritten have been altered. Tools are forgotten. They rust and rot. The grains, the flowers, the fabrics perish. The stones remain. We have misplaced our stories. But, the stones hold them for us, saving them until we can hear them again.

Sometimes describing the work itself is a challenge for the artists. Dawn B. comments, "It's almost like [we have to make] a new language to describe women's work... I think that's why a lot of women artists writing about their work use extended words or ... dumb words like floaty. They are trying to describe things that haven't been described before... It's so hard to pin down in words [a description of the image] for other people to visualize."

But they do contextualize the work, and it becomes a visible part of their programming. By taking responsibility for this contextualization, BAAWA is informing and educating the larger art community about its interests, directions and presence.

As Dawn B. notes, "I think that people are becoming more and more aware of groups like BAAWA and their value and they are tentatively reaching out in small ways." For example, a director of a public gallery registered interest in working with the group on curating an exhibition using his permanent collection. Jane G. comments more critically on this. She notes, "[Some gallery directors] have said that I have changed forever the way people in the region will look at women's work... From where I sit, I don't see a big change."

Not all exchanges have been fruitful, especially those with its host centre. When I asked Jane G. if she thought BAAWA could continue to work with its host centre within the existing gallery structure, she said she was hopeful. As Jane A. says, "I'm very firmly defending BAAWA's presence in the host centre as something that is constructive, rather than destructive." However, for some this constant negotiation is tiring. "How many times," says Donna. I., "have we been over this and how many times have we fought this fight?" "Sometimes," adds Dawn B., "I think it would be so much better for us if we just went off on our own and did our things and didn't have to negotiate so much. My natural reaction ... to a lot of this confrontation is to turn away and go in another direction. I would rather be busy teaching my nieces than fighting a battle with people that aren't really listening... I [would] hope [that] I'm sowing seeds [with these children] for something else [more productive] later on."

June King McFee (1975, in Collins & Sandell, 1984) sums up the dreams of women such as these in BAAWA:

> Our greatest need is to see ourselves and all people with far more potentials for development in far more different ways than our stereotypes would allow... To be full persons, we don't need to have the male goal as our goal — but as people, find out what is our most natural way to define our individuality. What this means... is a redefinition of the nature of what society can be. It is the fear of this in ourselves and in society at large that keeps us back. But of all the single factors that could make world systems work more effectively in this limited resource/space capsule we live on is to change the status of women world-wide... Coupled with more intellectually and creatively productive women, we could double our potential to solve our environmental and social problems. This may seem an unattainable dream but more of us are dreaming and out of such dreams come ideas and with the ideas the power to develop them. (p. 183)

Five

The art of being an artist [...] is [...] to be able to speak when silenced. To be able to hear when not being heard, to be able to see and make seen when no one looks.

Gabriella Muller, "Washing the Linen"

A woman artist I know came to hear me sing [...]. After my performance, she came towards me, eyes sharpened with discovery. "Your music, your singing has helped me to see colour in a new way."

Sandi Russell, "Minor Chords, Major Changes"

When I began this journey, I oriented myself, my experiences and my assumptions with regard to the questions at hand. Since then, I have been discovering my learning through connecting the various strands of my relationships to self, to Leena and to BAAWA through compiling, gathering, acting and researching. It has been an intriguing patterning. When I asked, "Why do we need to seek out sites to learn, and are there such sites?" the answers seemed relatively easy and were addressed in the concrete form of a literature study. But when I asked, "What do we women do in learning at these sites?", the research process became more complex, and I moved closer to the BAAWA group. The integrity of the individual sensibilities became significant to me, and this informed an interest in the specificity of BAAWA-as-site and -as-culture. I described this in "Process in Performance."

It is our process of interacting in BAAWA that places us as central to the making of our own education, of our own learning. As in feminist thought in which real women are woven through the social constructions of "woman," so too are the real women artists of BAAWA woven through the "institution" of BAAWA. It is a structure that to a certain extent shapes us and that we also shape. It is an imaginative, active and constantly changing process. As we act, we also speak out, constantly interrupting each other to add a comment or to point out specific issues or contradictions. The ever-changing web formed by these interactions maps a curricular design for this community. This grows from our thinking together about our differences as women and the ways we work, learn and act together as women and artists. We have found in our commonality, consensus and in our differences, dynamics. The pattern shifts and learning is placed in process-as -curriculum.

•

It is in this chapter, then, that I attempt to structure learning in BAAWA-as-curriculum. I want to come to a form which is representative of learning-as-BAAWA. I want to find out not only what happens between the individual women - as women, as artists, as teachers, as makers of their own learning - but also to take on the process of making. It is a search for definition. What do I/we do as author(s) of my/our own learning? How do we perceive it? How do we shape it? What are the obstacles to forming and directing this perception? How do we use concepts, ideas, and each other to form or frame ourselves and our learning-as-curriculum in presentation as well as in process?

In the research to date, I have been learning "about" BAAWA. While I am a member of the group, I had nevertheless placed myself as researcher outside of the group as I prepared the literature study. I moved closer in researching and writing "Process in Performance". I began to learn not only "about" but "with" BAAWA.

Through this chapter, I move into learning "as" BAAWA. This takes me closer to understanding process-in-community. This research/learning process acts as a rite of passage in which I enter into BAAWA-as-community, as "communitas". "Communitas" according to Victor Turner (1977) refers to a notion of community that exists by nature of the bond between members. As a term first used to title a book by Paul and Percival Goodman (1947), it presented a neo-functional philosophy which examined and re-evaluated the functions, forms, and hence designs for different societies. Turner's (1977) use of "communitas" , as the Latin form of "community", speaks to a very different relationship more relevant to the forming of the BAAWA community. BAAWA is constructed through and by the committed acts that they/we take on in the making and presenting of their/our art. They/we move between structure and non-structure, pause and play,

form and forming.

In Chapter Three, I noted that art was a marker of the educational culture of the BAAWA community. Using ethnographic research, I described BAAWA- as-educational culture in a dynamic creative form that was "Process in Performance." After completing this work, I then presented both the literature study and "Process in Performance" to the group. In doing so, my work became enmeshed in their/our practice. I was taken inside the educational culture of BAAWA. This shift is played out in this chapter. It takes me into the conceptualizing of BAAWA-as-curriculum with group members as co-currickers. I look to the co-responsibilities we take on as learners and as teachers and of our coming together to make the markers of this learning in artistic form. Here, I am implicated as group member, learning in community, and as BAAWA.

This writing then becomes a re-shifting, a reforming, a re-balancing, a churning, a restricting, and finally a shaping.

•

Leena and I drive back from the <u>This Decade of Days</u> opening (Dec. 5, 1999). We posit the potential for women's culture and what our expectations now are for the development and presentation of that culture. We take a more critical stance to BAAWA. Is this because we now have more distance from the group? Is it because we have had more time to develop our own work as collaborators apart from the group? What did we learn from the BAAWA process that we now apply to our own work?

Leena is also part of Women's Cultural Building, a collective of women educators, artists, writers, curators who create opportunities for women in the Toronto area. It provides support in personnel, funding and venues for women's art to be produced and shown.

BAAWA was also originally conceived to catalyse such events, and to a large extent it has done this and more. Its interest, though, has also been on educating its members and providing a context for mentoring. It has seen itself as a curriculum-in-process.

But what, asks Leena, does This Decade of Days represent? It does bring collectives together; it does provide space, energy, support for collectives to show and to interact. But what is the focus for Jane as curator and for the other artists in this exhibition? What does Jane want to say now about collectives, about BAAWA and about the artists that define these groups? How does this exhibit represent the concept of women's collectives?

*

We struggle to find the rationale, the link, the grand direction for This Decade of Days.

Our expectations are disappointed. "What if", asks Leena, "Jane had asked the collectives to work as a group on a piece or on various pieces about what their own process was? Wouldn't that be interesting? You'd get collectives reflecting on their own process, on how they work, and on what being in a collective means to them? They could make work about this."

You can always get a group of artists together and hang a show, but to find a connection, a strong statement, a cohesive direction - that is the final shaping.

*

The BAAWA collective has given Leena and me the energy, the support, the template to further shape our own process. However, our process seems so much more challenging now. We're trying to do so much more. Our lives are more complicated and our commitment to our work is greater. We have a range of ideas, we try them out, speak them, form them, look, then reshape. We

go out and then pull back - testing, looking, reflecting, searching to find a cohesive direction.

•

Pam: Working on our co-exhibitions and performances has been very demanding, and at times, exhausting work.

Leena: Each time - we've tried to find a visual experience that is cohesive but that works on many levels.

Pam: And we're trying to do the same thing now.

Leena: Yes.

Pam: I was disappointed in <u>This Decade of Days</u> as a cohesive vision of women's collectives and their activities. I place a greater expectation now on exhibitions. And I also place higher expectations on our work together. I work hard. I listen hard because I don't want to let you down, the exhibit down. I feel that my work must be strong, to honour yours.

Leena: ... and perhaps that's something that a collective can do.

*

The third modality is to be a visual exhibition - <u>Communitas in Context</u>. Before arriving at the visual form, there is for me much talk, reflection, re-examination - locating, dislocating, relocating again and again as I struggle to find my grand direction for this exhibition..

The core BAAWA group came together with me, after I completed the first and second modalities, "A Literature Study: Why a Feminist Separatist Art Education?" and "Process in Performance," to reflect on that writing and to discuss our collaborative process.

Some important considerations were noted. One was that they wanted their real names to be used throughout the text(s) of this writing, so changes were made. They wanted to be visible and

present.

The second was that they wanted to be more active participants in this next phase of research. The research then became reframed here as a process of learning-in-community and shifted to shape BAAWA and its activities as curriculum.

"What is it," we asked, "that shapes our learning in this community as curriculum?"

Words used by us relating to notions of "curriculum" were: action, voicing, messing around, chatting, meandering. All, we have noted, are active. To most of us, it would seem, curriculum-as-BAAWA is not a static thing, or a concrete object. It is a process of curriculum making or as arts educator Richard Courtney (1992) terms it, a "curricking".

Our processes are represented in art discussions, dialogues, chats, conversations and writings. Our ongoing curricking is centred within these processes. We attempt to effect insights through our collaborative forms of reflection and dialogue, and to use these insights to shape our daily practices as artists, educators, writers and/or curators.

We suggest that these "conversations" are critical to facilitating our ever-evolving curriculum. We further suggest that such conversations may, in their (re)telling, contextualize narratives of transformation that locate our learning in, of, and through our bodies as researcher/learners and take us closer and closer to something deeper, clearer, and strongly representative of us, our learning and our work.

*

Conversations will continue to be critical for expanding our possibilities. Representatives of groups which differ in use of media, in cultural mandates, in race, in gender, in orientation came together in <u>This Decade of Days</u>. A dialogic relationship - "not a seamless system but... a dynamic

and temporal relationship of utterances" (Glazener, 1989, p. 116) - was an appropriate way to frame such a meeting. Jane, BAAWA and the host gallery, the Burlington Art Center, promoted such a gathering. An engaged and respectful commitment from each encouraged the exhibit as an occasion for teaching/learning to be successful.

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BAAWA itself is relatively homogeneous. There are, however, differences and these differences create a dynamic among members. Our commitment, however, to being connected in relation and in accepting a dialogic notion of process has been instrumental to our using such differences as keys for defining questions for our ongoing research and learning in both our curricular and art practices.

At this time, I would like to offer theoretical frames that can be used to locate and shape our conversation(s) within current ideas on learning. Feminism, the arts, and the value of embodied knowledge represent some of the plural positions which were voiced at this juncture.

These frames have been discussed by us while pursuing the activities at various tables that are the settings for BAAWA - in the kitchen, the studio, the corner restaurant, at the gallery.

BAAWA was not first conceived in theory. While theory may have informed individual ideas on describing a structure for the group, we first gathered out of need. And from that need came actions, and these actions then informed theory. And this process has continued.

Writing about BAAWA has been but one way to speak about and shape a perception of the group. Curating an exhibition would be another. And since most of the women are artists, the method of choice for most is to speak through images. My choice has been to intertwine my writing here in an academic language with the language of the embodied learning that is BAAWA. I come

now to dialogically interpose theory and our reflections on practice. My place at the group table is as interpreter, participator and as co-curricker and co-learner.

•

As we come to this table, we bring our bodies - aching, jittery, hungry or crampy. And from this flesh we think and speak.

John O'Neill (1989) writes, "we have our philosophies, mythologies, arts, and sciences because we have... a communicative body (p. 3).... It is through our bodies that we communicate with the things and persons around us" (p. 8-9). We communicate holistically and particularly with/through our bodily expression. This expression is thoughtful. It integrates mind and body - "there is no tissue that is not 'body', and no response that is not 'mind'" (Juhan, 1987, p. 148).

Communication does not necessarily imply speech. Expression, for example, can be pre-speech (O'Neill, 1989) and can be activated, as in theatre, from the core of bodily impulse. And, this impulse holds the potential to shatter the "social" body (Artaud, 1958; Grotowski, 1968; Barba, 1986).

As an actor and performance artist, I find such ideas on bodily expression have informed much of my work. I have acquired a respect for the body as a potential site for disrupting and shifting perhaps limited assumptions. I have understood this process as dynamic - short-lived and time-based as in the performing arts (Laban, 1958) - and aesthetic - an action clustered "around imagining and feeling, choice and judgement, metaphor and symbol... always dramatic" (Booth & Martin Smith, 1988, p. 83). It was such an idea that informed my writing in the second modality, "Process in Performance."

Embodiment can then indicate "the developing process of organism-environment

interactions that constitute our ever changing reality" (Johnson, 1989, p. 367). Therefore to understand learning we must "explore the way... our bodily interactions work their way up into our more abstractive concepts and rational processes" (p. 366). As Mark Johnson (1989) further elaborates:

> *The relevant knowledge here is thus knowledge that grows out of one's personal experience and is the very means of transforming that experience.... it is knowledge in process, which emerges in the flow of practical activity, is directed toward some ends and is a context-sensitive exercise of imaginative capacities for dealing with problematic situations. (p. 364)*

Knowledge then is understood not as just having content but also as "a process, a relationship, a dramatic dynamic" (Courtney, 1985, p. 42).

Knowledge as activity can be further traced through work by theorists such as Richard Courtney (1992) and Rudolf Laban (1958). Both speak of four domains for aesthetic thought or communication. For Courtney, they are the thinking styles of: cognitive, affective, aesthetic and psychomotor (p. 15); for Laban, they are the motion factors of weight, space, time and flow which correspond to the inner participations of attention, intention, decision and progression (feeling). I find Laban perhaps more attentive to the bodily presence, but both incorporate a felt as well as thinking presence. Also, while the domains are different for each, what I find interesting is that each writer views the domains as interrelated. As Courtney (1992) states, "any thought contains all these qualities but, at a specific moment one may be... uppermost" (p. 15). So as learners involved in, or evolving, an aesthetic process of the body, we relate holistically and actively (Berlak & Berlak, 1983, p. 279) to the world around us. However, our specific ways of thinking and being with the world will relate to, and emerge from, whichever domain is dominant for a particular time, situation and context. We work through our whole bodies as actors to learn. We may learn differently in

different contexts but it is a creative, dynamic, relational activity.

As individuals with our own specific experiences, however, we can only possess a particular perspective or understanding at one time (Bell, 1993). As artists, though, we have the opportunity and the tools to make spaces to articulate and explore the different representations of this experience.

As artists we make choices and critically articulate our knowledge. We can then direct the viewer towards a specific perception of a particular understanding. No one true meaning or interpretation can be formed from an art object, for different meanings are attributed to a work of art by different viewers as a result of the various experiences they each bring to the work (Foss, 1988, p. 11). However, Sonja Foss (1988) sees some of the art artists make "as forms of rhetoric that attempt, as does discursive rhetoric, to influence others' 'thinking and behaviour through the strategic use of symbols' (Ehninger, 1972, p. 3)" (p. 11). The art then, just as the artist, is integral to this learning/ teaching/ learning relationship. We reflect on our own experiences and the various representations of experience in art, and can extend both by imagining yet other possibilities.

We are bodies in action. Life is inherently energetic. It is this energy, the result of inner tensions, that leads us to act. It is through a playful imagining that we can productively begin this action: "It is imagining that requires satisfaction of safety, love, esteem, self-actualization, curiosity and aesthetic needs" (Courtney, 1982, p. 56). It is imagining that shapes the possibilities for new experiences.

This exploration need not be entirely naive, nor should reflection on our process be uncritical. In fact, I suggest that by working to create form through distortion, the artist-educator can uncover tacit, non-explicit ideas. She can expose hidden conflicts, contradictions, and

assumptions and suggest alternative perspectives. She can open these alternatives to discussion, perhaps even enable a shift in how she and others understand themselves within the social arena. This can become a pleasurable, intuitive, and yet demanding and engaging, holistic process for the learner.

For women artists engaged in working this way - through an embodied aesthetic - the activity becomes unique. For those informed by a feminist perspective, the process can be activated by a specific vision.

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Mary Kelly once asked, "'What is the problematic for feminist artistic practice?' where problematic refers to the theoretical and methodological field from which statements are made and knowledge produced" (cited in Pollack, 1988, p. 8). Griselda Pollack (1988) responds by directing us to attend to feminist art practices/interventions which "demand recognition of... the social construction of sexual difference" (p. 9), as sites which address this problematic. She suggests that the art which engages, through this practice, with the social world is political, sociological and narrative.

We are social beings, for we grow into and through the world around us. As Dewey suggests, knowledge is an "activity (of knowing) by means of which we are able to transform our experience" (Johnson, 1989, p. 363). However as we participate in activities in the world, our bodies become inscribed with the codes that shape and determine many of our ideas and actions.

Some women desire to experience a different way to "feel" in their bodies - strong, alert and affective. This may not be "socially" acceptable. As Martha Bell (1993) writes, "Bodies seem like unique, personal possessions, or perhaps attributes, and yet there are social expectations and

regulations around all our bodies" (p. 22). In order to reflect on this "body as social site," a split between mind and body can occur and the "mind" is called into, and at times privileged in this, theoretical action.

> *[M]y body, as the site of my socially learned practices of (and resistances to) femininity - a large part of my identity - has been invisible in the theory. It is not left out, but remains present as the oppositional term in the mind-body dichotomy. As long as experience is understood through abstract, rational, objective reflection, then, in order to participate, I must also use my mind and ignore my body. Yet my experience happens in the very site of the rules and etiquette which define me as a woman... (Bell, 1993, p. 22)*

It is a dilemma that has challenged many feminist theorists. And they have suggested ways of working, thinking and being which can be potentially fruitful for "curricker"-researchers to heal the mind/body split. There need to be different contexts for voices to be heard (Gilligan, 1982), alternative ways of knowing to be explored (Belenky et al, 1986), a variety of fantasies to be experienced (Moffat, 1992). A suggestion proposed by communities such as BAAWA is to decenter research from a university base (Gluck & Patai, 1991), pay attention to the everyday actions and activities of women (Aptheker, 1989), approach the work and research in a spirit of playfulness (Lugones, 1990, p. 400), and displace simple oppositions with more complex levels of analysis (de Lauretis, 1990).

For some woman artists, the solution lies in research which is "touching the corporeal ground of our intelligence" (Rich, 1976), in our creative endeavours (Sanders, 1987), and through the use of "the power of the erotic" (Lorde, 1984). This experience was encapsulated in BAAWA artist Jane Gordon's (1994) "The Ovarian Manifesto" as recorded in "Process in Performance" and I refer to it again here:

[P]ower does exist and it is the power of the body.
We live this power as we live in haptic spaces.
We embody this power as we live, love for life...
No usual or well known phrase for the "feminine" or the "female" adequately expresses the concept of gender-centered work I am trying to describe.
This is powerful, fiercely loving, unutterably sensual, and the source of the "speaking self"...
I am not an artist in spite of being a woman.
I am not an artist as well as being a woman.
I am an artist because I am a woman. (p. 2)

While there is no proof of a different (female) relationship to detail and generality, motionlessness and movement, or to rhythm and demeanour, is there a feminist aesthetic? "Certainly not", writes Silvia Bovenschen (1985), "if one is talking about an unusual variant of artistic production or about a painstakingly constructed theory of art" (p. 49). But when one is talking about aesthetic awareness and modes of sensory perception, when one can understand aesthetics as framed as a way of thinking and be(com)ing, one can break with the formal laws of a medium, release the imagination and play in acting out those intentions which are feminist. "There is no premeditated strategy which can predict what happens when female sensuality is freed" (p. 50).

Such activity is not a strategy as much as a way of proceeding. It follows no clear rules for construction. It does look to a deeper understanding of the body and action, and trusts that it will, at the very least, distort social restrictions and definitions. Such activity presents possibilities for another way of knowing.

It is through the sensation of the body, then, that we come to action, to language, to interaction, to conversation, to community and to conceptualizing that curriculum for community in/as art.

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We feel our way into language (O'Neill, 1989). We learn to speak, to express, to form words. For those of us who are women, the dominant cultural language is foreign (Herrmann, 1989). We may struggle through contradictions to each find a particular voice (Gilligan, 1982; Belenky et al, 1986) - as individuals and in groups. Britzman (cited in Clandinin, 1988) writes :

> *Voice is meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community... The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all a part of this process... Voice suggests relationships: the individual's relationship to the meaning of his/her experience and, hence to language, and the individual's relationship to ...[others]. (p. 4)*

In some communities of artists and learners, the artist is struggling to voice her ideas, feelings, experiences in at least two languages - conversation and art. "'Finding voices' is not a definitive event but rather a continuous and relational process" (Miller, 1990, xi). What support can an individual find? How can she find her specific voice while collaborating in an active, dynamic community process?

Early strategies to enable women to find voice in groups were practised through the technique of consciousness-raising (Shreve, 1989). While this technique proved useful in making some women (predominantly white middle class women) aware of societal pressures and in allowing them to speak without judgement or interruption from others, it was a technique. It required a format that may not be appropriate to the learning styles of all women.

A more free-flowing, creative understanding of conversation and of embodied learning which emerges from the evolving process of the group may prove to be more useful and inclusive.

How, though, can this learning can be encouraged, supported and enriched within a specific

learning community? For us, a conversational format or a non-evaluative conversation grounds our process. Through our collaborative talk - an exchange of ideas, or informal, and at times, intimate conversation - we find support for our personal reflections and discover insights into our particular problems as women and artists within the home, the gallery and art educational community. We take responsibility for our own learning, our own transformation. However, the collaborative conversational format also means that each of us can take the floor or take a leadership role as "expert" at any time.

The idea of collaborative conversation as a means of both learning and support for learning is grounded in various theories and research studies. Some suggested by Sandra Hollingsworth (1992), and other in "Learning to Teach through Collaborative Conversation: A Feminist Approach", which are useful include: theories supporting the notion that personally meaningful knowledge is found through shared understandings (Vygotsky, 1978); feminist studies on the value of collectivization and community (Bate & Taylor, 1988); feminist epistemology that values considered experience as knowledge (Belenky et al, 1986); and feminist therapy which embraces emotion as a means of learning about self and relationships (Schaef, 1981). Research in other relevant areas of value to this focus on learning include those in: conversation (Booth & Thornley-Hall, 1991; Wells, 1986; Barnes, 1975), co-learning (Weiss, 1992), collaborative inquiry in art education (Hagaman, 1990), and co-construction of theory through dialogue (Lugones & Spelman, 1983).

Useful ideas which emerge from these various texts include: the value of small everyday ongoing occurrences as basis for learning (Neumann, 1991, p. 109); the value of the full range of conversational possibilities - not just those on-task - for learning (Wells, 1986); the notion of co-

learning as a shared activity (Weiss, 1992; Hollingsworth, 1992); the value of friendship and mutual respect for sharing of experience (Raymond, 1986); and the commitment of each individual to personal growth and to the larger conversational community (Spelman & Lugones, 1983).

The idea of a "conversational community" is not a foreign concept to women artists, certainly not to BAAWA nor to Leena and myself. Griselda Pollack (1986) notes that the feminist struggle in its "conversational communities" has been a "collective one composed of distinct persons with particular and heterogeneous ends and means" (p. 28). These communities offer "points of recognition, identification and, indeed, competition through which women can locate themselves and develop related practices" (p. 28). A concept for such sites would have as its goal the development and perpetuation of the community which, while working toward communal action, does so without marginalizing or suppressing the uniqueness of others. (Young, 1990, p. 320).

Conversation, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is:

1. the action of living or having one's being in a place or among persons,

2. the action of consorting or dealing with others,

3. intimacy,

4. an occupation or an engagement with things,

5. a manner of conducting oneself in the world or in society,

6. an interchange of thoughts and words,

7. a public conference or debate,

8. an at home,

10. a kind of genre painting representing a group of figures.

Could we accept that all these definitions are relevant to, and concurrently exist, in relation

to the interactive process of the curriculum for a collaborative, conversational women's art community? If we are to imagine such a conversational community of difference, and theoretically envision it as it operates by a dialogic process (Courtney, 1992), such imaginings become possible.

I cannot help but feel such a framing might apply here. We are friends, live near each other, are engaged with the making of things, enter into the public arena to debate and discuss our work, have informal gatherings in our homes, and are artists challenging and redefining art genres.

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My own movement, embodied here in this writing as a dialogue or conversation between theory and practice, reflection and action and individual and group experience, mirrors the larger BAAWA progression. As I continue this thesis, I continue to shift sites. This process has not found, and will not find, closure. It will, however, find a specific form. And I suspect in the following discussion I will move closer. I come to the table once again to reframe our curricking as I struggle to find that grand direction for my own art

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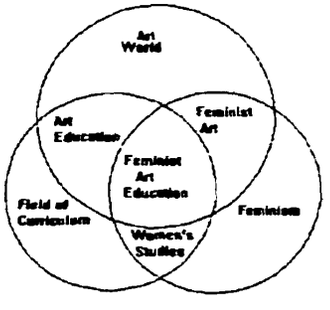
I see a curriculum for feminist art educational communities at the confluence of the domains of feminism, the art world, and the field of curriculum



(see Figure #1.[1]). Conceptions within this confluence have been defined as integrationist, pluralist, and separatist feminist art education (Collins, 1981). Integrationism assumes that art practices, concepts and values are sex-neutral, and that a successful curriculum requires that no significant art-related gender differences be expected, attributed or even recognized. It demands equal treatment of individuals, regardless of gender. Pluralism encourages enhancement of the individual's art education by including the feminine. Separatism calls for establishment of a separate women's art community with "practices, values, institutional structures, standards and reward systems compatible with women's experience and ensuring women's power and control in terms of self-definition and governance" (Collins, p. 89).

As I focus here on learning between women in environments of their own choosing and making, a conception for a separatist feminist art education draws me. I see this conception evolving and hence give it a dynamic form. For this, I accept learning as experiential and education as designed to facilitate this learning by giving shape and meaning to experience (Dewey, 1938).

Women come together in small communities such as those represented in <u>This Decade of Days</u>, to develop their education in collaboration as learners and as curriculum researchers. Each has a particular conception of a "separatist feminist art curriculum" but, given a commitment to process, to compromise, and to action, each names her position and gives it form. The noun "curriculum" then becomes the active verb, "curricking" (Courtney, 1992).

*

This curricking is enacted in, and embodied through, our conversations, research,

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[1]Graphic adapted from Rene Sandell's (1979) model.

writing and art practice. It is a dynamic, critically reflective, and aesthetic process. Insights gleaned through this process influence our daily practices as artists, educators, writers, curators or researchers, shaping our education. This education then shifts and reforms with each new insight.

"Curricular conversations" such as I/we have been retracing, contextualize transformative learning located in and through us as inquirer/learners.

*

> *Dawn B: Whenever I think of BAAWA, I always think of all these women's voices fading in and out, stacking up one on top of another, and kind of weaving a design.*
> *...kind of this interacting, and everybody depending on everybody else.*

*

Ongoing inquiries are centred within the processes by which we attempt to effect collaborative forms of reflection and dialogue. In the following exchange, we identify key ideas about our notion of dialogue and definition:

> *Dawn B.: It seems that, if we have to identify ourselves in someone else terms, it's kind of acknowledging that we're still other. You know?... whereas if we keep identifying ourselves in our own terms, it's sort of saying, "You change. Until you can come into our structure and understand what we're doing..."*
>
> *Pam: ... then you're saying, "If you want to talk to me, you talk to me as an equal and we'll dialogue about this?...*
>
> *Dawn B.: or learn my language...*
>
> *Pam: or learn my language and then we can speak." Or*
> *I'll speak with my language, and you speak with yours, and we'll see if we can find a way of coming together...*
>
> *Dawn B: Yeah, and that's probably faster, there's probably some action possible...*
>
> *Pam: Yeah, and I find that very exciting.*

*

Dialogue gives an account of our experience, our process, our educational culture. So we meet in dialogue. The conversations in the group ramble, re-turning to specific issues at hand. Ideas emerge as "truths.. trapped inside narratives.. sprung loose in a moment of insight.. along the way" (Ascher et al, 1983). Dialogue is through the body, voiced in conversation, enacted in relation and embodied as curricular process in form(s).

*

Relation becomes a key word. Why should we come together? Not all our reasons are the same. The question is raised, "What do I get out of this?" But self interest doesn't seem to be the only motivation for all. Rather, I suggest that friendship seems to be one motive. We strive to listen to what each other is saying, to understand each other and, to in turn, question our own assumptions. This notion of friendship does not assume that we all should be close friends, but rather that we work from an understanding of what friendship means (Lugones & Spelman, 1983). This friendship implies trust, and a respect for, and commitment to, each other and our work together as communitas.

We attempt to understand each other as separate and in context -- for there are both social and individual needs to take into account. Each woman explores, reacts and responds to the social pressures she may feel in relation to the group, her family and/or the larger community. Each stretches to find her own voice, her own particular interpretation of experience, her own reflection on the group's actions within the shared research focuses of the group. This response is particular, and not always comfortable. Collaboration does not necessarily mean consensus.

*

We are pluralistic and particular, and yet we focus together on joint actions.

> *Jane A.: Creating ourselves in relationship to certain contexts is part of what BAAWA is. That's part of what generated BAAWA. BAAWA has got kind of an inside and an outside aspect. Inside are relationships interweaving, interacting, support, generating juice... all the things that we do for ourselves and each other through BAAWA. The outside has to do with power inevitably, because of where we are, and it has to do with visibility, voice, impact, education in terms of how women and women's art are seen and how women function in society...*

Such ideas are not foreign to notions of education as social transformation. At the heart of Paulo Freire's work is the belief that societal and individual liberation are interdependent:

> *Reflective thought and action [praxis] are seen to be dialectically related. It is through dialogue and engagement in society that awareness and insight into the learner's world and social reality come about... The life experience of the learner and a critical analysis of this are at the centre of this process of conscientization. As the learner interrogates her/his own experience so s/he is able to reinterpret this experience and understand the societal context within which s/he finds her/himself. This understanding leads the learner to action, which again becomes experience to be reflected upon. Life experience is therefore the source of the leaner's knowledge which liberates her/him and provides her/him with the tools for changing the society in which s/he lives. (Saddington, 1992, p. 43).*

*

The strategies, actions, and responses are made up as we go along; they respond to very particular, concrete situations. We understand empowerment to be located within the reciprocity of our relationships and lodged in the personal spaces of our daily lives (Miller, 1990, p. 18). Even as we discuss a theory or concept of what we imagine our learning or process to be, we are energetically, bodily rooted in the concrete processes which are our practice.

*

> *Dawn : I think we're doing fine, because we make it up as we go along... depending on the situation and the issue and who has the energy to engage the problem at the*

time and based on our own lives...

Pam: So the strategies emerge from the specific moments themselves...

Dawn: Yeah, at the moment that it's most urgent.

Donna I.: It's like there's a need for something to happen, and these women get together, and then they all phone each other, and they meet at someone's house and they just do it...

Jane G.: We may look like a coffee klatsch, but we do it.... we enter into the public sphere, and we just do it.... we do it very well.

•

It is in the public space of the gallery where the learning, research and dialogue takes another significant form. It is the rhetoric that has emerged from the interaction and dialogue of the group in process. It is a form we believe to be embodied and particular. While we acknowledge that the gallery product is a limited representation of the group's interactions and curricking, it is also a text which we feel is different, and potentially more inclusive then previous representations of women, by men, have been. The following exchanges relate to this:

Dawn B.: What we do is so floaty and circular and networky and layered that, when you put it into the gallery setting, I instantly visualize everything pouring into a square box...

Jane A.: So we can't define ourselves by this product that emerges in this particular context, because too much gets left out...

Dawn B.:...because a lot of what we do is a reaction to each other and to events...

Jane G.: ...[but] I think that, also, a lot more gets included. I think that when we enter the gallery, it is a different process then a lot of others I've seen.

This gallery "presence" is informed by the particular narratives of our life which are re-searched and re-contextualized within the context of our meetings. While each narrative may differ greatly, certain connections link them. It may be a similar imagining between us that defines a creative focus, or it may be an event that happens to the group that consolidates us to action.

And the action may be to go public, to go to a wide variety of institutions in the public arena. The challenge is for us to situate women's art in a variety of contexts, and to alter the way people view these sites and art by women.

•

We understand the value of having many different, and sometimes unusual, sites for learning, for this has informed our own self-education. Chosen locations reflect our own interest in accessibility and in the domestic or everyday use of space. Sites for exhibitions have included: the gallery, the newspaper office, the town hall, the park, the street, the storefront and the railway station.

*

Our ways of working and our choices of learning sites, I feel, emerge from an embodied being/learning and a creative imagining as bodies in action. From this core we then come to language, to written text and/or to art. And our particular use of this enacted language in turn forms our "curricking" process. Our seemingly rambling conversational patterns are not recognizable as a conventional institutional organizational paradigm.

*

The group exists, continues to exist and will exist. While certain exhibits and events such as <u>This Decade of Days</u> *mark particular occurrences, it is difficult to mark its growth as linear. Its*

action is expansive and contractual, moving in dynamic, wave-like or webbed patterns that shift to meet particular needs at particular moments.

We construct ourselves through use of a different language. We feel we construct representations of ourselves through a different aesthetic thinking.

> *Jane A.: We make art that makes things real, that's the kind of mediation that we do in our art making...*
>
> *Pam: In other words, you mean by taking a subjective experience and giving it form...*
>
> *Jane A.: Yeah...*
>
> *Pam: ..that's very different, because we're taking it through our bodies...*
>
> *Jane A.: through ourselves and through our bodies... It's more like...*
>
> *Dawn B.: I think it's more honest.*

*

So curriculum becomes something that shifts, changes and transforms. Meanings are added to, questioned, altered, but rarely firmly fixed.

> *Pam: What for me becomes a really strong [part] of what we are , is that constant challenge we pose to ... conventional ways of thinking, being, learning, acting...*
>
> *Jane A.:... making art..*
>
> *Pam: So that even what is understood to be what [a] word means can be shifted and changed.*

*

So we are always asking: is this what this means or not? And in this ongoing process, our learning is forming. Our understanding of our process can only live within a notion of active imagining - one which is processual, dialogic, and emergent.

It is a curricking which is both practical and theoretical, personal and yet public, individual and yet social. And it is the nature of the dialogue which allows the tension to conjoin the seemingly diverse narratives of the group into a dynamic, dramatic collection of people, context and processes.

It is not an education which is easily categorized. It does not fit into any particular category for non-school approaches to education, as in those cited by Reed and Loughran (1984) in Beyond Schools, but rather has characteristics of many. In fact, in some ways it embodies and values what could seem to be conflicting notions. Some of these include: dialogue with the institutions/reform of the institutions, professional/personal concerns, holistic processing and communicating in creating exhibits/practical sequential learning for gallery proposals, etc., collaboration/ independence, inner initiated actions/outer initiated actions, leaderlessness/leadership, celebration of women in art/critique of women's social position through art.

In theorizing how curricking proceeds for us in BAAWA, I look to how Richard Courtney (1992) captures curricula "making" as a process. His theory of curriculum understands curricking as: "processual and emergent" and so is "especially flexible and adaptive to change"; contextual in that "it relates all ideas to... specific setting[s]"; plural and perspectival allowing for complexity and cooperation; a dialogic and dramatic relation which is respectful and imaginative; reflecting ideas that cannot be wholly expressed in language; functional and designed to promote improvement; both rational and intuitive; and focussing on the tensions in the gaps between practice and intention (p. 46-49).

A theory for BAAWA's curricking, which encompasses ideas posed by Courtney, can be derived from the co-learning/co-curricking act. I feel that it is the embodied dialogue of us as

members, the dialogue between context and learner/curricker and the social and personal body of each of us as learners, which is at the heart of this making. It is the tension between opposites that activates an energy that keeps the group in flux, and actively casting for meaning. It is dramatic in its dynamics and imagining. It is a process that can allow for transformation.

Dialogue is practiced in an association of respect and caring, an ethics which some, like Nel Noddings (1984), feel should be fundamental to any approach to education. In making our curriculum, we reflect through conversation, personal diaries, art making and make commitments to change - individual and social. This action carries us back into dialogue and the wave-like action proceeds. New connections are formed, old ones fade away at each new incarnation. And there is a faith that it will continue. There is a belief in the value of art, of art making, of the feeling and knowing body, and of the specificity of women's experiences. And while we theorize towards notions of process, the reality is that, while faith can subvert, it can also drive us to shift these notions to greater accomplishments. Perhaps by realizing that learning can be tentative and fragile processes, we can respect and nurture them as they move to find new cycles.

*

This "talking out" or curricking through conversation provides a narrative of transformation that can inform the shaping of my learning process. It's a constant, concrete, concerted chatter. It is also hard work. The rigour of deciding, directing, arguing and shaping is necessary for growth and for excellence. It is what Leena and I were challenging as critical to conceiving the curatorial rationale of/for the <u>This Decade of Days</u> exhibition. The exhibit rationale needed more forming and the artists needed to be encouraged to reach further and dig deeper in an examination of self-in-context. We need to be learners and to be mentor/teachers, to cull from

the self and from each other. It is bringing the disparate relationship of experiences and practice together in cohesive form. It is an activity that is aesthetic, embodied, playful and yet rigorously demanding.

*

> *I grew accustomed to the idea that my intellectual life... and my spiritual life were two radically different fields of experience which had absolutely nothing in common. This imbalance ... made my life a kind of endless debate. (de Beauvoir, 1959, p. 41).*

*

Knowing is not "a definitive event, but rather a continuous and relational process" (Miller, 1990, p. xi). In order to enter into such a process of development, we as mentors/teachers need to see ourselves as learners open to our knowledge, meaning frameworks, or constructs (Kelly, 1955). We need to subject ourselves and our work to "new interpretation and re-invention" (Diamond, 1991). "One's point of view is in... constant transition" (Pinar, 1979). It is ongoing and active - we engage in situations, and take charge of our own inquiry. We are confronted daily with complex, personal and political dilemmas within ourselves and in response to the learning situations in which we practice (Berlak & Berlak, 1983).

We need to actively engage with and initiate our own education as a precursor to significant change in our own practice (Diamond, 1991). My experiences, and the knowledge I acquire of and from them, are transformed through reflection and critique into a growing knowledge of the self and the self-in-practice.

*

The sense of self, and the unique ways that we can think about the self, make it possible for

us to experience the world in unique ways. These ways of experiencing make possible new ways/forms of knowing. These new ways/forms can facilitate "shaping [...] the experience of others, who in turn can use them to create even newer forms" (Eisner, 1991).

This to me is the core of the teaching/learning relationship: the push and pull of the collaborative work of BAAWA.

We have been "curriculum makers" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1992); we have shaped experiences, authored curriculum events (Doyle, 1992) by being active in making, and inquiring into, learning situations (Dewey, 1938). For me to facilitate others' learning, though, I need to know and be able to articulate my own.

*

John Dewey's conception of the learning process describes how learning transforms the impulses, feelings, and desires of concrete experience into purposeful action. This Dewey refers to as the educational experience. It fosters the growth of human intelligence, supports curiosity, and values knowledge as worthwhile. Dewey cites the educational experience as situated in the interaction of the self and environment (Dewey, 1938, p.42) and characterizes growth for participants as a "continuity of experience". "Every experience takes up something from those who have gone before, and modifies in some way the quality of those that come after" (Dewey, 1938, p. 35).

*

Education is not only the education of the self, but is an "educative relationship among people" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, p. 148). Wells (1986) notes this process as interactional, where meaning is negotiated, not only within the learner, but in collaboration with other learners.

We make sense of the world collaboratively, and each has different experiences. Peshkin (in Eisner, 1991) points to the fact that we also have many "selves." This has two results: who we are at any one time depends on the situation in which we find ourselves, and we are able to see a situation from several points of view. "Taking various perspectives is a way of examining situations from different angles. It allows us to be open to many experiences, to have a sense of self that is versatile, eclectic and mutable," (Eisner, 1991) and to be flexible and open with others. I suggest that we as learners need to acquire a dynamic, plural, embodied understanding of the self-in-relationship to others across multiple contexts (Clandinin, 1985; Noddings, 1984; Hollingsworth, Dybdahl & Minarek, 1993). This introduces the concept of relational knowing - a continual fluid questioning that leads to growth.

Dewey points out that one judges the quality of experience in terms of its influence on growth. High-quality experiences (Willis, 1982) tend to promote the healthy growth of future experiences. We are active participants in our learning (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) and, as a result, have the opportunity to choose and hence frame our own experiences. We create our own knowledge (Pinar, 1978). bell hooks (in Garber & Gaudelius, 1992) sees this choice as a basis for change (p. 7). Through understanding and choosing our multiple experiences, we can begin to articulate and name how they will affect us (Garber & Gaudelius, 1992, p. 7) . Interpretation can then "be an act that transforms ... the world... and the interpreter as well" (Grumet, 1988, p. 146).

*

I and my collaborators want to authorize "[our] own perspective[s] on experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). In the act of giving form to our experiences, we consider the meaning of personal and social dynamics that affect out lives. From discrete experiences, we

construct ourselves and make an account through interpretive acts of the shape of our knowing (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 4).

*

Dewey (1934) asserts that art is the language with which we reach ahead to new integrations of experience. Arts experiences have the property of being uniquely communicative, communal and social, "a fluid function of individual and collective agency" (Honeychurch, 1995, p. 214).

George Eliot writes in Middlemarch:

> *If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence (in Belenky et al, 1986).*

Things of art such as Eliot's text have form. They "invite perception and can be described." (Grumet, 1988, p. 78). They serve to bring sentience, emotion, feeling, aspiration to consciousness (Abbs, 1989, p. 36). This aesthetic transformation reorders experience. It allows us to perceive anew:

> *When it is most radical, the work of art draws the viewer to it, engaging expectations, memories, recognition, and simultaneously interrupts the viewer's customary response, contradicting expectations with other possibilities, violating memories, displacing recognition with estrangement. (Grumet, 1988, p. 81).*

This "making strange" (Kristeva, 1991) asks us as learners to shift our perceptions from the mundane to the unexpected. It asks us to be fluid, to accept the possibility of multiple and changing perspectives. It is active experience rooted in the body "clustered around imagining and feeling, choice and judgement, metaphor and symbol" (Booth & Martin-Smith, 1988, p. 83). Dewey defines the "aesthetic as ... the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every complete

experience," (Dewey, 1934, p. 36).

•

I have argued, like Grumet (1988), that women need to construct a curricking place for themselves "if their work ... is to achieve the clarity, communication, and insight of aesthetic practice" (p. 89). They also need to take the stance of the artist, to transform and reorder experience, to use the senses, feelings, to communicate for action, to choose, to challenge, to question and transform their own education.

Clandinin (in Johnson, 1989) understands this aesthetic as an individual mode of perceiving and interacting with the environment and with other people. When we do this, when we reflect on/in practice, on the actions and meanings of our lives, we make theory that emerges from our practice: "Unless theories come from practice, they may not apply to practice" (Hunt, 1987, p. 109). It is a theory for learning, aesthetic and embodied in the "multiplicity of experiences" (Christian, 1990, p. 343).

•

> *At one point today, I look over at [Margaret] and see my face etched in hers. Interesting. (Rogers & Patterson, 1994, p. 20)*

•

Some of us from BAAWA have examined our experiences as learners, artists, and teacher/mentors. This has allowed us to think of collaborative work as an opportunity for realizing new identities (Maher & Rathbone, 1986), merging the personal and particular into multiple contexts (Helle, 1991) and actively facilitating our own and our collaborative learning (Laird, 1988).

One day, after hashing through this text, I rebooted my computer. I saw the message - "press <escape> to bypass memory test." I hesitated over the escape key. What held me back were waves of images and sensation that washed over me. They seemed keys to another way of describing the process of making and learning. And so, I returned to the work.

•

I see this group and my place in it in a different light now. Just as its members have changed and some matured, I have too. I have developed a view of time and learning based on an understanding of a continuous present. I have begun to take responsibility for myself and have ceased to struggle so much. The past learning modes have become luxuriously blended through ongoing conversation with present and future ones. And this blending continues to call me, to capture me. Once I was no longer obsessed with facts, so critical to an interpretation, I was able to perceive depth, to be drawn to explore that which was not clearly discernable.

It has been a mapping that has shifted. It has attended to the flux of happenings, the web of relationships and the creative sparks that drive the unsaid into artistic form. I believe this energy to be at the core of what impels us as community to form and reform as curriculum at each new occasion for working, talking, exhibiting and learning. I could continue to speak about the group's structure, how it has evolved and continues to change, and how it has shifted its relationship to the larger art community. I could continue to speak about its members, their art work, the production of catalogues and publications. But what would that say about what lies at the heart of the BAAWA group; about what makes it unique and successful?

•

Memory is fragmentary and, at times, illusive. The Popular Memory Group (1982) writes:

"Memories of the past are, like all common sense forms, strangely composite constructions resembling a kind of geology, the selective sediment of past traces." (p. 211)

Leena and I work on our performance. The dynamics that shape this are in the ways we remember events, and view images. We each see different parts of any phenomenon or event. And when this difference is respected, our work evolves. Memory is private and public, individual and collective. And yet each of our memories is never identical, and as a result our performances have always been richly textured.

Louise Forsyth (in B. Warland, 1990) writes, "In this place we meet and speak the evidence of our own truths" (p. 10). Forsyth sees this process of meeting and speaking as a way of activating dreams or forgotten memories. It is created through imaginative play, a play that attempts to break down conventions, produce alternative truths and extend women's knowledge.

•

Individual memory becomes activated through the storying of the individual members in community.

It becomes phrased in conversation and formed and tested through the dynamic push and pull of the rigour of making.

As Jane A. has noted, "[It's not] just sitting around meeting every month and talking with each other but also [it's about] honing yourself to the experience, the discipline of fusing [ideas] into a project."

Through our conversations and stories, the threads of our memories emerge and converge. Speaking is a way of naming memory, redefining memory into ideas. Our ideas connect, we are drawn together, and we find a new confidence. We feel a sense of belonging. We also trust that

there is a suspension of judgement in each of us, in terms of how we view each other and how we view each other's ideas. So, we each listen to what the ideas are, and find a way that we can work with them. It is accepting that everything is valuable to the task at hand.

I am reminded of Bettina Aptheker's definition of collaborating: "The point is not so much to unite as to congeal. Each element retaining its integrity and value, stuck together for a particular purpose," (in Hladki, 1993, p. 105). Each of us uses our skills to shift and relate, adjust and integrate, so that our work is shaped not by consensus, but rather by the different voices that come into play.

There's a time and place for everything. A certain level of comfort and connectedness has to be arrived at before we begin. It's a way of respecting our process of coming together. But in the process of storying and conversation, there is not always agreement. While the convergence brings us together, it is the divergence or differences that spark debate.

> *DAWN: There are differences and conflicts which are not always resolved. I think you really have to accept the limitations of being able to resolve conflict. It's not always possible because we are simply very, very different.*
>
> *LEENA: It has to do with how you work in a group and how you know what a group is. BAAWA was formed by people with certain similar interests coming together to make something happen that was in the good interests of...*
>
> *PAM: Of all the members of the group?*
>
> *LEENA: And I'm sure that, even from the beginning, there were differences in many areas, but in certain areas there were agreements, and so there was an agreement to work together and, you know, put on shows, so that all the members of BAAWA*

could show their work and discuss things and grow through the process of coming together often as a group.

PAM: And I guess that's the thing that's stayed, hasn't it?

LEENA: It's evolved... but I think one of the real strengths of BAAWA...

PAM: Is that it is fluid? Yeah....

LEENA: And for difference projects, there will be different, you know, configurations of that...

PAM: That's true. I think you've hit on it, Leena, that the reason why it just keeps going is that there's that continual focus on what is positive.

LEENA: Well, I think also with time, there's a greater acceptance of people being different. You know, everybody has flaws, but that if you can work together and have a project [that] really focuses people... you can focus your energy on getting your work ready for something, instead of on individual differences.

PAM: Focus on the learning? Yes, I think that, too.

*

It is through the sensation of the body, then, that we as BAAWA artists currick as we come into action, to language, to interaction, to conversation, and to community. It is to/with our art that we mark the confluence of the memories, stories and sensations of our process and practice.

Art is an artifice - but it contains a kernel, an interpretive moment, of a time, place and occurrence.

•

What can art offer self-as-researcher that is unique? Art gives my search an understanding

of flexibility. It provides a multitude of intentions, a plurality of meaning (Eco, 1989, p. 8) and questions the way I see (Hockney, 1988). Practices of making, connecting and risking enlarge conceptions of what is possible, show me ways from what I am supposed to be towards what I pluralistically could be; and what forms and issues I could explore in my work (Saunders, 1987, p. 4).

A German artist, Marianne Werefkin, wrote in 1903: "Art is not hysteria, art is observation and consciousness ... Art is the sparks which are born from the chafing of the individual against life - it is not delirium - it is a philosophy" (Witzling, 1991, P. 139-140). Abbs (1979) asserts that the arts are also disciplines, in that they require concentration and the living mastery of a technique in intimate relationship to the nature of the experience being symbolized, and depend on a delicate and developing discrimination, an endless process of selection, critiquing and discarding.

The discipline of making is, I believe, at the core of what Eisner (1995) refers to as the excellence of "artistically crafted research" (1995, p. 7). Eisner values the artistic treatment of any form of representation as "a way of creating an impact, of making ideas and images clear" (p. 7) - a constructed artistry through which understanding is organized (p. 10). Artistic thinking directs our attention to individuality and the particular. Coherence, imagery and particularity are then its contribution to educational research.

While artistic endeavour is not equivalent to artistic research, the demands of creative practice in art making discipline the mind, excite the passions, and drive the maker to completion - useful attributes for an educational researcher.

An analogy between art and research also exists in terms of the similarity of goals and processes. The art-making process can be used in research by being internalized and used as a way

of connecting art to people and events (Stinson, 1995). A topic is selected, data gathered, reflection taken and theory built - activities that point to finding the form and content for the work being constructed (p. 49). For the crafting of research, it speaks to a search for the "right structure" for the particular work.

Art, like research, is a conscious construction. It is a form of representation, unique in being "a balanced organic whole, while at the same time, constituting an open product" (Eco, 1989, p. 4). The author/artist proposes a number of possibilities which have been rationally organized and oriented for presentation. He/she then offers the work to be completed. It does not mean complete chaos, for the researcher offers the reader the opportunity for "an oriented insertion into the world intended by the author" (p. 19).

•

Research, like a work of art, can have infinite aspects. These aspects are not just fragments, for each can contain "the totality of the work, and reveal it according to a given perspective" (Pareysan, in Eco, 1989, p.21). The surprises for the reader are the performances of the researcher, and the performer knows that he/she must always try to deepen and clarify the interpretation of his/her work (p. 21).

•

This text has marked my testing, shaping, moulding, curricking with BAAWA. I have engaged with them, with others and with various selves exploring ideas, concepts, and memories. But it is but more text, more words. I attempt to shape a research practice as aesthetic as art, to speak in images, but I haven't allowed images to speak. It does a disservice to my practice as artist and to the predominant practice of the women of BAAWA. It also limits the perspective on the

group, its practices and the further shaping its learning and curricking can take.

This realization moves me then from conversation, dialogue, theorizing, co-learning and co-curricking to forming - the art. It is to this that the third modality, Communitas in Context, speaks. It is representative of the aesthetics of BAAWA practices, an interpretation of past, present and future memories, stories and sensations and a visual trace of the curricking and teaching/ learning that is (of) BAAWA.

Six

Communitas in Context

"Communitas" is a term used by anthropologist Victor Turner (1977) to give recognition not to society's structure but rather to an essential and generic human bond. In the complex world in which we now live, our connections are many. We alternate between experiences of structure, communitas and transition. If we think of our relationships with /in communitas as sacred and approach them with humility, we can for each experience different rites of passage.

"Communitas" corresponds here to my association(s) with/in The Bay Area Artists for Women's Art, a Hamilton Bay women's art group. Through my connection(s) with the group, I have conceptualized, developed and acted as artist, academic and cultural worker. I touch on these activities here. It is a touching which invites sensation, not analysis. It is an experience in flux caught at moments of remembrance.

This exhibition, Communitas in Context, is divided into three parts. The first is composite images or portraits of four long-standing members of BAAWA, three of whom I have worked with on this research. I first photographed each woman and then collaged, xeroxed and remanipulated the images. The resulting photo-based portraits are representative of the different contexts where I have interacted with each woman and also of her own complexity.

The second section of the work is the small photos and large panels and rock works. These pieces mark a collaborative learning partnership among three BAAWA members; myself, Leena and Dawn as we curated, designed and realized a specific project, Domestic Objects and Other Stories for BAAWA. We met and discussed curatorial directions in Leena's yard in Toronto ("BAAWA: A First Meeting") and then met again in Hamilton to work out the practical considerations and pull together the catalogue ("BAAWA: At Dawn's Studio", "BAAWA: A Reflection"). Leena made the graphics for the catalogue, Dawn designed it and I wrote a short introduction. We worked together on all aspects of the exhibition. It was non-curated which meant anyone in BAAWA could submit work. We brought an exhibition by BAAWA into a small Toronto community gallery. I was excited by this process and about how a new exhibition context could contribute to the building of our community. I was beginning to think about how collaboration could shape self, partnership and community.

Our intention in Domestic Objects and Other Stories was to create an occasion where we were very much learning partners rather that simply creating an exhibition. We all were engaged in self and group reflections, committed to process and to the group and to what this could mean in terms of an understanding of BAAWA as community and as education. My sense of this process shaped and informed the visual work for Communitas in Context.

The third section of the exhibition is three large panels and a text that was shaped by a grouping I formed outside of, but not independent of the intent of, BAAWA. The project Mapping the (Un)Familiar, was another occasion for learning. I initiated it with Margaret Rogers, the Director of the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington. We decided to look at how the nature of a learning partnership could catalyse community building in an artist community in the Bowmanville area. This activity was concurrent with my exhibiting, teaching and presenting at the gallery and we recorded, photographed, reflected and wrote daily on our process. The collaged panels and accompanying book represent this occasion. Margaret went on to form her own women's art group in the Bowmanvile area and has established links and partnerships with other BAAWA members.

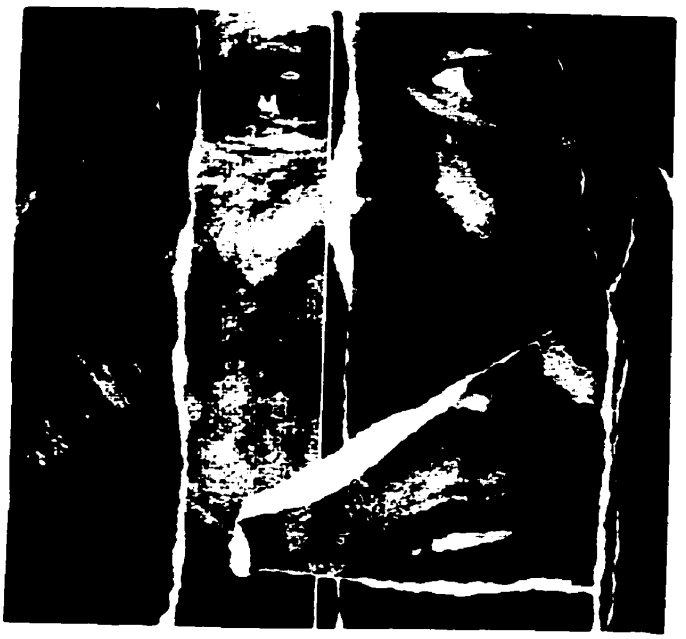
Communitas in Context was presented at the Cinema Gallery in Hamilton, the Union Gallery at Queen's University, Kingston. "BAAWA: At Dawn's Studio" was shown in This Decade of Days at the Burlington Art Centre, Burlington.

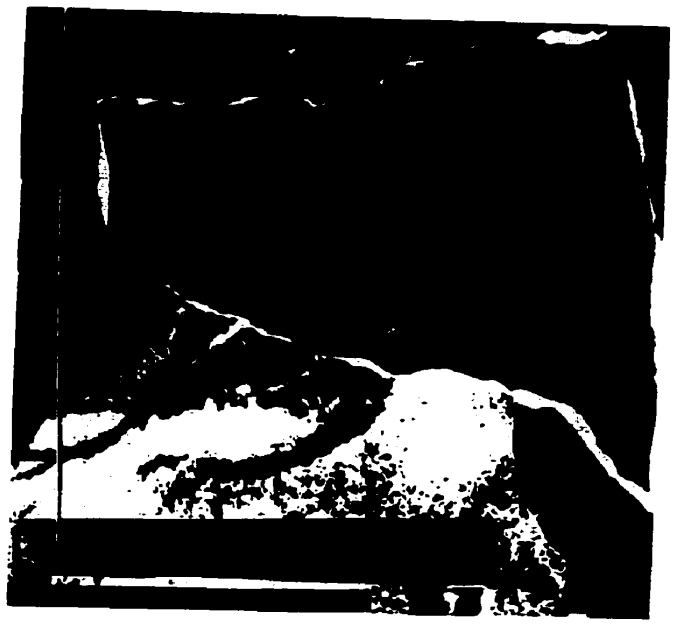
Other images and text that accompany this exhibition are of a lecture/performance, "Conversations in Context," presented as part of the Union Gallery exhibition. It frames a meta-text and commentary on my research, process and the visual work itself.

Communitas in Context
Union Gallery, Queen's University,
Kingston, Ont.

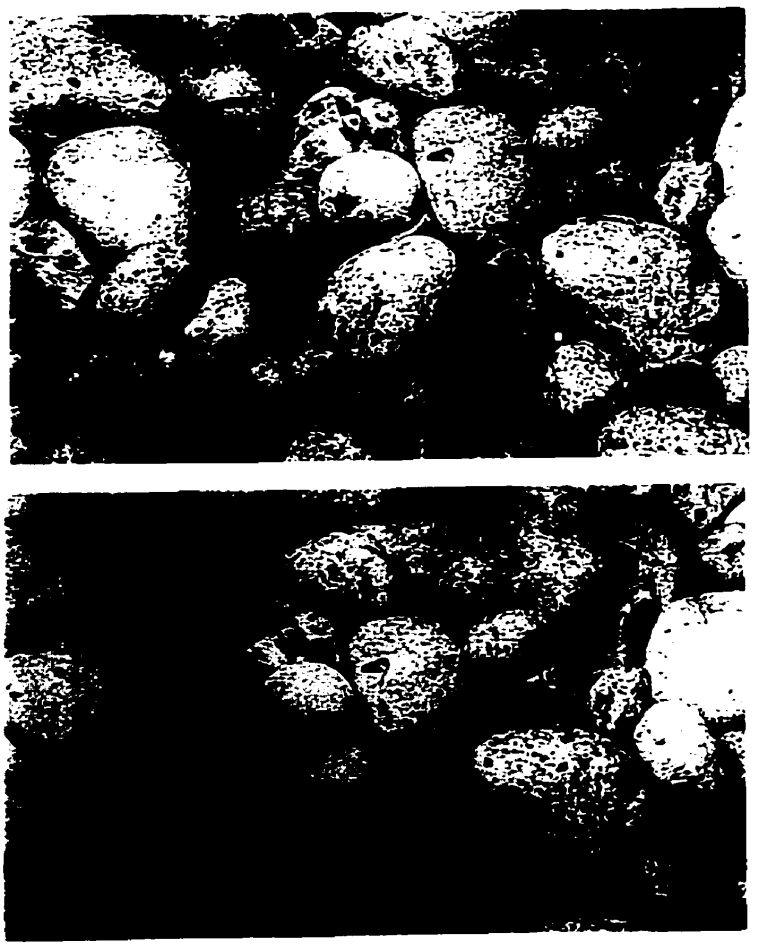
Communitas in Context
Cinema Gallery
Hamilton, Ontario

BAAWA Portraits:
Dawn, Jane, Donna, Juliet
(colour photo-manipulation, collage and printing on paper
each piece 10" X 10" unframed
24" X 36" framed)

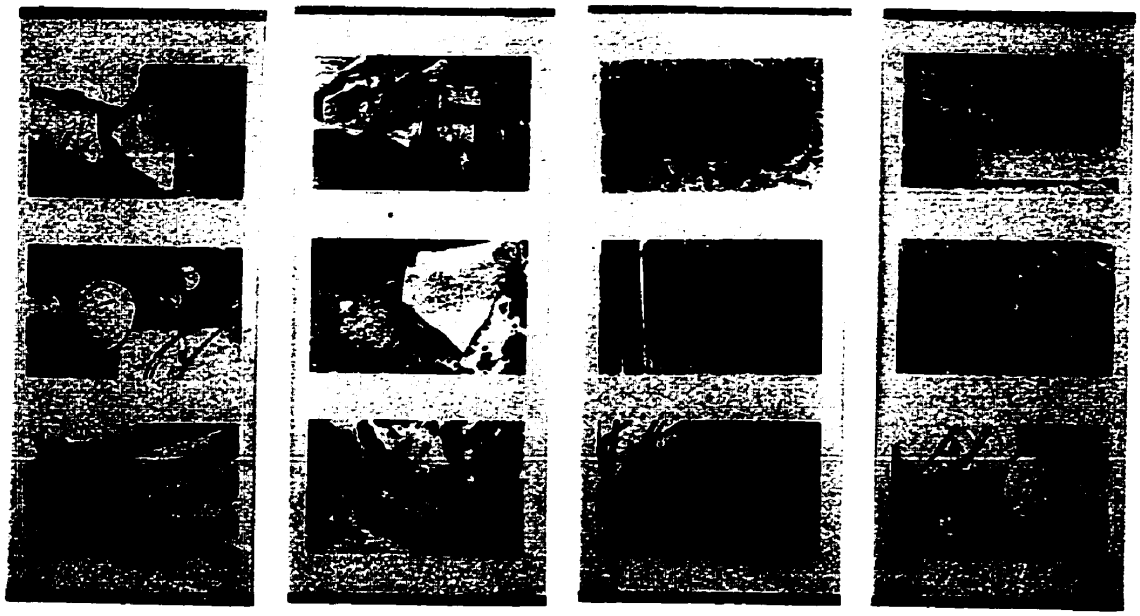




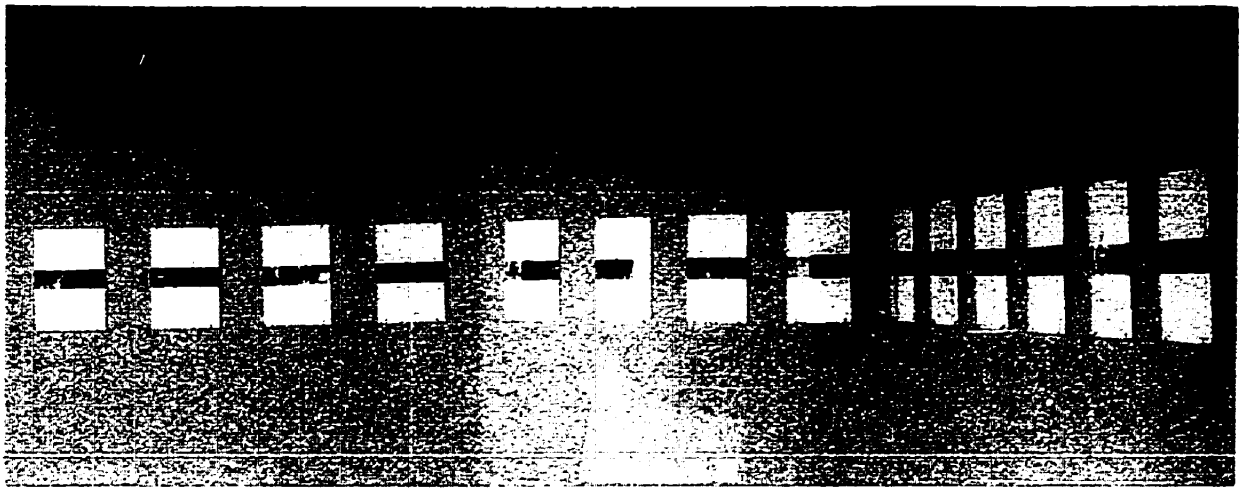
BAAWA: A Reflection
(photo-xerography on paper
each piece 5' X 8')



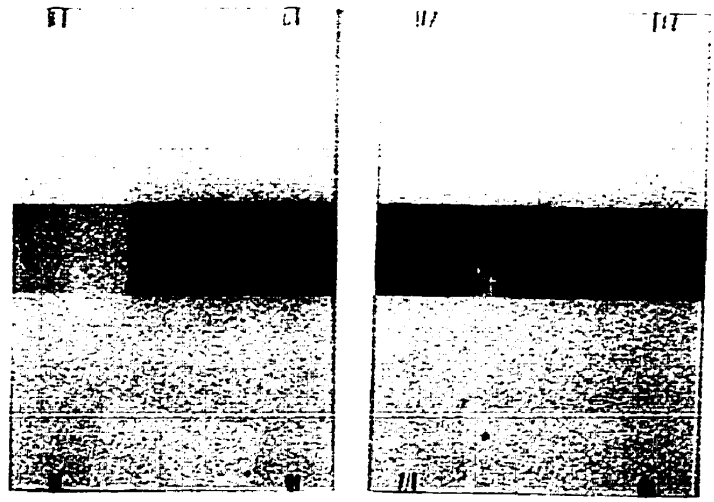
BAAWA: A First Meeting
(photo-xerography on paper
each panel 3' X 10')



BAAWA: At Dawn's Studio
(black and white photography
each piece: 6" X 2 1/2" unframed, 6" X 12" framed)

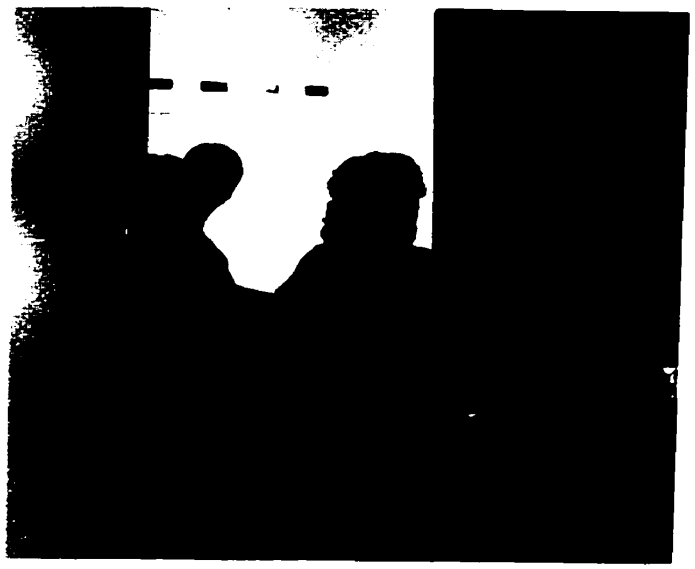


BAAWA: At Dawn's Studio
(detail)
(black and white photography
each piece: 6" X 2 1/2" unframed, 6" X 12" framed)



Mapping the (Un)Familiar
(black and white collaged photo-xerography on paper
each panel 3' X 12')

Conversations in Context



Good evening, and welcome. My name is Pam Patterson. I am an artist, a curator, a mother, an actor, a woman, a writer, a teacher, a person with a disability, an academic, a student.

This is the artist's talk. You know the format. Sometimes it is planned for the opening of an exhibition, sometimes a special event for galleries or schools. We who are urban artists might bring to each event our anti-racist-conflict-resolution-feminist-political-theory-radical politics to teach the right strategy, say the right words. Aren't we so important. Well, I suppose at some point in our life, we all need to feel important but it can get rather tiresome at times, don't you think.

Welcome to the artist's talk. Come in, sit down, put your feet up, relax. Let your mind wander. Melt into your body and move towards a place that gives you pleasure. There will be sensations, ideas, concepts. There will be contradictions. We will look, shifting, turning, our eyes shrouded and lensed by our particular subjectivities. See what you see. Go where you go. No, this won't necessarily be a linear presentation, for the events, the makings in one's life and for one's art can never be entirely reduced to that, for these events are a process. Each has light, width, depth and time. Each has weight, space, and flow. They are of soma: a body poised, reflective, alongside, inside, between many texts.

The texts that comprise this talk are the communities of my art and my research, and are integral to the communities in which I work, study, teach and live. Come with me now. Focus your eyes on some point. Any point will do along the contours of my body. Place the point of a pencil on a paper. Imagine your pencil point is touching me instead of your paper. Without taking your eyes off me, wait until you are convinced that the pencil is touching that point on the paper to which your eyes are fastened. Then move your eye slowly along the contours of my body, and move the

pencil on the paper. As you do this, keep the conviction that the pencil point is actually touching the contour. Be guided more by the sense of touch than by sight. Feel my weight as the essence of my form. Feel my substance as the essence of my tangibility.

Texts. What matters is that lives do not serve as models, only our texts - what we make - do that. We can only live by the stories we have read or heard, or the performances or the images we have made. They come back to us, they form us. They are what we use as raw materials to remake our texts, reform our experiences.

When I talk about texts, I see "text" as the way of framing my response to, or my interpretation of, experience. It might be a paper, a performance, an artist's talk, a visual work. These texts record occasions of my learning, of my perceiving, of my making, of my process. They are moments of rest and, perhaps, reflection, a pause. When I pause, I play and then move on again.

These texts I generate are not on a linear continuum. But - my living body is the binding force for these textual events. This body, moves, is visible, tangible, yet elusive to catch, for while it has substance, it has also been formed from dreams, ideas and images.

I've chosen to present here this evening in this rather unusual way to give you the opportunity to experience "text" haptically, as the embodied experiential. This experience embodies my process, my way of perceiving, my ways of learning, my ways of doing research and of making art, and of working in community with others.

The various events I am going to speak about here form the equally valuable places where differing perspectives for me and for others have become possible; these events relate to each other but, at times, the connection may not be easily discernable.

These events are being enacted through many of the traditional academic rituals and also in

and through my process and practice as a performer and as an artist.

I recognize the practices of each - performer, academic and artist - as different but related, as different ways that I construct texts.

The "performer" defines an intuitive process. As an actor I use my body to sense, move and feel. My goal is to transmit specific moments in such a way that they can be experienced by an audience.

As an academic, I read or listen to different texts; try to make rational connections between them, and then - once I've made cognitive connections - do I try to find ways to link them to my body. I am dependent on the process of composition. In writing, I edit, sort, collect and grapple with ideas to give them a cogent, dense written text. It is like moulding a sculpture with the mind.

As an artist, I read, listen to and observe diverse texts and images and search for connections. I then explore making intuitive visual responses. It is an intuitive, metaphoric and playful process..

Each practice is unique. All are integral.

Each time, I am given an occasion whether performative, academic or artistic, I am driven to create. And in and through this, I enact and reform new texts. Meaning is negotiated and formed, not only between my selves, but in collaboration with others. To make sense of my words, my relationships, my selves, I then need to animate a dynamic, plural, embodied understanding of them in relationship to and across multiple contexts. It is a continual fluid questioning. A walking, a balancing, a swinging, a balancing, a speaking ...

As I speak, I am plunged into lived experience, particularity: I see scars, disfigurements, discolourations, disillusionments, damages, losses, as well as what pleases me.

I shall become the fool, feel uncomfortable, open myself to reconstruction, self-construction

as I physically inhabit various communities.

I have been a member of a community called the Bay Area Artists for Women's Art (BAAWA) for the past ten years. This women's art group is located in the Hamilton Bay area of Ontario and draws women from the cities of Hamilton and Toronto and from small towns and rural areas in the region. It came into being in 1989 as an active response to a major historical retrospective exhibition at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. This exhibition failed, as have many, to note women artists' historical contribution to the arts. The BAAWA women artists, already keenly aware of their own invisibility, were sparked to act by this reminder of these historical omissions. Fuelled by their rage at past transgressions, they discovered the power to affect their own future. Thus began the many exhibition projects by BAAWA. The Montreal Massacre Commemorative Exhibition, the Hag Show, The Flower Show, Domestic Objects and Other Stories, Invoking the Grove, projects curated, coordinated, catalogued by members - a series of projects that were to provide visible markers for the emerging events of BAAWA.

With group members and others I have formed art-making partnerships. Our associations are informal, conversational. We are committed to learning and self-development and to educating a larger community. We actively catalyse events. We name personal/political problems we want to address. In naming, we validate our experiences and affirm our place as knowledge makers. Through story, sensation and memory, we interpret, critique and re-story these experiences, using written text, dialogue and visual materials. It is a "playful" open practice where each of us is open to surprise, to self-construction or re-construction and to the construction or re-construction of the 'worlds' we inhabit. From this process of research and making, artwork results. The materials are diverse, the perspectives unique.

Meaning is made for us in the individual and collaborative processes or making, doing and presenting. We teach each other and teach others - those who come to the exhibits, workshops, artist's talks, and studio visits, and in these activities we revisit the work, re-interpret and re-question the patterns that emerge.

Dear Donna, I think my work is deepening. I've always been committed to speaking from a gendered site but now... I'm including elements of my past in the work that I thought I had left behind, architecture for instance. So, rather than just installing an exhibition, I'm making an installation!

Dear Jane, should I say to these critics, "My work is very personal. It's my life"?

I mean, that's why I don't ask them for advice or look for their criticism. How can they criticize something that is my personal reaction to something? It's mine.

Sure, I want to say something. I want a response. But, it's the idea that's important, I start with the idea. I think about how I can get it across, Okay, I'm a woman and I paint a penis, but I'm not allowed to show it, it's censored. That's interesting. So I do everything I can to that image 'penis' and I get a series shown somehow. It's like I'm saying to these people, "Get used to it. This is a penis. It's not going to kill you. You're not going to die of shock!"

Dear Dawn, last night while I was working on a series of boxes which included the steamer chest, the forensic tray, the baby box... I had a night of terror. All night I dreamed, off and on, so desperately trying to build the walls of the boxes, struggling and struggling. And I had this deadly certain knowledge that this endeavour had everything to do with holding back madness. I woke convinced of the power of those boxes. They are fortresses between order and chaos. My faith in this, though, has come more slowly through my body into the clay. Things are becoming what they

need to become. It's strange, I build and struggle and force form while you find and gather your things or ideas and allow the relationship between them to be full of meaning.

Dear Pam, I think I am an observer of the details of living. I want to absorb all possible influences and sensations while conceiving the idea for the piece. When the physical work begins I can only hope that my hands and eyes will adequately interpret the internal turmoil and that the visual result will realize this mental and physical gathering process.

It is through the body that BAAWA artists come into action, to language, to interaction, to conversation and to community. The art we make marks the confluence of the memories, stories, sensations of BAAWA events. In each work by each artist is a kernel of an interpretive moment, of a time, space, place and occurrence.

BAAWA histories emerge from, and develop through sensation, in "touching the corporeal ground of our intelligence" (Rich, 1976), in our "creative endeavours" (Sanders, 1987), and through the use of "the power of the erotic" (Lorde, 1984).

In June, 1994, I shared reflections and interactions with Margaret Rodgers, Director of the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, on the art "community" surrounding the Bowmanville Centre. At the time, I was hanging and opening the exhibition of my work, Mapping the Familial. During the week, I not only hung the show but also gave an artist's talk. Both these activities are traditional ones for artists visiting the Centre and, in fact, most public galleries or artist-run centres. Rarely does there seem to be the time, funding for, or commitment to, evolving a more dynamic model for artist/community interaction. Margaret and I, however, wanted to create such an opportunity. Our intention was to take up an inside/outside view of this community by doing studio visits together, by her participating in my workshop, and through my participating in her life at the gallery and

home. Both of us were excited by, and certainly committed to, this project, and put aside financial and time constraints to take it on. We assumed that there would be differences between an outsider's and an insider's observations and experiences, but we could not predict the nature of these differences.

An image came to me - me as a tourist who, armed with camera and guide book, flits through the community, jotting down impressions. This was my starting place.

I have a memory of sitting with my daughter beside a Toronto hotel swimming pool listening to the tourists talk about their evening's plans in my city. I stifled giggles, realizing that what they see as Toronto is custom-crafted for the tourist experience - the CN Tower, an evening with The Phantom. How was I to step outside a pre-packaged itinerary? Well, I had my guide, Margaret. But some who travel to exotic places also have guides. A guide translates, makes the trip pleasant and easy, keeps you organised, and on time. And Margaret did most of these things. What she didn't do, though, was translate. She wisely stepped back and let me stumble my own way through. I had very little background information on each of these people - just enough to keep me from freezing up in absolute terror. So I had to engage with them, or run. While running would certainly have been an option, and there were moments when I thought about finding the door, I hung in. The reasons for my staying were mainly the patience and persistence of my guide, and of those whom we visited. Perhaps they too wanted to see if more then a "tourist" connection could be possible?

And, slowly, I made that shift from tourist to traveller.

To a large extent, I think we both participated in a shift. We both travelled - the experiences between us had weight and substance. Care, consideration, sensitivity and patience were critical. And, not easily, we began to learn.

PAM: Well, we were lucky, because we never had a plan.

MARGARET: No, other than the studio visits.

PAM: Other than the studio visits. That was really it, and the other planned events such as the artist's talk. But that was basically like a framework, so everything else had to evolve out of the framework. The framework was crucial but it was not limiting.

MARGARET: No, but the heat was. When I read over our writing, I remembered how it was so hot, and when I think back on it, it was like we were in a pressure cooker.

PAM: Yes, we were.

MARGARET: The temperature was rising and the clock was ticking, and you know there were only those many days in the week, and that was that.

PAM: But we've had the luxury of reflection. And that, to me, has been the greatest advantage of this process -- just to have time. I find as I get more distance from the event and the writing, I'm happier and happier with what we did. As I look at the text, there are things that you were seeing earlier on that I didn't see. I would get caught into things about, oh, you know, "I haven't written anything as good Margaret did."

MARGARET: Oh God, did you think that?

PAM: Oh, yeah. I remember when you first sent me your text in September, I said, "It's so beautiful." I know that has a lot to do with my not trusting my own knowledge and my own experience.

MARGARET: But it's funny how, as you work through it like you did, [you find unusual connections].

PAM: Oh, yeah. Fairly recently, I added things to the text that were maybe somehow informed

by your memories of that stay. Maybe as we continue to look at it, we'll find other connections ...

PAM: Let's look at the photographs. It was kind of nice to have the photographs as markers of various moments. They became signposts or symbols of our learning. The act of photographing itself shifted, too. Remember when we were at Tony and Maralynn's? We all ended up taking pictures of each other. That was a moment of integration for me.

MARGARET: Yeah, everything kind of consolidated at that point. And then the last morning was so much fun, because we were so excited, and we saw what we had. When I look back on that week, it was the highlight of the summer. When I reread what we wrote, and kind of relive it through reading it, I feel good.

PAM: I feel much happier with the process. I feel much happier with my text now.

MARGARET: I was never unhappy with your text.

PAM: No, you weren't. I had to listen to that. One thing I think is really good about the way we've written it, is that [the reader does] have a sense of very different, but connected, experiences of similar situations. And they work perfectly together, because there is that sense of difference. And yet there is a connection. I think what came out of this was a living text. It was an open-ended discussion, in which we realized we'd made certain assumptions about how we value our own knowledge, and we were able to make those fit.

The function of art is not only inherent in the product, in what you create. It's situational. Even community is situation. It's situational for the activity that is to be completed. For example, when this artist talk ends, this community ends as well. Now we could reorganize and restart up, but we would need another occasion in order to do that. What that means is that for any occasion, we have to really be aware, of contributing something. We just can't be taking something. We need

to participate fully. The phenomenon must be made by us in order for it to be there.

So, what do you do, where do you go when you leave this building? What voices do you speak, roles do you take, issues do you act on. Hopefully we will reenter our worlds playfully, creatively, imaginatively, joyfully. Yes, we will need to take on roles in negotiating and living with our various selves and communities and at times we will need to work alone.

So, good luck and good night.

Seven

We think in images, we remember in images, images repeat, reassert themselves on us again ... again.

Betsy Warland, "cutting re/marks" in Proper Definitions.

If art isn't allowed to address and transform the conditions of real life, I don't see the point of it.

Adrian Piper, "The Critique of Pure Racism," interview by M. Berger, Afterimage.

"Fragments"

•

Leena and I complete the work on "Fragments." We see the work as both a retrospective of our work; a synthesis, a historiography, a continuing process of mapping the "art" of making and collaborating.

In "Fragments" the focus for us was on our development as collaborative artists. Images, activities, and objects marked moments/movements from our past, present and future work. These "texts" resonated within the current activity. We occupied a macro text as we manipulated ourselves and our narratives of process within the context of the V. MacDonnell Gallery and in response to Ann Beam's Studies in the Motherline. We, as Artifacts, recreated, drew, and performed, the "study" of our own line of past/present/future, of our active presence as women, as feminists, and as makers.

We incorporated "process" into the actual thing itself, incorporated a historiography of memory, sensation and story representative of that development. It was pleasurable because I/we finally, in spite of our disabilities, our "limitations", had faith that we would complete the work together.

•

We stand in the windows of Virginia's gallery on the morning of the performance laughing because we realize how we have aged and how we have changed since the last time we performed together. Leena needs to be placed so she can see out of the one eye that has peripheral vision, I so that I can use a "good" side to bend down to reach a stack of paper.

And we laugh. We laugh out of relief, out of absurdity and out of the sheer pleasure of being

able to do this work together.

We reach to a pile of xeroxed paper - images of crumpled paper on paper - we examine them with frank curiosity, crumble them and then reopen them, smoothing the new creases and placing each sheet down on the floor to build a new pile beside us. The quality of the fresh xeroxed sheets is flat, aligned, predictable. Those we have handled, looked at, smoothed, stack in an irregular fashion. There is space between them. They sit higher and are more precarious and perhaps more determined in their originality.

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At the performance, we stand in the windows watching the night as people enter the gallery. Behind us our two daughters sit waiting. People slip in from the night into a room which reads as landscape, sit in the half-darkness on the floor.

At exactly the time we predict, we turn, wait and step down into the raffia, the lights splay out over the rocks and people, and we enter their space. We search for a rock and another rock, placing them in order around the walls until the floor is only people. The raffia is then spread like dried grasses around their feet and words sift down on them through our hands - bits of text - fragments of our past, present and future works - our words that have framed the process of our learning.

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Leena: The tape of the sheet.

Pam: Oh, I've never seen that.

L: Yes, that's right.

P: You were gone.

L: The performance was over.

P: You were gone.

L: There was the sand in the bag.

P: And I did what with the sand?

L: I don't remember.

P: I'm sure it was used.

L: You know what I did?

P: I sat down and wrote.

L: I said, "It's too much."

P: It's too much.

P: We can't do that.

P: I can't do that.

L: We have a space.

P: We have an empty space.

L: We could turn off the lights?

P: We're struggling.

L: One small action.

P: Something not too big.

L: You know, there's the lights.

P: That's right.

L: So what we have is a little plot.

P: Absolutely.

L: Absolutely.

P: I'm sitting across from you.

L: Talking.

P: You know what we could do?

L: What?

P: We wouldn't even have to be there.

L: Why not?

P: Well, why not?

L: I loved that performance we saw.

P: Yes, I loved that too.

L: I just loved that.

P: Leila still speaks of it.

L: It was so simple.

P: Exactly... Something very ....

L: We could space it out.

P: I do love a single light bulb.

L: And us moving into the space.

P: Moving in and moving things.

L: Yes, of course. Exactly.

P: Being part of it ... while not being part of it.

L: Because it may work.

P: Do you know what this does?

L: Yes.

P: The chair. One of our many chairs.

L: On this tiny scale.

P: Over time...

L: And every now and then.

P: Like a pause, a break or a change.

L: Perhaps a colour.

P: Like a bell?

L: Our bodies of course are too big.

P: If you take this and just.

L: And look.

P: That process of looking.

L: Of just looking and saying.

P: I remember.

L: Just handing it back and forth.

P: Like wrapping it in a cloth.

L: Placing it down by the sticks.

P: Do we need a light?

L: Something small.

P: That might be nice.

L: We don't have to speak.

P: These tiny pieces of paper.

L: We could make a little heap.

P: Perhaps.

L: If we can do that, then we have a space.

- from the transcript/script for "Fragments" by Pam Patterson and Leena Raudvee

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At the close of the performance, we sit, open books to read and see only snippets, fragments of text, images in words that trace moments of our exhibitions, performances, interchanges. Our daughters' music ends and we stand and walk from the room.

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"Fragments"

(Multi-media/installation/performance.)

by Pam Patterson & Leena Raudvee

V. MacDonnell Gallery, Toronto

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The images of/from/for this research reassert themselves again and again. And in their repetition through different forms, modalities or events the sensibility of the whole emerges. Each of these forms, like models bridge gaps - linking emotion to experience, self to work, particular people and situations to research focus and practices. Texts, models, representations are meant to be used to think with. And it has been as inquirer/learner that I have done that, making confusions, biases and process apparent as I ask different questions and shift through differing perspectives. Research has been a learning-in-process.

I have begun here to find/create the tools and opportunities to make spaces to articulate and explore original ways of writing and representing research. If I continue to attend to the needs and nuances of the particular contexts in which I work, am intent in my goals and rigorous in my practices, I am likely to form such a research that responds to the specificity of place.

Adrienne Rich (1977) writes that "responsibility to yourself means refusing to let others do your thinking, talking and naming for you; it means learning to respect and use your own brains and instincts; hence grappling with hard work" (p. 233). Rich says that women, rather than simply receiving an education, should claim one. Let us then claim it in action, reflect on it in dialogue, and realize it in practice.

I reread Rich's statement when I had felt crushed by study; my research seemed tentative, passive and fearful. I looked to BAAWA, a group that I had been working with for years at that time. In contacting them, I became aware that I had lost my courage to claim an education. I had claimed this right with them years before, but where had it gone? To return to them again with one foot in the academy was daunting. These women too may be individually fearful, but they are also

angry, articulate, joyous and hopeful and in their research, art making and educating they expose their lives, art and learning to public scrutiny with great courage. They have been an inspiration to me. It has been useful to me once again to place this "communitas" in context here at The Decade of Days.

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This Decade of Days

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The staff of the Burlington Art Centre, motivated by Dawn White-Beatty in particular, decided in 1997 that they would commit resources to, and support the creation of, a gallery event that marked the tenth anniversary of the massacre of fourteen women engineering students at L'École Polytechnique at L'Université de Montréal. When I was invited to curate the planned exhibition I decided to turn the focus of the exhibition away from mourning and toward living with the effects of these events in our lives. Grief never really leaves us, but it does change us, creating an internal space for itself. The title of the exhibition acknowledged a Decade of Days living with this personal and cultural space.

In the fall of 1989 four women artists associated with Hamilton's artist-run gallery, Hamilton Artists Inc., wrote a letter to the search committee for a new director at the Art Gallery of Hamilton asking that a director be hired who would create programming that would provide role models for women artists. This letter was a response to the Art Gallery of Hamilton's 75th Anniversary Exhibition which had only four women artists in it. The four women artists who signed the letter called themselves The Bay Area Artists for Women's Art. This was an organization manque; it didn't exist beyond the envelope sent to the Art Gallery. The letter writers decided it would be a good strategy to support the request in the letter by hanging an exhibition by the new group in The Third Space, Hamilton Artists Inc. members' gallery. While that exhibition was being planned, the events happened in Montreal. Those events changed this group of letter writers and fused them into the core of a culturally active feminist artists' collective. BAAWA is now a decade old and I don't believe the organization would have continued to exist without the painful crucible of the events in Montreal and that exhibition which was transformed when it was dedicated to the victims of the massacre.

For the current project, This Decade of Days, I decided to look at the process of collectivizing as a strategy for women artists. This collectivizing of individuals creates a 'social site' which Hannah Arendt (1958) calls 'that hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance'(p. 35). The women artists' collective can be explored as an alchemical space where intimate and personal response is transformed into public action and voice. Ten years after the events in Montreal this exhibition looks at the strength of the work of women artists in collectives, their affirmation of their own agency, their strategies applied to healing, their tactics applied to

culture, and their ambitions for artistic and social growth.

- by Jane Gordon (1999) in Curatorial Essay to This Decade of Days, Burlington Art Centre.

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Meeting, talking, listening

The collective spirit touches an ancient

source of strength.

No dogma no hierarchy.

A gathering of women,

questioning

and trying

to understand.

- Pat Kozowyk, BAAWA, This Decade of Days, BAC.

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I remember there was a show that I went to see at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. All the rooms were filled with works of art and as I walked around the whole gallery counting the number [of works by women] I think I counted two, possibly three (because in one case I wasn't sure if the name was male or female, so I thought I'd give them the benefit of the doubt). I was really depressed and then angry and frustrated and then resigned and even more depressed.

Then I found from Jane Gordon that she had had a similar experience and was even more angry and depressed but she had an idea. She'd met a woman from Manitoba who belonged to Manitoba Artists for Women's Art and Jane thought we could form a similar group here in the Bay Area. I'm a bit foggy on the exact dates and sequence of events but I know from the very first meeting, just the

fact that we were going to unite, I felt good. And we made change!

Even just the fact that were there put the fear into many people in the art world. I've always been astounded at what power we had, really just the threat or possibility of power, and I've been shocked at the lack of male artists' support of our group's goals, simple, clear, fair goals - the wish to have something equal to what male artists always had. Not more, not special, just the same.

I'm always pleasantly surprised to see the genuine desire of members to help each other and work together in whatever endeavour we take on and I'm very happy and relieved to be a member of BAAWA.

- Donna Ibing, BAAWA, This Decade of Days, BAC.

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On December 6th 1989 a lone gunman entered L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. In the ensuing massacre fourteen female engineering students were killed and many others were wounded.

Every day newspapers, radio, television and people report husbands abusing wives, brothers abusing sisters, sons abusing mothers, and men abusing women. In the workplace, abuse of women is common. Violence against women remains as serious a problem today as it was before December 6th 1989. 'This Decade of Days' should remind viewers that a 'Montreal massacre' can occur in any place, at any time, if emotion and outrage are not controlled. Women need to stand up and join together to prevent this happening again, and to continuously diminish the level of violence against women.

In late 1994 or early 1995 I went to meetings of the BAAWA collective held at Hamilton Artists Inc. for discussions related to a group exhibition.

Approximately three months later we had a BAAWA show at the Broadway Cinema Gallery in Hamilton.

- Woon-Ngor Ballik, BAAWA, This Decade of Days, BAC

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In 1995 while writing a university essay 'Inspired by Inequality: The Art of Donna Ibing', the BAAWA collective came to my attention.

Research revealed she [Donna] and three other women co-founded BAAWA in 1989 as a reaction to the Art Gallery of Hamilton show where three female artists' works hung along side hundreds of male artists' works.

Their philosophy made an impression on me and I recently chose to be a part of the collective.

- Helen Sovereign, BAAWA, This Decade of Days, BAC

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Of the many highlights that I have had with my association with BAAWA, two surface as specifically memorable.

First, the workshop that was held at Jane Gordon's studio dealing with women and their community, issues of creativity and government support or lack thereof in building art in public spaces. This workshop was especially enlightening around the issue of government assistance that may be available.

The second event was the workshop dealing with the process of creating "Changing Places." This project [questioned] how the City of Hamilton would look if women were the architects, designers and artisans. The main purpose was to get women working with new technologies, in particular the Internet.

My goal was to create a labyrinth for the year 2000. The workshop allowed me to launch my website (changingplaces.sonicboom.com/giuliani) and to allow viewers a detailed introduction to my renewed passion -- the labyrinth. This workshop also inspired me to continue to take computer courses. I have since been able to build a labyrinth in my backyard and have successfully negotiated with Burlington City Council to build a labyrinth as a millennium project on public park space, allowing everyone access to it 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Burlington is one of the first cities to have a labyrinth in a public space in all of Canada.

- Justine Guiliani, BAAWA, This Decade of Days, BAC

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As a visual artist, I work in solitude, days and weeks alone with my own thoughts. This is of course an important part of the creative process, to help you learn how to have the voice of an individual. This particular expression, I believe is the heart of what I call art.

Then I began to realize that to truly grow, I had to learn to share. Open myself up to the society I live in, interact with others who are like minded. This of course is a different interaction than that of being at art school, or with curators or critics; it's a dialogue that begins at the creation level, before the work is done. The inspiration, the goal and the collective voice.

I joined the BAAWA collective after a long search for a group of artists that I felt I wanted to

interact with. The women in this collective are strong individual artists, with... strength of character. Substantial artists to grow and learn with.

- Corinne Duschene, BAAWA, This Decade of Days, BAC

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As a performance and visual artist, my artistic practice provides me a way to come to an embodied knowing (knowledge gained primarily by and through the body) to learning and experiencing. It enables me to recover and enact "being" constantly through the activities of my life.

One such site for activity has been the Bay Area Artists for Women Artists (BAAWA). It has provided for me, a passionate centre that has activated me in re-forming and recreating occasions for my learning and growth. It has catalysed my taking on a committed engaged working process that has been rigorous, eclectic and dynamic. It has supported and affirmed my needs and encouraged me in my practices as artist, curator, teacher, writer, community worker and academic.

This latter activity has been reflected through and in my master's and doctoral work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and has been extended into my professional work with colleges, institutions and other individuals and collectives.

My relationship with the individuals that comprise, and the collective that is, BAAWA are and have always been in flux. It is, and will continue to be, a dialogue of the interaction of self and community in process.

- Pam Patterson, BAAWA, This Decade of Days, BAC

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I find it interesting to see my writing in/for This Decade of Days presented here, at the exhibition and in the catalogue alongside the writings of other BAAWA members. Some of these women I know, some are newer members whom I have not yet met. Threads, images recur through each of our comments - the memories, the learning, the associations, the work - the comments in dialogue as representative of us, our practices and our collaborative partnerships.

We each practice our own learning process privately and publicly. We each respond to text, various situations and people. We each make modalities, representative of our shifts in sights/sites

over time. And we each share this at some point, in partnerships.

In this chapter, I trace my progression as self-as-inquirer/learner through the thesis project. I locate the significance of each modality as a specific site for learning. In doing so, my intention is to give recognition to a multiplicity of self(ves), contexts and learning needs. Taking on the role of inquirer/learner-in-process, I enact an engagement with the research as a whole reinterpreting, reframing and reasserting the words, actions and images. In this further occasion I write in an open and emergent textual form as I draw connections toward a closing.

How has my own conception of learning process evolved in this thesis project? It has been formed from/through my own experiences, in relation to an-other; someone or something that has taken me outside myself. This includes written or spoken text(s), images, feelings or crises. It has been a process - a movement. As I have moved through and with this process, shifts have occurred. These shifts have raised the why, the what, and how the how of the research and have taken me to new and different places, alternative perspectives and have been given form in various modalities.

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My intention was to begin with myself, to start with what I knew about myself and my own learning process. I assumed, to a certain extent, that this would inform how I then viewed or biased my understandings of learning with the BAAWA community. Rather than making my biases problematic, I became interested in how my own biases, i.e. my own bias to learning, informed the way I understood and interpreted the learning process of a group or partnership. Virginia Griffin (1987), in "Learning to Name our Learning Process", defines learning process as "a patterning, an act of finding that seemingly disparate experiences fit together in some relationship that has meaning to the learner" (3).

For me, this notion of disparate experiences connected to my own interest in multiple dimensions, multiple perspectives, and multi-layered relationships possible in adult learning, the arts and experiential methodologies. But how could I name my learning process? For me, the crucial aspect became the notion of movement, rather than necessarily a patterning. Perhaps it could be seen as a movement of patterns or a pattern of movement. That for me, illustrated the potential for perspectival shifts, destabilizations or ways of operating through/in a liminal zone (Turner, 1977). Liminal zones are the playful places, the pauses I take where I can suspend analysis for a moment, intuit and tacitly explore. This has been played out not only in the modalities but through my voice as self-as-inquirer/learner.

I see this as a creative process, in which disparate elements can then be seen in various, rather than fixed, contexts. My sense was that, if I became fixed too long in one position, it would be difficult for me to see multiple dimensions or multiple perspectives. It would be difficult to shift from one experience to another, and to move and hence to learn. Learning for me requires that shift. Romanyshyn (1989) notes:

> *The world as our home is always multi-levelled. Like a house, it has many stories. We need to attend to this more holistic view of the world, to a view which embraces surface and depth, to a view which allows us to experience the world not just in terms of facts to be discovered and known, but also in terms of stories to be imagined and heard. (183-184)*

What underlies this understanding of learning process have been the assumptions I have made on the values of connectedness, compassion and an ethics of caring and on the reality of fragmentation, separation, pain and loss. I have a certain faith in a search for, but not necessarily an acceptance of, a connectedness between differing perspectives. So, I have understood my position for this inquiry as holistic and yet I acknowledge the value of the critical. A holistic definition

assumes that "the universe is a meaningful whole in which everything is connected. This assumption of wholeness and unity is directly opposed to the assumption of separation and fragmentation that prevails in the contemporary world" (Clark, 1990, p. 3). I have played between the two, always yearning for the former.

My assumptions framed as a critical but holistic learning named a place in BAAWA as the location for this study.

Once I named my learning process and how I understood that it proceeded by the shifting and reforming of my perspectives, I then asked: how have the BAAWA contexts affected my learning?

I then looked to the three sites that represented my specific processes of learning with BAAWA over the last few years. One site related to my work as an academic; the second related to my role as educator and actor; and the third related to my practice as artist. All three include researcher. I found it interesting, as I began to formulate my doctoral dissertation, that I recognized academic, educator/actor, and artist as three very different aspects of myself, that could relate dialogically-in-process for this work. They seemed to represent different ways that I constructed texts, and different ways that I interpreted the world. They might provide, I thought, intrinsically valuable clues for a multi-perspectival learning. I discuss here again the specific differences between each.

At the first site, as academic, I read or listen to different books, articles and catalogues. I become dependent on the process of composition. I edit, sort, collect and grapple with ideas to shape a new text. I proceed to written form tightening and forming language but without ever entering into testing these ideas or processes with my body. The ideas though are useful, the

information relevant.

As educator/actor at the second site, my process is different. As an actor I use my body to learn through sensing, moving and feeling. In order to learn in acting, I'm required to discover a certain movement and interpret certain scripted text through an integrated act of mind/body/voice. I need to perform specific moments repeatedly, searching for links that give these actions or words meaning. My goal is then to transmit that activity in such a way that it can be experienced by an audience. As an educator, I also attempt to integrate mind/body/voice in "performing" the role of teacher. Here, though, I enact moments, not only for, but in empathy with, an "audience." I need to be empathetic to others' learning processes. Each student needs to experience repeatedly through his or her own body certain sensations and then integrate these in her/himself. They find their own ways to connect their subjective felt experience with specific ideas. To learn in this context, I imagine, trust, feel, and then integrate mind and body, and attempt to educate in the same manner. The learning process is cognitive as well as emotional, sensate, and experiential.

As an art maker, evidenced at the third site, I look at images, listen, talk, examine diverse texts and experiences and search for connections. I explore visual responses to those connections that I've made, trying to solve the problems - both formal and conceptual through an intuitive and metaphoric process. My learning happens in the making and the looking as I reflect on the process of doing and on the form as it emerges.

In this, the BAAWA research, I used each of these three sites to create a text: for the academic, the written text; for the actor/educator, the notated performance script; for the artist, the exhibition text. The analysis or interpretation of how I have worked into, through, and out of these texts - a complementarity in conversation - has come from my reflecting on these various texts as

self-as-inquirer/learner.

Each process has provided me with a different text, a new understanding. While certain questions are perhaps more appropriate to certain processes, "why" and "where" to the literature study, "what" to the notated performance script and "how" to the exhibition - each process at a site - the academic, the acting/educating, and the art making - does interrelate.

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I recognise that each instance of learning at a site is a creative occasion for research. This does not necessarily mean that each learning moment need be formalized as a modality or model, but rather that each be recognized as a potential place for a study of learning. A course, a preparation of a paper, a performance, a workshop teaching, a making of an art object for an exhibit - each can become an occasion for learning. A specific context can be created; a context which provides an occasion in which learning can take place and can be observed, formed and presented.

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I am driven to create, and through this compulsion I enact my learning.

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In the enacting of this research, I observe certain aspects of my learning practice. I see a value in balancing and integrating the learning processes I use. If I only work at the academic site, my body suffers; if I am only involved in the process of acting/educating, I am not stimulated. Suggestions I received during this research process which were useful in directing how I could better achieve an integrated or interrelated process, include the following. David Hunt values metaphor, and the intuitive voice. "Trust what you tacitly understand. Pay attention to what is

special, to what draws you," he commented. Ronald Silvers asked: "Attend to the subtle, not the coarse. Listen with the whole body. Be attentive to what captures you, not just what interests you." Virginia Griffin also suggested that perhaps it might be useful for me to start a search with the direct exploration of what my body is asking me or telling me. Each identified for me, and enabled me to find ways, to bring my body and my imaginings into academic research: to honour the processes I had found as an academic, educator and as an artist.

My research has included a search to identify the elements of my learning process, and then to understand what drives that process. I use Virginia Griffin's (1987) "Beginning List: Basic Processes in Adult Learning" as a focus here. She lists the following:

A. Keep centred and maintain self-esteem

B. Become increasingly responsible for learning

C. Find own direction for learning

D. Identify and deal with external and internal expectations, norms, values

E. Invest energy, involve and commit self

F. Deal with energy ebb and flow

G. Relate to others

H. Help the group develop and use the group effectively

I. Suspend old ideas, risking the new. Allow and deal with perspective transformations.

J. Learn about self as a learner (meta-learning)

K. Identify appropriate and timely learning tasks, functions, modes

L. Find personal meaning in content and experiences

M. Notice, clarify, consolidate, synthesize what is being learned

N. Test new ideas, skills, behaviour, ways of being

O. Ask for, give, use feedback

P. Plan for and use new learning in other places

Q. Find and accept satisfactions, joys, excitement in learning.

To which I now add:

R. Experiment with non-linear associations

S. Listen to other things; sensing and feeling

T. Identify "aha" moments and attend to them

U. Attend to multiple perspectives and accommodate them.

I have experienced ways through the BAAWA research that I can incorporate or learn to incorporate these processes in my learning. I have attended to the unexpected, and to the physical messages and reactions. I have become an informed, self-directed learner through naming many of my processes. I have looked to ways to integrate learning process into research practice.

I have always valued play. It has been a way for me to explore non-linear associations, to listen to other images, voices, texts, and sense and test these out. In processing this research, I expected the unexpected, and was playful with things that would appear in the "data." I listened and allowed things to develop, whether or not I felt they were relevant to the research at hand. I attempted to identify and name "aha" moments. These were moments that integrated ideas, feelings, discoveries. They were moments of elation, of pain or anxiety, or of rest. They were not always comfortable, but they were liberating.

Now that I am able to reflect upon my learning within the context and writing of research,

I realize that an integrated learning has been taking place. The process has been creative, intuitive, emotional, and yet mindful. I have found a place to pause, play and to reflect. This may not always be the way I will proceed in academic work, but it has pointed the way for valuing the creative processes I already know and honouring them in and through academic text.

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RONALD SILVERS (Professor of sociology, artist and curator): From what you just said - it's not that there is a community and then you study it, that's a conventional way of thinking about it. But rather it's the reverse. The occasion of art or the occasion of research is the occasion of the community. It isn't there unless ...

PAM: Unless there's..?

RONALD: There are these things. It's very different because it isn't as if, well, there's something there and I'm coming to it, it's that when I come to it, I'm making it, you see. Now that's a very different way of looking at the phenomenon... In your analysis, you can begin to point to certain things. You will assemble and find in that assemblage the re-occasion of the role you play in making community... I think the thing - taking your own point here - is to make community and the concept of community unfamiliar. You want to have a fresh way of seeing what's going on.

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I realize that, through my doing research, I'm creating occasions for me to learn and for others to learn.

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How do I learn in collaboration or community? Is it a context so different that my learning

process alters considerably?

It is, and it isn't. Partners provide other "text(s)" for me to respond to, and I alter my process depending on the particular situation, just as I do in any context. A partner in conversation with me, though, can generate a "text-in-relation." If we are both committed learners, we can co-create a new perception, hopefully a different perspective. But when people work in relation, it is so complex.

In her study of drama teacher collaboration, Janice Hladki (1993), notes:

> *Collaboration... is characterized by linkage or connections, interaction and relationship (105)....*
> *The emotional consequence of collaborating is another issue. Collaboration can generate warmth and humour, trust, support, the excitement of bonding around common interests and goals, and a space for vulnerability and constructive criticism. It can, however, also cause heartache, resentment, and fear when individuals feel they are unheard or silenced, when their needs are unmet, or when their views are disparaged. Collaboration is a process of personal relation... sometimes [too] there is pleasure in understanding the process and results of collaboration as co-created, with no identification of separate offerings, yet at other times, collaborators may need recognition of individual contributions (109).*

To discern a process-in-relation has perhaps been not as easy as discerning an individual learning process. It has been interpretive but not definitive.

I have realized that to frame "person as text" has not done the relationship justice. As I continue to inquire into my learning-in-community, I come to recognize, experience, enact, and interpret the complexities inherent in these relationships.

Relationships demand so much from the learner. It may be easy for me to lose sight of my bodily and/or emotional reactions in reading an article. It is not so easy when dealing with a dishonest or manipulative partner. What I choose to do or not do with those feelings, within that situation, determines where I/we could go next. I could challenge the partner, question the group,

ignore the feelings, and hope for the best, or leave the relationship.

I was at such a crossroads with one individual with whom I was working in a BAAWA grouping. I chose to continue in the project, but the learning relationship became unbalanced. I felt misused, slighted and unfulfilled. I was not alone. The BAAWA group has accepted the limitations of this member and continues to work with her, and hopes that, by example, she will change. They continue to include her in good faith and through a commitment to the ideals of the group. She asked not to be included in this research. Those who did contribute were deeply committed to self-questioning and learning as well as the project at hand. I believe, given such commitment it is possible to build together creative spaces where each of us can pause and play, where each learning can become an "art". And where our common interest and love in art making can energize us toward new learnings.

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RONALD SILVERS: The function of the art is not only the product, it's not only what is actually happening, you know what you create, but it is also...

PAM: Something that happens among the members of the community?

RONALD: It's intuitive. It's situational. Even community is situation. It's situational for the activity that is to be completed. I would think [of it] especially in terms of performance, when [it] ends, then that community ends as well. Now it could reorganize and restart up, but it would need another occasion in order to do that... [The community] is dependent on the activity of the art in order for [it] be vital. After a while, [if] you brought [the people] together and there was no art going on in it, it would, I would think, just dissipate.

PAM: I think you're right. It's interesting. In starting a creative partnership, I need to acknowledge

that there's something else that's going on, something special, something creative.

RONALD: And what this means in terms of research is that in any occasion of research, you have to really be aware, in the immediate technical sense, of contributing something. You just can't be taking something. You have to participate fully.

PAM: But am I compromising the research, because I'm too close to it, too involved...?

RONALD: In this case, there would be no other way that you could do it. In order to study the phenomenon [you] have to create it in the immediate sense. [You] have to create it right there as well as research it, and there's no other way that it can happen. The phenomenon must be made by you in order to be there. Otherwise it can't be there, you see? So that whole notion that you have to take an objective, disinterested view, you know not to be biased is not - it's not - the thing that you'll be wanting to do, because then your phenomenon is gone. You'll have nothing to study.

PAM: So... that's why, each time I come to the research, the form of it always changes, because it's very dependent on each different occasion that I/we set up.... It can never be [recorded in] one text. It will have to be a series of different kinds of texts that are markers for different kinds of occasions.

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Complementarity in conversation.

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I am, I do, I create... then I reflect, re-tell, re-search. It is the re-searching, the re-telling that occupies me here in this writing as I feel my way to the core of understanding my relationship to self, to community, to art making as a research process. I accept that this process has required and may continue to require an ongoing rigorous retelling as it stretches in its closing toward an understanding of knowledge which is processual and emergent, and linked to future interpretations.

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As I reread "A Literature Study: Why a Separatist Feminist Art Education?" now, I sense the solidity of place that defines the writing of this work, the tangibility of text, of existing text that seems even now so authoritative and definitive. Nothing of significance had been written or collected on Canadian women's art educational collectives when I wrote that. I had not yet seen and touched an art work by Aganetha Dyck, a MAWA member. This Decade of Days, a public forum for the examination of collectives- as-education, had not yet happened. I had not yet spoken in public on BAAWA and/or on the uniqueness of learning for women in educational communities of their own making. I underestimated perhaps the effect such a speaking and presenting might have. It served to destabilize the single authorial voice of the academic presentation of the literature study and moved me to act, to educate and to learn.

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I move now to reflecting on the making of "Process in Performance". As I re-read this notated script, I am struck by the different voices - voices which talk "through" in the poetic text and the voices that talk "about" in the notated text. Both are kinds of conversation, but are very different. I think of the actor coming to a role. She builds her "notations" by studying the history behind, and the structure of, the script; creates a biography for her character; and decides on an emotional context. All of these are the layers that go into the final speaking - they are of the subtext and inform the performance. They become embodied in/through the actor.

So, too, here do I, and the other women, carve our art from the talk and the reflection in our lives. I am struck here by my choice to present us as co-constructing, for example, the stone metaphor in the poetic text. As I re-read this text, I am given a sense of the dynamic nature of our

co-curricking - the pauses, the weight, the overlaps and continuations - the movement towards form. I see knowledge as emerging, as coming to being, formed through our senses from our own particular and collective associations with stones.

In some ways the poetic text seems so much more dense than the descriptive narrative of the notations. In the former, there is nuance, mystery and the space to be with the text on many levels. It is a re-memory of the senses.

A sense memory process in acting is a way, using the memory of sights, sounds, smells, etc., that an actor can recover and re-create, in different contexts, specific moments. In this scripted moment, individual memories seem to cross and mingle in a collective conversation rich with touch, sight and feeling.

But this remembering is not passive. There is a tension between us, between the words and the ideas that impels us to move further. It is a tension created through dynamic activity. We want to be both together and yet separate. We are all artists and yet we are not all mothers, writers, old, young, rich, poor. It is our similarities that can bring us together and our differences that can call us to move to different sites.

The poetic text, then, is not one isolated from life. The notations remind me of that. These comments isolate, for me, the, at times, concrete clarity of everyday experience. They provide, for me as well, a grounding for the "poetic" text. Each "text", however, holds my memories - memories, in the poetic text, of J.G.'s vibrant colours or J.A.'s dense and troubling boxes; memories, in the notated text, of <u>The Hag Show</u> weekend or J.G. reading her "Ovarian Manifesto" at the Spectator Gallery. And it is in the resonance created in the moments and movements between images, texts and people that I experience the dynamic creative activity of BAAWA members in their

art making and in their interactions.

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> *I began in a shallow basket, on a window sill, lined up in ranks on a filing cabinet... if you become a stone you consume its dusty presence, it becomes an absence, a wet space, an opening. Women and stones. Women. And women begat all the rest including themselves, not work, just stones, lined up on filing cabinets and in baskets on the table. Jane Gordon (1990)* <u>TheEccentric Furniture Show</u>

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The stones that rests on my dresser, on an art work I am now exhibiting and in my daughter's hand resonate with the memories of everyday activities that consume my life. I see another friend, artist and writer reach for that stone, look at it, hold it and replace it. We talk. The stone takes on a meaning for me and for her. And when I visit her studio I see boxes of stones, stones on cabinets, stones in glass bowls and I comment on them as we meet and discuss our upcoming collaboration. In the presenting of the photographs of my meetings with Dawn and Leena, I attempted to capture the feeling of our meetings, the stillness and yet movement of our exchanges, the quality of how we enact our art making and our practice as artists, and curators.

The stone is a haptic object which provides us with a touch, a hand-hold, a place to rest and feel the weight, the warmth, the smoothness. As we pass this stone back and forth, a space is opened where we can offer and receive interpretations of our act of doing, of passing, of holding.

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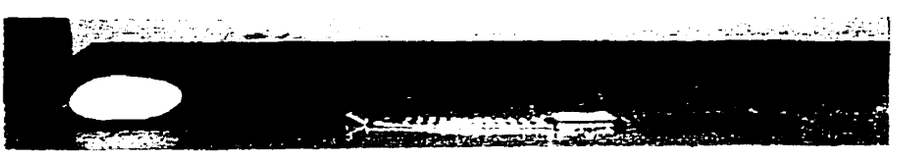

It is a small rectangular black and white photograph, one of the ones shown in Communitas in Context and This Decade of Days, which records two objects resting on a surface which I know to be a filing cabinet. The one to the left is a smooth stone, the other a delicate metal banded watch. I smile, for I recall Dawn B. returning to the watch throughout the meeting and then racing down to put money in the metre if the time proved right.

This image records for me time and space - the time and space between us, the non-forcing of time or non-taking of space. I look closer at the image and I think I see etched on the smooth comforting stone the word "pain". I had not seen this when I took the picture. It shocks me. For pain had certainly been there at the meeting, not between us, but in the personal lives of two of us. And it will come to be etched in our art. It reminds me of how, while we speak of the practical in our meetings, we acknowledge beneath that, the feelings, the concerns of our everyday lives. We do not ignore the "pain" but neither do we dwell on it. It is given the time and space to be, and then we go on. But it bubbles in and through us over time, resonates as we connect and is given form in our work.

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I look at the two xeroxes of photographs. Both are composite images (one set of pictures

superimposed on another). The photographs were taken by two different photographers at two different BAAWA events. One photographer was asked to record BAAWA women talking, the other was documenting an exhibition. The result places the two main activities of BAAWA in relation - the dialogue and exhibitions.

I am aware as I look at the images, that my eye moves back and forth between the people and the art in the photographs. At times the people are clearer than the art works. In one photograph, I see what appears to be someone looking through a painting at others who are looking at a three-dimensional piece. My perspective is askew. It is not a linear, or predictable perspective but it does record, for me, a potential way of seeing the movement within the space between the people and the exhibition. By using art works as one way to conceptualize this inquiry, I have asked myself and the reader to imagine what could be named in the spaces between. By being able to imagine, comments Richard Courtney (Booth and Martin-Smith, 1988), we are capable of seeing both sides of a question, or object or concept (p. 103). It is an activity which allows us to see relationship. Richard Courtney (Booth and Martin-Smith, 1988) also notes that "the arts are largely concerned with intuitions which are communicated... at the tacit or indirect level" (p. 89). By entering a research process from this perspective, I have allowed myself a greater opportunity not only to see but experience this relationship.

In "Process in Performance," J.G. seems to raise a question, "What if I became the stone object? If I embodied it within me?" D.B. seems to respond, "Would I not then be learning? Would I not tentatively come to an understanding of my own knowing, my own being?" In the dramatic act, the actor directly takes on the image. Statements are then made in speech or in action through a cultural dialogue (Courtney, 1988, p. 133). Interpretive meaning then becomes

mutually created. Meaning relies on our meeting, on the conjunctions.

But how we each embody that stone, though, is of our own personal domain. Odin Theatre director Eugenio Barba (1979) refers to this place as the microcosm of the actor. I may speak in public at BAAWA gatherings and come with them to some mutually-created meaning. But, I also return taking this "meaning" with me, to a private space to reflect and recover other interpretations. It is here I tend to focus on what nags me, on what was not fully clear enough to be expressed in public. It is here I look to the disjunctures, to the concerns that call me to respond. In the studio or writing on paper, I then explore, more specifically, the indirect ways I use and respond to these various images or ideas.

The private actions of reading and assimilating, the public dramatic activities of acting and teaching and of presenting visual work are part of the being, doing and creating of this arts community. My writing from my "biography" (Silvers, 1986, p. 24) and my "writing" in structured or dramatic or visual forms are but ways I have struggled to capture not only my self-in-learning but also the dynamic relationship of learning-in-community.

I look at the photograph on the right in which I am speaking with Dawn B. I imagine myself saying something, then stopping and looking at the work on the wall beside me and then continuing the conversation. But as the researcher, I know that we were not standing with that work. The work on the wall behind us was yet to be made. The passage of time is recorded in this image. Our changes, our learning, our building, our art evolves through the oscillation between our private space and public dialogue. And, like this dissertation, have been built over time as I have moved between these different considerations.

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It is from this I now move to finding a meta-perspective to this research and a closing.

Closing

The artistic practices of women require deciphering, like monuments from lost or unfamiliar cultures. There is some system to the patterning of signs into meanings. We need, however, to find the codes that lend the symbols generated there resonance and meaning, both within the context of their production and across time and space to other contexts. These codes, as I name them, are not merely semiotic signs, but those shaped in concrete social and historical conditions, which in turn shape and are shaped by the psychic life of individuals framed and formed in specific trajectories of socially constituted but psychically lived subjectivity.

Griselda Pollock, Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings

For Bakhtin, the grotesque body represents a powerful force. It is a body that is 'always in process' ... In summarizing his work... Mary Russo describes the 'grotesque body' as the one which is open, protruding and extended, the body of becoming, process and change. The 'grotesque body' is opposed to the classical body, which is monumental, static and closed. She explains that the imagery of carnival resists, exaggerates and destabilizes the distinctions and boundaries that mark and maintain high culture and organized society, and in this sense the carnivalesque suggests a redeployment of culture, knowledge and pleasure, thus becoming a site of insurgency.

Michelle Hirschorn, "Body as ready (to be re-) made" in Griselda Pollock, Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings

Closing as Context

This Decade of Days has closed; "Fragments" is done. Ten years of association with OISE/UT and with BAAWA is ending. As I come to a close in this writing, I stretch for a closing conversation. I framed this writing of self-as-inquirer/learner as complementarity in conversation. It has started on its own ground, in its own named space. It has evolved to a conversation between texts, selves, responses, events, images : the past events of BAAWA that have provided the context for the three modalities; the exhibition This Decade of Days, and its celebrating 10 years of feminist art activity in collectives and specifically in BAAWA; and the making and presenting of "Fragments," an installation/performance art work with a fellow BAAWA collaborator, Leena R. Each activity sits dialogically in action with the others, relating, crossing, influencing. There is much to see and experience.

I have looked to that which challenges ways of defining communication and a sense of self and other. I have risked entering into interpretation and explanation of persons and life events without always turning to the previous effective paradigms I have used in the past. But I have faith in the process and that drives me on. I trust what niggles me, what stays with me, irritates me and drives me to use dis-ease as a spur to movement and to action will enable me to establish a phenomenological unity as closing. It has been an encounter, an immersion in the learning process of self-in-BAAWA.

Dis-ease as Catalyst

I remember Jane G. telling me in one of my first BAAWA meetings how she had been so irritated by a derogatory comment an art educator made about women and flower paintings. This drove her to research, question, investigate. She asked a group of us to join with her and through that

joint inquiry we birthed The Flower Show. Thinking we were required to negate any interest in representing flowers in our practice seemed to evoke for us a feeling of shame. For some reason, we heard, if we wanted to be considered serious artists, flowers would be the last thing we would want to use as subject matter. Some feminist theorizing also betrayed that shame.

Not just by our training, but also by some of our own ideologies, we were shamed away from our bodies, and the domestic - little reference was made in meetings we attended outside BAAWA to our children or our monthly bleeding or even just our daily lives. While such interest in this kind of exploration and work surfaced briefly in the 70's, it was quickly hidden away. Some of us pondered this. Leena and I were condemned for a street performance, "Female Laundry," when we took two housewives on laundry day to The Stock Exchange. The public response was strident: businessmen were violent and aggressive, some feminist colleagues equally accusatory. We knew we had touched a nerve: "Why all this outcry? Perhaps," we thought, "we were supposed to stay marginalized in a 'domestic' space or redefine ourselves as non-confrontational - as nebulous, soft, ineffectual beings in flux." So we gathered with others in a collective, in isolation, as women, in seclusion to think, to talk, to strategize, to shape our learning and ultimately to produce. But while we might collectivize in separation, we wanted the dialogue within and through other conversational communities of women and with the larger art and public spheres. So we kept moving.

The Pleasures of Form and Text

Now ten years later, we continue to work. Any medium, any image, any place has now become a site for struggle and definition. We write, we perform, we paint. We attempt, as Angela Partington suggests, to decolonize existing imagery, and existing traditional forms.

Partington "rejects the formalism of scripto-visual work and its deconstructive strategies

based on the flawed language metaphor that an art work is (only) a text. And she reads deconstruction backwards as the already familiar - and privileged - strategy of [the] historical avant-garde within modernism... [she] revalorizes consumption which she says is women's work; the pleasures of form should not be placed above the pleasures of use" (Laing, 1994, p.360). Use implies for me the haptic - the hand, the touch. It engages me to question the modernist paradigms. While they may expose moral and political issues and explore questions of identity, they remain for me fixed in place, in time and limited in perception.

Pleasure decodes for me another language. It speaks, as Kristeva suggests, of a "new discourse... neither stagnant, nor eclectically academic; instead, [as a] new knowledge ... [that's] 'original, mobile and transformative'" (Laing, 1994, p. 354). I have found pleasure in assemblages - in layers of images and texts that appear less rigidly defined than in more conventional research practices and presentations. By layering various media - image, conversation, text - I can allow for the use of touch, sight, and feeling and give myself the opportunity to move through various forms of discourse.

Text(s) as Models

Our senses are not stable. Different media shift the senses we use. Reading text here makes the eye dominant over the ear, seeing over listening. And we engage these senses as we attend to different presentations. These differing presentations and the symbols they use ask for a shifting response from the senses and for multifaceted interpretations. It asks the reader to perceive the different texts just as they were made, through different direct active encounters of self with phenomenon.

This swings me again back. I hear myself say in "Conversations in Context" that "texts" are

what we read as models, as what represents us. I hear myself dismiss the curatorial organisation of This Decade of Days. "It lacks clarity as a representative text." I return humbled. Have I not fallen into the trap of privileging certain forms and conventions? Have I not realized that texts are there to be read, to be interpreted within the larger context of experience?

Perhaps we need to understand texts and the forms they take as symbolic and search for the underlying structures and processes they represent. Texts have certainly been useful as markers of my own learning and touchstones for my learning process. Texts do reveal some of what is representative of experience. But not all.

The "Complementarity" of Different Aspects or Elements of Text(s)

This Decade of Days draws me again. There are various aspects that interest me: the artists themselves, the fact that both curators are also artists, and that I as audience and as participant am also an artist. It implies for me an acceptance of assumptions about art, art practice and the viewing and interpretation of both. There is in this event a passion and an excitement, and this is not all made fully visible in the exhibition and the catalogue texts. But the attempt has been made and yes, it is messy, dense and problematic. But perhaps, that is the nature of texts that attempt to reveal more than conventional forms, spaces, or activities, that insert the bodily into research and presentation.

When examining the significance of what we do in BAAWA, the assumptions might be that everything that is mediated by us can be described; this may be true, for there are aspects which can be socially circumscribed and hence easily named and formed. But it is the aspects that niggle us, that call to us, which are problematic in terms of representation. They are unnameable or are named in various forms again and again. Both co-exist in this study. Roland Barthes (1998) speaks of the

"co-presence of the[se] two elements" (p. 23). The first, the studium, he perceives as quite familiar, as a consequence of knowledge. It is derived from participating in culture and gives us a generalized reading of people, places, and actions. The second element, the punctum, breaks or punctuates the studium. It is the details, the sensitive points which speak to the viewer and cut, strip, or pierce the studium (p. 25-28).

It is the element, the studium, that locates the critical and the social strategizing of BAAWA. But, it is the punctum that draws us to the places of emotion, memory and sensations of BAAWA. It is the interplay of these aspects that has influenced the shaping of this research. I have attended to the need to revisit the BAAWA process again and again, attending to these aspects. It is the nature of BAAWA - as phenomenon and my connection to it that draws and envelopes us both. I first wrote of why women chose to make self-directed art educational communities and articulated where such communities existed in "A Literature Study: Why a Feminist Separatist Art Education?". It was a conventional study that drew material from published texts. Then I began to move into a more open interpretation with the notated theatrical performance script "Process in Performance." It revealed through a poetic narrative of transformation and supported by thick description what these artists actually do. This "doing" became reframed through the perspective of the inquirer/learner-as- curriculum and was given artistic form in the exhibition Communitas in Context. I allowed myself, in the exhibition, to make images which spoke directly to how I experienced the BAAWA learning to be. I gathered the markers of the social and the political and grabbed at the places that sparked me to respond. Both these aspects: the more easily named political and social activities, and the less easily named niggling details of our lives have interacted. And it is in this interplay that we have come to reform and co-create as a group at each occasion for

art making.

Complementarity in conversation - the voice of the inquirer/learner engages with these different aspects - not to refute one, or privilege another, but to place them in relation to each other in dialogue. I suggest that when we learn in the arts, we learn with our whole being - mindfully, expressively, intuitively. As a result, there are aspects of what we do and how we learn that are easily understood and there are others not so easily explained. This speaks to a perception of education that sits outside of standardization, to a place where questions are asked and answers sought in different contexts over time. And in the multifaceted and multilayered interpretations we arrive at, we see why we are, where we are, and how we are there. We cycle around, in and out, drawing ourselves into our processes, as we learn in depth. It is a learning process that honours the self and what we do. For what we are resonates with our making and in the interactions between us a community, and representations of that community are born. The representations become haptic objects which we then can view, can see, feel, and experience. We are energized by them.

Research as/through MultiMedia Complementarity: Performance Art

This research embodies this interplay. Each modality is an object unto itself - formed through and from the self interacting with phenomena. Once made, the modality becomes an object - it is a text we can perceive. It is easily understood and yet at times it is not so easily understood. I attempt to move through and interpret each text in dialogue in the complementary conversations.

But in order to unify the thesis as metatext, it might be useful to view this thesis as a whole and frame it as multimedia. This would encourage us to use a whole conjunction of senses and allow us to destabilize objectifying and fragmenting the study and representation of BAAWA as phenomenon. Once we accept thesis as/through the use of multimedia, we could then explore how

in future projects we might continue to use such a perspective to find different ways of representing and perceiving.

One multimedia interplay is performance art. It is innovative in its approaches and hybridity and as such challenges the conventions of traditional art, literature and theatre. It is my practice and it has informed the process and shaping of this thesis.

My particular way of researching and building a multimedia performance art project evolves from the fibre of my life. It has been a way for me to give voice and contextualize my experience. I see myself committed to a feminist creative practice which seeks to explore and celebrate the connection between a capacity to engage in critical resistance and an ability to experience pleasure(s). For me, such a practice has been a crucial focus for the disparate elements that have defined my life. It has served to integrate my professional life, my community work and my personal concerns. Here it serves to integrate my artistic intuitions, my subjective experiences and my scholarly ideas.

This process of incorporating subjective knowledge and artistic ambiguity into academic research through the use of multimedia, I believe, has resonance for research in arts education and particularly feminist art education. This layering of information, memory, images, ideas from many sources, allows the researcher to address from various perspectives the question at hand. It is a non-linear configuration which, as it moves, can create greater depth and raise more possibilities. It need have no closure. It is one which, like the scanty written history of women and art, leaves traces of dialogue, memory, awkwardness, pain, joy - all sensations that, when linked to thought, will ultimately inform a body of knowledge on women and art.

My decision to frame my research as/through multimedia performance is not so peculiar a

choice for a woman in the social sciences. Marianne Goldberg in "Ballerinas and Ball Passing" (1987/88) uses image, text, and choreographic drawing to locate a physical language of the body. Her central metaphor is the feminist academic as dancer. Her defining image is of herself as a lecturer holding in her hand a photograph of herself dancing.

Marianne Paget (1990) presents her study of a patient-doctor relationship as theatre. By placing scientific work in an artistic context, she feels that she allows academic research to value lived experience and encourages the development of a "richer and subtler interpretive science" (p. 153). She acknowledges specific useful aspects of performance:

> Performance is complex, subtle, provocative, and dialogical. I call it a concretion... of experience... Concretions hug the natural world, but not as exact equivalents of natural forms. They display movement, process, change, and transformation. They are expressive, sensitive, and experience near. They resonate, they seem strangely familiar, and yet they are not. (p. 151)

Susan Krieger (1983) in The Mirror Dance investigates identity in a women's community. She chooses to see inquiry as fiction. She omits a traditional authorial voice and invites the reader to enter into the central excitement of the community's gossip. Krieger states that her intention, in this research, is to reveal the value fiction could have for exposing different levels of "reality" in social science research.

All these three women in their research practices allow feminist analysis, the arts and education to converge and inform each other. I have employed yet another art methodology - that of multimedia performance art to permit academic text, theatrical presentation and visual images to converge and relate.

Performance art is an enactment both in making and presenting. It engages for me the activities of academic, artist and actor/educator. In its making, the process includes research and

retrospection. Different media such as photography, sound, montage, assemblage, are layered in process through and in presentation.

Amelia Jones (1998) speaks of performance art as a way of rethinking the self. The self-as-body performs itself and in so doing "claims the immanence and intersubjective contingency of all subjects." (p. 51). In the enactment of performance art, the perceptions of viewer and maker become concurrent and make contact through the body of artist-as-subject. In making with, and including the body in this context, the boundaries between object and subject are blurred. The personal is used to disrupt the artistic event and media are layered so they disrupt one another. If the performer is a woman, the audience is asked to then address women in women's terms, to re-view images in the context of women's restorying. The action then moves us forward to interpretation, transforming the project into an open-ended process, rather than allowing it to be fixed as a mute, static object.

Reading Performance Art as a Language of Research

The Head of Education at the gallery where I teach attended a crit with my performance art students the other day. Afterwards she spoke to me and said, "It is so difficult to talk about performance art because we have no language - not a language like those we have already to, say, speak about sculpture or painting or theatre. It's especially difficult to talk about it when it isn't finished." "Yes," I agreed. But, those comments I heard and made nagged me and drove me to distraction. But wait, I thought, we do have a language - it is a language born from our experience, framed in production and etched through practice. It can and is used whether a work is "finished" or not. And, what is finished? Is there really closure?

When a curator views my exhibitions, or a reader reads my writing or an audience attends

my theatrical performances, s/he reads the finished pieces from the context of the history and the traditional language of the form. "But," s/he says, "conventions may not exist in order to read innovative work?" Perhaps not, perhaps readers need a new language in order to read the work. What if, I suggest with the assistance of Carole Laing and Angela Partington, I immerse and saturate the conventional, predictable forms of language with the language of experience? A language that reveals production, practice, and process.

What if, I suggest that when you read/view my innovative work, you attend not to just the organization but also the detail, the formed but also the unformed?

This asks for a more textural way of perceiving. It sensitizes me, and I would hope the viewer, to observe how I relate to the subject of study and how I use image, text and action to express that relationship. It opens up the possibility for a capability to play with multiple perspectives. It becomes not only a cognitive matter, but also a bodily one - visceral, prelingual - not emotion, but linked to them. The memory of the movement from one modality to another becomes encoded in the language of the learner. And that language becomes descriptive, symbolic and representative of the progression of learning.

Here you have "read" modalities representative of modes of experience and learning, that honour the process of practice and production for academic, actor/educator and artist. These are enveloped by the convoluted struggling, active voice of the inquirer/learner, a voice that names practice and process but does not attempt to reduce experience to conventional text. It is a language that moves in and out of texts pausing and playing as I (it) go(es). It is the doing that makes the language. I as multimedia performance artist speak from and through production, through a process saturated with experience. And whether this process or production is at the level of language, I still

have a sense of that progression. And as I reflect and speak again, language is made. I have attempted to bring the learning, making, and acting of the BAAWA women inside language, inside research and in so doing ask that learning be seen in its context(s), in process, and in action(s).

Research-as-Knowledge: A Meta-perspective:

When Leena and I read the transcripts or listen to the tapes of our talks, we are given a meta-perspective on our process. We gain a sense of control of our material, by simply being still with it. We are aware of what we are doing. We consciously speak of the experience of being women, artists and researchers through out work. And through this meta-perspective, we establish a connection to our language, and to our practice. It is a place that empowers our speaking and making and that we feel lies at the heart of our self education. It speaks to my search for an innovative academic form for feminist art educational research. I have attempted to develop here a methodology which would reflect my and other women's experiences and be pertinent to the field of feminist art education. It has proved to be a challenging task.

As Kathleen Rockhill (1987), in referring to academic research by feminists, states:

> We know that knowledge is not something out there to be disseminated, and that politics is not confined to public organised spheres of practice, but we've yet to develop academic forms which fully recognize the radical implications of a feminist critique. (p. 16)

As I set out to record my own and the BAAWA women's self-art education, I tried to find a voice that would introduce the ambiguity of the arts and better acknowledge my own triple configuration as artist-feminist-educator.

The voice of inquirer/learner as multimedia performance artist is not often heard in conventional academic texts or models. And while creative texts, performances, images and

models build bridges, to contain and structure activities, they do not always reveal the meta-perspectives, the places of knowledge making.

It is a knowledge making for women artists/teachers/learners that speaks from a place made by them and for them, that is personal and specific. We have had to position ourselves in meta-perspectives relative to this knowledge making, as we reflect on what we know and how we know. This awareness influences the tools, the materials, the forms we use in our practice. This practice then engages us in the making of texts or forms and we move through and on, reporting and reflecting.

In "Fragments," Leena and I reused slides, music, images re-examining past performance art works, from a distance of an almost 15 years of collaborative practice before, during and since BAAWA. Images reasserted themselves in this making. And we recontextualized them -- it was not a simple repetition. While the images were no longer as close to us, they were still resonant. We could now see them, acknowledging that we were of them.

Research Knowledge - of the Body and the Aesthetic

As for this research, it too has been a recalling, repeating, recontextualizing over time of my association with and through BAAWA. While I am no longer an active member, its memories, processes, activities are embedded in me and inform my practice. In this writing, there have been conscious repetitions, recurring images, observations. But it is the receiving of these from changing contexts, seen from differing perspectives, that records the progression of the research. The research continues to evolve from BAAWA, and its trace will undoubtedly resurface. Images have been made and while I expect new ones may surface, those of the past are present now and for the future reasserting themselves again and again as learning-in-process.

I can now speak to those BAAWA practices, recall them and use what I have learned from them. When confronted with a difficult working relationship or a challenging collaboration, memory reasserts itself and while I may not necessarily know how to immediately solve the problem, I have a history - a history of memory, sensation, story and action - that I can draw on to inform the present. In fact, a new project is just beginning. I feel the stresses and strains of collaboration but the dynamics are different and we seem to be finding ways through to evolving a concept, sharing the proposal preparation, writing the grants, contacting and negotiating with the galleries and setting the exhibition schedule.

The results of this study rest not only within me but within you as reader/viewer. As an "open text" it asks how you as reader/viewer choose to respond. We may not find consensus. This text here becomes, in its reading, a reflective occasion. My voice of analysis is not the definitive one. For learning is in community, in flux and subject to shifting perspectives and views. And like Barthes's punctum, certain images and actions stay with us unnameable and yet evocative in their interpretation.

Such an image recurs for me throughout this thesis - the crumpled piles of paper that recall the acts in "Fragments" and the acts of composition in this work. I take a piece of this paper, an image of crumpled paper on it, I dismiss too quickly what is on the paper, it's too predictable, it's not the exact language, and in frustration I crunch the paper into a ball. But just as I am to toss it to the floor, I hesitate and open the closed ball of paper, smoothing out the creases. There are now new marks on the paper, a new design, a new awareness. And I place the paper on the floor beside me and reach for the next. I continue to repeat the action with each paper and the pile beside me builds. But it is not compact and closed, but rather open and organic. When it falls over, I need to

find another configuration, a creative situation that allows it to progress. But its shape and the actions that created that shape determine the evolving structure. This action of building moves me away from a passive precarious position of balancing between various texts to building with experience and through learning emotional links to and through these texts. The texts remain as markers, traces, objects of this progress, modalities representative of change, complexity and growth inherent in an educational phenomenon. There has been a reordering in this movement that asks for a restructuring of experience. There is a shift. Rather than just studying culture, this thesis contributes an interpretation as meta-perspective as knowledge, and in so doing contributes to creating culture.

It is artistically crafted research that speaks from and to the specifics and honours the personal and the social, the active and reflective, the pleasurable and practical.

Like Susan Stinson (1995) notes, research may need to be presented in/through the use of innovative strategies and forms to better represent education in/through the arts. What we understand in art practice is that internal shaping and working creates external form. We "look inside to feel ourselves as participants not just onlookers" (p.3). While Stinson refers to kinesthetic experiences, I feel it to be true for any artistic making.

Eisner claims that it is only by means of external forms of representation that we can communicate private experience, and while Eisner refer to the perception of the artwork as that which makes "art," not the object itself, I see little or no mention of the word "body" (in Stinson, 1995, p. 46).

Stinson, as researcher and dancer, articulates a similar search to mine for forms that represent "the self which lives experience". For her, it is a process that is concurrent with her

dancing practice. She selects a topic - something that compels her, and engages her passionately. She generates or collects material about the idea, attends to the material, selects significant observations and perceives and interprets relationships (p. 47). But what becomes important to her, and I think to me and to my perceptions of learning and especially self-directed learning, is the need to dialogically observe the relationships between what I know and what I am coming to know. I am fortunate as a multimedia performance artist in having a range of symbols to use to represent my experiences. It has not only allowed me to better understand my own process but also those of others who have participated in this research. It is a sensory and yet cognitive process, layered but not necessarily fragmented.

Research-as-Knowledge, Open and Evolving

Here I have constructed an open work in movement: "Not" as Eco (1989) notes "just a conglomeration of random components ... [T]he 'openness' or dynamism of a.. work consists in factors which make it susceptible to an whole range of integrations... They provide it with organic complements which [are grafted] into the structural vitality which the work already possesses even if it is incomplete." (p. 20). Luigi Paryson (in Eco, 1989) further notes that the work is a form that has infinite aspects that are not just fragments or parts. Rather each reveals a given perspective. The infinite points of view of the readers and the infinite aspects of the work itself interact with each other, come into juxtaposition and clarify each other by a reciprocal process (p. 21). The parts of the work, and the progression of self-as-learner works then in several directions and on various levels. It is engaged in movement, is open in form and hence fluid in its questioning. In closing, it stops, to pause, seeing and sensing the possibilities for another action.

A Pause

For me and many BAAWA women, our lived experience of traditional schooling was one in which we were forced to choose between our own learning and the reality demanded by the institution(s). Experiences similar to these recur as we continue to negotiate institutions as teachers and as artists. However, we have created conversational communities of our own to allow us re-examine, rename and restructure our learning, and actively advocate for institutional change. We can then change the nature of our research, our artmaking and our teaching, reframing our positions, our presentations with the intent to catalyze new possibilities and configurations through the creation of reciprocal moments. If we are "reflecting subjects" (Berger & Mohn, 1982, p. 283) we have the capacity to create dynamic working and research environments. We grasp meaning reflectively. We story ourselves in a narrative of transformation through a need to touch, to see, to hear and to speak. It has been both a necessity and a luxury to have the time and space to reach deep below the babble of habitual speech and daily activities to find a meta-perspective of "thesis as aesthetic practice". The intensity and unity of the three modalities and my open movement in, through and on from each has provided me as inquirer/ learner a pleasure in learning, a perspective in practice and a reflection on education.

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Photography Credits

Communitas in Context exhibition and performance documentation, and double exposure BAAWA images photographed by John Oughton.

"Fragments" documentation photographed by Pat Hudecki.

Communitas in Context images by Pam Patterson.

"Fragments" is a performance/installation by Pam Patterson & Leena Raudvee/ ARTIFACTS.

Appendix: BAAWA Membership List

First Name	Surname	Address		
Woon-Ngor	Balik	15 Hilton St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8K 3K3
Patti	Beckett	25 Fairleigh Cres.	Hamilton	Ontario L8M 2L1
Jocelyn	Belcourt-Salem	39 Beverly St.	Toronto	Ontario M5T 1X8
Andrea	Blanar	233 Rossmore Dr.	Burlington	Ontario L7N 1R2
Alison	Boston	964 Heywood Ave., #124	Victoria	BC V8V 2Y5
Tracey & Kathy	Bowen	255 Wynford Place	Oakville	Ontario L6L 5T3
Susan	Boychuk	94 Delaware Ave.	Toronto	Ontario L8M 1V1
Kathy	Bresnahan	150 Parkside Dr. W.	Hamilton	Ontario LOR 2H1
Joan	Bridget	100 Main St. E. #3406	Hamilton	Ontario L8L 3W4
Joyce	Brown	25 Chatham St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 2B3
Vanessa	Compton	100 Bay St. S. #3406	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 2B3
Silvia	D'Agruma	General Delivery	Freelton	Ontario L0R 1K0
Susan	Davis	148 Stanley Ave.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 2L4
Betty	Dawson	Skeleton Lake R2 RR#1	Utterson	Ontario P03 1M0
Carolyn	Dover	jebel ali freezone unit HB3 Box 17165	Dubai	UAE
Corinne	Duschene	1301 Coric Ave.	Burlington	Ontario L7R 3S4
Brenda	Faloney	20 Academy St.	Ancaster	Ontario L9G 2X9
Kathleen	Finlay	190 Woburn St.	Toronto	Ontario M5M 1K7
Gale	Flemington	6-313 Powerline Rd.	Brantford	Ontario N3T 5L8
Natalia	Fot	223 Park St. N. Apt. C	Hamilton	Ontario L8R 2N9
Patricia	Gagic	c/o 849 Upper Wentworth	Hamilton	Ontario L9A 4T8
Susan	George	134 ½ Cannon St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8L 2A5
Lucy	Gerritsen	80 Pearl St. N.	Hamilton	Ontario L8R 2Y9
Donna	Giles	60 Oak Ave.	Dundas	Ontario L9H 4Y9
Audrey	Gill-Grantham	Box 1177	Waterdown	Ontario L0R 2H0
Justine	Giuliani	354 Pomona Ave.	Burlington	Ontario L7N 1T5
V. Jane	Gordon	P.O. Box 1273	Waterdown	Ontario L0R 2H0
Diana	Gordon	58 Canada St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 1N9
Regina	Haggo	109 East 4th St.	Hamilton	Ontario L9A 2Y3
James	Hart	5410 Windermere Dr.	Burlington	Ontario L7N 3M5
Ruth	Hartman	27 Hepbourne St.	Toronto	Ontario M6H 1K1
Kate	Hawkins	231 Concord Ave.	Toronto	Ontario M6H 2P4
Kelly	Hilton	133 Erie Ave.	Hamilton	Ontario L8N 2W9
Lindsay	Holton	47 Glenfern Ave.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 2T6
Roxanne	Horbett-Benton	75 Tom St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8R 1X6
Angela	Hrabowiak	173 London South	Hamilton	Ontario L8K 2G8
Donna	Ibing	549 Regina Dr.	Burlington	Ontario L7S 1L7
Debra	Jackson	3204 S. Patrick Ave.	Niagara Falls	Ontario L2J 2M9
Juliet	Jancso	57 Lakeview Dr.	Stoney Creek	Ontario L8E 5A6
Renee	Johnston	81 Poulette St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 4E3
Elaine	Jones	31 Penetang St. #409	Hamilton	Ontario L4M 6E8
Nicole	Katherine	750 King St. W.	Hamilton	Ontario L8S 1J8
Gwen	Kearns	39 Cross St.	Dundas	Ontario K9H 2R5

Mary	Keczan-Ebos	1901 Four Seasons	Burlington	Ontario L7P 3B1
Pat	Kozowyk	c/o General Delivery	Freelton	Ontario L0R 1K0
Christianne	L'Esperance	40 Mountain Ave.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 4G1
Berthe	Laliberte-Rodger	107 Mountbatten Dr.	Hamilton	Ontario L9C 3V6
Pauline	Lawson	RR#1	Freelton	Ontario L0R 1K0
Sarah	Link	204 Windermere Ave. S.	Thunder Bay	Ontario P79 4M9
Janice	Mason Steeves	32500 30th Side Rd. RR#2	Rockwood	Ontario N0B 2K0
Gabrielle	Michelle	264 Main St. W.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 1J6
Anne	Milne	267 Jackson St. W.	Hamilton	Ontario L8S 4P4
Gina	Monaco	#10-1967 Main St. W.	Hamilton	Ontario L8S 4P4
Theresa	Morin	32-2344 Queensway	Burlington	Ontario L7R 2T3
Joan	Moumblow	87 Victoria St.	Dundas	Ontario L9H 2C1
Susan	Obermeyer	1379 Silversmith Drive	Oakville	Ontario L6M 2X4
Barbara	Patrick	372 Richmond Street W. #201	Toronto	Ontario M5V 1X6
Pam	Patterson	491 Palmerston Blvd.	Toronto	Ontario M6G 2P2
Vessna	Perunovich	22 Southport Street #3340	Toronto	Ontario M6S 4Y9
Carol	Podedworny	238 Park Row S.	Hamilton	Ontario L8K 2K5
Rose Anne	Prevec	186 Old Ancaster Road	Dundas	Ontario L9H 3R4
Leena	Raudvee	528 Dovercourt Rd.	Toronto	OntarioM6H 2W4
Marianne	Reim	47 Emily St.	Grimsby	Ontario L3M 4A1
Donna	Robinson	239 Holton Ave. S.	Hamilton	Ontario L8M 2L8
Margot	Roi	335 Maple Ave.	Oakville	Ontario L6J 2H8
Carolyn	Samkova	11 Hawthorne Ave.,	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 4P6
Violetta	San Juan	155 Market St. # 1008	Hamilton	Ontario L8R 3H5
Karen	Sea	90 Queen St. S.	Hamilton	Ontario L8P 3R8
Teresa	Sharpe	3-300 Victoria Ave. N.	Hamilton	Ontario L8L 3G3
Audrey	Shimizu	23 Bellevue Terrace	St. Catharines	Ontario L2S 1P4
Victoria	Shymlosky	130 Blake St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8M 2S6
Helen	Sovereign	6449 Guelph Line RR#2	Milton	Ontario L9T 2X5
Anna	Stacho	372 Hemlock Ave.	Stoney Creek	Ontario L8G 2W6
Marie	Sutlin	21 Lorna Dr.	Stoney Creek	Ontario L8G 2W6
Mary	Toplack	46 Osler Drive	Dundas	Ontario L9H 4B1
Vesna	Trkulja	72 Ray St.N.	Hamilton	Ontario L8R 2X6
Janet	Tulloch	1576 Champneuf Drive	Orleans	Ontario K1C 6B5
Cees & Annerie	Van Gemerden	93 Colborne St.	Hamilton	Ontario L8R 2G6
Leah	Wallace	73 Mill St. N.	Waterdown	Ontario L0R 2H0
Anita	Weitzman	31 Terrace Dr.	Dundas	Ontario L9H 3X1
Brenda	Wivell	17 Franklin St.	Brantford	Ontario N3R 1S9