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Narrative Form and Yam Lau's *Room*:
The Encounter in Arts Based Research

Adrienne Boulton-Funke
Missouri State University

Abstract

In this paper, I consider "the encounter" (O'Sullivan, 2006) and conceptualizations of subjectivity and identity proposed by post qualitative scholars (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Lenz Taguchi, 2012; MacLure, 2013; St. Pierre, 2010) and contemporary art theory (O'Sullivan, 2006; 2012) to attend to the potentialities for visual arts-based research to provoke rather than represent thought. Traditional narrative inquiry is critiqued as affirming representational thought while the methodological implications of duration will be explored as a psychical site for new thought creation. I draw on my encounter with Canadian artist, Yam Lau's film/CG animation, *Room* (2004) and the works of Deleuze and Guattari to critique the narrative form and persistent humanist notions of subjectivity in qualitative research. I argue for the potentiality of the encounter in creating conditions for an affective disruption to perceptions and suggest future implications for arts-based educational research and pedagogy with secondary teacher candidates.

Introduction

Visual arts-based research has continued to grow and develop amid many concerns including, audience and interpretation (Eisner, 1997; Pole, 2004), artistic practice and process (O'Donoghue, 2008; 2009), representation (O'Donoghue, 2011), and the apparent divergent aims of art and research (Pariser, 2009). I argue that a further area of concern for this growing field stems from contemporary discourses surrounding identity and subjectivity, which have emerged as poststructuralist and post qualitative research and contemporary art theory have refined various positions on knowledge production and subjectivity within the crisis of representation (Britzman, 2003; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; MacLure, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2006; St. Pierre, 2010). These fields suggest that humanist notions of identity and subjectivity continue to plague forms of qualitative research, including arts-based research. jagodzinski and Wallin (2013) argue "for arts research to remain politically charged it must begin to orient its task to the creation of a probe-head capable of detecting the poeitic event without reterritorializing it within an a priori image of thought" (p. 106). This paper will examine and critique three facets of narrative inquiry including: the stable self and reflexivity; the cohesion of the narrative Event; and the consecutive notion of time to explore knowledge production and subjectivity in research. I argue that post qualitative research and contemporary art theory have challenged these narrative inquiry traditions by attending to the mundane rather than the Event, duration (Deleuze, 1991) rather than linear time, and entangled (St. Pierre, 2013) rather than stable self. Drawing on these understandings, I argue that visual arts-based research must respond to these contemporary discourses to orient its aims from 'what does art/research mean?' towards 'what does art/research do?' (O'Sullivan, 2006). I will examine my arts-based encounter with narrative through contemporary Canadian artist, Yam Lau's film/CG animation, *Room* (2004) to examine the potential of the mundane, duration, and the entanglement of the self for visual arts-based research. Future implications for arts-based educational research and pedagogy in teacher education will also be discussed.

Narrative Inquiry and the Centered "I"

O'Sullivan (2006) argues,
An object of an encounter is fundamentally different from an object of recognition. With the latter our knowledges, beliefs and values are reconfirmed. We, and the world we inhabit, are reconfirmed as that which we already understood our world and ourselves to be. An object of recognition is then precisely a representation of something already in place. (p. 1)

The use of traditional narrative inquiry looks to the narrative and reflexivity to explore the continuity of experience and namely, "the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 2). To this end, traditional narrative inquiry remains problematic as the "self", "subjectivity",

and "identity" remain stable and centered while the practices of reflexivity in the research utilize this stable form as an object of reflection, while affirming rather than disrupting representational perceptions. Pillow (2003) critiqued this form of reflexivity as creating the conditions for the transcendence of subjectivity and context and Butler (2005) critiqued reflexivity as a tethering of the self to the moral coherence of normative discourse. Jackson & Mazzei (2012), Lather & St. Pierre (2013), Lenz Taguchi (2012; 2013), MacLure (2013) and St. Pierre (2010) claim that the centered "I" of the humanist tradition persists in in many facets of qualitative research and argue for the self as an entanglement of the virtual, material and discursive. As St. Pierre (2013) argues,

> Deeply embedded in the new ontology are ethical concerns that acknowledge the destruction of the world humanism and its science projects encourage with their man/nature, human/nonhuman binaries. Refusing that binary logic which pervades our language and thus our living is a priority, because if we see ourselves as always already entangled with, not separate from or superior to matter, our responsibility to being becomes urgent and constant (p. 655)

I argue that for visual arts based research to go beyond the tracing of understandings back to originary, recognizable meanings, it must go beyond a narration of experience and the assumption of the stable self. I suggest that through particular experiences understood as an encounter (O'Sullivan, 2006), arts-based research is potentially able to create the conditions for new thought and in this creation, provoke difference (Deleuze, 1994). In the following section, I will examine my encounter with the non-linear visual narrative of *Room* (Lau, 2004) and Yam Lau's rendering of the materiality of the everyday as the tacit, ritual, and habitual practices performed in place in the routine of living and his use of film and animation to make strange these familiar acts. Drawing on Lau's work, I will explore the pedagogical value of research that re-forms the narrative to attend to the mundane everyday versus an experience (Dewey, 1934). I will examine the encounter as creating opportunities to know and perhaps perform these acts differently. In doing so, the encounter will be explored for implications for non-linear visual narrative inquiry.
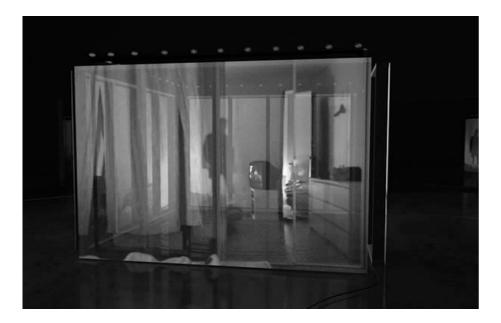
Figure 1. Still from Yam Lau's Room (2006)

Room and Affect in the Deterritorialization of the Everyday

As a PhD student working with secondary visual art teacher candidates, I frequently used reflection and reflexivity as a pedagogical device, with my students, to explore the events that led them to teaching. Students wrote, created artwork and discussed their path to become a teacher. Through these works, we explored their personal and practical views on teaching, which created opportunities to question their perceptions of practice. I did not though, adequately consider the extent to which these processes created opportunities to disrupt their perceptions rather than affirm their understandings of teaching within the normative understandings of teaching and schooling. Yam Lau's film/CG animation, *Room* (2004), created, for me, an encounter with narrative inquiry and the research and pedagogical practices of narrative inquiry. It provoked a consideration of the potentialities of the encounter in contemporary arts-based educational research methodologies as well as pedagogy, to disrupt tacit perceptions of teacher practices by disrupting the affirming nature of the narrative.

I first encountered Lau's *Room* in the Surrey Art Gallery while supervising my daughter's grade one class field trip. An encounter through art in this moment, despite being in a space intended for art, was unexpected given that my attention was focused on supervising 22 active six-year old children. I sat with these children in a darkened screening room and we watched as Lau's film began with a minimalist three-dimensional virtual architectural framework of a room, rotating clockwise emerging from a darkened space into light so that the activities of people within the room came into focus. In the lower right hand corner, a video loop of two

people played on what I later recognized as a TV within the interior room. As the room continued to rotate, further details began to unfold. I was able to view material qualities of the space as well as Lau in the midst of being in the space.

The work was created with the use of fixed camera recording four scenarios of Lau in his apartment that, through computer graphics and animation, played as a continuous disrupted narrative of the banality of everyday living. *Room*, Lau (2006) argues, functioned as a shorthand expression of the room in an attempt to complicate a series of representational footage. A second CGI virtual camera rotated counter clockwise to the image of the room and we watch as Lau enters and turns on a light. We see Lau change his jacket through sheer curtains. He does not acknowledge the camera, suggesting a voyeur quality of watching without his permission and I found that I was anticipating something, an event or an experience that would point to the significance of the series of non-events playing. Shadows of his form and actions were cast in unexpected places including the immediate foreground of the film disrupting the position of his presence in a particular area of the room. As he continued to remove his jacket, a second image of the same room appears as a layer behind the first, yet the sameness is disrupted because of the position, angle and perspective of the shot. As the camera rounds a corner the apparatus of the architectural elements part and we are able to see the interior of room as a cube that is empty despite the image of the contents and actions within the room remaining projected on the panels of the cube.

At this point, we see multiple 'Laus' removing their shirts while another appears to be lying in bed, looking towards the foot of the bed outside of the shot. The disrobing continues as a progressive and multiplying composition of moving images of Lau appear. We see Lau put on pajamas and get into bed despite having seen him already in bed only moments before. He reaches over and turns out the light moments before a second projection of the same activity also turns out the light and the work returns to its architectural structure and the glowing television until it dissolves into darkness. During the viewing in the gallery space my attention was drawn to understanding the story as an interpretation of Lau's meaning. When that story became something other than expected, my attention shifted to the details and the qualities of the work and I began to attend to the mundane qualities of his everyday. My expectations and assumptions were set aside as I became attuned to the performance of the everyday and to my own discomfort at the lack of a traditional narrative form.

While I became invested in exploring the connections that emerged, and as my expectations of a traditional narrative became something else, the docent who guided the students I was supervising moved the children out of the room without discussion. The exhibit that housed *Room* also included more representational works that depicted processes and products of domesticity. Children were seated in front of sculptures of homes and neighborhoods as the

docent asked them to compare and contrast the displays with their own homes. The narratives of advancing urbanization were discussed with the students and after a short explanation of these works, the children were moved to the craft room to make versions of their own houses out of clay. In this work of representation, the children simply further confirmed their own perception of what homes and neighborhoods meant recognizing their own models of domesticity while leaving their perceptions intact.

The Mundane and Duration

The traditional narrative form in research offers a conception of identity that is "coherent, bounded, individualized, intentional, the locus of thought, action, and belief, the origin of its own actions, the beneficiary of a unique biography" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 107) tracing identity formation as linear and progressive. For Ricoeur (1992), narrative identity developed through a hermeneutic and linguistic approach exploring ipse, identity as self-hood and idem, identity as sameness, forming the individual as an uninterrupted continuity despite time as a "factor of dissemblance, of divergence, of difference" (p.117). Ricoeur (1992) argues that the narrative identity pulls together disparate forms of identity within a temporal time frame drawing connections to qualitative attributes, including events contingent on places and characters in the narrative, into unification within the narrative, melding multiple perspectives, beliefs and attitudes into the traditional narrative form. "The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character" (pp. 147–48). Through this form, the character becomes recognizable through coherence and unity and so the subject is produced through the stability of events in the narrative. The events or practices remain normalized as the focus of attention remains on the subject.

This process of narrative cohesion around a significant Event organizes and realigns experiences to achieve unity. The events of the narrative experience draw attention from those particular everyday qualities of experience, leaving them already in place. But what of the everyday experiences? de Certeau (1988) argues that "every story is a travel story-a spatial practice" (p. 115) and that a place is a space formed by the practices there in. These practices transform a space, yet in the narrative form the daily practices are left in-place and normalized rendering the subject produced by that which is already in place leaving those normative practices un-scrutinized. The success of the narrative depends on the story maintaining resemblance as to not destroy continuity. The traditional narrative form draws on an Event of significance or an Experience (Dewey, 1934, my emphasis) conforming and shaping experiences to maintain the narrative unity.

> an experience has a unity that gives it its name, that meal, that storm, that rupture of friendship. The existence of this unity is constituted by a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts….In going over an

experience in mind after its occurrence, we may find that one property rather than another was sufficiently dominant so that it characterizes the experience as a whole. (Dewey, 1934, p. 38)

While traditional narrative form attends to a linear and consecutive experience of time to develop unity, the arts-based encounter is concerned with duration (Deleuze, 1991) as a non-linear psychical experience of time, a dynamic process that contracts to draw the virtual as past recollections and memories and future desires into the present moment, rendering them amenable to change. In duration, a process of becoming displaces the conception of the self as a fixed and knowable object as the encounter provokes a disruption to perceptions. Semetsky (2009) argues that the creation of concepts occurs in duration through the triadic relationship of percept, affect and concept. Perception, as tacit and representational knowledge, undergoes a deterritorialization through an affective shock and in doing so creates a concept or percept as perception-in-becoming as the perception of that which is not given. Perception is allied with representational and commonsensical engagement with matter, as well as our perceived capacity to act on it, and must be disrupted through affective destabilization in order for new concepts or knowledge to form. The post qualitative conceptualization of the subject departs from this desire for narrative identity unification and the authorial author by offering ways to explore relational histories of power, knowledge, gender, and position. The self is understood as entangled in the virtual and the materiality of the every day. Tamboukou (2008) argues,

> What is not actualized or expressed in a [traditional] narrative form, the virtual, the silenced, the non-said, still inheres in what has been said, expressed or articulated, creating the narrative itself a depository of forces that can take it elsewhere, divert it from its initial aim or meaning, create bifurcations, sudden and unexpected changes, discontinuities and ruptures the sequential nature. (p. 284)

Rather than engaging narrative processes that re-present perceptions formed in the virtual recollections and memories, I argue that research and pedagogy must provoke an affective shock to thought to disrupt rather than repeat these perceptions. Traditional narrative form and inquiry have created the conditions for practices in research that reifies perceptions focusing on an Experience and narrative cohesion. The unification created in traditional reflexivity and narrative interpretation rigidifies identity by leaving whole, the practices in place. The encounter denies this process of interpretation and representation by disrupting that which is already in place and in doing so, new potentials for practices and place become possible. The encounter shifts attention to the tacit or silent by disrupting the continuity and unification of the narrative Event and in doing so, inquiry shifts from narrative as representing to narrative as provoking. The conception of identity becomes a dynamic and continuous reflexive account of processes of becoming where the self is conceptualized as entangled, contingent, non-uniform, and incomplete emerging and re-emerging.

Affect, The Encounter and Re-Thought: Yam Lau and *Room*

Deleuze (1994) argues, "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter" (pg. 139). The encounter creates resistance or disruption to normative thought by drawing on the affective disruption to perceptions. My encounter with *Room* was shaped by the denial of my perceptions of the space and my expectation of a typical narrative. What happened instead was a shift in my attention to the fractured and incomplete documentation of a mundane moment in Yam Lau's life. The initial questions that formed as I viewed the work were initially interpretative in nature including 'What was I supposed to be looking at or for? What was important that I was somehow missing? What did this work mean?' Questions of interpretation in a hermeneutic tracing of intended meaning sustained by my assumptions and perceptions surrounding film and the use of a traditional narrative form.

As the film looped back on itself, I attended to the performance and to my affective response I now call uncertainty which created an opportunity to encounter film and narrative for their potential to unsettle and disrupt the expected, anticipated and unified. The resistance found in uncertainty gave way to inquiry. In the three minute loop, I mapped connections to Lau's work, the everyday, my research interests, and how attending to this might draw attention to multiple narratives of being, knowing and experiencing in a non-linear non-progressive way. In its simultaneous recognizable but non-representational form, *Room* created an opportunity for me to think differently about the ways in which a narrative shapes and is shaped by the practices of place.

Sheerin (2009) asked "What happens if we no longer seek the self in recognition and the same, in idem, in what is banal in the person, in what is recognized to have repeated itself in tedious habit?" (p. 72). To seek the selves outside of recognition, Yam Lau's *Room* explored the banality of the everyday, the tedious habit, and that, which repeats itself by disrupting the concept of sameness and repetition in difference. Ricoeur's (1992) thesis of sameness in the narrative identity melds two disparate forms of identity, idem-sameness and ipse-selfhood, into the conception of character as that what remains consistent throughout the narrative. Deleuze (1994) though suggests that difference, not sameness is produced in this moment and that it is the affective that differentiates the self in relational acts, moving away from fixed identities or in this case, creating the opportunity to explore the representation and recognition as forming perception and conceptions of identity. Drawing on Deleuze's' (1991) notion of the virtual as memories and recollections drawn into the actualization, Lau's work considers the repetition of daily living in both place and time, while visually disrupting the narrative of sameness.

The fractured nature of the repetitive acts of living in Lau's work reveals material and expressive differences, projected on the exterior of an empty cube, which draws attention to the ways that meaning is attached to particular acts versus the acts containing an inherent meaning themselves. Lau's work draws on familiar places and familiar performance of routine while adding virtual dimensions that disrupt the representative form of the narrative of experience as "acts of ordinariness elevated to that of the almost extraordinary as the hyper-cubed dwelling shifts and un/folds itself" (Nguyen, n.d.).

Through *Room*, I considered the ways in which representation and traditional narrative form function as acts of territorialization. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest that the act of interpreting experience requires a tracing of connections and that a more generative process is developed through the concept of mapping. In this process connections are made forming new assemblages. O'Sullivan (2006) suggests that non-representational contemporary art works create the possibility of thought as we engage in an "experience oriented against an overemphasis on signifying régimes, but also against habit and opinion" (p. 6). For O'Sullivan (2006) drawing on the works of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, art that resists representation then draws on affect to create opportunities to disrupt and to know differently. This suggests a neo aesthetic that presents a "claim for a materialist aesthetic, premised on the affect and sensation, where subjectivity is rendered subjectless" (Kennedy, 2004, 17). In this durational event, affect intercedes with the virtual recollections and memories that form perception disrupting our normalized perceptions and desires. O'Sullivan (2006) argues, via Bergson that

> we are caught, as beings in the world, on a certain spatiotemporal register: we 'see' only what we have already seen. We see only that which we are interested in. At stake with art might be an altering-a switching-of this register. (p. 47).

Engaging in an encounter through art offers an opportunity to deterritorialize the ways in which we have been conditioned to perceive through devices including the narrative form. For Deleuze (1991) this disruption is not achieved through representation but through the affective or virtual dimension as "the assembly of …a new image of thought or what might be termed the invisible of the visible of thought" (Sheerin, 2009, p. 73). How then might arts-based educational research draw on these understandings as a way of creating or inviting new ways to see in the encounter?

Future Implications

Inviting the Encounter: Visual Narratives as Arts Based Research

Brown and England (2005) argue that the "task of teacher-research is not to pin down life for inspection but rather to stimulate this life for future growth" p. (11). Bennett (2012) argues

through Rancière that art produces a double effect as a "dynamic combining the readability of a political signification and a sensible or perceptual shock caused conversely by the uncanny, by that which resists signification" (p. 46). This proposes that inviting the opportunity to encounter schooling through contemporary art practices creates the potential to both disrupt normative perceptions of schooling by engaging with the tacit and repetitious understandings gathered in place. This exploration of the mundane practices and places of schooling as sites for disruption of tacit knowledge with teacher candidates could be engaged through the exploration of memories, practices, and experiences.

What might occur if teacher candidates were invited to encounter schooling to explore their memories of schooling, not through narration of an experience, but by experience of the place as provoking affective bodily memories in place? This process draws on memory triggered by affective responses to place to disrupt the centered "I" of narrative and to explore the virtual "I" constructed in memories and recollections. An encounter with the mundane as the everyday (de Certeau, 1988) and the non-places (Augé, 1995) of schooling suggests through an affective shock to thought, the potential to confront and disrupt tacit perceptions of schooling formed in the everyday becomes possible. These everyday and non-places of schooling are the mundane spaces including entryways, hallways and stairwells that trigger sensory engagement including smells and sounds, rather than remembered events. These spaces form transitional elements of our daily lives that in schools and are constituted by repetitive, ritualized performances of everyday (McLaren, 1998). Rather than recalling our perceptions of our experiences, teacher candidates might engage in a return to place to see what may be recalled through affective engagement.

Our ways of seeing education are so deeply ingrained with discursive familiarity and "mythic immediacy" (Buck-Morss, 1991, x) that we are more-or-less insulated from surprise and wonder. What is needed is the kind of transgressive jolt that comes from encountering a "demented form of the familiar" (Fer, 1993, p. 176) or "suddenly glimpsing the demented in the all-too familiar" (MacLure, 2006, p. 229).

For Mike Kelley and Educational Complex (1994) the work of interrogating memories of schooling provoked a disruption and shock to thought as he constructed an architectural model as an amalgamation of every school that he had attended. His work shifted from a tongue-in-cheek response to critics of his former work, to a deeper more complex exploration of trauma in early childhood provoked through his own memory work in the construction of the model. According to Singerman (2008), Mike Kelley began Educational Complex as a response to critiques of his previous art works that were largely composed of stuffed animals. This work was critiqued as a product of trauma and perhaps suppressed memories of trauma, a critique that Kelley disagreed with (Singerman, 2008).

As a response, Kelley began construction of an architectural model of a composite of all his recollected educational spaces. What began as a play on the critique, soon became a point of concern for Kelley as he frequently could not recall spaces of his learning. He created large solid blocks within the model to represent the inaccessibility of memories of particular places and began to inquire into his past as his concern rose over his lack of memory and recollection.

This memory work disrupts the normative renderings of the narratives of experience by provoking new understandings of memories within the durational event. In research, this memory work invites teacher candidates to disrupt their own perceptions and to engage in a critique of the political signification of schooling by affectively experiencing the memory of schooling rather than recalling the memory or perception of their history of schooling. This form memory work provides both a conceptual and visual space for reflexive practices that destabilizes the "I" in the narrative by drawing on the material and virtual qualities in the formation of and disruption to perceptions. The narration of the story turns back on itself to readdress ideas values, actions and experiences, drawing on new knowledge and new experiences. Therein lie the possibilities for the implication of the destabilized self in narrative inquiry in teacher education; the release from the absolute, from the pressure of authoritative knowing that creates resistance to new ways of knowing and seeing. This destabilization of the authorship of the narrative draws the virtual memories and recollections as well as their future desires for teaching into the present moment for consideration, the continuity of which is disrupted by the affective responses to place.

This work broadens the possibilities for thinking about practice that attends to the psychical, situational, the contextual and the discursive. In this attention, we mark the shift from understanding the authority of the author and the subject to understanding how authority is gained and dispersed in the construction of the author and the subject. As a site of disruption, we may then examine how these processes might be reimagined. In doing so, the constructed nature of 'teacher' and 'education' is rendered amenable to new thought, therein creating possibilities of change.

Drawing Lau's work, Deleuzian concepts, post-qualitative discourse, and narrative structure into a conversations with arts-based educational research with teacher candidates, aligns the processes of art and research as pedagogical. It engages in the re-mapping of the educational imagination by rethinking the normative processes of schooling and those of qualitative research. It explores the school space as a "practiced place" (de Certeau, 1988, p.117) through a narrative that moves away from exploring education as a series of events, and instead examines the routines of learning by making the familiar strange. In this sense, research exploring the everyday and non-places of education might occasion the school, the cafeteria,

the classrooms, the hallways and gymnasium as an encounter with education. This occasion invites the teacher candidate to explore a place at once familiar, but made strange through the re-presentation of space as formed by practice. If we point as collaborators in research towards this invitation or conceptualize research as an occasion to unrecognized, what understandings might come from this that shift from a linear narrative signifying teacher, to multiple narratives of being in place, at once suggesting the embodied experience of place and the institutional parameters shaping possibilities?

The non-linear narrative of everyday practices in place explored in Lau's *Room,* resisted the organization of everyday experiences as leading up to an experience and required an attentiveness to the mundane experiences themselves. In doing so, the mundane attained a heightened status provoking an encounter with the mundane. This disrupted the representation of both the narrative form and content of the story Lau's day of living and in that moment thought or re-thought about the practices in that place became possible.

Research as an encounter engages teacher candidates in what Britzman (2009) describes as the ethical obligation of teachers, as reflexive practice that brings to a form of consciousness beliefs and values about teaching that have formed in the virtual memories and experiences and are actualized in the practice of teaching.

> Through examining the ways the social inscribes itself on the individual, and by calling into question the construction of the individual in the essentializing terms of humanist theories, poststructuralist theory shows how it is that power works not just to force us into particular ways of being but to make those ways of being desirable such that we actively take them up as our own. (Davies & Gannon, 2005, p. 318)

This suggests that by engaging in an encounter with the tacit and mundane of the educational everyday, teacher candidates may disrupt their habits of mind and the performance of education, offering opportunities for candidates to both understand their histories of education and the performance of these histories in their practices as teachers. Research may thus be thought of as an invitation to re-encounter.

As St. Pierre (2000) argues
> The risky business, 'homework', the disturbance of the saturation of identity in places, may create an overflow that produces those tiny explosions of the self that refuse to repeat the same I-great shattering revolutions, in fact. (p. 261)

As teacher candidates, teachers and research collaborators engage in this affective memory work the attention turns to spaces outside of representation and to the ways in which narrative

work might provoke new ways of understanding by making teaching, the teaching subject and education unrecognizable. When we consider education in a material and psychical sense, how might then we imagine the potentialities of teacher candidates to re-engage and re-imagine education in the moment of encounter, deterritorializing normative understandings of education and schooling?

To be continued…

In a 2011 Keynote address at the Visual Sociology Conference, Irit Rogoff challenged the notions of egalitarianism and democracy as a claim or invitation made through artwork. She argues that contemporary art practice, in a thirty-year trajectory from engagement with art as a mode of critical consciousness to contemporary aims as offers sites of alternative engagement that we have yet to figure out. This engagement requires a re-imagination and a set of new expectations for both research and pedagogy. In the parallel shift from representing to doing, contemporary art practice and research become invested in the provocation of thought that disrupts habits of mind and performance of habit. Research now becomes less about tracing that which came before and more about mapping these encounters for the possibilities of becoming.

Deleuze's concepts of duration, the virtual and affect connect in the re-imagination of the purposes of visual arts-based educational research and contemporary art practice to provoke rather than represent. Lau's work, in its simple, yet complex form suggests a challenge to the everyday practices that sustain normative performance of domesticity, offering understandings that may prove disruptive to normative experiences with education and identity tied to place. Attending to difference in research leads this field into an area of discomfort, a line of flight from outcomes, predictability, reliability and a range of possible outcomes. As such, we need creative thought and a set of new expectations to evacuate traditional meaning from the term research, thinking the un-thought in the encounter of the mundane.

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About the Author

Adrienne Boulton-Funke is an Assistant Professor of Art Education in the Department of Art + Design at Missouri State University. Her research interests include post-qualitative research, affect, and contemporary art practices, secondary visual art teacher candidates perceptions of practice, and arts based educational research. Her PhD research explored the design and enactment of an arts-based methodology of intuition with secondary visual art teacher candidates in the aim to understand research and art practice as a pedagogical act. Her research and filmmaking continues to explore the implications of an ontological shift in both research and pedagogy in creating the conditions for new and creative thought in educational practices.