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**Research Statement**

**March 2019**

**Current Writing Projects**

I am presently revising an article that has been just accepted for a special edition of *Arts Education* journal on entrepreneurship and creative destruction in the arts. This article (written during the fall of 2018) implements new research such as interviewing a former art educator who started an independent creative business and attending a panel discussion held at the Kimbell museum specifically focused on creative entrepreneurs in Fort Worth. Supported by current scholarship, the article is designed to inform and inspire discussion among educators about the corporate community that is interested in supporting and commodifying the creativity they believe artists possess.

I am also writing portions of forthcoming fourth edition of the textbook The Visual Experience for Davis Publications. I am writing the majority of instructional support material for the teacher’s edition as well as some assessment and content for the student edition. This work is scheduled to continue through the current spring semester and summer.

Ongoing and new research this year is focused in two specific areas: museum education and access, and the relationships between visual expression (art) and text.

**What is the nature of the intersection of text with culture, art, and art education?**

Academia is intensely involved with text on every level: reading, research, and writing are intertwined with student communications, assigning and collecting their writing to asses learning, and sharing knowledge on multiple levels. Even in the field of visual arts and art education we are largely immersed in a text-centered world. From this experience, I have been intrigued by another human impulse that transcends cultures and millennia: the elevation of text from a mere word to a visual product that is impressive, beautiful--Art. Arabic calligraphy fashioned as design element in a mosque, illuminated holy books from medieval Europe, Japanese calligraphy in paintings and scrolls are just a few examples of this phenomenon. My research exploration here is not about the incorporation of text as one of several elements in an artwork (such as Kruger, Duchamp, or Ruscha), but the elevation of text as the artwork itself. What is the motivation to make words beautiful? What happens to the viewer when they read (interpret) the text crafted from gold or silver, on a larger than life surface, surrounded by beauty as expressed by each unique culture? As art educators, what can we glean that will enable our students to creatively express ideas of value to themselves? As educators, can we address the text of our field in new ways that will empower and advance advocacy for our field?

**Preliminary research**

Counter to such elevation is the abundant presence of text in our lives today, from digital imagery to every kind of print media. Education as a field produces text based material meant to describe and inspire successful instruction, data to evaluate student progress, new programs and initiatives, legislative mandates and advocacy. The sheer quantity of text and its presentation is far removed from the celebratory beauty described above. *As art educators, what is our relationship with the text in our field?*

Over the last year, I have brought this question to art educators as a means of informally gathering data through arts based research. In this exploratory stage, I wanted to see what responses they might have to the proposition, and if this would reveal subtle or overt qualities in their relationship to and with professional text. At four of the workshops I conducted this year, text and the cultural practice of utilizing writing and calligraphy as an art form were incorporated into the sessions. The art making process focused on utilizing the tools of calligraphy from different cultures, as well as breaking down text from the discipline of art education in particular and holistic aspects of education and educational institutions.

As a disruption, art educators in the first two years of service were tasked with creating a multimedia piece reflecting their lived classroom experiences, from celebrations to profound challenges. I offered as a media an array of text from the field: colorful lesson plans provided by vendors, scholarly readings, newspaper articles about legislation related to retirement and school funding, teaching manuals, and brochures about addiction, crime and sexual abuse related to children and schools. Texts that were intended to help or influence education are thus rendered as media, tools for visual expression. These new educators were invited to adapt and craft this and other materials, to tear up such text and reform it into new and personally relevant ideas.

**Initial data collection**

The energy these educators brought to the challenge, and the resulting variety and power in their artwork, was illuminating and inspiring. As I gather photographic evidence and record data, the implications that begin to emerge are intriguing. Art educators in this setting are reconsidering the nature of the texts, tearing up topics that are frustrating or heartbreaking, and building something new. In some cases, the artwork they make is intensely private, revealing a deep relationship with the texts and the emotions they stir.

This research is ongoing, and will culminate in the workshop that I will be conducting at InSEA World Congress in Vancouver this summer: “Re/viewing Art Educator as Maker: Identity, Materiality, and Text.” At this workshop I will add cultural layers to the process of creating with text that will include calligraphy, writing and painting tools from the rich variety of cultures that are prominent in Vancouver with education related text within the materials offered for making. Destruction and creation will be encouraged within the space of questioning our relationship with text. I eagerly anticipate the ideas, discussion, and visual products that will be created and look forward to writing an article or book chapter inspired by this generative project.

**Museum Education and Access**

For several years I have been exploring aspects of museum education related to access and proprietorship. This began with my experiences as a public school teacher taking student groups to museums each year and learning quickly that most students (and many parents) have never been to any art museum or gallery prior to the trips I plan. The large museums in my area have active education programs that encourage attendance, but this is less common in smaller museums or for remote communities. Preservice art educators are eager to learn the practical steps for getting their future students to museums. Yet many practicing art teachers I have worked with over the last two decades are often unwilling, or believe they are unable, to organize museum field trips. This is an area of deficit in art education that I am compelled to address.

The issue of access has also opened another avenue of inquiry: What is the role of museums as gatekeepers of cultural heritage? To what extent is the museum institution responsible to protect artwork and artifacts *in situ*, and conversely, to what extent must it open access to the general public? What are the terms of such access, and who is responsible for curating the framework in which the access is offered? Certainly society views museums as educational, places where learning can happen, and active education programs are rising up to meet and exceed that expectation. While current scholarship addresses these questions in terms of schools or public access to institutional museums, there is little current scholarship related to the connection between museums and unique artistic or archaeological sites.

I began researching this issue in 2015, when I interviewed staff at the Georgia O’Keefe Museum in Santa Fe to discuss the procedure they have in place to conduct tours of O’Keefe’s home and studio. Access is possible, but strictly limited in the number of people and schedule for supervised visits. I experienced a similar arrangement in Italy when trying to visit Etruscan tombs near Chiusi, where access is controlled by a small museum in the village. In such remote areas of Italy there has been some effort to protect archaeological sites, yet looting and nefarious invasion of ancient sites is an ongoing problem. Prior writing on this topic focuses on the competing agendas of archaeologists and museums, neglecting the education perspective.

This year I am returning to these questions with two goals. The first is to develop curriculum for preservice and current art educators to encourage stronger relationships between classrooms, museums, and arts communities, including tools for getting funding and permission to take students to artistic venues. I will pursue publication for this curriculum with practice based journals that emphasize curriculum for art educators. The second goal is to further research the role of museums in the protection of archaeological sites, drawing on experiences visiting such sites supported by academic research. In January of this year I visited Etruscan sites in Cerveteri and Tarquinia, both of which are protected differently from those in Chiusi or Sienna. The scholarship produced by this endeavor will be valuable to international journals in arts education, art history and archaeology. The protection of archaeological evidence, artwork, and objects is a global issue, thus the role of major museums and site museums in such protection, access and education is highly significant.