

TOWARDS A CONNECTIVE AESTHETIC:

AN A/R/TOGRAPHIC JOURNEY

by
Lara Kruger

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Supervisor: Mrs MJ Kaden

Department of Visual Arts

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the possibilities for how one might work aesthetically to contribute to the enabling of a human ecology through connection-making.

The central questions that inform the thesis are how one can awaken or 'aesthetise' individuals into making internal connections and understanding their interconnectedness with one another and with the planet, and how one can enable them to respond to this interconnectedness by removing obstacles to it and modelling alternative ways of being. This requires the establishment of process-orientated, connectionist approaches to phenomena in our social and natural environments.

This study situates aesthetic practice within an expanded concept of art. It inquires into the importance and difficulties of expanding an object-orientated approach to art towards a performative, process-orientated approach. It suggests that art, as it is practised within an expanded field such as social sculpture, has the ability to significantly contribute to the sustainable relationships of humans with one other and with their environments.

Questions that emerge in response to developments in the expanded realm of art concern the potential difficulties of the reconciliation of art with life: can aesthetic qualities be attributed to certain forms of activism, education and social and economic structures? When does something become 'art'? Who determines what art is? What is to be gained from calling it art? And what is the value and efficiency of these forms of art? (WochenKlausur: [sa]; Kester 2003; 2004).

In addition to considering questions about the reconciliation of art with life, the thesis explores practice-based questions, such as how to reveal creative ability and find appropriate forms for it; how to see everyone as an artist; how to approach an individual, group or community as a creative being; and how to work towards enabling a connective aesthetic. These questions are pitched towards the development of an aesthetic pedagogy and the creative facilitation of processes that are ordinarily considered to be situated

outside of the creative realm. These processes are continuously explored in my research process, in an attempt to find how I might work in the world.

The research questions are explored by means of the qualitative inquiry space that is offered by a/r/tography. A/r/tography draws on theoretical understandings and methodologies that enable the practice of understanding and integrating theory, praxis, and *poesis*, or theory/research, teaching/learning, and art/making. The focus is mainly on a/r/tography as an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights and the rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography. The contiguous relationships between the identities of artist, researcher and teacher/learner offer multiple perspectives to the field of inquiry.

To add further rigour to the a/r/tographic practice and reflections thereon, this inquiry draws on the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and in particular their work on rhizomatics, and on Laura Ellingson and Laurel Richardson's concept of crystallization, thus reinforcing the connectionist position of this study.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om die moontlikhede te verken vir hoe daar esteties gewerk kan word om tot die in staat stelling van menslike ekologie by te dra deur middel van konneksievorming.

Die kernvrae waarmee hierdie tesis besiel word is ondermeer hoe individue bewus gemaak of 'geëstetiseer' kan word om interne konneksies te maak en begrip te kry vir hul geïnterkonnekteerdheid met mekaar en die planeet, en daarby, hoe hul in staat gestel kan word om teenoor hierdie geïnterkonnekteerdheid te reageer deur die verwydering van struikelblokke en die modulering van alternatiewe weeswyses. Die stigting van proses-georiënteerde konnektionistiese benaderings tot verskynsels in ons sosiale en natuurlike omgewings word geverg.

Hierdie studie plaas estetiese praktisering binne 'n uitgebreide konsep van kuns. Dit ondersoek die belangrikheid en moeilikhede verbonde aan die uitbreiding van 'n objek-georiënteerde benadering tot kuns na 'n performatiewe, proses-georiënteerde benadering. Dit stel voor dat kuns, soos dit beoefen word binne 'n uitgebreide veld soos sosiale beeldhouwerk, die vermoë het om 'n kenmerkende bydrae te lewer tot die volhoubare verhoudings van mense met mekaar en ook hul omgewings.

Vrae wat na vore kom in reaksie tot ontwikkelings in die uitgebreide kunsgebied het te doen met die moontlike hindernisse in die versoening van kuns en die lewe: kan estetiese eienskappe toegeskryf word aan sekere vorme van aktivisme, opvoeding en sosio-ekonomiese strukture? Wanneer word iets 'kuns'? Wie bepaal wat kuns is? Wat is die wins daarin om na iets as kuns te verwys? Wat is die waarde en effektiwiteit van hierdie vorme van kuns? (WochenKlausur: [sa]; Kester 2003; 2004).

Buiten die oorweging van vraagstukke oor die versoening van kuns en die lewe, verken hierdie tesis praktyk-gebaseerde vrae soos hoe om kreatiewe vaardigheid te onthul en toepaslike aanwendings daarvoor te vind; hoe om alle mense as kunstenaars te sien; hoe om 'n individu, groep of gemeenskap as 'n kreatiewe entiteit te benader asook hoe om bes 'n

konnektiewe estetika in werking te stel. Hierdie vrae word gemik op die ontwikkeling van 'n estetiese pedagogie en die kreatiewe fasilitering van prosesse wat gewoonlik as iets buite die kreatiewe ruimte gereken word. Hierdie prosesse word voortdurend ondersoek in my navorsingsproses in 'n poging om vas te stel hoe ek in die wêreld sal kan werk.

Die navorsingsvrae word verken deur middel van die kwalitatiewe ondersoekingsruimte wat a/r/tography bied. A/r/tography maak gebruik van teoretiese begrippe en metodologieë wat die beoefening van die begrip en integrasie van teorie, praxis en *poesis*, of teorie/navorsing, onderwys/leer en kuns/skepping. Die klem val hoofsaaklik op a/r/tography as 'n estetika van ontvouende in/sigte en die risomatiese verwantskappe van a/r/tography. Die aanliggende verhoudinge tussen die identiteite van kunstenaar (artist), navorser (researcher) en leermeester/leerder (teacher) bied veelvoudige perspektiewe aan die ondersoekingsveld.

Om verdere stiptheid aan die a/r/tography praktyk en die besinning daarvoor te verleen, bou hierdie ondersoek voort op die werke van Gilles Deleuze en Felix Guattari, in die besonder met betrekking tot hul werk op risomatiek, asook Laura Ellingson en Laurel Richardson se konsep van kristalising, dus onderskragend van die konneksionistiese inslag van hierdie studie.

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She had been working on it for fifteen years, carrying about with her a shapeless bag of dingy, threadbare brocade containing odds and ends of colored fabric in all possible shapes. She could never bring herself to trim them to any pattern; so she shifted and fitted and mused and fitted and shifted them like pieces of a patient puzzle picture, trying to fit them to a pattern or create a pattern out of them without using her scissors, smoothing her colored scraps with flaccid, putty-colored fingers.

(William Faulkner in Deleuze & Guattari 1984:476)

PREFACE**How might I work in this world?**

The MA programme in Visual Arts comprises related practical and theoretical components. It is expected that the artworks that are produced should be contextualised in the thesis according to theoretical, historical and philosophical art-making issues. In moving back and forth between the fields of practical and theoretical research I have been mindful of the third field that is created by the relationship between theory and practice. Sensitivity to this threefold whole¹ has become integral in the development of my own understanding of, and contribution to, my area of study. Consequently, my research process should be read as a fully integrated and supple whole that includes practice, theory and the tensions between these two components, which creates spaces for the *unfolding of insights*².

This practice-based investigation developed from a question that I consciously worked with during the latter half of my MA studies: how might I work in this world? (Figure 1) This question started as a subconscious need that initially contributed to my decision to commence this Masters study. It was only well into my research process that I was able to consciously formulate it, as a result of reflection on my creative practice.

In *Experience as art: aesthetics in everyday life*, Joseph H. Kupfer (1983:15) states the importance of self-formulated questions in orientating us to our subject matter and to ourselves. Similarly, I see questions as a strategy for making connections — connections with our personal histories, concerns and quests, and connections between ourselves and the systems that we as humans shape and live in. Kupfer (1983:16) explains: 'questions

¹In *Development practitioners and social process: artists of the invisible* (2002), Allan Kaplan refers to 'threefoldness' as a focus on the relationship between things as opposed to *things* as compartmentalised fixed identities surrounded by empty space. It is important to mention that this third space or middle ground is not a compromise or grey area, but rather a tension and a balance that holds the energy that exists between polarities. Some of the examples of threefoldness that Kaplan (2002:65) lists are:

expansion – centre – contraction
light – colour – dark
in – threshold – out
inquisitive – interested – indifferent

²Rita Irwin's (2003) description of a/r/tography as an unfolding of insights is unpacked in depth in the section of this thesis titled 'Map key'.

require a willingness to reconsider our experiences and opinions, and their bases'. He compares working with good questions to an aesthetic experience, as it 'takes us beyond our ordinary perception of things' (1983:16). My question-led journey beyond the 'ordinary perception of things' has led me to a strong interest in connectionist practices that expand the concept of art beyond the production of objects to the production of relations.

I have accordingly chosen research and writing methods that aid me in overcoming some of the obstacles related to traditional academic research and writing practices that might be counterproductive to a connectionist approach. One such obstacle is the lack of acknowledgment of the significance of the experiences and emotions of the researcher. Disembodied and disconnected 'objective' writing is clearly at odds with the knowledge and understanding developed through my art practice. The motivation for this research is personal and relies on a trust of the self as a research vehicle. Consequently, the writing of this thesis is rooted in the reflections and recollections of my research process. The subjective and personal nature of reflective practice creates a distinctive text that informs the visual format and structural form of this thesis.

I borrow concepts from autoethnography in the writing of this thesis. This autobiographical genre of writing supports the conceptual underpinnings and practical implications of my field of research because it is essentially connectionist. It contains no pretence of objectivity. The researcher's own experience becomes the object of investigation (Ellis & Bochner 2000:741). This reflective methodology entails

...research, writing, story, and method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political. Autoethnographic forms feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterisation, and plot (Ellis & Bochner 2000:739; Ellis 2004:xix).

Ellis and Bochner (2000:765) claim that the blurred boundaries between the personal and cultural allow the researcher to oscillate between inward and outward modes of looking. This movement resonates with ideas relating to connective aesthetics, in which the connection between the inner and outer worlds of people and systems is recognised. Autoethnography's ability for boundary-crossing makes it a 'genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural' (Ellis & Bochner 2000:739).

The writing methodology employed in this thesis also pertains to the way in which this thesis is read. Bochner and Ellis (1996:24) note that good autoethnographies inspire a different way of reading, asserting that autoethnographies are not 'meant to be consumed as knowledge or received passively.... On the whole, autoethnographers do not want you to sit back as spectators; they want readers to feel, care and desire'. I hope to encourage such empathetic and participatory reading by employing first person writing, and by strategically including different forms of dialogue and a textual sensitivity line in Appendix 1.

Another difficulty became apparent during the writing process: I became concerned that some important aspects of the practice-based knowledge acquired would be lost in the process of constructing an academic study as an end product of my research process. This thesis is not a product of my research process. It is one significant step in the journey of my research process. The practical and theoretical components of my research process are intended to be read as an integral unit. This influences and determines the overall form of both components. The nature of the text of this thesis is, and looks, process-orientated and the practical component is, and looks, theoretically-orientated. The shift from dominant academic conventions in the form and format of my thesis correlates with the shift that I have initiated in my practice by moving away from object-orientated art.

My art practice comprises a network of interrelated approaches and efforts in which I inhabit the multiple and shifting positions of researcher (working towards completing a MA thesis), artist (working towards completing a body of work in partial completion of a MA in Visual Arts) and teacher (in my role as facilitator of various art processes and as a high school art teacher).

For assessment purposes the practical component of my research journey has been documented in an interlinking and relational map, through photographs, video and sound recordings, notebook entries, and artefacts such as drawings and knitworks. I have traced both the documentation and my memory of the processes in order to map the journey for the purpose of critical reflection. The performative processes of constructing, walking and tracing the pathways of this map (as simultaneous spectator and participant) have provided an opportunity to find visible and invisible ruptures and connections, so that alternative movements within and between the creative territories emerge. Such shifts in

understanding have helped me to confront stereotypical views and to acknowledge different perspectives.

Similarly the process of writing this thesis constitutes performative processes of constructing, reading and tracing a map in written form, in order to engage with ruptures and connections that emerge during knowledge creation. I have refrained from using chapters as a way of compartmentalising information. Instead, the thesis (like the presentation of the practical component) unfolds in parts that create a mosaic of windows into my research process. Much information (e.g. electronic correspondence, notebook pages and visual resources) that might ordinarily have been included in appendices has purposefully been knitted into the body of the thesis. Epigraphs and texts which are the verbatim words of the participants in the incorporated dialogues are typographically distinguished by a variation in typeface. This approach highlights the multiplicity and dialogical nature of the text. The dynamics of dialogue in the written component of my research are intended to reflect the collaborative nature of the practical component of my work. This collaborative approach probes the tension between observer and participant status in art and research practices. By taking this approach and incorporating information that is traditionally reserved for the peripheries of an academic document, I emphasise the dynamic process of shaping meaning.



Figure 1:Lara Kruger. Map detail in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011.
Photograph by Xenia Venter.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

In the early stages of my research I became concerned with the disconnections that are apparent in my everyday life and in the systems in which I find myself, dominated by pervasive post-industrial capitalism and globalisation. These disconnections manifest in ill social, political, cultural and economic systems, and in dysfunctional relationships with self, others and the planet. Humanity's current failure to engage in a sustainable relationship with our planet's natural resources and the world's large divide between rich and poor are but two symptoms of this.³ These disconnections result from a lack of sensitivity and intentional engagement in the complex interrelations of our everyday existence. I concur with Suzi Gablik's (2004:17) assertion that 'the fundamental problem of the West today' is 'the illusion of autonomy. It fails to recognize the interconnectedness of everyone and everything. And it ignores the well-being of the whole'.

These concerns have led me to a particular interest in an emergent shift from a modernist, isolated approach to being in the world to approaches that seek to connect people, expand experiences and integrate knowledge. Such a shift towards connectionist approaches is rapidly manifesting and developing in and across the fields of culture; physical, natural and social sciences; politics and economics⁴. Connective and interdisciplinary approaches across all fields enable a more holistic understanding of the world we live in⁵. Such an understanding enables new forms of social organisation to emerge. These forms are rooted in 'networks rather than hierarchies' and run through 'co-operation rather than control'

³We are daily confronted with this divide in South Africa, ranked as one of the most unequal countries in the world.

⁴For example the South African New Economics Network (SANE), a network of individuals and organisations which challenges reductionist economic and financial modes by collaboratively developing alternative economic systems rooted in connective approaches to our complex social and natural environments (SANE [sa]).

⁵The increased focus on interdisciplinary and collaborative research programmes, social and artistic practice is palpable in initiatives such as the Tipping Point conferences hosted by the British Council. These conferences, held globally and for the first time in South Africa in 2010, connect artists and scientists to engage in dialogue on climate change and provide platforms for collaborative projects and processes that emerge from these conversations (British Council [sa]).

(Ennals1997:250). New fields of science such as quantum physics approach the world as consisting of 'relationships' rather than 'things' (Kaplan 2002:7)⁶. In accordance with this focus on relations, interdisciplinary pedagogy (such as Waldorf education⁷) is increasingly directed towards more integrated and holistic learning that includes both a creative and an analytical component and which focuses on the learner's latent potential and personal relations to the world as a site of learning. This differs from pedagogical practices that rely only on academic or intellectual development.

Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1974) introduce the concept of the 'homeless mind' to describe how thoughts and ideas about the world can become homeless in an alienating modern world. As an artist, I experience a sense of homelessness in relation to the dominant, object-orientated art world, which appears isolated from everyday life. Against this sense of homelessness, one might posit a 'human ecology'. I understand the term human ecology to refer to humans' relationships to each other and to their environments. Furthermore, the etymology of 'eco' is the Greek word *oikos*, meaning 'home' (Barrett & Odum 2005:2). Ecology may also then be presented as an expanded concept of home or an alternative to homelessness. Consequently my artistic practice entails a search for materials and strategies that will enable me to work as an artist in a way that is more meaningful to me as an individual and as a participant in a variety of complex social, political, cultural and economic systems.

My interest in an expanded concept of art originates from my growing interest in the art process, and an ensuing frustration with the product-driven and exhibition-orientated art world. This investigation is situated within (although not restricted to) the wider discussion about, and development of, art practices that are able to support the creation of a human ecology. An enquiry into art practices that operate beyond the walls of galleries and museums has aided me in shaping my own questions regarding the type of creative materials and art practice needed to overcome a disconnected way of being in the world. It

⁶This is a departure from a classical or Newtonian model of science where 'material reality consists of discreet things which act upon each other across the nothingness of space' (Kaplan 2002:7-8).

⁷ See EJ Ogletree's *Creativity and Waldorf education: a study* (1991) and J Armon's *The Waldorf curriculum as a framework for moral education: one dimension of a fourfold system* (1997). Waldorf education is based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, whose work also played an important role in the development of Social Sculpture (Social Sculpture Research Unit [sa]).

has also helped me to map a need for creative practice that acknowledges the interconnectedness of, and interrelationships between, the persons, objects and systems I encounter in the world.

In the context of this investigation, art's role in mediating a holistic approach to being in the world rests on the concept of a 'connective aesthetics' which is practised and developed within an expanded concept of art. Social sculpture employs the term connective aesthetics to refer to the role of the imagination in a transformative process. According to the Social Sculpture Research Unit ([sa]:[sp]), connective aesthetics is a new methodology of engagement and understanding. Gablik (1992:4) uses the term connective aesthetics to describe the aesthetics of art that is 'grounded in the realisation of our interconnectedness and intersubjectivity'.

One might argue that in the South African context connective aesthetics is embedded in the philosophy of *ubuntu*, the idea that 'a person is a person because of other people'. The Nguni expression *ubuntu* addresses our interconnectedness, our common humanity, and the responsibility to each other that flows from our connection' (Nussbaum 2003:21). It serves as a guiding principle for treating one another with kindness and respect. *Ubuntu* principles resonate with Kupfer's views on individual and societal development. He says that '[s]ince the individual and society are mutually constitutive, the health and development of the one presupposes the well-being of the other' (1983:74).

Connective aesthetics, like the concept of social sculpture, is not shaped into a fixed identity. It is, rather, a space for exploration and understanding within a specific realm which is in turn connected to many other realms of thought and practice. Even though I refer to and discuss the ideas of art practitioners such as Shelley Sacks and Suzi Gablik concerning connective aesthetics, I do not aim to define the term at any point in this thesis. I see the process of writing this thesis as an extension of my own search for what connective aesthetics might come to mean in my practice. This thesis supplies a dynamic space for a meaning of connective aesthetics to emerge.

Aim of the study

This study is an autobiographical inquiry of how I, as an art worker, might work in this world to enable a human ecology through connection-making. The questions that arise from my research journey direct the investigation of this thesis to the role that art practice might play in fulfilling the need for a holistic understanding and development of the world, and to how aesthetic experience might assist people in becoming mindful creators of themselves and their own surroundings.

Ideas of art as a fixed end-product or commodity, and of the artist as a producer of these products or commodities, are problematised as giving rise to a practice that promotes disconnection. A strong focus is placed on an art practice that works towards the integration of social and environmental concerns in a highly commodified modernist and post-modernist art world. This requires a reestablishment of the connection between aesthetics and ethics, and process-orientated, connectionist approaches to phenomena in our social and natural environments. *Connective* is a key term within this thesis. For the purpose of this study I focus on two types of connections, as well as the action of connection-making. The first type of connection is an internal (within an individual) connection. The second is a connection between individuals and groups.

This study aims to situate aesthetic practice within an expanded concept of art by inquiring into the importance and difficulties of expanding a gallery object-orientated approach to art towards a performative, process-orientated approach. It aims to argue that art, as practised in an expanded field such as social sculpture, has the ability to significantly contribute to the sustainable⁸ relationships of humans with each other and with their environments.

The process of writing this thesis provides an opportunity to re-trace moments in my practice and to consider questions and challenges that arise from working within an expanded realm of art. These challenges include the potential difficulties of the reconciliation of art with life, and finding appropriate forms and strategies for a creative

⁸ The United Nations defines sustainability as a 'development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development 1987:[sp]). Sacks states that sustainability 'is not about the environment out there. It is first and foremost about culture, about consciousness, about how we view and inhabit the world. It is about developing the imagination and intuition as new organs of perception' (S Sacks, personal interview, Weimar, 5 July 2009).

practice that embodies a connective aesthetic. As I attempt to discover how I might work in the world, the continual movement back and forth between my art practice and the process of writing this thesis provides me with a space to develop a deeper understanding of the creative and aesthetic potential of processes that are ordinarily considered outside of the art world.

Theoretical framework and methodology

The post-structural methodology employed in this study attempts to approach research and writing as processes of seeing and understanding that contribute to new ways of working in the world. Consequently, the theoretical framework of this investigation allows for a qualitative, practice-based and exploratory process which presents a connectionist position. The framework facilitates a holistic approach to complex systems and emphasises process over outcome. This approach helps me explore the contested relationship between theory and practice.

This thesis actively engages with what Rita Irwin (2003:64) calls the 'in-between spaces' of the research process – active spaces for knowledge creation and an 'unfolding [of] aesthetic sensibilities'. This is done by means of the qualitative inquiry space that is offered by a/r/tography. A/r/tography draws on theoretical understandings and methodologies that enable the integration of *theoria* (knowing), *praxis* (doing), and *poesis* (making), or theory/research, teaching/learning, and art/making (Irwin 2004: 27-28). A/r/tography treats the roles of artist, researcher and teacher as integral. The a/r/tographic renderings of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations and excess, quilt a lens through which my own a/r/tographic journey can be critically reflected on. The focus is mainly on a/r/tography as an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights (Irwin: 2003) and the rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography (Beer, et al: 2006).

The theoretical framework provided by a/r/tography is supported and deepened by the writings of Deleuze and Guattari (rhizomatics) and Laura Ellingson (crystallisation). Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'rhizome' indicates a hidden network of interrelations that form a 'decentred multiplicity' (Bonta & Protevi 2004:136), as opposed to what they call hierarchical arborescent systems (1984:16). In this multiplicity any point can, and must, be connected to any other (Deleuze & Guattari 1984:7). Similar to rhizomatics, the research

methodology of 'crystallisation' sets aside positivist claims to objectivity and the need to obtain a singular discoverable truth, and instead embraces knowledge as situated, partial, constructed, multiple, embodied and enmeshed in power relations (Ellingson 2009). Together a/r/tography and rhizomatics provide a valuable multi-faceted prism⁹ for looking at how one might expand the field of art to be more connectionist.

To add further rigour to the a/r/tographic practice and reflection thereon, the inquiry draws on the critical work of Grant Kester (2003) (collaborative, community-based dialogical art), Gablik (1992) (connective aesthetics) and Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) (relational aesthetics). I focus mainly on connective aesthetics as it is practised and developed within the field of social sculpture and by Gablik.

Social sculpture (Social sculpture research unit [sa]) theory, developed by Joseph Beuys in the 1960s in relation to his expanded concept of art and practiced by contemporary social sculptors such as Shelley Sacks and James Reed, is particularly helpful in understanding aesthetics as a connective practice and in unpacking and repacking the opportunities and challenges of working within an expanded concept of art. Moreover, it allows for art to be socially responsive by creating spaces for engagement, exchange and reflection among its participants. My focus on social sculpture is determined by my personal experiences and evolving perceptions¹⁰ of social sculpture as a field that contains depth, substance and form, and yet remains developing and emergent. This character of social sculpture provides fertile ground for the exploration and development of a personal way of working in the world.

Literature review

Rita L. Irwin is an artist, researcher, and teacher whose research involves the arts-based educational inquiry of a/r/tography. A/r/tography is a 'form of practice-based research

⁹ I purposefully use the word *prism* here as opposed to *lens*. Richardson (1994) and later Ellingson (2009) illuminate the nuances of a multiple-genre approach by considering it an exercise comparable to viewing an object through a crystal. In Richardson's words, 'crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns and arrays, casting off in different directions' (Richardson in Ellingson 2009:11).

¹⁰ Obtained by taking part in social sculpture processes such as James Reed's Agents of Change Project (Reed (ed) [sa]; Agents of Change Project [sp]) and through participation in a Weimar summer course in art and sustainability that was led by Sacks. Experiences pertaining to participation in this course are discussed in more depth throughout this thesis.

steeped in the arts and education' and recognises 'the educative potential of teaching and learning as acts of inquiry' (Beer et al 2006:2). Like Deleuze, Guattari and Kaplan, Irwin problematises 'analytic reasoning and rationality rooted in detached cognitive ways of knowing'. She deals with these problems by means of a transdisciplinary approach towards the role of the artist, teacher and researcher (Irwin 2003: 63). This contiguous¹¹ relationship between the identities of artist, researcher and teacher/learner offers multiple perspectives to my field of inquiry in which I shift between the aforementioned roles — an approach that relates to Ellingson's commitment to multifaceted research and writing approaches.

Irwin's (2003) critical take on the relationship between theory and practice and view of aesthetics as a tool for understanding and action resonate with the aim of my research, in which I inquire as to how I might work with aesthetics as a means of enabling a human ecology through connection making. The key texts that help shape my understanding of a/r/tography are *The rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography* (Beer, et al: 2006), and Rita Irwin's writings *Toward an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights through curriculum* (Irwin 2003) and *A/r/tography, a metonymic métissage* (Irwin 2004).

Underpinning the rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography, are Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's two volumes, *Capitalism and schizophrenia: anti-Oedipus* and *A thousand plateaus* (1984; 2002[1988]) which present a metaphysics of flux that relies on an understanding of the interrelatedness of things and the dynamic movements and processes that constitute all systems. These volumes are useful in the development of an appropriate research methodology for this inquiry and in examining the role of aesthetics as a connective practice, precisely because they acknowledge and work with a complex system of connections in which everything is both a part and a consequence of many other things.

Laura Ellingson's *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research* (2009) has helped me to develop research and writing methodologies that are sensitive towards, and in accordance with, the understanding that I have attained through the above-mentioned literature and through the creative practice dimension of my research. Ellingson's idea of using multiple genres on a continuum of understanding as a way of reconnecting the disconnected also

¹¹The slashes in a/r/tography (and other related words) purposefully illustrate a doubling of identities and concepts rather than a separation/bifurcation of ideas.' (Beer et al 2006:3)

closely resonates with what Alan Kaplan (2002) refers to as 'threefold thinking' in his book *Development practitioners and social process: artists of the invisible*. These ideas have been useful in developing a holistic approach to my research process, as opposed to viewing my theory as separate from my art practice.

In *Development practitioners and social process: artists of the invisible* (2002), Kaplan unpacks the processes of social organisms and looks to nature as a way of understanding complex and interrelated processes. Kaplan's work is grounded in the thinking of Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, who drew on processes in nature in his philosophy. This resonates with Beuys who, also informed by the work of Goethe, relates natural things and processes, such as warmth, to the way in which they are manifest in human behavior. Kaplan's approach to social phenomena as living systems and his deep consciousness of process and movement within and between social systems relate strongly to the concept of social sculpture. His work, which is focused on a connectionist, as opposed to reductionist, approach to social forms gives insight into the practical possibilities of Deleuze and Guattari's metaphysics of flux, and aid the development of a connective aesthetic in my own work.

In order to situate my autobiographical inquiry in the context of art forms that seek to connect and expand, I consult the critical work of Gablik, Kester and Bourriaud. Gablik's book *Has modernism failed?* (2004) is particularly useful in developing an understanding of the larger critical view of the social situation of contemporary art at the beginning of the twentieth century. In books such as *Conversations before the end of time* (1995) and papers and articles such as *Beyond the disciplines: art without borders* (2003) and *Connective aesthetics* (1992), Gablik focuses on an art practice that works towards the integration of social and environmental concerns. The art practices that are her focus share the connectionist characteristics of the recent collaborative, community-based dialogical art that Kester discusses in *Conversation pieces: community and communication in modern art* (2004). Whilst Kester and Gablik's work map, and argue for, relational and connective art practice, Bourriaud, in *Relational aesthetics* (2002,) aims to produce the tools for understanding the current focus on 'interactivity' and the 'aesthetic of the encounter'.

My interest in the relational, dialogical and connective is reflected in my choice of field-related literature that employs dialogue and conversation to support the concepts of its content. In *Conversations before the end of time* (1995:17), Gablik uses dialogue to orientate her writing towards being 'participatory and interactive'. The integral nature of dialogue to Beuys' work is highlighted by the format of the text in *Joseph Beuys, life and works* (Adriani, Konnertz & Thomas 1979) and *What is art?* (Harlan 2004). The former is a chronological presentation of Beuys' life and works, and includes conversations with Beuys, commentaries on significant incidents, and studies of documented material. *What is art?* comprises a discussion between Beuys and close colleague Volker Harlan and highlights the central themes and concerns of Beuys' work.

An in-depth study of the work and ideas of Beuys, who first developed the concept of social sculpture, is vital for understanding how to expand artistic practice to become more connective. In an effort to delve into the thought and work processes of Beuys, I have also consulted *Joseph Beuys: in memoriam Joseph Beuys, obituaries, essays, speeches* (Beuys 1986). In Beuys' social sculpture theory, every human being is potentially an artist or creative being that is able to shape his/her own life and world by working with the visible and invisible materials available to us all in the expanded workspace that is our world. He describes social sculpture as the manner in which we 'mould and shape the world in which we live: sculpture as an evolutionary process' (Beuys in Harlan 2004:9).

The Social Sculpture Research Unit (SSRU) is a valuable resource on developments within the field of social sculpture, the expanded concept of art and connective aesthetics. It provides a comprehensive overview of the history, influences, current and future growth of the field, and acts as a departure for research on key role players (such as Beuys and Sacks) and past and current social sculpture processes (such as *Honey pump in the workplace*¹² and *Exchange values*¹³).

¹²*Honey pump in the workplace* is a social sculpture process in which Beuys employs the invisible material of conversation in conjunction with physical forms such as the honey pump to create a space for communicating and making connections at Documenta 6, 1977.

¹³Sacks' social sculpture project, *Exchange values – images of invisible lives* is an example of expanded interdisciplinary art practice. It involves numerous social sculpture processes that connect producers and consumers.

Adding to social sculptors' thoughts on the possibilities of aesthetic experience in the conscious creation of ourselves and the systems we are part of is Josef H. Kupfer's *Experience as art: aesthetics in everyday life* (1983), in which he focuses on the development of aesthetic learning. Kupfer (1983:5) links 'aesthetically impoverished' social institutions to the lack in 'form-making capacities' of individuals, capacities which are necessary for them to shape their own lives meaningfully. He suggests that aesthetic learning, which employs connective practices such as 'aesthetic discussion', enables these capacities.

Overview of the parts

This thesis, like the presentation of my art practice,¹⁴ is created as a map of my research processes¹⁵. Rather than compartmentalising information in enclosed chapters, the map unfolds and re-folds in interconnected and overlapping sections.

Map key

As an extension and deepening of the literature review provided in the introduction of this thesis, the map key unpacks the chief concepts of a/r/tography that are useful for reading this map. For the purposes of this map, the focus is directed towards two major qualities of a/r/tography: a/r/tography as an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights, and the rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography. In order to gain a fuller understanding of these a/r/tographic qualities, we consider Deleuze and Guattari's metaphysics of flux and Ellingson's concept of crystallisation.

1: Unfold/ lay open/ expand/connect

Movements of Deterritorialization

The first section of Part 1 of this thesis unfolds a map of art practices that attempt to expand the realm of art. This broad overview of art that operates beyond the walls of galleries and museums assists us in recognising the shifts that are needed for artistic practice to enable a human ecology.

¹⁴A brochure of this presentation is included in Appendix 2.

¹⁵Many maps of these processes may exist, of which this thesis is but one and is constructed to support one of the many possible approaches to the aim of this study.

The shifts identified are a turn towards strongly connectionist practices and a focus on process, the social and the relational. It is deduced that the challenges made to the definition of art practice have caused contemporary art to spread out from its material form to become more socially responsive. This deterritorialization of art practice is substantiated and expanded on by considering the critical work of Kester (collaborative, community-based dialogical art), Gablik (connective aesthetics) and Bourriaud (relational aesthetics), in relation to situations in my research journey. These situations are directed towards the exploration of the questions that I formulate regarding the character of my creative work in an expanded concept of art. The questions are: What are my materials? What are my tools? Where is my work space? What is the form of my work?

The situations that I reflect on are *Knitwork* and my experience of the Weimar summer course. This critical reflection is aided by the map key provided at the beginning of the thesis. In addition to formal text, this section of the thesis includes illustrations and written recordings of dialogues and conversations pertaining to the journey situations at hand.

Lines of Flight¹⁶

Here, I briefly introduce *Knitwork* (2008 – 2010) as one of my research journey situations, constructed to engage in art practice that breaks away from art's material form to become more process-orientated. *Knitwork* is constituted by:

Ktog (Knit together), first collective knitting action,
Melkbos knit collective,
Knitted cosy for a bronze rhinoceros, and
ECC 25th anniversary knitting action.

Knitwork provides an arena for exploring the materials, tools, workplaces and form pertaining to an expanded concept of art. This area of the map traces the pathways that led me to the deeper understandings gained and new connections made through my experiences at a summer course in Weimar.

¹⁶ A line of flight is the concept used by Deleuze and Guattari (2002) when writing about multiplicities and the rhizome metaphor. It is the act of fleeing, eluding, breaking through and deterritorialising. A line of flight has the ability to bleed out into, and connect with, possibilities beyond its current dimension. I employ this concept to refer to processes in my research journey that aid me in making new connections and breaking through my current perceptions of how I might work in this world as an artist.

Ruptures and Connections

I lay open and trace my Weimar experience. By using the map key provided by a/r/tography, I am able to highlight the understandings and shifts in perception that unfold in Weimar as a result of the ruptures and connections enabled by certain lines of flight. They are: the formulation of aesthetic as opposite to anaesthetic; the significance of the concept of new organs of perception to my art practice; the importance of connectionist and trans-disciplinary research and practice. I conclude that these understandings are useful for working with the questions regarding materials, tools, work spaces and forms, that I have begun to explore in *Knitwork*.

2: Enable/ inquire/map/relate

Part 2 deepens the critical reflection in Part 1 by means of interrupting, revisiting and re-tracing the situations introduced in Part 1 of the thesis, as well as by introducing a third journey situation, *Drawing to Understand*. *Drawing to Understand* is an inquiry and work strategy that emerged through my experiences in Weimar and that has been explored extensively as a component of various creative inter-actions since 2009. *The Drawing to Understand* situations reflected on in this thesis constitute creative processes facilitated at:

New Love Foundation workshops: 16 days of activism programmes,
ABSA Klein Karoo National Arts Festival (KKNK), Klap! Workshop and
The first Climate Fluency Exchange.

In addition to the map key and links to critical theory employed in Part 1, I employ theories and strategies written and practiced by Kupfer and Kaplan. Their work on aesthetic pedagogy and social development aid me in making deductions as to how one might approach individuals or groups as creative beings in order to foster agency and facilitate a connective aesthetic.

Machines¹⁷

Here, the focus is on how I might work towards the development of new organs of perception as machinic processes in order to assist people to aesthetically shape their lives and the world we live in. It is suggested that agency is reliant on the creation of two types of connections: a personal, inner connection with self, and an outer connection between individuals and groups.

Rhizomes

Here I look at how the afore mentioned relations create alternative modes of sociality. The deduction is made that personal and social agency developed by 'new organs of perception', acknowledges complex relations with self and others which in turn enables a human ecology.

In/sights

Strategies for working in this world a little bit better

I conclude this thesis by summarising the in/sights¹⁸ that I have gained through my research journey. A list of strategies for how I might work in this world is constructed. Furthermore, deductions are made that an expanded concept of art is necessary for the practice of connective aesthetics and the creation of humane and ecologically sustainable relations in this world.

Dancing with shadows

Here new questions that have emerged are acknowledged, and suggestions are made for how these questions might be explored in the future through the development of aesthetic pedagogy and the creative facilitation of processes that are ordinarily considered to be situated outside of the creative realm.

¹⁷ A term employed by Deleuze and Guattari (2002) to refer to that which enables supple networks in complex systems.

¹⁸ In/sight is a concept developed by Irwin (2003). It refers to the understanding that one is able to acquire when one works in the in-between spaces of our common perception of things. This concept is unpacked in more depth in the map key section of this thesis.

Appendices

Appendix 1 contains two textual sensitivity lines. The sensitivity line format serves to illuminate and support the theories involved and to illuminate and interrogate the connections between them. The 'discussion' of each theory is interrupted and broken up and placed in between the 'discussions' of what I have identified as related theories.

The first textual sensitivity lines consist of critical 'discussions' of three process-orientated, connectionist approaches to phenomena, namely: Deleuze and Guattari's metaphysics of flux; Ellingson's engagement of crystallisation; and Kaplan's approach to social phenomena as living organisms. The second sensitivity line is constructed with critical 'discussions' on connective aesthetics. The role-players in this line are Beuys, Gablik and Kupfer.

The resulting mosaics require active and simultaneous readings of the individual parts, as well as of the integrated wholes, and attempt to provide in/sights for the overall strategy of my research process, which includes this thesis.

Appendix 2 is the brochure that accompanies the presentation of the practical component of this research journey.

MAP KEY

Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities!

Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns point into line! Be quick, even when standing still! Line of chance, line of hips, line of flight. Don't bring out the General in you! Don't have just ideas, just have an idea (Godard).

Have short-term ideas. Make maps, not photos or drawings (Deleuze & Guattari 2002:25).

An a/r/tographic journey

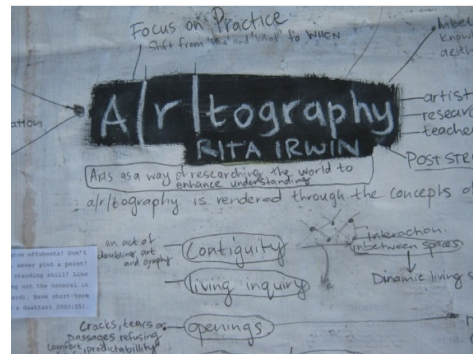


Figure 2: Lara Kruger. Map detail of a/r/tography in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011. Photograph by the author.

Rita Irwin [Sa] states that

to be engaged in the practice of a/r/tography means to inquire in the world through an ongoing process of art making in any art form and writing not separate or illustrative of each other but interconnected and woven through each other to create additional and/or enhanced meanings.

My research comprises a dynamic network of interrelated approaches and efforts in which I am situated within the multiple and shifting perspectives of researcher (working towards completing a MA thesis), artist (working towards completing a body of work in partial completion of a MA in Visual Arts) and teacher (in my role as facilitator of various art processes and as a High School art teacher). Irwin's work is useful for me (Figure 2), as she critically consider the complex relationship between theory and practice. Through a/r/tography she problematises 'analytic reasoning and rationality rooted in detached cognitive ways of knowing' and takes a transdisciplinary approach towards the role of the artist, teacher and researcher (2003:63). Furthermore, the connective aesthetic of

a/r/tography echoes the two types of connections that are focused on in this inquiry: an inner, personal connection about self as artist/researcher/teacher, and a social connection, 'when groups or communities of a/r/tographers come together to engage in shared inquiries, act as critical friends, articulate an evolution of research questions, and present their collective evocative/provocative works to others' (Irwin [Sa]). Consequently, I borrow the term a/r/tography to refer to my positions during this research process and have chosen the theoretical framework provided by a/r/tography to function as key for tracing the shifting and provisional 'maps' of this research journey. Deleuze and Guattari, whose work is crucial to my theoretical 'mapping' here, 'suggest that once a map is grasped, tracings across the map need to occur in order to resist dualistic thinking' (Beer et al 2003:4).

As Irwin ([Sa]) explains:

A/r/tographical work is rendered through the methodological concepts of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations and excess which are enacted and presented/performed when a relational aesthetic inquiry condition is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text, and between and among broadly conceived identities of artist/researcher/teacher.

A/r/tography , then, can be considered as an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights and as a rhizomatic relationality: two characteristics of a/r/tography that are of particular importance in constructing this map key. These concepts are useful to my multi-faceted research process because of their ability to 'provide access to phenomena not otherwise attainable or to provocative ideas' by enabling the artist/researcher/teacher 'to interrogate the interstitial spaces between things, for example image and word, text and audience, researching, pedagogy and art making'(Irwin [Sa]). This level of access is necessary in my research journey, because the inquiry is into an expanded concept of art, in order to learn new ways of working in this world as an artist.

An aesthetic of unfolding in/sights

In writing on the cultivation of an 'aesthetic way of knowing', Irwin (2003:64-65) speaks of 'an aesthetic of unfolding' that opens 'that which resides in the active space between the fold and the not folded'. This contiguous action reveals in-between spaces that are 'dynamic living spaces for inquiry' (Irwin [Sa]) similar to the middle ground in Kaplan's (2002:65)

concept of *threefoldness*: a tension and a balance that holds the energy that exists between polarities. In a/r/tographic practice such spaces are openings that ‘are not passive holes through which one passes easily but are cracks, tears or passages refusing comfort, predictability and safety’ (Irwin [Sa]).

Both the written and practical components of my research process intend to embody an ‘aesthetic of unfolding in/sights’ by engaging with the dynamic openings offered by a/r/tography. This is an inquiry strategy that is awake to the generative qualities and tensions that are active in the research process and aims to ‘convey meanings rather than facts’ (Irwin [Sa]). Just as with the ‘dialectical relationship between theory and practice’, ‘an aesthetic way of knowing appreciates the awkward spaces existing between chaos *and* order, complexity *and* simplicity, certainty *and* uncertainty’ (Irwin 2003:63). In this thesis I embody an ‘aesthetic of unfolding in/sights’ through ‘mapping’ my research and moving back and forth in/between its theoretical practical components. These unfolding maps depend on relationships between research situations rather than isolated inquiries into individual research problems or art works.

For an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights to be activated, one ‘requires an embodied experience rich with sensory perception’ (Irwin 2003:65). Irwin (2003:65) places such an experience ‘in direct contrast to anaesthesia or disembodied experiences lacking sensory awareness’. Irwin (2003:64) states that

In/sights open up or unfold implicit aesthetic sensibilities held within seeing. The / (slash) embellishes the typically unperceived inner space between in *and* sights. *In*, meaning held by, surrounded by, amidst, within the boundary of, or within the confines of category, is held in dialectical tension with *sight*, meaning the act of seeing, things worth seeing, viewing and the range of vision.

This contiguous interaction between *in* and *sight* forces a critical stance towards sensory perception and the way in which we perceive things. In cultivating an *aesthetic way of knowing* one is then required to look beyond and in-between our common perception of things. The dynamic process of unfolding in my practice-based research journey allows for consciousness to emerge by engaging with, and reflecting on, the multiplicity of journey sites and in-between spaces. This dynamic process of unfolding also allows for an exploration of my and others questions regarding the ordinary perceptions of the concept of art, the artist and the nature of our relations with the complex systems we live in.

The rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography

In *The rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography* (Beer et al 2003: 4) the authors draw on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'rhizome', and argue that 'rhizomatic relationality is essential to a/r/tography as a methodology of situations'. 'Rhizome' is the term that Deleuze and Guattari (1988:1-25) apply to a multiplicity of complex systems. The image of the rhizome metaphorically represents these systems because, like the interrelated approaches in a/r/tography, 'rhizomes resist taxonomies and create interconnected networks with multiple entry points' (Beer et al 2003:4). In light of the process-orientated approach taken in my research and art practice, it is important to note here that the rhizome is also a process and that complexity is not a state of rest (or product) that we should aim to attain (or produce).

Prompted by the work of Beer et al in *The rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography*, I explore the a/r/tographical situations in my research journey as 'methodological spaces for furthering living inquiry' (Beer et al 2003: 2) to find ways of working in this world to create connections through aesthetic experience. The focus on connection-making in this exploration relies on the rhizome as metaphor in an attempt to acknowledge the multiplicities implicit in this process-orientated multi-faceted approach. A/r/tography employs metaphors (such as that of the rhizome) because they 'permeate boundaries and open up new understandings' (Irwin [Sa]). In order to gain more depth of understanding of the metaphoric use of the rhizome in both the theoretical and practical component of my work, I consult Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's metaphysics of flux.

In *Capitalism and schizophrenia* (1984; 2002), Deleuze and Guattari introduce an abstract metaphysical model of 'flux', which, together with a/r/tography and crystallisation, is integral to my research process. The model sees reality as a flux or flow. This flow takes part in two movements: flow interruption and flow production. These movements are distinguishable but always flow into and out of each other. They imply each other and the one is always 'becoming' the other (Deleuze & Guattari 1984; 2002).

Reality is then modelled as a complex network of material 'processes', in other words systems comprising these two flow movements. Humans are a part of, and a consequence of, all these processes of reality. The upshot of this is that the systems that humans are

involved in can also be seen in the form of flow production and flow interruption – processes of social interaction, interaction with the environment, knowledge production, consumption et cetera (Bonta & Protevi 2004; Deleuze & Guattari 1984; 2002).

In addition to their internal connections, all of these processes are always connected to other processes within the system (reality). They can never be seen in seclusion from one another or the rest of the system(s). Deleuze and Guattari (1984; 2002) for this reason criticise models that do not take all of these complex connections between humans and the universe into consideration (for example, psychoanalysis and linguistics). When systems are studied in isolation they are ‘overcoded’ (in other words, extra dimensions are added to them and a false centre of importance is attributed to them).¹⁹

Deleuze and Guattari (1988:1-25) introduce to us the idea of the *abstract machine*, that which allows the system to connect all the different processes to one another, and that which allows the system its very high degree (‘intensity’) of complexity. The deduction is made that when a human ecology is overcoded and the overcoding (because of its false centre of importance) fosters disconnection, an abstract machine may be employed to allow the system to once again (re)make certain connections. In the parts of the thesis that follow I suggest that for a connective aesthetic to unfold art needs to be considered a machinic process of connections as opposed to a mechanic production of objects.

The relational conception of products and processes presented by Deleuze and Guattari helps to destabilise fixed concepts, objects and identities, a destabilisation that ‘is also found in contemporary art discourse where ‘site’ as a fixed geographical concept has moved to a relational concept re-imagined as a ‘situation’ within political, economic, cultural and social processes’ (Beer et al 2006:5). This process-orientated shift from site to situation is re-enforced throughout the remainder of this thesis by means of reference to research journeys ‘situations’ as opposed to journey sites.

¹⁹ One could argue that our capitalist economic system is an example of such an overcoding. A television advertisement of a particular motor vehicle brand might use a father’s desire for a meaningful father-son relationship to sell a luxury vehicle. This is done by falsely attributing healthy human relations to material possessions such as cars, which require a hefty bank balance, which in turn requires a specific mode of life (for many this equates to long, stressful working hours that result in less time spent with loved ones) that might in actual fact be the reason for poor human relationships.

A/r/tography as crystallisation²⁰

Like Irwin and Deleuze and Guattari, Laura Ellingson (2009) demonstrates a concern for the method in which we approach the problem of understanding a multifaceted evolving phenomenon. Ellingson (2009) addresses this challenge by means of crystallisation. Crystallisation offers a multiple-genre approach to qualitative research, where knowledge is represented across many different points along the qualitative methodological continuum (Ellingson 2009). It achieves depth 'through not only compilation of many different details but also through different forms of representing, organising and analyzing these details' (Ellingson 2009:10). Ellingson (2009:7) explains: 'I envision the continuum as having three main areas, with infinite possibilities for blending and moving among them'. The continuum places scientific approaches or positivist methods on one end of the spectrum, and then art, or radical interpretivism, on the other end.

Like the a/r/tographic concepts of contiguity and openings, these methodologies do not follow an either-or approach and therefore do not oppose each other, but rather anchor ends of a continuum of methodology, a continuum on which most of us find ourselves somewhere in the middle ground (Ellis & Ellingson 2000). Ellingson (2009:7) points out that 'middle-ground approaches need not represent a compromise or a lowering of artistic or scientific standards. Rather they signal innovative approaches to sense making and representation'. This middle-ground approach is like Kaplan's (2004:65) concept *threefold thinking*, in that it is different from the dualistic thinking that often pervades our modern approach to living systems.

Ellingson (2009:101) writes about the benefits of 'multidimensional thinking' for reflection on the impact of different modes of work on one another. She points out that research that is conducted from several perspectives allow descriptions to be thick and rich because of its multiple ways of meaning-making. Ellingson (2009:94) refers to the 'law of the hammer' in her call for multiple methodological approaches. The law of the hammer represents the tendency whereby, 'if you have a hammer as your only tool, you tend to search for opportunities in which to hammer things, rather than looking for interesting opportunities

²⁰ Crystallisation as it is spoken of here should not be confused with Joseph Beuys' concept of crystallisation. Beuys sees crystallisation as a *freezing process* (not a *warmth process*) which, when transposed to human beings, is a 'hardened, one-sided intellectuality' (Beuys 2004: 50).

and then choosing an appropriate tool' (2009:94). As an artist and researcher seeking new ways of working in this world, it is essential to heed the law of the hammer to allow for the boundary-crossing essential for expanding my practice to include new materials, strategies and work spaces.

Heeding the law of the hammer, crystallisation, and, subsequently, a/r/tography as crystallisation, involve multiple ways of knowing. Crystallisation offers deep, thickly described, complexly-rendered interpretations of meaning that create space for contrasting ways of knowing that interweave and blend by drawing upon more than one way of expressing the world (Ellingson 2009:94-95). Such multi-faceted approaches are prevalent in art practices that shift the boundaries of art. They often manifest in multi-disciplinary and collaborative art processes. Such processes in my own work and in that of others are explored in more depth in the next section of this thesis.

1: UNFOLD/ LAY OPEN/ EXPAND/ CONNECT

This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of land out at all times (Deleuze & Guattari 2002:161). (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Lara Kruger. Map detail of a deterritorialisation in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011.

Photograph by Xenia Venter.

Movements of deterritorialization

To discover how I might work aesthetically to help enable a human ecology through connection making requires an exploration in relation to other movements that permeate the boundaries of art as a market-related product to an art practice that is morally connected and more process-orientated – a shift from a focus on objects, to a focus on relationships. It requires an inquiry that is open to the possibilities of aesthetic experience in the conscious creation of ourselves and the systems we are part of and focuses on the role of art in the transformation of living conditions.

Questions concerning the role and definition of the artist have been explored extensively by artistic practices that work towards expanding the concept of art beyond the object, gallery, or museum, into everyday public and personal spaces and situations that include a plurality of individuals and groups. During the early 1900s, the Russian Constructivists sought to

directly influence social life and personal agency.²¹ The Bauhaus further cultivated these ideas in an attempt to culturally reform industrial modernity by exploring and designing new ways of living via the arts.²² After the Second World War, socially engaged art prevailed in the work of the Situationists and Lettrists.²³ At the same time, the development of Conceptual Art further developed the focus on ideas as opposed to finished products. The need for socio-political relevance in art became ever more prominent during the 1960s and 1970s when cultural change and social revolution were prompted by happenings such as the war in Vietnam, the de-colonialisation of many African countries and the liberation of marginalised groups. Initiatives and individual artists such as the Artist Placement Group (APG) and Joseph Beuys experimented with radical new forms of art practice and significantly contributed to the shift away from the idea of art as a fixed object.

APG worked towards repositioning the role of the artist in society by 'enabling artists to engage actively in non-art environments' (Tate Learn Online: Artist Placement Group [sa]). They did this by placing artists within industry and government departments, where they were paid a salary for playing the 'new role of maintaining sufficient autonomy to acting on an open brief' (Tate Learn Online: Artist Placement Group [sa]). Similar to Beuys' social sculpture works these placements do not require the artist to produce images or objects and instead focused on durational, process work that presented the artist with an opportunity to occupy the grey areas and in-between spaces of industry and government in order to make connections that might improve the quality of human life.

Drawing strongly on the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller and Rudolf Steiner, Joseph Beuys extended artistic practice into the domains of the social, educational (for example new art pedagogies and organisational learning), political (for example, direct democracy) and economic (such as new money forms that equate creativity with capital) (Harlan 2004: 27; Gablik: 2004). Beuys' work is the embodiment of the uniformity of art and life and promotes an awareness of the interconnectedness of all things (Adriani, Konnertz

²¹ See Maria Gough's *The artist as producer: Russian constructivism in revolution* (2005).

²² See Bauhaus Archive and Magdalena Droste's *Bauhaus, 1919-1933* (2002).

²³ See Constant. 1984. *Manifesto*. Translated by L Bright.[O]. Available: <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/manifesto.html>

&Thomas 1979; Harlan 2004). In this thesis, his term 'expanded concept of art' is brought into play with reference to the concept of 'social sculpture' (e.g. how we shape the world in which we live). In an 'expanded concept of art', art practice includes the use of 'invisible materials' such as 'thinking forms' (e.g. how we mould our thoughts) and 'spoken forms' (e.g. how we shape our thoughts into words) (Harlan 2004). Furthermore, Beuys' work challenges the realm of the artist by proposing that every human being is potentially an artist (Social Sculpture Research Unit [sa]:[sp]; Beuys 1986; Harlan 2004).

Emerging from the groundwork of Beuys and other like-minded creatives is the Social Sculpture Research Unit (SSRU) at Brookes University, Oxford (currently directed by Shelley Sacks, artist and student of Beuys). The SSRU provides a wider social sculpture network that 'encourages and explores transdisciplinary creativity and vision towards the shaping of a humane and ecologically viable society' (Social Sculpture Research Unit [sa]).

Sacks' transdisciplinary social sculpture projects ranges from 'performative actions, mapping processes, interventions, and dialogue processes to facilitating 'spaces for new vision' toward an ecologically sustainable world' (Sacks 2008). *Exchange values, images of invisible lives* is an evolving project that focuses on 'the interconnections between producers and consumers by bringing together people from a multitude of backgrounds and disciplines to explore ways to develop a more participatory and sustainable society' (*Exchange values* [sa]).

Other contemporary artists and collectives such as Suzanne Lacy²⁴, WochenKlausur,²⁵ and the Arkwork collective²⁶ have succeeded in extending their practice into the socio-political

²⁴ Lacy is an artist whose work includes installations, video, and large-scale performances on social themes and urban issues. *The Roof is on fire* (1993-4), a collaboration between Lacy, Annice Jacoby and Chris Johnson, features 220 public high school students in Oakland in unscripted and unedited conversations on family, sexuality, drugs, music, neighborhoods and the future, as they sit in 100 cars parked on a rooftop garage (Kester 2004).

²⁵ WochenKlausur's proposals and interventions are aimed at improving human coexistence. The WochenKlausur collective proposes that artistic projects have the ability to solve problems that are not easily solved by conventional approaches (Kester 2004).

²⁶The Arkwork Collective is a section 21 non-profit organisation that works collaboratively in striving to 'create experiences for people who usually do not have the opportunity to creatively engage with their daily lives and personal histories and [which] facilitates the process of turning lost space into empowered place. *The collective* provides the free resource and expertise of volunteer artists [and] uses creative dialogue as a form of social justice, catharsis, education and personal empowerment' (2010/10/18). Also see <http://arkwork.yolasite.com/>.

domain by means of concrete (and often collaborative) interventions in society. By employing artistic creativity to improve human coexistence, they question the functions of art and argue for a shift from a formal aesthetic to a new aesthetic: an aesthetic which one can employ to consciously and humanely shape the world we inhabit.

A map of such art practices that operate beyond the walls of galleries and museums highlights a shift towards a focus on process-orientated, transdisciplinary creative actions that expand the concept of art to include work strategies, materials and tools that are appropriate for working towards a relational, and consequently connective, aesthetic. The subsections that follow represent a critical reflection on situations in my research journey and explore how I might work within this expanded realm of art. I proceed by employing a map key that is supported by the critical work of Kester, Gablik and Bourriaud.

In her social sculpture work Sacks uses questions as ‘interventions’ in her ‘habitual thought’ so that they become ‘instruments of consciousness’ (The Social Sculpture Research Unit [sa]). The autobiographical questions that I have formulated for the purpose of this explorative journey of how I, as art worker, can enable a connective aesthetic are:

What are my materials?

What are my tools?

Where is my work space?

What is the form of my work?

The illustrations and epigraphs (some of which are retrieved from documented conversations) that I have included among the formal text in the remainder of this part of the thesis acknowledge multiple ways of knowing. My intention here is to highlight the rhizomatic and relational learning embedded in the situations.

Lines of flight (Figure 4)



Figure 4: Lara Kruger. Map detail of a line of flight in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011. Photograph by the author.

In *Conversation pieces: community and communication in modern art*, Grant Kester (2004) offers a comprehensive study of recent collaborative, community-based dialogical art. He deals critically with the most pertinent questions arising from this field by situating specific examples of performative, process-based contemporary art practice within related developments in art theory. In referring to activist or community-based art practices, Kester (2004:13) states: 'more traditional critics have challenged the very definition of this work as an art practice'. He responds to this by 'developing a theoretical foundation for this work as art and placing the work in the context of avant-garde art practice' (2004:13).

I challenge the traditionalist idea of art in my practice-based research process *Knitwork* (2008 – 2010). *Knitwork* is a relational enquiry that relies on the act of collective knitting as an entry point for crossing the boundaries of my art practice and exploring materials and workplaces that pertain to an expanded concept of art. These collaborative, community based *Knitwork* processes are documented by means of photographs, a zine (Figures 3-5), sound recordings, documented reflections of participants, and knitted artefacts. I rely on these documentations, together with my memory of the research journey, during the mapmaking process of writing this thesis.

What are my materials?

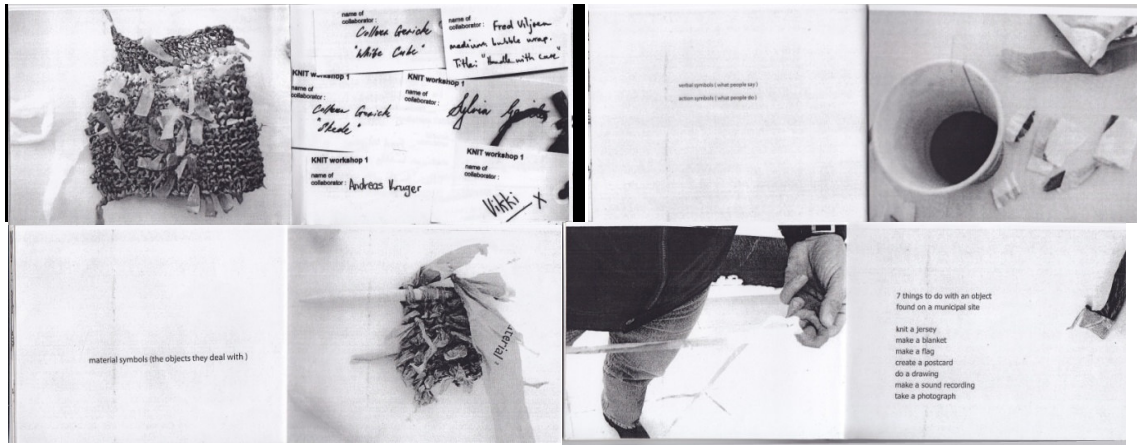
What are my tools?

Ktog (the knit abbreviation for knit together) is the first collective knitting action and takes place one morning at Off the Wall Art Gallery, Paarl. Gallery goers and friends are invited to create individual knit works whilst engaging in conversations around a table placed in the centre of the main gallery space, which opens out onto the side walk, in view of passers-by. (Figures 5-11)



Figures 5-7: Photo documentation of *Ktog*, Paarl, 2008. Photograph by the author.

This living inquiry into how I might work with conversation as an aesthetic material, and knitting as a tool for connecting people purposely does not propose to be a means to a grand, fixed end (product). There are no specific requirements for what participants need to produce other than an invitation to engage in the act of knitting. Although I create the opportunity for conversations to emerge, by placing chairs around a table, no guidelines are given for what the conversations are supposed to centre around. This approach of ‘contiguous interaction’ disrupts what Irwin [sa] describes as ‘taken for granted categorizations of knowledge production’. The open-endedness of the knit situation enables me to be attentive to the knowledge that might emerge from an inquiry that is based in the *unknowing* that artist/researcher/teacher Barbara Bickel [Sa: 3] refers to in reflecting on inquiries that do not rely on pre-given practices as ways of knowing and learning. This *unknowing* resides in the openings that are created by working with knitting as a tool for connecting and with conversation as material in this connective process.



Figures 8-11 : Lara Kruger. Double pages from *Ktog* zine, 2008.

In this situation knitting is valuable as a connective tool because it is simultaneously personal and social: each person is involved in her own knit endeavour, but shares this effort with others who have also committed to do so. Conversation as material creates openings because it is inherently relational and in constant flux, a rhizome, always becoming. This gives it the potential to cultivate *an aesthetic of unfolding in/sights*. One is able to suggest, then, that by expanding art practice to include conversation as material, the art worker is enabled to work with an aesthetic that is potentially connective.

Where is my work space?

Departing entirely from the gallery as a site for aesthetic experience, *Ktog* was followed by the *Melkbos knit collective*. The *Melkbos knit collective* was collaboratively facilitated by me and the Melkbos ACVV (through social worker Luna Pieterse). Participants in the collective consisted mainly of female adult residents of two informal settlements in and near Melkbosstrand. This knit collective took place in the participants' living spaces and during weekly afternoon meetings at the ACVV facilities. Participants knitted various products that could be sold as a small source of income to the knitters. During weekly knit meetings, discussions centred on the progress of the knitting and the personal and social well-being and concerns of participants.

The creative deterritorialisation of permeating the boundaries of the artist's studio and the gallery opens my inquiry to the potential of everyday life as a site of aesthetic experience. Gablik (2004:17, 84), who is interested in the 'blurred distinctions between art and non-art', notes that 'one of the things that seems to separate postmodernist from modernist thinking...is the rejection of any serious concern about art's moral center'. She contends that this results in the majority of contemporary art being 'the product of energies freed from direct social purpose or obligation' (Gablik 2004:84) and that 'modern Western society seems to be unique in regarding its art as a commodity to be sold in exchange for money, prestige, and power' (Gablik 2004:57). Although the craft of knitting and the production of sellable knitted products provided the initial motive for the existence of the *Melkbos knit collective*, the essence of the collective became increasingly dependent on the social relations in it, which were continuously formed and re-formed. The collective was a becoming network of individuals who could rely on the knit project as common ground for sharing, exchanging and knowledge formation, with topics ranging from social concerns to food recipes and personal health and well-being issues. This alternative focus in the collective resonates with Beuys (in Harlan 2004: 27), who equates money and capital with human dignity and creativity, rather than with economic value. He argues that 'we need to develop a concept of money that allows creativity, or art, so to speak, to be capital. Art is capital' (2004: 27).

In addition to demonstrating the connective aesthetic of an expanded workspace, the reverberations of this expansion activates openings that host uncertainties, tensions and instabilities regarding what the actual form of the artwork might be when it is formed in an expanded concept of the artist's workspace, by an expanded concept of the artist's tools and materials.

What is the form of my work?

What is the art form that results from encounters and exchanges? Social sculpture explicitly works with invisible materials such as 'thinking forms' and 'spoken forms', for it is not only concerned with art's material form but with 'perceiving interrelationships, joined up thinking and practice [and] enabling connective understanding' within individuals and the world they live in (Social Sculpture Research Unit [sa]:[sp]).



Figure 12: Photo documentation of a form at *Ktog*, Paarl, 2008. Photograph by the author.



Figure 13: Photo documentation of a formation at *Ktog*, Paarl, 2008. Photograph by the author.

When Bourriaud (2002: 19) argues that relational aesthetics represent a theory of form, the form that he speaks of is not necessarily a material form, but rather, as he points out when observing contemporary artistic practices, 'formations' (2002:21). With the word 'formation', the unfolding, becoming, process-orientated nature of the art work is emphasised, much like when one employs the term *situation* (like in *a/r/tographic* practice) as opposed to *site*. This shift towards formations and situations deterritorialises art as a fixed object. (Figures 12 and 13)

One can deduce, then, that by challenging what one might define as art practice or the artist, some contemporary art forms are expanding from material forms to manifest as encounters

and processes that promote connections within individuals (personal, inner connections) and with their social and other relations with the world.

Whilst the *Melkbos knit collective* took as its departure point the social upliftment of individuals through the cultivation of knitting as a craft, *Knitted cosy for a rhino* (Figure 14) relied entirely on the symbolic actions and interactions that were played out and enacted in public space, through the act of knitting. This was a knitting project in collaboration with residents from Safe House, a home for abused women and children in Stellenbosch.



Figure 14: Tracing of *Knitted cosy for a rhino* in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011. Photograph by Xenia Venter.

Knitted cosy for a rhino was a performative, public intervention process, in which a collaboratively constructed cosy was fitted onto a bronze sculpture of a rhinoceros. The site of the sculpture is the village green in Stellenbosch town centre. The idea for the cosy initially developed from a project by the social justice activist group, Code Pink, to which some of the Safe House residents had contributed knitted squares that were to be made into a cosy to cover the gates of the White House in Washington, in celebration of Mother's Day 2009.

knit work/ knitted cosy = gift, warmth, protection = mother = safe house
abused women and children = vulnerable, need of protection = rhinoceros, endangered animal, abused,
value, beauty, strength
act of knitting with plastic bags = transformation, regeneration, recycling, environmental issues = safe
house: regeneration, protection, transformation

[Participators' collaborative flow of ideas about on the symbolic value of the knit work]



Figure 15: Lara Kruger. Map detail of *Knitted cosy for a rhino* in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011. Photograph by the author.

The upshot of the creative actions and interactions that unfolded in the public space are what Bourriaud (2002) suggest we refer to as ‘formations’. Formations exist through encounters, exchanges and relations. I suggest, then, that it is useful when working towards developing a connective aesthetic to envision form as *formation*.

After making art on the village green, I returned to the formal gallery space with the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) 25th anniversary knitting action that took place in 2009 as part of a weekend event that commemorated 25 years since the launch of the ECC²⁷. Most of the art on display at the ECC 25th anniversary ‘*Forward>March*’ exhibition at Spier Old Wine Cellar Gallery showcased South African resistance art of the 1980s.

The ECC 25th anniversary knitting action (Figure 16) consisted of a quilted accumulation of previously knitted sections, onto which multiple knitting points were created, so as to allow commemoration participants to simultaneously participate in a common knit endeavour. The knitting acted as metaphor for the processes of constructing, healing, participation, connecting, and reconnecting. Irwin [Sa] explains that ‘metaphoric and metonymic relationships help us to make sense of the world by making ideas accessible through our senses’. Departing from literal language, the knitting action co-worked with the gallery

²⁷ By the late 1980s thousands of young white men, opposed to the role of the South African Defence Force in maintaining apartheid, were actively avoiding compulsory military service as part of the End Conscription Campaign.

artworks to help deepen understandings of the roles we play in the systems (such as the apartheid or military system) we exist in. This set-up encouraged a site of exchange in which the use of spoken and thought forms in aesthetic formations could be explored. The dynamics of shared participation through knitting, and reflective conversations on the role of the ECC, opened up a relational encounter that was situated amid the encounters produced by the images and objects that filled the gallery space.



Figure 16: Lara Kruger. Map detail of the ECC knitting action in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011. Photograph by Xenia Venter.

The numerous connections enabled through these encounters assisted an unfolding of *in/sights* of the role of the ECC in South Africa's history and also of the potential of how we might shape our world differently through the conscious and active creation of the current and future systems that we are a part of.

Ruptures and Connections

During the European summer of 2009 (the 90 year anniversary of the foundation of the Bauhaus and 20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall), I attended a two-week course (Figure 17) at the Weimar-Jena-Akademie in Weimar, Germany. This course on art and sustainability was entitled 'From Bauhaus to social sculpture: the shaping of humane societies as an aesthetic challenge'.

The course was led by Hildegard Kurt (cultural researcher and co-founder of The Institute for Art, Culture and Sustainability, Berlin) and Shelley Sacks (artist and director of Social Sculpture Research Unit, Oxford) and was attended by artists from a variety of disciplines, art historians/theoreticians and philosophers, art educators, students and individuals

concerned with how we shape societies. The geographical representation was global, with participants from South Africa, India, Germany, England, Poland, Georgia, Russia, North America, China and Australia. The aim of the course was to investigate the following question: can the shaping of humane societies be approached as an aesthetic challenge? This question was explored by collaboratively shaping questions and concerns and by developing, practising and sharing work strategies.



Figure 17: Lara Kruger. Map detail of the Weimar learning experience in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011. Photograph by Xenia Venter.

The questions that I identified at the start of the course presented a concern for how I might move beyond assumed ideas of how we should be in the world, to learn to imagine, trust and pursue my own personal future and to help others do the same. In the relational learning space of the course my questions and those of the other participants co-worked to open up the definition of whom and what the artist is and what role he or she has to play in an expanded concept of art. Johanna, a participant, was concerned with how one might react to the question 'Are you an artist?' when practising art within the expanded concept of art. Janhavi, another participant, questioned the role of the artist in society and referred to the tensions between 'being with the people' and being removed from them. Werner, a practising magistrate, expressed a need to break away from a condition that he calls 'the fantastic artist', a need that resounded with their questions. I interpret Werner's description as an elitist vision of the artist as a know-all observer that points things out. This is in opposition to a vision of a more connective artist, the artist as a transdisciplinary social and ecological participatory agent. In Gablik's (2004:151) critique of the social situation of contemporary art at the beginning of the twentieth century, she calls for an 'art that transcends the distanced formality of aesthetics and dares to respond to the cries of the

world'. Such a responsive and connective artistic position relies on an appreciation of an aesthetic that permeates (although does not entirely exclude) art as object or product.

The formulation of the aesthetic as the opposite of the anaesthetic, a formulation which Sacks shared during a knowledge exchange at the summer course, is useful to interrogate the artist's role in connective art practice. As the opposite of anaesthetic, aesthetic comes to mean 'enlivened being' and connects with the sense of responsibility within humans. Sacks explains that this responsibility does not refer to a moral imperative but rather to an ability to respond (Sacks in Harlan 2004:x). One can deduce, then, that in the context of connective aesthetics an enlivened being is one able to act and respond morally in the world by means of a developed inner concern for our relatedness to other human beings and the planet. With this in mind, the artist's role in connective aesthetic practice is to develop a personal ability to respond and to facilitate processes that enable and nurture others' ability to respond.

This understanding of aesthetic differs from traditional aesthetics that involve a concept of beauty and artistic representation. Etymologically, the term aesthetic is derived from the Greek word *aesthesis*, meaning sense perception. *Aesthesis* is the perception of the external world by means of the senses and *aesthesia* is the capacity for feelings and sensations (Oxford English Dictionary 1989. Sv. 'aesthetic'). In the understanding that this thesis is based on, the aforementioned senses expand to incorporate 'new organs of perception' (Beuys in Harlan 2004; Social Sculpture Research Unit [sa]), which, in addition to perceiving the external world, also contain the ability to perceive internal worlds of living beings or systems. The questions and concerns that emerges from the Weimar course underline the need for a creative practice that enables people to attain a certain level of consciousness, so as to become responsible participants in their own lives and in the systems in which they exist. At the summer school, dialogues facilitated by Sacks and Kurt illuminated a shared understanding (gained from the creative practices of the course participants) that aesthetic experience contains the ability to awaken and develop such a consciousness and the ability to respond by connecting to our inner concerns and felt needs.

Janhavi: But then I was reminded of Beuys' statement- 'Every human being is an artist, a freedom being, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and inform our lives'. So, I thought I could initiate the group into something they have never done before - which will expand their awareness and open new possibilities of movement (2010/09/28).

An expanded view of the artist as a practitioner and enabler of 'new organs of perception' requires the art worker to operate beyond the secluded art studio and to work in the social environment, with materials that encourage not only aesthetic forms but also formations. Gablik (2003: [sp]) points out that 'strategic changes are happening in which the individual artist becomes an integral component of a larger social network'. She refers to a shift from specialisation to transdisciplinarity in artistic practice as well as on an institutional level. Gablik (2004: 136, 152) explains that by 'breaking down the rigidity of specialization', a transdisciplinary approach not only enables us to work across disciplines, but can 'propel us beyond either/or thinking into a co-existence of nested truths'. Sacks [sa] explains that the transdisciplinary character of social sculpture work 'lifts the creative process out of the specialist world of art into a realm in which we all have the possibility to become artists: 'social sculptors', engaged in the shaping of our world'.

I deduct that in an expanded concept of art the view of the artist as a producer of images makes way for the artist as enabler, facilitator and participant, able to move freely between roles and disciplines. This opens our beings, doings and perceptions to moving beyond assumed ideas, so as to make connections within the self (personal connections) and with others (social connections) and the systems (e.g. economic and political connections) we live in.

Janhavi: The course was just a wonderful beginning; it is definitely going to be an ongoing process for years to come... it was also the course and our interactions that re-motivated me to continue philosophy. It gave me a sense that there really are, at least some, like-minded individuals/intellectuals and so we can hope to work in togetherness, in an interdisciplinary way and help, enrich each other because our goals might be different. But I still think, the understanding and trust we share can really be implemented and then executing our ideas will be/is possible.(2010/09/28)

While developing creative strategies during the course, it was this deduction, of the aesthetic, that prompted me to re-think my role in *Knitwork* and wonder how my role might support a more connective aesthetic in future creative endeavors. Working through the understanding of aesthetic as the opposite of anaesthetic, I experimented with a creative strategy that utilises the ‘new organs of perception’ that Beuys (in Harlan 2004; Social Sculpture Research Unit [sa]) refers to in his concept of social sculpture. The strategy, introduced to me by Sacks, involves drawing as a tool for understanding. This strategy is integral to my exploration of a central question that informs this thesis: how one can awaken or ‘aesthetise’ individuals into making internal connections and understanding their interconnectedness with one another and with the planet, and thus enable them to respond to this interconnectedness by removing obstacles to it and modeling alternative ways of being. *Drawing to understand* is reflected on in more detail in the section that follows, where I look at how I can work to help develop ‘new organs of perception’.

Concluding notes

This expansion and consequent connective aesthetic relies on transdisciplinary practices that share an understanding of aesthetic as opposite to anaesthetic — an understanding that requires the development of new organs of perception. The next part of this thesis explores how I as an art worker might work towards the development of new organs of perception, so as to assist in aesthetitising people to become able to respond to, and subsequently actively shape, the world they live in.

2: Enable/ inquire/map/relate

to docket living things past any doubt,
you cancel first the living spirit out:
the parts lie in the hollow of your hand,
you only lack the living link you banned
(Goethe in Kaplan 2004:6)

The aim of this area of the map is to inquire into aesthetic experience as that which enables an ability to respond through connection-making. This aim is pitched towards the cultivation of a personal and social agency which enables alternative modes of sociality in which rhizomatic relations with self, others and the systems we are a part of are recognised. I argue that the nature of the required aesthetic experience is reliant on what Beuys calls the 'new organs of perception', which I introduced in Section 1 of this thesis.

To assist me in this aim, I at this point unfold a new journey situation: *Drawing to understand* (2009 – 2011). The drawing-to-understand approach evolves from methodologies used by Sacks in social sculpture practices and the Masters in Social Sculpture course that she leads. The drawing- to-understand methodology, which I started working with in Weimar, utilises the process of drawing as a tool for understanding. The objective here is to draw to see the dynamics of relationships (Figures 18 - 20), as opposed to drawing to produce an image as end product.

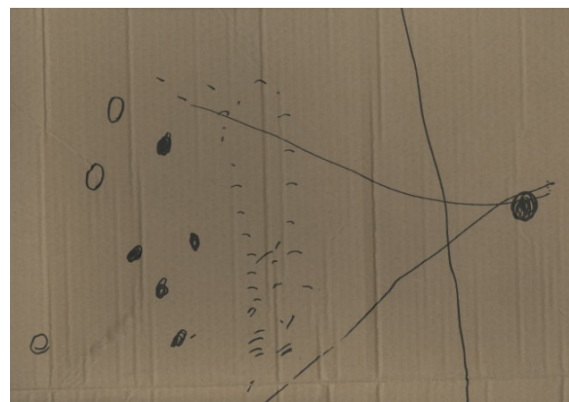


Figure 18: Lara Kruger. A drawing to understand the dynamics of my relationship to participants in *Knitwork*, 2009.



Figure 19 : Lara Kruger. A drawing to understand the dynamics of the relational learning experience in Weimar, 2009.

The methodology, as I approach it, is adapted and applied to a variety of different situations, groups and individuals, and documented by means of drawing artefacts, video recordings, written notes and photographs. Besides using drawing-to-understand in my personal capacity as researcher, artist and high school teacher, I have explored and developed the methodology as part of the following processes:

- New Love Foundation (NLF) workshops: 16 Days of Activism programmes and ABSA Klein Karoo National Arts Festival (KKNK) Klap! Workshop
- The first Climate Fluency Exchange



Figure 20 : Lara Kruger. Map detail of drawing to understand in *How might I work in this world?*, Paarl, 2011. Photograph by Xenia Venter.

Machines

Deleuze (2004:219) refers to the 'machine' as that which allows systems to form supple networks through multiple connections between and within systems. Like *Knitwork* and the learning space enabled in Weimar, *Drawing to understand* explores ways in which a

connective aesthetic, and new networks, can be cultivated. The 'network' is a key metaphor not only for Deleuze and Guattari, but for Gablik, who describes it as 'a new pattern of organization' and 'a generative creative force' (2004:153). Such 'new patterns' enable a shift away from specialisation and an extension of artistic practice into relational domains, such as the social and environmental.

Gablik (2004:92) calls for the development of an aesthetic life which engages 'the individual's potential for creating himself'. New Love Foundation facilitates arts-based workshops and processes that utilise this potential as a means to social transformation and mobilisation. Methodologies employed in these processes are based on the premise that aesthetic experience enables transformational understanding and action.

The foundation facilitated our first complete interactive, educational prevention programmes in 2009, during the 16 days of activism, in Atlantis, a predominantly coloured, Afrikaans community in the Western Cape. Three programmes were executed: one for adults, one for teenagers and one for children. The programmes aimed to create awareness in the community of the impact of cultural perceptions and social habits on the abuse of women and children, and to assist the community in developing the ability to solve and prevent such social problems. Facilitators sought to create a non-threatening, creative atmosphere in which the community could learn through participation and experience. Each programme consisted of music, drama and visual art (of which I was the facilitator) components that overlapped and flowed into one another to create a participatory creative learning process.

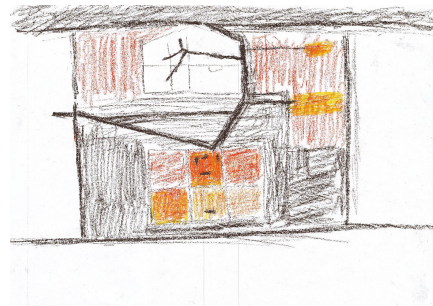


Figure 21: A drawing by one of the New Love Foundation workshop participants, Atlantis, 2009.

I argue that in these workshops the drawing processes (Figure 21) became a tool for the development of what Beuys refers to as 'new organs of perception', because they allowed

the participants to venture into their inner concerns, questions and needs. Beuys' own countless drawings such as *Evolution* (Figure 22) and his blackboard drawings were intended as 'a continual form of questioning' that would enable an understanding of various interconnections. Beuys not only activates new organs of perception through drawing, but 'through dialogues, discussions, in conversation, in confrontation, in question and answer' (Harlan, 2004: 24).

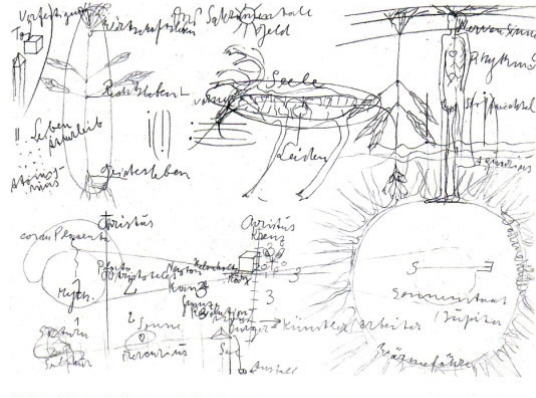


Fig.22. Joseph Beuys, *Evolution*, 1974. Corresponds to the blackboard drawing made during a lecture at the Hibernia School in Wanne-Eickel on 1.7.1974. (Source: Harlan, V. Fig. 35. 2004:67.)

The knowledge creation enabled by 'new organs of perception' is integral to a connective aesthetic, which is understood in more depth when placed in relation to Kupfer's ideas about the development of aesthetic learning. His ideas are in accord with a/r/tographic research practice, for he argues that aesthetic experience contains the ability to 'force(s) us deeper into ourselves in an attempt to gain a fuller view of the world') (Kupfer 1983:16). According to Kupfer (1983:13), aesthetic learning is made possible by bringing personal questions and needs into the classroom to 'help form an integrated whole'. Kupfer makes this proposition by drawing on the ideas of John Dewey, who uses the term 'funding' to describe the activity of 'bringing to the work of art our fund of experience, values, and cultural knowledge' (Kupfer 1983:13). Kupfer (1983:31) explains what an aesthetically formed classroom might look like and suggests using questions to connect with a student's felt need and implementing 'aesthetic discussion'. Such discussion is balanced between 'spontaneous excitement' and 'control and direction': 'It presents a practical synthesis of opposed approaches'. When an aesthetic discussion unfolds, 'each speaks to others as a listener, and listens as a speaker': the student must learn to 'talk harmoniously with others' (Kupfer 1983:32-37). The characteristics of aesthetic discussion remind me of the question-

led discussions I participated in at the Weimar summer course. These discussions relied on active listening²⁸ as a way of attaining deep understandings of the entirety of things. Kupfer (1983:15) suggests a thoughtful approach to questions as a way of opening up an inquiry that relates to that which moves someone personally: '[b]y questioning, the teacher can lead the student to see the inadequacy of his understanding'.

In accordance with with these ideas of Beuys' and Kupfer's, the workshop participants individually and collaboratively utilise their drawings and the discussions, together with confrontations facilitated by the Boal²⁹ drama exercise, to investigate their ability to respond in situations of gender-based violence. Through this process of questioning, deeper understandings of how one might shape alternative relations with self and others develop, so as to produce more humane societies.

In addition to the previously mentioned New Love Foundation endeavours, the New Love foundation facilitated three individual arts-based workshops as part of the Klap! Festival, a subdivision of the ABSA Klein Karoo National Arts Festival (KKNK). The Klap! Festival aimed at exposing school learners to a variety of arts and career fields, and at skills development and

²⁸To speak is often considered active, whilst listening is considered passive. In active listening both acts are done with a consciousness that requires active participation in the conversation.

²⁹Boal therapy is named after Augusto Boal, a Brazilian playwright, director and inventor of the school of theatre known as the theatre of the oppressed. The theatre of the oppressed is rooted in the belief that 'every human being is a miniature theatre' and it is based on a simple notion of elementary theatre, where everyone (trained for it or not) is involved. Boal points out the similarities between the experiences of actors on stage and the ways in which we express ideas and feelings through dialogue, movements and voice intonations in real life. The success of the theatre of the oppressed lies in the fact that it does not attempt to reveal truths. It focuses on asking questions rather than giving answers. Its methodology relies on a simple system of exercises, games and methods which are accessible to all (Boal 1997).

Boal's beliefs and methodologies closely resonate with those of Beuys and the field of social sculpture. The practices of both Boal and Beuys are rooted in a deep belief and trust in inherent creative ability and its power to provide people with the tools to be conscious and responsible creators of their own lives and the world they live in.

In the NLF programmes the audience members become active spectators ('spect-actors'). The 'spect-actors' participate, explore, indicate, analyse and transform the reality in which they are living, through participating in the dramatic performances of the actors. They do this by stopping a performance, suggesting different actions to the actors, or taking over the roles of certain actors. In this way, the audience has an input in the dramatic outcome of the scene they are watching.

Additionally, the audience finds new ways of challenging the 'oppressor' within the dramatic scene. This empowers members of the audience who are victims of oppression themselves, enabling them to reach new conclusions through the consideration of opposing arguments, and to find new solutions and skills to address similar problems in their own lives.

the promotion of performing and visual arts programmes at schools. The NLF presented workshops in visual art, music and drama, executed separately but with the umbrella aim of introducing to these art disciplines non-traditional approaches that focus on aesthetic experience as a tool for enabling individual and societal transformation.

Wall-to-wall communication, the visual arts workshop that I facilitated, took place (simultaneously with 12 other workshops) in one of the classrooms of the Bridgton Secondary School in Oudtshoorn. Twelve high school children from a multiplicity of backgrounds, races and socio-economic situations attended this workshop. I facilitated processes in which they individually and collaboratively engaged in drawing and mapping processes designed to illuminate the connections between the participants in the group. These connection-making actions aimed at enhancing the children's awareness of their interconnectedness with each other and their living environments. I argue that such awareness leads to empathetic ways of being in the world that are necessary for the maintenance of a human ecology.

In the above-mentioned processes new organs of perception, such as 'the ability to empathise, to develop a conscience, to see the organising idea in things and the interconnections in the world', move beyond and in-between enclosed or rigid ideas and actions to open up an 'expanded awareness' (University of the Trees: 2007). I claim that new organs of perception, as developed in the situations in my research journey, are machines that produce ecologies by means of a connective aesthetic.

The Climate Fluency Exchange is one of many initiatives and practices inspired by the COPART³⁰ impulse that emerged in South Africa in May 2010 at a Tipping Point Conference outside Stellenbosch. This participatory aesthetic learning process is articulated as

... a collaborative social sculpture project which works with complex questions that emerge from the problems of climate change, and embody these into accessible ways of knowing and doing in our lives. The CFE facilitates a trans-disciplinary intersection between scientists and artists, activists and

³⁰ 'CONNECTING OUR PLANET AND RE-IMAGINING TOGETHER or COPART is a creative impulse that fosters the incubation of a new form of thoughtful action for sustainability in a changing climate that is articulate, compassionate, peaceful and intelligent. COPART is not an organization but a new way of "doing" in the complex world we live in today.' (The COPART impulse: [Sa])

creatives, as well as the general public, using different forms of creative dialogue. (Climate Fluency Exchange: [Sa])



Figures 23 & 24: Photo documentation of the *Climate Fluency Exchange*, Cape Town, 2008. Photographs by the author.

The first Climate Fluency Exchange (CFE) took place in Cape Town, South Africa, from 4th to 10th December 2010, which coincided with the UN COP16 Climate Negotiations in Cancun. I facilitated the drawing-to-understand process on a CFE day that was designed around the themes of gender and climate change. The process consisted of mindfully facilitated conversations (figure 23), in conjunction with the drawing processes (figure 24), aimed at social transformation and mobilisation. The success of this aim was evident in the problem solving and new visions of being in the world that emerged from processes that cultivate an ability to respond as an aesthetic endeavour. Much like the participants in the 16 Days of Activism workshops, the CFE participants utilised drawing as a tool for understanding, and reflecting on, the personal connections they were able to make. The insights attained here is in the context of gender relations and humans' relations to a changing climate.

Rhizomes

Gablik (1995:17) is concerned that 'embedded in modernism is a subtle and far-reaching message concerning loneliness and isolation of the self...'. I relate this 'loneness' to the homelessness that results from the absence of a human ecology.

Weimar summer course participant Miyuki's questions that she brought to our aesthetic discussions were 'where is the seat of understanding and what is it that connects us?'

Gablik (2004:18) suggests that art is a tool that can be utilised 'to make a difference to the welfare of communities, the welfare of societies, and to our relationship with nature', and that in order for us to employ art as such a tool we need to become increasingly aware of

the complex networks of relations that we are a part of. Her (2003:[sp]) work advocates a connectionist orientation towards art practice, by calling for a 'change [of] our basic one-dimensional linear models [of art and art making] to something more dynamic, branched, and multi-dimensional – something that is more in harmony with the interconnected nature of the world'. She (Gablik:1992) investigates the relationship between self and others with a focus on the way in which people interact. This part of the thesis looks at what alternative modes of sociality might look like, and how relations with self and others can contribute to a human ecology. In this inquiry I pay attention to the individual's relations to self and to others, as well as the artist's integration into the larger social network by means of the collaborative, transdisciplinary character of an expanded concept of art, discussed in Part 1.

In accord with the rhizomatic relations of a/r/tography, Beuys' work processes function on a 'multiplicity of layers' (Gablik 2004:92). Beuys uses the phrase 'parallel process' to describe 'processes that extend beyond linear logic and integrate different forms of knowing and communicating' (Social Sculpture Research Unit:[sp]). Consequently, his expanded conception of art includes 'thinking forms' and 'spoken forms', in addition to material objects:

My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture, or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture can be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone (Beuys in Harlan 2004:9).

As pointed out in the descriptions of the *Drawing to understand* situations, these situations always co-work with other processes and across disciplines. I agree with Gablik (1995:20), who argues that 'one position, one voice, lacks dialectical resonance'. She goes on to explain that in collaborations you are not permanently identified with one position and that this makes you aware of interconnections. Irwin [Sa] refers to collective actions and processes such as the ones discussed in this thesis as 'entangled co-laboring[s]' that result from 'personally and socially constructed, reverberations [that] activate openings to let other's work and words resonate' with each other. This 'co-laboring', which is also embodied in the methodology of this research journey by means of a/r/tography and crystallisation, acknowledges a multiplicity of networks embedded in process.

Social practitioner Allan Kaplan (2005:4) explains his approach to social situations as organic (living) phenomena:

I try to understand that which I'm working with — and am part of — qualitatively, which is a different way of pursuing the work from the prevailing search for cause and effect, from reduction into parts which we attempt to control and predict. Social phenomena are complex and emergent, not linear but simultaneous. I search for a way of appreciating and facilitating, rather than explaining and controlling.

As with the complexity of the rhizome, connection-making is a process which transcends the art work as object. It is a dynamic flow of transformative processes: 'the furniture we are forever rearranging' (Deleuze & Guattari 1988:21). Beuys in particular affords attention to art's transformative potential 'by means of images of planting and growth and the transformation of materials such as fat' (Gablik 2004:135). This dynamic approach to art as flux leads to aesthetic forms that are not fixed and finished. Beuys (in Harlan 2004: 9) explains that 'processes continue in most of [his art works]: chemical reactions, fermentations, colour changes, decay, drying up. Everything is in a state of change '.

As in Beuys' sculptures, the changing nature of the social and other human and natural systems we find ourselves existing in requires us to mediate between the various parts of these systems in order to make new connections. In *Knitted cosy for a rhino* this mediation was evident in the alternative modes of sociality that emerged from the encounters triggered by the knit action in a public space (figures 25 & 26). I suggest that the inner-dynamics of the changing systems we exist in can be perceived by new organs of perception developed by participatory creative actions such as these and other connective aesthetic processes such as *Drawing to understand*. This perception is necessary for a more connected and holistic understanding of the world we live in.



Figures 25 & 26: Photo documentation of *Knitted cosy for a rhino*, Stellenbosch, 2009. Photographs by the author.

In Kaplan's (2002:60-66) discussion of polarity as one of the archetypal patterns that gives rise to the form of living systems, he suggests the acknowledgement of a middle ground. It is very important to mention that this middle ground is not a compromise or grey area, but rather a tension and a balance that holds the energy that exists between polarities. Such acknowledgement involves 'threefold thinking' (Kaplan 2004:65), which is different from the dualistic thinking that often dominates in our contemporary approach to living systems.

Threefoldness entails a focus on the relationship between things as opposed to a focus on things as compartmentalised fixed identities surrounded by empty space. Some of the examples of threefoldness that Kaplan (2002:65) lists are:

expansion – centre – contraction

light – colour – dark

in – threshold – out

inquisitive – interested – indifferent

A/r/tography engages these becoming identities by acknowledging and working with the active in-between spaces in processes of unfolding in/sights. These in-between spaces often host latent knowledge that has the potential to produce more sustainable and humane ways of being in the world.

Kupfer (1983:12) uses the midwife metaphor (an interpretation of Socratic midwifery) to describe the role of the teacher in connecting the student to his/her latent knowledge: '[t]he job of teacher as midwife is to provide an occasion for the student to recognize the presence

of this unnoticed learning'. He suggests that the teacher does so by assisting the student in identifying a 'felt lack of understanding' or 'felt need' that catalyses a participatory learning process in which the teacher is not merely the entity that deposits knowledge into a passive subject (Kupfer 1983:10). He relates this to Socrates' description of learning as 're-cognizing': 'cognizing or seeing again, in a reflective way that calls for effort' (Kupfer 1983:12).

Resonating with this midwife metaphor is Sacks' (personal correspondence, 2009) use of the term 'responsible participant' to refer to her position in the social sculpture processes that she develops and enables. As responsible participant in the journey situations reflected on in this thesis, I am able to engage in participatory action research that places me inside the art process whilst simultaneously giving me the scope to responsibly direct and enable the creative processes.

Concluding notes

In all of the creative processes introduced in this section of the thesis map, drawing-to-understand is implemented as an aesthetic tool or 'organ of perception' to internalise and embody conversations and insights that emerge through both artistic and social processes. Secondly, drawing-to-understand is offered as a tool for developing a better understanding of our current relationships and connections (social, ecological, political and economic). Lastly, drawing-to-understand attempts to help people develop an ability to respond to these relationships by imagining alternatives which can lead to action.

IN/SIGHTS

There is a kind of seeing which is also a kind of thinking... : the seeing of connection.
(Ray Monk on Wittgenstein in Kaplan 2004:9)

Strategies for working in this world a little bit better

As this a/r/tographic research process unfolds in reflectively³¹ selected accounts, the phenomenon under investigation reveals more and more of itself. A/r/tography provides not only a valuable lens for looking at the world and our relation to it, but also guides one in a conscious and empathetic attempt to engage with it. It enables one to fully interrogate and engage with the complex systems and invisible processes that we are a part of, by empowering us to move in the in-between and un-dwelled spaces often neglected in secluded, reductionist and linear art and research practices. This sensitivity to the seemingly invisible is a requirement for work within the field of social sculpture and connective aesthetics.

By mapping the research situation accounts on a continuum of understanding through writing, doing, seeing, mapping, creating, walking and tracing, in both the theoretical and practical components of this inquiry, I acknowledge and hold the multiple connection points within this creative process. The central theme which emerges in this multiplicity is the possibility of art to catalyse new forms of understanding and agency by means of connection-making: connecting art and everyday life, aesthetics and ethics, individual and community, human and planet, practice and theory, the internal and the external, the parts and the whole. The research journey situations reflected on in this thesis show that the opportunities and challenges that are opened in the process of expanding art practice into everyday spaces and working with visible as well as invisible materials and tools to enable formations allow art practice to become rhizomatic. This in turn enables it to be machinic and connective.

³¹As explained in the preface of this thesis, this reflective approach is borrowed from autoethnography, which is an openly subjective, boundary-crossing and connectionist form of writing and research.

This research process is a continuous process of learning and unlearning³². I agree with Heidegger that 'the most difficult learning is to come to know all the way what we already know' (Heidegger in Kupfer 1983:13). The writing of this thesis enables me to get a little bit closer to knowing 'all the way' what I had already come to know through my practice with regard to my question as to how might I work in this world. The processes and interactions of my practice and theory considerably enhance my understanding of that which enables the process of connection-making:

- A consciousness of the interrelatedness of all things.
- An acknowledgement of, and engagement with, a middle ground and the in-between spaces.
- An ability to move between the parts and the whole.
- Sensitivity towards the pervasiveness and dynamics of process and the life of all systems.
- The implementation of tools and strategies that seek to expand, rather than reduce.

Furthermore, my experience indicates that the connective and rhizomatic can be attained in art by means of the deterritorialisation and expansion of the concept of art. Such an expansion relies on:

- An understanding of aesthetic as the opposite of anaesthetic.
- The inclusion of invisible materials, such as thought and conversation.
- A belief in the artistic potential of every person as an enlivened, responsible agent capable of shaping his or her own life.
- The development of 'new organs of perception' by means of connective aesthetics.
- The concept of art as a perpetuating, inter-disciplinary 'parallel process' working on a multitude of levels.

Due to the relational nature of my research process I receive substantial informal support from the participants in the workshops and processes that it comprises. This makes me attentive to the creative potential of all people and of the value of communal and collaborative learning, teaching and creative practice. Further inquiries into the question of how I might work in this world might include the exploration of the opportunities offered by

³²Unlearning... is making transparent all that has been learned up till that point, in order to choose the future afresh, in order to see the world anew. Unlearning is about making conscious all the unconscious habits and routines and ways of thinking and behaving and valuing' (Kaplan, 2002:79).

Communities of Practice³³. Communities of Practice, such as those established by the COPART movement and its related initiatives, such as the Climate Fluency Exchange, could also be useful in pursuing a more in-depth investigation of the role of aesthetic education in agency development and social learning.

Dancing with shadows³⁴

Kaplan refers to the 'shadow' as a tendency which develops within the 'archetypal patterns' of social organisms (Kaplan 2004:85). Jungian analyst Robert A. Johnson uses the term 'shadow' in its general sense — as 'that part of us which we fail to see or know'/ 'that which has not entered adequately into consciousness' (Johnson 1991:4). Kaplan explains that, although the shadow can become destructive when ignored, it is not 'bad' — 'rather, the shadow lives as a potentially developmental nodal point around which the organism may turn' (Kaplan 2004:86). The shadow as it is characterised here plays an important role in 'our process of awakening and becoming, born out of the turning of polarities, and acting as the spur to shaking our fixed paradigms (grounded and stagnant) into facing a changed reality through the possibility of new seeding and growth' (Kaplan 2004:86). This shadow concept resonates closely with the a/r/tographic rendering of 'excess', which Irwin [Sa] explains can be 'that which is considered waste or alternatively, the sublime'. Irwin [Sa] elaborates that excess 'exists as a point of rupture between absolute knowledge and sheer loss' that 'provides opportunities for us to understand the world in complex ways.' The acknowledgement of the shadows and excesses of this research journey is thus necessary for it to be a balanced whole that recognises the interstitial spaces and multiplicity of current and potential connections.

The knowledge gained by contemplating the shadows of this research process suggests that a more rigorous written documentation, mapping and re-tracing of the research process could be helpful in attaining insight into what Kaplan (2004:86) refers to as 'that which arises

³³See Wenger's foundational works in the area of Communities of Practice (Wenger 1999). Wenger defines Communities of Practice as 'groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly' (Wenger [sa]).

³⁴ I borrow this heading from a chapter title in *Development practitioners and social process: artists of the invisible* (Kaplan 2004).

when our attention is elsewhere'. I deduct that when research is practice based and one's attention is directed towards participatory living inquiries, it is useful to view theory as an illuminator, rather than that which tries to contain or capture ideas. This allows for the creative process to attain grounded moments/forms through written reflections (in the thesis or formal research document), whilst still engaging in a process-orientated (as opposed to product-driven) approach/ formations.

Ellingson however warns that '[m]ultiple angles illuminate, but they can also obscure and confuse if researchers do not provide sufficient tools for connecting them' (2009: 83). More work is needed to explore ways of connecting multiple angles in a thesis that is rooted in practice based research. I feel that the crystallisation process can possibly be more successful if the scope of the research is narrowed down. This will enable more depth in the presentation of my research process and in the reflections and accounts of these processes. Now that a broader scope has been explored, a narrowing and deepening of the field could be beneficial to future research processes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Developing a tone

Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns point into line! Be quick, even when standing still! Line of chance, line of hips, line of flight. Don't bring out the General in you! Don't have just ideas, just have an idea (Godard). Have short-term ideas. Make maps, not photos or drawings (Deleuze & Guattari 2002:25).

to docket living things past any doubt,
you cancel first the living spirit out:
the parts lie in the hollow of your hand,
you only lack the living link you banned
(Goethe in Kaplan 2004:6)

This appendix is presented in the form of a textual 'sensitivity line'. A 'sensitivity line'³⁵ is an activity used in creative facilitation practice. People form a line by standing side-by-side, facing away from a crowd. One person in the line, who feels moved to do so, will turn to face the crowd. This person keeps facing the crowd until someone else in the line turns towards the crowd. The idea is that only one person may face the crowd at all times. All participants need to remain sensitive to the movements of every other person in the line. The turning happens slowly at first and then picks up pace as the participants become more in tune with the movements of the other participants.

³⁵ My knowledge of the sensitivity line exercise is based on my experience of it at a creative facilitation workshop led by Charlie Murphy from Pye Global. The workshop, entitled Using the Arts in Working with Youth, was hosted by the Novalis Ubuntu Institute, Cape Town on 7-8 October 2010.

‘Sensitivity line storytelling’ is a variation on this activity, whereby participants tell a story when they are faced towards the crowd. When one of the other participants feels moved (usually by something that is being said, and which they can relate to their own story) to do so, they turn around and interrupt the story that is being told, by telling their own story. These actions are repeated and each time a participant turns to face the crowd, his or her story takes off where it was last interrupted. As the pace increases, excerpts of the stories become shorter. The resulting effect could be compared to television channel hopping or described as a mosaic of stories.

A textual sensitivity line is a format of writing that I have developed based on the concept of ‘sensitivity line storytelling’. Text replaces the told stories in a ‘line’ of writing. The writer takes on the roles of the sensitivity line participants, while the reader becomes the audience. The texts ‘interrupt’ each other at sections where the contents relate to each other. The product of this exercise may be read as a mosaic of separate, yet simultaneous, ‘stories’. It is also an inter-connected whole in which the different components serve to illuminate one another.

In constructing the textual sensitivity lines I also draw on aspects of Richard Ennals’ (1997) example of a philosophical dialogue in *Art, artificial intelligence and wealth: dialogue with Adam Smith*. Philosophical dialogues are imaginary conversations between characters, where the original words of the characters involved are often used. They can be presented in written form, but are often intended to be performed. The goals of philosophical dialogue include the initiation of new dialogue, the unlocking of new possibilities, and the reassessment of ideas (Ennals 1997:250).

The discussions in this part of the thesis do not pretend to be in-depth discussions of each methodological or theoretical approach. Instead, I focus on the elements of each that I have found most useful in constructing the character of this investigation. These elements have been woven together to create an approach that is called for by the nature of my work, which, as is set out in the introduction of this thesis, comprises interrelated written and process-orientated components. This process is directed to searching for, and developing, new and appropriate ways for me to work in this world as a creator and as a maker of connections.

A variation in typeface is employed to help differentiate between the individual participant voices. By means of this visual strategy, the reader is assisted in a connective reading of the whole, which results from the dynamics between the three stories, while not losing track of the individual characters as they each 'turn to face the audience'. Quotation marks indicate the direct words of participants, in the same way as they are used throughout the rest of this thesis.

Methodological perception

The role-players in the first textual sensitivity line are: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and their concept of metaphysics of flux, Ellingson's engagement of crystallisation,³⁶ and Kaplan's process-orientated and connectionist approach to social phenomena as living organisms. The key themes that I focus on in this sensitivity line are process and flux, connections and multiplicities within the process, and the process' in-between spaces and middle grounds.

Key for typographical distinction in the textual sensitivity line:

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari
Laura Ellingson
Alan Kaplan

'The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd... we have been aided, inspired, multiplied.' (Deleuze & Guattari 1984:3)

Laura Ellingson (2009) and Laurel Richardson (1994) both demonstrate a concern for the method in which we approach the problem of understanding a multifaceted evolving phenomenon.

With *Capitalism and schizophrenia* (1984; 2002) Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari introduce an abstract metaphysical model, which is integral in setting the tone for the research process at hand. This model sees reality as a flux or flow.

³⁶ Crystallisation as it is spoken of here should not be confused with Joseph Beuys' concept of crystallisation. Beuys sees crystallisation as a *freezing process* (not a *warmth process*) which, when transposed to human beings, is a 'hardened, one-sided intellectuality' (Beuys 2004: 50).

Social practitioner Allan Kaplan (2005) approaches social situations as organic (living) phenomena: 'I try to understand that which I'm working with — and am part of — qualitatively, which is a different way of pursuing the work from the prevailing search for cause and effect, from reduction into parts which we attempt to control and predict. Social phenomena are complex and emergent, not linear but simultaneous. I search for a way of appreciating and facilitating, rather than explaining and controlling' (Kaplan 2005:4).

Ellingson (2009:6-7) has addressed this concern by first mapping the field of qualitative methodologies that are usually used to understand these problems. This is done in different shades of a range of possibilities to describe what is more often than not socially manufactured as dichotomies.

This flow takes part in two movements: flow interruption and flow production. These movements are distinguishable but always flow into and out of each other. They imply each other and the one is always 'becoming' the other. (Deleuze & Guattari 1984; 2002)

Kaplan (2002:69) describes *fourfoldness* as a 'creative round' and distinguishes it from threefoldness as follows: '[w]here threefoldness provides pure energy, fourfoldness provides also direction and intent'. He presents the creative process with reference to the four archetypal elements: fire, air, water and earth.

Fire transforms substance through warmth, which is needed at the beginning of the cycle of creation. This warmth creates a sense of security that enables 'the risky leap into new ventures'.

The cycle continues with the element of air, which represents a lift, and a weightlessness that is necessary for growth to take place. Air gives rise to light, which enables new ideas and insights.

Water represents movement, process, fluidity and a type of humility that prevents the creative process from becoming stuck. It also has the ability to unite parts that have become fragmented or alienated.

The earth element enters when it is time for the creative process to come into form. It is a hardening of process and an opportunity for ideas to manifest and form a foundation. The creative round does not end with the earth element. This hardened form will again be transformed through warmth and the cycle will continue as described above (Kaplan: 2002).

Reality is then modelled as a complex network of material 'processes', in other words systems comprising these two flow movements. Humans are a part of, and a consequence of, all these processes of reality. The upshot of this is that the systems that humans are involved in can also be seen in the form of flow production and flow interruption - processes of social interaction, interaction with the environment, knowledge production, consumption et cetera (Bonta & Protevi 2004; Deleuze & Guattari 1984; 2002).

Kaplan is, however, well aware of the dangers of a very strong focus on process. Process contains the ability to paradoxically³⁷ rigidify when it is never balanced at some point by becoming grounded.

Richardson (1994) and later Ellingson (2009) illuminate the nuances of a multiple-genre approach by considering it an exercise comparable to viewing an object through a crystal. In Richardson's words, 'Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns and arrays, casting off in different directions' (Richardson in Ellingson 2009:11).

In addition to their internal connections, all of these processes are always connected to other processes within the

³⁷ See Chapter 12 of *Development practitioners and social process: artists of the invisible* (Kaplan 2002), on the paradoxes of power.

system (reality). They can never be seen in seclusion from one another or the rest of the system(s).

Ellingson draws her articulation of crystallisation from Richardson's concept of 'qualitative crystallization' as 'a postmodern reimagining of traditional, (post)positivist methodological triangulation (i.e., validating findings through mixed methods research design) as a messy, multigenre, paradigm-spanning approach to resisting the art/science dichotomy' (2009:xii).

Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term rhizome stirs up the image of a hidden network of interrelations that form a 'decentred'³⁸ multiplicity' (Bonta & Protevi 2004:136). In this multiplicity any point can, and must, be connected to anything other (Deleuze & Guattari 1984:7).

Crystallisation sets aside positivist claims to objectivity and the need to obtain a singular discoverable truth, and instead embraces knowledge as situated, partial, constructed, multiple, embodied and enmeshed in power relations (Ellingson 2009).

According to Guattari's (2008:6) writings in *Three ecologies* (2008) on 'ontology of difference', disconnection manifests through homogenisation by post-industrial capitalism. Post-industrial capitalism - Guattari (2008:9) calls this Integrated World Capitalism - seeks to gain power over us through a process of 'existential contraction' that determines the limits within which we think, feel and live and it is through this 'existential contraction' that we become homogenised. Integrated World Capitalism forces its ideology upon the masses in order to sustain itself. It maintains its ideology through a variety of systems, including isolating technologies (for example, mass media, including television, and global communication technologies, such as the internet).

³⁸ As opposed to hierarchical arborescent systems (Deleuze & Guattari 1984:16).

Ellingson (2009:10) addresses the challenge of achieving depth by means of crystallisation 'through not only compilation of many different details but also through different forms of representing, organising and analyzing these details'.

Genosko (in Guattari 2008:9) comments: 'we don't get out much; we tend to think what everyone else thinks; feel the same as everyone else; a strange passivity haunts our lives'. We are, in other words, becoming more disconnected, as we are becoming more the same.

Ellingson (2009:101) writes about the benefits of 'multidimensional thinking' for reflection on the impact of different modes of work on one another. She quotes Hunter et al: 'For research descriptions to be thick and rich, researchers must be able to view their data from several perspectives. The more experience they have in multidimensional thinking, the more ways of making meaning they have at their disposal'.

Deleuze and Guattari (1988:1-25) introduce to us the idea of the *abstract machine*, that which allows the system to connect all the different processes to one another, and that which allows the system its very high degree ('intensity') of complexity.

Ellingson (2009:94) refers to the 'law of the hammer' in her call for multiple methodological approaches. The law of the hammer represents the tendency whereby, 'if you have a hammer as your only tool, you tend to search for opportunities in which to hammer things, rather than looking for interesting opportunities and then choosing an appropriate tool (2009:94)'.

Deleuze and Guattari (1984; 2002) for this reason criticise models that do not take all of these complex connections between humans and the universe into consideration (for example, psychoanalysis and linguistics). When systems are studied in isolation they are 'overcoded' (in other words,

extra dimensions are added to them and a false centre of importance is attributed to them).³⁹

Heeding the law of the hammer, crystallisation involves multiple ways of knowing. It offers deep, thickly described, complexly-rendered interpretations of meaning, which usually include at least one middle-ground (constructivist) and one interpretive, artistic, performative, or otherwise creative analytic (post-positivist) approach. These methodologies often create space for contrasting ways of knowing that interweave and blend by drawing upon more than one way of expressing the world. (Ellingson 2009:94-95)

The three ecologies (2008) communicates concern with the need for humans to become more heterogeneous through pragmatic intervention. Gauttari (2008:45) argues that 'individuals must become both more united and increasingly different'.

In Kaplan's (2002:60-66) discussion of polarity as one of the archetypal patterns that gives rise to the form of living systems, he suggests an acknowledgement of a middle ground. It is very important to mention that this middle ground is not a compromise or grey area, but rather a tension and a balance that holds the energy that exists between polarities.

Crystallisation offers a multiple-genre approach to qualitative research, where knowledge is represented across many different points along the qualitative methodological continuum (Ellingson 2009).

This acknowledgement is 'threefold thinking' (Kaplan 2004:65) and is different from the dualistic thinking that often pervades in our modern approach to living systems.

³⁹ One could argue that our capitalist economic system is an example of such an overcoding. A television advertisement of a particular motor vehicle brand might use a father's desire for a meaningful father-son relationship to sell a luxury vehicle. This is done by falsely attributing healthy human relations to material possessions such as cars, which require a healthy bank balance, which in turn requires a specific mode of life (for many this equates to long, stressful working hours that result in less time spent with loved ones) that might in actual fact be the reason for poor human relationships.

Ellingson (2009:7) explains: 'I envision the continuum as having three main areas, with infinite possibilities for blending and moving among them'.

Threefoldness is a focus on the relationship between things as opposed to *things* as compartmentalised fixed identities surrounded by empty space⁴⁰. Some of the examples of threefoldness that Kaplan (2002:65) lists are:

expansion – centre – contraction
light – colour – dark
in – threshold – out
inquisitive – interested – indifferent

The continuum places scientific approaches or positivist methods on one end of the spectrum, and then art, or radical interpretivism, on the other end. These methodologies do not follow an either-or approach and therefore do not oppose each other, but rather anchor ends of a continuum of methodology, a continuum on which most of us find ourselves somewhere in the middle ground (Ellis & Ellingson 2000).

Kaplan (2002:65) writes that '[t]o hold polarities in balance is to hold and be held, to be flexible and fluid yet focused, and principled'.

Ellingson (2009:7) points out that 'middle-ground approaches need not represent a compromise or a lowering of artistic or scientific standards. Rather they signal innovative approaches to sense making and representation'.

Kaplan (2002:65) goes on to explain that '[t]he richness of the world seems to resonate from out of the third which forms the whole'.

Concluding remarks

I have been able to apply Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's abstract metaphysical model, Laura Ellingson's engagement of crystallisation and Allan Kaplan's approach to social phenomena to develop the appropriate connectionist character for a research process that

is orientated to expanding the concept of art and developing aesthetic practice that contributes to a human ecology.

Deleuze and Guattari's metaphysics of flux provides a valuable lens for looking at the world and our relation to it. It enables one to see, understand and work with the invisible processes that we are a part of. This sensitivity to the invisible is a requirement for work within the field of social sculpture and connective aesthetics and is further explored in the textual sensitivity line that is to follow.

The concept of the creative round or *fourfoldness* (Kaplan 2002) acts as guideline for the importance of the different stages of becoming in a creative process — in this case, the creative process comprises the research and writing of this thesis. Ideas pertaining to this creative round remain pertinent throughout the remainder of this thesis.

In this thesis the emphasis is on writing for research, as opposed to writing for presentation. This approach poses the challenge of keeping writing open to what is emergent or hidden and allowing space for chaos, while acknowledging the need for a certain type of structure and form. Kaplan (2002:65) articulates this well: 'to be flexible and fluid yet focused, and principled'.

I sense that the implementation of crystallisation can allow for context to be constructed while keeping the structure open to what might emerge from the interplay between the different interpretations of an enquiry. It still remains to be seen if crystallisation can offer a viable method to reflect on my research process in a way that is meaningful in addressing my question of how I might work in the world.

I am particularly interested in the role of Deleuze and Guattari's abstract machine. One could argue that the role of aesthetics in reconnecting humans to one another and to their environments implies that art is an abstract machine.

In contemplating Guattari's argument for individuals to become simultaneously 'more united and increasingly different' (2008:45), I am reminded of Ellingson's and Kaplan's approaches

to moving back and forth between the parts, continuously making connections without losing sight of the whole.

I make the deduction that in a homogenous existence there is no difference, which makes an ontology of difference impossible. Without difference, through which we make connections, we are unable to (re)connect. It is by means of this argument that the seemingly paradoxical relationship between disconnection and the homogenous becomes clearer.

Ellingson's idea of using multiple genres on a continuum of understanding as a way of reconnecting the disconnected closely resonates with Kaplan's concept of *threefold thinking*. A study of these ideas has been useful in developing a holistic approach to my research process, as opposed to viewing my theory as separate from my art practice.

In this thesis I attempt to allow for and maintain the 'richness' that Kaplan speaks of by means of the cultivation of a threefold thinking of art and science. One of the ways in which I have worked towards this richness is by drawing from postmodern ethics and aesthetics in an attempt to incorporate mixed or multi-genre writing by combining poetic, autobiographical, dialogical and analytical forms. This approach is particularly evident in Part III where I present the documentation of my research process in an attempt to work on a multiplicity of levels as opposed to finding THE way.

This approach is an attempt to work with the in-between spaces and the warmth, tensions and creative ability that are housed in the research process. It also assists me in exploring the contested relationship between theory and practice.

Pertaining to the previously mentioned research strategies that operate at the intersection between theory and practice is Beuys' interest in theory as practice. Beuys' ideas on this are discussed in greater depth in the second textual sensitivity line, where he is placed with Kupfer, who enquires into the aesthetics of everyday life, and Gablik, an art critic arguing for an ethical shift in aesthetic paradigms.

Conceptual perception

The conceptual perception of this thesis is largely informed by the work of Joseph Beuys, Suzi Gablik and Joseph H. Kupfer. Its aim is to serve as a 'guiding framework' to clarify the focus of my research and situate it in a 'scholarly conversation' (Ellingson 2009:83).

I have chosen these particular sensitivity line participants because of their deeply interconnected and overlapping thoughts on the possibilities of aesthetic experience in the conscious creation of ourselves and the systems we are part of. My intention is to weave a multi-angled account of the concepts that I find useful in pursuing the question of how I might work in this world as an artist. In attaining this character I have focused mainly on the sensitivity line participants' work and ideas on the expansion of the concept of art, the development of connective aesthetics, and the role of the artist/teacher and artwork in the creation of a human ecology.

Key for typographical distinction in the textual sensitivity line:

Joseph Beuys
Suzi Gablik
Joseph H. Kupfer

Gablik (2004:17), an art critic, is interested in the 'blurred distinctions between art and non-art'. Gablik (2004:84) points out that art marked by a deep involvement of artists in their societies (art that began to manifest shortly before World War One) had subsided by the mid-1970s. She notes that 'one of the things that seems to separate postmodernist from modernist thinking...is the rejection of any serious concern about art's moral center', which results in the majority of contemporary being 'the product of energies freed from direct social purpose or obligation' (Gablik 2004:84).

Beuys first developed the concept of social sculpture, in the 1960s, based on the proposition that every human being is potentially an artist. He describes social sculpture as the manner in which we 'mould and shape the world in which we live: sculpture as an evolutionary process' (Beuys in Harlan 2004:9). This proposal propelled his idea of an expanded conception of art and its relationship to freedom, direct democracy and sustainable economic forms (Harlan 2004: 27; Gablik 2004).

Kupfer (1983) argues for the aesthetic potential of ordinary experience. He does so by extending it beyond the things that we might ordinarily associate with art, and addresses aesthetic experience in relation to moral, social and personal concerns.

Gablik (2004:17) is concerned with what she articulates as 'the fundamental problem of the West today,' that is: 'the illusion of autonomy. It fails to recognize the interconnectedness of everyone and everything. And it ignores the well-being of the whole'.

Informed by the work of Goethe, Beuys relates natural things and processes, such as warmth, to the way in which they are manifest in human behaviour.

Gablik (2004:18) suggests that art is a tool that can be utilised 'to make a difference to the welfare of communities, the welfare of societies, and to our relationship with nature'.

['It is the transformation of substance that is my concern in art, rather than the traditional aesthetic understanding of beautiful appearances' (Beuys cited in Gablik 2004:135).]

Gablik (2004:151) calls for an 'art that transcends the distanced formality of aesthetics and dares to respond to the cries of the world'.

Kupfer (1983:5) links 'aesthetically impoverished' social institutions to the lack in individuals' 'form-making capacities', capacities which are necessary for them to shape their own lives meaningfully. In the enquiries in *Experience as art: aesthetics in everyday life* (1983) Kupfer tries to overcome what he calls 'that so anti-aesthetic of contemporary trends – compartmentalization' (Kupfer 1983:16).

In *Has modernism failed?* Gablik (2004:92), calling for the development of an aesthetic life which engages 'the individual's potential for creating himself', refers to a statement by William Saroyan: 'My work is writing, but my real work is being'. Such

a development calls for a shift not only in the way we see, but also in what we see (Gablik 2004:138).

In relation to this concern, Kupfer (1983:16) writes about the development of aesthetic learning and makes suggestions for what an aesthetically formed classroom might look like. He argues that aesthetic experience contains the ability to 'force(s) us deeper into ourselves in an attempt to gain a fuller view of the world').

One strategy for developing such an art is 'breaking down the rigidity of specialization, the segregation of functions and activities, both within the personality and within the community as a whole' (Gablik 2004:136). The role of a transdisciplinary approach is not only to enable us to work across disciplines, but to 'propel us beyond either/or thinking into a co-existence of nested truths' (Gablik 2004:152). A key metaphor employed by Gablik is that of the 'network', described by her as 'a new pattern of organization' and 'a generative creative force' (Gablik 2004:153).

Kupfer (1983:12) uses the midwife metaphor (an interpretation of Socratic midwifery) to describe the role of the teacher in connecting the student to his/her latent knowledge: 'The job of teacher as midwife is to provide an occasion for the student to recognize the presence of this unnoticed learning'. He suggests that the teacher does so by assisting the student in identifying a 'felt lack of understanding' or 'felt need' that catalyses a participatory learning process in which the teacher is not merely the entity that deposits knowledge into a passive subject (Kupfer 1983:10). He relates this to Socrates' description of learning as 're-cognizing': 'cognizing or seeing again, in a reflective way that calls for effort' (Kupfer 1983:12).

Gablik (2004:136) argues that 'Beuys shows us how we might actually achieve the possibility of a society that would maximize personal autonomy and social relatedness at the same time'.

Aesthetic learning is made possible by bringing personal questions and needs into the classroom to 'help form an integrated whole' (Kupfer 1983:13). Kupfer makes this proposition by drawing on the ideas of John Dewey, who uses the term 'funding' to describe the activity of 'bringing to the work of art our fund of experience, values, and cultural knowledge' (Kupfer 1983:13).

Beuys' work processes function on a 'multiplicity of layers' (Gablik 2004:92). Beuys uses the phrase 'parallel process' to describe 'processes that extend beyond linear logic and integrate different forms of knowing and communicating' (Social Sculpture Research Unit:[sp]). Consequently, his expanded conception of art includes 'thinking forms' and 'spoken forms' in addition to material objects:

My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture, or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture can be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone (Beuys in Harlan 2004:9).

[Gablik (2004:46) employs the phrase 'anxious object' (first used by Harold Rosenberg) to write about art that creates in the viewer a sense of unease that is born of the uncertainty as to whether the work is art or not.]

Kupfer suggests a thoughtful approach to questions as a way of opening up an inquiry that is related to that which moves someone personally: 'By questioning, the teacher can lead the student to see the inadequacy of his understanding. Ideally, the student learns how to question on his own. But before he can shape questions for himself, the student must become aware of his own lack, his own ignorance' (1983:15).

Beuys' countless drawings are intended as 'a continual form of questioning' that aims to enable an understanding of various interconnections (Harlan 2004:24). One could say that drawing becomes a tool for the development of what Beuys referred to as 'new organs of perception'. In addition to his use of drawing, Beuys 'activates things through dialogues, discussions, in conversation, in confrontation, in question and answer' (Harlan, 2004).

In addition to using questions to connect with a student's felt need, Kupfer (1983:31) promotes the implementation of 'aesthetic discussion' which is a balance between 'spontaneous excitement' and 'control and direction': 'It presents a practical synthesis of opposed approaches'. When an aesthetic discussion unfolds 'each speaks to others as a listener, and listens as a speaker' (Kupfer 1983:32). The student must learn to 'talk harmoniously with others' (Kupfer 1983:37).

This strategy is evident in the discussion room that formed part of Honey Pump in the Workplace, a work that took place at Documenta 6, 1977 (Harlan 2004: 44). Beuys (in Harlan 2004:46) explains:

...in and around his honey pump, people will be able to experience the core idea implicit in the honey pump directly, both as symbol and as machine, but also in a spiritual sense, by communicating their ideas there for a hundred days, speaking with others, making connections.

It is for this reason that Gablik values art that is able to disrupt habitual thought and develop new types of consciousness that break from dominant thought paradigms that fail to acknowledge our interconnectedness.

Beuys is deeply interested in the transformative potential of thought patterns, materials and substances, states of consciousness, and political and social realities.

In addition to its contribution to aesthetic education 'aesthetic responsibility and communication can provide preparation in facing new situations which demand the harmonizing of diverse opinions or opposed courses of action' (Kupfer 1983:79).

'Modern Western society seems to be unique in regarding its art as a commodity to be sold in exchange for money, prestige, and power' (Gablik 2004:57).

Beuys (in Harlan 2004: 27) equates money and capital with human dignity and creativity, rather than with economic value: 'we need to develop a concept of money that allows creativity, or art, so to speak, to be capital. Art is capital'.

To overcome a postmodern disconnection from social purpose, Gablik proposes that aesthetic value be linked to the moral instead of the marketplace.

Beuys (In Harlan 2004:17) explains:

That's why it's so important to consider all jobs and professions in the light of the overall forces involved and the contemporary energy issues; because this alone will enable the right kind of connection between the human being and cosmos to come about.

This interest is evident in his excavation of art's transformational power by means of images of planting and growth and the transformation of materials such as fat (Gablik 2004:135). His approach to the development of artworks leads to sculptural forms that are not fixed and finished. Beuys explains that 'processes continue in most of them: chemical reactions, fermentations, colour changes, decay, drying up. Everything is in a state of change ' (Beuys in Harlan 2004: 9).

Concluding remarks

During the process of conducting this research I became very conscious of my shifting and overlapping roles as artist, researcher and teacher. Initially I considered these roles as separate from one another, even though I acknowledged their mutual influence. As the research process unfolded, my work as artist, researcher and teacher interwove to form one transdisciplinary practice. Beuys, Kupfer and Gablik have through their own research practice and teaching been instrumental in my awakening to such an integrated practice.

An inquiry into the work of Beuys, Gablik and Kupfer has assisted me in formulating ideas about how I as a/r/tographer, might approach individuals and groups as creative beings. Issues surrounding the artistic potential of all people and the systems in which they exist are pertinent in Beuys' concept of social sculpture and Kupfer's concept of aesthetic education.

The sensitivity line participants call for an expansion of our definition of art beyond the gallery and into everyday life. Their enquiries into how this shift might manifest in practice has greatly influenced my approach to my own practice and informed my use of materials

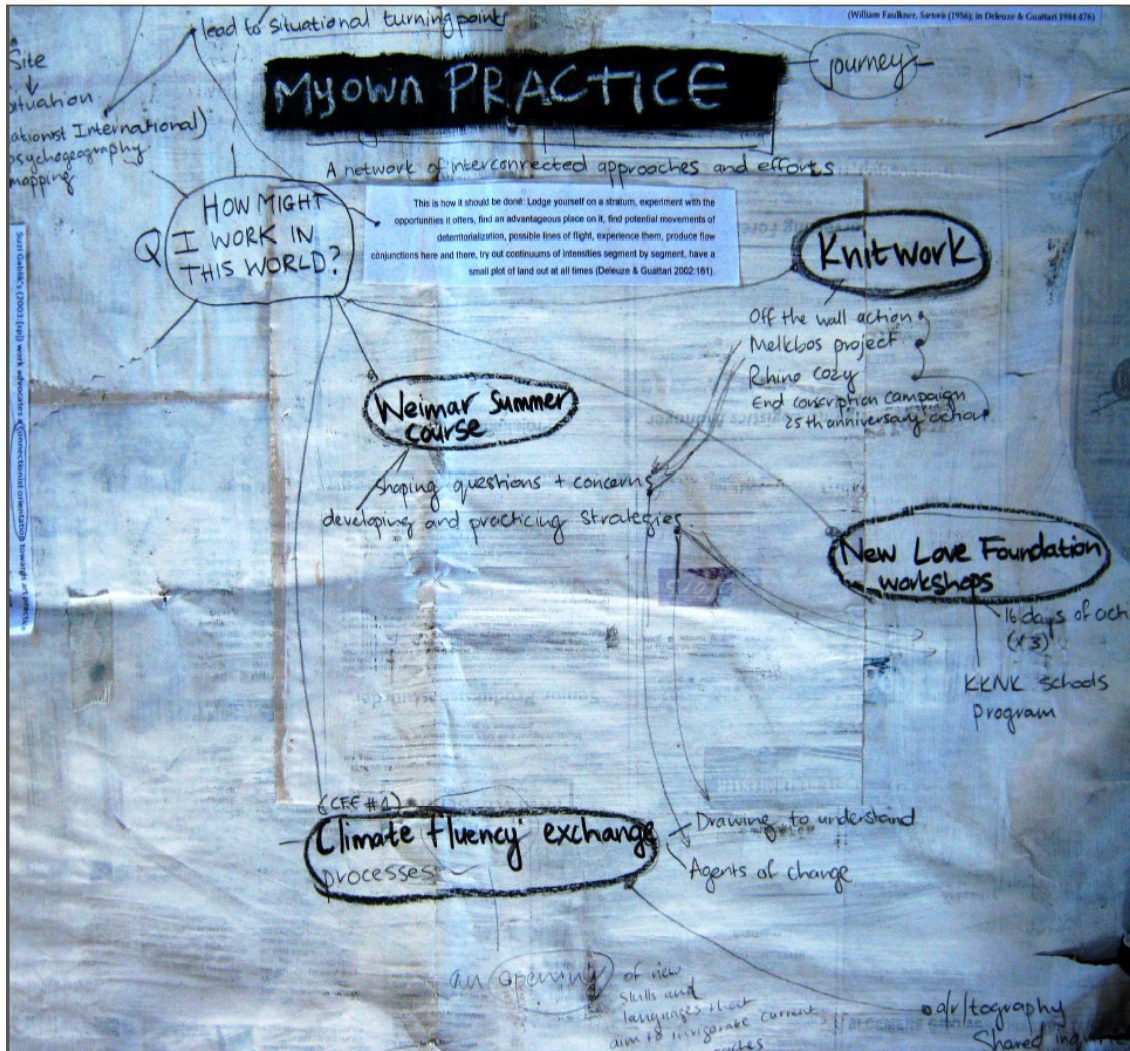
and work-space: to include the invisible materials of thought and conversation (Harlan 2004) and to expand into the studio of everyday life (Kupfer 1983; Harlan 2004). This expansion is also a shift away from art as a market-related product to an art practice that is morally connected and more process-orientated – a shift from a focus on objects, to a focus on relationships. This shift towards a focus on relationships strongly resonates with the methodological character of this thesis.

All three sensitivity line participants underline the need for people to attain a certain level of consciousness in order to become responsible participants in their own lives and in the systems in which they exist. They argue that aesthetic experience contains the ability to awaken and develop such a consciousness and the ability to respond by connecting to our inner concerns and felt needs.

Conversation and dialogue is pertinent in the work of all three participants: in Kupfer's aesthetic learning and teaching, in Beuys' social sculpture works and in Gablik's literary work *Conversations before the end of time* (1995).

Appendix 2

Practical presentation brochure, side 1



How might I work in this world?

My art practice comprises a network of interrelated approaches and efforts in which I inhabit the multiple and shifting positions of researcher (working towards completing a MA thesis), artist (working towards completing a body of work in partial completion of a MA in Visual Arts) and teacher (in my role as facilitator of various art processes and as a high school art teacher).

An enquiry into art practices beyond the walls of galleries and museums has helped me to identify a need for a creative practice that acknowledges the interconnectedness of, and interrelationships between, the persons, objects and systems we encounter in the world. It has also helped me to shape my own questions regarding the type of creative materials and art practices needed to overcome a disconnected way of being in the world.

My artistic practice entails a search for new materials and strategies that will enable me to work as an artist in a way that is more meaningful to me as an individual and as a participant in a variety of complex social, political, cultural and economic systems. Consequently, this journey is directed towards exploring how one might work aesthetically to enable a human ecology through connection-making.

In addition to working towards expanding traditional notions of research and writing, I problematise modernist

ideas of art as a fixed end-product or commodity and of the artist as a producer of such products or commodities, arguing that these ideas give rise to a practice that promotes disconnection with the world. I focus instead on an art practice that works towards the integration of social and environmental concerns in a highly commodified modernist and post-modernist art world. This requires a reestablishment of process-orientated, connectionist approaches to phenomena.

This practice-based enquiry explores various questions, such as how to make visible creative ability and find appropriate forms for this work; how to see everyone as an artist and how to then approach an individual, group or community as a creative being; and how to enable a connective aesthetic. These questions are pitched towards the development of aesthetic pedagogy and the creative facilitation of processes that are often considered to be outside of the creative realm.

The enquiry draws strongly on ideas and practices pertaining to the transdisciplinary field of social sculpture. Social sculpture is particularly helpful in understanding aesthetics as a connective practice and in unpacking and repacking the opportunities and challenges of work within an expanded concept of art (namely one which is active both within and beyond the conventional sphere of art).

This journey is documented in an interlinking and relational map, through photographs, video and sound recordings, notebook entries, and artefacts such as drawings and knitworks. I have traced both the documentation and my memory of the processes in order to map the journey for the purpose of critical reflection.

The performative processes of constructing, walking and tracing the pathways of the map (as simultaneous spectator and participant) provide an opportunity to find visible and invisible ruptures and connections, so that alternative movements within and between the creative territories emerge. Such shifts in understanding have helped me to confront stereotypical views and to acknowledge different perspectives.

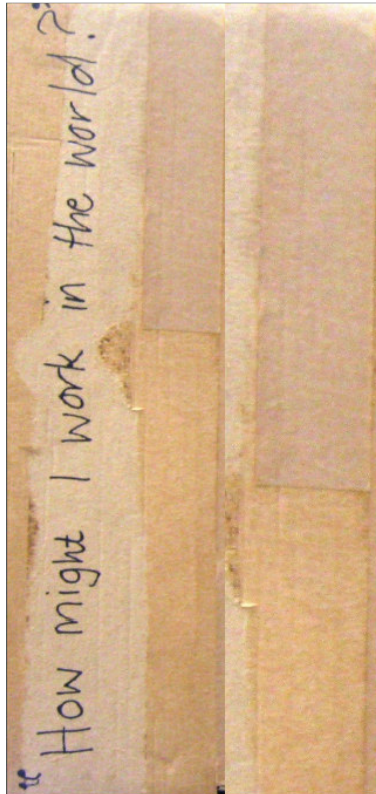
Major journey territories

Knitwork: 2008 – 2010
 Ktog collective knitting action
 Melkbos knit collective
 Knitted cosy for a bronze rhinoceros
 ECC 25th anniversary knitting action

Weimar summer course 2009

Drawing to Understand 2009 – 2011
New Love Foundation workshops:
 16 days of activism programmes
 ABSA KKNK, Klapi Workshop
The first Climate Fluency Exchange

Practical presentation brochure, side 2



This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of land out at all times (Deleuze & Guattari 2002:161).



Knitwork: 2008 – 2010

Knitwork involves a mindful enquiry that relies on the act of knitting as an entry point for exploring materials and workplaces that pertain to an expanded concept of art.

Knitwork is documented by means of photographs, a zine, sound recordings, documented reflections of participants, and knitted artefacts.

Ktong (Knit together), first collective knitting action

Ktong was a collective knitting action that took place one morning at Off the Wall Art Gallery, Paarl. Gallery goers and friends were invited to create individual knitworks whilst engaging in conversations around a table placed in the centre of the main gallery space, which opened out onto the side walk in view of passers-by.

Melkbos knit collective

The Melkbos knit collective was collaboratively facilitated by me and the Melkbos ACVV (through social worker Luna Pieterse). Participants in the collective consisted mainly of female residents of two informal settlements in and near Melkbosstrand. This knit collective took place at the participants' living spaces and during weekly afternoon meetings at the ACVV facilities. Participants knitted various products that could be sold as a small source of income to the knitters. During weekly knit meetings, discussions centred on the progress of the knitting and the personal and social well-being and concerns of participants.

Knitted cosy for a rhino

This was a knitting project in collaboration with residents from Safe House, a home for abused women and children in Stellenbosch. *Knitted cosy for a rhino* was a performative, public intervention process in which a collaboratively constructed cosy was fitted onto a bronze sculpture of a rhinoceros. In this project I assumed the role of facilitator and "responsible participant". The idea for the cosy initially developed from a project by the social justice activist group, Code Pink, to which some of the Safe House residents contributed knitted squares that were to be made into a cosy to cover the gates of the White House in Washington, in celebration of Mother's Day 2009.



ECC 25th anniversary knitting action

This knitting action took place in 2009 as part of the ECC25 'Forward>March' exhibition at Spier Old Wine Cellar Gallery, and formed part of a weekend event that commemorated 25 years since the launch of the End Conscription Campaign. By the late 1980s thousands of young white men, opposed to the role of the South African Defence Force in maintaining apartheid, were actively avoiding compulsory military service as part of the End Conscription Campaign. Most of the art on display showcased South African resistance art of the 1980s.

The knitwork consisted of a quilted accumulation of previously knitted sections, onto which multiple knitting points were created, so as to allow commemoration participants to participate in a common knit endeavour. The collective space created by the knitting hosted reflections on the role of the ECC and dialogues on the symbolic value of knitting.

Weimar summer course 2009

During the European summer of 2009 (the 90 year anniversary of the foundation of the Bauhaus and 20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall), I attended a two-week course at the Weimar-Jena-Akademie in Weimar, Germany. This course on art and sustainability was entitled 'From Bauhaus to social sculpture: the shaping of humane societies as an aesthetic challenge'.

The course was led by Hildegard Kurt (cultural researcher and co-founder of The Institute for Art, Culture and Sustainability, Berlin) and Shelley Sacks (artist and director of Social Sculpture Research Unit, Oxford) and was attended by artists from a variety of disciplines, art historians/theoreticians and philosophers, art educators, students and individuals. The geographical representation was global, with participants from South Africa, India, Germany, England, Poland, Georgia, Russia, North America, China and Australia. The intention of the course was to investigate the following question: can the shaping of humane societies be approached as an aesthetic challenge? This question was explored by collaboratively shaping questions and concerns and by developing, practicing and sharing work strategies.

I have documented the course with notebook entries and reflections, and drawing artefacts.



Drawing to understand 2009 - 2011

The drawing-to-understand approach evolved from methodologies used by Shelley Sacks in the social sculpture practices and the Masters in Social Sculpture course that she leads. The drawing-to-understand methodology utilises the process of drawing as a tool for understanding. The methodology, as I have approached it, is adapted and applied to a variety of different situations, groups and individuals, and has been implemented to internalise and embody conversations and insights that emerge through both artistic and social processes. Secondly, it has been offered as a tool for developing a better understanding of our current relationships and connections (social, ecological, political and economical). Lastly, it attempts to help people develop an ability to respond to these relationships by imagining alternatives which can lead to action.

Drawing-to-understand is documented by means of drawing artefacts, video recordings, written notes and photographs.

Besides using drawing-to-understand in my personal capacity as researcher, artist and high school teacher, I have explored and developed the methodology as part of the following three processes:

New Love Foundation workshops:

These arts-based workshops focused on social transformation and mobilisation. The workshops were based on the premise that aesthetic experience enables transformational understanding and action.

16 days of activism programmes

The New Love Foundation facilitated our first complete interactive, educational prevention programs in 2009, during the 16 days of activism, in Atlantis, a predominantly coloured, Afrikaans community in the Western Cape. Three programmes were executed: one for adults, one for teenagers and one for children.

The aim of the programmes was to create awareness in the community of the impact of cultural perceptions and social habits on the abuse of women and children and to assist the community in developing the ability to solve and prevent such social problems. Facilitators aimed to create a non-threatening, creative atmosphere in which the community could learn through participation and experience. Each programme consisted of music, drama and visual art (of which I was the facilitator) components that overlapped and flowed into one another to create a participatory creative learning process.

ABSA Klein Karoo National Arts Festival (KKNK) Klap! Workshop

On 8 April 2010 the New Love Foundation facilitated three individual arts-based workshops as part of the Klap! Festival, a subdivision of the ABSA Klein Karoo National Arts Festival (KKNK). The Klap! Festival aimed at exposing school learners to a variety of arts and career fields, and at skills development and the promotion of performing and visual arts programmes at schools. The NLF presented workshops in visual art, music and drama, executed separately but with the umbrella aim of introducing to these art disciplines non-traditional approaches that focus on aesthetic experience as a tool for enabling individual and societal transformation.

Wall-to-wall communication, the visual arts workshop that I facilitated, took place (simultaneously with 12 other workshops) from 08:00 to 11:00 in one of the classrooms of the Bridgton Secondary School in Oudtshoorn. Twelve high school children from a multiplicity of backgrounds, races and socio-economic situations attended this workshop.

The first Climate Fluency Exchange

The Climate Fluency Exchange is one of many initiatives and practices inspired by the COPART impulse that emerged in South Africa in May 2010 at a Tipping Point Conference outside Stellenbosch. "CONNECTING OUR PLANET AND RE-IMAGINING TOGETHER or COPART is a creative impulse that fosters the incubation of a new form of thoughtful action for sustainability in a changing climate that is articulate, compassionate, peaceful and intelligent. COPART is not an organization but a new way of "doing" in the complex world we live in today." (The COPART impulse: [Sa])

"The Climate Fluency Exchange is a collaborative social sculpture project which works with complex questions that emerge from the problems of climate change, and embody these into accessible ways of knowing and doing in our lives. The CFE facilitates a trans-disciplinary intersection between scientists and artists, activists and creatives as well as the general public, using different forms of creative dialogue." (Climate fluency exchange: [Sa]) The first Climate Fluency Exchange took place in Cape Town, South Africa from 4th to 10th December 2010, which coincided with the UN COP16 Climate Negotiations in Cancun.

I facilitated the drawing-to-understand process on a CFE day that was designed around the themes of gender and climate change.

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