

Abstract

I am a professional visual and performance ritual artist with a desire to articulate art as education. In doing this I have re-appropriated educational language into the language of art. I experience performance ritual as pedagogy, recognize art making as research and curriculum making, view art as curriculum, and work with the body as text. The menstrual cycle and altered states of trance, further unfold as immanent and transcendent curriculum texts to be studied. Through use of these a-rational texts, internalized fear and shame are exposed as unwanted silencing survival strategies within a pathological patriarchal society.

The question that guides this thesis is: *What does it mean to me to have an ethical and aesthetic feminist art practice?* The purpose of this research is to integrate art, text, language, and the body. To challenge the dualistic and damaging mind/body split that still operates within Western culture, this thesis responds to the numerous feminists who call for women to write from and with their bodies. Within the third space of ritual, resistances are engaged and my body, art and writing are re-forged as interconnected language.

The question that lies underneath this thesis is: *What kind of an academic, researcher, pedagogue will I become?* Through a phenomenological process I embrace anti-pedagogy as an ethically resistant stance that teaches between the place of knowing and not knowing. Through practicing a psychoanalytic pedagogy within a/r/tography, my own internalized dualisms (imperfections) are exposed and transformed. This thesis engages reflexively on my collaborative aesthetic and ethics and encourages collaboration as an essential feminist educative tool.

This a/r/tographic and autoethnographic thesis documents my journey as a spiritual feminist artist, committed to transformative and community-based educational processes, to the expanded identity of an a/r/tographer. A/r/tography as the form of inquiry weaves together the roles of artist, researcher and teacher/educator through a self-reflexive internal collaborative practice of art making and writing. A/r/tography challenges isolating tendencies of the traditional disciplines of art, academic research and education. It has the potential to synthesize and transform these traditions, benefiting each discipline and society as a whole.

“A/r/tography as ritual” expands current conceptualizations of a/r/tography, contributing further to a transformative educational tool. Ritual creates the container or third space for the alchemy of a/r/tographical inquiry to unfold within. The breadth and depth of a/r/tography as ritual when engaged with openness and commitment can greatly expand the learning imaginary of students, educators, artists, and life-long learners.