Performing Pedagogies and Exploring Embodied Knowledge as Curatorial Investigation

by

Shalon Tweed Webber-Heffernan

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Abstract

Performing Pedagogies was a week-long performance and exhibition series I organized that took place in Kingston, Ontario between March 15th - March 20th 2016. The motivation for this project came from a desire to explore performative modes of experiencing critical, embodied knowledge. The series featured five performances, a long distance collaboration between thirty-one Queen’s undergraduate students and a Vancouver artist-run free school (The School for Eventual Vacancy), a subsequent exhibition, a panel discussion, and a radical performance pedagogy workshop led by co-artistic director of the international performance art troupe, La Pocha Nostra. Artists featured included Golboo Amani, Basil AlZeri, Caitlin Chaisson, Justin Langlois, Saul Garcia-Lopez, Francisco-Fernando Granados, and Andrew Rabyniuk. By curating examples of performance art that variously incorporated embodied pedagogical interventions, I examined the processes of performance as pedagogy. Performing Pedagogies explored interventions into contemporary contours of neoliberal education paradigms through embodied encounters—fostering conversations about the meanings and limitations of knowledge dissemination and education today and posing questions about possibilities for radical pedagogies, embodied knowledge, and counter curricula.
Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1
Introduction

In November 2015 I presented a paper at the UAAC Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia titled, *The Pedagogical Pursuit in Contemporary Art Practices*. Artist and performance art historian, Bruce Barber who organized the session outlined the parameters of the conference discussion:

With the recent English translation (2014) of Valentin Torrens’ *Pedagogía de la Performance* (2007), the potential for a new era of performance practice has become evident in the University and College performance curriculum. This session will bring together Canadian and international performance art practitioners and educators to discuss the emergence of a ‘critical performance pedagogy’ that is characteristic of tendencies in recent art practices that highlight transdisciplinary modes of performance, performativity and participation. The focus will be on practice-led performance, relational practices and education for criticism with a negotiation of attendant praxiological theories advanced by Jacques Rancière, Giorgio Agamben and Claire Bishop among others.

Barber’s description makes reference to a shared interdisciplinary authorship on matters of aesthetic and cultural theory within the field of contemporary art. He offers Torren’s book as evidence of praxis of performance art pedagogy that is as old as the naming of “performance art” itself.  

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In March 2016 as fulfillment of my MA major research project in Cultural Studies at Queen’s University, I curated a week-long performance and exhibition series in Kingston, Ontario called *Performing Pedagogies*. The motivation behind this project came from my desire to further explore performative modes of experiencing critical, embodied knowledge. The series featured five performances at Union Gallery, as well as a long-distance collaboration between thirty-one Queen’s undergraduate students and a Vancouver artist-run free school (The School for Eventual Vacancy) and a subsequent exhibition at the Isabel Bader Centre for Performing Arts. *Performing Pedagogies* also featured a panel discussion at Agnes Etherington Art Centre, and a radical performance pedagogy workshop led by co-artistic director of international performance art troupe, La Pocha Nostra. *Performing Pedagogies* featured national and international artists including Francisco-Fernando Granados, Saul Garcia-Lopez, Basil AlZeri, Golbou Amani, Andrew Rabyniuk, Caitlin Chaisson and Justin Langlois.

Using research creation as my methodology, I curated contemporary examples of performance art that variously incorporated embodied pedagogical interventions as both my creative process and curatorial investigation. Examining the processes of performance as pedagogy, I have drawn upon principles from the field of critical pedagogy, especially the work of Henry Giroux. I have incorporated embodied knowledge and have considered practices of decolonial theatricalization as a performative embodiment of critical analysis. *Performing Pedagogies* explored various artistic experiments which intended to intervene into contemporary political contours of neoliberal ideology and education through embodied action and encounters. The performances, exhibition, panel, workshop, relationships, conversations, and learning

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3 I have been especially inspired by Giroux’s writings on the ‘hidden curriculum’, described as a side effect of an education, “lessons” which are learned but not openly intended. His article *Neoliberalism as Public Pedagogy* (2010) has been hugely influential to my thinking around this project, especially the collaboration with The School for Eventual Vacancy.
processes themselves are the substance from which I draw upon as the major source of observation and which are the critical work. Performing Pedagogies fostered conversations about the meanings and limitations of knowledge dissemination and education today, posing questions about possibilities for radical pedagogies, embodied knowledge and counter curricula.

The curatorial series explored radical and vernacular critical pedagogies, specifically within the context of contemporary institutional learning that is increasingly in crisis in the face of austerity, professionalization and instrumentality. It explored critical pedagogy involving the human body as site for creation by engaging with performance art and open-ended frameworks for circulating knowledge and embodied epistemologies. The series considered ways to play with re-structuring power relations of knowledge production through performance, critical negotiation and ephemeral exchange. This project also drew attention to the often under acknowledged interdependence of support structures inherent to many socially engaged projects that depend on pedagogical processes as methodology for creation, and which seek to critique the very intuitions that hold them up. While trying to explore methods of learning beyond the rigid expectations of institutionalized teaching-learning relations, it is important to acknowledge the inherent paradox that this project indeed took place within the traditional academy, with academic expectations, learning ‘outcomes’ and with funding and institutional support from the very pedagogical system I purportedly attempt to critique.

General recognition should be given to the historical body of work that precedes my own curatorial contribution, whether it’s artists organizing thematic festivals with symposia or panels for debate and discussion, or performance artists themselves as independent or embedded scholars producing criticism, chronologies, surveys, or monographs. In Canada since the early 1970s, a radical pedagogical form of institutional critique is very visible through the setting up of
Valentin Torrens connects Charles Garoian’s book of a similar title, *Performing Pedagogy: Toward An Art of Politics* (1999) to the symposium, *Performance Art, Culture, and Pedagogy* that Garoian principally organized at Penn State University in 1966⁴. Torrens usefully names six pedagogic tactics (here somewhat edited) that were exposed at the symposium [that] are of capital interest and can interact combined. I have considered all of these pedagogic performance tactics in the planning and realization of *Performing Pedagogies*, and I think they are useful to name here as reference points for readers to get a better understanding of what is meant by performance pedagogy:

• The ethnographic-autobiographic performance as an incarnation of a culture of one’s body, our physical and historical memory.
• The performance of language, linguistic strategy used to critique cultural metaphors that codify and stereotype the ‘me’ and the body to let identity language emerge. The body as text where behavioral, perceptive, and expressive formulations of a cultural group are registered.
• Resistance towards cultural domination represents the political performative strategy to question the political body.
• Communal performance as a social strategy.
• The corporate intervention in technological culture.
• The ecstatic strategy, the body as a place of inscription of cultural codes, rescued by the performer⁵.

While I have not directly drawn upon each specific pedagogical tactic that Torrens outlined, I have incorporated many of his points (above) into the interconnecting conceptual terrain used for the project. For instance, *Performing Pedagogies* made heavy use of performing the

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⁴ Among the 40 performers, art critics, historians and teachers at this symposium were: Henry Giroux, Peggy Phelan, Rachel Rosenthal, Suzanne Lacey, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, James Luna, Allan Kaprow, and Kristine Stiles.
autobiographic as a legitimate source of knowledge production—this was seen most specifically in the performances of Saul Garcia-Lopez, Basil AlZeri, and Francisco-Fernando Granados—all of whom used personal narratives and political subjectivity for the basis of the works they presented in Kingston. Through the use of humor, Garcia-Lopez directed attention to his own cultural memory and the inherited colonial legacies of stereotypical, hyper masculine Latino culture and personas. Basil AlZeri used the socially binding agent of food, cooking and feasting to highlight issues surrounding Palestinian cuisine, cultural appropriation, and under acknowledged labour, while Francisco-Fernando Granados quite literally used his ‘body as text’ for exploring issues surrounding legibility, securitization and state sanctioned violence. The performance of language was explicitly explored through Golboo Amani’s performance installation piece, *The School of Bartered Knowledge*, as well as the long distance collaboration with *The School for Eventual Vacancy* as both projects explored the potentials of dialogic exchange as art practice. Andrew Rabyniuk also took up a critique of cultural metaphor through his exploration of enculturation processes and vernacular pedagogies, such as those found in fashion and dressing. Weaving in the performance methodology of La Pocha Nostra, namely through the radical performance pedagogy workshop that was offered at Queen’s University as part of *Performing Pedagogies*, I employed Torrens’ notions of communal performance as strategy and his use of ‘ecstatic strategy’: throughout the workshop we explored the body as a place of inscription of cultural codes, and found ways of reclaiming and critiquing these codes through performance and embodiment. In the following chapter I will walk through some of the conceptual terrain that I used in my *Performing Pedagogies* curatorial project.
Chapter 2

A Conceptual Terrain for Curating

Curating *Performing Pedagogies* was an exploration into what possibilities may exist for political praxis vis-à-vis performance art, the body, and pedagogical processes, as well as experimentation with knowledge dissemination in the pursuit of creating counter hegemonic strategies. My belief in experiential, embodied ‘self’ learning (having first-hand, direct, and affectual experience with concepts) initially guided me in realizing this curatorial project. Performance art, as an embodied practice, materializes self-knowledge. This approach to learning can have deep affective and transformative effects on individuals leading to micro shifts in perspective and personal changes, and can temporarily counter institutional and hegemonic forms of knowing.

This project has been theoretically and conceptually situated within a critical theory framework grounded in critical race theory, postmodern, poststructuralist and feminist thinking. Performances that occurred directly dealt with issues of race, sexuality, hegemonic masculinity, power, colonialism and the performing body as pedagogical tactic for interruption. It is through these tactics that I examine embodied decolonial theory as a relevant pedagogical intervention into neoliberal educational paradigms. My intention with this project was to pose questions that might provoke and unsettle hegemonic forms of knowledge. As the curator, I have considered performance pedagogy as an intervention—I am curious about the ways pedagogical performance practices align with, or resist neoliberal trends toward fulfilling capitalist agendas as can happen through market-driven concepts of pedagogy. I am even more curious about the potentials for radical pedagogies in disrupting the ongoing nourishment of these trends and interrupting the naturalization and transmission of hegemonic knowledge.
While I take Jen Harvie’s provocation seriously that perhaps the turn to relational art risks offering a “spectacle of communication and social engagement rather more than a qualitatively and sustainably rich and even critical engagement,” I claim that artistic modes of working pedagogically do still hold rupturing power and can draw upon places of desire and transformative self-knowledge. It is through these pedagogical means that we begin contracting new habits, desires, perceptions and ways of being and relating to the world. I have engaged with critical embodied pedagogies to explore how they may temporarily push against the limits of colonialist, authoritarian hierarchies, and hegemonic forms of education which systematize experience, and in many cases ignore body/emotion/intuition/relation as reliable sites for knowledge production. My curatorial and pedagogical intention for this project, especially as it related to the student collaboration, was to highlight the observation that while educational institutions may value “knowing the mind and deny the knowing of the heart and body, students do remain the partners in these ‘enterprises of knowing’ and are still the people with ideas, with emotions and with sensations.”

**Pedagogical Turn**

During 2015 I had a professional experience working at a contemporary independent public art gallery on the West Coast of Canada where I closely worked with artists who engaged in social and relational arts practices, and who often relied heavily on community engagement, interventionist and “pedagogical tactics” as a basis for their work. It was during this professional experience of arts administration, and of providing supportive provisions, that I

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6 Art critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud has defined relational works as "a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space." *Relational Aesthetics.* 113

7 Jen Harvie. *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism.* 3


9 Some of the social engaged artists I worked with included Maddie Leach, Keg de Souza, Walter Scott, Sameer Farooq, Harrell Fletcher and Marie Lorenz.
started critically considering the ‘pedagogical turn’ in contemporary art practices, and I began to map connections between the ways in which I had personally been exploring embodied critical performance pedagogies, with the move toward education in contemporary art. It is useful for my project to consider how these trends have been debated to situate Performing Pedagogies within the conversation.

I consider embodied pedagogy as a critical practice, and I feel that it can have a potential role not only in changing how people think about themselves and their relationship to others and the world, but also in energizing people to engage in struggles that further possibilities for living in a more just society.\footnote{Henry Giroux. “Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals.” \textit{Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies} Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2004, 63–64} I make this link to corporeal education because embodied processes share education’s processual nature which involves “low-key transformative process[es],” and become what Rogoff calls a “platform that can signal a politics and bring together unexpected and momentary conjunctions; academics, art world citizens, organizers, activist initiatives and many others.”\footnote{Irit Rogoff, “Turning”, \textit{e-flux journal}, 0, November 2008, www.e-flux.com. 39.}

By reimagining the role of artist and pedagogue, new methods present themselves for critically negotiating forms of knowledge within contemporary neoliberal globalization that are intent on privatizing and standardizing education. Thinking of creative critical pedagogy as tactic\footnote{Michel de Certeau ties “strategies” with institutions and structures of power who are the “producers”, while individuals act in environments defined by strategies by using "tactics".} is a politically responsive strategy capable of grappling with contemporary issues in transformative (radical) ways. A turn to pedagogy can thus be subverted by artists from a place of agency rather than that of systemic dependency.\footnote{Returning to my observation of pedagogy and politics functioning in the early artist-run centres /collectives see Clive Robertson, \textit{Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture}, (YYZ Books, 2006).}

While the pedagogical turn in the art milieu may indeed be symptomatic of neoliberal
trends that conflate artist with social service provider or community worker—as art historian Claire Bishop identifies has happened with the British New Labour social inclusion policy, and the instrumentality of socially engaged art as ‘soft social engineering’—I argue that this precise collision can be used to positive ends to achieve political agency. There are interstitial spaces and opportunities for small acts and personal moments of ‘becoming’ that exist within the continuum of the cultural industry that is so insidiously tied with capital and radical cultural resistance. With practically all levels of contemporary social life (including information and culture) being enmeshed with capital, I suggest tapping into this ambiguity, using it as an advantageous place to move forward—illuminating our relationships with systems of support and power, as well highlighting the critical points of tension while realizing that politically informed work requires more than simple transformation of aesthetic styles.15

Bishop argues for an antagonistic aesthetics and warns against the ameliorative processes between the social and aesthetic. She rightly points out that there is real difference between the strictly social and art, and she is not satisfied that “a socially collaborative art project could be deemed a success if it works on the level of social intervention even though it founders on the level of art.”16 However, I take up Shannon Jackson’s response to Bishop when she questions, “by what logic are artistic autonomy and social intervention made contradictory?”17 And while I hear Bishop’s arguments that artistic trends toward the social often fall into rigid categories of identity politics—“respect for the other, recognition of difference, protection of fundamental liberties, and an inflexible mode of political correctness—constituting a rejection of any art that

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might offend or trouble its audience,”18 I am not the only who is convinced that such binaries
Bishop sets up are adequate.19 Again, I argue that there is room for agitation and growth within
these in-between spaces that Bishop so ardently wishes to shut out of the conversation.

It is at this intersection that I consider embodied pedagogy as a way to explore
undiscovered possibilities through art, activism and performance praxis, and I reflect on these
liminal crossovers and the spatially political dimensions of what Nato Thompson calls “sites of
becoming.”20 The process of ‘becoming’ is mobile and has pliant possibilities rather than a static
or fixed location. Regarding relational art practices, Thompson considers these artistic processes
as helpful in the creation of temporary, social spaces and argues that through sustained relations
and engagement with others over a period of time can influence our ability to collectively create
new forms of being21. This transience between different ways of knowing carries a radical
promise for performance pedagogy—by opening the space between analysis and action and
negating the binary opposition between theory and practice. This embrace of different ways of
knowing is radical because it cuts to the root of how knowledge is organized in the academy.22
By providing multiple physical spaces of engagement, Performing Pedagogies attempted to
temporarily create sites of becoming that actively engaged with radical forms of knowledge
dissemination. As Thompson suggests, “the encounters enact a range of transformations that
exceed mere words. They are somatic. They are lived. These encounters come with feelings as
well as ideas.”23

18 Claire Bishop. The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents. Artforum Feb 2006, 181
19 Liam Gillick, Contingent Factors: A Response to Claire Bishop’s “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics,”
October 115, Winter 2006, pp 95-107
20 Nato Thompson. Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the 21st Century. 135
22 Dwight Conquergood. “Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research”. The Drama Review. Summer
Transpedagogy

‘Transpedagogy’ is a term used to describe projects that blend educational processes and art-making in works that offer an experience that is clearly different from conventional art academies or formal art education. In transpedagogy, the pedagogical value is not in the transfer of art skills or techniques; rather, the pedagogical process becomes the artwork\textsuperscript{24}. The intent here is to provide students/participants with an experience, instead of formal references or prescribed understandings about contemporary art. Likewise, Performing Pedagogies considered performance and pedagogical processes themselves as micropolitical and ethical engagements that aimed to undermine dominant codes and normalizing structures embedded within education. The pedagogical processes were the core of the work. By engendering conditions for the creation and development of new formations of subjectivity that have yet to be felt, Performing Pedagogies attempted to create an experimental basis for experiencing new formations and to act as a platform in recognition of new political subjectivities.

For Grant H. Kester, in Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art, socially engaged art is uniquely placed to counter a world in which “we are reduced to an atomized pseudo community of consumers, our sensibilities dulled by spectacle and repetition.”\textsuperscript{25} I would add that in the slumber of an increasingly corporate milieu, a moment of encounter, of affect, of pause, a moment that breaks through routine practices of consumption, transaction, self-governance and discipline becomes a rupturing and awakening autodidactic experience. These transpedagogical moments guide (catapult) us temporarily into another way of being that may transgress hegemonic beliefs and values—and even if these experiences only

\textsuperscript{24}Pablo Helguera. Education for Socially Engaged Art.
last for short periods of time, at least they have been had—and perhaps they will lay the ground for this kind of continued searching.

Like Giroux, I argue that a critical performance pedagogy must be informed by a concern with establishing the material and ideological conditions that allow multiple, specific, and heterogeneous ways of life to come into play as part of a pedagogy of resistance. In this sense, the broader parameters of an antiracist pedagogy are informed by a political project that links the creation of critical citizens to the development of radical democracy, and furthermore, radical education can be looked upon as a political project that ties education to the “broader struggle for a public life in which dialogue, vision, and compassion remain critically attentive to the rights and conditions that organize public space as a democratic social form rather than as a regime of terror and oppression.”

**Radical Pedagogy**

Performance pedagogies is a process of translating performance techniques that give students, artists and participants tools for politicizing and deconstructing representational social codes. It was important for me to include multiple projects in this series in order to better understand the diverse relationships artists have to pedagogy—illustrating that it is never a static process, and to highlight that incorporating critical pedagogy into artworks does not always follow a particular formula as has been implied by critics of socially relational art work. Performing Pedagogies considered the transformative effects of performance strategies and radical pedagogy both in their embodied process and their materialization. Performance pedagogy can offer radical

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intervention, and is not averse to disruption.\textsuperscript{29} Performance, as an embodied practice, transmits and stores knowledge and can corporealize theory while maintaining a politics of social justice.

In trying to define what a ‘radical’ pedagogy might look like, I find it helpful to turn to Leanne Simpson’s observation that “radical pedagogy pushes against the limits of colonialist, supremacist forms of education which systematize and generalize experience.”\textsuperscript{30} She reveals that a pedagogy whose prevailing motivation is the metamorphosis of reality, instead of being subjected to the demands for definition or being held to the highest principles as well as to the oldest values; a pedagogy used to grasp new habits, new perceptions, new ways of relating to the world in short, is infinitely more intuitive, more sympathetic and joyful than what the universalist universities administrate.\textsuperscript{31}

**Embodiment**

For several years I have been personally examining cross-disciplinary embodiment practices through the study of yogic philosophy, physical theatre training, performance practice, meditation, radical pedagogy and activism. It is through these experiences that I have come to know critical potentials for embodied, self-reflexive performance processes in generating alternative pedagogies which counter dominant knowledge discourses through the deeply felt processes of unlearning, and undoing inherited, uncritical paradigms of knowledge. It is increasingly being acknowledged that to ‘embody’ or to experience something physically is deeply influential and positive for learning experiences. ‘Embodiment’ as a linguistic term remains a vast and esoteric topic when simply ‘talked about’ so I realized that I needed to find a

\textsuperscript{29} Bishop denies that contemporary relational projects are disruptive, insisting that much of it is laden with morality and avoids unease, discomfort or frustration. While this certainly exists, I believe that there is room for radicality and disruption as well. See Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 26.

\textsuperscript{30} Leanne Simpson quoted in Rose-Antoinette Ronald, “if the earth is the pedagogy…” *Radical Pedagogies: Inflexions* No. 8

\textsuperscript{31} Leanne Simpson quoted in Rose-Antoinette Ronald, “if the earth is the pedagogy…”.
way to demonstrate what I meant by embodiment through action—which led to my choice to curate multiple artists who engaged, in some way, with these processes. Embodiment in performance pedagogy describes teaching and learning in acknowledgement of our bodies as whole experiential beings, and returning to the primacy of experience. It means tapping into an existing storehouse of knowledge (intuitions, feelings, and senses) that exists within our bodies. It means considering deep listening, feeling, impulses and direct experience as tools and methods which can lead to moments of personal transformation and which have political resonance when considered within the contemporary moment of globalization and neoliberal capitalism.

Embodiment processes explore the relationship between physical matter and energy, and the interaction of our body structures with our thoughts and actions in the world. With this definition in mind, I have learned through intensive performance training and somatic practice that embodiment through performance pedagogy allows for encounters with different forms of intelligences, which trust and rely upon memory and emotion, and consider particular social located-ness as critical pedagogy. I connect these moments of embodied pedagogical transformation to Giroux’s ‘rupturing practices’, which allow marginalized groups and the culturally disenfranchised to push “against the grain of traditional history, disciplinary structures, dominant readings, and existing relations of power.” These rupturing practices can involve embodied, situated knowledges that challenge epistemologies of mastery and become pedagogical sites for interrogating and disrupting patterns of domination and oppression. Social transformation and change require a deep and radical pedagogy where in the body and self are considered to be reliable knowledge sources, and components of knowledge creation rather than

a disembodied ‘mind’ into which an educator pours knowledge. In discussing emancipatory pedagogy, Charles Garoian emphasizes that the “transformation of the artist/teacher or spectator/student from the object to the subject of cultural history requires liberatory forms of action.” Drawing upon embodied methods and the presentation of alternate curricula, this series prioritized subjugated knowledges that have been quieted, dismissed, suppressed or even eradicated by hegemonic systems of knowing, and mainstream dominant culture. Performance allows for an immediate transfer between the performer(s) and the spectators. During these exchanges, cultural and social meaning is imparted, negotiated, and multiplied.

Performance pedagogy can challenge traditionally determined ‘places’ of study, or schools of artistic training; places which can be considered sites wherein “pre-scripted, discipline specific, and monocultural objectives are learned. In contrast, embodied, situated knowledges consider the body and ‘self’ as equally reliable knowledge sources, significant to knowledge creation and self-empowerment rather than disembodied ‘mind’ into which an educator pours knowledge. Similarly, by the mid 1970s, Paulo Freire (and others) had considered reflexive forms of education and acknowledging that knowledge comes from the student matching her lived experience with new ideas.

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33 Freire challenged the banking system of education, the approach to learning that is rooted in the notion that students need to consume information fed to them by a professor and should be able to memorize and store it. It was Freire's belief that education could be the practice of freedom and transformation through strategies of becoming critically aware of one’s political situation. Freire’s reasoning means that classrooms should become active places where the teacher and every student is an active participant, not a passive consumer and considered critical pedagogy as education praxis that extends beyond institutional structures and into the social world. See Pedagogy of the Oppressed.


36 Alongside Freire, Augusto Boal, Joseph Beuys, and many Fluxus artists were also incorporating educational praxis into their works and philosophies; however, due to the time of their works, many of these earlier educators and artists did not factor intersectional analysis of globalization, race, sexuality, gender, and cultural difference—all the more reason I believe that contemporary, radical pedagogy is necessary.
Chapter 3
PERFORMING PEDAGOGIES

What follows in this chapter is a series of reflective descriptions on the performances of Andrew Rabyniuk, Golboo Amani, Francisco-Fernando Granados, Saul Garcia-Lopez, Basil AlZeri, as well as on the long distance collaboration, exchange, and exhibition between Queen’s University undergraduate students in Keren Zaiontz’ class, Film 338: Contemporary Issues in Cultural Studies, and Vancouver artist-run free school *The School for Eventual Vacancy* led by Caitlin Chaisson and Justin Langlois.

**ANDREW RABYNIUK**

*How to Tie a Bow Tie*

*How to tie a bow-tie* was a series of one-to-one, participatory performances that used intimacy and mimicry to demonstrate how to tie a bow-tie without verbal cues. Rabyniuk casually entered Union gallery at noon on March 16th, and walked toward two clothing hooks and a mirror. Watching himself in the mirror, Rabyniuk unbuttoned his jacket, took it off and hung it up. He removed his shoes, took off his shirt, belt and pants. He pulled up his socks, and grabbed a pair of black dress pants hanging from the opposite hook. He put them on along with a white button up shirt (figure 1). He looked at his reflection in the mirror as spectators watched him, watching himself. He put on a pair of black dress shoes and suit jacket, and it became clear that his change of dress indicated a change of roles: he was moving from pedestrian to performance mode. Once he finished dressing, he faced the audience that had gathered in the gallery. The intimate sphere of the artist who viewers had voyeuristically been watching as he dressed was merged with the public realm; the fourth wall, as it were, was then broken. After giving a short introduction to the performance, he sat down on one of two chairs positioned in the centre of the gallery and began the durational performance (figure 2).
Participants could select a red silk bow tie from off the gallery floor and sit directly across from Rabyniuk (figure 3). Each person would receive a handshake and a brief introduction, and Rabyniuk would slowly begin to tie the bow tie knot, allowing each participant to watch, interpret and perform for themselves the same actions by carefully mimicking his movements. No linguistic instructions were given, so for participants to accomplish the objective of properly tying their own bow-tie, they were required to mirror Rabyniuk’s actions carefully. In turn, Rabyniuk relied on participants' actions and body language in order to proceed from one stage of tying the knot to the next, which revealed the difficulty of mimicking someone else's actions, and to allow for possible ‘failures’ to occur publicly.

![Figure 1 & 2: Andrew Rabyniuk, How to Tie a Bow Tie Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominique Helie](image)

*How to Tie a Bow Tie* asked how, through the dissemination of certain knowledge and skills, ideologically imbued cultural practices and forms are reproduced. Dressing is an embodied and political practice and, in turn, fashion is a cultural system embodying complex gender and class codes. The performance relied on an interdependency reciprocity between Rabyniuk and his participants. By employing a ‘demonstration’ model whereby people learn by

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37 Andrew Rabyniuk. Excerpted from Rabyniuk’s artist statement for this project.
38 Andrew Rabyniuk. Excerpted from Rabyniuk’s artist statement for this project.
observing and doing, Rabyniuk revealed the subtle and discursive influences affecting sartorial form among individuals and groups—highlighting enculturation as pedagogical form. While Rabyniuk intended to ‘teach’ individuals how to tie a bow-tie, the interdependent relationship between himself (as demonstrator) and participant was an effort to undercut the authority of the pedagogue by highlighting the inherently reciprocal relationship involved in knowledge transmissions.

The potential difficulties and failed attempts to produce a well-formed bow tie shifted the concern from the knot, as the object of knowledge, to the process of its production and the experience of learning in public. The performance also illuminated the challenges, relationality, and affectual labor required to transmit knowledge to unique individuals with diverse needs. Each person who sat in front of Rabyniuk came into the performance with their own set of challenges, barriers, skills and abilities, yet all had the same goal: to tie a bow tie. There was an intimate and empathetic component bound to this public interaction, as it became clear that the ‘teacher’ (Rabyniuk) must subtly respond and intuitively adapt his silent

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instructions to each participant in order to convey the information. For those who were ‘not getting it,’ Rabyniuk had to consider alternative embodied methods for illustrating what he is doing which often included turn his body to the side, leaning closely in toward the person, or using facial expressions to guide people. Body language became an important signifier in this performance; through closely observing, participants could understand and mimic Rabyniuk’s actions, while as ‘instructor,’ Rabyniuk was able to assist by emoting and using his body to teach what to do without intervening verbally. There was total interdependence on participant and observer and this reciprocity made for a shared ownership of the work. Because of the public nature of the *How to Tie a Bow Tie*, participants’ feelings and insecurities became integral components of the performance. The close physical proximity between teacher and learner created an intimate and vulnerable experience, so much so that an unique relationship developed between each participant and Rabyniuk.

As the subject of a pedagogical performance, producing a bow-tie through the relational scheme described above treats dressing as a performative and social practice. Although the bow tie is a very specific fashion accessory, *How to Tie a Bow Tie* considered the kinds of value-laden know-how embodied by dressing, revealing the public pedagogy of enculturation. Rabyniuk’s performance elucidated vernacular relational knowledge, and highlighted the co-dependent reliance we have upon each other to socially learn, while also illuminating the stresses and emotions involved when we do not or cannot learn socially. The performance revealed ways that learning happens through processes of enculturation, intimacy, vulnerability and reciprocity. Rabyniuk’s ‘public pedagogy’ metaphorically revealed the more complex ways in which we come to know things—always aware of who and what is watching us, surveilling us, and governing the ways we ‘should’ be in the world and the ways we ‘should’ learn.
Because of the placement of mirrors behind Rabyniuk and each participant, people could see themselves reflected behind their ‘teacher.’ Participants’ own reflections became a teacher—a revealer of their progress, their feelings, their selves, and a heightened awareness of being watched in a public space became unavoidable (figures 4 & 5). Participants could also see the reflection of others in the gallery watching them, so while they were trying to watch the teacher, they were also forced to see their witnesses. The mirrors revealed the ripple effect that learning can provide—the many things we learn through observing, or through simply existing socially—and highlighted that quotidian public pedagogies circulate and ‘teach’ us things without us paying much attention to their process. Rabyniuk highlighted the public pedagogies inherent in fashion, a sphere that resides far outside of traditional schooling, but that impacts our identities and sense of self. By doing this, Rabyniuk achieved a nuanced pedagogical performance that centred participants’ experience of public learning at the forefront, magnifying the invisible processes that are otherwise relatively common place (dressing).

Figure 4 & 5: Andrew Rabyniuk, *How to Tie a Bow Tie* Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie
The School of Bartered Knowledge is a performance/installation that utilizes open-ended frameworks for the circulation of knowledge and information. The school itself is a simple wooden structure, designed for the democratic negotiation of knowledge. It is a self-contained school and archive, with the structure acting as the building, furniture and library. Housed in the top of the structure are shelves that contain the collected epistemologies of various community interactions. Conversations are initiated through public engagement between Amani and passersby. The encounter is intended to re-structure the power relations of knowledge production through critical negotiation and ephemeral exchange, and the distinctions that constitute the gap between valued and illegitimate knowledge become the central topic of discussion. Through The School, Amani is able to ask what kinds of knowledge are worth trading? And what kind of value do we give them? Once a ‘fair trade’ is reached between Amani and her participant, the transaction of knowledge is documented on index cards and archived into an accessible library.

Once a passerby would sit down in The School, Amani briefly explained the process and how they would go about trading and negotiating knowledge together. Participants approached the structure that placed them in an intimate, face to face encounter with the artist. This encounter played with the logic of capital trade through an exchange of bartered, oral knowledge. Amani records the knowledge she receives on an index card and files it on the archival shelves above the seating area of the structure, creating a loose-leaf encyclopedia of the everyday. At the end of each exchange, Amani asks participants if they felt the exchange was a fair trade, and she only kept the knowledge card if the participant believed it to be a fair knowledge trade; if they
did not, they had the power to renegotiate (figures 6 & 7).

Figure 6: Golboo Amani, The School of Bartered Knowledge
Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Brian Johnson

For Amani, one of the inspirations for creating The School of Bartered Knowledge was the realization that some of the most important things she had learned throughout her life had been from outside of the institution—things taught to her in casual and vernacular ways—which posed the question: where do we hold that knowledge? Where is the archive of that knowledge? The School of Bartered Knowledge speaks to precisely that kind of vernacular knowledge and exchange.40 Amani’s school operates out of generosity since, as she notes, “we rarely pay for the vernacular knowledge that feeds us with the vital information that we use to survive in our lives,

40 Golboo Amani. “Performing Pedagogies Panel Discussion” (artist talk, Cultural Studies Speaks Series, part of “Performing Pedagogies” Queen’s University, Kingston Ontario, 16 March 2016).
so I wanted to create a space where people could do that.”

The School of Bartered Knowledge could be thought of as a kind of trading booth; a modest, self-contained and mobile structure that reflects a kind of democratic, or ‘fair trade’ situation. The structure of The School lends itself to a non-hierarchal exchange as both Amani and her participant sit facing one another in the semi-private booth (once a participant is in the school, the conversation remains between that person and Amani). There is an intimacy created between Amani and her participant sitting in the structure even while situated openly in the public sphere.

Figure 7: Golboo Amani, The School of Bartered Knowledge
Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie

The School was originally designed so that anybody could activate it, and anyone could sit in the school to exchange knowledge with others. Amani focuses on the subjective knowledge of her ‘students’ rather than the objective narratives typically understood to count as knowledge. The School is performed as a public intervention, and most often happens in very public

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spaces—usually on a city street. As a performer, Amani takes on the job of convincing participants that whatever it is that they know is worth trading. *The School* creates a space for the negotiation of knowledge to take place, as well as brokering value of knowledge and what that means in terms of cultural capital in the face of academic learning or institutionalized and standardized knowledge.\(^{42}\)

During *Performing Pedagogies*, *The School of Bartered Knowledge* was located in the Joseph S. Stauffer Library Loggia at Queen’s University directly outside of Union Gallery. The loggia/atrium space where Amani performed the work acted as a gateway between Union Gallery, and Joseph S. Stauffer Library. This site specificity created a liminal space for individuals interacting with *The School*, creating a space for experiencing non-institutional learning directly within the context of a traditional education institution (Queen’s University). For the two days that *The School* took up residence in the loggia, it disrupted everyday routines that typically play out in the space (usually used for people studying, or as a thoroughfare for getting from place A to place B) by creating an alternative space and physical container for intimate public conversation, honesty and the feeling of vulnerability to occur. Talking openly to and connecting deeply with a stranger and having the opportunity to share one’s own knowledge and have it validated, created an affectual rupture breaking from daily academic routines, and shifted peoples’ focus from external daily processes to internal thoughts and emotions and new ways of thinking about knowledge, community and sharing.

Amani says she thinks that most people feel that institutionalized and structured forms of knowledge are extreme obstacles for them in claiming a kind of knowing, and for this reason, her

\(^{42}\) Giroux acknowledges that it is in everyday cultural and political spaces that identities are shaped, desires mobilized, and experiences take on form and meaning. (Giroux 2011, 139).
art practice is centred on the accessibility of knowledge. Amani’s school achieved a level of accessibility by challenging what constitutes knowledge, and by embracing vernacular conversations that move outside of the standard ‘knowledge’ spaces. *The School* created an alternative and affective space to learn differently, to be heard, to re-think knowledge, and to unlearn particular power dynamics of expert - student relations. There are some contributions to *The School* that are entirely ephemeral—some people have exchanged knowledge in oral transactions, like songs, or exchanged embodied movements, and those things have not made their way into the archive, but live on ephemerally. *The School of Bartered Knowledge* creates space for the experience of other ways of knowing and experiencing knowledge exchange. Amani’s school played with deinstitutionalizing pedagogy drawing out the inherent possibilities of interdependent structural systems, while simultaneously revealing that ‘radical’ spaces can exist within institutions and can have fracturing effects for individuals.

As Bishop notes, the increase of interest surrounding the relationship between art and pedagogy represents the belief that education acts as art’s potential ally in a time of ever-decreasing public space, privatization and instrumentality of knowledge. Bishop and Irit Rogoff both point out that slippages can easily occur between terms like “education”, “self-organized pedagogies”, “research” and “knowledge production” and the more radical intersections between art and pedagogy employed by artists become difficult to separate from neoliberal trends which render education a product of the “knowledge economy.” So the question for me becomes how can we keep what Bishop calls ‘pedagogical aesthetics’ more radical, disruptive, and critically fruitful? Amani’s work transcends a simplistic pedagogic

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aesthetic by focusing on and highlighting radical potentials for the processes these works elicit by hailing her participants and viewers to engage in and take responsibility for a critical, subjective experience—rather than relying on the artist’s expertise to ‘teach’ something new or to provide a consumptive experience.

**FRANCISCO-FERNANDO GRANADOS**

*movement study – standard North American strip search procedure*

*movement study* illustrated behavioral patterns established by police strip searches and was presented as a readymade in a white cube setting. Emerging from a crowd of spectators at Union Gallery, Francisco-Fernando Granados casually approached the vinyl instructions that were applied to the gallery floor which detailed the steps of a ‘correct’ strip search procedure (figure 9). Granados followed the instructions by taking off his clothes, turning them inside out, shaking them and then throwing them out of reach and then a very detailed and intimate examination of the body. The intimacy and discomfort elicited by *movement study* forced spectators to consider the ways they are personally implicated in ongoing forms of state violence and forms of knowing that are produced through naturalized racism, laws, structures, and embedded societal norms based on compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia, racism and a neoliberal capitalist agenda.46

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Figure 8: Francisco-Fernando Granados, *movement study – standard North American strip search procedure* Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie

Figure 9: Instructions for *movement study – standard North American strip search procedure* Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie
Granados maintained intense eye contact with his spectators throughout the entire performance. When he removed his pants, coins spilled from his pocket—he bent down to pick them up wearing only his underwear and socks. He pulled down his underwear and held them up for all to see, and proceeded to wriggle off his socks, shaking them out and tossing them into the pile of belongings. Once completely nude, he leaned forward and ran his fingers through his hair—ensuring everyone could see that there was nothing hidden there. He leaned his head back and stuck out his tongue, flipped his upper lip up and down. Folded back the left ear, then the right. Hands up. He spread his legs, pulled back foreskin, lifted testicles. Lifted the left foot, then the right. Squat. Cough. Once the strip search was complete, Granados slowly began to cover himself back up, piece by piece. He approached the heap of clothes scattered on the gallery floor and began to dress himself.

Denuding within the context of carefully following instructions for a ‘correct’ strip search procedure posed the question of pedagogy in relationship to the power dynamics of state instruction. The relationship between score and action aimed to expose the double bind between coercion and consent that results from framing an act of state power that under current circumstances can be legally enforced on any body that falls under its jurisdiction. By performing the procedure of the strip search, Granados revealed the perversity and coercion that can be embedded in instruction. A real strip search procedure already looks so much like performance art; it already is such a careful, detailed way to figure the body.

After dressing, Granados slowly transformed back into the individual who began the performance. He put on his pants and t-shirt and buttoned up his cardigan. An intimate knowledge was shared between him and the audience. He put on his ball cap, his shoes and it began to seem as though the previous ten minutes never occurred. Granados remained dignified
in putting himself back together (figure 8). Once entirely dressed, he picked up his keys, the
coins that had scattered on the gallery floor and his wallet, placing them all back in his pockets.
These small ‘everyday’ moments revealed an invasive and private intimacy—basic human
actions denied. Once dressed, he walked through the crowd and out of the gallery completing
the performance. It was clear that there is a huge sense of incompleteness in the room—spectators
were left feeling confused, unsettled and unsure how to respond.

During the performance viewers were present and aware of their own bodies and
emotions in the gallery space – the alienation the performance instilled in its viewers set up space
for spectators to sit with and feel the discomfort of the situation and the feelings evoked through
the performance are what left the most visceral trace. During the panel discussion Granados
stated, “What I discovered by becoming interested in the procedure of the strip search was the
perversity and the coercion that can be embedded in instruction.”47 The action of the strip search
is so abstract, yet at the same time so real that it really is a readymade.

Certain bodies are differentially targeted for these kinds of procedures, depending on how
they look, and Granados stated that he sees his body as operating as a placeholder—movement
study is an example of just ‘a’ body within an infinite possibility of how state power can
manifest itself in some bodies48. Performance pedagogy happens when the conditions of the
artwork shift from the logic of material composition and symbolism to the expanded field of
bodies, time, and space. In a post 9/11 world, neoliberal reason intersects with securitization,
and both are supported, as Wendy Brown states, by “their mutual legitimation of each other and
collaborative bracketing of law, democratic principle, and social welfare in favor of other

47 Francisco Fernando Granados. “Performing Pedagogies Panel Discussion” (artist talk, Cultural Studies Speaks
Series, part of “Performing Pedagogies” Queen’s University, Kingston Ontario, 16 March 2016).
metrics, including those of efficacy, control, and an advantageous economic climate. Foucault has also written about the ways in which neoliberal policies and securitization intersect with government creating new and complex relationships with freedom, as they produce, organize, manage and consume individual freedom without ever directly coming into contact with the individual subject. Theatricalizing these contemporary socio-political issues draws awareness to contemporary political conditions and everyday state procedures, and exercises of state power.

SAUL GARCIA-LOPEZ

500 + Years of Macho Power

As co-artistic director of La Pocha Nostra, Garcia-Lopez is deeply influenced by the international performance troupe’s common denominator to challenge, cross, and erase dangerous borders between art and politics, practice and theory, artist and spectator, mentor and apprentice, body and cultural nightmares through performance art. Garcia-Lopez’ performance engaged with hegemonic masculinity and violence perpetuated by colonization. In 500+ Years of Macho Power Garcia-Lopez embodied a hyper-masculine Latino persona and his performance deconstructed binary forces and relationships of machismo and power. Garcia-Lopez performed humorous actions showing stereotypical representations of power.

A table sat before Garcia-Lopez with hot sauce, tequila, cutting board, kitchen utensils and knives and all the ingredient necessary for making tacos. Ceremonial bagpipe music blared loudly from the speakers with the tune of Amazing Grace. Garcia-Lopez donned a crown of silver bullets and began grabbing at his crotch at an apparently massive phallus under his pants.


(figure 11). Stroking himself, he stepped toward his viewers—taunting them, playing with them. He raised his head to the sky and began slowly metamorphosing into comically ‘macho’ poses: flexing his muscles, squatting, showing off his power. He began to grab at his crotch and feel down his leg and stripped off his shirt to reveal the words MACHO POWER on his chest. Garcia-Lopez unzipped his pants and pulled out a massive piece of meat attached to his body and proudly showed it up and then dropped it straight onto a chopping block and began to mash the meat violently with a mallet—butchering it. He sharpened the knives and carving fork with the meat still hanging from his pants.

![Figure 10: Saul Garcia-Lopez, 500+ Years of Macho Power Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie](image)

He tossed taco shells on the grill and began cooking the pieces of meat he had severed. Using tongs, he placed pieces of the cut up meat on the grill. The meat began to smell, infusing the gallery with the reek of meat and chilies (figures 12 & 13). The gallery is not a place we are used to experiencing these smells so the senses evoked by the performance began to unsettle the space and those inhabiting it. He assembled the taco and greedily stuffed the entire thing in his mouth, with meat juice dripping all over his face and lips and chased it down with tequila—eating his own masculinity in an act of self-mutilation. The performance was a provocative
poetic action that referred to the mutilation of the body and its relationship with power and
gender. In other iterations of this piece, Garcia-Lopez has completed the performance by offering
‘Macho Tacos’ to the male audience members in the room, a powerful commentary on
deconstructing machismo, power and the violence implied—implicating members of the
audience to reflect on their own complicity in histories of violence. Garcia-Lopez challenged
viewers to re-think and re-engage with the performative effects of bodies that transgress against
state-and socially mandated racial and sexual norms.

It is important to highlight some of the acknowledgements that Garcia-Lopez made
before beginning/as part of his performance in recognizing the interdependent support systems
and relationships involved in performance art (figure 10). “I’d like to acknowledge tonight’s
performances and everyone involved. First, the spiritual presence of Guillermo Gomez-Pena my
mentor who has conceptually sponsored me to cross the border of Canada and the US making me
the first Mexican reverse wetback” (a derogatory term used to describe Mexicans who have
immigrated to the United States by swimming across the border). He acknowledged the
involuntary performers of the audience for being present in the ‘here and the now’ and directed
attention to his use of English and broken Spanish— “I acknowledge my accent in this event
without negating the many other languages in this multicultural room.” He acknowledged the
ever dwindling paycheques of artists and the support of the “invisible but necessary existence of
all the barflies and bohemians in Kingston and other cities who have attentively listened to and
supported our performance practice.”
Diana Taylor writes that the body of the artist translates a way of knowing to an audience. Taylor’s discussion of the performative centers around the notion of performance of culture as a form of knowledge dissemination. Specifically, the embodiment of knowledge is presented to an audience in order to translate those knowledges to others and pass them on. Within the context of Performing Pedagogies, I relate Garcia-Lopez’ performance to Vivian Fryd’s notion of performance acting as an “expanded public pedagogy” which seeks to inform and engage diverse audiences with issues relevant to the personal lives of the performers, theatricalizing political issues and asking spectators to experience the effects and implications of these actions. The knowledge performed moves across perceived borders which separate art

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and reality, and extend outside to the political spaces that exist in communities. Fryd theorizes that the body and the public display of human experience turns art into an activist and spiritual medium that expresses intense emotions, reconnects the sensory body with the cognitive mind, in public spaces as the site of knowledge production.\textsuperscript{54}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure13.png}
\caption{Saul Garcia-Lopez, 500+ Years of Macho Power Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie}
\end{figure}

\textbf{BASIL ALZERI}

\textit{Suggested Instructions}

\textit{Suggested Instructions} instructed guests in the etiquettes of eating Palestinian mezze dishes. Defining life artistically through the domestic, the culinary, or everyday unsettles the relationships between art and life and AlZeri’s performance broke with the traditional space and usages of the art gallery by taking as his subject the dynamic and ephemeral social environment of dining. \textit{Suggested Instructions} worked to create a social circumstance with the participant’s experience of social eating, conversation, and learning and teaching the instructions, becoming the art. Cuisine is an everyday cultural practice imbued with history and politics. Palestinian cuisine—in Gaza and the West Bank—reflects a history of occupation and displacement, so

\textsuperscript{54} Vivian Fryd. 23-38.
while the performance engaged participants in eating a meal, it also opened up space for dialogue around histories of violence, colonization and appropriation. AlZeri foregrounds Palestinian cultural cuisine as it manifests in everyday familial acts of sustenance and tradition, embodying the role of the trivialized and unrecognized laborer long occupied by mothers, slaves and marginalized minorities.55

AlZeri rolled out a dolly carrying thirty folding chairs and began to arrange them around the table one by one. Once the tables and chairs were set, AlZeri began randomly approaching individuals in the gallery to ask them if they wanted to dine. If they agreed, he sprayed their hands with sanitizer and gave them a serviette. Once this cleansing ritual had concluded, chosen individuals/dinner guests would find a spot at the table in the gallery, and wait for others to join. Once enough people had gathered around the table, AlZeri began creating an elaborate spread of food—bringing out large pots of hummus and olive oil, followed by bowls of chopped tomatoes, lemon, radishes, arugula, fennel, pine nuts, paprika, olives, stuffed eggplant, and labneh.

Figure 14: Participants in Suggested Instructions Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie

Once the table was set, AlZeri quietly explained ‘the etiquette instructions’ to individuals seated around the table. He taught his guests the ‘correct’ etiquette for eating the Palestinian mezze dishes set in front of them. After the instructions were imparted to the selected guests, the guests were in turn asked to repeat and teach the instructions to other remaining spectators in the gallery (figure 15):

1. Rip the pita bread in half.
2. Give a piece to whoever you are eating with.
3. Tear a smaller piece of the pita bread and pinch to create a scoop.
4. Swiftly dip your pita bread in the mezze from the side of the bowl closest to you.
5. Carefully pick up one olive from the bowl, making sure not to disturb any of the others.
6. Refrain from crossing the pool of olive oil. Stay on your own side.

The live time ‘performance’ quickly began blurring into ‘real’ life. Guests/participants exceed the role of audience member by becoming active members who made up the performance—guests were empowered to co-build the work, contribute to it or even stop and interrupt it completely. Multiple conversations quickly erupted in the gallery, people dispersed and scattered throughout the space, and usual gallery etiquette was interrupted (figure 14). The performance created a temporary community of friends, fellow artists and community members in a gesture of generosity and collectivity with individuals engaging, sharing and contributing their own knowledge through dialogue. AlZeri abdicated the position of ‘teacher’ rather than remaining the gatekeeper of special knowledge. The knowledge of the instructions was organically and messily passed along orally through individuals; much of it was lost,
misinterpreted, or transmitted completely incorrect. While the visual display of the colorful foods was beautiful, it was not the presentation of the food that was important for this performance, but rather what happened between people while eating and talking. Eating the food, and the conversations that arose while attempting to pass on the instructions of proper etiquette to others became the object on display – the shared communication was the realization of the work. AlZeri’s practice aims to facilitate a space for empathy through gestures of inclusivity and generosity.

Figure 15: Basil AlZeri, Suggested Instructions
Performing Pedagogies, March 15th, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie

*Suggested Instructions* intervened into the patterns of pedagogical art practice by inviting individuals to join in a conversation while casually eating and sharing knowledge in the gallery space. The knowledge was organically and messily passed along through individuals – most of the instructions were quickly lost, misinterpreted or transmitted completely incorrectly to others. Spectators had the experience of this kind of dispersed knowledge dissemination through the social binding agent of food. *Suggested Instructions* is an extension of AlZeri’s ongoing series of food based performances, *The Mobile Kitchen Lab*—a long term project that AlZeri started working on after many conversations with his mother (Suad) about how to make traditional
Palestinian dishes. Much of AlZeri’s social practice focuses on empathy and the recognition of unpaid labour, generosity, and land exploitation and between private tradition and public archive. He has co-performed many times with his mother via Skype (who calls in from Dubai to instruct him on the proper recipes) highlighting the focus on the recognition of labour. AlZeri is interested in emphasizing the unpaid labour of women and mothers, but also that of invisible minorities—especially illuminating domestic activities like cleaning, preparing food and sustaining families. This emphasis on labour can also be extended to the unpaid work of many artists. By focusing attention on his mother’s wealth of knowledge, he brings the everyday and the personal to the forefront, inviting guests to engage in Palestinian stories, and the labour and historical specificity that is built into his recipes. *Suggested Instructions* provided an entry point for starting conversations through the social binding agent of the food and facilitated a platform for those conversations through very familiar things like eating—which is an opposite approach to the majority of contemporary art practices that unintentionally alienate people who feel they have to have particular knowledge to be in institutions or galleries. AlZeri’s performance involved people by choice, not forcing; the performance is suggested, with everyone taking responsibility for what happens.

*Suggested Instructions* worked to create a social circumstance (dining together) with the participant’s experience of social eating, conversations, and learning and teaching the instructions, becoming the art. While the visual display of the colorful foods was beautiful, it was not the presentation of the food that was important for this performance, but rather what happened between people while eating and talking. Eating the food, and the conversations that arose while attempting to pass on the instructions of proper etiquette to others became the object on display: the shared communication was the realization of the work (figures 16 & 17).
Figure 16: Participants in *Suggested Instructions*
Performing Pedagogies, March 15\textsuperscript{th}, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie

Figure 17: Participants in *Suggested Instructions*
Performing Pedagogies, March 15\textsuperscript{th}, 2016. Photo Credit: Dominque Helie
Distance Education

Distance Education was a long distance knowledge exchange between The School for Eventual Vacancy (TSEV) based in Vancouver, and Queen’s Department of Film and Media undergraduate course, FILM 338. After several discussions between myself, Caitlin Chaisson and Justin Langlois about the nature of our exchange, TSEV held a session in Vancouver early February 2016, entitled Hidden Curriculum and Distance Education. This session aimed to reveal hidden curricula in educational infrastructures and everyday practice.

In the curriculum description for the session, The School outlined their intention to distance education from traditional pedagogical dogmas, to think of learning in an expansive scope, and to take up distance education as something more than a response to scarcity or an inclination towards independent management. Through an engagement with various concepts of distance, The School located themselves in a vantage that illuminates what it is we are learning, when we are learning. Guided by an effort to not only unpack but to deploy hidden or secret knowledge and curriculum within and against educational models, the session explored the potential of forms, gestures and articulations that take place across great distances and expanses of time. Members of TSEV collectively prepared individualized packages of materials, resources, and ephemera, culminating in a postal correspondence project that was sent to a traditional postsecondary institution (Queen’s University). Throughout the session and through the packages, TSEV prepared a lens through which to read the hidden, underrepresented and overrepresented positions in education capital.

56 http://eventualvacancy.org/category/courses/
In early March 2016, the packages arrived in the mail and were distributed to FILM 338 students (figures 18 & 19). The packages set out to challenge traditional understandings of learning in the academy. Students created their own Knowledge Kits in response, that critically and creatively attempted to de-centre their own ingrained assumptions around schooling within and beyond the classroom. The Kits the students created challenged how (un)learning can take place, and revealed the range of embedded messages disseminated through both popular culture and institutional curricula. While some Kits took the form of books and maps, others used film and art objects to explore the stakes of learning in a period where knowledge for its own sake is treated as a suspect activity because it cannot be reduced to (economic) market activity. After creating the Kits, a group exhibition took place at the Isabel Bader Centre for Performing Art which displayed students works that illuminated the possibility of a counter curricula, or subjects of study that attempted to tactically speak back to the secret knowledge that disciplines subjects into productive workers, consumers, and docile students\textsuperscript{57}.

\textsuperscript{57} Excerpted from the jointly written Distance Education curatorial statement co-written by Tarreisha Agard, Keren Zaiontz and Shalon Webber-Heffernan.
Following the week-long *Distance Education* exhibition at the Isabel Bader Centre (figures 20, 21, 22, 23 & 24), selected pieces were mailed back to Vancouver completing the exchange with TSEV. Selected materials will be used has curriculum in an upcoming TSEV session in summer 2016. Working across great distances and expanses of time, this exchange demonstrated that knowledge production is an activity made of critical negotiations, ephemeral exchanges, and creative practices.\(^58\)

\(^{58}\) Excerpted from the jointly written *Distance Education* curatorial statement co-written by Tarreisha Agard, Keren Zaiontz and Shalon Webber-Heffernan.
For this intervention I was curious about what happens when artists who engage in counter institutional tactics like TSEV, directly interact with traditional educational frameworks and the institutional and bureaucratic systems they are working ideologically in opposition to (i.e. Queen’s University). *Distance Education* created a meeting place for two worlds to intersect, and gave undergraduate students the experience to engage critically with alternate curricula and unlearning, and to begin questioning canonical institutional learning processes while remaining within the bounds of the system they are comfortable embracing. Some questions asked in the students’ packages were: how do you educate desire? How do you crack open spaces of possibility? How can we come up with unrealistic, serious ideas? Can you have pluralistic counter-hegemony? How do you avoid a crisis of imagination? The goal of *Distance Education* was to probe antagonistic potentials of critical gestures and unlearning that occur within traditional institutional educational settings. The collaboration became a way for students to begin thinking in counter-institutional ways of engaging with critical pedagogies and to examine their own positionality as students within the learning environment. It gave students the opportunity to consider their own knowledge to be considered legitimate and asked them to
reflect on what it means to unlearn particular forms of education and training.59

The irony of conducting anti-institutional exercises from within the institution became an interesting intersection, and an illumination of what our contemporary socio-cultural situation finds many of us—students, artists, cultural workers, professors and the like are in similar precarious situations when it come to depending on, or rejecting the various infrastructural systems which support and hold us, while simultaneously restrict and diminish our capacities. Institutions, as Langlois states, prove an “articulation or manifestation of a number of rules that we have agreed to abide by, at least momentarily.”60 It is not a matter of attempting to ‘change the system’—or even consider if the system is worth changing—especially for purposes of this project. But, as Langlois states, institutions do undoubtedly hold resources that cannot otherwise be easily drawn upon or constructed elsewhere.61 The majority of us rely on institutions in some way as they often pave the path through which many of us are travelling on or through.

As Langlois reiterates, even new or invented institutions are also sites of ‘very real’ social production and become productive positions for critiquing the thing that it may mirror. Despite the possible futility of these ‘counter’ exercises and the continued reliance on the very institutions we critique, institutional experiments (like Distance Education) do, Langlois urges, help us to practice a sense of agency and explore possible sites for cultivating different ways to exist in the world. The mandate of TSEV is to make itself unnecessary and vacant; its mobile, shifting curricula intends to undo hegemonic learning “in other things that have been called

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59 Foucault discusses the relations that are possible between power and knowledge, and claims that once one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power. There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tries to transcribe them, lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory. Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977. 69.
60 Justin Langlois. BREACH magazine, Vacant Positions: Institutional Drag and Institutional Form
61 Justin Langlois. BREACH magazine
schools.” Likewise, Jackson has noted that if a political art discourse becomes too enthralled with breaking down institutions, it ignores the degree to which we are in fact dependent upon them. Yes, the ‘institution’ constrains; but it also sustains. As Jackson points out, by thinking about support as a complex system, as a social question and as an aesthetic question, we can activate a different conversation.

What if a school only exists where you are? What if a school is about inventing ourselves in relation to one another in a way that no other structure can currently accommodate? In the case of Distance Education there was certainly no guarantee that the experience of engaging with alternative curriculum and unlearning would result in tangible or enduring changes in the social order, nor was there any guarantee that the collective formation of the group would remain intact. But, as Giroux has pointed out, social change always depends on the unknown and the unpredictability of people’s actions. It is the process that is set in motion by a public pedagogy of unlearning that creates the conditions—yet not the certainty—for actual change to occur. It is this political belief in uncertainty that allows me to feel okay with the idea of an institution that ‘vacates’ itself and truly takes up the notion of the temporary.

Simply critiquing hegemonic and institutional failures is not enough. A politics of hope and imagination offers a springboard for the creation of new hegemonies and new means for production and understanding of knowledge. Distance Education employed an experimental praxis, which was a way to slowly begin launching new ways of thinking and being within (and without of) institutional networks. It urged students to re-engage with their imagination and its inherent powers for dreaming to think in new ways. As Giroux has observed, hidden curriculum

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62 Justin Langlois. BREACH magazine
64 Henry Giroux. “Public pedagogy as cultural politics: Stuart Hall and the crisis of culture.” Cultural Studies, 14(2), 341–360
are those things learned which are not openly intended such as the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs conveyed in the classroom and the social environment. Giroux argues that we must demystify the official and the hidden curriculum by revealing the evaluative choices implicit in them, and then explore alternatives to these mainstream beliefs and values.65

I acknowledge that these temporary interruptions and micropolitical gestures do not necessarily interrupt systems of hegemony on a large scale, but at least they perhaps begin to pave the way for personal critical journeys of undoing, providing flashes of new critical perspectives. The project gave students agency to act out new forms of knowledge production, and in this way to transform configurations of power.

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Chapter 4

Exploring Embodied Knowledge – La Pocha Nostra Workshop, Tijuana & Kingston

On March 17th Saul Garcia Lopez, co-artistic director of La Pocha Nostra, led a day-long radical performance pedagogy workshop at Queen’s University. La Pocha Nostra (led by Guillermo Gomez-Peña) conducts cross-cultural/cross-disciplinary/cross-generational workshops involving performance artists, actors, dancers, theorists and students from diverse communities, generations and artistic backgrounds. Participants in Kingston were exposed to the ‘Pocha Method’, an eclectic combination of exercises borrowed from multiple traditions including performance art, experimental theater and dance, the Suzuki method, ritual shamanism, performance games and live performance jam sessions. Parallel to this hands-on process, the group analyzed the creative processes and issues addressed by the work and its cultural impact and political pertinence. The workshop provided a glimpse into the pedagogical performance methodology of La Pocha Nostra which seeks to create temporary communities of rebel artists from different disciplines, ages, ethnic backgrounds, gender persuasions, and nationalities, in which difference and experimentation are not only accepted but encouraged. La Pocha Nostra look for new modes of relating laterally to the ‘other,’ bypassing the myriad borders imposed by professional institutions, religious and political beliefs, and pop-cultural affiliations. The workshop focused on methods to discover new ways of relating to our own bodies with the hope that by decolonizing and then re-politicizing our bodies, they can become sites for activism and embodied theory.

I first discovered La Pocha Nostra in 2014 when I attended one of their live performance jams in Toronto. It was from that experience that I became deeply interested in learning more
about their work, and which led me to spend the following summer in Tijuana, Mexico—the infamous border city—intensively studying the group’s radical performance pedagogy and methodology in a live art laboratory-style school. The summer school I attended in Tijuana was open to experimental performance artists, theorists, activists, and students from all over the world. Students were immersed in performance training with a focus on the body as site for creation, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between the body and the particular geographic environment (in that case, the border between the US and Mexico). Various exercises were employed during this intensive that physically explored notions of the ‘social body’, ‘contested body’, ‘illegal body’, ‘racialized body’, ‘migrant body’, or the ‘cyborg body’, with the intention of allowing students to explore and develop a deeper knowledge of themselves in relation to ‘the other’, and to the social and political world through their own intersubjective experiences while avoiding the utopian discourse of ‘sameness’. For Gomez-Pena, the performance classroom is an “extension of both the performance space and social world, and is highly politicized, anti-authoritarian, interdisciplinary, (preferably) multi-racial, poly-gendered and cross-generational.”66 The dramatization of difference becomes praxis and an epistemological site for knowledge production, and enacting and embodying post-colonial theory.

The workshop space becomes an extension of the performance space and an extension of the social world. Radical performance pedagogy seeks to teach beyond technical specifics of performance disciplines, and toward a critical understanding of social hierarchies and political locatedness. The process of teaching and learning and sharing performance is where the critical work happens. The knowledge gained through La Pocha Nostra pedagogy, no matter how ephemeral, carry on in the bodies of participants and is distributed across interdisciplinary

boundaries once the workshop is complete and people return to their ‘normal lives.’ For two weeks, eight hours a day, participants in the Tijuana workshop engaged in physical, perceptual and conceptual exercises which fostered connection to the body and a strong sense of community within the group—eventually leading up to the creation of original performance material. La Pocha Nostra includes what they call a ‘border crossing’ aspect to their radical pedagogy, believing that through performance, participants and instructors can effectively negotiate political, racial, gender, aesthetic spiritual difference.67

During the summer school in Tijuana, performance exercises built upon one another offering solutions for dealing with cultural divides and tensions in non-confrontational ways. These types of performative theoretical engagements placed the body at the center of analysis, and provided performative opportunities to work through difference. As an internationally diverse group, we partook in creative exercises for developing original performance material and collaborative opportunities helping to deeply politicize and ground live performing bodies. La Pocha Nostra performances and pedagogy challenge audiences and students “to acknowledge the limitations of their own position as the shape shifting, vanishing, confrontational performances resists mastery and refuses to be an object of knowledge.”68

Furthermore, La Pocha Nostra performances cannot be translated easily and culture cannot be easily consumed. This may be an uncomfortable position for most members of the audience trained in the Western epistemology of knowledge as ‘mastery’ over the object of knowledge.69 There is no particular object of culture or object of knowledge to be ‘known’ in La Pocha Nostra pedagogy.

La Pocha Nostra attempts to teach radical civic mindedness and critical citizenship through its workshops and through their performances. Gomez-Pena’s work produces effects that are also important in socially engaged art. Discussing La Pocha Nostra’s performances, Gretchen Coombs states “such discomfort and frustration—along with absurdity, eccentricity, doubt, or sheer pleasure—can be crucial elements of a work’s aesthetic impact and are essential to gaining
new perspectives on our condition.\textsuperscript{70} Gomez-Pena insists that the political content of performance should reach deeply into the personal realm of the viewer, offering an effective strategy for creating a reflexive space that allows audiences to get involved and re-think their relation to political issues. Something imaginative is revealed through performance, something once ‘unsafe’ becomes safe; something ‘perverse’ is transformed into something sacred.

The gatherings that educational art projects create can be considered to foster what Rogoff calls “small, ontological communities,”\textsuperscript{71} a comparison I draw here to my experiences with La Pocha Nostra. The ontological communities are a place where transient and liminal groups of radical artists can form temporary communities to create "in-between" spaces where languages, sexualities, genders, generations and races collide, and transform, demonstrating the potential for epistemic ruptures to forge spaces for uncontained difference while charting another cartography for what Homi Bhabha calls the "something else besides."\textsuperscript{72} Discussing Gomez-Pena, Bhabha focuses on the “hybrid hyphenations” or hyphenated realities created that emphasize the incongruence of different cultural spaces linked together through these processes of ‘coming together,’ while simultaneously creating similarity on the very basis of this incongruence; meaning the liminal space, or borderlands are both a connection and a barrier. What is at issue, Bhabha explains is:

[the] performative nature of differential identities: the refutation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, contingently “opening out”, remaking the boundaries, exploring the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference.

\textsuperscript{72} Homi Bhabha. \textit{The Location of Culture}. New York: Routledge. 219.
Hyphenations of difference suggest an identification that is ‘neither one nor the other but something else besides, in-between.’

La Pocha Nostra’s cross-cultural immersive pedagogy is a hybrid artistic and aesthetic process that generates new cultural meanings and new subjectivities—which allows other new and alternative positions to emerge.

In a practical how-to handbook called *Exercises for Rebel Artists* La Pocha Nostra claims, “If performance was to embody theory, these encounters would have to happen using the whole body in a conscious, politicized, and performative way.”

Gomez-Pena claims that performance art is an ontological attitude towards the whole universe. Drawing from the bodies’ deep longing within as a site of knowledge production and energy as an alternative to regimes of the state, and received culture, I apply this thinking to embodiment politics and the everyday relationships between individual gestures and the impulse (or intention) to build radical communities.

Embodied pedagogy can be transcendent, non-structured, imagined and a (temporary) alternative to prevailing order. I apply Jafari S. Allen’s theory of the erotics of self-making to performance pedagogy, agreeing that “temporary moments whereby subaltern subjectivities in normative structures may experience being; that is feel, experience being, imagine herself or himself-detached from the social structure and bond with others who are similarly situated.”

These temporary and fleeting techniques resist closure and allow for and sustain uncertainty. It is my hope that resisting cultural norms with and through the body and art will invariably lead to disruption, transformation, imagination and change. I apply this reasoning to the power of embodied self-knowledge—once it is achieved even once, there is a perpetual seeking to have it

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once again.

Allen suggests that ‘small acts’ can be “significant epistemological, spiritual, and cultural transgressions.”76 I trust that it may not always be from formal political movements that change can be achieved, but that it can also be achieved through alternative attempts to “create autonomy over one’s life, to pursue desire, or to make the best of very limited life options.”77 There is a power in using “the restricted agency available to create autonomous spaces absent the constant stream of power from outside authorities or normative structures”78 with the intention to resist through transcendent embodiment politics. Allen suggests a methodology that embraces anti-structure and imagined, lived alternatives to prevailing order with “temporary moments whereby subaltern subjectivities in normative structures may experience being, that is feel, imagine herself or himself-detached from the social structure and bond with others who are similarly situated.79"

If ways of knowing are produced through naturalized systems and institutions, like homophobic laws, structures, and embedded societal norms based on compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia, racism and neoliberal capitalism, then I explore performance as a way of ‘knowing’. I have drawn on the performance pedagogy of La Pocha Nostra greatly in thinking through how to counter naturalized knowledge systems vis-à-vis the performance body. Performance pedagogy allows for an immediate transfer between the performer(s) and the spectators. During these exchanges, cultural and social meaning is “impacted, negotiated, and multiplied ... and in research performance can be used “both as a tool of investigation and a form

76 Jafari S. Allen Venceremos? The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba. 84.
77 Jafari S. Allen Venceremos? The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba. 84.
78 Jafari S. Allen Venceremos? The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba. 84.
Performance can be used methodologically and pedagogically often accomplishing the desired goals of empowerment, healing, growth, education, consciousness raising and community building. This type of community building is powerful as a form of resistance to destructive hegemonic beliefs and violent racist, gendered, homo/trans phobic responses to current social formations. There is a power in using “the restricted agency available to create autonomous spaces absent the constant stream of power from outside authorities or normative structures” with the intention to resist through transcendent embodiment politics. A performative pedagogy and methodology can be a counter-colonial route to collect and share stories, ignored histories and imagined landscapes of the land where we live drawing on perception, memory, and history, bringing together artists and community members. With a hope to work against predetermined cultural landscapes and to transform existing educational discourses, I have explored moving beyond the strictly visual experience of performance art and have examined the implications of a deeply felt experience, looking to the corporeality and affectivity of aesthetic process. Through sensorial examinations, the deep impulses of the bodies, if listened to, have profound teachings that can be used performatively and pedagogically if applied. Embodied processes can begin to direct us toward understanding deeper truths leading to small ‘flashes of autonomy’ - not only in performance but also in the everyday living body in space, in communities, within structures, systems, and societies.

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Epilogue

*Performing Pedagogies* posed questions about the possibilities for embodied critical pedagogies in the face of seeming crisis in contemporary neoliberal education paradigms. It contributed to the conversations currently happening and understandings of contemporary socially engaged art practices, and the current debates about its potentials. Performances and events that happened within *Performing Pedagogies* experimented with disrupting the binary between theory and practice by using dynamic and relational processes that were participatory in nature and sought to create space for the possibility of becoming through self-knowledge. Performance pedagogy can provide alternative spaces where forms of differing subjectivities, and various oppressions can be restaged in various performative ways, negotiated, re-written, and transformed. Such creative interventions become particularly relevant within academia, where one is invited to have access to knowledge from a cognitive/intellectual level, but not necessarily from an emotional/physical level.

Events occurred in space and time and from those events many subjective and unknowable pedagogical seeds were planted. In a sense *Performing Pedagogies* produced its own knowledge with its own set of meanings. I have attempted to link the broader category of education and pedagogy to a more substantive struggle for a radical democratic society and away from individualistic neoliberal demands. The hope was to challenge authoritarian and specialized knowledge and to create a temporary space where imagination and embodied dialogue could flourish. Developing broader definition of education and pedagogical practice as a form of cultural politics. As Giroux states with the context of artistic pedagogies:

“Critical pedagogy is not reduced to the skills and techniques that educators use to
meet the predefined instrumental objectives of the market place or the ideological demands of canonical culture; rather, critical pedagogy as a form of cultural politics is a deliberate attempt on the part of cultural workers to influence how and what knowledge and subjectivities are produced within particular sets of social relations."²⁸²

The intention was to foster radical and critical shifts in thinking that examine our human potential beyond individualized, self interested, economic channels and to better understand existing educational structures in order to transform and reinvent them. Performing Pedagogies focused on the social processes of exchange, and embodied knowledge as a tool for empowering us. Like Audre Lorde, it is my strong belief that when we begin to live from within outward, in touch with our own self-knowledge, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us, then we begin to be responsible to ourselves in the deepest sense.³³ For as we begin to recognize our deepest feelings, we begin to give up, of necessity, being satisfied with suffering and self-negation, and with the numbness which so often seems like their only alternative in our society. Our acts against oppression become integral with self, motivated, embodied, and empowered from within.

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²⁸² Henry Giroux. Beyond Cultural Conservatism. 61.
³³ Audre Lorde. The Uses of the Erotic. 1978.
Bibliography


---. “Public pedagogy as cultural politics: Stuart Hall and the crisis of culture”.


<http://www.artpractical.com>


Appendix A:

*Performing Pedagogies* Performance Series Poster

Design: Clive Robertson
Appendix B:

Performing Pedagogies Performance Series Brochure- Front and Back Cover

Design: Clive Robertson
Appendix C:

**Performing Pedagogies Performance Series Brochure- Inside Contents**

**Design:** Clive Robertson
Appendix D:

Performing Pedagogies Panel Discussion Poster

Design: Nicole MacDougal

SPONSORED BY THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN CULTURAL STUDIES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16
AGNES ETHERINGTON ART CENTRE
3PM – 4:30PM
OPEN TO ALL

PERFORMING PEDAGOGIES

This panel is part of a week-long series curated by artist, scholar and MA candidate (Cultural Studies), Shalon Webber-Heffernan. This series emerged through critical considerations of the “pedagogical/social turn” in contemporary art practices paired with the seeming unsustainability of Humanities education in a period of permanent crisis and austerity, professionalization, and instrumentality. The participating performance artists will discuss the intersection of their artistic practice and pedagogy, and the relationships, challenges and potentials between art and critical pedagogy.

Basil AlZeri, visual artist living and working in Toronto, Canada
Golboo Amani, Toronto-based interdisciplinary artist
Saul Garcia Lopez, performance artist, radical director and a PhD candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at York University
Francisco-Fernando Granados, Toronto-based artist working in performance, drawing, and multidisciplinary critical practices.

WWW.QUEENSU.CA/CULTURALSTUDIES CS.PROGRAMCOORD@QUEENSU.CA
Appendix E:

La Pocha Nostra Radical Pedagogy Workshop Poster

La Pocha Nostra Radical Performance Pedagogy Workshop

CALL FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
FACILITATED BY: Saul Garcia-Lopez (Co-Artistic Director of La Pocha Nostra)
DATE/TIME: Thursday, March 17th 2016 (1pm-5pm)

Join in a condensed radical performance pedagogy workshop taking place at Queen’s University in Kingston, ON. La Pocha Nostra conducts cross-cultural/cross-disciplinary/cross-generational workshops involving performance artists, actors, dancers, theorists and students from diverse communities, generations and artistic backgrounds. Open to all! ($20 suggested fee)

Participants will be exposed to the 'Pocha Method', an eclectic combination of exercises borrowed from multiple traditions including performance art, experimental theater and dance, the Suzuki method, ritual shamanism, performance games and live jam sessions. Parallel to this hands-on process, the group will analyze the creative process, the issues addressed by the work, its aesthetic currency, cultural impact and political pertinence.

Some of the objectives of this workshop are to provide a glimpse into the pedagogical performance methodology of La Pocha Nostra which seeks to:

- create temporary communities of rebel artists from different disciplines, ages, ethnic backgrounds, gender persuasions, and nationalities, in which difference and experimentation are not only accepted but encouraged

- find a hybrid and interdisciplinary aesthetic, reflective of the spirit and tribulations of our times, and of the concerns of each participant. Find new modes of relating laterally to the 'other' in a less-mediated way, bypassing the myriad borders imposed by our professional institutions, our religious and political beliefs, and pop-cultural affiliations.

- To discover new ways of relating to our own bodies. By decolonizing and then re-politicizing our bodies, they can become sites for activism and embodied theory

For more information or to register please email Shalon at performingpedagogies@gmail.com or text/call 778-887-8145. Space is limited so please register early!
Appendix F:

Letter Sent from The School for Eventual Vacancy to Film 338 Students

February 7, 2016

Dearest friends,

As you know by now, The School for Eventual Vacancy operates as an ongoing exploration of education as creative practice and political subjectivity. It tries to find the power to make itself unnecessary and vacant, with an underlying concern for the necessary maintenance of The School towards its eventual vacancy.

*Hidden Curriculum and Distance Education* aimed to reveal hidden curricula in educational infrastructures and everyday practice. Distancing education from traditional pedagogical dogmas to think of learning in an expansive scope, we endeavoured to take up distance education as something more than a response to scarcity or an inclination towards independent management.

Through an engagement with various concepts of distance, we tried to locate ourselves in a vantage that illuminates what it is we are learning, when we are learning. Guided by an effort to not only unpack, but to deploy hidden or secret knowledge and curriculum within and against educational models, this session explored the potential of forms, gestures and articulations that take place across great distances and expanses of time.

As a result of these efforts, we have prepared a package of materials, resources, and ephemera for you. In some cases, we have aimed to share what we found important or useful, and in other cases, we’ve tried to rework materials to our own interests, and in yet other cases, we’ve abandoned discrete goals in favour of eventual trajectories and horizons of spontaneous activity. We envision this package as a part of a correspondence project, perhaps even a form of distance education, that will be posted back and forth between us. The materials provided should be ‘completed’ as you see fit.

We encourage you to think together and apart, to develop your own vacancies and deployments or knowledge and action, and to hide in plain sight and in deep cover a curriculum that matters to you. Together, we want to imagine that a hidden curriculum is as much something we need to reveal as it is something we need to obfuscate, and that distance education is a site of praxis and generosity, negotiated collectively. What counter-hegemonies, common sense, and truant activities can we cultivate together?

We look forward to your response.

With sincerity, eventually,

Caitlin Chaisson and Justin Langlois, on behalf of The School for Eventual Vacancy
Appendix G:
Artists Statements from Film 338 Individual Projects

The Never-Land Project
Emily Langer, Robyn Berry, Meredith O’Brien

The Never-Land Project is designed to push the boundaries of critical thinking within the confines of institutionalized schooling by focusing on explorations of the unknown within hidden curriculums. We have focused on discussing unrecognized spaces within schooling systems by examining side effects of a schooling momentum by exploring allergies and diet. The personalized cookbook looks at the alternating paths students take. The personalized path will be determined by the student’s allergies and diets. This way, by observing what the students absorb in school, the reader is similarly consuming their experiences. We questioned and compared the traditional and new boundaries of education with the sole purpose of finding parallel factors that contribute to the schooling experience. The Never-Land project showcases the key qualities that are consistent within the schooling system and crucial to the development of individuals. There is value in everything that we learn in life, and the Never-Land Project aims to explore and recognize all the possibilities that can come from exploring your own hidden curriculum, and finding your own never-land.

Between the Lines
Tarreisha Agard, Adeorike, Pippa and Sharah

Between the Lines revolves around the idea of unlearning the methods which we have been taught in our conventional institutional education settings, and instead ‘reading between the lines’ of resources and publications that are presented to us. As we are a group that solely consists of individuals that identify as female, we decided it would be worthwhile incorporating our differences as far as ethnicity and heritage are concerned in order to unlearn coded messages about race, as well as gender. Rather than approaching the project in an abstract manner, we have opted for a more tangible form of art, in the form of a textbook. Externally, the book appears to be traditional, but the contents will consolidate the fact that our project is anything but a conventional textbook. The knowledge kit will place emphasis on the fact that because we are in institutional education, it isn’t second-nature for us to read between the lines. By incorporating our own interpretation of race and gender based literary texts, we hope to demonstrate the process of unlearning and encourage students and non-students alike to question and understand the content beyond what is presented in front of them.

A Tale of Two Cities: 10 Must See Places in Toronto and New York City

When one travels to a new place to explore and learn, they see certain ideas of what their travel destinations have to offer. Certain stories become the focal point of travel and the darker narratives of communities are forgotten, although they are what shape the larger picture of a city. In today’s globalized world, travel has become more accessible for people to learn about new cultures. Our goal is to challenge people’s preconceived notions of the cities they travel to and to highlight the “hidden costs” associated with travel and tourism, addressing the effects of tourism and the way in which cities adjust and cater to tourists and the traveling lifestyle rather than to local ways of life and permanent residents. A Tale of Two Cities, creates an interactive dialogue about the main side-effect from a tourist economy and the dominant overarching issue present in these two cities: homelessness. We want to educate and personalize this experience to the viewer
and make them aware of this prevalent subject matter in Toronto and New York City. The postcards create new tourist maps, quotes and statistics to communicate our message and knowledge and allow them to each have an individual experience with our installation. This process strays away from stereotypical and touristic perceptions of travelling destinations, bringing light to important issues of homelessness.

**Education Breakdown**

**Alex Barrett, Matthew Corolis, Pat Sainsbury, and Ryan Wilson-Bennett**

Post-secondary education rates within Canada and the US have risen steadily since the 1950's post-war economic boom. Under 100,000 Canadian students were enrolled in post-secondary schooling in 1951, a number that now sits at well over 2,000,000. Even so, there are currently numerous widespread problems in the field of institutional education. Exacerbated by rapid and exponential growth in the field of technology, students face problems related to communication and knowledge consumption that previous generations did not encounter. The shift from text to alternative means of information display (LCD / LED screens) has made knowledge increasingly hard to digest and has given rise to newfound distractions in the form of computers and cell phones. Modern methods of instruction (online and video-based lectures, Massive Open Online Courses), have led to potential revolutions in the way knowledge is received. Coupled with fundamental developments in the way humans interact through social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), the contemporary post-secondary student has been placed within a demanding environment where adaptation is a necessity; and, in addition to the aforementioned issues, the job market remains incredibly hostile.

*Education Breakdown* attempts is to assess and critique the current modes of instruction and reception that define institutional education. Ideal strategies of learning and communication are to be revealed through the consultation of professors, students, and administration officials. The almost exclusively one-way exchange of knowledge between student and professor is also addressed. Combined with depictions of unorthodox methods of learning, it is to be argued that historical methods of learning and communication need to drastically change in order to keep pace with such a continually changing society.


*The Anonymous Guide to Better Etiquette* is an essential reference manual for the modern hacker. Don't get caught behaving badly --the repercussions could be enormous. Instead, follow our simple instructions on how to maintain a clear and consistent image when working online. Learn to use the destabilizing power of technology to build a consistent brand name people can trust. Our goal with this work is to critique the growing institutionalization of 'hacking' and the mainstreaming of hacker culture. The package we received from *The School for Eventual Vacancy* presents challenges to the combination of hegemonic power and information control. Our response is to turn our focus to the realm of digital information, and the power of the hacker as a destabilizing force. Institutions have responded to the threats and benefits offered by these rogue agents by equally demonizing and embracing the hacker. Pop culture has responded; again trending towards either fetishizing or marginalizing the hacker image. We see many contradictions, and we see these contradictions as a sign of a powerful social group working to define their place in the social fabric. This etiquette manual is a reminder of the codependent relationship between the establishment and influential subcultures.
**Demand Attention**
Brett Hagarty, Maddie Furlong, Florian Ntibarigobeka
As you're walking through the display, take a second to clear your mind of any pre-conceived notions you may have about what ‘education’ means. Be open-minded, ready to accept what you are about to see and hear. The reason why we feel like this beginning process is so momentous is because every single person will have different interpretations at the end of the exhibition. That is why to start, it is essential for everyone to be judgment-free and accepting. We are excited for this, as it will spark more dialogue and evoke more feeling in how we as a society, analyze the norms of today. Through the use of audio and the medium of collage, engaging with our piece will be straightforward, yet a mind-test as well. Once the process has begun, the guest will have formed opinions on the topics presented, and have the opportunity to reflect on that opinion through the last phase of our exhibit. We hope that our audience will leave with more questions, rather than answers (shocking, I know), because we believe that our purpose for knowledge lies in front of the idea that the more you don’t know, the more you seek to know and vice versa.

**The Uncommon Core Workbook**
Megan Burns, Erica Headley, Julia Scheel
*The Uncommon Core Workbook* is a school exercise booklet aimed at dismantling the automative techniques of answering worksheets that is encouraged in traditional educational systems. We ask individuals interacting with the booklet to question their perception of common sense, and what makes an answer correct. The varying pages of questions, exercises and drills address both utopian thinking that many of these traditional forms of educational practices convey, as well as hidden curriculums.

Utopian idealism and concepts of perfectionism are revealed within homework and in-class work expected to be executed to achieve a perfect solution and a correct answer. Furthermore, they are built on the principle that by practicing and repeating pre-determined steps and formulas, one can arrive at a pre-determined result. Based on this understanding of the traditional exercise booklet, “The Uncommon Core Workbook” follows a non-linear format to showcase both the crisis of creativity, and the hidden curriculum of the educational system. The Uncommon Core Workbook highlights the notion that since common sense is viewed as the foundation of all knowledge, in order to begin to unlearn and reveal the hidden, steps must be taken to change what common sense is. Through taking time to fill in “The Uncommon Core Workbook”, questions will be raised that will encourage redefining the ‘correct’ or learned understanding of the individual.

**2:33**
Fenton Isaacs, Adam Gavin Mott, Kala Raju, Miranda Ramnares
Our piece critiques the structure of filmic language and the values presented by digital media. We wish to demonstrate this critique by reformatting what is expected of a film. End can come before the beginning, or exist solely in the middle. Regardless of placement, the “form” of the actual piece remains true, the only aspect that has changed is that of viewer expectancy. Akin to how one learns math, events do not gain importance due to the order in which they flow, yet at the same time they do. By unlearning the methods of filmmaking, we hope to present a discussion on the semiotics of media, and how symbols and signifiers are cast and given power. In this assumption, one can derive meaning from non-linearity and the inherent weight of narrative structure.
Our accompanying physical component illustrates the very physical creation of such a film. While the information contained within the digital film is fluid and in a way non-existent in its lack of physicality, it is nonetheless derived from the physical world. By making the physical, and mundane aspects of film accessible to visitors of our exhibit, we present the remove between the physical and digital and examine how the deification of media occurs.

Desire 101
Rochéa D’Souza, Callie Mathieson, Mickayla Pike
In Desire 101 the artists address the question How do you educate desire? Through a satirical short film, inspired by the popular instructional videos of the 1950s, the artists reveal the hidden lessons provided by the world around us and blatantly state the expectations society has of women today. The artists first began to answer this question by asking themselves that if we can educate desire, what is it that we desire or better yet, what does society teach us to desire? Desire 101 speaks to the underlying messages that inform our desires, but are rarely said openly. It highlights what we believe to be successful, including high beauty standards, or what it means to have the “perfect” career and life. While the content of the educational videos from the past has evolved, the basic message is very similar to the expectations and aspirations of people today. Furthermore, the inequalities that were obvious in the past have manifested itself in society and has more covertly influenced what is desirable to the most people.