

Daniel T. Barney

# Editorial

**Volume 39**  
**Sub/Verse**

## Editorial: Sub/Verse

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Are there practices within the field of art education that are in need of subversion? The theme of JSTAE volume 39 is Sub/Verse, which is closely connected to the word subvert. To subvert can mean to challenge and undermine a conventional idea, form, or genre. The cover of this volume highlights a gallery space called Washer / Dryer Projects, conceived of by the multidisciplinary artist, programmer, designer, and educator, Mitchell Barton.<sup>1</sup> Ellie Goldrup's work *Burgeoning Friendship with a Potential False Start* is exhibited (see cover) in the dual-purpose space that alternates as Barton's private basement laundry room and semi-public gallery located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Barton explains,

*The gallery functions as an unconventional space where artists can experiment in an abnormal/less-than-ideal art context outside of major art centers. We don't have openings or events—the space is committed to being mostly private and inaccessible in a physical sense, but all work is documented and can be viewed online on the Washer / Dryer Projects website.*  
(personal communication, July 26, 2019)

As the Editor of JSTAE, I looked for a project for the cover of this volume that embraced the ideas surrounding the call (see [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jstae/JSTAE\\_39\\_CFP.pdf](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jstae/JSTAE_39_CFP.pdf)). In my search, I wondered if subversion nowadays is really all that subversive? Standards that are beacons for an improved future seem to be subverted on a regular basis while harmful, oppressive standards are often held up and reinforced. Mitchell Barton's humble attempt, however, to build a community of contemporary art in close proximity to his apartment with his limited resources

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Barton is an artist working in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. He works primarily with photography and digital mediums. His work has been shown in galleries and online by Self Publish Be Happy, CUAC, Humble Arts Foundation, Ain't Bad, Der Greif, the Lithuanian Photographers Association, Phases Magazine, BANAL BANAL, The Light Factory, and others. He also runs a small online-based gallery in his basement laundry room called Washer / Dryer Projects (see <https://washer-dryer-projects.com>).

of time or finances resonated with me as an art educator looking for generative destabilizations. Barton's questions about (in)accessibility, aesthetics, presence, collaboration, and bricolage led him to ask, what if I subverted current standards of curation, presentation, and production? The simple question of "what if I had shows in here?" (see block quote below and Figure 1) inspires me, as an art educator, to encourage my own students to create beyond normalized limits of how and where art is to be shown, how it should be generated, and how/where/and by whom it may be accessed (see Figure 2). Barton explains his project in the following:

*After living in Salt Lake City for a few months, my family and I moved to a new apartment. The new apartment had an amazingly rugged and run-down laundry room, which sparked the question of "what if I had shows in here?" The laundry room was so far away from the typical white cube, that it seemed exciting and interesting to confront the challenge of getting artists to experiment in the space. I started to hash out the idea and decided to embrace all of my family's current circumstances and the limitations of the space as a way of making it unique, but also easy for me to manage. The space is not open to the public because I have a full-time job, a wife and a child, and I didn't want to put pressure on my wife to take appointments during the day while she's taking care of a baby. It seemed right to go even further with this idea, in that we don't have events or openings for exhibitions. The gallery is technically only open while we are doing laundry. Through these limitations, other forms of dissemination and experience have been emphasized, with all shows being documented and available to view online and through social media. By also focusing on the tiny budget we have for the gallery, it has allowed me to collaborate a bit more with artists who exhibit in the space through the install process and communication beforehand, primarily those that are not from Utah. Through this work I hope that a community (although not physical) can be nourished, ideas can be exchanged, and new ways of looking at and showing art can be created.*

(personal communication, July 31, 2019)



Figure 1, "Deep Space Laundry" - Group show curated by Jon Feinstein - (From left clockwise) Azikiwe Mohammed, Joy Drury Cox, Harold Diaz, Amelia Bauer

Volume 39 of JSTAE includes seven provocative responses from twelve scholars that address Sub/Verse as a theme within art education social theory discourse. Each of the authors remind us that the actions we often hold up as subversive might be "kinda subversive, kinda hegemonic" (Sedwick, 1995, p. 15) and are in continued need of scrutiny, play, and/or undermining.

**Gloria J. Wilson and Sara Scott Shields** offer a subversive poetry through the methodological lens of duoethnography that upsets the practices and procedures of a status quo pedagogy by transforming a conceptualization of we in significant ways. Wilson's and Shields' theories, methods, and models act as a brave counter narrative and crucial conversation.

**Christopher Lynn** creates an artistic character called, *Misplaced Wall*. This character performs its function within a series of photographs and videos where it

subverts the usual understandings about how a wall should behave or act. Lynn suggests artists and educators should subvert boundaries through building and erasing since all practices are provisional and up for negotiation.

**Albert Stabler and Jorge Lucero** share personal narratives from two teaching sites where they unpack the affordances and limitations of their corresponding schools, attempting to subvert systematic oppressions and limits by amplifying localized expressions of political energy.

**Kimberly Mast** exhorts educators to subvert standard pedagogical models of art history as well as the western *canonical*, "rule of law," narrative, chronology, and even methodologies. Mast offers key insights into how to reframe an education within art history that is more engaging, relevant, and personal while also examining a variety of cultural contexts relevant

to art history/natural history through interdisciplinary collaborative inquiry.

**Kira Hegeman** shares a three-part public art intervention series working with several collaborators and sites that generated pedagogical experiences that unsettle standard pedagogical experiences within a formal university setting. Hegeman frames these experiences as pedagogical encounters that function as “artful tactics.”

**Mindi Rhoades and Vittoria S. Daiello** present a subversive collaborative artmaking-writing strategy they call *losing + founding poetry* that subverts established ways of reading and writing academic texts.

**Natalie LeBlanc, Valerie Triggs, and Rita Irwin** subvert standard mentor relationships using artistic strategies and concepts to generate co-mentoring or relational mentoring reimaginings. Thinking through duration, discernment, and diffraction as concepts

within an artistic process of learning, LeBlanc, Triggs, and Irwin present three narratives, or *turns*, of how they overturn traditional mentor hierarchies.

- Daniel T. Barney  
JSTAE Editor

#### References

Sedgwick, E. K. (1995). *Queer performativity: Henry James's the art of the novel*. *GLQ*, 1(1), 1-16.



Figure 2. “Whoosh” - by Catharine Maloney

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