Artist Residencies as Complex Contexts for Creative Growth:

The Stories of Eight Artists


Carianna Arredondo

**Abstract**

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Contemporary artist residencies are institutions or programs that enable artists to develop their practice beyond the confines of their typical work setting. Increasingly, they are also a means to access significant material, interpersonal, and professional resources, and a medium through which to engage with local communities. In response to these developments, the present interview-based study aims to understand how artists develop within a community context by investigating the work and experiences of eight artists who have participated in community-based residencies across—and sometimes beyond—the United States. By collecting each artist's narrative and supplementing it with documents, images, and auto-reflections of their artwork, the study investigates the complex network of characteristics that help facilitate the creative process. Furthermore, by canvassing research from fields like social psychology, business management, and arts education, it explores the relations of educational reciprocity that emerge between artists and residency communities. This study suggests that the complex physical and interpersonal dynamics of each residency environment contributed in distinctive ways to the artists' development. It also notes that each unique residency program provided support for the use of new materials, the exploration of new practices, and the investigation of new content. The residency characteristics that were most conducive to creative growth included (1) difference from one's typical working environment; (2) access to new (and sometimes unconventional) materials, tools, and facilities; (3) social opportunities such as shared meals and public forums to

cultivate relationships with residency cohorts; and (4) ample time (usually 1–2 months) and space (access to both private and public studios) to settle into the residency environment, explore one's artistic practice (and the practice of other resident artists), and foster relationships among cohorts, staff members, and community visitors. Ultimately, this study argues that artist residencies can contribute to the field of non-formal art education by serving as a relational framework for artists and their residency communities.

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# Acknowledgements

I am eternally grateful to the Art and Art Education faculty, staff, and my colleagues at Teachers College, who have continually challenged, inspired, and empowered me throughout my academic career. I have grown into a confident leader and advocate within my own community, and I know that all of this was possible due to the resources and relationships I accessed and fostered during my time at Teachers College. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my committee: Dr. Judith Burton, Dr. Joy Moser, and Dr. Olga Hubard for their mentorship, love, and support, and to my fourth reader, Dr. Nicole Furlonge, for her feedback and encouragement.

To my eight artist participants in this dissertation, thank you for your honesty, and thank you for sharing your artistic journeys with me. I hope that I have done your voices some justice, and that your unique stories contribute to a larger discussion surrounding the future of artist residency programs. You are all incredible individuals, and I will continue to cheer for your success.

A special thanks to my family, my friends spread out all over the globe, and to my partner John; it's been a wild ride, and I'm glad you've all been by my side to offer words of encouragement, to check in, and to simply "be there." I'd like to especially thank my dear friend, Rebecca Buening, who dedicated so much of her time listening to me during some of my darkest moments and helping me along the way. It truly does take a village, and I couldn't be more grateful.

C. A.

# Dedication

*This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Adam Arredondo.*

*Dad, in your own unique way, you have taught me the value of curiosity, resourcefulness, and drive, and instilled within me a desire for learning and true creativity.*

*To the man who taught me to swim so that I could grow up to soar.*

*I'll look out for your pennies from heaven, and butterflies.*

**Chapter I**

**Introduction**

I have interacted with professional artists, to varying degrees, for over thirteen years. During this period, I began to notice that artists who had participated in several artist residencies wielded a particular confidence when communicating about their practice and ideas. As an artist myself, when reflecting back on my own practice, I also noticed that I often created my strongest artworks outside the confines of my everyday studio space—for example, in the urban landscape of Taipei, Taiwan, in the mesas of Abiquiu, New Mexico, in rural scapes across the Midwest, as well as in my hometown of San Antonio, Texas. As I got the opportunity to explore ever more locations and communities while working for a number of artists and residency programs, I witnessed how uprooting one's studio space influences an artist's creative process. From these informal observations, I began to speculate about how working within new spaces or communities might foster creativity, ultimately contributing to the development of an artist's work.

When I began my journey as a scholar within the field of art education, I became particularly interested in cultivating knowledge and developing research around artist residencies. In the past six years, I have completed projects and conducted studies that examined the development of the artist in communal spaces. These conversations shed light on the importance of artists' social interactions for their creative growth, especially when participating in residencies that require them to travel outside of their familiar territories. The projects also indicated how mobility enhances creativity and spurs innovative thinking. As the evolution of my research progressed, each study, though unique, revealed common threads, or what I began to call "pillars" upon which these organizations have built success: art pedagogy, culturally relevant

pedagogy, and place-based pedagogy. While I expanded upon these themes that served as pillars

for my research, I realized that I had overlooked a characteristic that may play a crucial role in

the trajectory of my inquiry: the relationship between travel and creativity. This led to a pilot

study that I conducted in 2018 to examine the artistic trajectory of five artists who have traveled

informally and participated in artist residency programs. From these conversations, it became

clear that the participants' artistic growth was not so much the product of traveling and working

in a new or different space, but rather of engaging with communities that were different from

their own. These studies have led me to develop this dissertation, in which I interview eight

extraordinarily unique practicing artists about their experiences participating in a wide spectrum

of residency programs across a vast community landscape.

**Background to the Problem**

***Defining Artist Residencies and Community-based Residencies***

While the historical representation of artist residencies has drastically shifted over time,[1]

contemporary artist residencies can be defined as institutions or programs that "give artists the

opportunity to live and work outside of their usual environments, providing them with time to

reflect, research, or produce work" (Neuendorf, 2016, para. 1). Furthermore, recent trends have

shown that artist residencies have begun to incorporate elements of community engagement and

public outreach into their mission and residency programming. Thus community-based artist

residencies can be defined as residencies that place an emphasis on public outreach through a

variety of programs, including, but not limited to, open studios, artist talks and readings,

performances, workshops, potlucks, and so on.

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[1] See Chapter II, Literature Review, for an in-depth review of artist residency history.

*Preliminary Case Studies*

**T Residency, Teen Arts Council | Texas | 2016.** Prior to this study, I completed several qualitative studies on the topic of artist residencies and artistic development. This research began in 2016 with a study of the Teen Arts Council, a high-school-based internship program that existed within T Residency, in Texas. Because adolescence is a time when people begin to form particular interests, opinions, and ideas, the artistic process can serve as a resource to help young minds engage with powerful histories, cultures, and societies. Thus, my study focused on how artist residencies could potentially help to foster adolescent artistic development. I found that this particular organization used guided conversations, creative making, and opportunities to engage with current resident artists as means to help students learn more about the resident artists, themselves, and each other:

> [The] Teen Arts Council and leading educational directors have had opportunities to engage in dialogue about both ubiquitous and deeply personal ideas, relationships, and histories that were prevalent to the members. Most importantly, teens, artists, and educators were able to foster and facilitate a conversation around the relationships between art, the world, and the self through interactions with the AIR program and participating artist-residents. Identifying the consistencies in overlap between such themes [could] allow educators the prospect of cultivating a repertoire of guided discourse about race, history, ethics, and culture, guided by both the educator and artists, but driven by adolescents and young adults whom these conversations ultimately impacted. I noticed that, through enabling meaningful moments over conversations in the AIR space, teens could explore and redefine their own outlooks and perceptions grounded in a more culturally relevant pedagogy. (Arredondo, 2016, p. 23)

**N Residency | California | 2017.** While my study with T Residency focused on understanding adolescents' artistic and identity development, my subsequent research at N Residency, in the Bay area, broadened to include themes of place-based and culturally relevant (or responsive) pedagogy. N Residency is unique because it emphasizes sustainability, ecology, and recycling by giving resident artists access to recycled materials collected by the city. It also features community engagement like educational tours and studio visits. The research shed light

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on how artist residencies facilitate artistic and identity development for both artists and visitors; local artists are given the opportunity to respond to a specific site, while visitors are given the chance to respond to the artist's work and to engage with the artists and their process. I thus concluded that:

> ... this co-generative dialogue, facilitated by both the visitor and the artist, brings forth ideas surrounding collaborative meaning making in art, geared towards a more democratized artistic practice. (Arredondo, 2017, p. 72)

Indeed, one resident artist reflected:

> Unless I'm able to interact with the public or the viewer or the gallery-goer, whoever it happens to be, then the interchange isn't complete, because I'm not just [about] creating art in a cave, right? There has to be dialogue. There has to be a way in which people can reflect and understand on their own terms … wherever they happen to be, their reaction, their emotions, their points of view based on what they see in the visual arts. (personal communication, January 24, 2017)

**Artist Interviews | New York | 2018.** Building upon this research trajectory, the pilot study portion of my qualifying papers investigated the relationship between travel and creativity. This involved qualitative interviews with five practicing artists on their informal travel experiences and formal artist residency experiences. Each of the five artists demonstrated that, more so than traveling to new environments, it was engaging with different cultures that fostered artistic development. Moreover, those who had participated in residency programs with community projects and workshops described these residencies as profound experiences that stimulated their creative and mental growth. One participant (Sam—pseudonym) summarized this idea as follows:

> We should be humble about our ability to decide what it is we need for ourselves. We should be putting ourselves in situations where environment and context and listening and learning are more about the other thing … travel, I think, it is slightly chafing to what's comfortable and art needs challenge … if your life circumstance allows you to leave the country, you will gain an extra nitro-boost to your experience. But mainly the idea is like disrupting whatever is your norm. If all you're around is white people, maybe try something else. If all you're around is English speaking, fill in the blank; urban, rural,

whatever it is that is part of your normal … if you're entirely a meat eater, go to a place that only serves vegetarian; you could have an epiphany. You could just … that kind of thing could be spending time a half hour away from where you live. (personal communication, July 27, 2018)

**Piloting Interview Protocols | New York | 2019.** If immersing oneself in a new cultural environment is an effective way to stimulate creativity, then interacting with people within the community can further enhance the artist's creative growth. Thus, I began to direct my attention towards artist residencies that incorporate community-based learning within their mission. In my most recent study, I investigated two artist residencies located in Manhattan that emphasize community–artist interaction and educational reciprocity. During the process, I was able to pilot my interview questions with the participating resident artists and program administrators. Based on this short study, I was able to learn more about how the history, community, and multi-layered landscapes of each site shape institutional programming, resulting in unique residencies and irreplicable residency experiences.

Each of the aforementioned studies shed light on how artist residencies facilitate complex relationships between artists, communities, and places, ultimately leading to growth. Despite their unique themes and vantage points, they each revealed common threads about residency experiences and their possible relevance for art education. I began to call these the "pillars" upon which art organizations build their success: art pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and place-based pedagogy. Paired with the relationship between travel and creativity, as explored in my 2018 research, these findings led me to develop this dissertation proposal.

**Problem Statement**

A range of studies in the field of art education examine artists' participation in residencies within academic institutions, and especially artist partnerships within classroom

settings (Remer, 1996). Additionally, many studies have investigated how artists contribute to the development of different kinds of communities. However, few studies have addressed artists' participation in residencies set within local communities, despite the increasing prevalence and centrality of such residencies in various community settings. Furthermore, existing research does not focus on the impact that residencies have on artists' development, or on how community factors combine to contribute to the development of the artist (Jeffers, 2017), focusing instead on artists' impact on the institution/community setting. Given this gap, my research seeks to investigate the experiences and interactions that occur between artist participants and audience participants within community-based artist residencies. This could reveal how artist residencies might function as agents of artistic development and broader creative learning.

This study will interweave three strains of literature—artistic pedagogy (Burton, Dewey, Billmayer, Wagner, Keuchel), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, Caroll, Friere), and place-based pedagogy (D. Sobel, Ball, Lai, Graham)—to investigate atmospheric relationships and explore creative development. It will also consider the psychological aspects of travel and its effects on cognition, creative thinking, and imagination. Because relations of reciprocity and travel are characteristic of artist residencies, the study assumes that artist residencies can be valuable spaces for artistic, democratic, and cultural learning in which all participants exercise agency in their education and the education of others, thus contributing to the development of participating artists. Given this assumption, the study asks "how can residencies serve as a hub for community engagement, conversation, imagination, and artistic growth?"

While there is significant literature in the field of art education that surveys topics like art pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and place-based pedagogy, gaps still exist when it comes to understanding how these pedagogical philosophies converge, especially in the context

of artist residencies. Thus, the present study offers a theoretical framework for the study of residency programs and their impact on artists' development.

**Research Question**

Given that different forms of artist residencies have existed in the United States since the late 1900s and often function as a means to foster the creative development of participating artists, what can be learned from exploring the ways in which an artist works, learns, and develops within a community-based residency context, as told through the narratives and reflections of eight practicing artists?

*Sub-Questions*

1. Which specific factors in a community context become particularly salient in fostering the educational experiences and development of an individual artist? To what extent are these determinants consistent across diverse placements or specific to individual situations and artist dispositions?

2. Given that there are a number of factors, both situational and personal, that foster the development of community-based artists, how do these factors emerge across diverse community placements, and what specific developmental trajectories do they enable? For example, what role do residency staff, community visitors, and participants play in challenging or inhibiting artists' development?

**Assumptions Not to Be Debated**

- Given that diverse experiences provide multiple environments for artistic growth, creativity can be fostered through lived experiences in different spaces and places.

- Given the increased funding for artistic pursuits in community settings, more artists have begun to work within community education.

- Given that artistic experiences enable multimodal learning—visual, logical, verbal, aural, and physical—artist residencies can serve as centers for fostering multimodal knowledge.

- Given that exposure to different communities stimulates the development of an individual's self-concept, and given that arts and culture are essential to healthy, vibrant, and equitable community development (Americans for the Arts, 2015), artists and community members in community-based artist residencies contribute to each other's betterment. In this study, this mutual betterment is regarded as reciprocity.

**Assumptions to Be Debated**

- Given that new experiences can stimulate artistic growth, artist residencies can provide specific kinds of environments that facilitate new thinking and creative action.

- Given that artistic practice draws upon multiple and diverse experiences to work through sensory/creative problems, artist residencies can present integrated and interdisciplinary challenges that foster creative agency within communities.

- Given that exposure to diverse groups and communities can nurture the development of an individual's self-concept, working with various communities can enrich an artist's self-concept as a creator.

- Given that traveling to new sites exposes an individual to new environments, situations, and populations, artist residency programs provide contexts within which artists can grow.

**Educational Aims**

- To gain a deeper understanding of the different types of artist residency programs that exist across the varied regions of the United States and how they contribute to an artist's development.

- To obtain insight into the ways in which artist residencies negotiate relationships between resident artists and their respective surrounding communities.

- To acquire a greater understanding of the challenges and successes that artists encounter when working in a new studio space.

- To identify the specific benefits of artist residency programs that emphasize community engagement and understand how they foster artistic development.

- To better understand the educational implications of reciprocal learning between resident artists and the individuals with whom they interact throughout the residency cycle.

**Limits of the Study**

*Research Method*

This interview-based study used a qualitative, narrative inquiry method to extract experiential, interpersonal, and contextual information. Narratives were collected from eight established artists who had participated in artist residency programs in the U.S. and beyond, one or more of which were community-based artist residencies. The interview data was triangulated with documentation[2] gathered from each artist participant and various residency sites. Together, these processes enabled me to construct individual portraits for each artist participant based on their experiences, and to find thematic patterns and developmental trends across these

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[2] Texts and documents obtained from online resources on residency site(s), demographic information on neighboring community, and bibliographic information on participating resident artist.

experiences. This information shed light on how artist residency programs cultivate the creative growth of visiting artists by exposing them to different types of communities.

## *Participant Selection*

This study did not discriminate based on sexuality, gender, race, class, or age; instead, it restricted its focus to artist participants, as these individuals possess the skills and knowledge essential to carrying out the study. Inclusion criteria were (1) had participated in a community-based residency site located in the United States within the last 5 years (2015–2020); (2) had participated in more than one artist residency; and (3) had maintained a professional artistic practice for more than five years. Because the aim of this investigation is to identify and understand what specific factors within a community context become salient in fostering the educational experiences and development of an individual artist, I defined community-based residency sites as those that have a reputation for community engagement and a calendar of public programming. After determining eligible artist participants based on research, recommendations, and snowball sampling, recruitment letters were emailed to prospective participants.

## *Tools*

This investigation used two different types of data: (1) texts and documents representing the different residency sites attended by the respective artist participant, which were collected and analyzed alongside articles and information about the artist participants' professional career trajectories; and (2) online, semi-structured interviews with each artist participant—one initial interview, followed by an additional, follow-up interview at a later date.

## Theoretical Framework

This study will interweave three strains of literature—artistic pedagogy (Burton, Dewey, Billmayer, Wagner, Keuchel), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, Caroll, Friere), and place-based pedagogy (Sobel, Ball, Lai, Graham)—to investigate atmospheric relationships and explore reciprocity. It will also consider the psychological aspects of travel and its effects on cognition, creative thinking, and imagination. Because relations of reciprocity and travel are characteristic of artist residencies, the study assumes that artist residencies can be valuable spaces for art education that contribute to the development of their participating artists.

**Role of the Researcher and Justification**

As mentioned by John and J. David Creswell (2018): "[q]ualitative research is interpretive research; the inquirer is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants"; thus, we must consider how the researcher's role affects this particular investigation (p. 183). For the purpose of this study, my role encompasses that of the interviewer, the observer, the artist, and an individual who has experience with a broad spectrum of artist residency programs. While these experiences and my positionality may grant important insights into the topic at hand, they also introduce bias and subjectivity into the research process, which may inform the study's conclusions.

**Overview of Chapters**

Chapter I presents the background to the problem, including the preliminary studies that led to the evolution of the present dissertation topic. Based on the operative definition of residency programs broadly, and community-based residency programs in particular, and given the myriad theoretical "pillars" that presage this research, it introduces the notion that artist residencies are complex contexts for artistic growth. The dynamics of this complexity are the subject matter of this study.

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Chapter II presents a fuller account of the literature associated with this research. The first section, *Historical Shifts in the Role of Art and Artist Residencies*, reviews the history of artist residency programs and their changing characteristics over time. The following sections, *Art Pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy,* and *Place-based Pedagogy*, introduce the main pillars of the pedagogical framework. The last section, *Travel and Creativity,* explores the relationship between wanderlust and creative habits.

Chapter III sets forth the methodological details of the research design, explaining the choice of a qualitative, interview-based study and the respective methods for data collection and analysis. Furthermore, this section discusses the participant inclusion criteria and the ethical measures implemented to protect participants' anonymity.

Chapter IV presents the findings in two parts: Part I, *Portraits of the Artist Participants* and Part II, *Cross-Case Themes*. Part I elucidates the developmental experiences, including prior residencies, that the artists brought to the study. Part II examines the overlaps in the participants' residency experiences, demonstrating the common methods by which different residency programs support artists' exploration of new materials, practices, and content.

Chapter V discusses the findings within the context of the literature presented in Chapter II to further clarify how artist residency programs contribute to the learning and growth of adult artists. In response to the research question, "what factors within a community context foster the artistic development of individual artists," the data revealed that "community" assumed a variety of meanings and roles within a larger network that lived within and beyond the residency "ecosystem." Some of these manifestations of community provoke ethical questions about the motivations behind community-based residency programs and how these programs can pursue their missions without compromising the integrity of artists or surrounding communities.

Chapter VI presents the educational implications of this study and summarizes how residency programs can be viewed and utilized as sites for learning, both for artists and community members. By revisiting the research question and sub-questions, this dissertation explains how artist residency programs and their participants can utilize the findings of this dissertation to pivot towards democratic learning: art education for the artists and community, by the artists and community.

Chapter VII summarizes the main points of this dissertation and presents recommendations for further study.

**Chapter II**

**Literature Review**

**Introduction**

In order to provide a preliminary framework for this dissertation, Chapter II elaborates upon the history of artist residencies in Euro-America, noting the three pedagogical "pillars" of art pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and place-based pedagogy as well as research relating to travel and creativity. Although these pedagogical pillars are traditionally used to explore school-based contexts, I argue that they are equally powerful as a framework for understanding the context of artist residency programs. This framework elaborates on the different modes of learning that occur within residencies, and the entry points to learning that residency programs provide.

**Historical Shifts in the Role of Art and Artist Residencies**

*Europe: Classical* Schole, *Early Modern Grand Tours, and Enlightenment-Era Art Voyages*

Contemporary ideas about the value of art, art education, and artist residencies are still largely informed by intellectual traditions from 25 centuries ago. Darras (2015) outlines the Greek and Roman concepts of *schole* and *otium*, which described leisurely "free" time that was intended to be filled with the accumulation of wisdom. The goal was to achieve "an intellectual life that elevates the spirit" (p. 62), as this is what constituted the real "profession of man," and it could only be attained through education (p. 62). However, this free time for spiritual/intellectual edification was only available to the privileged and powerful ruling class. As such, artworks produced by members of this class were deemed of higher value than those of "craftsmen" who were forced to work for wages or commissions. Even throughout the Renaissance, most working

artists still relied on the patronage of wealthy aristocrats for their financial support, and the artwork they created served to edify the patron rather than the artist themselves.

Monarchs were among the patrons who sought to elevate themselves through their support for the arts. Indeed, according to The Goethe Institut, French monarchical art patronage sparked the birth of artist residencies. In 1666, French artists began competing for the "Prix de Rome," a prize awarded by King Louis XIV (Hütter & Alexander, n.d., p. 1). Recipients of this prize were given the opportunity to study abroad at the Academie de France in Rome. However, this award came with a caveat: "the artists returning to France were expected to use their newly acquired skills to glorify Louis XIV in their artworks and to represent and legitimize his power" (p. 1). The idea became popular as other nations followed in France's footsteps and sent artists to Rome for residencies (p. 1), or as aspiring artists undertook travel to various European countries in a practice that became known as the "Grand Tour."

The Renaissance period of residencies was marked by "elite patronage through the Romantic tradition" and what Lithgow and Wall (2017) describe as "the artist retreating to solitude to fire (typically) his genius" (p. 12). It wasn't until the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century that scholars popularized the idea of extending the Greek/Roman notion of "liberal" education to all (male) members of society, with the intent of achieving an egalitarian, or at least more democratized, society (Darras, 2015, p. 64). At this point, art production became less of a vocation and more of a discipline, as can be seen in the French Academic art movement, and international art-related travel for young artists' technical development extended beyond Europe to the Near East, Northern Africa, and even the Polynesian Islands. Of course, such artistic education was still only available to rather wealthy individuals, and the relationships it engendered between the artists and the communities they visited were still largely extractive.

Even in the 1900s, artist residencies maintained a similar function, with benefactors in the United Kingdom and United States providing guest studios to artists, or artists escaping to countryside communes to cultivate their art (Hagoort et al., 2010, p. 6).Thus, for the majority of its existence in Euro-America, artist residencies have served as retreats that give artists the opportunity to maintain and expand their studio practice.

### *The United States: Funding the Arts as a National Economic and Cultural Initiative*

The initiative to integrate more working artists within communities began during the mid-1900s (Tate Museum, n.d.), following Roosevelt's New Deal strategies to stimulate the economy during the Great Depression. Among the millions of jobless Americans were several thousand artists. Hence, George Biddle (1885–1973)—a painter and childhood friend of President Roosevelt—requested that artists be included in the 1933 Civil Works Administration (Smith, 1984, p. 58). Though this initiative was short-lived, it eventually informed the Federal Art Project (FAP), which was part of Federal Project Number One (Federal One) in Roosevelt's New Deal and Works Progress Administration. Come March 1935, there were 4,986,000 citizens on relief in the United States. The majority of these workers were employed through manual labor construction projects, though 10 percent were employed in white collar positions, and one percent were linked to the Federal Arts Program (Romasco, 1983, p. 198).

**Table 1**

*List of Roosevelt's Federal Projects for Federal Project Number One*

| Federal project | Description |
|---|---|
| The Federal Music Project | "…[sought to] establish high standards of musicianship, to rehabilitate musicians by helping them to become self-supporting, to retrain musicians, and to educate the public in |

| | |
|---|---|
| | the appreciation of musical opportunities" (The Library of Congress, n.d.-b). |
| The Federal Arts Project | "… sought to bring art and artists into the everyday life of communities throughout the United States, through community art centers, exhibitions and classes" (The Library of Congress, n.d.-a). |
| The Federal Writers' Project | "… [intended to] produce a series of sectional guide books under the name American Guide, focusing on the scenic, historical, cultural, and economic resources of the United States" (The Library of Congress, n.d.-d). |
| The Federal Theater Project | "… [intended to] serve as a national cultural resource--a national theater--to reach new and diverse audiences and serve as a force for social change" (The Library of Congress, n.d.-c). |

Federal One (1935–1943) spearheaded the changing face of American art and culture. It included four sub-projects (Table 1), which, according to Smith (1984), shared three common elements: (1) they emphasized and embraced American content; (2) they tended to be grassroots and anti-big business, despite persisting governmental relations; and (3) they encouraged artist collaboration within local communities (p. 61). The results of the projects were impressive: during its 10-year lifespan, the Federal Arts Project employed thousands of artists and performers and produced an estimated 700,000 works, many of which were murals; the Federal Music Project composed and presented 250,000 recitals before an audience of around 158 million people; in four years, the Federal Theater Project performed over 60,000 shows before an audience of more than 30 million people; and the Federal Writers' Project generated nearly 400 writings and texts and saved much cultural and historical material through their library. The cost

of funding Federal One was equal to the cost of producing one battleship (Smith, 1984, p. 61); arguably, though, the value of these projects was more than double this figure, given the livelihood these projects bestowed and the unquantifiable impacts the programs fostered by enriching the lives of the American populace and articulating an esteemed cultural heritage. Prideful in the successes of Federal One, Roosevelt commented in his address at the dedication of the National Gallery of Art on March 17, 1941:

> A few generations ago, the people of this country were often taught … to believe that art was something foreign to America and to themselves – something imported from another continent, something from an age which was not theirs – something they had no part in, save to see in some guarded room on holidays or Sundays. … The people of this country know now … that art is not a treasure in the past or an importation from another land, but part of the present life of all the living and creating people – all who make and build. (Smith, 1984)

> Under Holger Cahill's leadership, the Federal Art Project thrived throughout the

Depression, cultivating a new strain of appreciation for specifically American art. Cahill had fashioned and defined the artistic tradition of American folk art. Jeffers (1991) explained:

> … through pioneering exhibitions, essays, and radio broadcasts he launched an inquiry into our national artistic heritage that continues to fascinate us today and has helped to create a broader audience for American art. (p. 2)

In this way, art became a means for tackling economic problems and cultural identity, and artist residencies became a means for channeling government funding to promising artists in order to further national initiatives. In some ways, this constituted a return to the 17th century French mode of artistic patronage, but with a more democratic bent.

### Euro-America: Art and Community in Progressive Movements

Within the following decades, democratic and community-based artistic initiatives would come to characterize large-scale progressive movements. Between the 1960s and mid-1980s in the United Kingdom, the Community Arts Movement emerged "from a series of conflicts at that

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time" (Jeffers, 2017, p. 39) to advocate for democratic learning and engagement. Participants believed that increasing access to modes of expression would empower communities to proactively shape the larger culture, yielding opportunities for political engagement and social change (Jeffers, 2017, p. 1).

Although it is hard to pinpoint an exact date and cause for the movement, Jeffers (2017) suggests:

> Fixing the first date as 1968 allows us to, accurately, associate the beginnings of the Community Arts Movement with the international countercultural movement of the late 1960s … [which] marks the period between 1958 and 1974 as a 'long decade' during which a 'cultural revolution' took place in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States. (p. 39)

Correspondingly, in the United States, the Community Arts Movement began in the 1960s in San Francisco, California, as a response to the U.S. cultural rebellion, better known as the "Counterculture Movement," which coincided with the Civil Rights Movement. According to Assaf (2009):

> In the Civil Rights Movement, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was closely connected to the Free Southern Theater … [t]he Chicano Arts Movement, with historically important arts activist companies such as Teatro Campesino, was inextricably linked with Latino/a struggles in the U.S. … [t]he Women's Movement saw the rise of more women in various forms of cultural production, from journalism and media to playwrights, and leaders of arts organizations and non-profits centered in feminist politics and methodologies. The Gay Rights movement gave birth to decades of solo performance art, and later during the AIDS crisis, the work of activist organizations such as Act Up! and allies could not be separated from mass cultural demonstrations such as Day Without Art and the AIDS quilt. The artistic movements, even if viewed by some as marginal, have always been central to the impact of political change on the hearts and minds of people. (para. 3)

These initiatives ignited a social and artistic revolution, leading to a further "horizontalization" of access to art and art making, including to social groups that had largely been excluded from Enlightenment idealism, such as women, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ community, and other minorities. Furthermore, where artist residencies were previously characterized by

isolationism, residencies and art movements after the cultural revolution came to focus on social

engagement (Badham, 2017, pp. 1–2). Artists were increasingly motivated to escape urban

society in favor of remote, communal utopias or to involve the public in art-making as a means

for sociopolitical change (Hagoort et al., 2010, p. 6). With this cultural revolution, residences

came to embody artist colonies and spaces for social interaction, a development that has

continued for the remainder of the 20th century.

### *International Stage: Artist Residencies in an Age of Globalization*

The expansion of mass media (and particularly the internet in the 1980s) bolstered these

democratizing processes, as Billmayer (2015) noted in the following passage:

> At the beginning of the 20th century, art was seen as an important field of meaning-making. The bourgeoisie determined what was on offer. The bourgeoisie frequented theaters, opera houses, and museums, they dominated the production of literature. The newspapers that targeted the middle class were the general medium of public discourse. Digital technology (ever cheaper memory) and with it the Internet (cheap and easy distribution) have more or less completely destroyed these monopolies. Today, nearly everybody can make and distribute pictures, movies, text, and music. In the social networks all over the world new discourses are emerging that find their own public. (p. 85)

Popular participation in mass media also created a culture of globalization. By the 1990s, fueled

by increasing internet access, artist residencies began to proliferate all over the world, with a

greater emphasis on grassroots agency and local knowledge (Hagoort et al., 2010, p. 6). Indeed,

non-Western residencies 'function more and more as catalysts in the local contemporary art

scene and have become indispensable for connecting the local scene with the global art world'

(p. 6). Now, artists of various nationalities and ethnic identities travel to destinations all over the

world to pursue their artistic edification.

Furthermore, this process is much more social than it had been in previous generations;

nowadays, many international residencies aim to provide opportunities for socially and

politically motivated artists to develop site-responsive projects for public interaction with local

community members. Thus, residencies have become a means for cultural exchange. According

to Lithgow and Wall (2017):

> It is only in the past 20 years or so that artist-in-residencies (AiRs) have expanded and
> emerged as important aspects of the global flow of people, money, ideas and expertise in
> the art world. The AiR is an architecture or assemblage of opportunities related to artistic
> practice with generally open-ended outcomes. Artist residencies create affordances for
> experiment, learning and creation on the part of individual artists, social exchange and
> engagement, and/or cooperation among and between professions and disciplines. (p. 1)

With this increased emphasis on collaboration, and the increasing technical means to access

information, resources, and virtual communities, there is more space to develop symbiotic

relationships, both with fellow resident artists and local populations. In this sense, the

community becomes the gallery.

What is particularly exciting and revolutionary is the unlimited potential of residency

programs; given the sheer variety of programs currently available throughout the world, there is

a suitable opportunity for every artist. Within an art world that is often plagued with elitism,

competition, and intimidation, residency programs have expanded to provide a wide range of

spaces for creativity, community, and the democratization of art practice.

### *Art Pedagogy in a Time of Scientific Advancement*

Despite these positive developments, which to some extent successfully democratize the

old ideal of "liberal" education, liberal, arts-based education is no longer the socio-culturally

dominant mode of learning, either for elites or for the general public. Since the Enlightenment,

and with increasing rapidity after the Cold War, the accompanying Space Race, and the ongoing

technology and Silicon Valley boom, scientific education has become the choice mode of

achieving individual and collective advancement, meaning that art must often compete with

science for funding and the ability to shape collective discourse. According to semiotics and

visual culture scholar Bernard Darras (2015), art education all over the globe is regularly

threatened with extinction because even its strongest advocates have never been able to convince

educational authorities of its absolute necessity in students' general education (p. 58). We

regularly see that arts programming is the first extracurricular subject to be suspended when

schools are faced with budget cuts. This defies the fact that, according to Darras, arts education

provides students with access to "Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) and Information and

Communication Technologies (ICT)" (p. 58).

These developments have various implications for current manifestations of "art

education," which have had to adapt to new trajectories and pressures. In the remainder of this

chapter, we focus on art pedagogy theories from the last century that revivify the relevance of art

as a vehicle for instruction by virtue of its ability to counteract current trends towards positivist

objectification and cultural and environmental decontextualization. These theories cast art in

three different but overlapping roles: art as a means for experiential learning, art as a means for

culturally sensitive learning, and art as a means for place-based learning. Together with

theoretical material on the links between travel and creativity, these pedagogies frame the kind of

holistic learning that takes place within artist residencies today.

**Art Pedagogy**

*Dewey and Experiential Learning*

In contrast to current pursuits of "objectivity" in technology and the sciences, theories

about art pedagogy (or art's ability to contribute to an individual's education) from the past

century have sought to emphasize the importance of subjectivity and experience, and art's unique

ability to harness these modes of knowledge. John Dewey, for example, highlighted art

education's contribution to non-hierarchical, embodied knowledge. In his formative work, *Art as*

*Experience*, Dewey (1934) presents a theoretical framework for understanding and engaging

with art, grounded in a holistic approach to experiencing artworks that nourishes our learning

and appreciation. Dewey asserts that art and civilization are analogous, as one informs the other:

> … [e]sthetic experience is a manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of civilization, a means of promoting its development, and is also the ultimate judgment upon the quality of civilization. (p. 326)

Furthermore, Dewey frames artworks as an expressive, universal form of communication:

> Every art communicates because it expresses. It enables us to share vividly and deeply in meanings … For communication is not announcing things, communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular … the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to that of those who listen. (p. 253)

Thus, learning through the arts enables audiences to participate in an ongoing socio-cultural

dialogue and to develop as individuals and as artists.

This differs from the kind of knowledge articulated in the sciences. Though Dewey

(1934) notes that art and science are both rooted in a desire to observe, express, and understand

"rhythm," or patterns, as they exist in nature,[3] and both rely on intellect and imagination,[4] he

argues that these fields diverge in their approach to meaning and experience. Where science

states meanings to define the natural world, art expresses meanings to allow us to experience the

world in an emotive way (Leddy, 2006, p. 12). Thus, Dewey conceives of art as superior to

science, as it provides greater knowledge and understanding than could be obtained from

science. In a way, this reflects the "liberal" educational ideals of the Ancient Greeks, who

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[3] "The rhythms of dawn and sunset, rain and shine, the seasons, the movements of the moon and the stars, reproduction and death, waking and sleeping, heartbeat and breath, and the rhythms involved in working with materials, were all seen by early men as having mysterious meaning related to their survival" (Leddy, 2006, p. 14)

[4] Dewey explained that artists require imagination to "see each element in the creative process in relation to the whole to be produced" (Leddy, 2006, p. 9). Similarly, the creative process could not continue without the ability to intelligently respond to each progressive step. Like any scientist, Dewey claims, artists are innately experimenters; "through experimentation, the artist opens up new areas, or reveals new qualities in the familiar" (Leddy, 2006, p. 14).

developed science as a means to create art. To them, according to Dewey, "art [was] the guiding ideal for humankind" (Leddy, 2006, p. 7).

### Mezirow, Cranton, and Transformative Learning Through the Arts

American sociologist Jack Mezirow developed the complementary theory of transformative learning in the late 1970s. According to this theory, our assumptions and experiences are meaningful and can be made "more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and options that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 76). Like Mezirow, Cranton (2009) asserted that this process involves "revision of previously unquestioned perspectives and assumptions based on critical reflection and critical *self*-reflection" (p. 2). Mezirow (2000) also asserted that it requires attention to context:

> It is so important that adult learning emphasize contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions, and validating meaning by assessing reasons. The justification for much of what we know and believe, our values and our feelings, depends on the context – biographical, historical, cultural – in which they are embedded. We make meaning with different dimensions of awareness and understanding; in adulthood we may more clearly understand our experience when we know under what conditions an expressed idea is true or justified. (p. 73)

Thus, according to Cranton (2009), adult learners are characterized by their choice to participate in activities:

> … that lead them to acquire new knowledge, skills, or values; elaborate on existing knowledge, skills, or values; revise their basic beliefs and assumptions; or change the way they see some aspect of themselves or the world around them. (p. 1)

Transformative learning cannot occur without an initial "disorienting dilemma," or what Cranton later describes as a "trigger event" (Cranton, 2009, p. 1; Mezirow, 1991, p. 197), which is an experience that provokes reflection and causes one to revisit how they understand themselves in the larger context of the world around them (Cranton, 2009, p. 2). Disorienting

dilemmas and/or trigger events can be sudden, drastic, epiphanic moments that jostle one's

assumptions and beliefs, generating transformation (Mezirow, 1991, pp. 153–155), or they can

be subtle and gradual processes that unfold over an extended period of time (Cranton, 2009;

Laros et al., 2017; Lawrence, 2016 Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Either way, they generate

"emancipatory knowledge" (Cranton, 2009, p. 1; Mezirow, 1991, p. 87).

While there has been much research on the experiences and effects of transformative

learning within adult education (from scholars such as Mezirow, Cranton, Lawrence, and Lawton

& La Porte), there is little on the experiences and effects of transformative learning within art

education (exceptions include works by scholars such as Koo, 2019; Lawrence, 2012; Lawton &

La Porte, 2013). We may assert, though, that, in addition to providing a means for social

collaboration and engagement, art also presents opportunities to assess and modify our orienting

values, and thus our relationship to life and the world around us. Because transformative learning

requires reflection and discourse on the contextual origins of our values, creativity and

imagination—which are intrinsically associative in nature—can act as a conduit for meaning

making in transformative learning. Simpson (2006) contends that:

> … [c]reative expression informs transformation. It may be considered a framework or a
> catalytic mechanism that facilitates the adult in discovering, knowing or expressing that
> which is within and waiting to be articulated for critical reflection and given meaning. (p.
> 531)

Importantly, arts-mediated transformative learning is always a relational embodied process

(Lawrence, 2016, p. 186).

### Mission Fulfilled: Franz Billmayer on Art Education and Visual Culture

The kind of transpersonal, transcendent learning advocated by Dewey and Mezirow are

hallmarks of a "humanist" education, and they rely on a notion of art as process rather than

product. However, given the professionalization and disciplining of art that occurred from the

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early 19th century through to the modernist period, there has been little distinction between art

and the artifacts that derive from it, leading to highly technical modes of instruction. While

access to art education may have expanded in fits and starts throughout this history, the

definition of art education as "the education of skills that would allow children first of all to

appreciate, and eventually to imitate and emulate, the works of the artistic canon" (van Heusden

& Gielen, 2015, p. 10) remained relatively unchanged until the past few decades.

German scholar and art educator Franz Billmayer (2015) explored this discrepancy in his

essay entitled "Mission Fulfilled, Art Education and Visual Culture," wherein he identifies two

main pillars of art education and labels them *education to art* and *education through art*. The

former involves learning the technical skills required to produce art: "[s]tudents … learn how

painting, sculptures, graphics and so on are invented, designed, and produced" (p. 78). Education

*through* art, on the other hand, involves learning to understand the world around one's self.

Billmayer discusses that *drawing,* for example:

> … is understood as a way to develop and promote the sensual perception and the sensory system. The students should learn to look at details, to be aware of their surroundings, or to understand technical functions. They even ought to become better humans. The real target lies "outside the picture." (p. 79)

Education through art echoes the idealized goal of *schole* as a means of elevating the spirit

through contemplation, and it better resembles the perspectives of certain non-Western art

traditions, such as that of East Asia, where plastic and martial arts are both processes of spiritual

self-cultivation.

As the field of art education has expanded to account for multi-disciplinary practices and

embodied cognitive and social processes, art is no longer "treated as a quality of objects – it is

rather considered to be a dimension of a complex process that involves not only imaginative

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reflection, but many other dimensions as well" (van Heusden & Gielen, 2015, p. 11).[5] Billmayer (2015) draws from Elliot Eisner's work *The Arts and the Creation of the Mind* to create a list of objectives that "reflects the main ideas and aspirations of current art education" (p. 81), as demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Ideas and Aspirations of Art Education*

| Ideas and aspirations of art education |
| --- |
| Refining the sensory system / seeing the overlooked |
| Cultivating our imaginative abilities |
| Understanding the meaning of representation |
| Becoming aware of the environment and our own consciousness |
| Cultural understanding |
| Personal transformation, development of personality and identity |
| Creativity |
| Well-being |
| Learning at school |
| Promoting creative and innovative practices in favor of the holistic, social, cultural, and economic development of societies |
| Fostering and enhancing knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural and artistic expressions |
| Fostering democracy and peace in communities and supporting construction in post-conflict societies |

*Note.* Billmayer, 2015, p. 81.

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[5] "Under a variety of guises, ranging from 'meta-modernism' via 'new pragmatism' and artistic design to engaged art, art and science, and community art, the artistic is in a sense being reintegrated in more complex forms of life that resist the all too simple mummifying distinctions of modernism" (van Heusden & Gielen, 2015, pp. 11–12).

Given this shift from art-as-product to art-as-practice, artist residencies have transformed into complex spaces for cultivating one's creative process; similarly, museums have transformed into places of cultural self-education. Though Billmayer (2015) notes the complicated role that museums play in negotiating the two aforementioned orientations to art and art education, given our current culture of consumerism,[6] Ernst Wagner argues that this is the product of logistical challenges rather than ideological positions. Wagner (2015) believes that even the most minor of details, such as lighting, the way pictures are hung, which pictures are selected, or the commentaries that may accompany the artworks, each contribute to the "story" being told. Thus, museums have the potential to allow art educators and their students to choose from a spectrum of different narratives, or even to create their own. Wagner gives examples of various narrative strategies often utilized by museums, such as chronological, developmental, geographical, thematic, etc. Each of these has their own merits and deficiencies.[7] Whatever their limitations may be, a museum's *raison d'etre* is to incite discourse. Wagner believes that this is where educators have a distinct responsibility:

> They are responsible for which stories are told, and for how (and whether) that story is made clear as a story (in an act of enlightenment). And they can show children and young people how to love museums. (p. 52)

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

In her essay "Arts Education in the Age of Cultural Diversity: A Basis to Gain Cultural Identity in a Risk Society," Susanne Keuchel (2015) discusses the need for art education to adapt to changes in society, specifically with regards to cultural diversity and how it creates "tension

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[6] According to Billmayer (2015), items on exhibit at any art museum can be thought of as "former consumer products of the social dominant class" (p. 83). It is up to the museum organizers to shift from this static, passive mode of art transmission to one that engages audiences in a co-constitutive art process.

[7] More often than not, and especially in the museums established centuries ago, the narrative is "more or less the chaotic result of an often long history of collecting" (Wagner, 2015, p. 42).

between an increasing individualization on the one hand and the need for a sense of belonging on the other" (p. 94). Keuchel posits that:

> The globalization process promotes two contrasting trends: a trend towards global cultural practices that, detached from specific national or regional peculiarities, become established predominantly through economic and medial power processes; and a resultant opposite trend towards one's own and regional specifics promoting processes of regional identity and alternatives to the global mainstream. (p. 94)

Thus, on an international stage, economic and cultural applications of art can come to compete with each other (in opposition to the complementary nature of these applications in previous European and American historical periods). Keuchel (2015) concludes that:

> … a diversity-conscious arts education can contribute to strengthening cohesion in a diverse cultural society, while at the same time providing individuals with decision making aids and freedom of choice for their own cultural biography. (p. 109)

So, in addition to art presenting a means for (1) self-improvement and (2) socio-cultural participation, it can also present a means for (3) social solidarity/cohesion, as per the results of Federal One.

### *Freire and Critical Pedagogy*

Critical pedagogy in many ways responds to Keuchel's call for a diversity-conscious art education. Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire is one of the leading advocates for critical pedagogy, and his two seminal texts, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974), advocate learning as a means to democracy and justice. Richard Shaull, who writes the forward for Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, argues that education has the potential to be transformative and freeing, should we choose to liberate our learning:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and

creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 34)

In addition to introducing the theme of emancipatory education, Freire extensively discusses an educational approach called *problem-posing education,* which serves as a possible solution to what he calls *banking education*, wherein educators *deposit* knowledge to students rather than facilitating a co-generative dialogue:

> Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits … In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. (p. 72)

Many classrooms in the United States fall victim to this banking model of education due to the high pressures of standardized testing. Consonantly, the works created in art classrooms tend to frame art as a product rather than a transformative process due to administrative hurdles and testing demands. Freire (1970) advocates for problem-posing education, wherein teaching and learning become a reflective process:

> Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation … Problem-posing education affirms [people] as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. (p. 84)

Freire (1974) argues that education must transform from a "banking" practice into a "becoming" practice if we are to humanize and democratize learning:

> Democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in [people], on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, their continent, their world, their work, the problems of democracy itself. Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality or, under pain of revealing itself as farce, avoid creative discussion. (p. 34)

Thus, what Freire envisions is an education founded on the experiences of the individual and the collective, with learning being driven by reality.

### *Ladson-Billings and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*

Mirroring critical pedagogy's focus on empowering learners, culturally responsive pedagogy also presents a means to educate students from a diverse range of backgrounds. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) coined this phrase to describe a pedagogy that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 17). Education grounded in culturally responsive pedagogy incorporates students' backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences into classroom curricula and teaching methodologies, and it acknowledges students and their unique voices to help them not only achieve academic success, but also become a critical force for change in their communities. Educators who engage in culturally relevant teaching are better able to bridge students' home and school lives while still fulfilling district and state curriculum requirements, and they differ from other educators in terms of their approach to self and others, to social relations, and to conceptions of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 478), as summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Adaptation of Gloria Ladson-Billings's Modes of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*

| Conception | Mode of action |
|---|---|
| Self and others | • Believe all students are capable of academic achievement and success<br>• See their pedagogy as art<br>• See themselves as members of the community<br>• See teaching as a way to give back to the community |
| Social relations | • Maintain fluid student-teacher relationships |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Demonstrate a connectedness with all of the students |
| | • Develop a community of learners |
| | • Encourage students to learn collaboratively and to be responsible for one another |
| Conceptions of knowledge | • Maintain that knowledge is not static; it is shared, recycled, and constructed |
| | • Believe that knowledge must be viewed critically |
| | • Believe that teachers must be passionate about knowledge and learning |
| | • Believe that teachers must scaffold or build bridges to facilitate learning |
| | • Assert that assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence |

*Note.* Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 478–492.

According to culturally responsive pedagogy, holistic approaches to educational

opportunities provide students with the potential to link their unique, classroom-based learning

experiences with other aspects of their lives. As noted by Castro (2004), such approaches involve

risk taking, inviting students to:

> … risk looking inside themselves in ways they haven't usually been asked to before.
> Such an approach is also risky for the teacher in that results are oftentimes unpredictable
> and unknown. Yet, risk taking is characteristic of creative artists. Having an existential
> question to drive the making of the art, a question that comes in contact with all that is
> important to students, causes them to find their own voice and to speak eloquently. (p.
> 56)

Given the boundary-crossing nature of culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally responsive

teaching, we might say that these approaches are inherently interdisciplinary and highly

amenable to creative practice.

**Place-Based Pedagogy**

Place-based pedagogy is a means to engage students in a dialogue about the multi-layered

systems they inhabit. This includes both the macro- and microcosms of environment, from the

ecosystems of their homes to their carbon footprint histories. According to David Sobel, an avid researcher and scholar of place-based pedagogy, place-based education is defined through:

> … the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. (Sobel, 2004, p. 6)

This particular methodical approach to learning underscores the importance of hands-on, real-world educational experiences that emphasize not only academic rigor, but also building relationships with a community of people and the surrounding environment. Sobel explains that such civic engagement also replenishes morale: "community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school" (p. 6).

### *A History of Place-Based Pedagogy*

In their article "Place-Based Pedagogy for the Arts and Humanities," scholars Eric Ball and Alice Lai examine various approaches to place-based pedagogy. Ecohumanistic place-based pedagogy began in the 1970s as a backlash to the "cosmopolitan" approach commonly adopted by institutions of higher education. Where cosmopolitanism obscures local orientations in favor of aggregated or culturally dominant perspectives, prioritizing ideas, artworks, literature, and performances that have achieved national significance, ecohumanism places importance on the local ecosystems particular to each student. According to Ball and Lai (2006), Wendell Berry excoriated colleges and universities for neglecting their mandate to serve their local communities. After all, he argued, "if an education is to be used well, it is obvious that it must be used some *where*, it must be used where one lives, where one intends to continue to live, it must be brought home" (p. 52). Berry pointed out that this cannot be achieved if institutions continue to disregard their students' roots. Thus, educational institutions should be held accountable for

"the social and ecological well-being of the places in which they are located and to which their students will return" (p. 263).

Based on Ball and Lai's (2006) account, Eric Zencey built upon Berry's case for place-based pedagogy in an essay published in the book *Rooted in the Land: Essays on Community and Place*. In this piece, Zencey (1996) noted that:

> … professors are expected to owe no allegiance to geographical territory; we're supposed to belong to the boundless world of books and ideas and eternal truths, not the infinitely particular world of watersheds, growing seasons, and ecological niches. (p. 15)

Ball and Lai (2006) explain that, as students become teachers, "an ethos of placelessness in education is almost guaranteed to be reproduced from one generation to the next" (p. 264). Furthermore, they cite the personal experiences of Scott Russell Sanders with regard to place discrimination as another negative effect of the cosmopolitan education commonly deployed in higher education institutions, as recounted in various essays (Sanders, 1987, pp. 20, 32; 1995, pp. 172, 175):

> Throughout his work, Sanders intimates ways that arts and humanities education have marginalized the importance of place in general, and the inhabitants of specific places in particular. He proposes, therefore, that the educational institutions become sites for nourishing art and literature that celebrate the importance of rootedness in local human and biotic communities, both in terms of what these institutions teach, and through sponsoring such work. (Ball & Lai, 2006, pp. 264–265)

As ecohumanistic place-based pedagogy became popular, its shortcomings became apparent. Among these was a tendency to:

> … reduce education to a process of local socialization without sufficient recognition that *this* reduction can cause injury to particular marginalized individuals or groups who inhabit that community. (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 266)

Additionally, there was a tendency to assume that:

> … the local is already indeed meaningful to students' lives … [despite the fact that j]ust because something is "local" … does not necessarily mean that it will always be particularly familiar or meaningful to students. (p. 268)

Critical place-based pedagogy emerged to address these shortcomings. Proponents of critical

place-based pedagogy, such as Theobald and Gruenewald, argue that:

> Critical perspectives on place-based education provide a corrective to the romantic
> excesses of ecohumanists, which generally lead to a depoliticization of place, community,
> and the local. They call for educators to remain attentive to the political geography of
> difference not only among places, but also within places. In this way, they make
> necessary space for critical multicultural and other anti-oppressive considerations in
> place-based approaches to learning. (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 270)

Arguably, by attempting to address the aforementioned problems relating to

ecohumanistic approaches, critical place-based pedagogy falls into the trap of over-politicizing

local places. After pointing out the strengths and deficiencies of both ecohumanist and critical

place-based pedagogy methodologies, Ball and Lai argue for the synthesis of these techniques

into a single methodology called "radically place-based pedagogy." Radically place-based

pedagogy focuses on local cultural production, much like the ecohumanistic approach

championed by educators such as Wendell Berry, Eric Zencey, and Scott Russell Sanders. It

pairs this local focus with a critical approach akin to the one adopted by Theobald and

Gruenewald, among others. Where critical place-based pedagogy attempted to correct

ecohumanist place-based pedagogy's fetishization of the local, Ball and Lai's figuration of

radically place-based pedagogy attempts to right the wrongs of critical place-based pedagogy by

not assuming "that there is a single most important immediate focus for *all* place-based

pedagogy" (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 273). More specifically:

> Ecohumanists make the claim that the proper focus for place-based education is
> something along the lines of a depoliticized notion of "the common good" … [whereas]
> critical pedagogy of place basically makes the claim that what should be foregrounded
> instead is socioecological politics. (p. 273)

Radically place-based pedagogy takes a more practical approach, as Ball and Lai wondered, "just how receptive will these students be to pedagogies that focus on local social and ecological politics?" They explain that their approach is radical because, while:

> … current educational discourses seek to standardize the experience of students from diverse geographical and cultural places so that they may compete in the global economy … the focus [of radical place-based pedagogy] emerges through dialogical negotiation between the particular interests of local students-inhabitants and those of educators armed with theories of the common good and socioecological transformation. (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 273)

Engaging students in conversations about local "texts, artifacts, and performances" is much more compelling when those artworks are imbued with meaning due to their familiarity (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 281). This dialogical methodology captures students' interest much more effectively, and it empowers them to be the "caretakers" of their respective communities, which, as Ball and Lai point out, "today's communities so desperately need" (p. 282).

### *Place-Based Pedagogy and Art Education*

Mainstream American educational reform is centered around standardized learning, and this ultimately generalizes the student populace and disregards the idiosyncrasies of place, environment, and culture that permeate an atmosphere. Within the context of art education, Graham (2007) explains that "critical place-based pedagogy provides a robust theory and practice" through which art education can facilitate discourse about place, ecology, and their positive and adverse effects on the everyday (p. 375). He elaborates that this pedagogical discourse serves as a "prelude" to subsequent efforts to chronicle contemporary art and art education by thematically engaging audiences in these issues (p. 375).

According to Graham, there are three entry points to place-based pedagogy: "natural history, cultural journalism, and transformative education" (Graham, 2007, p. 380). Table 4 provides a brief description of these three points, each of which provides a different perspective

and methodology through which educators, alongside learners, can create transformative learning experiences "that illuminate the complex relationships among communities, nature, and culture" (p. 380).

**Table 4**

*Adaptation of Graham's Practice of Critical Place-Based Pedagogy*

| Entry points of place-based pedagogy | Mode of action |
| --- | --- |
| Natural history | Emphasizes getting students outside to experience and bond with the natural world |
| Cultural journalism | Connects students to the cultural life of their community through local histories, stories, traditions, artifacts, and local performance productions |
| Transformative education | Focuses on change, community involvement, service, and environmental responsibility |

*Note.* Graham, 2007, p. 380.

Based on the above, place-based pedagogy provides a multi-modal platform for holistic learning experiences that can supplement art pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy.

**Travel and Creativity**

As can be seen from the historical background on art education and artist residencies at the beginning of this chapter, travel has often figured prominently in these exploits. I maintain that this is not a coincidence, but rather a central organizing component of creative education. Whether performed on a small or large scale, exploration and experimentation are vital for artistic development and socio-cultural, spiritual, and ecological integration.

***Travel, Curiosity, and Cognitive Flexibility***

Travel can be thought of as one way to fulfill an innate need for exploration. According to Susan Edelman (1997), "exploration refers to all activities concerned with gathering information about the environment" (p. 1). She explains that curiosity is our drive to explore; it is defined as "a need, thirst, or desire for knowledge" (p. 1). There are numerous theories on the origins of curiosity, and they differ in terms of whether they frame curiosity as an innate primary drive, a learned secondary drive, or a personality trait (p. 2). There is more consensus among researchers about the source of curiosity. Fowler, for example, believes that "boredom is one prerequisite or motivation for curiosity" (Edelman, 1997, p. 1). Similarly, Zuckerman equates exploration with sensation seeking, which he defines as "the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences" (Edelman, 1997, p. 3). While there is room for additional research on the subject of curiosity and exploration, there is an abundance of evidence that suggests that creativity is enhanced through travel, as travel allows the "explorer" to experience new stimuli.

Understanding the relationship between travel and creativity has been a more recent interest within the field of Management and Social Psychology. In a 2014 study of 65 employees and their recreational travels, de Bloom et al. explored whether travel sparked creativity and cognitive flexibility. In this study, cognitive flexibility is "conceptualized as the mental core of creativity and an essential component of real-life creativity" (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). It refers to what Guilford calls "the ability to break ordinary patterns of thought, to overcome functional fixedness and to avoid a reliance on conventional ideas or solutions" (de Bloom et al., 2014, p. 165). De Bloom et al. (2014) explained that "high job demands like time pressure, role ambiguity and emotional demands deplete psychophysiological resources" (p. 165) and posited that travel may help to restore creative

thinking and behavior by relieving stress, as stress causes people to focus on stressors and thus to display routinized, habitual, well-rehearsed behavior patterns. Stressed people tend to think in convergent ways (i.e., fast, accurate, logical, standard). By contrast, people who do not feel stressed are not so captivated by negative stimuli. Consequently, their thinking may be more divergent and flexible (de Bloom et al., 2014, p. 165). As per their hypothesis, the researchers found that travel does indeed present individuals with the opportunity to decompress, recover cognitive flexibility, and foster creative habits.

Similarly, research on physical and perceptual distance has shown that distance cultivates abstract thinking (Trope & Liberman, 2010). This is called the Construal Level Theory (CLT) of Psychological Distance. Likewise, the closer an individual is to an idea, thing, or problem, the more likely they are to think concretely and unimaginatively about this topic. Trope and Liberman's (2010) research suggests that psychological proximity vs. distance is an egocentric phenomenon: transcending the self in the here and now entails mental construal, and the further removed an object is from direct experience, the higher (more abstract) the level of construal of that object. Supporting this analysis, research shows that (1) various distances are cognitively related to each other, (2) they simultaneously influence and are influenced by the given level of mental construal, and (3) they collectively affect prediction, preference, and action (p. 440).

Based on these bodies of work, and given the fact that artists today must exercise mobility and flexibility to survive in a rather uncertain professional environment, artist residencies that offer international opportunities and financial assistance can enable artists to escape the tedium of their daily routine, re-instilling novelty and intrigue through expeditions into new and unknown places. Furthermore, by providing outlets for increased psychological

distance from the everyday, residencies enable artists to engage in greater levels of abstract thinking.

### *Travel and Adaptability*

The need for creative or innovative thinking in traditionally "un-artistic," corporate industries has expanded in recent years. This has prompted a litany of research into factors that increase creativity in individuals. Foremost among these factors is travel; evidence indicates that there is a correlation between diverse cross-cultural experiences and increased creativity. In their article, "The Diversifying Experience Model: Taking a Broader Conceptual View of the Multiculturalism-Creativity Link," Gocłowska, Damian, and Mor summarize a number of psychological studies on this topic:

> In particular, [psychologists] have observed that unusual and unexpected life experiences, such as biculturalism, unexpected adversity, or, more generally, exposure to schema violations, force individuals to adopt new habits, values, and cognitions, resulting in more flexible thinking and, via that, greater creativity. (Gocłowska et al., 2018, p. 304)

Thus, travel to other countries succeeds in stimulating creativity because it allows individuals to experience a greater variety of concepts and challenges than would otherwise have been possible.

In a recent study published in the *Academy of Management Journal* and conducted over a period of eleven years, Godart, Maddux, Shipilov, and Galinsky analyzed industry-wide data from high-end fashion houses to determine the effect of foreign travel on creativity (Godart et al., 2015, p. 196). They reasoned that their conclusions would be relevant to any industry or organization to which creativity and innovation are essential, as well as to multinational organizations where foreign travel is commonplace (p. 196). Godart and his colleagues determined three metrics that could be used to characterize these culturally diverse experiences: breadth, depth, and cultural distance (p. 195). Breadth can be thought of as the quantity, and depth as the quality, of cultural experiences, while cultural distance refers to the difference

between one's own values and cultural characteristics and those of the foreign country (pp. 198–199). Godart's team found that creativity was highest when accompanied by moderate levels of breadth, depth, and cultural distance. They show that both too little and too much exposure to diverse cultural experiences can have a detrimental effect on creativity. Gocłowska et al. (2018) explain that, when a certain "sweet spot" of intensity is crossed, we see that creativity starts to diminish in response to diverse experiences. This reversal likely occurs when foreign experiences require a degree of adaptation that individuals cannot accommodate. Too much breadth or cultural distance can overwhelm an individual, undermining their ability to adapt and, by extension, engage in creative thinking. Depth operates in the opposite way: as more time is spent abroad, the novelty eventually wears off as adaptation continues. Once a person has assimilated into the "host" country, their experiences there cease to be diversifying, and creativity levels consequently flatline (Gocłowska et al., 2018, p. 311).

Contrary to these findings, Galinsky and Maddux (2009) found that individuals who live abroad exhibit more creative thinking and habits than those who merely travel abroad. They completed a series of five studies to gather evidence on the relationship between creativity and living abroad. The first study employed the Duncker candle problem, wherein individuals are presented with a picture containing several objects on a table: a candle, a pack of matches, and a box of tacks, all of which are next to a cardboard wall. The task is to figure out, using only the objects on the table, how to attach the candle to the wall so that the candle burns properly and does not drip wax on the table or floor. The correct solution involves using the box of tacks as a candleholder: one should empty the box of tacks and then tack it to the wall, placing the candle inside (Galinsky & Maddux, 2009, p. 1049). In the study, 205 students were asked to solve this task, and then to answer a series of demographic questions, such as:

… (a) whether they had lived in a foreign country (i.e., not their native country) previously, and if so, for how long, and, (b) whether they had traveled in a foreign country before, and if so, for how long. (pp. 1049–1050)

The results indicated that "the more time individuals had spent living abroad (but not traveling abroad), the more likely they were to solve the Duncker candle problem" (p. 1050).

The second study elaborated on the first, employing a different creativity task (negotiating the sale of a gas station) while controlling for variables such as personality, gender, nationality, and academic performance (Galinsky & Maddux, 2009). As with the first study, the results of the second study implied that:

… the amount of time spent living abroad, but not traveling abroad, significantly predicted whether a deal was reached, even when [the researchers] controlled for a variety of important personality and demographic factors. (p. 1051)

Study three started by priming the participants with written exercises, wherein individuals described their experiences in one of four categories: traveling abroad, living abroad, a day in the life of their hometown, and their last visit to the grocery store. After this exercise, participants were asked to participate in a creative task, "the Remote Associates Test" (RAT; Mednick, 1962), which is a creative association test relating to convergent thinking. In this task, participants are "presented with three words and asked to come up with an additional word that can logically be associated with the three words" (Galinsky & Maddux, 2009, p. 1053). Once again, the results of this study confirmed that living abroad for a long period of time enhanced creative cognition; though all of the participants in the third study had previously lived abroad, those who had been instructed to write about living abroad performed better on the task than those who had responded to the other prompts. In this case, the foreign residence-related prompt "temporarily produced a significant enhancement in subsequent creativity" (p. 1053).

Based on the results of the first three studies, the fourth one sought to examine the relationship between adaptability, living abroad, and creativity. Galinsky and Maddux (2009) hypothesized that adaptation may be the key psychological element that explains why living abroad is associated with creativity. Because culture is such a pervasive force, impacting and shaping every aspect of one's life, adapting oneself to a new culture—that is, learning how to behave and think in different way—may make individuals chronically aware of multiple perspectives and approaches when dealing with mundane and novel situations and, thus, may be associated with increased creativity (p. 1054). Participants were first given a background questionnaire in which they disclosed their demographic information, the time they spent living abroad, and specific items about the countries in which they previously lived (p. 1054). They were then asked to complete the Duncker candle problem from the first study. The results revealed that adaptation extent (the degree to which participants had adapted themselves to the foreign countries) was a significant predictor of creativity, but that time spent living abroad had a nonsignificant effect. This demonstrated that adaptation mediates the effect between time spent abroad and creativity. In addition, a M.E. Sobel's test (Sobel, 1982; see also Preacher & Leonardelli, 2003) indicated that the mediational effect of adaptation was, in fact, significant (Galinsky & Maddux, 2009, p. 1055).

Though the fourth study confirmed that adaptability correlates with time spent living abroad and creativity, Galinsky and Maddux (2009) felt that this finding required more testing and verification. Thus, their fifth and final study introduced the element of randomization by unsystematically:

> … assigning participants who had previously lived abroad to one of four experimental priming conditions, then assess[ing] the impact of such cognitions on subsequent creativity in an unstructured creative generation task: an alien drawing task. (p. 1055)

Based on the results of this study, the aliens sketched by participants in the "adapt-prime" condition—who had been asked to recall their experiences abroad—"had more atypical sensory features, were less similar to Earth creatures, and were overall more creative than those drawn by participants in the other conditions" (p. 1057).

**Summary**

The purpose of this review is to understand the history of artist residencies and the trends that informed contemporary community engagement initiatives. The chapter also specified the significance of residency programs across various periods and the salience of art practice for individual development. Finally, the chapter explores the potential for residencies to serve as sites for culturally relevant pedagogy and place-based pedagogy, which—together with artistic pedagogy—support the growth of artists and their work.

# Chapter III

## Methodology

### Introduction

The methodology selected for this study focuses on the experiential, relational, and environmental factors that are significant for the development of artists within residency contexts. This dissertation employs a qualitative, interview-based case study design grounded in narrative inquiry. The chapter introduces the methodology, procedures, and participants for the study, along with rationales for their selection.

### Research Orientation

The research question proposed in Chapter I (and repeated below, for convenience) arose from my own experiences with artist residencies and from careful review of literature relating to the role of art—and, by extension, residency programs, in individual learning, as expressed in Chapter II. Because much of this literature and prior research focused on the ways in which an artist contributes to the development of a community, failing to acknowledge the ways in which a community contributes to the development of the artist, the present study specifically examines how artist residencies support the development of artists, and which elements within residencies contribute to artists' growth.

#### *Research Question*

Given that different forms of artist residencies have existed in the United States since the late 1900s and often function as a means to foster the creative development of participating artists, what can be learned from exploring the ways in which an artist works, learns, and

develops within a community-based residency context, as told through the narratives and reflections of eight practicing artists?

### *Sub-Questions*

1. Which specific factors in a community context become particularly salient in fostering the educational experiences and development of an individual artist? To what extent are these determinants consistent across diverse placements or specific to individual situations and artist dispositions?

2. Given that there are a number of factors, both situational and personal, that foster the development of community-based artists, how do these factors emerge across diverse community placements, and what specific developmental trajectories do they enable? For example, what role residency staff, community visitors, and participants play in challenging or inhibiting artists' development?

## Assumptions

The research question is based on the following set of assumptions, which also arise from my own experience working with artists in residence as well as relevant literature sources. The assumptions constitute the philosophical and socio-cultural context that underpins the study.

### *Assumptions Not to Be Debated*

- Given that diverse experiences provide multiple environments for artistic growth, creativity can be fostered through lived experiences in different spaces and places.

- Given the increased funding for artistic pursuits in community settings, more artists have begun to work within community education.

- Given that artistic experiences enable multimodal learning—visual, logical, verbal, aural, and physical—artist residencies can serve as centers for fostering multimodal knowledge.

- Given that exposure to different communities stimulate the development of an individual's self-concept, and given that arts and culture are essential to healthy, vibrant, and equitable community development (Americans for the Arts, 2015), artists and community members in community-based artist residencies contribute to each other's betterment. In this study, this mutual betterment is regarded as reciprocity.

### *Assumptions to Be Debated*

- Given that new experiences can stimulate artistic growth, artist residencies can provide specific kinds of environments that facilitate new thinking and creative action.

- Given that artistic practice draws upon multiple and diverse experiences to work through sensory/creative problems, artist residencies can present integrated and interdisciplinary challenges that foster creative agency within communities.

- Given that exposure to diverse groups and communities can nurture the development of an individual's self-concept, working with various communities can enrich an artist's self-concept as a creator.

- Given that traveling to new sites exposes an individual to new environments, situations, and populations, artist residency programs provide contexts for artistic growth.

### Study Design

I used a narrative inquiry approach to investigate the residency experiences of eight mid-to-late career practicing artists. Through a series of interviews, I invited the artist participants to reflect, ruminate, and critique their own developmental trajectory and residency encounters. The

resulting narratives provide insight into the participants' histories, motives, and responses, and set the stage for an investigation of specific environments. As noted by scholars Connelly and Clandinin (2006), narrative inquiry allows one to think about the complexity of experience and identity development:

> People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study. (p. 375)

Thus, narrative inquiry captured the experiential and relational elements that transpired within the given residency environments, and it allowed each case to be presented as a unique portrait. Finally, an interview-based format provided an extensive look at the particular phenomenon of residency experiences. I used a semi-structured interview protocol[8] to allow the conversations to evolve organically while maintaining a presiding focus on the relevant topics.

To further enrich the narrative approach of this study, I employed data triangulation to achieve "a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest" (Salkind, 2010, p. 1538). This involved amassing participant interviews, resident artist artworks, and documentation from each narrative to "understand the similarities and differences between the cases" (Gustafsson, 2017, p. 3)—that is, the unique qualities of distinct residency programs vs. the common trends across residency programs, and how each of these affect the artist participants' artistic development. By bringing this data together, I was able to understand (1) the ways in which particular elements of the artist participants' experiences led to growth in their

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[8] The interview protocol is included in Appendix A.

unique artistic trajectories; and (2) the complex contexts and characteristics unique to different artist residency sites that cultivate artistic growth for the artist participants.

Over the course of the project, I performed sixteen interviews, two each with the eight artist participants (one primary interview and one follow-up interview).[9] Given the involvement of multiple participants, data management and organization was crucial to this investigation; as such, I employed an audit trail to ensure validity and reliability.

**Study Participants**

*Inclusion Criteria*

I used purposeful sampling[10] to assemble the participant group, as this strategy involves deliberately selecting participants "to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). I first determined prospective participants based on research and recommendations, then used snowball sampling and recruitment letters to reach additional eligible artists. I focused my research on artists who had recently participated in an artist residency program, as these individuals possess the skills and knowledge needed to complete the study. Specifically, to fulfill the research objectives (i.e., to identify the specific factors within a community context that foster the educational and creative development of an individual artist) and ensure representativeness, I recruited individuals who had (1) participated in a U.S.-based residency with a reputation for community engagement and a calendar of public programming (such as open studios, artist talks, workshops, and educational tours) within the last five years (2015–2020); (2) participated in more than one artist residency; and (3) maintained a

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[9] The following code structure (2020, a8: i1) will specify the interview date, artist number, and interview number (1 or 2).

[10] Participants were screened based on previous studies, recommendations, and residency participation based on the Curriculum Vitae available on their artist websites.

professional artistic practice for more than five years (mid- to late-career practicing artists). In order to paint a more holistic narrative of the "artist's experience," the researcher made a diligent effort to select a diverse range of artist participants with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, genders, artistic mediums and practices, histories, and perspectives.

By the end of the sampling process, eight eligible artists agreed to participate in the research. Given the detail-specific, intensive nature of this interview study, in which artist participants reflected on their own artistic trajectory and residency experiences, eight participants provided a sufficient amount of data for data triangulation and discussion. Each one had attended at least three artist residencies, some in the United States and some internationally. Several of these artists are teachers, community organizers, academics, and parents. Their artistic themes range from exploring cultural identity, queerness in artmaking, environmentalism, and even trans-species communication. The participant profiles are listed in Table 5, on the following page.

**Table 5**

*Participant Profiles*

| Name | Background | Primary medium | Career length and scope | Training | Themes | Residency experiences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Richard | White male; born in Wisconsin, raised in the Detroit-area of Michigan, splitting time between farm, city, and suburb | Video, performance, and collage artist | Has shown his work and curated exhibitions in major cities across the United States and abroad. Tenure-track digital art and animation professor since 2018; has lectured as a visiting artist since the early 2000s | BFA in Sculpture (from a Detroit-based University, mid-90s). MFA in Studio Art (from a fine arts University in California, 2002) | Transformative experiences, self-betterment, and environmentalism | Over the span of nine years, has participated in seven different residency programs, some including voyages abroad by boat, others housed in smaller communities |
| Emma | Child of a Chinese immigrant and grandchild of Russian and Irish immigrants; born in the Midwest and raised in Brooklyn; based in Texas for the past 12 years | Ceramics and installation | Recipient of numerous artist awards and fellowships; has shown her work across major cities in the United States and internationally in Berlin. Assistant Professor at a public university | BFA in Crafts (university in Ohio) (early 2000s). MFA in Artisanry (university in the New England region of the United States) | The complexity of identity and conflicting family histories | Several residencies across the globe, spanning Europe, China, and the United States |
| Sarah | White female from the Bay Area; has been based in New York for 22 years | Drawing, painting, installation, and writing. Has collaborated and published books with poets and scholars | Exhibited across the United States and internationally; has been featured in many major publications; work in both private and public collections (individuals, public institutions, universities, and museums). Professor at a liberal arts college | BFA (early 1990s). MFA (early 2000s) both at private universities in upstate New York | History of science and the environment from a feminist perspective | A handful of artist residencies and artist fellowships across the eastern United States; one internationally acclaimed residency in Italy |
| Aaron | Hispanic male born in the greater Los Angeles area and raised along the southwest coast of the United States; currently based out of western Washington | Filmmaker and interdisciplinary artist | Has exhibited his work nationally and internationally at museums and galleries, and is the recipient of a handful of major grants, awards, and fellowships. Advocates for trans rights and the trans experience; founder of an institution that highlights the contributions of trans art to the cultural and political landscape. Associate Professor of Art and Art History at a public university | BA in Film and Digital Media (2006). MFA in Art Practice (2011) both from public universities in northern California | Deploys humor and performance to explore the complex ways that queer and trans people negotiate spaces for themselves within historical and institutional memory and popular culture | Several writing and artist residencies within the United States |

| | Background | Medium/Practice | Professional Activity | Education | Focus/Themes | Residencies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jesse | Queer Filipino-American currently based in New York; raised along the southeast coast of the United States | Painting, drawing, fabrics, textiles | Exhibited in major galleries across the globe. Lectured as a visiting artist for several institutions | BFA in Studio Art (late 90s); originally attended a university in Virginia on a music scholarship before transferring to a studio art concentration. | Queerness, the history of Filipino textiles | 18 different residency programs and fellowships within the United States, 9 of which took place between 2018 and 2019 |
| Christina | Black female raised in the southern region of the United States; currently based in New York | Interdisciplinary artist (performance, installation, video, text) | Recipient of numerous artist awards and fellowships, has shown her work across major cities in the United States and internationally in Canada and Ghana | BA in Theatre Arts and Speech Communications (from a Historically Black College/University in Louisiana, 2003) MA in Drama Therapy (private university in New York City, 2010) | Conventions of racial and gender identity, psychotherapy, and art access | Several residency programs within the United States, Japan, Panama, and England |
| Anh | Born in Vietnam, immigrated to the United States as a refugee when she was a young child Alongside individual practice, she and her husband have creative projects in the USA and Germany | Multidisciplinary (performance, sculpture, installation, and socially engaged art); uses everyday objects like eggshells, handmade quilts, boxing gloves, and printed shooting targets | Exhibited nationally and internationally, with private and public collections in museums and galleries Recipient of several arts-based awards and grants; founder of an award-winning international, multidisciplinary arts outreach and migration project | Fine arts with a concentration in painting (United States and Australia) (early 1990s) | Reflecting on her experiences as a former refugee and woman of color, her work addresses everyday manifestations of cultural identity, memory and displacement | Residencies in the southeastern region of the United States and eastern Germany |
| Jonathan | Black male raised in the Jim Crow South during the Civil Rights Movement; based in the Bay Area for over 20 years | Fiber, sculpture, and social-practice artist | Exhibited nationally and internationally at museums and galleries; recipient of a handful of major grants, awards, and fellowships | BA in Psychology and Political Science (public university, 1982) Master of Divinity (M.Div, private university in the southern United States, 1986) | Informed by his childhood memories of African-American weaving and quilting traditions; explores resistance and conformity, control and freedom, by weaving and creating fabric sculptures | Several writing and artist residencies within the United States |

*Ethical Protocol*

Participants were given both an informed consent and participants' rights form, developed by the researcher and approved by the IRB, notifying them of the intent of the research and the confidentiality of their information. Participants were provided a copy of the consent form as a record of the agreement. In order to garner a sense of trust, honesty, and transparency from each artist participant, I pseudonymized or otherwise veiled all identifying information (including names, locations, and institutions) and excluded images of artworks. Due to these precautions, the participants were more comfortable sharing critiques, questions, arguments, and observations about their residency experiences, some of which called into question the ethics of community engagement initiatives.

## Bias Mitigation

Many researchers have commented on the unique strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research. Merriam (1998) stated that the researcher in qualitative research is often the "primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 7). John and J. David Creswell (2018) elaborated that "[q]ualitative research is interpretive research; the inquirer is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants" (p. 183). As the sole researcher for this study, I take on the role of interviewer, observer, and analyst, collecting texts and resources from each case study, interviewing artist participants on their experiences, and deriving trends from the subsequent analysis. However, "because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being's worldviews, values, and perspective" (Merriam, 1998, p. 22). Thus, we must consider how the researcher's role affects this particular investigation.

Inevitably, my own background working with and for artist residency programs will influence my analysis of the material. In one sense, this is positive, as my combination of first-person experience and third-person research knowledge of how artist residencies function within a community could help me to uncover relevant details in the data that other scholars might overlook. It also helped me to shape my research method and data collection approach. However, it could also introduce potential biases that skew my interpretation of the data. Thus, I have submitted my preliminary findings to my dissertation sponsor for review before proceeding with subsequent phases of research.

**Data Collection**

"Unquestionably the backbone of qualitative research is extensive collection of data, typically from multiple sources of information" (Creswell, 2008, p. 43). The primary intention of data collection is to capture "rich descriptions" of each artist participant's unique developmental trajectory and residency experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In order to better describe and understand these experiences, as well as the conceivable meaning and implication of the encounters between artists and respective resident communities (as told through the narratives of the artist participants), I supplemented the audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews with artworks and documents particular to each residency site and resident artist.[11]

First, I researched and reviewed available texts and documents particular to each artist and their history with residency participation, then researched the characteristics of the residency sites they attended. Next, I conducted online semi-structured interviews with each artist participant about their perceptions of and experiences with artist residency programs and

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[11] This data was obtained through artist websites, respective residency websites, and personal correspondence, as per Table 6.

community engagement. Lastly, in the follow-up interview, I asked the artists to describe their

own artistic development and trajectory and to reflect on visual and/or conceptual indicators of

creative change in their work that could possibly have been a result of residency participation.

Further descriptions of each data type are included in Table 6 and the following subsections.

**Table 6**

*Data Types and Instruments*

| Data type | Data collection | Source | Relevance to investigation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Texts and documents | Texts and documents obtained from online resources on residency site, demographic information on neighboring community, and bibliographic information on participating resident artist | *Residency website <br><br> *Artist website <br><br> *Online articles | … will allow the researcher to obtain contextual information about each site and participating resident artist |
| Interviews | Semi-structured interviews guided by designed interview protocol | *Artist participant | … will allow the researcher to obtain information about each site and participating resident artist that cannot be obtained through the former collection methods |
| Artwork analysis | Artwork analysis from first person (artist participant) perspectives | * Artist participant | … will allow the researcher to code for potential change in artist participants' artwork trajectory |

*Note.* Arredondo, 2018.

### Texts and Documents

Audiovisual and digital materials were collected to elucidate the distinct characteristics of

each artist participant and residency site. This was done prior to conducting the semi-structured

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interviews. As such, these materials provided preliminary data that informed the design of the interview protocols.

### *Interviews*

I conducted sixteen semi-structured interviews: one primary interview and one follow-up interview with each of the eight mid-career artists. The goal was to collect detailed information regarding their perspectives on and experiences with artist residency programs, and how these experiences contributed to their own development as artists. The follow-up interview specifically focused on artist participants' reflections on their own artistic trajectories, along with minor detail and date clarifications from the initial interview. All interviews were conducted online via Zoom, and each interview lasted approximately one hour and was audio recorded. Interviews were transcribed using an online transcription service, and the transcripts were shared with the respective artist participant for edits, omissions, and confirmation of accuracy. The interview protocol was developed based on analysis of the preliminary case studies and modified based on the literature review. The interview protocol is included in Appendix A (page 236).

### *Artworks and Audiovisual Materials*

Audiovisual and digital materials "may take the form of photographs, art objects, videotapes, website main pages, e-mails, text messages, social media text, or any forms of sound" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 187). These were collected to further enrich the descriptions of each residency site and artist participant. Artist participants were asked to evaluate their artworks for visual and/or conceptual indicators of creative change that could possibly have been a result of residency participation. While this is, potentially, an "unobtrusive method of collecting data," artworks may be "difficult to interpret," particularly given the

researcher's biases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Hence, the follow-up interview explicitly tasks artists with self-evaluation and reflection of their own artistic development and change.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis occurred simultaneously alongside data collection. First, the data were arranged and organized by categories and subcategories, primarily by participant (or case), then by data type. During this process, the researcher "winnow[ed] the data," which involved a "process of focusing in on some of the data and disregarding other parts of it" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 192). Raw data were winnowed, aggregated, and reviewed for hand coding based on themes related to the research question.

The process proceeded based on a combination of code derived from the literature sources, code drawn from prior case studies, and themes that emerged from the present study. In the coding process, I sought to foreground those qualities of artist residency programs that cultivate a sense of collaboration and community or facilitate new ideas and new processes. Additionally, I sought to identify signs of art pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and place-based pedagogy in the residency programs, as I hoped these might inform a new way of thinking about educational reciprocity between artists and communities.

According to Thorne (2000), data analysis in qualitative research can be ambiguous:

> For readers of qualitative studies, the language of analysis can be confusing. It is sometimes difficult to know what the researchers actually did during this phase and to understand how their findings evolved out of the data that were collected or constructed. Furthermore, in describing their processes, some authors use language that accentuates this sense of mystery and magic. For example, they may claim that their conceptual categories "emerged" from the data—almost as if they left the raw data out overnight and awoke to find that the data analysis fairies had organized the data into a coherent new structure that explained everything! (p. 68)

To avoid needless ambiguity, I worked closely with my dissertation sponsor to ensure transparency and consistency during data analysis.

**On Reflection**

I must acknowledge that many of the features of this study were constrained or determined by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, the research was designed as a multi-case study: I had planned to travel to four unique residency sites across the United States to observe their residency programming and interview their resident artists, staff, and visiting community members. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, many residency sites across the United States had temporarily and, at the time, indefinitely halted operations. Thus, the methodology of this dissertation, therefore, had to be shifted to an online-only, interview-based narrative study involving eight artist participants and their reflections on their residency experiences and artistic trajectories. My research focus, however, remained the same: to explore and identify the salient factors and unique conditions of residencies that foster the growth of individual artists.

The research design change added an unexpected level of complexity to the study, as it forced me to rely exclusively on artist accounts to understand broader residency dynamics. Thus, I must acknowledge that this dissertation conceptualizes the artists' development from the perspective of the artists themselves, such that their individual proclivities, dispositions, and positionalities are inextricable from the narratives. To neutralize the effect of fleeting emotions on the interview data, I arranged for a second, follow-up interview at a later date in which I specifically asked the artist participants to reflect on their artistic trajectories and the changes they observed throughout their years of making.

Regarding the measures taken to ensure the participants' anonymity: I acknowledge that the omission of artworks may complicate the reader's comprehension of the artists' growth. I have taken care to describe relevant artworks or art processes verbally. Should I have the chance to revisit and reconfigure this study, I would like to use a mixed-methods approach wherein I

design a carefully constructed survey instrument administered to 100 artist respondents who have participated in residencies, in order to understand their attitudes in greater detail. From this survey I would select 10 artists with a greater range of diverse residency experiences to interview. For such a study I would hope to include images of artists work and analyze these as critical data informing the impact of residencies on the artists' work. Sans pseudonymization, and with the inclusion of images, how might the study, discussion, and reflection take shape then?

**Summary**

This research comprises a qualitative, interview-based study with eight mid-to-late career practicing artists who have participated in variety of artist residencies—at least one of which was a community-based residency. Although participant selection proceeded without bias towards sexuality, gender, race, class, or age, the researcher intentionally sought out a diverse cohort of participants to paint a more holistic, and diverse, portrait of the "artist residency experience." Each artist participated in two semi-structured interviews conducted online: one primary interview (regarding their perspectives on and experiences with artist residency programs) and one follow-up interview (focusing on their reflection on their own developmental trajectory in the arts). Interviews were transcribed and data was color-coded based on themes derived from the literature sources, drawn from prior case studies, and observed in the interview responses. The data analysis yielded a series of individual narrative portraits, along with cross-case participant reflections, which will be presented in Chapters IV and V, respectively.

**Chapter IV**

**Findings**

**Introduction**

This chapter provides the data from the artist interviews, and it is divided into two parts: *Portraits of the Artist Participants* and *Cross-Case Themes*. Each of the eight portraits are divided into three sections: *Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory*; *Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences*; and *Reflection and Residency Takeaways*. The portraits establish a framework for understanding the developmental experiences, including prior residencies, that the artists brought to the study. Data analysis of the interview material suggests three major themes: *Experiential Axes of the Residency Ecosystem*; *Valued Outcomes of Residency Experiences*; and *Imagining the Ideal Residency*. Cross-theme analysis further suggests that residency programs provide support for the use of new materials, exploration of new practices, and investigation of new content. Final triangulation of the interview data suggests that different kinds of physical, community, and geographical experiences challenge the artists to think in new ways that inspire novel artistic endeavors. As indicated in Chapter III, all names have been pseudonymized and some specific details (such as residency names and locations) have been redacted in order to protect the identities of the artist participants. Similarly, images of artworks have not been included, but rather described.

**Part I: Portraits of the Artist Participants**

While the main research question of this dissertation asks us to consider what aspects of the residency experience facilitate artist development, this study also examines potential factors *outside* of the artist residency that foster the artist's growth. Thus, this section presents individual, narrative portraits of each of the eight artist participants and their early influences,

education, and dimensions of artistic practice, arranged in a way that enables comparison between pre- and post-residency trajectories. It provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the context, history, and perspectives of each artist, and how these may have affected their residency experiences. Narrative portraiture:

> … [brings] the participant and their life experience into focus, highlighting that a portrayal of a sole story can be, not only a medium to understand a research phenomenon, but also a valuable research output in itself. (Rodríguez-Dorans & Jacobs, 2020, p. 611)

While I will endeavor to draw common themes in Part II, this section highlights that the artist participants' experiences were unique, informed by their respective circumstances, perspectives, and dispositions. The first section, *Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory,* presents the artist participant's initial encounters with art and making, as well as their early formal, conceptual, and stylistic explorations. Artists were asked to consider what contributed to the formal and conceptual shifts during this time, be it a profound experience, a new material or process, or a mentor. The second section, *Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences*, illustrates the process by which the artists became aware of artist residency programs and outlines how their residency experiences informed their further practice. Artists were asked to reflect on the specific factors that led them to pursue residencies, and on the value to be gained from residencies. The final section, Reflection and Residency Takeaways, briefly presents each artist participant's current practice and activities and provides their closing remarks on residencies and creative growth, particularly, during a time of uneasiness and isolation.

## *Artist 1 | Richard*

### Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.

***Formative Years, Detroit.*** Richard was born in Wisconsin but grew up in the Detroit area

of Michigan. When asked to recall his earliest introductions to art, he remembers his mother

making a valiant effort to expose him to great Western painters:

> … she got us one of these subscription books from the supermarket, where every month
> we got a new volume of "Old Masters." It actually went all the way up to [the era of]
> Picasso, but it [also dated back] to as early as Medieval Times. I was very, very young. I
> flipped through it and I just saw some crazy paintings. It was where I started seeing
> Turner and Van Gogh, and Watson and the Shark by Copley. That was the painting that
> blew my mind to see as a young person—it's action packed. (2020, a1, i1)

Richard's interest in the Western canon of art was further cultivated by an early experience in

elementary school, which allowed him to explore the creation process of Michelangelo's Sistine

Chapel:

> It was second or third grade, or something like that, we had somebody come in and they
> pretended to be Michelangelo. They had just standard scaffolding, but they showed us
> how Michelangelo would have painted the Sistine Chapel, [and after the presentation],
> we all got to paint the ceiling tiles. (2020, a1, i1)

In addition to this multi-modal exposure to different artworks and art movements, Richard

reported that both his aunt and uncle were amateur cartoonists who shared their interest for

drawing and making with him and his sibling:

> … they were both always drawing and making stuff. Whenever they would watch us,
> they would just sit down with a bunch of paper and popsicle sticks and stuff like that, and
> we'd be making things. (2020, a1, i1)

> Towards middle-school and early high school, Richard began to shift his interest from the

visual arts to creative writing:

> I always liked to draw, but I kind of lost my interest or drive in it … just because I'm not
> a naturally gifted drawer and other people were better, and I also realized that I became
> more interested in telling stories. I started taking up creative writing, which led me to
> want to pursue English. I was interested in the idea of sharing worlds or making worlds
> and situations. (2020, a1, i2)

Although less visually driven, Richard still cultivated his imagination and creative thinking

through writing and literature:

> Somehow I ended up with a copy of David Foster Wallace and his book of short stories
> "Girl with Curious Hair," and I think that was the first time I really saw pop culture and
> postmodernism combine and be treated complexly. And that really sent me going in
> terms of thinking about what art and literature could be. … [These books] got me very
> excited about what one could do with art and language … And I think that moment was
> what really set me on fire for creative life. (2020, a1, i2)

***The BFA Years and Afterward, Detroit and Chicago.*** Upon graduating high school in

the early 1990s, Richard attended a Detroit-based state university. Initially, he was unsure of his

academic vocation; with his interest in literature, storytelling, and world building, he leaned

towards pursuing an English degree, then shifted into Film Studies. Ultimately, after taking a few

art classes, he decided to pursue a BFA in sculpture: "I was focusing on sculpture because it just

seemed like the most engaging way to make art—to get people involved and to take up space."

Marrying his interests of world-building and popular culture, and bolstered by his BFA's

promotion of idea development and material experimentation, Richard created playful works

during this period:

> I had a whole series of school desks and I made a Mickey Mouse arm with his gloved
> hand. I just had a whole array of plaster casts of that arm on the desk and I don't know
> what the point of it was, but all of my work at that time looked extremely "cartoony," but
> also kind of handmade, so that it never had a pristine finished quality. I really wanted to
> [give it a more finished effect], but I just didn't know how to. … Another thing I created
> was a giant Weeble-wobble kind of structure, but with arms and a big round head, and it
> would rock back and forth. I also [glued] pinwheel suckers—the kind that you could get
> at the fairground, those lollipops—… on his eyes, and its arms were reaching up, but it
> would rock back and forth. It was made out of concrete and papier-mâché, so it was
> incredibly heavy. (2020, a1, i2)

Alongside these material and conceptual investigations of mass and pop-iconography, Richard

explored different elements of Detroit's thriving rave culture:

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… every weekend [I would go] to techno parties and drone parties. And just thinking about and remembering the colors, and what was happening at that time, it was especially influential. (2020, a1, i2)

Although Richard received his BFA in sculpture, he was developing a strong fascination with video art. Video art had been an established medium since the 1960s, and it was growing in prominence in the early 1990s with the increasing affordability of editing and recording materials. However, it was not a concentration available for study at Richard's alma mater.

It was the early- to mid-90s, and just seeing and being exposed to … art magazines like Artforum and Frieze and Flash Art and how they were championing Video Art at the time. I remember thinking excitedly to myself, "Oh, this is a thing." People make videos and that seems to be really engaged and in dialogue with pop culture. Seeing artists like Georgina Starr and Matthew Barney and, a little bit later, Pipilotti Rist, and then Mike Kelly—all of those people were *huge* influences and remind me how much you can treat pop culture seriously and as a part of yourself. So, I think that shift from being mostly into sculpture to mostly into video happened right about then [end of undergrad]. (2020, a1, i2)

Video artists served as distant mentors for Richard, and, occasionally, he was even able to hear them speak at artist lectures:

I had been aware of Mike Kelly as an artist for some time, and he lectured at the Detroit Institute of Art, where I worked. So, just to be able to see him and hear him talk and look at how he really inserted himself into pop culture and "claimed" pop culture … [I remember] he mentioned, "it doesn't matter what media you use," and, for me, that was one of the first moments that gave me permission to use video and sculpture and just say, "Okay, this can be art." He wasn't just coldly critical and condemning of popular culture but truly trying to figure out what it does to us once it's inside of us. (2020, a1, i2)

After graduating in 1996, Richard moved to Chicago and lived there for five years. Taking Kelly's lecture to heart, he explored and experimented with a multitude of media: "videos, painting, sculpture, and occasionally, performance." When reflecting back on his time in Chicago, Richard credited much of his material exploration to the circle of artists with whom he associated:

Many of my art friends are painters; and so, just to stay engaged with them, I was doing it. One of my teachers that I had in undergrad was a very influential person to me. He was

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an artist that dealt with race and pop culture and media depictions. So, I kind of gravitated towards him a lot. He was another artist that talked about how our daily lives in contemporary culture can be represented in art. (2020, a1, i2)

In addition to the influence of friends and teachers, Richard was inspired by trending ideas and

new forms of performance art that existed in the Chicago art scene:

> I think I had seen that [performance was] what artists were doing at that time. At first, I just captured my performances on camera and thought to myself, "Oh, we could also do this in person," and oftentimes they weren't very big performances; they'd be things like noise music performances, or once we had an arm-wrestling tournament at one of our openings. (2020, a1, i2)

When asked to recall significant experiences that solidified his sense of self as a video artist,

Richard shared an intimate encounter with a Pipilotti Rist installation:

> [It was] her video *Sip My Ocean*—which is a big corner projection of mostly underwater shots and her singing Chris Isaak's "Wicked Game"—which is another example of somebody taking some parts of pop culture and just incorporating themselves [into it]. I was in [the installation], and it just felt like you were being bathed in this video and transported. I really felt not only the emotional, but [also] the physical power to video and sound. So that got me into video for a very long while—obviously, to stay. (2020, a1, i2)

Richard created videos alone and collaboratively, keeping play and experimentation in the

forefront:

> My videos at that time were mostly stage stuff. They would either feature me or a friend doing things [derived from] a lot of the stuff that was happening in the 90s and video art. Just trying to do kind of mundane or simple actions but capture them in different ways. I was trying to push the saturation and play with interesting video effects without having the work be too much about video effects. (2020, a1, i2)

**The MFA Years and Afterward, California and New York.** In 2000, Richard moved to

Southern California to attend graduate school. At this time, his material practice took an

unexpected turn toward screen printing:

> Funnily enough … they accepted me because of all the video work I created. And I got detoured into doing screen printing for a *long* time. … I got invested in 60s counterculture and those ideas. I like the psychedelic style and colors and the way that

you could have this really coded language within the image. Yeah, but I was still making videos the whole time—making videos for the camera or performances for the camera. Probably my most successful work from graduate school was a piece where I just learned how to dance like Mick Jagger, and I made a video of just me dancing like him; that's probably the only work that I still really like from grad school, because it kind of married the idea of taking pop culture [and] digesting it within performance and video. … If I could have done anything differently, I would have focused on the intermediate arts program. (2020, a1, i2)

Upon graduation, Richard continued to stay in the Los Angeles area before moving with his wife to New York City in 2009. During this period, he continued to collaborate with artist friends and to push his exploration of materials, interweaving his conceptual interests with his formal practice.

I was still doing performances for cameras and staging more elaborate scenes. I would recruit friends to do psychedelic performances and I'd experiment with different video effects and things like that, and, when I could, try to do video projections. At that point, I was working with a friend and we were doing old school psychedelic light shows. My friend was really good at pushing the context, though, so we always wanted to have a political engagement. We always had shows on July 4th, always at the stroke of midnight—we'd always pitch them as trying to purge the US of its warlike energies. (2020, a1, i2)

Shifting from his visual interest in 60s psychedelic posters to punk rock flyers, Richard began to incorporate collage work into his material investigations:

I was trying to figure out how to create work that wasn't these more elaborate videos and things that took a long time. So, I started making collages; maybe that took the place of some of the screen printing as well. I was trying to do these collages that were fast. I would say, "Oh, you've got to finish it in an hour," and then I would end up making very, very elaborate collages that would take weeks. But ultimately, that process then fed back into the video work I was doing. I started to think of my videos as collages. (2020, a1, i2)

During his reflection, Richard was very aware that his process of collaging was informed by contemporary political culture. He was making collages around the time of 9/11 and at the height of the Iraq War: "There was a lot of protest culture and a lot of people, including myself, that were trying to figure out how do you make art that fits in with that energy" (2020, a1, i2).

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**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Like many artists, Richard

first began to learn about artist residencies during his undergraduate degree:

> I think I heard about them without really understanding what they meant when I was in undergrad. I worked at the Detroit Institute of Art and I worked with some of my friends from that job who were slightly older artists [and] were either just finished with undergrad or beginning grad school and talking about artist residencies and going on them. And also looking through things like Flash Art and Artforum, they would have ads for different residencies. (2020, a1, i1)

Residencies in the United States were beginning to expand and gain traction in the early 90s, and

many artists viewed them as stepping stones for career building. This was the context Richard

had when he experienced his first residency in the late 2010s.

*K Residency and A Residency: The "Life" Moment.* Richard held a variety of

administrative roles at different arts institutions in New York City. His artistic practice slowed

down around this time, though he continued to experiment with collage and video work as his

primary mediums, partially due to spatial limitations. He did not have a separate studio, apart

from a small area he would use in his apartment. As Richard reflected on this period, he

mentioned that it was energizing to be around contemporary artists and that it was nice to be able

to support their work as an administrator for an arts institution, but he often found himself

craving the opportunity to, like them, thrive as individuals on their own creativity. In light of

this, Richard sought artist residencies. His first was a two-week residency in Philadelphia, where

he continued to work with collage. In 2013, he participated in two different programs: *K

Residency* and *A Residency*. K Residency offered access to a studio space on Governors Island,

publicity and public programs, and specialized support and resources, in addition to a

concentrated period of time for creation and experimentation. A Residency was a particularly

unique experience in that it was an "expeditionary" residency program on a sailing vessel.

Furthermore, the program was not only open to artists of all disciplines, but also scientists,

architects, and educators. A Residency was extremely transformative for Richard's artistic

practice:

> My practice became a little bit more elaborate. I started working on this kind of sci-fi mini-epic based on a story about a monster. That's what I went to A Residency for, and I think that was one of the biggest life-changing moments for me. To be up there, to see the natural environment, experience the climate, and see climate change—it was a very sublime experience … To be on a boat … and just be with all of these different interests but overlapping concerns … that was just amazing, and life changing, and art changing. … That's what sent me to really wanting to address environmental and climate issues with my art, even though I still do it in a very goofy way. Just to see that there were so many approaches to talking about that and to think about using my art as a set of experiences about that. (2020, a1, i2)

***P Residency and S Residency: The "Art" Moment.*** A year later, the arts institution

Richard worked for closed, and he found himself unemployed. Before picking up a job as an art

handler, alongside guest lecturing and adjuncting across the five boroughs, he continued to make

work, exhibit, and apply for residency programs. In 2015, Richard participated in another set of

residencies on the East Coast: *P Residency* and *S Residency*. P Residency was a year-long,

project-based residency that culminated with an exhibition in their gallery space. During this

residency, Richard maintained traction and steadily made work while hosting studio visits with

the owners; the residency was a very rewarding experience, but it did not transform his formal or

conceptual artistic practice. S Residency is located in a small town on the East Coast; its program

length is 1–2 weeks, and it generally supports individuals working with experimental media. It is

known for its resources and access to a plethora of tools, software, and materials, both old and

new, in the realm of experimental media art. Richard described S Residency as a colossal archive

that housed tools he'd never considered using before, like tools that enable "real-time processes,

to play a video and manipulate video [as though] playing a musical instrument" (2020, a1, i1). S

Residency revolutionized Richard's formal practice, to the point that he returned for another

cycle in 2017:

A Residency was kind of the "life" moment for me, but S Residency was maybe a bigger "art" moment. To sit there and have these old machines and learn about the history of video synthesis and think about video and electricity as a living force that you can collaborate with … or machines that have some kind of agency that you negotiate, and collaborate around. Also finding that, "Oh, I have peers and fellow travelers that are interested in a lot of the same stuff." So many of my good friends have come from that S Residency network. That was a big, big shift in my video making as well. I went more in the direction of looking at video synthesis, and more about layering up signals and information with pre-recorded imagery. (2020, a1, i2)

S residency also led Richard to incorporate other interests into his artistic themes:

I had a conversation with one of the people that currently runs S Residency, and they said, "Oh, we looked at your proposal; we get so much stuff that's about video synthesis, and here you were wanting to come in and make these 'space gorilla videos,' and we thought, *that sounds good,* let's do that." I think that seeing somebody else react like that to something that I was into—it was sort of permission for me. So, I just kind of dove into my sci-fi. All of the sci-fi stuff I've always loved, and it has always been part of my personality, but it hasn't seeped into my art very much. Just that moment I realized, "Oh! All of these ideas—I might as well combine them, because I don't have to keep them separate." (2020, a1, i2)

***X Residency: Community Engagement.*** After Richard's experience with S Residency, he continued to adjunct, guest lecture, curate, and exhibit. In 2016, he was offered a yearly contract as an Assistant Professor with a public university in the Midwest. This university was known for its animation program, so Richard started to incorporate animation into his artistic practice in order to support his students. In 2018, he was offered a tenure track position at a liberal arts college in Tennessee, where he continued to research animation and to incorporate it into his artistic and teaching practice.

In the summer of 2019, Richard participated in *X Residency*, located in the same midwestern college town where he previously lived. X Residency is a program that provides resident artists with living quarters, a studio space, and access to facilities at the neighboring university, along with a small stipend. The residency period is anywhere between 4 and 12 weeks, and it traditionally supports 3–4 artists a cycle. Each resident proposes a personal project

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alongside a community talk and workshop. This was Richard's first experience participating in a

residency that had an element of community engagement built into its mission and programming;

to satisfy this component, he led guided deep-listening walks for the public:

> … it's this form of walking and listening meditation. I chose to go to two different wooded areas. You just move through the environment that you're in. Normally, it's walking quite slow with frequent stops to sit and listen. Sound is important to my artwork, and the idea of listening and feeling where we're at was important. It just seems like that kind of meditation—that guided meditation of placing ourselves in the world and figuring out how we relate to it—was an exciting one. (2020, a1, i1)

Richard spoke about how receptive the community was to his walks, and he felt that the project

was something that he wouldn't mind doing again.

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: The Gift of Time, Space, and Support.**

Throughout much of our interview, *time*, *space*, and *support* were words that came up often as

Richard reflected on his artistic trajectory and identified periods of major formal and conceptual

shifts. He explained that his position as a professor furnished him with benefits, resources, and

support that greatly contributed to his advancement as an artist: "having a job—a tenure track

job—at a place like this university, has given me the time and resources to focus. So, I can now

spend a long time on one piece of art" (2020, a1, i2). With this time and support from the

university, which includes an arts commission grant for material purchases, Richard's latest

video animation work has been ambitious, and "much closer to what [he] had in [his] head":

> For this video, electricity video and sound animations are manipulated by electrical signals generated by a plant … I recorded the sound and video for different greetings … I then composited the five video images into a 360° world in 3D animation software. I paired each of the screens with an alien figure, highlighting the vast differences between humankind and other intelligences. In all, the video functions as a set of translations, from human to plant to machine and around again. (from artist website)

It could be argued that Richard's latest video was an artistic milestone for him, combining many

of the influences and themes from his previous artistic experiences.

Residencies also offer time, space, and support, and Richard explained that he found it amazing that there are experiences available for artists that give them the opportunity to feel fully supported by institutions. He also recalled the sense of validation and confidence he felt from each residency he undertook. Residencies armed Richard with a sense of artistic resilience:

> I always felt like I had to make art that was—not always serious—but in some ways acceptable or in conversation with whatever was going on at the time. Making that piece [at S Residency] about aliens just kind of loosened something up in my mind, and I thought, "You know what, I'm not having a *ton* of success being an artist. So, it doesn't matter what I make if nobody's going to look at it. I might as well make work that I'm excited about." (2020, a1, i1)

Richard is currently utilizing the institutional support from his university to test new materials and experiment with new equipment. He is taking a pre-tenure sabbatical, which could be construed as another type of "at-home" residency, and looks forward to diving into unknown realms of making.

### *Artist 2 | Emma*

**Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.**

***Formative Years, Brooklyn.*** Emma was born in the Midwest and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Her mother immigrated to the United States in the early 1970s from China and her father was born and raised in the Midwest to European immigrant parents. When asked about her early encounters with art and making, Emma explained that she was very interested in the arts but often quieted her desire to pursue them due to the pressure she felt to eventually attend law school or medical school. She mentioned that, although New York City is known for being a creative art mecca, she cannot remember visiting an art museum during her childhood. Rather, her early impressions of art and craft began, indirectly, within the home:

> I grew up with [craft] in my household, watching my Chinese grandmother sew all the time, or how she would make dumplings from scratch. I always saw working hands in my household, and I really relate that to my training in ceramics in that we're constantly

physical within a material. I grew up surrounded by Chinese porcelain objects that were our most prized possessions, protected in cabinets. I just knew they were important and special. (2020, a2, i1)

Emma's ideas and definitions of art were also shaped by other elements of her immediate environment, including her neighborhood:

I remember growing up in Brooklyn, and at times there would be little shops in the streets for months. There was a little arts and crafts sewing shop, and I would just beg my mom to let me walk there by myself. It was one of those places where I learned how to use a hot glue gun at 12 years old. I remember we would just hot glue lace on the front covers of photo albums. That was really popular at one point—I lived for rickrack and trim and that was my jam. I thought that's what it meant to be an artist. So, I had all these dreams of sketching designs for bedspreads. (2020, a2, i2)

***The Undergraduate Years, Ohio.*** Arts and crafts became a hobby for Emma throughout her early childhood and adolescence, though her focus remained with law. After high school, Emma went on to study pre-law at a small regional campus in the Midwest, where she had an experience that would begin to shift her trajectory:

I was touring minimum- and maximum-security prisons. I was interested in reforming the prison system. And, I remember, there was one time where—it's the same tour on all those trips, where the people are dehumanized—but there was a part where they took us into a room and showed us all of the things the prisoners, or the inmates, the *people* make out of boredom, or lack of resources, and there were these really beautiful art objects. At that moment, I really saw how art could be healing. (2020, a2, i2)

Eventually, as part of her pre-law degree requirements, Emma enrolled in her first art class during the last semester of her junior year. In this class, she met her first art mentor, Professor R:

I remember my teacher, she was someone I had never met before, or seen before on campus. She listened to NPR—I didn't even know what that was—she listened to Thelonius Monk, and I just thought that this lady was so fancy and cultured and worldly in this small Ohio town. She really nurtured my beginnings in art. She really encouraged me, and I think she recognized that I had some talent, but I just didn't know what to do with it. So, at that moment, taking that art class, I felt like my brain flipped and then I saw the world in color. (2020, a2, i2)

Professor R encouraged Emma to "be an artist," despite the uneasiness she felt about her family's reception. Thus, Emma decided to change majors and began studying ceramics.

With her newly declared major in fine arts, a new world opened up for Emma. Her educational environment drastically changed as she went from large lecture halls filled with students to a much smaller ceramicist community.

> I kind of started over when I thought it would be finishing. I fell into my love of ceramics—I think mostly the community, too. Ceramic people love to cook and have dinner parties and eat and drink, and every part of the process is pretty communal. I felt like I went from this really big, huge campus … to the ceramics program, which was a small shed-like building that was makeshift and "can do," and things were broken all the time, but it was just really lovely that there were always people there working. There was great energy. (2020, a2, i2)

Though this intimate and family-like community appealed to Emma and helped her to feel more comfortable in her new-found art practice, she remained apprehensive about her craft:

> I think my undergraduate work was really bad. I realized I was making work about my family and just didn't really know what the end result of the form was. My BFA thesis show was the first time I'd ever really sculpted anything. I made these porcelain bunny rabbit sculptures with human faces. When I look at them now, I realize I did not know how to sculpt a face, the lips look so smushed in—like when you make lips with clay and just roll two coils and put them on there. They looked so bad. [The works] are heavily patterned with Asian symbols on the skins of the rabbits. I made them after the women in my family—my mother, grandmother and three aunties—to capture their personalities. The faces all had really big, boldly drawn eyebrows, and I made little wigs for each of them. When I look back at that work, it all leads to bigger things in my practice now. I just made them really badly and really kind of naively back then. (2020, a2, i2)

During this period, Emma also cultivated her interest in textiles and fibers, as another one of her creative mentors ran the textile program. Emma mentioned that she was a few credits away from a textile minor, but opted not to pursue this as she was already into her 5th year as an undergraduate student, and she wanted to move on to the next big thing.

***The MFA Years and Afterward, New England and Texas.*** In 2004, Emma graduated with her BFA in Crafts with a concentration in Ceramics. Upon graduation, Emma decided to

take a gap year, enrolling in a small state school in the area to have access to a ceramic studio

where she could make work for her graduate school application. When considering programs,

Emma sought out schools that placed an emphasis on interdisciplinary practices:

> I was interested in my work becoming multi-disciplinary. Even the last piece I made
> before grad school was a mixed media piece. I threw on the wheel these awkward egg-
> like shapes. I would inlay the same Asian patterns onto them, and I was making these
> felted, neon egg cups or nests and also weaving all of these plastics into them. So, I think
> I was inching towards a multi-disciplinary practice, but still needed more skills. (2020,
> a2, i2)

Emma saw schooling as a way to continue refining her skills and ideas, and as a way to access a

communal setting with different tools, materials, and facilities. In 2006, she began a 3-year

graduate program in the New England area of the United States:

> When I went to grad school, I purposefully picked a program that had a really full craft
> department. Ceramics, textiles, metals, those were all histories I was very interested in,
> and I wanted to have access to those kinds of facilities and equipment. My grad program
> in ceramics was, and still is, very interdisciplinary. They really encouraged students to
> work beyond the tradition and history of the material. I really loved that because it
> encouraged us to just explore material culture. (2020, a2, i2)

> In her first year of graduate studies, Emma's work resembled the pieces she created

during her BFA and gap year in terms of imagery, content, and formal approaches:

> When thinking about my first year of grad school, there's nothing really memorable
> about my work. It was still all really bad, still trying to explore how to make work about
> my family, but make it my own. And that was a critique I kept hearing over and over
> again. So, I was still making these weird eggs, but I was working with this idea of the
> eggs being squashed or sandwiched in between things, like pillows. The hard ceramics
> with the soft pillows—kind of like the Princess and the Pea story, which comes back later
> in my work, too. (2020, a2, i2)

Emma spent much of her time during her first year of graduate school trying to understand how

to strengthen the relationship between the conceptual and formal ideas in her work. In her second

year, she started exploring installation in an effort to make her "object-based practice feel

bigger":

I was thinking about how to get people to engage with it or have their bodies interact with the piece. There is an [installation] piece [that I made], where it was these kind of conjoined, stretching, abstract, blob-like forms—which I think, at the time, represented my ["half-ness"], the two halves of myself; the feeling of having to pick a side. It was decorated in the same Asian patterns, patterns that I was just pulling from books—I don't think I even really looked at their true meanings. The object was sitting on a pedestal in a small room that was covered in Chinese funeral papers. They're really thin papers with gold leaf on them that you see in most Asian markets, [and] you burn them at funerals. So, you walk into the space that feels almost religious, altar-like, with this glimmering gold paper and blob form on a pedestal. (2020, a2, i2)

Emma's faculty committee, however, felt that her work was becoming too niche and lacked cohesion:

At the end of my second year of grad school, for my last critique in December, I remember my faculty committee saying I still had a lot of work that I needed to do, and they kind of failed me. I remember crying horribly, but it was the kind of crying where I understood why they were failing me—because they knew I could do better. Looking back now, I'm glad they did that, because I then went back to the studio and made all new work that was much more vulnerable; still about family, but it was a little more universal [in terms of] the experiences. (2020, a2, i2)

Emma's new work addressed issues of anxiety, culture, and memory while still subtly integrating nuances of her family life:

My third year of grad school was all about working on my thesis work. I was making porcelain chicken feet that were hung on the wall with these fabric pieces that were like handkerchiefs, [which] I would dip in clay and then tie into big knots. So, this delicate chicken foot was holding this massive knot, which was a metaphor for anxiety, this tangled mess. Handkerchiefs [are also a] metaphor for catching tears and sadness. The chicken foot is a delicacy in Chinese cooking. So, I was thinking about all those things and inserting elements from the Chinese side of my family into this work, and then some things that were more universal, like the handkerchief—deeply rooted in nostalgia [while] also timeless. (2020, a2, i2)

In 2008, Emma and her partner, "Jeff"—who is also a ceramicist—moved to a city in south Texas, "El Sobrante," where they have been living ever since. Emma's work in the early years of her residence there was formally and stylistically similar to her graduate school body of work, as she and her partner prioritized engraining themselves in the local community:

That's the hardest transition to make, from grad school to the real world. And we did it too by moving halfway across the country, away from both of our families, to a very new community. I felt like the first few years of living here consisted of, yes, exhibiting work a little bit, but mostly just meeting people and trying to learn how everything works. (2020, a2, i2)

Though the ceramic community in this city was not large, there was a strong art presence:

I think in some ways we miss having those clay conversations, but then, at the same time, we didn't have to explain a lot here, which was good. It was good to be different … [The city] does have a great art community, and we felt very welcomed. And I feel like, 12 years ago, when we first moved here, [this city] was pretty special with the arts, because there were so many artist-run organizations and galleries, and it was easy to have an exhibition and meet everyone. (2020, a2, i2)

**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Emma didn't learn about artist residency programs until she was a senior in college:

I was really fortunate [because] my undergraduate program in ceramics also had a grad program. I learned a lot from the graduate students because I know they were at that point in their career where they were thinking and talking about their next step and seeking opportunities. That's where I learned about two-week artist residencies, month-long residencies, but also [residencies] very specific to ceramics or craft. … It wasn't until I started graduate school that I learned even more about [residencies]. They were still very much specific to material, and very material based—ceramic residencies that had the equipment facilities, kilns, the specific space, connected to some part of ceramic history or tradition. (2020, a2, i2)

During this time that Emma was in school, social media was in its early stages as a platform, and it became an additional resource for discovering new residencies:

I learned a lot about residencies from the back of art magazines when I was an undergraduate student. When I was in grad school, I remember *just* getting Facebook and that changed everything, since I had easier access to websites and information. I think now Instagram is a new way—I learn more about residencies from other artists I follow on Instagram and I'm learning about new ones all the time. I think there are a lot more databases now for residencies than there were 10 years ago. (2020, a2, i1)

*Pottery Workshop and Solo Exhibition: The "Aha" Moment.* In 2010, Emma received an artist grant from El Sobrante for approximately $5,000, which gave her a sense of validation in her practice. She used the money to travel to a city in China—the porcelain capital of the

world. In graduate school, Emma had been to Jingdezhen briefly during a study abroad trip that took her to major cities across China. She continued, "[w]henever I would meet Chinese people and tell them about my trip, they would say that 'Your trip to China is like cutting a watermelon and only eating the very middle'" (2020, a2, i2). So, in 2011, Emma returned to this city for five weeks to study porcelain through the *G Residency* program and to truly experience the city. G Residency consisted of a pottery workshop that gave participants a shared studio space and housing. The workshop had daily events that allowed participants to explore various aspects of porcelain and making, and these proved to be invaluable to Emma's practice:

> I think this is where I experienced and saw the big shift or change in my practice. That residency really came at the right time for me. It gave me space away from my environment, but it was such an inspiration, too … they take you on excursions throughout the day. For example, if you wanted to go see the tile factory, you could go and watch artisans and how they make porcelain tiles as big as sheets of plywood. I spent a lot of time seeing these things that defy making; it went far beyond anything I was taught in school. I learned where porcelain came from, I saw where it was mined. (2020, a2, i2)

Navigating a foreign country on her own also proved to be transformative for Emma's sense of self, and this new understanding of her identity provoked shifts in her work. She created works that referenced her heritage and nuances particular to Asian culture. The works she made while in China were formally and conceptually stronger than her last body of work, and they were pivotal to her artistic practice:

> I started making the piece "Half." It was my favorite piece I ever made, but also, I feel like the most pivotal piece in my practice. … I was kind of playing around with blue and white transfers … It was a piece with this cookie/biscuit-shaped tray with blue and white patterns on half of it [and] these two little makeup powder puffs with chicken feet handles. (2020, a2, i2)

After her residency, Emma shipped her works and supplies home; but when they arrived a month later, she discovered that several of the things she made in China, the supplies she bought, and the techniques she learned, "didn't translate the same at home. There was a whole

new learning curve to go through again." This adjustment process proceeded as Emma prepared

for her first major solo exhibition since graduating with her MFA. She identified this 2013

show—in conjunction with her time in China, which inspired much of the work—as a major shift

in her artistic trajectory, as she incorporated new mediums such as photography and

performance. She created cohesive, "fully realized" works that spoke to each other and "[told] a

story": a documented performance piece in which she plucked off her eyebrow hair—hair that

would later be used in a sculpture; a photograph of herself wearing porcelain eyebrows created

from a mold she made while in China; the porcelain eyebrows themselves, resting in an

accompanying dish on a pedestal in the exhibition. Emma described this experience as follows:

> [This body of work] has something to do with my first time traveling as a woman on my
> own and coming into my own self, of recognizing my power and that my strength comes
> from my vulnerability. Plucking my eyebrows off was an act of destroying and allowing
> a rebirth, instead of focusing so much on what I was taught as a young girl: "to find my
> value in the love of men." … I made the blue and white porcelain eyebrows. I made the
> mold in [China], not knowing what I was going to do with it, but I was noticing all the
> women there with tattooed eyebrows. The same tattooed eyebrows I had put on bunny
> rabbits for my undergrad work. When I was on that trip to [China], I had walked into a
> makeup tattoo shop, and that's where I saw a poster with eyebrows … It took about a
> year for me to decipher all of this information from this trip and to figure out what to
> make with these ideas that started there, and how they translate back at home. But that
> was really a big "aha" moment in my practice, was making "Half" there and then seeing
> that eyebrow poster where the eyebrows were based off of Disney Princesses. I vividly
> remember this poster that showed the eyebrows and how close they were, how high the
> arch was, how long the tail was. The different types of brows had names like
> "Cinderella," "Princess Jasmine," "Sleeping Beauty." (2020, a2, i2)

In this series, she addressed her identity with the question "what are you?" This was the first time

she would conceptually tie together research and history with metaphor, porcelain as "desire for

whiteness as a material but also lightness as a privilege in racial class." The work also negotiated

dualities in her target audience:

> I am trained in ceramics, but my work was still trying to find an audience within the
> ceramic community. There weren't a lot of people doing performance and clay. I think
> the contemporary art world said, "okay, but it's ceramic. So, it's still craft." I think it's

interesting to think about how my work conceptually deals with "half." And my work was also existing in the middle of these two "art" worlds. (2020, a2, i2)

***Return to the Pottery Workshop: Solidifying Concepts and Processes.*** In the summer of 2015, Emma returned to China with her partner, Jeff. She attended the pottery workshop residency for a second time, this time focusing on immersion, inspiration, and research:

> … this was my third trip. I felt more comfortable. I also knew I wasn't going to make fully realized works there, that I was going to make tests. It wasn't a "put the pressure on myself to come away with a body of work"; I kind of was [already] establishing a pattern where I go, immerse myself, absorb the information around me, try different things, and then take all of that home with me and figure out how to make it work in my studio, where I can control all the conditions and circumstances. (2020, a2, i2)

Emma came to China with a shaved head and thus appeared more ethnically ambiguous to others, which made her realize how much of a role her hair played in how others identified her:

> I think when I had a shaved head, no one knew what I was—I wasn't Chinese anymore. … So, with no hair, this is where I learned about the hair dealer, which is a man that rides around on a motorcycle collecting ponytails. Whenever people would hear him on his megaphone, people would come out of nowhere and grab me from wherever I was and say, "Go! Go meet him! You have no hair! Go meet him!" … My last day there, finally, someone with the pottery workshop asked if we could go to his house. So, we went and met him and I ended up buying the longest ponytail he had, which was almost three feet long, for 200 U.S. dollars, and I remember that was all the money I had brought with me. And I used it in a piece. (2020, a2, i2)

Emma's encounter with the "hair dealer" fueled her interest in the hair market, as she discovered that Asian hair holds extreme value in this setting. She would continue to incorporate human hair into her pieces, even as she began teaching ceramics full time as a faculty member in 2015.

***Residencies in the Northeastern U.S. and Europe: "Outside" Art Circles.*** In 2015, Emma also traveled to the Northeastern region of the United States to attend a program that hosts more than 50 artists and writers at a time for 2–12 weeks. Emma mentioned that meeting others outside of the visual arts was beneficial to her development as an artist, stating, "the most valuable part of that was meeting writers. … I gained so much from them—they were diverse

and extreme and amazing" (2020, a2, i2). Moving forward, Emma would continue to look

"outside" of the artist circle for dialogue and inspiration.

In 2016, Emma was invited to participate in a residency in Berlin, *E Residency*. She was

attracted to Europe because, being of half Chinese and half European ancestry, she wanted to

research porcelain through the European lens to further inform her practice. Emma spoke about

how her time in Europe was rather difficult; conversations with other artists about her work

raised questions about whether or not her concepts were specifically "American" issues, even as

she experienced instances of racial targeting in Europe. She created a piece, a neon sign with the

words "Ching Chong" in an Asian-styled font, in response to such an incident:

> My Chinese cousin and her husband, who's Korean, came to visit me and we went out dancing—we really wanted to experience European club culture. After the night was over, as the three of us walked together back to my apartment, a group of White Berliners were walking toward us, and they got in our faces and yelled, "Ching Chong! Ching Chong! Ching Chong!" We were kind of stunned. And as we were trying to cross the street, this taxi cab drove past us and the driver stuck his head out the window and yelled, "Ching Chong! Ching Chong!" too … and it was a man in a turban. We were like, "Come on. We're on the same side!" We were stunned at the fact that we were racially profiled twice within a block. It made me really think about that word again and how we'd all been called it growing up. (2020, a2, i2)

Alongside this difficult experience, Emma also encountered an unexpected, severe health issue

during her time in Berlin.

> I woke up one morning in severe pain and had to go to the hospital. … [I] was in the emergency room for eight hours where no one really spoke English, nobody knew what was wrong with me. And here I had ruptured ovarian cysts and ovarian torsion. They would say my Polish last name, but were confused because I didn't look Polish. I'd hear this every morning for five days. I totally didn't understand what was going on; it was the first time I heard the word endometriosis, and I didn't know what that was. (2020, a2, i2)

Though her time in Berlin was extremely trying, she created works that spoke to these moments,

including a beaded curtain of hair:

> The curtain very much speaks to that idea of "crossing thresholds," and I was thinking about that while lying in the hospital, thinking about crossing the threshold, where I

really thought I wasn't going to live. And also thinking about those transitions from girlhood to womanhood. (2020, a2, i2)

In 2017, Emma attended another residency in Europe—this time in the Netherlands—to continue researching porcelain and traditional blue-and-white decoration motifs. While her residency in the Netherlands felt more communal, as artists gathered and cooked dinner together each evening, she encountered similar conversations as she did in Berlin:

> … whenever I talked about my work, the same thing would come up, "Oh, these are just American experiences." I was kind of tired of having these conversations with White Europeans about my practice being solely defined by location and being American. It was also during a time when Trump was elected to the presidency. (2020, a2, i2)

Frustrated with the art circle responses to her work, which she felt were insular and very much concerned with the "game" of the art market, Emma decided to look elsewhere for conversation. She began visiting an African hair salon in the area to find respite and talk with the women in the shop. Emma viewed beauty salons as safe, protected spaces. From this experience, Emma created a series of works about female empowerment, globalization, and dominance.

*Award and T Residency: Finding Her Voice and Her People.* In 2017, Emma received an award that included a $10,000 prize and coverage in a magazine. This experience exposed her to a larger, more diverse audience and led her to participate in more panel discussions, talks, and guest lectures. While her work did not necessarily undergo any stylistic or conceptual shifts in response, the way she began to approach and describe her work began to change. Then, in 2019, Emma was selected as the regional artist for a residency in El Sobrante, the city in which she currently lives and works. *T Residency* hosts three artists—one regional, one national, and one international artist—per cycle. Participants are given a large materials budget, a living stipend, and living and studio accommodations for the two-month duration. With a sizable budget and studio space, Emma's work became larger and more ambitious, involving more people in the

production process. She created works that involved photography, wearable art, sculpture, and affirmations collected and imprinted on beads, which were then thread through hair to create a large curtain that divided the gallery space.

> I really thought about the staging of the photography, and the wearable, and the body more than I ever have in my other pieces—which I felt like I often did on the fly … I wanted to work with only women on my project; I worked with a female photographer, female models … And I was really thinking about how to bring community into the work, where I felt like I couldn't really fully tell the story with my body. (2020, a2, i2)

The two other resident artists were skilled photographers, and Emma mentioned that it was helpful to be able to solicit their feedback on her work. They were also both female artists, which Emma found empowering, particularly because having a residency cycle with an all-female participant list was rare. From then on, Emma's works began to incorporate different elements of communion and relationship: while still capturing ideas of what it means to be "half," "whole," and "other," her work has evolved to also encapsulate themes of empowerment, disentanglement, material culture, and resilience.

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: Freedom to Fail and be Open/Vulnerable.**

Emma defines residencies from her perspective as an educator. To her, teaching and making have a reciprocal relationship:

> I feel like teaching helps me to be a better artist because [the students] ask more questions [regarding] my practice, and I share with my students the importance of research and experimentation. I teach a lot about failure and that it's okay, and I try to really think about failure in my practice. … I learned that from trying to make work in China and these residencies and realizing that they're not working. Through failure, I can experiment more and not feel like things are so precious. (2020, a2, i2)

Emma also highlighted, from her experiences in residency programs and travels abroad, that residencies can transcend the studio, enabling inspiration from outside the arts:

> It may be more open to other modes of making and that is something I hope I bring to teaching: that you can find inspiration outside of the studio or inspiration outside of

looking at artists or talking with artists. I think in school, you're taught that you should do residences to meet people and make connections. I think that's all great, but also, for me, it was more important to learn about other cultures and meet other people outside of the residency. I learned more about places through the people that live there than other artists that are coming from other places. (2020, a2, i2)

When the topic of residencies comes up in discussions with her students, Emma emphasizes that they are not homogenous or equally accessible:

… there are so many different kinds. The residencies you pay for, [meaning] that you're of different socio-economic status. There are residencies where you're given a budget, which seem to be the harder ones to come by. (2020, a2, i1)

Given these socio-economic concerns, Emma encourages students to find opportunities by studying artists with similar backgrounds or career paths: "I think another way … we learn about residences is, we look up and discover artists we like and then we look at their CV and then do reverse research that way."

Emma is still teaching ceramics, albeit remotely, during the current COVID-19 pandemic. She is lucky to have a studio space at home that she shares with her husband, and she continues to thrive in her practice, though the process has been slow. Even during this time of isolation, Emma is participating in online panel discussions, lectures, workshops, and presentations. Community and connection are still crucial, and she is excited to return to in-person learning when it is safe to do so.

### Artist 3 | Sarah

**Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.**

***Formative Years, San Francisco.*** Sarah was born and raised in the Bay Area in Northern California during an era rich with culture, activism, and the arts. When asked to reflect on which childhood experiences may have contributed to her interest in the arts, she cited her family and environment:

[My parents] moved to San Francisco in 1967, and at that point the Bay Area was in this incredibly rich Civil-Rights-era moment, [and people were] deeply invested in community and community activity. And I would say that I hugely benefited from that culture at the time. Both my parents were students still and didn't have a lot of resources. They were very young parents and had three kids. My mom was amazing at taking advantage of every last Parks and Rec program that existed. If they weren't free, they were really close to being free. … When I was a kid, the city had turned an abandoned recreational pool, like the Sutro Baths, into a community space. All of the dressing rooms that were along the edge of the pool were turned into art studios. We used to go there all the time and make all kinds of stuff. (2020, a3, i2)

Throughout her childhood, Sarah and her siblings engaged in many recreational activities throughout the city. In addition to attending different programs and craft camps, Sarah fondly recalled family trips spent hiking and camping at local forests and national parks. She pointed out that those experiences in nature perhaps informally planted the seed for her interest in the environment and non-human entities: "[Camping] taught me about looking, and I think that's very much at the root of my work. It's about looking and it's about the movement between a micro and macro view" (2020, a3, i2). Furthermore, Sarah's father played an integral role in training her acute observational skills:

I would say, in addition to that, the other probably huge influential thing about growing up for me had to do with having a dad who was a researcher and a physician and a surgeon—and I didn't realize this at the time when I was growing up, because I wasn't particularly interested. I wasn't good at science in school and I always hated my science teachers; I was more interested in history and language. But my dad really taught me a lot about looking and he always wanted to take things apart and put them back together and kind of understand how things were made, and he had this creativity. (2020, a3, i2)

Sarah would continue to cultivate these interests throughout her childhood and adolescence.

*The BFA Years and Afterward, New York, Rome, and the Bay Area.* Sarah began her undergraduate studies at a private university in upstate New York in 1987, where she pursued a BFA in Studio Art and Literature. During the first two years, she began to "disconnect" from the materials and processes that previously constituted her artistic practice:

… I was completely disconnecting from the kind of art that I had made prior to [university], partially in response to the expectations of the classes I was taking, and [also due to] being in a new environment … some of the ways that I worked, the *primary* way that I worked before I went to college was in watercolor. And that was considered "not acceptable" in my program. (2020, a3, i2)

In her second year, Sarah enrolled in an etching class where she encountered one of her mentors, Professor T:

And that really opened up a bunch of things for me … I always seem to be somebody who gets strongly affected by a mentor or by a personal connection that goes beyond an intellectual one. There was a professor [at my university] who I ended up working with pretty intensely for the rest of my time at school. She had this ability to provoke and really challenge [me] critically. … that [combined] with the experimental process of etching really opened up a lot of ways of thinking for me and helped break down a lot of inhibition that I had. (2020, a3, i2)

The world of printmaking was particularly liberating for Sarah, as the mechanical and technical aspects of the different types of printmaking brought with it a sense of magic. Oftentimes, Sarah was excited by the dualities of control and chance that existed when pulling a print, and this gave her permission to be more experimental and less critical and "self-editing" in her process.

While in the thick of her studies, Sarah spent a semester abroad in Rome, where she became extremely immersed in and inspired by the architecture and landscape of the area:

The real transformation for me in terms of "becoming my own voice" in college had to do with spending a semester in Rome. I got really obsessed with how architecture forced or changed our way of seeing the world. In particular, the Roman architecture. I think that the big pivoting point for me was when I went to Pompei and there was this almost minimalist effect of architecture and landscape there with the natural environment. I think I started to really appreciate those spaces as a kind of metaphysical landscape—like an interior landscape [as] a metaphor for my own path and investigations. And so, from that moment forward, I worked pretty exclusively that way until I graduated and probably for a good few years afterwards. (2020, a3, i2)

When Sarah returned from her semester abroad, she enrolled in an Italian Film course where she encountered another mentor, Professor M:

[I] became very close to a professor who was Italian and had worked very closely with the famous filmmaker [Michelangelo] Antonioni. Antonioni's films started to really

influence me because he works with and uses architecture as a character. I hadn't thought about this until recently, but because I'm so interested now in sort of decentering the human, this idea manifests itself more in my work in terms of the observation of non-human species like animals and plants. Back then, in my work, I think I was sort of decentering the human through architecture—which is … something Antonioni [also] did in his films. (2020, a3, i2)

Sarah described both her painting and printmaking work at this time as "abstract and dominated by a singular color palette" (2020, a3, i2). Although deeply invested in architecture as a visual resource, her paintings and prints were "never representative and always reduced to a geometry and a perspective" (2020, a3, i2). Geometry and perspective were forms that Sarah manipulated in her work to represent her own psychological state:

I ended up finding a lot of places—just as it is working from specimens now—I started "seeing" and "looking" for the ways that I wanted to look, if that makes sense. After I went to Pompei, I came back to Rome and kept looking every time I went out to see the city. I would see spaces that reflected my own interior interests. I mean, it's kind of embarrassing, but I think that architecture was metaphoric for my own psychological state and questions and, in a way, that's probably more reductive than I would be interested in now, but it was related to a kind of identity, a kind of investment, of trying to think about the mind through space. (2020, a3, i2)

Not only was Sarah visually activated by European architecture's play on perspective, but also by the non-linearity of hagiographic paintings often seen in Italian churches. Hagiographic paintings depict the biography of a saint or religious leader, with one main central image and smaller scenes surrounding the central image. Often, the narratives portrayed in these paintings highlighted significant moments in the subject's life. Sarah was interested in this method of "interconnected activity" and imposed those methods and ideas on her work for her BFA thesis show: "[i]t was a hagiographic installation of nine panels, including a tondo piece on the top and the predella on the bottom" (2020, a3, i2). Sarah continued to work with these ideas for the next few years.

After graduating with her BFA in 1991, Sarah moved back to the Bay Area, where she

continued to explore painting and printmaking:

> Those first two years after college I was working fairly isolated for the first time; I didn't
> have a creative community yet. But I worked a lot, back in the day in the Bay area when
> you didn't have to pay huge rent. I had a two-bedroom apartment in the Mission [District]
> and one bedroom was my studio. At that time, there weren't any profound shifts in my
> work. The biggest shift was that I turned to the industrial architecture of San Francisco
> and, in particular, the highway structures that go over the top of the city. [I also played]
> with the effect of perspective, from all of the hills, [and] how it changes your visual
> perspective. (2020, a3, i2)

After a couple of years, Sarah's boyfriend at the time was accepted into a graduate program at

UC Berkeley, and they decided to move from San Francisco to the East Bay. There, Sarah was

introduced to and welcomed by the Berkeley community. She was particularly energized by the

community of poets and writers,[12] and she began to incorporate collage and language into her

practice:

> … I became obsessed with creating these historical fictions. I worked for a long time on a
> project called "Some Ladies," and it was a series of paintings and prints that imagine
> historical figures, traditional *male* historical figures, but as women. It was kind of a
> reconstruction of female typology … creating space that probably was there but wasn't
> remembered, and also creating fantasy. At that time, I used a lot of iconography [and]
> collage. I was printing onto the canvas, doing a lot of photo Xerox transfers, and they had
> a much more graphic quality. I used architecture as the organizing principle, but I think
> the prints were much more resolved, in retrospect, than the paintings. I think, with the
> paintings, I was really fighting the materiality of the paint. (2020, a3, i2)

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[12] "I started to see with the poetry community, at least with the poets that I was exposed to, that there was this kind
of incredible freedom that they seem to exercise in their practice. That they could take from so many different parts
of their life experience and references and resources and history and research, and kind of shape and mold them into
this form. That really interested me, I found it very visual, actually. So, that in combination also with seeing how
poets organized. The fact that they're a negative economy—they don't hold the promise of income in the way that
visual art does. It kind of took away this ugly piece, or my view of the ugly piece, of being in the arts. They all
engaged in tremendous collective activity" (2020, a3, i2).

As Sarah continued to live and work in the East Bay, she eventually collaborated with "Gwen," a well-known female poet who lived in the area. Gwen and Sarah worked together on Gwen's next poetry anthology, with Sarah creating prints that would accompany Gwen's poems:

> I had approached one of the poets who I had seen read. … I don't know why I was so brave, but I just introduced myself to her after one of her readings and asked her if she would consider a collaboration. She agreed to meet with me, and we just became really fast friends and collaborators and have collaborated for many years on a pretty regular basis. So, that was a way that I was able to bring my language of collage into that collaboration. It took me a while to realize my connection to painting needed to shift. But, at that time, that work influenced my painting practice more than anything else—the collaborative work. (2020, a3, i2)

*The MFA Years, New York.* Sarah continued to collaborate with Gwen throughout the years and, in 1998, this took her to New York City, where she worked with a publisher to finish one of her book projects with Gwen. After a year, the project was complete, and Sarah attended a low-residency MFA program at a private university in New York. During this period, Sarah solidified her practice as a painter:

> The immediate change was that I gave up collage … at first, I was still incorporating some of the Xerox transfers. When I started my MFA program, even though I decided on going there because it's a multi-disciplinary program, and I was really interested in it because of that, the painting department was pretty conservative and the head of the painting department *insisted* that I paint on canvas. So, over the course of my time there, the two biggest things that changed were (1) I completely let go of collage and I rediscovered why I was a painter, why I was making paintings … And, (2) conceptually, what really shifted for me was a sense that I had to prove something in the work. … What I came to, in the end, was that I really wanted there to be a visceral response to the work, and I wanted it to have multiple points of entry for the viewer—that it could open up space, open up thinking, rather than tell you how to think. (2020, a3, i2)

She also began reintegrating watercolor into her sketches:

> The work was still abstract during this time, but I started turning towards a lot of close observation, and that's when I brought watercolor back into my work. [The MFA program] was a low-residency summer program, and I spent a lot of hours wandering through the woods and collecting things. And, in a way, I think that isolation and this huge shift from daily life—in New York City, where I was working and had a job and was busy and had no money and no time—that experience sort of opened up things, and I

recovered the importance for me of having part of the work [involve] a close observation practice, which I hadn't done really since I was a young child. (2020, a3, i2)

**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Sarah first became aware of residency programs during her BFA:

… my undergraduate program had a relationship with a famous residency program—they were allowed to nominate one senior student a year to apply and have fully paid tuition, and I was that person. However, I did not get accepted. And though I didn't go, "residencies" were put on my radar. I thought, "Oh! There's this whole world out there where you can go and make your work and meet all these artists and be supported." (2020, a3, i1)

Sarah was attracted to residencies not only for the time and space they provided, but also for the way they brought artists together in a community. As such, she pursued grants, residencies, and any opportunities available to artists:

As soon as I graduated college, I went to the library and would get out these books that gave you a list of all the different grants and residences that were available. Keep in mind that having a computer with internet access at home wasn't common—I didn't have that. So anyway, I would go through this book and then I would try to find out all the things I could apply for. I was kind of diligent, and would dutifully apply for things—not getting anything very often, but still persistent. (2020, a3, i2)

***Residency in Italy, Exhibition in Ireland, and Later Residency in a New York Garden: From Pieces to Projects.*** In 2001, Sarah was accepted to a residency in Italy, *R Residency*. This residency was unique in that it invited scholars from diverse backgrounds and fields, including, but not limited to, academics, artists, policymakers, and practitioners. During her time at this residency, Sarah began performing walking rituals to calibrate her acute observational skills to the environment around her:

… I would say the work that came out of my graduate studies became more focused through the work I made at that residency. That's where I realized how important it was for me to be creating my own cosmology, my own kind of world that I lived inside of through the work, and [where I realized] that I also craved a kind of continuity. I started … working on projects, rather than one individual piece at a time. (2020, a3, i2)

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Sarah made lifelong connections with the scientists and historians who attended the residency, and she began to incorporate more science and history into her artistic practice. These cross-disciplinary connections made her realize the importance of collaborating with others outside of the arts.

After her residency in Italy, in 2003, Sarah was invited to create and exhibit a series of works in Ireland:

> They said that the only sort of specification about the show was that it had to be dealing with the question of site. I was kind of baffled about it and actually contacted the curator and said that I didn't feel like I was really the right pick for that because I didn't live in Ireland, and [had] never even been there—how am I supposed to address that? She said, "Well, you know, we selected you because of the work you made in Italy. Site doesn't have to be literal; you can think about it as being more expansive than a geographic place." That's when I started researching 19th century [Irish] women and discovered [Mary Ward,] a woman who was a microscopist and wrote the first treatise on the microscope. … That shifted everything. (2020, a3, i2)

Imaginatively placing herself in Ward's position, Sarah began creating. She described this project-based process as "eternally expansive," and remarked that it reformed her artistic trajectory:

> That's when I felt like I really discovered true freedom as an artist, and also when I realized I had shifted from this paradigm of, "can I do this"—which I think is another thing that plagues so many artists—to, "this is just what I do." (2020, a3, i1)

Sarah began to incorporate more play—serious play—and research into her daily life and studio practice:

> I loved that I could spend days trooping around in hip waders in a bog and that was as valid as being in my studio with a piece of paper and pen and brushes. I spent a lot of time in different archives and different universities. And I love that, too. I felt like I was playing; it brought back play. I could play at being a researcher, an anthropologist, a scientist, a naturalist, and all those things. But it's *real*; I was rigorous in my play. (2020, a3, i2)

This history-rooted, project-based approach was also manifest at Sarah's next residency, which occurred several years later. *L Residency* is a year-long residency located in a botanical

garden in New York. Here, Sarah visited the garden regularly and accessed historical resources

and specimens, thereby discovering the work of plant biologist Mary Treat, who had studied the

beneficial relationship between insects and plants. This experience stimulated a material shift in

Sarah's practice, namely a return to watercolors:

> I realized in the botanical residency that the use of watercolors just made so much more sense with my conceptual practice and that they were also the material that was most intuitive to me and most captured my process and way of thinking. And this was a pivotal moment for me. (2020, a3, i1)

***Becoming a Mother, a Professor, and a Hunter: From Projects to Life.*** Following

Sarah's exhibition in Ireland—but before her experience at L Residency—the most substantial

change in Sarah's practice occurred in 2003 when she became a mother:

> I always thought that having children would hinder my practice in the sense of practical things, because of time. But I found when I had kids that I had already become kind of a master of juggling things as an artist—and I think that's shared by a lot of artists who feel that way when they have children. But I think, also, being able to put oneself inside the mind of a child and how the child sees the world, and noticing that there aren't these lines between things, really opened up a lot for me and reminded me of being a child myself and how I learned to see the world. Things like "being in a more-than-human world," I think, is something that children helped me understand. And the *directness* of kids—they don't know what conceptual art means; they don't know about all sorts of judgmental criteria that we all come to learn over the course of our lives. (2020, a3, i2)

Having children brought Sarah back to her own deep sense of observation and directness that she

had as a child.

A year later, in 2004, Sarah became a professor. Teaching provided its own realizations

for her creative practice:

> … [Through teaching, I] was able to [enact] so many of the values that I held privately in terms of how I directed my own life. It felt like this opportunity to kind of enact a relationship to daily life and the possibility of an art practice being a kind of exercise and [a] continuous exploration. I felt like I had a lot of freedom that way. And now, thinking back on it, it also took care of some of the personal growth issues of never feeling quite taken seriously as an artist—that sense of "Oh, but I'm a professor, and that somehow has some real validity to it"—and it's embarrassing, but also funny how these things weigh

on you, especially earlier in life. Now, I don't feel like I need to have that in order to prove that I have a life. (2020, a3, i2)

From this point, Sarah started to move away from her old conceptual resources:

I had the opportunity to work with different community groups, and to have more active interactions in my research stations. … By the end of the "S Series," I sort of felt like I didn't need the construct of the historical figure anymore to guide me. I know I've talked a lot about how important structure has always been for me, in terms of giving me freedom. … Maybe that's one of the biggest shifts, not in terms of what the work looks like, but in terms of a personal shift, because after 15 years of this process, I had sort of become all of those people. I don't mean that in a pretentious way, I just mean that all of those acts, whether it was the act of preserving specimens or doing all types of research, those had all become a big part of my daily life. And I couldn't imagine doing anything other than that, like, going back to just, you know, entering my studio and thinking, "What am I going to paint today"—it would be terrifying to me. (2020, a3, i2)

In 2014, Sarah's art underwent another shift when she realized that her practice had not yet confronted the animal directly, in terms of both close observation and understanding the "cultures" of different animal life. Sarah wanted to connect these ideas to her own practice of eating animals, so, in addition to studying animals, she proceeded to ritually hunt them for food:

… I decided that I would have to force myself to hunt and only eat the things that I hunted myself, and that I would have to honor that process by preserving their skins through taxidermy, and thereby also study their anatomy and understand their whole being in that way. (2020, a3, i2)

This process unearthed a more intense, extreme mode of participatory or immersive observation:

What the hunting allowed for was a kind of meditation, a kind of deep, acute attention to the environment and to all the different sensory parts of the environment. I found that very transformative. Something about being able to have that level of focus was really rewarding and infinitely generative in terms of what I imagined in my head and the visual making process … The hunting part of it, every time I actually shot the gun, I found it to be so completely disruptive and counter to everything I had just experienced up until that moment … ultimately, I couldn't resolve that, and I don't do it anymore. (2020, a3, i2)

While the experience of hunting was extremely informative for Sarah's practice and introduced her to an entirely different community of hunters, she felt that she got what she wanted out of the process and retired from hunting:

I just kept making the work without hunting. I became really obsessed with this idea of activating all the senses and being able to have sensory experience in life. I started to understand my making and my process as a meditative practice. (2020, a3, i2)

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: Art Beyond the Gallery.** When asked to reflect

on her recent body of work and to identify any particular experiences or moments that have

stimulated changes in her practice, Sarah mentioned that the last four years have been

particularly challenging:

I've been through a lot of personal struggles, major work changes, and I became very frustrated with the art world and the aggressive negativity that I felt was always a part of it. This kind of constant "chase"—you don't even know what you're chasing after half the time—but this sense of chase and expectation. … Anyway, I just found myself in the last four years really confronting that, taking it head on, and not wanting or being willing to … [accept] that "that is just the way it is." So, I left my gallery. (2020, a3, i2)

After making this decision, Sarah began to correspond with another artist through a weekly

letter, which helped her to liberate her ideas:

That has been very transformative in the sense of getting to a place where I feel at peace about where I am with the work and not dependent on the dopamine of having somebody buy something, contact me, like my work on Instagram. And it's not to say that all that isn't helpful from a practical perspective or otherwise, but I feel good about it, and, in spite of all the challenges of life right now, I feel like I'm having a really fun time in my studio. (2020, a3, i2)

Recently, Sarah has begun to introduce completely new materials and processes into her daily

practice:

I've been making these wearable sculptures that I am calling "costumes for survival." They're sculpted, sewn with repurposed clothing and all sorts of other stuff that I have around—I'm not buying anything to make them. They all have multiple functions; you know, one of them you can eat. I've made a whole series of hammock outfits that you can sleep in and on. I just feel like I'm really in a good place creatively right now. (2020, a3, i2)

Although Sarah has not participated in a residency in the last few years, she does believe

residency programs have extreme value for cultivating the creative process, particularly by

facilitating connection, community, and collaboration. As the director of an educational program that hosts, supports, and connects arts-based undergraduate students with the rich creative network in New York City, Sarah has, in her own way, taken on the role of a "residency" director for young college students. She did not, however, have much to say about her community engagement experiences, specifically. From 2013 to 2015, Sarah participated in a residency and artist fellowship at an arts institution in New York City. This residency, the first of its kind for the institution, involved the artists with organizing public outreach events and community engagement activities. Unfortunately, this experience did not meet Sarah's expectations, and she did not credit the residency with providing any significant environment for creative growth. While Sarah finds value in the idea of community engagement and public outreach, within the residency, or perhaps institutional, framework, she has ethical and political concerns over the motives behind many institutional shifts towards community engagement:

> I'm all for the idea, but if you dig deep into a lot of those practices, a lot of them, in my view, are based on this colonialist model of going into another culture and trying to improve things or help them. I think there are a lot of ethical, political issues around it. And I'm not saying that it shouldn't happen. I think it's totally valid and viable for artists. Absolutely. But I feel like there's a tendency in the art world to want to immediately brand everything, and I'm increasingly kind of allergic to that. (2020, a3, i1)

Sarah's sentiments are shared with many artists today who question the ethical motives concerning community engagement and residency programs.

### Artist 4 | Aaron

**Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.**

*Formative Years, Los Angeles.* Aaron was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. His father is of Mexican heritage and his mother is White—his parents were high-school sweethearts, but divorced when Aaron was an infant. Aaron grew up mainly with his mother's side of the family, although he still has a relationship with his father. When asked to reflect on

his introduction to art and making, Aaron mentioned that, as a young toddler, his mother worked

at a graphic design firm for Hollywood movies, and she would often take him to work with her:

> My mom's "the one that ascended," class-wise, in terms of our family. … She didn't necessarily design or do the creative artwork, but did the building of advertisements. But I remember … in the office there were people who did art and people who drew and people who were more artistically inclined. So, I was exposed to that early on. (2020, a4, i1)

Aaron continued to have secondhand exposure to the arts. He noted that his childhood friends,

who were often more affluent, came from families that were in creative fields and invested in the

arts. This influenced his decision to attend an arts and humanities magnet high school:

> … at the end of middle school and into high school, I remember getting a catalog of magnet programs. … My mom used a different address so I could go to a nicer public school. All of my friends were interested in this humanities magnet school—at the time, I had no idea what a humanities magnet school was, but [I thought,] "All my friends are going, so I'm going to go, too." … I feel like, through friends, I was introduced to even the idea of going to an art museum and what an art museum was. My first formal exposure to art was within this humanities magnet program within a public high school in LA. We had art history classes, philosophy classes, sociology classes, and we had field trips to the LA County Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum. (2020, a4, i1)

***The Community College and BFA Years, Los Angeles.*** Aaron graduated from high

school in 1996, but didn't immediately transition to undergraduate studies. During this period, he

moved around, living in New York City for a few years before returning to Los Angeles. Aaron

stated that he created work casually and rather informally, but wouldn't consider these pieces

"art," per se. Five years later, in 2001, Aaron attended a community college in the greater Los

Angeles area to take general education courses so that he could later transfer to a state university.

There, Aaron enrolled in his first film course, which planted the seed for his future artistic

endeavors: "I took Super 8 filmmaking classes, Film Studies classes, Documentary History, and

that kind of thing. That's when I really started to create work more within a specific context"

(2020, a4, i2).

Outside of his schooling, Aaron began to network with makers and artists by means of an

art publication in which he was involved, gradually becoming entrenched in the Los Angeles art

scene:

> I made my first film ["Streetcar"] in 2003 using Super 8. By that time, I had been
> immersing and finding myself in an artist community. I had become friends with people
> who are established artists … people who went to art school. I think I was drawn to that
> crowd very intuitively. At that time, I didn't consider myself an artist, but [I felt aligned
> with and engaged with] what these people were doing. … So, it was a thing that I wasn't
> articulating to myself and hadn't even started building for myself. It's useful to meet
> these people because maybe it helps to orient where I am in our community. (2020, a4,
> i2)

"Streetcar" garnered international recognition for its content, aesthetics, and spotlighting of the

queer community:

> My first film was with some friends; it was a class project that ended up circulating pretty
> widely. My first film ended up starring somebody who had fame in the 90s—this super
> androgynous Calvin Klein model. A lot of queers were, you know, [crushing on him]
> because this was their first public image of androgyny, this sexy androgyny that was seen
> and known in popular culture. This was just kind of a happy accident. They were a friend
> of a friend. And for some reason—I mean, the film being Super 8 and having, like, a
> minor queer celebrity in it … really helped it circulate. … It ended up playing at a lot of
> festivals. So, right out of the gate, I got a lot of encouragement around filmmaking. It felt
> fun and easy, and I liked the process, and I liked film. (2020, a4, i2)

After the film festival run of "Streetcar," Aaron transferred to a state school to advance

his studies in experimental film. Aaron particularly wanted to veer away from industry and

commercial filmmaking. His aesthetic was clear:

> Super 8, black and white, really DIY, guerrilla-style filmmaking. Very much with that
> ethic: do it yourself, no polish, rough. It's more about the content. I've always been
> drawn to that style, personally, so I think I always just embrace the amateurish quality of
> my filmmaking. I like cheap-looking aesthetics in filmmaking and that's what drew me to
> it to begin with. It feels very accessible to me. Growing up in Hollywood, in LA, with
> various family members associated with the industry, I didn't care about polish, I didn't
> care about making a product that looked like a studio product. (2020, a4, i2)

During Aaron's BFA, the content of his work began to shift, becoming more overtly political and

"engaging explicitly with current queer and trans politics from a radical leftist perspective"

(2020, a4, i2). When asked to reflect on what caused this politicization in his work, Aaron

credited the campus's culture and the friends and relationships he developed while he was there:

> I think my own kind of articulation of political identity is based on the people whose politics I felt aligned with mine. That helped me better articulate my own sense of political identity. I met my collaborator "Joaquin" in [undergrad]. He was a grad student in the PhD program there … I met him, and he was involved already in a lot of organizing and a radical kind of queer activism. I also met "Matt," who I collaborated with on a web series about trans/cis relationships … loosely based on our relationship or exaggerated aspects of a relationship. (2020, a4, i2)

Much of Aaron's filmmaking during this time was extremely collaborative, although he also

occasionally made independent work. He was drawn to the energy that came from collaborating

with others.

**The MFA Years, the Bay Area.** After earning his BFA in 2006, Aaron moved to the Bay

Area and continued to collaborate with Joaquin on other film projects:

> We made another film together, immediately after the first film, which was made very quickly. We started on a 10-year process of making another film, which was a sequel to our first film together. [It was a] prison abolitionist movie. Our approach to it was really similar—very DIY, we didn't have a script. It was highly collaborative with the people who were performing in it. And therefore, it took forever to make because we just kind of filmed it piece by piece, with no real plan. We would shoot, edit, and then see if it made sense. Narratively, it was really sloppy, but we ended up tightening it up over the course of almost 10 years of making it. (2020, a4, i2)

While Aaron still maintained his DIY aesthetic, he became more inspired by the rich activist

history around him:

> Politically, the stuff that I was involved [with] in in the Bay Area really informed my work. The activism that I was involved in, the communities that I was involved in, absolutely shaped the content and the style of the work. The Bay Area, I feel like for me, was … outside enough of the art hubs and the film hubs. At that point, I didn't even feel comfortable calling myself an artist. I was just making stuff. San Francisco is permissive of that kind of approach. This lack of professionalization, a really kind of ragtag aesthetic, I associate that with a lot of San Francisco art. A lot of experimentation without the concern of being commercial. There was a lot of freedom, but also a connectedness, … to [the point that] I didn't feel like we were just shouting into the void. It felt like there was interest. There were platforms to show the [kind of] work that I was interested in

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making; there was work that I was engaging with just by, you know, seeing it, and feeling connected or responding to it. (2020, a4, i2)

After a few years of working and piecing together different jobs, Aaron was encouraged by Matt to apply for an MFA program in the area.

> This was like, the economic crash. I had been temp-ing; I didn't really have any solid career path. I had worked at the LGBT Film Festival a couple summers. I was patching together work, basically. And then I got laid off from an office job. My partner, Matt, he was really school-oriented—he was in a PhD program. And he kept telling me, "What you're doing is art, you know. You are an artist," and he really encouraged me to apply to MFA programs. I didn't really understand what that meant yet. I hadn't met a ton of people who had gone through MFA programs. I didn't really understand what the process was, what it was like. So, it was really just outside encouragement and kind of lack of, like, ability to imagine a career path at that point. I didn't even think being an artist was a real, … legitimate career path at that point. Going to school was a way to buy time. I don't know if this art thing is going to work out, but how about I go to school and then that'll buy me two more years to, like, figure it out? (2020, a4, i2)

Still skeptical about his sense of artistic identity, Aaron applied and was accepted to an MFA program in Art Practice at a university in the Bay Area. With full support from the institution, faculty members, and his MFA cohort, Aaron began to identify as an artist. During this period, he maintained his collaborative partnerships with Matt and Joaquin while beginning to create performative work:

> Putting myself in front of the camera. That started "The Trilogy," or the thing that I think of as a trilogy, which is like a set of three films that are me performing various biographies of trans and queer people. The performative element was really coming through, and my engagement with queer and trans biography and history. For my thesis, I was experimenting with video in the space of the gallery and installation. This period provided me with time and space to think about what I was interested in. Queer celebrity, and trans celebrity, and I was interested in activist history. (2020, a4, i2)

**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Though Aaron had first heard about residencies sometime between his undergraduate and graduate studies, he was not sure what the residency experience entailed:

> It felt like an idea totally outside of normative cultural approaches to working. It sort of existed in my mind as the same idea as an internship—you're going to go somewhere and

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work, but then there's not necessarily money involved. A residency can be "this thing" attached to earning money—or I tried to fit it within that framework to understand it … I began to understand that it existed as time and space for work, but I didn't quite understand how anyone would be able to leave their life and job and home and work commitments in order to do something like that. And I don't think I really understood that until I started graduate school, which was around the big economic crash of 2008, when I wasn't really working. I had a lot of little gigs patched together, and then I started to see and thought, "Oh, I could see how one potentially becomes an artist and maybe begins to take advantage of something like a residency program." (2020, a4, i1)

Residencies come in many different shapes and forms, some involving more amenities than others. Coming from a working-class family, Aaron, like many others, sees the challenges that come with attending residencies. Nevertheless, after graduating from his MFA in 2011, Aaron used this transitory period to attend his first residency.

*Queer Residencies and Informal Making.* Late in 2011, Aaron was invited by a friend to attend an informal residency in Oregon:

She invited a bunch of people, mostly MFA alum or people associated with the program. There's a really great network of people who kind of follow each other's work and support one another. She rented this giant, beautiful cabin; I think it was on state park land in Oregon. That was my first experience with something like a residency. A bunch of us camped outside and had dedicated working hours and then would gather in the evening and talk about our work. (2020, a4, i2)

Due to the technical limitations of the location, Aaron felt that he was not able to be particularly productive:

It was just really bare. I don't think there was electricity … It was challenging because a lot of my work requires electricity … But I think then, and [even] now, I still ask myself, how do people work in residencies? It's still a question to me, because I haven't had that much success, or I don't count what I did [there] as work that … was really productive— even though that's probably not true. All of the work is important, but I think the kind of work that I … ended up creating at residencies [in most cases] isn't necessarily exhibitable. I didn't make a "thing." (2020, a4, i2)

Although Aaron's artistic practice is predominantly screen-based, being around other artists who have a heavily material-based practice expanded his sense of what is artistically possible.

During the summer of 2011, Aaron attended his first formal residency with his

collaborator Matt. *Q Residency*, located around the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, was a queer

residency for LGBTQ+ writers and artists that provided live/work accommodations for residents.

All participants were expected to work independently on their projects during working hours and

to discuss their progress with each other over daily communal meals. During this residency,

Aaron and his collaborator worked on a script for their web series. Aaron enjoyed the casual

atmosphere of the residency, saying it generated creative productivity:

> That was fantastic. It was also very well organized but kind of informal in some ways.
> Even though there weren't any dedicated studios, they maintained structure through
> designated work hours throughout the day that were quiet hours so nobody was
> distracted, because the quarters were so close. And that was directly after I graduated
> from my MFA. I still didn't have a job. So, it felt great, and it was a short enough amount
> of time that felt like a reasonable time to be away from home. (2020, a4, i1)

Q residency also helped Aaron to cultivate a sense of community:

> I made lifelong friends that I still am in contact with on a weekly basis from that. And
> people who are artists, but also … the professionals who ran the residency, became really
> good friends. … We get a ton out of being around other artists. The networking stuff I get
> a lot out of, not just professionally but also just seeing how other artists work. (2020, a4,
> i1)

Aaron continued to seek out LGBTQ+ specific residencies that were informal and based

on establishing community. In 2013, Aaron participated in *I Residency*, using the time and space

to continue his research and to carve out new opportunities:

> Another queer residency. Similar to Q Residency, this one also had a live/work element.
> They were like vacation rentals. I think there were around four to five people, and there
> were four bedrooms … a big living room and dining room, and big porches. We all had
> to figure out where we were going to sleep and work, and I ended up just getting a
> bedroom with a nice desk that I lived and worked in, so it worked out fine for me. But
> there were people with kind of space needs, like painters and people doing sculpture. So,
> they just had to sort of figure out how to work and where to work. (2020, a4, i1)

Aaron acknowledged spatial concerns with each residency he attended. Residencies with minor

accommodations can present challenges for artists, depending on their medium. Though Aaron

was able to get by as long as there was easy access to outlets and the internet, he continued to

pressure himself to "produce a thing":

> I didn't know what to do. But now I realize, residences are also good for periods of
> reflection and research. I think I would have been less hard on myself. You know, I
> would have told myself, "Oh, it's totally fine that you're not making something,"
> because, when I was there, I was telling myself, "You have to make something." (2020,
> a4, i2)

A little after this period, Aaron began transitioning away from his filmmaking and web-

series work and more towards his research into trans history. He explained the decision as

follows:

> So, me and Matt got some really great attention for that project. It was the early days of
> YouTube … It was at that time where we saw a lot of artists using YouTube, and it was
> an interesting platform for artists to put their work up. The web series was a relatively
> new concept at that time. It felt exciting, but then video stopped feeling exciting because
> of the glut of content. So, all of a sudden video became content for the internet. I got
> really disillusioned with it. I don't want to put more content out into the world. It became
> commercial, corporate, monetized, and it lost its DIY, democratic sense. So, then I
> couldn't justify the use of video for me as a form of expression. (2020, a4, i2)

***Y Residency: The Institutional Critique.*** In 2013, Aaron was awarded the title of

"Community Engagement Artist-in-Residence" at *Y Residency* on the West Coast. Y Residency

proceeded over a period of three months, but it didn't provide living or studio accommodations.

Instead, they offered a sizable stipend. During this residency, Aaron continued to develop his

work on trans history and biography alongside two public projects:

> I had two programs. I organized a panel to talk about trans representation in Hollywood
> movies—a panel with a trans scholar, trans artist, and trans filmmaker talking about their
> relationship to certain kinds of mainstream representations in Hollywood. And then a
> kind of launch party, a public ribbon-cutting ceremony with talks and performers. It was
> kind of this symbolic launch [of] the museum. (2020, a4, i2)

Despite these activities, Aaron felt that his role at Y Residency was an empty title in some ways.

Lack of transparency and of clear communication clouded the residency's objectives and

expectations. Regardless, he took advantage of this opportunity to bolster trans history and

representation:

> … [The residency coincided] with the time that trans representation and trans inclusion was kind of really taking off. This was when the first trans studies program came into being at Arizona University. This was a time when there was a lot of trans inclusion in the Whitney Biennial. Then there was also trans actress Laverne Cox starring in "Orange is the New Black." It felt like it was the beginning of the transgender tipping point. I was interested in engaging with that in some way and doing trans historical research and still thinking about institutional legitimacy. So, many institutions all of a sudden started to focus on this historically marginalized identity and experience. I became interested in what that process does to the understanding of that identity and community. … I wanted to use that project as a platform to think about those things and to critique those things. (2020, a4, i2)

Because much of Aaron's research includes institutional critique, Aaron was able to use his

experiences within the institution for his artistic practice:

> I feel like I learned a lot about the inner workings of an institution, which then I use in parody or am critical of in my own projects. … [E]ven then, I think it was when I started to realize that people within the institution can be just as critical of the institution, even though they work there. There are some people doing really great work and [who] know the kind of fraught history of museums and know the fraught politics of museums, so I think that continually surprised me and I think I first encountered that in that residency. (2020, a4, i1)

Aaron described the film parodies that resulted from this project, wherein he acted the part of an

executive director for his own institution: "I did a couple of those in 2013, maybe four or five. In

a parodied voice, giving artist talks, talking about my projects and its various iterations, but in a

fantastical way" (2020, a4, i2).

***Academic and Artistic Recognition, then M Residency.*** As he pursued residency

experiences, Aaron also pursued teaching gigs, relying on the supportive network of artists from

his MFA program to stitch together several adjunct positions. He taught across the Bay Area

from 2011 to 2013, at which point he moved to New York state:

It was a little bit of a pause because I had left the Bay Area. I left my community, my home base. I was living in rural New York state at that time. I was there because my partner had a visiting appointment at a university, but I didn't have a job. Eventually, I did manage to get a teaching job for one semester at a different university. (2020, a4, i2)

Following this one-year appointment, Aaron and his partner returned to the West Coast in 2014, this time to a coastal town where Aaron secured a tenure track professorship. Aaron spent this time focusing on teaching and research, applying for and receiving several substantial awards and grants to execute traveling exhibitions on trans history and art. These exhibitions "[mixed] trans art and trans archival material that engaged with trans history in some way," and they eventually led Aaron to publish his first book on trans history through art and to complete a 2018 residency in New York City. *M Residency* supports one artist or a collective for a seasonal cycle (Fall, Spring, or Summer). During the residency term, artists are required to develop themes and organize an exhibition alongside public engagement activities, which may include performances, conferences, screenings, publications, teen programs, family activities, and/or archival research. During his term, Aaron arranged an exhibition about local trans history and organized three public programs around the exhibition.

When asked about his thoughts on the relationship between teaching and his artistic practice, Aaron pointed out that they mirror each other:

I see my role as a teacher as really about organizing people and coordinating events and activities—the act of coordination. It really kind of aligned perfectly, sometimes too perfectly, with my artistic practice and research because, often, I'm an administrator. My life got highly administrative. In some ways, there was not a hard shift between my university work and then my artwork, because I was essentially doing the same thing. That ended up being an issue later because then I felt like, "Oh my god, I'm so sick of working like this." I need to draw dumb drawings or do something totally outside of this, because I got really bored. (2020, a4, i2)

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: Institutional Legitimation of Artistic Practice.**

Aaron credits residencies with the same kind of legitimacy-granting capacities as academic

institutions:

> I was kind of riding high on this confidence and sense that "I'm an artist, I make work, I
> got into a residency," and I was teaching a class at my alma mater and other schools in
> the Bay Area. I felt affirmed as an artist because I was invited to be a teacher … in the
> [same] way [that] getting a degree is [affirming]. Which, I think, directly … connects to
> the next big project that I undertook after all this, which was trans history and art
> research. … Because it's all about institutional legitimacy. Think really deeply about how
> institutions grant legitimacy to people and organizations. (2020, a4, i2)

Aaron's relationship with residencies is quite unique, as elements of his practice parody

the characteristics of institutions and their exclusionary attitudes. In light of this, Aaron attends

residencies as a way of critiquing "from the inside, out." He is, after all, the executive director

and founder of an institution that spotlights how trans art and history have contributed to the

cultural and political landscape of the U.S. Through humor and performance, Aaron explores the

complex ways in which queer and trans people navigate and claim spaces within popular culture

and, of course, the institution.

Aaron recently applied for a residency but was unfortunately rejected after making it to

the final interview round. This rejection reminded him to take a moment for himself, to return to

play and to creating for pure pleasure:

> … within the past year, [I've been] doing things that just are purely pleasurable, with no
> plan for exhibition or a public forum, because I desperately needed to not be working on
> other people's deadlines. But I really shifted my way of working towards just simply
> doing fun shit. Why am I only just wanting to hit all these marks as a professional artist,
> just to say I hit them? Now I am asking myself, "What do I find pleasurable about being
> an artist; what do I actually want to be making right now?" (2020, a4, i2)

Although residencies provide institutional support and often lead to future professional

opportunities, Aaron realized that he needed to return to art for art's sake.

*Artist 5 | Jesse*

**Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.**

*Formative Years, Virginia.* Jesse is a Filipino American artist who grew up in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. When asked about his family, Jesse stated that no one in his immediate or extended family was an artist or had a professional creative career:

> I lived in this very devout Catholic household. I'm not a practicing Catholic, but yeah. … [My] mom has a very large family; no one is artistic. And on my dad's side, no one's artistic either, so it was really me. And my younger sister, she studied sculpture, so we were the only two. (2020, a5, i1)

Instead, Jesse's early formal and educational encounters with the arts were with music:

> I started playing the piano when I was three, and I played piano all through school. I went to a magnet school for the arts in high school. I would go to regular high school for half of the day, and then the other half of the day I would go to the [nearby] university … and take art, music, and performance classes. And so … even though I was a music student, I was exposed to the visual arts through the art students there, [as well as to] theater and performing arts and dance. (2020, a5, i1)

Jesse was friends with many of the visual arts students at his high school, and he began to draw based on their influence.

> I hung out with a lot of the visual artists, and there were times where I even collaborated with [them] in … some of the performance pieces they made, and things like that. … I think that sort of really planted the seed in me of wanting to work in visual arts. I also dabbled in drawing; I would draw things here and there. (2020, a5, i1)

*The BFA Years, Virginia.* Jesse attended a public state university in the mid-1990s on a music scholarship for piano performance, but he eventually realized that he had more interest in visual arts than in music. As such, he transitioned from music to visual art within the first year of his undergraduate degree:

> That experience in high school was carried over into college, and I was just like, "You know what? … I think I want to pursue visual art instead of music." And so, yeah, I applied to the visual art program, and I got in, and then I lost my music scholarship. (2020, a5, i1)

Although his parents were not initially supportive of his decision, Jesse was able to identify

parallels between the two fields:

> I had to start all over. And my parents—for them, [it] felt like a step in the wrong direction. But now, I'm glad that I made that decision. Music is still a part of how I think about work, because the language is the same, particularly in terms of color and structure; they share the same language. (2020, a5, i1)

Jesse predominantly studied painting, and he had a proclivity for abstraction:

> I made oil paintings. They were abstract, all grid based. There was a strong school of abstraction that was going on at this university. So, as a young painter, that's something that I gravitated towards. And also, having come from a background in music, I think the language of music and the language of abstraction were closely related. (2020, a5, i2)

**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Jesse decided to study abroad

his junior year of college, and from this experience was introduced to the concept of artist

residency programs:

> … I did an exchange program and spent a semester studying in England and then a summer semester in Italy. When I was in England, I met a bunch of artists there, and people were talking about artist residencies, and even the professors there were all talking about artist residencies. At the time, I didn't know what that was. Once I got back to the East Coast, after that semester, I started doing more research into artist residences, and during my senior year I applied to *V Residency*, and I was accepted with a full fellowship. (2020, a5, i2)

Jesse pointed out that those experiences "really opened [his] mind up to other possibilities for

art," especially given that he didn't intend to attend graduate school immediately after earning

his BFA:

> I was interested in studio space, time, the ability to go somewhere different. The residency I applied to was—and I think it may still be—one of the largest artist residencies in North America. I'm not sure, but it was the chance to be able to interact with so many different artists in one place. I think every month they have anywhere from 50 to 60 artists there. (2020, a5, i2)

Though Jesse's early paintings were grid-based geometric abstractions, his work began to loosen

up during this first residency:

They were also very colorful with lots of texture. So, you know, not only was I painting with a brush, I was using a palette knife. The paint was applied really thickly. I was playing around a lot with texture—thin paint versus thick applications of paint, but in a very structured and organized way, like within the confines of the grid … then when I went to V Residency, that sort of opened up. It was still abstract, but I loosened up from the grid and they became more organic, they weren't as rigid. It was also that experience of meeting other artists. That sort of opened my ideas up to what the possibilities of art could be. And so that was definitely a turning point for me. (2020, a5, i2)

After the end of his residency term, Jesse expressed interest in working for V Residency and was hired as a staff artist. As part of his contract, Jesse was provided room and board, meals, a modest stipend, and a studio for managing the space and assisting resident artists. His exposure to ever more artists led him to start playing with how his paintings were displayed:

I was making abstract paintings, but [I] made them as sort of interventions in the public. I would make these paintings and I would place them in public spaces. Some people would notice these paintings, and some people just wouldn't. I think there was that sort of thinking about place, which has always been a factor, and still sort of influences the work that I make—that sort of intervention, but also performative work, too. (2020, a5, i2)

***U Residency and Moving to New York.*** Jesse met an artist while he was working at V Residency in the late 1990s who encouraged him to apply to a residency located in the Northeastern region of the United States. He was accepted to *U Residency* and would later discover that the visiting artist served as part of the faculty there. Jesse was able to take time off at V Residency in order to participate in U Residency for a period of nine weeks. There, Jesse continued to explore and experiment with performance and even sculpture alongside painting and drawing.

I used that time to explore new materials and new processes, and to not really focus on just making paintings. … [T]he caliber of the visual artists that were there, or had gone through the residency … really just pushed me to move beyond the boundaries that I had been working within and to really explore new things. (2020, a5, i2)

As with V Residency, Jesse thrived on being around other artists. Based on the community he

established there among resident artists, faculty members, and staff, Jesse decided to move to

New York City:

> I was moving to New York just because I had met so many people at U Residency who
> were based in New York, and that automatically established a community for me. That
> became my way of moving to New York without that intimidation that I had experienced
> or thought of previously. (2020, a5, i2)

*Shift to Hyperrealist Drawing.* Jesse moved to New York City in September 2000. At the

time, he did not have a studio space, so he resorted to making drawings in his bedroom.

> That really shifted because I was making representational drawings and making the self-
> portraits because I didn't have a studio. Drawing became a clean and cheap way to make
> work. I didn't have to have canvases and paints and brushes and make a mess. I could
> just have a pencil and paper. I was making these really small drawings, and that led to a
> friend of mine telling a gallery dealer about my drawings. The gallery dealer decided he
> wanted to show the work—which was kind of weird because I was just kind of making
> these things for myself, just as a creative activity to do; drawing was a way of thinking.
> One thing led to another and I was making drawings for 10 years, and I was showing and
> exhibiting the drawings with this dealer. (2020, a5, i2)

Jesse's work at this time involved hyperrealist drawings that were based on photographs,

generally within the framework of queer content.

In 2002, Jesse was invited by the mentor who had invited him to U Residency to

participate in another residency in Florida. *U Residency* lasts anywhere from four to six weeks

and pairs a master artist with younger artists as apprentices:

> They had invited me and maybe four or five other artists to go down to E Residency. It
> was sort of like a collaborative residency; I didn't make anything while I was there. We
> spent time going to the beach, reading, and discussing things. We did some collaborative
> performances, and they were more like creative exercises, rather than making a finished
> work. It was great because there wasn't any expectation to create something. (2020, a5,
> i2)

For Jesse, attending a residency that emphasized stillness and restfulness made him realize that

these attributes are just as important as production and exhibition:

That … [is] becoming increasingly important, [the idea of a] residency as not just a space for production and active research, but also stillness and recharging, using that as the space to sort of start new. My experiences with residencies have been in both spaces. I go there with a specific project in mind and I make the work and I just produce, and then there have been other times where I go there with no fixed goal and really the thing is just to be open to what comes [out] of it. To not force anything onto the process, but just to allow the process to evolve organically. (2020, a5, i2)

When Jesse returned to New York City, he was able to rent his own studio space. During this period, he worked for different artists and eventually secured a position with one artist as an assistant. Eventually, he worked his way up to studio manager and would continue working for this artist for over 10 years.

*Return to Painting.* After drawing for several years, Jesse decided to return to painting in 2014, not only because he wanted something new, but because his relationship with his drawings had changed over time:

I'll work on something for a long time and then, all of a sudden, I'll decide, "Okay, I want something new." With the way that I was making the drawings, I was working from photographs. So, it was just an exact translation, it was just execution, and I think I got exhausted with doing that. It just became about executing an image or transferring an image from a photograph to a drawing. Then it became for the viewers all about how [much] it looks like the photograph. That totally lost sort of the essence of … the content I was working with. I could have been drawing anything, it was just about the technique. The subject matter and the content was secondary, and I didn't want that. (2020, a5, i2)

As he returned to painting, Jesse wanted to find a way to work with abstraction while still addressing queerness in his practice. To get back into the swing of the medium, Jesse created daily paintings:

The first project that I did, I was painting one painting every single day for the entire year. And with each painting I gave myself an hour to make [it]. It really became an exercise in painting studies. Learning, and not being too precious, learning to make decisions and accept decisions and accept failures. Also, just because I hadn't been painting [for] a long time, I felt the only way to get better was to make a lot of paintings. I was able to make a lot of bad paintings, I was able to work through color, through composition, I was able to work through pattern. Those are all things that are important to me in my work now. (2020, a5, i2)

***I Residency: Introduction to Textiles.*** In 2016, Jesse was invited to attend the LGBTQ+

residency *I Residency*. During this period, Jesse continued his daily painting assignments and

used each day to explore the environment:

> I brought a month's worth of small canvases. I was doing a painting every day, and then once that was finished each day, I spent the rest of the day exploring the place and just being on the beach and drawing. Going back to these two aspects of residencies—of being productive, but then also being open—it was the perfect combination because I had this very specific project and I only had to devote an hour each day to it, and then the rest of the time I was free. (2020, a5, i2)

Spending time in an environment that had a rich history of LGBTQ+ advocacy was a profound

experience for Jesse. Furthermore, community was extremely important at I Residency, and

Jesse met another artist there who later invited him to be a visiting artist at her university, where

she taught as a textile professor:

> I was invited to be a visiting artist at a University within the Fibers and Materials Studies Department, and they wanted to turn one of my paintings into a weaving—into a tapestry. … And that was something that I had never thought that I would be interested in, even though a lot of my paintings had referenced textiles and patterns and quilts and architecture, I'd never thought of actually using that process myself. I spent a week there, and we produced three different tapestries based off of one painting on a Jacquard Loom. … that experience completely shifted my work. It gave me this really profound respect for the making of cloth and textiles, and from then on, I was hooked. (2020, a5, i1)

This opportunity transformed Jesse's artistic practice, as it caused him to shift from painting to

textiles. Jesse still made paintings alongside textile work, but after receiving positive feedback

on his first exhibited textile piece, he began to focus more specifically on textiles.

***A Year of Residencies.*** Jesse was increasingly realizing how substantial residencies were

for his creative practice, so, in 2018, he decided to schedule an entire year of back-to-back

residencies—10 residencies all together. This meant leaving his studio manager position and

fully supporting himself as an independent, professional artist. His main agenda was to cultivate,

experiment, and explore his textile work:

When I started my year of residencies in 2018, I was able to really push the textile work. I was able to have these spurts of productive time, to make a bunch of work, [to] experiment, and [to] find my way of using textiles that felt authentic to the way that I wanted to express what I was expressing in painting. There's something in textiles, with the texture and color and history of the material, that I was missing in paint. (2020, a5, i2)

Jesse's textile work was, like his paintings, abstract, geometric, and loosely grid based. He drew upon his knowledge and experience of performing music to inform his textile practice:

I would sew pieces together in a way that I thought about music. I would sew strips of color together, and that sort of would form a chord. That to me established the key of the work, or the tone. It really became this intuitive way of working, of just creating a bunch of components and then finding a way to reorganize them or recombine them that was [harmonically] balanced. (2020, a5, i2)

Jesse also began to experiment with how his textile work was displayed:

There was a shift from making these sewn paintings that I stretched over wooden stretcher bars to having them completely coming off the stretchers. To allow the material just to be and to drape the way that it was meant to be. I still work in both modes, where I make these sewn paintings that are stretched over stretcher bars. But then I also have pieces that have no stretcher bars and they hang from the ceiling, or they get pinned directly to the wall. (2020, a5, i2)

However, as more exhibition opportunities arose, Jesse experimented less and less:

In the beginning of 2018, when I was doing these residencies, I was able to experiment and play. And then, slowly, all these exhibition opportunities started coming and it became more about producing for exhibitions. In that sense, I have that in the back of my mind. I have to try to make work that is more finished and [that,] perhaps, could sell easily. So then that … [affected] how much I could experiment with things. (2020, a5, i2)

Jesse's year of residencies opened up many opportunities to exhibit work. During the 2018–2019 residency run, he participated in 21 group exhibitions, 6 two-or-three-person exhibitions, and 3 solo exhibitions. Time became the most important factor within the residency experience for Jesse.

*B Residency: Reflecting on Heritage.* The last residency that Jesse completed before pausing his participation due to the global COVID-19 pandemic was *B Residency*, in 2020. B

Residency is located in the Midwest and provides artists with private live/work studios, access to studio facilities, equipment, and a research library, as well as a modest monthly stipend. Though B Residency is a process-based residency that doesn't require artists to exhibit work, they do invite resident artists to participate in one public-facing event, such as open studios. The minimum residency period at B Residency is eight weeks. Jesse was most impressed with the resources provided at B Residency; his work grew larger and more ambitious. Additionally, being a Filipino person in the predominantly White Midwest caused Jesse to reflect on his "otherness":

> I'd never really spent time in the Midwest. It made me really aware of being different, not being white. And I thought to myself, "Whoa, this is so strange to me." So, I think that really got me to focus on, in terms of textile history or authenticity, my identity and heritage. Being there gave me the time to really research and develop this new work, and so I decided that I would incorporate these motifs that were found in textiles from the Philippines. (2020, a5, i1)

Consequently, he began to research and incorporate Filipino textile traditions into his work for the first time:

> I began to ask myself, "Where am I locating myself within this history?" I think in 2018 and 2019, in the way that I was approaching textile work, I was looking towards modernist painting and abstraction and queer-ing modernist abstraction through the use of textiles. I still think of that, but I'm also thinking about my identity. I'm gay, but then there's also my Filipino heritage. That, for the most part, has been widely ignored in my work. At B Residency, I wanted to return to my heritage. During this time, I had been studying a lot and reading a lot of books on textiles from the Philippines. I had no idea of this rich tradition of textiles—the more that I researched and read about textiles, [the more I realized that] the way they were produced … [is similar] to the way that I think about making work, and I hadn't really even seen the parallel. It became this uncanny discovery. I totally feel a connection [between] the way I'm making work and the way some of my ancestors were making work. (2020, a5, i2)

Jesse alluded to his Filipino heritage through pattern, placement, and form. His work spoke toward spiritually, visibility, and invisibility. B Residency was the largest space in which Jesse had ever worked, and he wanted to create pieces that had a presence. He created work that

wrapped around pillars in the studio space and massive textiles that were almost 22 feet long and 11 feet tall. In doing so, he aimed to soften this massive, open, architectural space through his color, shape, and form.

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: Time and Space for Failure, Experimentation, and Simply Doing.** When asked about how his work changed with each residency, Jesse stated that the time and space to experiment and produce was most useful. Time has also allowed Jesse to loosen up his working methods, privileging creation with or without a predetermined idea:

> Less thinking, more doing … it's only through making that the more productive questions come up, because … that's when you solve [problems] and make things come into being. You can visualize and think about what something will look like, but not until you actually have the physical thing. (2020, a5, i2)

Consequently, his current process is more playful:

> … for the past few exhibitions that I've done, I have been very … rigid about the way that I would make these pieces. And so now the shift for this [upcoming] show is sort of going back to a more open-ended way of working, where I'm just piecing things together again and sort of making a bunch of different parts and then finding a way to combine them as one. … I'm just making, looking, piecing, and then figuring it all out. I think there's more discovery and play, and I think it just makes the work more interesting. (2020, a5, i2)

Despite the seeming impulsivity of this approach, it is informed by Jesse's longstanding knowledge, skills, and residency experience. He now goes into the studio with less anxiety and more intuition. He looks forward to connecting with other artists in the future and applying to residencies when they become available again.

*Artist 6 | Christina*

**Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.**

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***Formative Years and BA Years, the South.*** Christina is a Black, female performance

artist from Texas. When asked about her early encounters with art, she mentioned that no one in

her immediate family worked as an artist or had artistic proclivities. She did, however, attend

arts-based schools throughout her life. During her primary school years, Christina studied visual

arts (mainly drawing and painting) and theater, but she began to focus more on theater as she

moved into secondary school. She performed in productions at a very early age, but she did not

become interested in performance art until her undergraduate studies at an HBCU (Historically

Black College/University) in the Southeastern United States:

> I've done theater and acting my whole life, since I was very young. In terms of
> performance as a separate thing from theater, I learned about performance from my
> undergraduate school professor. He introduced me to the field of performance studies,
> and I was like, "Oh my gosh, this is great," and I started looking into it. I slowly sought
> out more information about contemporary art, and then [I] stumbled on performance art
> and I found a home in it, because I never was a theater nerd. (2020, a6, i1)

In 2003, Christina earned her BA in Theater Arts and Speech Communications, and she worked

professionally for a few years before continuing her education in New York City.

***Theater Fellowship and Graduate School Years.*** Preceding her graduate studies,

Christina was awarded a two-year theater fellowship (from 2006 to 2008) wherein she was

paired with a mentor at a theater in a major city in Texas to work predominantly in the education

department. Around the same time, Christina formed a collective wherein she and a collaborator

performed site-specific projects. Although Christina's main focus was theater—and,

increasingly, performance—she always maintained a practice in visual arts:

> Within that period, I was exploring visual art. I mean, I've always been an artist. I've
> always done it in my own time, painting and drawing and everything. … I think [it was]
> the combination of coming back to Texas and encountering these institutions with these
> different types of art—art between visual art and theater within the performance platform.
> I was asking myself, "What is performance studies?" The more research I put into it, it
> brought me to certain artists and others. And so, I would say, that's kind of the path that
> led me to New York. (2020, a6, i2)

In 2008, Christina attended a university in New York City to study Drama Therapy. During her time there, she met her mentor, Professor O, a specialist in group dynamics and the only Black professor in her program. Professor O taught Christina the concepts of group dynamics and how to build a study, something she frames a lot of her work around now. For her thesis, Christina studied "performance art as a treatment methodology," saying, "[a]t the time, I felt like I wasn't connecting with myself as an artist … and I wanted to reconnect with that, even if it was just through theory" (2020, a6, i2).

Upon graduation in 2010, Christina returned to Texas and was invited to participate in a group exhibition. For it, she created a performance around the act of prescribing medication:

> That was my first sort of introduction to me making an installation and interactive performance. It was very much related to my drama therapy and educational experience, and imagining what a performance clinic would look like. The whole exhibition was called "State Fair." So, they invited artists to make booths. For my booth, I had built a mock doctor's office. I had two chairs outside of the wall as the sort of waiting area. And I built a little window [through which] I could talk to people … I built a box that people could relax in, with pillows, books, and it was lit with Christmas lights. In the other corner of the room, I built a mini stage that had a table and some art materials. I basically gave people this questionnaire like an intake form. The form had all these really random questions, like "Blue or yellow?" "Do you like to eat crawfish in the morning or crawfish in the evening?" so as not to elicit any actual personal information from people. And a collaborator and myself would come up with performances to help people with their ailments. I would always say, "What can I help you with today?" I found that there were people who, even though the questions were extremely random, they would actually put real issues in the responses, or, when I talked to them, they would say, "Oh, well, my cat died, my mom died, I just lost my job." I feel like the performance installation elicited it. So, I would have these random materials, and I would write prescriptions. Your prescription is to put on these costumes and do this thing. Put this lampshade on your head, spin around, say this thing. That's my prescription for you. Go in the box for 10 minutes by yourself. That's my prescription for you. Make a quick painting, and that's my prescription for you. (2020, a6, i2)

Christina continued to find ways to marry the act of performance with theater, installation, and visual art. During this period, she taught at a university in the area and directed plays as a theater

professor. She saw her role as an opportunity to apply contemporary performance concepts to theater:

> I tried to do some gender-blind casting, queering characters. The set was very conceptual, very much an installation. The costume would be based off the work of Iranian feminist artists, [or Iranian feminist] sculptures. That was another big moment for me in my sort of … navigation and understanding of design in contemporary art and in performance. (2020, a6, i2)

**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Christina first learned about residency programs from her husband:

> My husband's an artist and he's a few years older than me, but also, career-wise, he's been in the art world much, much longer than I have, and he kind of helped me. I know I am an artist and I've always known, but I think sometimes we go into other things or kind of get sidetracked. And he said, "No, you know you're an artist. You can be an artist." So, he's the one who told me about residencies and helped me understand what they were and about some of the residencies he participated in. (2020, a6, i1)

Christina was very interested in the support, time, and space that residencies provided. She saw residencies as an opportunity to not only grow professionally, but also to cultivate her practice in performance.

*First Residencies: Commitment to Performance.* In 2012, Christina was invited by a mentor to participate in her first residency abroad in Panama. The residency was not limited to artists and creative individuals, but to anyone interested in the arts and cultures of the African Diaspora, ethnographic and anthropological research, Spanish and Latin American studies, and responsible and ethical tourism. The residency lasted three weeks and participants were only provided housing and meals. Christina mentioned that she didn't necessarily make anything, but rather immersed herself in the environment:

> At this particular residency, it was about exploring the environment. Watching the boats sitting by the water, watching kids playing, and thinking, "Maybe I'll climb this hill." Yes, it was about letting the culture of the place flow in and out of your work. It was very

much about a cultural exchange. About Black artists being in this Black town in Central America—understanding the Afro Latino, Latinx experience. (2020, a6, i1)

From 2012 to 2013, Christina was invited to her first semi-residency experience. For a five-month period, Christina created and performed 10 works in a non-profit artist space. Alongside this residency, Christina also acted in a few plays and productions. This period became a turning point for her, as it solidified her desire to solely pursue performance art and to cultivate her craft as an interdisciplinary artist:

> In terms of a catalyst, I would say this is the starting point. … I thought to myself, "I don't know what I'm going to do, but I guess I'm going to do performances." … I actually was in a few plays during this time. One before [my residency] and one during. I really liked the camaraderie of this Black theater company. But I was very sort of disjointed because I couldn't be experimental, only act. I think that's when I knew for sure that I had to leave this [theater] space for this other [performance] space where I get to do what I want. I ended up doing 10 performances over that five-month period. (2020, a6, i2)

Christina described the features and conceptual origins of this work like so:

> These ideas are just kind of ideas I have rolling around in my head, not necessarily as performances, but they were just sort of things that I thought about. As an example, I always thought about roaches. And there's this poem I found years ago … by Lucille Clifton. I forgot what the poem is called, but the poem is about her and her mother getting together and killing all of the roaches in their house, and how viciously bloody it was and how she and her mother reveled in the violence of killing these roaches. That stayed with me. … I decided to choreograph a dance, and I found some audio, and combined all these things together. … For this other piece, I was living somewhere, and I saw a drug addict kind of ambling down the street, and I recorded it. I created choreography based on this beautiful, elegant, but, you know, heroin knotting kind of dance down the street. The performance had a water installation component inside of the warehouse where it was filmed; I put a … sprinkler system in and made it rain inside. I was also thinking about that Charlie Brown character, Pig Pen, with that cloud of dust that follows him. I saw it as a metaphor for depression and melancholy. (2020, a6, i2)

While the ideas themselves were not necessarily born out of the residency experience, Christina did point out that residencies provided the resources, support, and platform for cultivating and actualizing these works:

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Given the opportunity to have a platform, [I thought,] I have ideas, let's just put them out there, because, early on, I didn't understand anything about how and when I could operate as an artist, where and when I would be able to perform again. So, I told myself, "Do them now and do as many as you can." (2020, a6, i2)

***Four Notable Residencies: Increasing Improvisation.*** From 2013 to 2017, Christina participated in nine different artist residency programs, both nationally and internationally. She reflected on four of the most significant ones—W, T, U, and D Residencies—and spoke about how, or if, these institutions bolstered her creative trajectory.

In 2013, Christina participated in her first major residency. *W Residency* is located in a coastal city in Texas, and it provides three artists with a studio, an apartment, and a monthly stipend for a one-year cycle. Christina used this time to play, explore, and experiment in her studio. Given that she was still in Texas, she was able to tap into a large network of individuals to assist with her performance productions. She collaborated with musicians, costume designers, and community organizers. Christina spoke about her most important piece from that residency, a series of performed sounds, rituals, and actions influenced by both the religious prayer sites in Texas and the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem—both of which are places visited repeatedly by people who make offerings with the hope of receiving something in return:

I think this work … was very important because it was really another piece that grew out of my mind. And I was trying to go back to that kind of creative space. It was also a really important place for me to be able to visually map out concepts. (2020, a6, i2)

After her time at W Residency, in 2014, Christina participated in two residencies outside of Texas: one in New York state and the other in England. She mentioned that, in general, residencies provide physical and mental space for exploration: "What these residences do in terms of space, they allow me to work things out organically, even though I don't know what they're going to evolve into" (2020, a6, i1).

In 2015, Christina was selected to participate in *T Residency*. As mentioned earlier in Emma's portrait, T Residency hosts three artists—one regional, one national, and one international artist—per cycle. Participants are given a large materials budget, a living stipend, and living and studio accommodations for the two-month duration. While at T Residency, Christina conducted research, traveled to Japan, and continued to foster her ideas, though she did not interact much with the other artists:

> In terms of community, I met with the other artists and interacted with them, but we spent more time working alone. There was this sense of, "We picked you three out of the entire world; come make the work, we're giving you all these resources so that you can manifest the contents of your heart." (2020, a6, i2)

Christina did, however, engage consistently with students from the community who would visit the residency. After having a positive experience with one student, she was invited to give a lecture at the student's school, and, after her cycle, Christina eventually returned to T Residency to conduct workshops with the teens:

> … in terms of the lineage, the prolonged community engagement connection, I feel like, in general, that's how my experiences have worked regarding community. There are these touchpoints where I make connections and I remain connected with the people from those moments. (2020, a6, i1)

After her residency term, Christina participated in one residency based in Texas before heading off to the East Coast to participate in two very well-known residencies.

In 2016, Christina was invited to attend *U Residency*, located in a rural area on the Northeastern coast of the United States. During a nine-week period, around 60 participants are given individual studio spaces, as well as access to a sculpture studio, a fresco studio, a media lab, a research library, and large areas of farmland, forest, and lakefront. As with her previous residency engagements, Christina used the time, space, and support to let her ideas organically develop:

[While at U Residency] my partner would … mail me boxes of things I needed, and he loves packing things properly. So, he would put a lot of paper in the boxes to protect the items in the box. So, I was left in the middle of the woods with all of this nice paper; it was barely crumpled. So, I started to make these sculptures with the paper. I mean, I just had so much of it, and I was just thinking about it, the toughness of it. Simultaneously, I was talking to my therapist about the concept of mother and matter, from the same origins [as] hoarding, and that led to a series of work around these ideas. (2020, a6, i2)

During her time at U Residency, Christina began to connect with the network of artists in and around the greater New York City metropolitan area:

I was coming from Texas and I wasn't really deep in the art world—I didn't go to art school. So, at U Residency, I was able to see who my art peers were and it was very advantageous that I moved to New York afterwards for another residency; a lot of these artists were New York artists. (2020, a6, i2)

Thereafter, Christina was awarded a prestigious, New York City-based residency, which elapsed for 11 months between 2016 and 2017. *D Residency* selects and supports three emerging artists of African and/or Afro-Latinx descent who work locally, nationally, or internationally. Resident participants are provided studio space, a sizable stipend, and an additional stipend for materials. Artists must secure their own housing. During the residency cycle, residents are expected to work in the studio a minimum of 20 hours per week and to participate in open studios and public programming. At the end of the residency term, the artists present their work in the space. While Christina enjoyed D Residency's unique audience, she often felt anxious about open studios:

I do miss that audience, because I later found the art world audiences to be very White. I rarely have an audience like that. I only had an audience like that because there's a contemporary art institution in [that neighborhood]. … There was a range of classes, of people of color, that came through the [residency] doors, because that's their museum. They felt comfortable there. They felt like "I belong here." … There were many people in my studio at one time, and at other times it was a stream. My relationship to open studios always presents anxiety for me. During my first open studios here, I sat in the middle of the room and played dominoes and let other people walk around my studio. I had a video playing, sculptures over here, drawings on the wall over there, and I had my notes on the wall. The second open studio I cleared everything out of my studio that morning, left five chairs in a circle and invited people to sit. Come in and sit. Look at each other. I also later did an open studio performance downstairs. (2020, a6, i2)

Despite the anxiety, open studio experiences helped Christina to develop her next interactive performance piece at the residency:

> [It is a] performance-for-video work in development. It is an extremely experimental work for me that takes the form of a talk show in which the audience is imaginary and the "guests"—that range from objects to people—are invited into an imaginary, dissociative, conversational space by myself, the host. This particular work emerged from hitting a conceptual wall while at [D Residency]. My fellow resident artists became my guests and the dialogues, which seem abstract—discussing vampires, kinetic human sculpture, and flower kingdom hierarchies—revealed more intense, layered conversations about cruelty, identity on the margins, and selfhood/objecthood in the African diasporic context. I've since decided to take this work further … by including it in a live performance; very soon it will develop into a series. This work feels important, yet effortless; it achieves my goal of working with my strengths as an improvisational performer while instantly, critically engaging my ongoing inquiry into psychodynamic theory. (2020, a6, i2)

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: Space, Privacy, Time, and Support.** Between 2018 and 2019, Christina participated in four different residencies within the United States. Although Christina did not go into detail about these experiences, she summarized the ways in which these residencies propelled her work in new directions, while also presenting logistical challenges.

> The last residency Christina was invited to was in a rural, coastal area of California:

> … a huge part of the residency experience for me [was] the quiet space, the new environment. The possibilities of … opening up something more [in my practice]. So [this residency] was beautiful, and in a beautiful area, but, you know, the power went out a lot. (2020, a6, i2)

For Christina, having the appropriate space, surroundings, and support helps to lessen distraction and increase focus. Furthermore, as a performance artist, her work is often inherently site-specific: "I feel like each residency kind of had a particular type of mood for me, as an artist who makes performance" (2020, a6, i2). As such, research and resources have become necessary components of Christina's practice, as Christina's ability to realize the ideas in her mind depends on the degree of support and the quality of resources provided by each residency. Several

residencies that she attended contained research libraries and access to different facilities, equipment, and staff members, with whom she networked during her cycle.

Privacy was another factor that allowed Christina to focus for long periods of time. She particularly valued residencies that provided extended time alone to create, as well as agency to reach out, when needed:

> There is an excitement around the ability of an institution to connect you to what can feed your processes—a curated interest. I appreciate … having my own space and the ability to close the door … if I want. (2020, a6, i1)

While open studios and public programming present both challenges and opportunities, Christina highlights the importance of agency:

> Some residencies have actual space and time to experiment—that's very useful. I often want to be freed from having an outcome, a product. At times an open studio event can feel like a pressurized moment. As a person trained in theater, I haven't always had the internal context for a public sharing of work in progress. Most of the time, I haven't spent the time in the studio making an object. Often, I imagine, visitors are hoping to see the progress of an object. … I now have a better handle on it by viewing it as another performative experience to study later. (2020, a6, i1)

Finally, Christina identified time and support as valuable and transformative. Residencies that offer unconditional support allowed Christina to both "dream big" and actualize these dreams. This, in turn, engendered confidence, and Christina mentioned that:

> … as a result of participating in many residencies, I go into each subsequent institution a bit more confidently, feeling that I belong there and [that] this is a space for artists to work and grow. This is a tool for artists. (2020, a6, i1)

When asked to reflect on what advice she would give her younger self, Christina said:

> I definitely wish, with every residency, that I would have done more—used the residency more, made more things, used even more of the resources that were offered. I feel like I made the connections that I needed to make at the residencies, with the institution and the artists present, but I don't know if I got to perform as much research, and reading, and thinking, and doing. I don't know if I did as much of that as I would like … I would have done more, played around even more, and tried to really think about what this residency [is] ideal for. (2020, a6, i2)

Recently, Christina rented her first private studio—unassociated with any arts organization or institution. When asked about how this new space facilitated her making, she stated that, like many of her former experiences with residencies, she needs the time to figure things out, to settle in, to see where she's going. However, there's no deadline, no pressure, no open studios to interrupt her process:

> I love it. I'm slowly getting used to what this means … I think I'm so used to the experience of having a space for a short amount of time, and there are people visiting and I have to show something when they come. There's that expectation [that] people will come and I have to have things around that look like art. … Now I'm in this space and can say, "Oh, I don't actually have to do *anything* in here. I can sit in here for a year and do nothing if I want." … I do like residencies because it puts the fire under me to produce, to focus, to think, to engage, to interact in a new environment. I get a lot out of residences. But this thing here is … I don't even know how to be in a studio where I don't have to perform for an institution. (2020, a6, i2)

With this in mind, Christina was asked to reflect on how her ideas transpire and come together when there's no institution demanding it:

> I feel like it often starts from a very personal place … about what I think about a thing, or a question I have about a thing. As opposed to, you know, an idea or concept I have no connection to. It's drawn from connections, and what I care about, and what's my relationship to that thing or that idea? I don't think that I know how to operate in any other way. I try not to be very autobiographical, but I will, in a performance, say something that is about my actual life. I don't shy away from that, but I don't know if I'd necessarily like to work explicitly from within that. (2020, a6, i2)

### Artist 7 | Anh

**Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.**

***Formative Years, the Southeast.*** Anh is a multi-disciplinary artist who was born in Vietnam and came to the Carolinas region of the United States as a refugee with her family. When asked about her initial encounters with art and making, Anh remembers her early experiences with daycare:

> … both my parents had to go work. So, [my mom] was there with the folks who were resettling us and took me to a daycare, and I was just screaming my head off not wanting

to leave her or not letting her leave. The caregivers at the daycare showed me the craft and arts room, and I was like, "Okay, bye." … So, my mom was very grateful that … [I had a] desire to create because it let her go to work. So probably, I would say that was the first major experience of me loving the idea of creating. Then, as far as growing up, I had a very humble upbringing in which my parents were both working in factories and just trying to learn the language and just put food on the table and a roof over our heads. So, there wasn't any money or time to take us to museums or concerts. For them, they thought art was a luxury; in many communities, [for] many people, art in some ways is a luxury. (2020, a7, i2)

Regardless, Anh's parents manifested their creativity in other ways:

My mom was very resourceful, and with the little money that we had—kind of what we would call upcycling now—she would take things and just make the home [and garden] really beautiful in her own little way … with just the very little that she had, and [she] turned things that we would not see as … sculptural [into] … aesthetically pleasing [objects]. (2020, a7, i1)

Anh's more formal introduction to fine art came through her schooling. She thrived in the

arts and was awarded an outside scholarship to take arts classes at a community center:

I think when I was in fifth grade, I won an art scholarship to the community art center. My teacher saw some potential in me. So, I was given this art scholarship for an afterschool program. Then, from there, I continued my schooling, and then went to a university and majored in fine arts. After that I've pretty much been a professional working artist my entire adult life. I've always been creating in different ways; I have had, like most artists, part-time jobs to support that. But right now, I'm 48 years old and I'm luckily full time. (2020, a7, i2)

***The BFA Years and Subsequent Study.*** Anh attended a public university in the area,

where she was primarily trained as a figurative painter, though she also cultivated her skills in

other media. Anh remarked that her undergraduate schooling was very traditional, and that the

student body was quite homogenous—predominantly White and upper-middle class. After

earning her BFA in 1993, Anh moved to Australia to study at an arts and design school for one

year. This experience was particularly transformative for her due to the drastically different

nature of her environment:

It was amazing to me because the school had not only folks who were indigenous, but [also people who] were very much linked to their indigenous heritage and spoke very

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freely in the class about their challenges being marginalized. That opened my eyes. There were a lot of other Asian students that came because of the area, because of its location. So, I got a taste of being in a situation where folks were not just White, [of] European heritage. I think that kind of opened my eyes to looking at my own background, my own heritage. (2020, a7, i2)

During her time in Australia, Anh's work shifted somewhat. She began experimenting with mixed media and installation. She also became very interested in the art museums and galleries in Australia, and in the different works that were on view.

*Meeting Her Collaborator.* In 1994, after returning home to the Carolinas region, Anh met her collaborator and future husband, "Ulrich." They began to collaborate on experimental, multidisciplinary performances:

[Ulrich is] German, and had just arrived from Germany. He was a ballet dancer. So, meeting somebody who came from the performing arts was new for me, because I had not known anyone who was a professional performing artist. Meeting him and being exposed to the performing arts, and to his own outlook on the arts, was rather unique. He was choreographing on his own, he loved multidisciplinary work, [he was] very experimental, and he launched his first independent show. He asked me if I wanted to collaborate with him as a visual artist. It was a very light collaboration, I would say, from my side, because I was just kind of dipping my foot into it. But just seeing that type of work, I think, changed how I looked at how we can tell a story through multiple art forms rather than one. (2020, a7, i2)

In 1996, Anh and Ulrich partnered together to found their own international artistic community and exchange program. Together, they have presented multimedia dance theater productions, led creative workshops, created teen youth programs, produced and presented music concerts, curated exhibitions, and presented a wide range of art and cultural festivals in the U.S. and Germany. Through the process, they have sought to build community and to facilitate direct connections between creators and audiences by means of the arts. When collaborating with Ulrich, Anh worked on costumes, set design, and more, gradually expanding her creative language:

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I learned how we could use lighting and how that could change the atmosphere. Working with … dancers [to tell] the story rather than just painting on canvas. Also, the act of working collaboratively and what goes into it—oftentimes you're in your studio alone, having that conversation with yourself. And here, [with collaboration and performance,] you are having to trust other people. (2020, a7, i2)

After some time, Anh and Ulrich were married and had a son. This was a big turning point for both of them because they had to navigate parenthood alongside their roles as working creative professionals. Anh continued to make work while raising her son, which she described as working with:

> … a lot of fabric, textiles, sewing, painting, furniture, you know, things like that, also just to get some income in. So, nothing really serious. And then, after my son was a little older, I had my first residency. (2020, a7, i2)

**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Anh and her husband were selected to participate in *J Residency*, which was located close to their home. J Residency provided a studio space to resident artists for a short period of time. For Anh, this opportunity was very much about interaction and experimentation:

> I think that residency was kind of the first time being able to just have the experience of being in residency and being around other professional artists. My work didn't change that much; I was just kind of experimenting. … The opportunity to meet other artists from different backgrounds, [often from] different parts of the world, and to share experiences with each other—sometimes it sparks ideas. … [W]e've been able to share best practices. (2020, a7, i1)

*Moving to Germany and Her Second Residency.* In 2007, Anh moved to Germany with her husband and son. This extreme change in environment caused another shift in her practice:

> Moving to Germany … my husband continued to do his performance work and I was kind of collaborating with him, and then jumping out and then back again. When we moved to [Berlin,] Germany, I think that was a big shift because I was focusing on just painting. … To be in a city that's just full of art, and full of artists. It felt like, creatively, anything goes. At that time, Berlin was super cheap. … They joked about how, for every plane that arrives in Berlin, there's at least a couple of artists moving there. It was the next great city of the arts, [where] artists could dare to be lucky. I was gradually getting back into making art. (2020, a7, i2)

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Anh also had a daughter during this time. She continued to make work and exhibit while

collaborating with her husband on creative projects. In 2011, Anh was selected to attend *H*

*Residency* for a one-year cycle.

> I think it was just the right time in the right place. My daughter was a little bit older, and
> my son was old enough to help with my daughter. I think that was the time where I really
> shifted from painting into mixed media, experimenting a little bit. Being exposed to other
> artists as well, I was starting to focus, contextually, on identity. Being in Berlin was
> exciting, but I was also really homesick. The idea of, "What is home?" Thinking about
> my own identity and being torn between these parallel worlds of my Asian heritage, but
> also growing up in a very Western society. I created a whole series with water lilies;
> water lilies as a symbol for beauty and birth, coming out of the darkest waters. (2020, a7,
> i2)

Water became a continuous theme in Anh's artistic practice, directly symbolizing aspects of her

experience as a Vietnamese refugee.

The next shift in her artistic trajectory did not occur until 2015, when the Syrian refugee

crisis was happening and many were seeking asylum in Berlin:

> I think that was a major shift for me because of my own background as a refugee, and
> seeing the fear that people had. I noticed that, on the one hand, Germans really wanted to
> help, and then on the other hand, there was this fear of, "Will Europe change?" "What
> will happen to Western Europe?" "Will the culture change?" There was this fear of the
> stranger. This experience informed my practice, and I think it was a very natural
> progression from identity, my own background, to the refugee crisis and kind of zeroing
> in on that specific idea. I saw these images of all of these life jackets that were strewn all
> over the coast in Greece. I thought it would be interesting to use life jackets in my work.
> Relating it to my own escape by sea, as a refugee—my own story. (2020, a7, i2)

Lifejackets made their way into several of Anh's works; they were painted, worn, performed,

and even delicately lacquered with eggshells based on a traditional Vietnamese craft, sơn

mài. Anh continued to create and exhibit work that reflected on her experiences as a former

refugee and woman of color, explaining that her artistic practice:

> … addresses everyday manifestations of cultural identity, memory, and displacement. I
> explore, through diverse media, the porous boundary between personal and collective
> history. Sometimes, observations are serious, ironic, or even satirical. Through

deconstructing materials, images, objects, and texts, I (re)construct personal experiences and narratives within the greater cultural context I am a part of. (from artist website)

With these ideas in mind, in 2017, Anh applied the sơn mài technique to a pair of boxing gloves:

… the boxing gloves—that's the next big shift. I was already creating mixed media assemblage work. I think the thing that really informed my practice was the politics, the Trump years. The idea of, we've got to continue fighting, right? We've got to push back. So, I'm working with the life jackets and these objects that can have a charged meaning. There are certain objects that are just full of meaning. What happens if I take on an object and alter [it], how does that change the meaning? What if I take a boxing glove? What if I cover it in eggshells? How would people respond to that? And how this fight is so fragile—what is this relationship [between] violence and salinity? So, I covered it with eggshells and embroidered it. What does that do to it? I took it out of its regular purpose and de-weaponized it. (2020, a7, i2)

***C Residency: Trials and Tribulations.*** A few years later, Anh and her husband Ulrich

decided that, rather than splitting time between Germany and the United States, they'd start to

spend more time in the United States, in the Carolinas region. In 2019, Anh was invited by *C*

*Residency* to participate in a pilot-program diversity initiative. C Residency is located near Anh's

home base in the United States, and its typical residency program supports a handful of artists for

a period of 16 weeks, providing spatial accommodations—a private studio and furnished

apartment—a materials and living stipend, and opportunities to engage with public

programming, alongside an exhibition at the end of the cycle. Anh, however, participated in their

new, inaugural program, which provided five local artists with a residency of only six weeks,

which involved a shared studio space, a small stipend, and an exhibition at the end of their term.

Anh believed that the experience was valuable, though there were many instances of

administrative and logistical disorganization. For example, the way studio space was apportioned

hindered the process of establishing a sense of community:

Normally, you would get your own studio space at this particular residency. … They split it up into two phases, and instead of giving each of us a studio of our own, we were to share the studio. In the first two weeks, … depending on which phase you were in, you were sharing the studio with one other artist, and then the third and fourth week into it,

you were supposed to share with all the artists. By the fourth week, if you were a part of the first cohort, you left and then the others would come in. … It was really kind of weird because it wasn't a very big studio; three of the artists didn't use the space at all because they had their own spaces that were much bigger, their own private studios. We still had a little bit of community, but it wasn't what they had thought it would be. For me, it was fine because I was spending a lot of time in the print studio anyway. (2020, a7, i1)

Despite these obstacles, the artists found ways to make connections:

It was also this kind of weird time where the regular residency artists from other places were transitioning out, and there was this short period of time where all of the studios were pretty much empty, except for the one that we were supposed to share. … I was looking forward to actually meeting some of the other artists, but that didn't really come to fruition … except for two of the stragglers who decided to stay a little bit longer, and I got to get to know them and meet them. One was from Chicago, and we're still in touch, and it was great, but it wasn't something that was planned—it was just by happenstance that she was staying longer, and there were not really many people around. (2020, a7, i1)

Even with this strange atmosphere, Anh was excited to use the printing facilities to create

a new body of work:

The new work that I had been working on was mainly created in the print studio [by] working on their press—they have this amazing facility that I've heard is rarely used by any of the artists. I created a whole new body of work that addressed gun violence in America. It started from this target practice … it's a real piece of paper that is printed and created and distributed by the National Rifle Association, and it's for the Boy Scouts of America. A friend of mine gave it to me a couple of years ago, when I did this other installation about gun violence, and she had found them in a parking lot and they had bullet holes in them already. She told me, "I don't know what to do with these, but do you want to have them?" I said, "Yes, of course, these are pretty disturbing and it's strange." So, I've been holding onto it for a couple of years and I really wanted to do something with it, and that opportunity came during this residency because of the print studio. So, I made multiple prints of this, but printed on top of profiles—silhouettes of children, basically. They were very simple but very poignant. (2020, a7, i2)

C Residency introduced Anh to a new way of making, and she has since incorporated

printmaking into her practice:

I fell in love with linocut printmaking after that. A few months ago, another artist that I didn't know had posted that she was selling her press. So, I bought it from her. I don't think I would have done that had I not had this experience of being able to work with this type of material. So, it has opened up another kind of way in which I can make work. (2020, a7, i1)

Given Anh's background in social practice and community engagement, she would have liked to do more community-based projects while at C Residency. Six weeks was too little time to prepare those types of projects, though it was enough for her to hone her craft:

> I thought six weeks was very short, in a way, though the pressure makes you very productive. Although I think it is a bit stressful, too. I've participated in residencies where there wasn't an outcome. You are just there to use that time to create without an expectation that you would show that work at the end. With this residency, I think it was more of an offering, like, "Hey, here's the residency—you've been accepted to it, by the way. There's an exhibition at the end to show off the work that you've produced." … So, already that mindset is "I've got to produce work that is actually in a state that it can be shown to the public, and that the public can engage [with it]." Then, the other thing was this kind of community engagement. I've done community engagement projects where I worked directly and intensely with the community. … [In this case,] I felt I didn't have that time to actually do a project within a project where I could bring the community into what we were doing or what I was doing, because [there] was the pressure of creating work for an exhibition and just trying a new medium … [with] the printmaking, because I had never done that before. (2020, a7, i2)

Anh noted that the community engagement and public talks that did occur felt awkward. School tours would pass by the shared studio space without interacting with the artists. Though this gave the artists time to focus on production, they would have preferred to interact with the public:

> [We] were really open to [community engagement]. But then staff would bring tours right by our spaces, but ignore us, and we brought it to their attention. So later, during the exhibition, there were [school] tours, and we were the first artists that they called and said, "Hey, we have this tour, could you make time to come and talk to the students?" And we said, "Yeah, of course, that's what we want!" But it was surprising [that] those situations unfolded in the beginning. (2020, a7, i1)

During the exhibition opening, Anh also became very aware of how White of a space C Residency usually is:

> The group of artists that I was in residence with was the first ethnically and culturally diverse cohort. At the exhibition opening, there was a whole different public that attended that [the staff and board members] weren't accustomed to. That evening, I heard several comments from people about race. "I have never seen so many Black people [here]." (2020, a7, i1)

Regardless of these trials and tribulations, Anh was grateful for the experience, the networking, the community, and the artistic exploration that occurred while she was there.

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: How Space and Time Mediate One's Ability to Play.** Over the span of her career, Anh only had the opportunity to participate in three different artist residency programs. She mentioned that, if she could go back and do it all again, she would have attended more residency programs before becoming a mother. Nevertheless, her present residency experiences have furnished her with sufficient space, time, and artistic community to nurture her practice.

When asked to reflect on what causes her to integrate new materials, ideas, and practices into her work, Anh stated that some of her decisions are driven by time and space restrictions, others by pursuit of newness and play:

> I think I just get bored. I mean, to be honest, I think I just want to do something different. I'll decide, "I'm going to make an installation." Then, I'll ask myself, "What is the best way to use [this] space?" "What's available to me at the moment?" "How much time do I have?" If I'm asked to participate in a show or a project or something like that, I have to think about, okay, what, realistically, can I do for it? What space do I have? So that informs … how I create work. Where I create the work [determines] how experimental I get to be. If it's a commercial art gallery, I have to think about that. If I exhibit work for a project space, we're going to try something different. (2020, a7, i2)

In addition to her paintings, performances, installations, lifejackets, and eggshell-embellished objects, Anh recently decided to incorporate abandoned quilts into her work:

> I just like to work with a lot of different mediums. I think it also has something to do with … the history of quilt making and the hidden messages or motifs, the different patterns that exist in these different quilts. Whether it's the different motifs that exist in European quilts or the types of patterns that live in African American quilt making, and things like that. (2020, a7, i2)

In her latest series, Anh printed unconventional phrases on candy sweethearts:

> I'm still working with similar ideas, like the boxing gloves. Taking conversation hearts and putting words on them that you would not usually see on conversation hearts; I want

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to start a conversation about what is currently going on in the world. The work has also stemmed from my frustrations with this year and the political climate. (2020, a7, i2)

Echoing her eggshell-embellished boxing gloves, Anh coated a new set of boxing gloves with conversation hearts, each one containing the phrase "fuck it." She also created ceramic dishes with the hearts, each containing a different message: "fuck it," "fuck racism," "slay it." Thus, while residencies have helped to propel Anh's work in new directions, our social environment can accomplish the same.

### *Artist 8 | Jonathan*

**Early Influences and Artistic Trajectory.**

***Formative Years, North Carolina.*** Jonathan is a Black artist who grew up on a farm in North Carolina during the de facto Jim Crow era. He recalled as a child:

> … watching movies in my hometown from the balcony of the theater because it was illegal for Black people to enter the lobby. Homophobia was just as rampant. It was also a time when Black men and women were fighting for equal rights across the country. Black people were redefining themselves as strong individuals, worthy of respect and equality. (2020, a8, i2)

When asked about his early encounters with art and making, Jonathan spoke fondly of his family, and particularly his grandmother—a quilt maker. He shared the following written excerpt regarding these influences:

> My mother and grandmother expressed their worldview and emotions through textile and fabric. My mother, a textile worker at Hanes Knit, which was at one time located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was a piece-mill worker. She spent long days sewing sleeves onto t-shirts. She taught me how to operate a sewing machine. At a young age, she taught me how to thread the machine, how to sew a button, how to do single-stitch sewing and other techniques with the machine. My grandmother lived next door to us, and on one of my visits she was [sitting] on the bed, quilting. As I came into the bedroom, she turned toward me and said, "Boy, come over here and help me with this quilt."
> The last thing I wanted to do was to participate in a craft project that would put in question my masculinity. I was already at an age where I was becoming aware of my same-sex attraction. Quilting and sewing had made me suspect, afraid, and withdrawn. I

was contemplating all of this as I was walking toward her. Expressing my displeasure with my grandmother's request would have been a serious mistake.

She calmly looked up at me and said, "Pick any color or pattern you like, and I will show you how to add it to my quilt." Her quilt already had an intricate pattern, which meant months of work. That didn't seem to matter to her. She was allowing me to break the pattern of the quilt. I was that important to her.

My grandmother knew that I was struggling with something. She intuited that I needed to feel embraced, accepted, and heard. We did not talk much. She taught me how to quilt pretty much in silence. She never told my parents. It was just the two of us. It was a most loving act.

These and other experiences from my childhood were the foundation of what formed … my understanding of creativity. From my father, I learned the importance of observation, patience, and active problem-solving. He took my curious mind and wacky ideas seriously. He did not make fun of me nor dismiss my childlike interests. He instilled in me the sense that I was important and worthy of attention from people in authority.

From my mother and grandmother, who were steeped in folk art traditions, I learned to appreciate skills and techniques that I could much later subvert and incorporate into radical self-expression. As a Black, queer male, I was as marginalized as the techniques in quilt making and sewing that the women in my life were teaching me. I also learned that craft culture can instill calmness, healing, and acceptance, especially when one can break the rules and not be judged by the finished product. (artist's unpublished manuscript)

***The BA and MA Years, the Carolinas Region.*** Jonathan began his undergraduate studies in 1979 at a public university in the area and proceeded to obtain his master's degree at a private university in the Carolinas region in 1986. Although he was making art during this time, he didn't formally study the subject in school; he earned his BA in Psychology and Political Science and an MDiv, or Masters of Divinity degree. Jonathan described his drawings during this period like so:

I was drawing, mostly. Making abstract drawings that look more like string or wire-y lines. I didn't have any drawing skills, really. So, a lot of the stuff that I was drawing were just patterns that you'd see in fabric patterns, textile patterns—and even [then,] I didn't know that the pattern has to be drawn and plucked away, that it can be repeated in the textile making process. (2020, a8, i2)

During his time in seminary, Jonathan was able to attend a lecture and meet world famous African American novelist James Baldwin. This was a profound experience, and, after

the event, Jonathan made a point of reading more works by African American authors, such as

Maya Angelou and Eldridge Cleaver. He explained, "[these authors] were never taught to us in

classrooms, we never read books like that" (2020, a8, i2). Jonathan's encounter with Baldwin

would later inform his practice while he was living in Japan.

*Living Freely in Japan.* In 1986, Jonathan moved to a major city in Japan to teach

English to young students. There, he encountered "more art than [he'd] ever been able to see"

when living in a small town in the Carolinas. The exposure to a new cultural environment with a

rich and distinct artistic tradition motivated Jonathan to continue cultivating his practice:

> In [this city], I was able to see art shows where artists have been painting the figure and
> drawing the figure. Growing up in the South and being self-taught, I didn't pay any
> attention to the figure; I was just doing a lot of abstract line drawing. … I thought, you
> know, my artwork needed content in it—it was just abstracted lines and stuff like that. I
> started to move away from abstract and to [the] figure because I wanted to reference the
> body, the Black body—inspired by the writings of Baldwin, including *Giovanni's Room*,
> one of his early books, about a gay American and his life in Paris. (2020, a8, i2)

As such, Jonathan began to supplement his drawing with collage work.

Jonathan described his time in Japan as freeing. He didn't feel oppressed as he had in the

Southern region of the United States. He knew that he was different, but he felt a sense of peace

and freedom:

> The Japanese people didn't care that I wasn't Japanese; they didn't care that I couldn't
> speak the language well, if at all. I wasn't trying to assimilate; it was obvious I wasn't
> Japanese and that didn't bother me. I wasn't arrogant enough to think that my race was a
> superior race, like in the way that I encountered Whiteness in the South. In Japan, I could
> teach English and I could paint and draw. That's why I went. (2020, a8, i2)

Jonathan began to use sumi ink, a traditional Japanese ink, to create his drawings. Pushing his

materials further, he also began to use Brazil nuts dipped in sumi ink as his drawing instrument:

"[in the U.S.] Brazil nuts are called … ni**er toes or ni**er nuts. … They referenced the sexual

organs of Black men" (2020, a8, i2). In this sense, Jonathan began to think and work more deeply with materials and images that referenced the Black body and Black history in America.

*A Summer Program at Yale.* In the late 1980s, while Jonathan was living in Japan, he decided to apply to Yale's fine art program. Though his application was denied, he was encouraged by a friend to apply to a summer intensive program at Yale, to which he was accepted. As a self-taught artist, Jonathan surprised his instructors during class sessions:

> I had a drawing class and an oil painting class. The painting teacher came over and he looked at what I was painting. He said, "Well, you're painting the model as if you're up there looking down at it," then he said, "Have you ever taken a painting class before?" I said no. He asked, "Have you ever taken a drawing class before?" "No." Finally he said, "How did you get in here?" I said, "I applied." And he just looked at me for a long time. … Finally, he told me, "We'll take you where you are, and we'll build on your skills." And he walked away. (2020, a8, i2)

This was Jonathan's first formal training in fine arts. Although the experience was initially jarring, it didn't stop him from continuing to create and explore when he returned to Japan to continue teaching English.

**Introduction to Residencies and Residency Experiences.** Jonathan wanted to pursue his artistic passions, and residencies became an opportunity to gain access to this support. While he didn't specify how he became aware of artist residencies, he decided to apply to his first residency (located in the United States) while he was living abroad in Japan.

*Returning to the United States and V Residency.* In 1991, Jonathan returned to America and almost immediately participated in *V Residency*. Located in the New England region, V Residency provided Jonathan with housing, a studio space, and meals for the duration of a one-to three-month residency cycle. He used the facilities to learn the process of monoprinting, which he applied to renewed investigations of African American literature.

The writings that I had read about, Baldwin and his writings, and Maya Angelou, and others—the whole idea of the Black figure being seen in a certain way that's more positive, more powerful, as opposed to being diminutive. "Don't be as bold as the White man is, because that will put you in danger, you will become Strange Fruit." And we all know this, right? So, taking those stories and those words and then translating it into my work at the time was a shift for me, because I never thought of my work as being able to have political content. (2020, a8, i2)

***Moving to the Bay Area: A Different Kind of Freedom.*** In 1991, Jonathan moved to San Francisco. Although he was still aware of systematic racism and oppression, and occasionally still encountered it, Jonathan became bolder in his practice, creating work that explicitly addressed the Black experience:

> … the atmosphere here was a lot more open and optimistic at the time; it's changed now. I felt that I could be more experimental in what I [was] doing—not having to hide my Blackness or my gayness or queerness; I [could] definitely let my artwork express that. I felt more liberated here. (2020, a8, i2)

Because of the history and atmosphere of political activism that existed in the Bay Area, Jonathan was empowered to create work that spotlighted the pain and oppression of racism, and how it permeates U.S. culture and social systems:

> I had this whole series about using Black or racist stereotypes and making art out of those stereotypes. I used Brazil nuts in my work because Brazil nuts are called … ni**er toes or ni**er nuts [in the U.S.]. It's a food; why would anyone give food such a horrendous [name]? … And then I thought, well, if you tie food to racial stereotypes, and we all need food to survive, … conceptually, that means that the racial social structure, and power, and capitalism that we find in society and culture, is just as important to this culture as food is to our survival, as nourishment. That's what the juxtaposition is. So, with my Brazil nuts, I went to a stationary store and asked the owner behind the counter to create two stamps for me: one with the word "ni**er" and the other with the word "toes." And he was shocked, but he did it. And I would stamp on these Brazil nuts this horrible racial epithet, and I'd put them in jars. From a distance, all you saw were these beautiful brown reddish shapes in a jar, and you'd be drawn to it. And once you got to it, what you saw was "ni**er toes" on every single one of them. (2020, a8, i2)

Jonathan continued to make work in this fashion, re-creating Uncle Ben's rice boxes:

> We digitally put my face over Uncle Ben's face. The idea is that every Black man is Uncle Ben. It could be my face, it could be my brother, my father. It could be any Black man. And Uncle Ben is supposed to serve. Because you're serving food. (2020, a8, i2)

During this time, Jonathan began to work as a curator for one of the departments of a local art museum. While he continued to make and exhibit work, his participation in residencies dwindled: he participated in only one other residency at the end of the 1990s. Eventually, Jonathan was able to arrange a short appointment with a foundation to show his work:

> I wanted to show them my monoprints and my drawings. I got an interview with the director of the foundation; he said I had fifteen minutes. "Bring your portfolio, set it there, and then you can leave the room." I wasn't allowed to be in the room while he looked at my work. He called me back in and told me that my work looked similar to pieces he had seen in New York … I had never been to New York. Regardless, all of these comments didn't lead to him including the work. I thought he would, based on what he was telling me. (2020, a8, i2)

In the 1990s, arts organizations were predominantly White spaces, and leaders and executives were often White, hetero males:

> I felt like [there was] nothing I could do as a Black male [to] get the dominant, White, male culture to look at my work without that bias. That's when I thought the art world isn't designed for change; it's designed to maintain the status quo. So, I decided to look inward, look at my identity. And painting and drawing had nothing to do with my life; no one in my family was a painter. It was always fabric. It was crocheting and quilt making. (2020, a8, i2)

***A Quiet Period and then an Explosion of Creation.*** Jonathan worked as a curator for over 20 years. During this time, he continued to make work and participated in two different residencies in northern California. Then, in 2010, Jonathan began to return to fabric, stitching, and crocheting as a means to facilitate healing and community. Jonathan would gather with friends at his home to create something similar to a quilting circle:

> … we were sewing rag rugs together using thread and needle. The act came from this idea of exploring what my desires and needs were. Instead of me asking other people to provide a sense of community, being heard, understood, all of that, why don't I give that to others? Why can't I create the healing environment that I want for society, instead of waiting for it to happen? Then I am also healing myself as I'm healing other people. We're always being judged, and we're always being told what to do. When my grandmother let me break the pattern of her quilt, that was powerful for me, and I want to share that with others. (2020, a8, i2)

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As his stitching circle grew in popularity, Jonathan was invited to give a presentation at a

museum about his work. Impressed, the director invited him to participate in a residency there—

*Z Residency*—though Jonathan would have to find a way to make his stitching circles more "kid-

friendly":

> We don't want to teach little 5-year-olds how to sterilize needles. The director told me, "… you've got to figure out another way to do this." Later, I was speaking to a friend about this, and she said, "Well, you're sewing rag rugs; you can also crochet rag rugs." And that's how I transitioned from the stitching circle to crocheting with the community. (2020, a8, i2)

> Crocheting became a primary medium within Jonathan's community and private practice.

Within the community, Jonathan hosted crocheting workshops, teaching visitors how to crochet a

single chain using found, bought, and donated fabric:

> It takes them on a very different journey. And that's what I want. When they come to my events … they're expecting, for the most part, to learn a technique, and they do. But they also are expecting to create a specific, finished product, and that isn't the focus. I'd take them on an inward journey toward maintaining their own agency, maintaining their own sense of self, and [ask them to assume authority for their criteria of success]. Just because I'm the stranger standing behind a table covered with rags asking them to participate in my event, do they need my approval over how it looks when they make all the choices? (2020, a8, i2)

Independently, Jonathan also crocheted large sculptural forms and assemblages from images of

the Black experience, which resolved into cohesive stories when viewed by members of the

African American community. He explained:

> Some of the pieces are very specific. When Black people see the work … the rag rug on the wall, the ironing board, the watermelon, the framed photo of Robert Kennedy—they have a whole different perspective. (2020, a8, i2)

With this momentum, Jonathan finally decided to pursue his craft full time, retiring from his

curator position.

***N Residency: From Healing to Mending.*** In 2016, Jonathan was invited to attend *N Residency*. Located in the Bay Area, N Residency provides studio space to three local artists for a period of four months. Housed within a large recycling center, artists have scavenging privileges and 24-hour access to the company's well-equipped art studio. In return, the artists agree to speak to elementary school classes and adult tour groups about the experience of working with discarded materials. At the conclusion of the four-month residency, the artists exhibit their work in a three-day public exhibition and deliver artist talks. Thereafter, artists contribute artwork to the program's permanent collection, and these pieces continue to be shown in off-site exhibitions that promote recycling and reuse.

Jonathan was excited to begin his work at N Residency, and began scavenging and collecting materials from "the dump" without any idea of how to transform them into artworks. Staff members and the director joked with Jonathan that he was creating quite the thrift store:

> The [residency director] walked into my studio and she looked around and said, "Well, you have quite a collection here, but what's the theme for your show? You have a show in a month," and I thought, "Holy moly, you're right. I have a show in a month, which isn't a long time." … She just said, "Well, yeah, we've got to start promoting it soon." (2020, a8, i1)

With slight panic, Jonathan visited the recycling site hoping for inspiration to visit, or even to crash into him:

> I did the same thing … that I did [in 2016 when] the curator … rejected me. I needed to pause and ask myself, how am I feeling on the inside? 2016 was the rise of Trumpism. I had felt at this moment feelings very similar to my experience growing up in the South; I felt detached, thrown away, discarded, dangerous, sharp. That's how I felt, and I wrote all this down. And then I put on my scavenging gear, the big boots, the goggles, the hard hat. I wanted to look for objects that related to my feelings in the material world. I was out there searching for maybe 20–30 minutes, and nothing was happening. I just kept seeing stuff I wanted to add to my thrift store. I just sat with my feelings, and then I thought, "This is not working." And then I heard this crashing sound. My intuition said, "Well, you should go over there." And I thought, I'd better listen. At this stage of my life, I can trust my intuition. … And all I saw was a big pile of broken ceramics. I was just standing there looking at these ceramics as if they were the most exciting thing in the world. As if

they were an asteroid. As if they were extraterrestrial, and I couldn't take my eyes off of them. I started becoming emotional over these broken ceramics, really losing my mind. Why am I misty over these broken ceramics? And then that's when it hit me: that's how you feel. You feel broken, detached, thrown away. … And that's when I decided, okay, I'm going to work with shards. (2020, a8, i2)

Jonathan began filling different vessels with broken shards of glass, ceramic, mirrors, etc. He stuffed them into frames, filled birdcages, bathtubs, handbags, and a grandfather clock. He also collaborated with the residency to host community crochet events.

Community is the foundation of Jonathan's practice, and he reflected fondly on the public tours at N Residency, which allowed him to speak with people of all ages, races, and classes. He particularly appreciated his studio visits with younger students, as they delivered bolder feedback. One girl asked him, "What did you actually make in here?" Jonathan was humbled:

… she's right, I didn't exactly "make" anything here, I didn't dig up the clay and fire the ceramics in the kiln; I didn't blow, shape, and break the glass. But I found it all at the dump, and I arranged the materials in a way that sets a tone, provides a context, and tells a story. (2020, a8, i1)

During his residency cycle, Jonathan was asked to donate a work for auction. This led him to create his first mended piece:

I thought, well, what if I were to crochet around this broken ceramic pot—and I crocheted around it and I gave it to them. And there were two people at the auction bidding on this piece. They were there in a bidding war, or that's what I was told. And one of them was my art dealer. She bought the first [mended] piece I've ever made. Then she contacted me and said, "Well, do you have more of these?" (2020, a8, i2)

Jonathan's mending series struck a chord with many collectors and dealers. Much like his shards, they were always about healing:

[The residency] was pivotal. It changed the direction of my studio art practice. I'm working with fabric and the public; I've done this crocheting for almost nine years, right? But the idea of bringing [a folk art and craft tradition]—crochet—and then crocheting broken ceramics is like … what is that? Why would you want to do that, right? And then put them in a fine art context. I took these two things that are in two different categories: ceramics and crocheting. They're both craft, but they have not been seen together. The idea of bringing the two together wouldn't have happened if I wasn't at [N Residency].

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Crocheting and mending together broken ceramics—they're important like we are. Even though we're broken, we don't deserve to be thrown away. So, symbolically, N Residency … [helped] me to be able to say, well, this is the language as an artist that I am creating. (2020, a8, i1)

**Reflection and Residency Takeaways: There's Nothing to Fix.** Since his cycle at N Residency, Jonathan has participated in several high-profile exhibitions and events and has received awards for his work. At this point in his artistic practice, Jonathan no longer relies on the concept of "mending":

Mending was symbolic in that it needed to be fixed. I realized that I had to be more careful symbolically. Now there's nothing to fix. They're broken, and they stay broken. I want to show off the beauty of that. It's the wholeness of it that is beautiful, whether it's broken or not broken. I'd like to think, conceptually, that … I'm saying that, broken or not, you'll always be beautiful. So now it's about liberation; nothing needs to be mended. Everything is able to explode, and grow, and I don't have to try to control the material. (2020, a8, i2)

Jonathan was invited to participate in a residency that was meant to take place in 2020. However, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the residency has been postponed. Reflecting on his residency experiences, Jonathan wishes he had attended more early on in his career:

If I had to do it again, I would want to spend as much time as I could in residency, because I would be able to experiment and explore in ways that I can't at home in my studio. Here, and especially now, there aren't other people around—no other artists, writers, dancers, and so forth. I'm supposed to attend another residency in the summer, and I'm excited to meet other people. To exchange ideas, critique work, to get inspiration, and grow. (2020, a8, i2)

When asked to reflect on the particular characteristics of residencies that cultivated his creative growth, Jonathan identified not only the support, resources, and community within the residency experience, but also the fruitful challenges of working in a new space and incorporating new materials and ideas. This challenge has the capacity to transform one's work in wholly unanticipated ways.

Jonathan continues to find community and healing, albeit through online lectures, artist talks, and workshops. He's been able to translate his crocheting circles into an online experience through Zoom, though he hopes to resume in-person sessions in the not-too-distant future. He is also preparing a solo exhibition, and he's excited to share his newest body of work with the world, whether virtually, in-person, or somewhere in-between.

**Summary**

I have presented portraits of eight very different artists who live and work in the United States. In doing so, I hope to have highlighted the proclivities, dispositions, and biases they bring to discussions about residency programs. From these vignettes, we can begin to see how artistic development was nurtured by family, friends, mentors, schooling, experiences abroad, life changes, and, of course, residency programs. We may even begin to elicit some thematic trends, as each of these elements cultivated creative growth by introducing new environments, ways of working, or materials and/or by fostering community. Below I have summarized the most salient takeaways from each artist's experiences with residencies, which will form the foundation for our discussion in Part II.

**Richard.** Richard identified two pivotal moments in his artistic trajectory: one that occurred at S Residency (the "art moment"), and another that occurred at A Residency (the "life moment"). S Residency impacted his material practice by furnishing him with significant digital and new media resources that helped him to reform his approach to visual synthesis techniques, and it provided him with a network of artists who were interested in related materials and ideas. A Residency, which took place on a sailing vessel across several sites, influenced Richard's conceptual practice by exposing him to "sublime" experiences and new perspectives on environmentalism, which he incorporated into his subsequent work. These changes made

Richard a more confident and adventurous artist, and interacting with other artists in these contexts "pushed the ambition," making his ideas "more complex or bigger in scope, bigger in scale."

**Emma.** For Emma, an artist of European and Chinese descent who works primarily with the theme of identity, G Residency in China proved to be the most influential setting for her creative growth, as it provided both a rich cultural environment and invaluable craft-based learning experiences. Both G Residency and E Residency (in Europe) allowed her to reflect on, experiment with, and explore her ideas around culture and self, each one highlighting different axes of difference. Emma's challenging conversations in Europe even led her to seek inspiration outside of the institution. Back in the U.S., Emma's participation in T Residency provided her with sufficient financial support and amenities to realize more ambitious projects. These material and conceptual developments nurtured Emma's confidence within her practice, cultivating a sense of authenticity and professionalism.

**Sarah.** We may identify two pivotal moments in Sarah's narrative that were mediated by residencies: R Residency in Italy, and L Residency at a botanical garden. The former reformed the conceptual aspects of her artistic practice by solidifying her desire to create her own cosmologies, while also facilitating lifelong connections with scientists and biologists and mobilizing opportunities that would inform her research-driven process. The latter stimulated a material shift in Sarah's practice, causing her to return to watercolors. The connections Sarah has made between her residency-mediated experiences and her wider practice have emboldened her to pursue her creative endeavors without fear of judgment and criticism.

**Aaron.** With each residency that Aaron completed, he increasingly shifted from collaborative endeavors to a deeply intimate, research-based practice that addresses trans history and art. Y Residency presented a decisive shift in this regard, as it provided him with both financial support and conceptual fodder that he used to investigate (and parody) institutional authority. Aaron continued to create, curate, and produce within this framework for some time before he began to experience administrative burnout. At this point, another residency pushed him forward by negation: Aaron's rejection from this residency encouraged him to start making things solely for pleasure.

**Jesse.** Jesse described his artistic trajectory as being "threaded" by the connections he fostered at each residency. This was particularly true at U, V, and I Residencies, which exposed him to a diverse spectrum of artists who each inspired him to experiment with his way of thinking through material. Jesse's gradual, residency-mediated shift from painting to textile work was mirrored by a conceptual shift from geometrical relations to "queering" space through color, shape, and form. Later, the ethnically homogenous environment at B Residency alerted Jesse to his marginality and motivated him to immerse himself in the rich history of Filipino textiles. Gradually, these technical and conceptual shifts effected attitudinal and stylistic shifts, as Jesse became more confident in his practice and looser and more intuitive in his forms.

**Christina.** Christina has engaged in 13 distinct artist residencies to date and credits them with providing resources and space to cultivate her practice. The most prominent change occurred at D Residency, where Christina took advantage of otherwise nerve-wracking open studio events to stage dynamic performances that engaged the audience in dialogue. T Residency afforded a different kind of shift, as its large materials budget and helpful staff allowed Christina

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to realize larger projects. Thus, Christina regards residencies as tools for artist growth and development.

**Anh.** Anh's most notable residency experiences occurred at H Residency in Berlin and C Residency in the U.S. She attended H Residency in the midst of the Syrian refugee crisis, and this social impetus, coupled with her own background as a refugee and the residency's space and resources, motivated her to produce work that highlights the common struggles and strengths that characterize the refugee experience. Due to its exceptional printmaking facilities, C Residency revolutionized Anh's material practice by giving her the opportunity to express her ideas through a new medium. As an interdisciplinary artist, Anh grew most in residencies that included a variety of facilities and equipment for material exploration.

**Jonathan.** The two residency programs that instigated the greatest artistic shifts in Jonathan's practice were Z Residency and N Residency. While Z Residency challenged Jonathan to find more accessible ways to deploy his socially engaged crocheting practice, N Residency provided him with the right material impetus at the right political moment, enabling him to "piece together" the material and conceptual dimensions of his art through his Mending series. Since then, Jonathan's attitude towards his work has evolved further, totally transcending the notion of "mending" and instead allowing the things he makes to grow and emerge as whole entities that do not need to be fixed.

Table 7 provides a snapshot of the information in these vignettes, highlighting the environmental characteristics of different residency sites and the unique material and conceptual changes each artist participant encountered while in residence.

**Table 7**

*Material and Contextual Changes in Each Specified Residency Environment*

| Artist | Residency | Environment | Material changes | Conceptual changes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Richard | A Residency | • Location: on a large boat that sails through the northern region of the globe<br>• Program length: 3 weeks<br>• Supports: artists of all disciplines, scientists, architects, and educators<br>• Average number of residents at a time: > 20<br>• Studio resources: live/work studio<br>• Accommodation type: shared room<br>• Stipend: none<br>• Fee: none | | Shifted his interest towards ideas surrounding climate change, global warming, and the natural environment. |
| | S Residency | • Location: a small town on the East Coast of the U.S.<br>• Program length: 1–2 weeks<br>• Supports: individuals working with experimental media<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 2<br>• Studio resources: artist studio, toolmaker studio, and a print and digital media library<br>• Accommodation type: private bedroom<br>• Stipend: none<br>• Fee: none | Was introduced to a large archive of analog and digital media tools, applications, and resources. | |
| | X Residency | • Location: a small college town in the Midwest<br>• Program length: 4–12 weeks<br>• Supports: artists of all disciplines<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 3<br>• Studio resources: live/work studio, access to the neighboring university's art studio facilities<br>• Accommodation type: shared room<br>• Stipend: $500 travel + $500 living/materials<br>• Fee: none | Public engagement through deep-listening meditation walks. | |
| Emma | G Residency | • Location: China<br>• Program length: 1 month (4 weeks)<br>• Supports: artists from around the world with an interest in learning more about traditional Chinese ceramics and porcelain<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 12<br>• Studio resources: shared studios available<br>• Accommodation type: private room, all meals provided<br>• Stipend: none<br>• Fee: yes | Learned more about the technical and historical language of porcelain. | Ideas about identity were largely influenced by time in China, hair being a major component of understanding this identity. |

| | Details | Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| **E Residency** | • Location: Berlin<br>• Program length: 3 months to 1 year<br>• Supports: artists of all disciplines; must apply through International Program Partner<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 20<br>• Studio resources: studio space<br>• Accommodation type: private apartment<br>• Stipend: contingent on International Program Partner<br>• Fee: contingent on International Program Partner | Expanded on not only identity, but also femininity, health, and " crossing thresholds." |
| **T Residency** | • Location: Texas<br>• Program length: 2 months (8 weeks)<br>• Supports: artists of all disciplines<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 3<br>• Studio resources: private studio/exhibition space, access to fully equipped wood and metal workshops and a digital media studio, and technical and administrative support<br>• Accommodation type: private apartment<br>• Stipend: travel expenses, a living stipend, a materials budget<br>• Fee: none | Was inspired by her cohort to introduce more photography into her practice. With access to a larger studio space, the scale of her projects increased. Recruited community for intention-bead hair curtain. |
| Sarah — **R Residency** | • Location: Italy<br>• Program length: 1 month (4 weeks)<br>• Supports: practitioners, scholars, writers, policy makers, and artists from around the world<br>• Average number of residents at a time: up to 100<br>• Studio resources: private studios available<br>• Accommodation type: private room, all meals provided<br>• Stipend: travel stipends and support available<br>• Fee: none | Became largely influenced by the multidisciplinary cohort; rooted her concepts even deeper in the sciences, history, and natural ecology. |
| **L Residency** | • Location: a botanical garden in New York<br>• Program length: 4 months to 1 year<br>• Supports: artists of all disciplines with an interest in ecology and nature<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 1<br>• Studio resources: small workspace<br>• Accommodation type: access to gardens after hours alongside additional access to archival material<br>• Stipend: none<br>• Fee: none | Informed by the history of botanists; painted exclusively in watercolor. |

| Name | Residency | Details | Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aaron | Y Residency | • Location: the Bay Area<br>• Program length: 1 year<br>• Supports: artist initiatives in community engagement, by invitation<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 1<br>• Studio resources: access to facilities and support for hosting community engagement events<br>• Accommodation type: no housing provided<br>• Stipend: project stipend and honorarium<br>• Fee: none<br>• Note: one-time pilot residency | Shifted away from strict video and film work and into a deeply conceptual and research-driven practice.<br><br>Shifted more decisively towards a practice invested in trans history and art. |
| Jesse | I Residency | • Location: New York<br>• Program length: 1 month (4 weeks)<br>• Supports: LGBTQ+ artists and writers<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 8<br>• Studio resources: live/work studio<br>• Accommodation type: live/work studio<br>• Stipend: meal stipend<br>• Fee: application; must cover own travel expenses | Was introduced to a colleague that invited him to a visiting artist residency at a university, which led him to shift from painting to textiles. |
|  | B Residency | • Location: the Midwest<br>• Program length: 2–3 months<br>• Supports: artists of all disciplines<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 8–12<br>• Studio resources: private Studios<br>• Accommodation type: private apartment<br>• Stipend: monthly living and travel stipend<br>• Fee: application fee | With access to a larger studio space, the scale of his projects increased.<br><br>Expanded his visual language of patterns, beginning to include inspiration derived from Filipino textiles. |
| Christina | T Residency | • Location: Texas<br>• Program length: 2 months (8 weeks)<br>• Supports: artists of all disciplines<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 3<br>• Studio resources: private studio/exhibition space, access to fully equipped wood and metal workshops and a digital media studio, and technical and administrative support<br>• Accommodation type: private apartment<br>• Stipend: travel expenses, a living stipend, a materials budget<br>• Fee: none | Work became larger; began to recruit the residency team for fabrication and construction of work. |

| | Residency | Details | Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| | D Residency | • Location: New York<br>• Program length: 11 months<br>• Supports: African and/or Afro-Latinx artists<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 3<br>• Studio resources: private Studio, access to printmaking workshop<br>• Accommodation type: no housing provided<br>• Stipend: living and materials stipend<br>• Fee: none | Created a performance piece from an open studio event that engaged the local community. |
| Anh | C Residency | • Location: the Carolinas region<br>• Program length: 6 weeks<br>• Supports: local artists in the area<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 5<br>• Studio resources: shared studio space, access to printmaking facilities<br>• Accommodation type: no housing provided<br>• Stipend: materials stipend<br>• Fee: none<br>• Note: one-time pilot residency | Was introduced to printmaking and began to incorporate that within her practice. |
| Jonathan | Z Residency | • Location: the Bay Area<br>• Program length: 1 month (30 days)<br>• Supports: creatives in the visual arts, writing, dance, and music<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 11–12<br>• Studio resources: private studio, access to other studio spaces for dance/choreography, digital media, music (non- recording), painting, photography (digital), photography (non-digital), sculpture, woodworking<br>• Accommodation type: private apartment, Meals<br>• Stipend: none<br>• Fee: application fee | Shifted from stitching to crocheting, expanding the scope of audience engagement. |
| | N Residency | • Location: the Bay Area<br>• Program length: 4 months<br>• Supports: local Bay Area artists of all disciplines<br>• Average number of residents at a time: 3<br>• Studio resources: private studio, access to the recycling dump for scavenging materials<br>• Accommodation type: no housing provided<br>• Stipend: materials stipend<br>• Fee: none | Discovered a new process: crocheting together broken ceramics.<br><br>Ideas surrounding his identity (Black, queer experience) became even more conceptual and abstracted through materials. |

**Part II: Cross-Case Themes**

Several themes emerged from data analysis of the interview material: *Experiential Axes of the Residency Ecosystem*; *Valued Outcomes of Residency Experiences*; and *Imagining the Ideal Residency.* A variety of sub-themes emerged within each of the larger themes, the most significant of which are *Network of Artists and Experts*; *Confidence and "Belonging"*; and *Time.* This section highlights the importance of residencies and their attendant communities and recounts the artists' perceptions of their ideal residencies. Simply stated, the artists' ideal residencies support the development of new ways of using material, exploring new practices, and investigating new ideas.

*Experiential Axes of the Residency Ecosystem*

The most prevalent concept addressed throughout each interview was the importance of *community* and its many forms. The ways in which the artist participants defined community fluctuated based on their unique experiences, but a close analysis of the data revealed three main elements; these were, in order of thematic frequency, *Network of Artists and Experts, Community,* and *Cultural and Environmental Context. Network of Artists and Experts* addresses the power of the "collective" and how, through mutualism, artists and other experts working within close proximity support each other's disciplinary growth. *Community* identifies the non-resident individuals within the artist residency community who help foster the artistic evolution of resident participants. Lastly, *Cultural and Environmental Context* describes the attributes of the larger setting outside of the residency that influenced, challenged, and/or inspired the artist participants during their residency cycle.

**Network of Artists and Experts.** Many of the artist participants' comments regarding the salient dimensions of social interactions with other residency participants addressed the

concepts of collectivity and diversity. Collectivity was contrasted with solitude, though both were framed as positive aspects of residencies, while diversity—framed as a desirable variation of collectivity—was contrasted with sameness, which could also yield fruitful outcomes, in some instances. At their worst, however, collectivity could manifest as art world competition, and diversity could manifest as disparity—especially when diversity was pursued in tokenistic ways. Each of these is a facet of the residency ecosystem.

*Collectivity vs. Solitude.* It is common for artist residency programs to host more than one individual at a time, sometimes subject to certain restrictions (artists may be chosen based on theme, medium, or geographic location). A handful of residency programs host a myriad of creative practitioners—visual artists, dancers, writers, filmmakers, etc.—and a couple host a wide array of individuals in different fields of study, expanding into the broader humanities, sciences, and social sciences. All the artist participants in this study agreed that there was value to attending residency programs that hosted more than one individual at a time, though impressions differed based on which accommodations were provided (living and studio accommodations vs. only studio space), as this informs the scope of interpersonal engagement.

Each artist participant spoke about the importance of working alongside, or in close proximity to, other resident artists. Creating within the fabric of a studio collective exposes artists to new and unfamiliar ideas, materials, and best practices. Jonathan touched upon the importance of "camaraderie and connection" and how residencies act as a catalyst for inspiration:

> The camaraderie and connection can be very powerful, because we have a chance to look at each other's work and get an idea of how others think and how they're able to move those ideas around with materials … and how to relate to their ideas and materials in a way that brings something new to the conversation of what their themes and concepts are about. What's new? How can you create something that hasn't been seen before? Through participating in these residencies with other people, for me, I have been able to

see the different ways individual artists have been able to push their concepts and take risks. The more risk, the more creativity. (2020, a8, i1)

With these ideas in mind, we can begin to think about how residencies can embody a metaphorical petri dish for creative germination. Echoing Jonathan's experience, Anh also spoke about the usefulness of "sharing information" with other resident artists:

> The opportunity to meet other artists from different backgrounds, [often from] different parts of the world, and to share experiences with each other—sometimes it sparks ideas. So, I think that's the community part I enjoy very much, making those connections and staying connected with them after the residencies. … [When] meeting other artists, we've been able to share best practices. Hearing from them, what their experiences are, what's worked, what hasn't worked, things I've never even thought of. So, I think that has been probably the best thing about meeting other artists during residencies—is the sharing of information. (2020, a7, i1)

The majority of artist participants pointed out that, most often, residency members became both friendly and supportive of each other throughout their stay. This daily encouragement can lead to discoveries in the studio as well as future collaborations with their resident cohort members. United through a common desire for growth and research, camaraderie transpires between disparate individuals—the residency acting as a channel for such connections.

Experiences with single-person residencies—where the artist participant was the only individual hosted—differed based on circumstance. Sarah acknowledged the "pressure" she felt as the only artist in residence at a different residency:

> I felt a lot of pressure being the only artist invited to this place and I felt like I didn't know what was expected of me … and I didn't really take advantage of it. In retrospect, I wish I had just told myself, "I am being given two weeks and am getting fed and everything's paid for, I should focus on my work." And I did work all the time, but I hated the work I did. (2020, a3, i2)

Richard, who participated in three different residency cycles where he was the only individual in residence, pointed out that focused time alone still enabled growth:

> When [you're alone], you can really focus. There's growth happening, but it's much more about just working on your vision and being selfish in [guilty] ways. On the other

hand, to be able to be with many other artists and writers, and scientists, developing friendships and seeing how other people interpret the same experience—how other people work—and being influenced and inspired by them, [the residency] becomes a swing space. (2020, a1, i1)

In line with this frame of thinking, Christina mentioned that one of the characteristics of residencies that she finds appealing is the ability to work in solitude, free of every-day—and often social—distractions. While she advocates for diversity and does find the communal aspect of the residency experience rewarding, she utilizes residencies for their promise of time, space, and focused attention: "Meeting the other artists can be nerve wracking, but also exhilarating. [But] I often want to be left alone when I finally get to a residency—silent and alone" (2020, a6, i1).

In sum, solitude is not stifling to the creative process, but rather essential. While artists are emboldened and inspired by working within a communal setting—giving them access and exposure to different modes of being, thinking, and doing—concentrated periods of time alone to reflect, research, experiment, and create is still necessary for the production process.

***Diversity vs. Sameness.*** While each artist differed in their estimation of the *extent* to which working alongside other artists influenced their creative growth, they unanimously agreed that diversity is important within a creative community. This makes sense, as the more diverse the cohort, the greater the potential for creative cross-germination. Diversity within the artist cycles often led to creative reinvigoration and divergent approaches to making. In this sense, artist participants indicated that exposure to different individuals within the residency opened up their own sense of artistic possibility. As illustrated by Aaron—an artist who predominantly works in writing, academic research, and video production—residencies became a space for creative potential and innovation. Having a heavily "screen-based" practice, Aaron's reflection

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on residency programs highlights the value of being around others with a "material-based"

practice:

> I never have a "thing" that I've produced out of a residency, but what I have gotten out of every single one of them was the community connection aspect—I made lifelong friends that I still am in contact with on a weekly basis. … The networking I get a lot out of, not just professionally, but also just seeing how other artists work. Most of what I do is heavily video- and screen-based, and people who have a material practice such as painting or sculpture are so fascinating to me. I always envy people with a deeply material practice, because it seems like that's what you imagine artists do, and I'm mainly reading books and doing research or writing a lot or editing on a screen. There's not a "thing" that I do. So being around artists with material practices expanded my idea of what is possible for me. (2020, a4, i1)

Similarly, Jesse explained that diversity in residencies not only enriches the cultural and social

aspects of the experience, but widens creative dispositions and disentangles artists from insular

artist communities:

> That was an amazing experience—to not only be around so many different types of artists of different ages and different economic backgrounds, but to also be introduced to writers and hear poets and writers do readings. It just really opened up this whole world for me, because when I was [in undergrad], it all just seemed very insular in the way that we were being taught. At [this residency], I got to see so many different types of work; it opened up possibilities for me and it made me aware of the different types of work being made, that it wasn't just one type. (2020, a5, i1)

Expanding upon the notion of diversity, two artist participants, Sarah and Richard, both

attended residencies that hosted individuals across many fields of study. Interacting with other

residents outside of the creative arts—for example, in other areas of the humanities, business,

natural and applied sciences, and social sciences—contributed greatly to their artistic

development and personal creative growth. Sarah's artistic practice became even more

conversant with the sciences after participating in this multidisciplinary residency. Having to

congregate for talks and meals, resident attendees became familiar with, and curious about, each

other's practice:

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[There was] this amazing effect with the community there because I became friendly with people and we all got to know each other's work. Sometimes I would wake up and go to my studio and there would be a little pile of mushrooms next to my door or a paper cup with a dragonfly in it or something. People would bring me things. (2020, a3, i2)

At this residency, Sarah made lifelong friends with two medical historians, and they continue to connect and collaborate to this day. Interdisciplinary residencies, by bringing together a multifarious group of individuals, appear to offer more cognitive territory for accessing divergent thinking. Richard, who attended a similar type of residency, began to create work informed by environmentalism:

To be able to go to [this place], and just be with all of these different interests but overlapping concerns with people. To be out in an environment like that, that was just amazing, and life changing, and art changing. … That's what sent me to really wanting to address environmental and climate issues with my art. (2020, a1, i1)

On the other hand, "sameness"—to a certain degree—can also stimulate creative growth. When reflecting on her last residency, Emma felt empowered to be a part of a rather rare cohort of all female resident artists:

There were two other female artists with me during that residency, and we were of three different generations, three different backgrounds. All three of us were teachers or professors. It was a really great sisterhood and bonding experience—and I miss them. I would say with the other residences I've done, there were maybe six to 10 people within a residency, and you stay in touch for a while, and then after [some time], you don't hear from them anymore. Because it is such an intense time that you spend together—I think we're still acquaintances, but it's definitely not the same. At [T residency], we were all three living next door to one another and working with each other. I really love that we're still in contact and we continue to work on other projects together. (2020, a2, i2)

During this residency cycle, all three female artists created and exhibited work that addressed feminist concepts and ideologies. As suggested in the statement above, living and working beside her neighboring artists likely helped to invoke a deeper bond.

Based on these eight perspectives, it appears that diversity cultivated within the residency experience can foster the artistic development and creative growth of the artist, while some degree of formal, conceptual, or demographic overlap can also be edifying.

***Collectivity vs. Competition.*** While artist residencies can sometimes be regarded by prospective attendees as a retreat for rest, reflection, research, and creative reinvigoration, these institutions are also viewed as professional development opportunities for artists, and professional networking was a main motive for attending these programs. Jesse spoke about how residency programs functioned as a substitute for an MFA; with each residency he attended, he networked and connected with individuals who led him to other opportunities and future residencies:

> If I hadn't been to that residency, if I hadn't met her, I wouldn't have done that visiting artist gig and I wouldn't be making textiles. … It's a continuous thread. Looking back now, over so many different years, I can pinpoint specific game-changing moments and how [they've] drastically altered the trajectory of where I am. (2020, a5, i1)

However, these "art world" dynamics were sometimes described as superficial, lined with ulterior motives or aggressive tendencies. When participating in a residency in Europe, Emma became exhausted by these "game"-incited discussions and looked outside of the institution for dialogue:

> In Germany, I'd found an African hair salon run by women from Ghana. For me … beauty salons or makeup shops or nail salons were the places I knew that I could meet people and have conversations. I was realizing in these residences that I was tired of having conversations with other artists, sometimes because it gets too much into the game of it: "Where are you showing?" "What are you doing?" "Why does this matter?" In the beauty salons I feel like you can have conversations … it's a safe and protective space. (2020, a2, i2)

Several of the artist participants spoke towards the complex and often "rat-race" quality of finding success in the art world—the constant "chase" of what they call *the game*. Sarah

admitted that this constant "chase and expectation" can be detrimental to one's artistic

development:

> I became very frustrated with the art world and the aggressive negativity that I felt was always a part of it. This kind of constant "chase"—you don't even know what you're chasing after half the time—but this sense of chase and expectation. Being an artist is supposed to be about making your own path, the ultimate freedom, but the art market makes it so that people end up being caged in by money and branding and all of that— this false sense, and inability, to really admit that it's a business. … Anyway, I just found myself in the last four years really confronting that, taking it head on, and not wanting or being willing to [accept] that "that is just the way it is." (2020, a3, i2)

All the artist participants addressed, in various ways, the complicated relationship between their

individual artistic practice and their professional careers as artists. Though artist residencies can

provide solace and support to bolster artists' careers, they may inadvertently prioritize this

professionalism over genuine creative betterment.

This art world professionalism and competitiveness may also manifest at the institutional

level, where residency programs and arts institutions vie for funding and recognition. To sustain

the *business* of art (as Sarah noted), they may toe a delicate line between honest engagement and

superficial exploitation—especially in the arena of community engagement. Artist participants

who attended residencies that had a focus on community engagement reflected that these

institutions failed to clearly define the scope of this engagement. Aaron, for example, was once

awarded the title of Community Engagement Artist-in-Residency, but felt that the role was more

an institutional gimmick than an earnest attempt at outreach:

> I didn't have a studio space, so it felt … kind of like an empty title in some ways. I didn't even have a presence in the space aside from the programs and the events that took place in association with my residency. They still had a lot of stuff to work out in terms of that [residency]. I don't know how they're configuring it now, it just felt like an imperative: "Okay, we need a community engagement artist; let's get one on the books." They didn't quite know how to support something like that. It just didn't feel like I had a presence in the institution and that I was engaging the public in a bigger way. (2020, a4, i1)

These reflections do not frame community engagement itself as unnecessary or unwelcome, but rather as an unrealized goal. Richard put it well when he reflected on his own experience with community engagement:

> I didn't mind it. I liked it, but it is stressful. My work is not naturally community-focused, so it was reaching outside of a comfort zone. There's a part of me that always thinks that's one way that art has to fight for its funding and its legitimacy; we have this trend now that art has to be "community engaged," so more and more residencies have it, and more and more artists have to find a way to do it, which is by no means a bad thing. I think we should all think about how we work with a community, but it is outside of a comfort zone and it can be difficult. (2020, a1, i2)

Art institutions and residency programs should be thorough and transparent regarding their intentions to support artists and the larger community, and should establish functional roles and processes to do so.

***Diversity vs. Disparity.*** It is important to note that artist residency experiences are context-specific, and individuals from different backgrounds may experience them in very different ways. For example, though Jonathan acknowledged that residencies can be effective resources for building and expediting a career, he also pointed out that racial disparities within the art world cannot be ignored. Jonathan expressed his frustrations from navigating the maze of the "White, male-dominated art world" as a Black, queer man in the 1980s:

> … it seemed that it was really difficult for White male curators and gallery directors to see [a person of color's] creativity and genius, when all they saw was someone—maybe unconsciously—not on their level. … The first residencies were on the road to where I am now, but what I didn't understand until I was older, and had done more residencies, is that I'm Black, I'm a Black queer artist. So, the hard part was figuring out, "Okay, how do I want to navigate the very subtle, more powerful White supremacy in the art world, if I'm going to be an artist?" (2020, a8, i1)

Similarly, Anh—a Vietnamese, female, and multidisciplinary artist—touched upon the lack of diversity within arts institutions' administrative teams and boards:

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[C Residency] is actually a really White space. The group of artists that I was in residence with was the first ethnically and culturally diverse cohort. At the exhibition opening, there was a whole different public that attended that [the staff and board members] weren't accustomed to. That evening, I heard several comments from people about race. "I have never seen so many Black people [here]." … So, that was not really a surprise, because there are residencies that think they're more diverse than they really are, or they think that they're serving the community more than they actually are. (2020, a7, i1)

As demonstrated in this passage, diversity is another positive element of artist residencies, alongside collectivity/community, that can be abused when pursued for the wrong reasons. Christina, a Black, female performance artist, addressed these things in tandem when she said:

Institutions often feel alienating and cold, so they invite the warmth and the glow of the artists. Brown and Black skin may provide an even warmer glow. I don't know how much the community is asking to be a part of the institution. Free or cheap admission would allow people to come in, see what you've got, and make their own choices about community engagement. (2020, a6, i1)

These critiques of the institution and White-dominated art world do not erase artists' gratitude for the support that they receive from residency programs. However, even with the opportunity to cultivate their artistic practice and develop their conceptual ideas, the artist participants were aware of the complex relationship between diversity initiatives, community engagement, and residency programs.

**Community.** In addition to providing artists with time, space, and opportunities to network, research, or work alone and/or in proximity to other artists and experts, artist residencies can also serve as a metaphorical *cultural nucleus* for a larger community that includes non-resident individuals, such as staff members, educators, student interns, outside artists, and other visitors. This is particularly true of "community engagement" residencies, wherein artists are required to participate in open studio events, panels, workshops, and discussions with the public, in addition to pursuing their own projects. All eight artist

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participants featured in this study engaged in one or more such residencies (as a condition of

their inclusion), and while their responses to the community element were particular to each

residency experience—and to their unique socio-cultural and psychological positionality—most

of them touched on how this "exposure" could stimulate growth, even by means of

uncomfortable disruptions and vulnerability. However, exposure could also enable

exploitation—both of the artist and the community—rather than genuine mutual development.

     ***(Stimulating) Exposure vs. (Disruptive) Vulnerability.*** Open Studios are common public

events hosted by artist residencies and other arts institutions wherein artists allow visitors to

explore their studio space, view completed and in-progress works, and, if permitted, converse

with the artists about their materials, ideas, and practices. For some artist participants, this

opportunity to speak to different audiences about the conceptual and material dimensions of their

practice was useful for their development, exposing them to new ideas and generating self-

confidence and validation. Jesse shared his experience at B Residency:

> You get the best of both worlds. You have this sort of live-work situation, but then you
> have all these other opportunities to engage with the community through these public
> programs. … Visitors and high school students would come through, see the studios, and
> we were also able to meet other artists [from the community]. For a lot of teens and
> younger visitors, this was the first time that they'd ever met an artist in person … it really
> helped me to speak about my work, just because I was speaking about my work
> constantly … that was probably one of the best things about that residency, and then also
> just getting to meet all these people. (2020, a5, i1)

Emma and Christina also felt that their interactions with student visitors and interns at T

Residency helped them to shape their own agency, sense of community, and self-understanding.

Emma described how this growth was often mutual:

> I would say [that] my favorite conversations were the ones where they would bring
> students in. … [The teenagers] would come through and they would be in their little
> groups … really shy. And then I would go up and ask them questions, and they would
> respond and question me [about] my work, such as, "Do you consider your work

political?" I loved their questions, but I also loved that you could see [how] this experience was really challenging their ideas of what art is. (2020, a2, i1)

Christina's interactions with high school students stimulated ongoing connections with the community:

> It was great. One of the students on that tour was this young Black woman who actually spent a little bit of her childhood in Japan because her father was in the military. And we talked, we kept in touch, and she invited me to speak at her school a couple of years ago. So, in terms of … the prolonged community engagement connection, I feel like, in general, that's how my experiences have worked regarding community. There are these touchpoints … I remain connected with the people from those moments. I did a workshop at [T Residency] after that for their teen council. (2020, a6, i1)

However, while open studio events exposed their work and encouraged artists to find new ways of discussing their practice with different and unfamiliar audiences, some artists felt that these experiences could also be distracting and, occasionally, daunting. Anh, an interdisciplinary artist who works in social practice, explained, "It's very difficult to concentrate when you're kind of on call, or anticipating that you're going to have a visit or several visits" (2020, a7, i1). Emma and Christina, two very different female artists, both reported that public-facing open studios were less intimate than smaller visits with teens, inspiring feelings of anxiety and even objectification. Emma described this experience of vulnerability as "being naked in front of the doctor":

> I would have an artist talk and show them my space. This was the biggest project I've ever done. I made this huge curtain of fake hair that took a long time to install. And it felt weird to have people come look at it in its ugly middle phase, where you can see the hardware and me really figuring out how to do something I've never done before. People are walking in and out all the time. And you could tell they would walk in and tiptoe, like they weren't supposed to be there. But then I would tell them, "Just come on in," at a certain point … after a while you don't care if you're naked in front of the doctor. (2020, a2, i1)

Christina reflected on a similar anxiety-ridden experience in an open studio at D Residency:

> My relationship to open studios always presents anxiety for me. During my first open studios here, I sat in the middle of the room and played dominoes and let other people

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walk around my studio. I had a video playing, sculptures over here, drawings on the wall over there, and I had my notes on the wall. (2020, a6, i1)

Though the revolving door of visitors sometimes interrupted the artistic process, rendering artists vulnerable, from this interruption and vulnerability, both Emma and Christina created work that incorporated the public in some way. Emma's hair curtain installation incorporated affirmations collected from the community, which were written on beads that were threaded throughout the piece. Christina created a new performance series that utilized the members of the particular community at D Residency:

> [For t]he second open studio, I cleared everything out of my studio that morning, left five chairs in a circle and invited people to sit. … Look at each other. I also later did an open studio performance downstairs. (2020, a6, i2)

Thus, disruptions could still have the effect of nurturing artistic practice.

*Exposure vs. Exploitation.* At their best, community engagement residencies and community-situated arts institutions can activate whole communities, engendering a sense of genuine participation and belonging. This was Christina's experience at D Residency, which was situated in a diverse, African and African American neighborhood:

> I do miss that audience, because I later found the art world audiences to be very White. … I only had an audience like that because there's a contemporary art institution in [that neighborhood]. It was their art institution. There was a range of classes, of people of color, that came through the [residency] doors, because that's their museum. They felt comfortable there. They felt like "I belong here." (2020, a6, i1)

However, all artist participants acknowledged the tenuous line between authentic collaborative learning and pseudo-satisfactory institutional obligation. Sarah expressed skepticism towards residencies and arts institutions that pursue community engagement as part of their "branding":

> … people are so quick to say, "Oh, you should make work … about art and science or social practice and community work." And honestly, most of it is such bullshit. I'm all for the idea, but if you dig deep into a lot of those practices, a lot of them, in my view, are based on this colonialist model of going into another culture and trying to improve things

or help them. I think there are a lot of ethical, political issues around it. And I'm not saying that it shouldn't happen. I think it's totally valid and viable for artists. Absolutely. But I feel like there's a tendency in the art world to want to immediately brand everything, and I'm increasingly kind of allergic to that. (2020, a3, i1)

Aaron echoed this sentiment, pointing out that community engagement may do more for the institution than for the artist or community, especially when the participants are not actively pursuing community-based practice:

> I imagine that it's really helpful for a social practice-based artist. But my gut answer, my first answer, is that I think that community engagement aspect does more for the museum than it does for the artist. It allows the museum to have this veneer of engagement with the public, or have this response to the criticism that museums are elitist places that people don't feel comfortable engaging with or entering, but then they can put this outward facing project forth and say, "Look what we're doing." It sort of feels like window dressing to disguise larger structural barriers or inequities that prevent people in a larger community from engaging with it. (2020, a4, i1)

> In response to these issues, Anh stressed the importance of institutional transparency. She described her experience with the diversity initiative at C Residency, which was separate from the institution's usual residency cycle, saying that staff members failed to communicate the scope of open studio events and tours:

> … [they] had specific days and specific hours for working and engagement. … But then staff would bring tours right by our spaces, but ignore us, and we brought it to their attention. So later, during the exhibition, there were [school] tours, and we were the first artists that they called and said, "Hey, we have this tour, could you make time to come and talk to the students?" And we said, "Yeah, of course, that's what we want!" But it was surprising … in the beginning … we were just confused; "What is happening?" (2020, a7, i1)

Richard suggested that residencies with a strong focus on community engagement should prioritize participatory art creation rather than lectures or open studios:

> I think that normal things, like expeditions and talks and studio visits, are fine, but that's not what I envision. I'm thinking of doing a publicly engaged project. It could be teaching workshops or creating art events for the public … it's not an artwork until the public is engaged with it, that idea. (2020, a1, i1)

Jonathan—an artist who does public crochet projects and is deeply rooted in social practice—

took this sentiment further, suggesting that true public engagement most often occurs outside of

"art spaces" altogether, where it is able to reach people with drastically different expectations

and dispositions:

> In the art spaces, more people are expecting the event; they expect to be engaged, and are
> more willing to engage in the event. So, I've had some events where people who aren't
> art savvy, or "art community" engaged, are more standoffish. This is also based on
> gender stereotypes. So, for example, seeing a man crocheting … some men, depending
> on their variances, [perceive it as something that] women do; men don't crochet. … I've
> had that happen … in public events. Like in Oakland, where it wasn't a residency, where
> people haven't had the time to let go of those perceived gender roles. … And I think
> that's good … if I'm able to shake people's concept of their masculinity. (2020, a8, i1)

**Cultural and Environmental Context.** While much of the "residency experience" takes

place within the walls of the institution, the exterior environment may also play a crucial role in

resident artists' development and enrichment. The effect of environment and culture on artists'

development seemed to depend on how residencies used distance vs. proximity to mediate

difference—or the unknown—relative to existing or familiar knowledge and propensities.

*Distance vs. Proximity.* The artist participants in this study who had attended residencies

outside of their local city—and especially those who had attended residencies abroad—reported

that they were greatly influenced by the foreign environments and cultures they encountered.

Being immersed in a new, unfamiliar place allowed them to turn inward and explore their sense

of self and artistic proclivities. Regarding A Residency, which included a boating expedition,

Richard pointed out that being in such a drastically different environment, surrounded by

different people (in this case, scientists), inspired him to create work that incorporated ideas of

environmentalism:

> … not only did I get to meet the people that were in the residency and the crew of the
> boat, but almost every time we stopped we'd also meet different scientists and

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researchers out there. It wasn't collaborations or anything, but just talking to them and seeing what they were doing and what climate science was. (2020, a1, i1)

For Jesse, who lived in a densely populated, metropolitan area, attending I Residency—a residency for LGBTQ+ artists in a more open and rural environment that is rich in LGBTQ history—affected his research, making, and practice:

> For me, it was the first time that I truly felt free to be who I was. I mean, I live in New York City. People are more open here, but you still get shit from people, right? And so, being [at that place] for that month, it was an eye opener. And it gives me chills just talking about it, because I imagine this is what hetero people feel all the time—they just feel like they can just be who they are, right? And it also just comes from this privileged position; I guess I never felt that feeling before. It wasn't until I went to that residency that I felt that. But on the other side of it, [this place] has a history of being a haven, a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community, but that's mainly for the White LGBTQ+ community. So then, I was very much aware of who I was, of my ethnicity, of the color of my skin when I was there. It was such an eye-opening experience, but at the same time, it also made me realize … "Yeah, well, you win one battle, but then you still are fighting another battle." (2020, a5, i1)

These ideas of freedom vs. "otherness" were further developed when Jesse attended B Residency, located in the Midwest:

> I'd never really spent time in the Midwest. It made me really aware of being different, not being White. And I thought to myself, "Whoa, this is so strange to me." So, I think that really got me to focus on, in terms of textile history or authenticity, my identity and heritage. Being there gave me the time to really research and develop this new work, and so I decided that I would incorporate these motifs that were found in textiles from the Philippines. (2020, a5, i1)

Living and working in a new environment can challenge one's preconceptions, especially about oneself, shaking the mundane and reinvigorating artists' creative concepts and material pursuits. For Emma, an artist whose practice already grapples with negotiating identity, as well as with ideas of other, both, and in-between, participating in a residency abroad presented several life-changing challenges. When attending a residency in Europe, Emma became frustrated when her residency cohort described her work as being limited to "American issues," even as she

encountered similar racist attacks (the use of racial slurs) in Europe. Still, she reported, "for an awful time, it really informed a lot of things in my practice" (2020, a2, i2).

However, this is not to say that artists cannot experience transformation closer to home. For example, Jonathan participated in a residency exclusively for artists in his local region. Located on the outskirts of his city, N Residency housed an almost 50-acre recycling facility, providing resident artists with access to discarded materials. Despite the proximity, this one-of-a-kind residency presented a very different environment for Jonathan, and it profoundly influenced his artistic practice:

> [I went into the recycling area and] I just sat with my feelings, and then I … heard this crashing sound. … And all I saw was a big pile of broken ceramics. I was just standing there looking at these ceramics as if they were the most exciting thing in the world. … I started becoming emotional over these broken ceramics, really losing my mind. Why am I misty over these broken ceramics? And then that's when it hit me: that's how you feel. You feel broken, detached, thrown away … And that's when I decided, okay, I'm going to work with shards … The idea of bringing the two together wouldn't have happened if I wasn't at [N Residency]. (2020, a8, i1)

Furthermore, distance—and, by extension, difference—does not necessarily incite change in and of itself. Christina described one of her first residencies in Central America: "it was about exploring the environment … about letting the culture of the place flow in and out of your work" (2020, a6, i1). Despite this emphasis on experiencing the local culture and environment, the residency did not have a direct, immediate effect on Christina's practice. Rather, as evidenced in Christina's profile and reflection, her ideas stem from her own being, generated based on her personal interest in and connection to a topic.

### *Valued Outcomes of Residency Experiences*

Upon review, the interview data revealed that successful residencies provide a climate that fosters individual growth and epiphanic insights, offering artists the time, resources, community, and support to cultivate their artistic practice. Furthermore, artist residencies serve

as stepping stones for artistic progression, fostering one's career trajectory through professional networking and publicity. Given that residency experiences provoke change and adaptation, all artist participants mentioned that residencies cultivated their sense of confidence and individuality. Many of the artist participants recognized that artist residencies expanded their visual vocabulary, encouraged experimentation, and allowed the artists to become more ambitious in their material practice and ideas. However, these conversations also shed light on the struggle and stigma that many artists encounter when trying to find professional success.

**Confidence and "Belonging."** It is well known that achieving success in the art world is difficult, and many of the artist participants in this study grappled with "imposter syndrome" and anxiety—both about their status as an artist and about the reception of their work—during the early years of their practice. Emma, for example, reported feeling imposter syndrome when she was accepted into a prestigious residency. However, all the artist participants stated that residencies also helped them to overcome this self-doubt, generating a sense of confidence, validation, and belonging. When looking back at the successes and challenges of her career thus far, Sarah mentioned that residencies—alongside other career milestones, such as professorship, solo exhibitions, collaborations, and more—allowed her to settle into her sense of being an artist:

> Now, I feel like this is just what I do. And it took me a really long time as an artist to feel like what I was doing was okay and not always anticipating response, judgment, criticism, all those things. And it doesn't mean that I think everything is perfect. Or [that] I'm equally confident about everything I do. But I feel like it's what I do, and I'm deeply committed to it. I feel like it has value—value for me and hopefully for a handful of other people. Whereas, the first time I went to a residency, I was still in that phase of lacking confidence—I just couldn't fully trust my sense of "this is what I do." (2020, a3, i1)

Being accepted to a residency, and then attending and completing the residency, were perceived as success markers in artists' career trajectories. Richard noted that "the acts of getting into, being accepted and invited into residency—it makes me more confident in the art that I'm

making and that it can have a place in the world" (2020, a1, i1). With each residency Christina

has been accepted into and attended (she has attended 10 residencies so far), she has become

more confident in her role as an artist, feeling less indebted and more empowered: "I [now] go

into each subsequent institution a bit more confidently, feeling that I belong there and [that] this

is a space for artists to work and grow. This is a tool for artists" (2020, a6, i1).

Beyond acceptance and participation, confidence also derived from opportunities to

interact with other artists. Anh explained that exposure to other artists helped her to practice

talking about her own conceptual and visual practice:

> I think it's just exposure. … I think just being older, being more confident about the work
> that I'm creating, or having the vocabulary—not the visual vocabulary, but also being
> able to speak about my work … I'm able to talk about my work with more confidence
> and more focus as well. So, I think that just having more experiences with other artists
> and being able to just have those exchanges has helped me to develop my confidence as
> an artist, and getting that feedback, too. Because when I was younger, I was a little shy
> about how to talk about my work, but also not confident enough. Not saying that … I'm
> now like, "Hey, look at what I'm doing," but at least [I'm now] able to share with others
> without as much hesitation as before. (2020, a7, i1)

Similarly, Richard commented that the opportunity to work alongside other artists nurtured both

the scale and depth of his art, ideas, and visual language: "being in residencies and meeting other

artists … pushes the ambition. Not necessarily bigger art, but … more complex or bigger in

scope, bigger in scale" (2020, a1, i1). With confidence, artist participants became not only more

open and ambitious, but also more willing to take risks in their art practice. Aaron explained that

the support and resources provided by residencies gave him physical and mental space for

experimentation:

> … besides just the time, the space, the networking … these residencies were important
> for being able to get out of [my] usual working space, and to be in a new context. It also
> allowed for risk taking and experimentation. … I feel like, when you have a studio that
> you rent and that you go to … you have a set routine and sort of this headspace that
> you're in. (2020, a4, i1)

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Emma also corroborated these ideas, stating that residencies helped to foster professional

momentum:

> [This residency] was probably the most prestigious and professional of all my residencies, and … I learned how to be better about time management because my work was so dependent on meeting deadlines of the institution. I think that for sure allowed me to create something that [otherwise would have] just lived as a dream in my sketchbook. … I think in terms of my development too, it opened huge doors for me. So, it's important to keep that momentum going, as an artist. (2020, a2, i1)

> In some cases, residencies provided a means to become a full-time practicing artist.

Jonathan, who had worked as a museum curator for many years, noted that residencies played a

huge role in his career transition:

> I don't think my philosophy as an artist or my studio practice would be what it is now if it wasn't for residencies, because I had a full-time job for 20 years. So, I didn't have the time to focus—if I'm working eight hours a day, where do you have time to cultivate your ideas and your thoughts and push ideas around? So, the residencies help me move my work to a much more sophisticated and universal approach. (2020, a8, i1)

Still, though residencies can help artists to move closer to this sought-after ideal of self-stability,

it is a long and complicated path. Aaron, who works as a full-time faculty member while

maintaining his practice, pointed out that it is extremely rare for artists to be able to support

themselves on their practice alone:

> I think I'm definitely more confident. I think all of these opportunities signal some sort of success as an artist. I know for a lot of artists it's really hard to feel successful. Even with a lot of these opportunities, there are still bouts of doubt … about my success as an artist, only because of the precariousness of art in our culture. It's just that there's no way for me to really make a full-time job out of it right now, given my current practice. But still, I think it's given me confidence. (2020, a4, i1)

Thus, while residencies may diminish the uncertainties and anxieties intrinsic to being an artist, it

cannot fully eradicate them.

**Creativity and Growth.** With regard to the artist participants' trajectories, creativity and

growth often took the form of new materials and processes. Each artist residency afforded its

own material and processual opportunities. N Residency, for example, provided Jonathan with new and unknown materials from a warehouse recycling center, which allowed him to transform his craft. Similarly, S Residency provided Richard with access to a plethora of old and new digital and analog video materials, which enhanced his material practice. Anh's work with a printmaking residency introduced her to a new medium that she has now incorporated into her artistic practice. Jesse's opportunities to connect with many diverse, creative individuals in different residency programs led to a visiting artist opportunity, wherein he collaborated with the textile department of a university to transform one of his paintings into a tapestry. This experience resulted in a material shift, furthering explorations into the realm of textiles, queerness, and Filipino culture.

However, not every residency results in a direct material shift. Instead, residencies may facilitate connections between existing concepts, materials, and practices, inspiring artists to revisit old ways of making in a new light. Sarah's time in different residencies restored her interest in watercolor—something that she had steered away from in undergraduate and graduate school. With the institutional support of residency programs, Emma and Christina were able to realize projects in the same medium that were nonetheless larger in scale, scope, and production. Similarly, Aaron was able to launch research-based projects that have grown into traveling exhibitions and a virtual museum.

### *Imagining the Ideal Residency*

As we begin to look towards the future of artist residency programs and how they can better foster the development of the artist, it is important to identify the specific factors— amongst the myriad factors that constitute diverse, contemporary residencies—that incite the type of artistic growth and creative transformation described in the preceding paragraphs. As

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such, artist participants were asked to imagine the fundamental elements of a model residency

program that could cultivate their artistic development and creative prosperity. Two main factors

were ubiquitous in the artists' responses: *time*, which was presented as residencies' greatest

attraction, and *place,* which correlated with different experiences and diverse cohorts. Generally,

ideal residencies provide material, spatial, financial, and physical support. Lastly, artists were

asked to express their opinions regarding community engagement, which proved to be an ethical

and somewhat controversial topic.

**Time.** In the context of residencies, time took on various forms throughout the

conversations, appearing as both a gift and a challenge for the artist's development. On the one

hand, residencies provide artists with focused time to immerse themselves in their craft. On the

other, they demand sacrifices and compromises from artists, who must negotiate how to pull time

away from their everyday obligations. Furthermore, in certain artist residencies, time must also

be set aside for community engagement. Time is treated as complex and precarious.

Artists' preferences for residency length varied based on their dispositions. Most artists

indicated that *at least* one month is necessary for productivity and creativity, though two to three

months would be even better. A one-month period allows artists to settle into their space and

build a routine while still preserving a sense of the new and unknown. Furthermore, this time

frame feels manageable for most artists, as it does not demand too much time away from other

obligations like teaching or child care. Richard touched upon the challenge of juggling his

various responsibilities and pursuits:

> Practically speaking, I like the residencies to be around two weeks … that's very short for
> most residencies, but it's the amount of time I feel that I can responsibly be away from
> my responsibilities at home. The ones that I've done that have been a month or so are
> really good because you can start developing things; you can finish things. (2020, a1, i1)

Sarah, an artist who also teaches at the college level, echoed Richard's response, stating that "the ideal residency is at least a month. Or maybe only a month, actually, because I think having an end to it is important" (2020, a3, i1). Aaron, another artist and university professor, agreed that one to two months would be ideal. Anh stated that two to three months would be an optimal length, so long as the residency hosted both artists and their families. Sarah and Jesse corroborated this point about family-friendly residencies, and Emma echoed Anh's two- to three-month length, stating that this would allow for "just enough time to get settled into a new environment, meet new people, make connections, forget about your home life for a second, and become entrenched in your work" (2020, a2, i2). Two artists, Jonathan and Jesse, believed that longer residencies lasting anywhere between three months to one year would be ideal for extended research, learning, and artistic breakthroughs. Jonathan imagined a residency in flux that would take place in multiple locations around the world: "These residencies would be three months long or six months to a year, where you spend two months in different places around the world, learning from the indigenous culture" (2020, a8, i1). Jesse pointed out that extended time fosters his sense of exploration and experimentation, allowing him to work through the awkward beginning stages of a body of work:

> It's my dream to do a year-long residency. I've gotten so much done in a one-month residency that I can only imagine what having 12 months could do. I could get three years' worth of work done in 12 months. Being allowed the time and the space to make a lot of work, to make a lot of shitty work, to make a lot of failures, and then to finally find these breakthroughs. It's harder to do that in daily life. It's harder to do that when you only have a certain amount of time each day devoted to being in the studio, because you know you have to go home and make dinner or you have to go shop for groceries, things like that. It's all those little details … it's amazing what happens when you take all that out of the equation, and you can just completely focus. (2020, a5, i1)

Christina did not identify the optimal duration of her ideal residency, but rather focused on how time is structured and managed during residencies:

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Some residencies have actual space and time to experiment—that's very useful. I often want to be freed from having an outcome, a product. At times an open studio event can feel like a pressurized moment. … Often, I imagine, visitors are hoping to see the progress of an object. (2020, a6, i1)

The way a residency is organized affects the way time is organized, directing artists' energies towards either products or projects/research.

**Place.** As with time, *place* manifested in many ways during the conversations. *Place* involves the geographic location of the residency and its unique attributes, but also the physical space of the institution itself, which can present technical hurdles for artists. For instance, ceramic artists or glass artists may need access to specific facilities to fabricate their pieces. Artists that work with digital and new media may configure their studio space based on the availability of outlets, and they may rely on steady Wi-Fi connection. Though seemingly minor, these details can drastically change artists' residency experiences. Thus, the type of place or space that can best support creative development depends on each individual artist. All the artist participants in this study addressed the need for a sizable studio[13] with sufficient privacy to work, create, and experiment free of distractions. This is not to say that artists preferred residencies that only hosted one artist at a time—all artists valued working within close proximity to other artists—but some degree of solitude is important for productivity.

***Resources and Affordances.*** The most important characteristic of the residency location was its general "difference" from home environments and familiar peer groups. All of the artist participants currently live in metropolitan areas, so most preferred residencies that were more rural and isolated. Sarah explained:

I think a contrast to wherever you come from. And so, since I live in an urban area, a more rural area is appealing to me … Because I think that's a really important thing to

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[13] Jesse put it concisely: "I think that, definitely, the thing has to be space—a lot of space" (2020, a5, i1).

just get you out of what you're used to on a daily basis. … And you have space to work and you're part of a community that isn't just artists, but … people who are engaged deeply in their practice, whether it be music or science; I think a mixed environment is really valuable. We get really [myopic] within our communities. Art communities in particular become so insular, and even within the art world there are so many insulated communities. … I think it's really important for people to break out of that. [At residencies,] they get to break out of their comfort zone. I think eating with other people is important, too. (2020, a3, i1)

In a similar light, Emma described her ideal residency as follows:

I prefer [for] it to be outside my city/region. No more than 10 residents and not just artists. I most enjoyed residencies that had writers included. Have some structure but not too much. Some required events like art talks, group meals/meetings, and a small goal or tangible at the end like an artist talk on research or exhibition. (2020, a2, i2)

Communal meals are sometimes included within the framework of residencies; the ability to gather over food allows for a more casual exchange of ideas with less formal pressure to present work. Anh also described the importance of residents "breaking bread together" as a way of encouraging growth, exchange, and collaboration:

I think it would depend on where it was. [If] it was isolated, [it should still be] within an hour, I would say, from a city that was interesting to go to. But … I wouldn't mind doing a residency, let's say, in Tokyo or … in Mexico City. There would be other artists and you [would be] encouraged to break bread together, right, so you have that ritual of, you know—you're creating your work, but also then come together as a community again and exchange ideas. (2020, a7, i2)

Jesse described the value that comes with working in an isolated location with a diverse cohort of people:

In regards to the location, for me, being in a more isolated location is important … I think when you're in a space or in a location where you're completely cut off from everything else, it really allows you that time to focus, and it becomes such a different experience. I think the residencies that have been the most impactful have been the ones where it's a mix of visual [artists], writers, and musicians, because the dialogue is different. When you have other people in other disciplines, the conversations are so much more stimulating, because there are things to learn from other people, problems that they're thinking about in their work [that] may have nothing to do with your work, but then it could be a solution … you can help someone or they can help you. … Just having a different set of eyes and ears that are in tune to other things. To be able to have that as a resource—other people's lived experiences—it's invaluable. That's … one of the greatest

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things about being in a residency where you have different people from different economic situations, different ethnicities, different cultures. It's all learning, it's just continually learning. (2020, a5, i1)

***Beauty and Wonder.*** When fantasizing about the ideal residency, the artist participants often engaged with the concept of beauty. For many, it was important that the location embody some sense of beauty and wonder. Aaron described his ideal residency like so:

I'm romanticizing this kind of residency where you go away for one to two months, and there's a large group of people—maybe 10 to 15—and it's a [physically] nice residency and you're cooked for with fancy food, and you're in a beautiful location. I romanticize residencies like [the more famous ones], these places where they deliver a picnic basket of food to your door. I've never really done a residency like that. So, who knows how I would actually like that kind of residency? But I imagine something that feels removed and an extended period of time where you have the time and space and you're totally supported and you're somewhere beautiful. (2020, a4, i1)

Anh also signaled that beauty is a desired attribute of residency programs: "[if] it was isolated, obviously a place that was really beautiful" (2020, a7, i2).

For others, beauty was less a physical attribute than a state achieved by physical means. Christina imagined a residency with curated elements that enable privacy but also connections:

I think artists having large studios with tall ceilings, studios having doors. There is an excitement around the ability of an institution to connect you to what can feed your processes—a curated interest. I appreciate (at residencies and in general) having my own space and the ability to close the door to that space if I want. I have a door now, which means I can allow people in and out of this space when I want. (2020, a6, i1)

Richard and Jonathan imagined a residency that provides a sense of wonder, perhaps by means of excursions into different environments and locations. Jonathan continued:

My dream residency would be an experience where you'd go from one residency to the next. The residency would be crafted as an arc of your interests. So, there'd be Residency A, then you go to Residency B, or C, perhaps in different parts of the world, learning craft and techniques from indigenous cultures. … I think other people who want to investigate, and clearly respect these cultures and ancient techniques, they're welcome to come along. (2020, a8, i1)

In a similar vein, Richard spoke about experiential activities that could inform one's practice:

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I think that it would be multi-part, so that you could go and have an experience or expedition—those are the ones I'm frequently attracted to. To be able to go do something new, and learn more about something you're interested in. Then to be able to come back and have the studio time and support to make use of the experience that you just had. (2020, a1, i1)

In these cases, being in residence with other artists would be welcomed, but not entirely necessary to foster growth. It is the ability to research and explore that would infuse and invigorate their creativity.

**Balanced Scope of Engagement.** As previously mentioned, many artist residency programs have evolved to incorporate different elements of community engagement. When an artist is in residence, they may be required to participate in open studios, public forums, and panels, to give lectures and presentations, and even to create and implement workshops for the community. Artists who already work within a community context, either in social practice or participatory frameworks, may find these outreach obligations less challenging than those who are unfamiliar with these practices. Nevertheless, by negotiating their work within the context of community engagement, artists may encounter new opportunities to explore different materials, ideas, and processes. However, the extent to which community engagement fosters the artist's development remains unclear. Artist participants addressed their concerns around community engagement and suggested that residency programs consider a more balanced approach to supporting resident artists and bringing the community in conversation with the artists.

Community engagement experiences vary based on the artist's background, the residency's characteristics, and the type of engagement. While some artist participants believed that their experiences with community engagement were beneficial to their practice, others argued that residencies with explicit public engagement agendas often lack clarity, transparency, and objectivity in their mission. Some asserted that these types of institutions hold the resident

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artist responsible for fostering community on behalf of the organization. Many of the artist participants touched upon the importance of understanding the ethical considerations around community engagement. Richard stated that residencies pursuing these trends should have existing community ties before the artist arrives:

> I don't know if I found [it] negative … or not, but I do think that if that residency could have a public engagement component to it, it would be beneficial. I think it's helpful to think about how you're going to share your experiences and incorporate that in … [but] the residency would have to have a willingness and a deep, rich base of connections to be able to draw from. (2020, a1, i1)

Emma concurred that, when performed in a way that does not overwhelm the resident artists, engagement can be powerful for both the residents and the community: "I enjoyed meeting the local community and bringing them into the space, research, and storytelling" (2020, a2, i2). Other artists noted that successful community engagement depends not only on strong social networks, but also on time. Anh stated that residencies need to have realistic expectations and time frames for outreach:

> I've done community engagement projects where I work directly and intensely with the community. I think six weeks was also a very short period of time, [as] I felt I didn't have the time to actually do a project within a project where I could bring the community into what we were doing or what I was doing, because [there] was the pressure of creating work for an exhibition and just trying a new medium. … So those six weeks was, just for me, way too short. (2020, a7, i1)

As discussed in the section *Exposure vs. Exploitation*, Aaron and Sarah argued that community engagement raises serious ethical questions around elitism, exploitation, and inequity. In a similar vein, Emma, who had a positive experience creating an installation that incorporated the community, also contemplated the ethics behind collaboration with the public:

> If my idea involves something bigger than my personal story or experience, then that's when I really want to approach the community. I think all institutions want some community engagement. When I talk about wanting to do these projects, I also tell the community that I'm working with that they're making the work for me. I couldn't create this piece without their stories or their participation. And I … always make sure I say

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that, anytime I talk about it. I think it's important. I don't want people to think I'm exploiting community or other people. (2020, a2, i2)

Christina questioned the intentions behind many institutions' desire to place artists at the front of their outreach initiatives. As a performance artist, she wants to forge relationships with community members, but she also wants to ensure that residencies continue to maintain those relationships:

> I recognize my role and my opportunity to connect an institution to a community. I want to connect people to my work and I want to connect people outside of art institutions to contemporary art by Black artists. I recognize that the artist benefits from this connection, but I want to make it clear that I hope the institution benefiting from this connection that I'm forging continues this relationship as well. (2020, a6, i1)

> Clearly, artist participants do not want their work to be isolated from the public. Both

Jesse and Jonathan stated that it's important for artists to have an audience. Jesse continued:

> I think community engagement is extremely important, because who are you making work for? You want to be able to make work that engages the community, even though people may not "get it," and maybe that's not the point … it's really just to have the conversation, and to help people to maybe see things differently. I think that's one of the most important aspects of community engagement because, oftentimes, people have these preconceived notions of what art is or what art should be. And when you're confronted with art or artists that you're unfamiliar with, that's just an opportunity to see art in a different light. (2020, a5, i2)

On a different note, Jonathan believes that it's important for the community to encounter artwork on their terms, with their own agency and their own sensibilities:

> Art isn't art if it's in a cave and no one sees it, right? When people are coming to see [the work], they're able to do it in [such] a way that they … maintain their own agency. I want them to be able to walk in and ignore what I wrote about the work—never read anything, if they don't want to. (2020, a8, i1)

**Summary**

This chapter highlighted the elements of the artist participants' residency experiences that most affected their creative development. The material was presented in two parts: Part I:

*Portraits of the Artist Participants*, which narrated the artist participants' developmental

trajectory in the arts and explored the myriad circumstances within and beyond the residency that

influenced it; and Part II: *Cross-Case Themes*, which elaborated the common themes that

emerged from these narratives and examined the particular role that artist residencies played in

the artists' growth. Table 7 reconciles the individual and collective dimensions of the artist

participants' experiences. By identifying factors within the residency context that contribute to,

and even at times hinder, the development of the artist, one can begin to consider the ways in

which artist residences provide a complex context for artistic transformation.

By allowing artists to escape the monotony of the everyday, and by bringing together

diverse resources and individuals, these contexts reinvigorate artists' routines and interactions

and present embedded opportunities for creative consonance and dissonance. The former may be

described as serendipity, while the latter involves unexpected challenges, be they intellectual,

social, creative, or even physical. Both stimulate artists to deepen their personal reflection and to

innovate elements within their artistic practices, leading to creative change, which often

manifests as "pivotal moments," or transformative experiences, in the artist's practice.

While the changes themselves vary based on the particularities of both the residency and

the artist participant—the location, amenities, community, and challenges of the site, or the

history, proclivities, and disposition of the artist—they resolved in the present study into three

broad "dimensions" of change: discovering new ways of using material, new forms of creativity,

and new outlooks and attitudes regarding one's own sense of artistic self. Artist participants

frequently emerged from their residency experiences with a greater sense of confidence, risk

taking, and agency.

Similarly, though the conditions of change vary across cases, in this study they tended to involve attributes of time, place, and engagement. Artist participants illuminated the importance of balancing solitude with camaraderie, undivided focus with community engagement, and harmony with dissonance. Many agreed that community experiences are the most salient characteristic of residency programs, as they enabled resident artists to exchange best practices and foster lifelong connections for future creative endeavors. Additionally, extended time spent in different, inspiring places allowed artists to expand, explore, and develop their material and conceptual practices, availing themselves of the fruitful conditions for growth. It may even be the case that the influence of place was mediated by the duration of the residency.

Based on the above, we may suggest that—though there is no formula for confidence or creative growth—residency programs increase the probability of these outcomes by serving as an incubator/incubation period for personal and creative development, with carefully controlled inputs that nourish the artist and their practice.

## Chapter V

## Discussion

This chapter interlaces the findings from Chapter IV with the literature sources from Chapter II to propose possible answers to the research question: is there a relationship between community residential experiences and an artist's development, and if so, what are the main features of this relationship? With this in mind, the chapter is organized to address the following two themes: *Residencies and the Community Ecosystem* and *Residencies and Transformative Learning.* Together, these themes elaborate how community-based residencies shape the developmental experiences of artists in residence.

As this is a qualitative study that includes a limited number of participants, no firm generalizations will be made. Each experience should be seen as unique to each artist's history, propensities, and disposition. Nonetheless, the results suggest new ways of conceptualizing residencies' impact on artist development, which will be further developed in the following chapter.

## Residencies and the Community Ecosystem

To understand the reciprocity between artists and resident communities, it is important to first examine the context of community as interpreted in this study. "Community" assumes a range of meanings and embodies different kinds of places, spaces, and people. Thus, I refer to "community" as a residency ecosystem that incorporates three different layers, each with a distinctive focus: *Community of Residents as a Community of Inquiry*, *Community of Visitors and Challenges to Public Engagement*, and the *Community Ecosystem Beyond the Residency*.

### *Community of Residents as a Community of Inquiry*

According to the artist participants' accounts, the aspect of the residency ecosystem that produced experiential states most conducive to their growth was the community of other residents. In this study, the eight artists valued being able to maintain their independent practice while working within close proximity to other artists and experts. Some enjoyed the ability to share communal meals and talks with other artists, and occasionally with the larger community. Within this structure, artists were able to exchange best practices, expose each other to new ways of thinking and making, and sometimes even collaborate to produce a body of work that would not otherwise have been possible.

By fostering dialogue and setting the stage for "questioning, reasoning, connecting, deliberating, challenging, and developing problem-solving techniques," residency cohorts in this study seem to develop into what Lipman (2003) describes as *communities of inquiry*. For example, Anh, Jonathan, Jesse, Sarah, and Richard each described the camaraderie and information exchange that transpired among residency cohorts and how this exposed them to new ways of working. By giving artists the opportunity to collectively explore ideas and materials and to benefit from others' wealth of knowledge, residencies can function somewhat like a "think tank." For example, while at T Residency, Emma was inspired to incorporate more photography into her work partly because the other residents in her cohort specialized in this medium. Similarly, during Jesse's time at I Residency, he was inspired and supported by another resident artist, whose concentration was fiber and textile art, to transform his paintings into tapestries. Sarah's interactions with a diverse, multidisciplinary cohort in Italy, both over evening meals and through the exchange of small tokens like specimens, allowed her to more deeply connect her artistic practice with the sciences. Such examples reveal how artist interactions within residency contexts can offer a variety of spaces and points of entry for new

learning. Through meals, open lectures and talks, and shared spaces, residencies may be seen as

sites that may prime participants to interact and engage in productive ways, perhaps, more so

effectively than artist interactions outside of residency context.

This kind of multivalent learning exceeds the possibility of didacticism. As Eisner (2002)

points out:

> No one ever learns one thing at a time. The concert hall, the art studio, the stage on which a dance or play is performed are each replete with opportunities for learning many things. Some of these opportunities relate to the ways in which humans working within different art forms associate with one another, the kinds of assistance they provide to one another, the extent to which one's own work depends upon the work of others, and the kinds of resources—tools, paints, instruments, music—one must learn to use in order to work in that art form. The setting is filled with opportunities for learning that are not necessarily a part of the formal agenda of the field, but are nevertheless important. (p. 235)

However, existing art world narratives can constrain this otherwise unbounded, indeterminate

growth. Sarah and Jesse described the artworld and/or artist communities as being "insular," and

Richard and Emma specified that multidisciplinary residencies are preferable precisely because

they offer inspiration beyond the vantage point of art. In fact, all artist participants emphasized

the importance of diversity within their residency experiences, as this opens up what Jesse and

Aaron describe as a "world of possibilities."

Of course, there are limits to the applicability of this "community of inquiry" model. Not

every artist attends residencies with the expectation of collaborating and co-mingling with

others. In this study, Christina, for example, explicitly pursued residencies for the promise of

intimate space for focus and production. Three artists in this study participated fruitfully in

residencies where they were the only person in residence. Furthermore, even within residency

cohorts, it takes time to nurture relationships to the point of stimulating a community of inquiry,

so only residency cycles of sufficient duration could meaningfully accomplish this. Needless to

say, outcomes will differ based on each particular residency and each individual artist. Finally, the residency site itself must also be highlighted as a space of exploration, investigation, and expansion. There is much that left to uncover about the particular environmental and archetypal qualities of a residency site that may nurture a community of inquiry, as Lipman mainly described these communities in the context of traditional educational settings. The results of this study suggest that this topic is a worthy avenue for further research.

### Community of Visitors and Challenges to Public Engagement

**Artist Responsibility and Engagement Choices.** According to the Alliance of Artists Communities (Strokosch, n.d.-a), recent trends toward community engagement in artist residencies aspire to free artists of prescribed material outcomes while emphasizing community outcomes. Despite the humanistic overtones of this development, all the artist participants in the present study expressed concern over the ethics of community-centered residencies and questioned the institutional motivations and politics that informed this public-facing mission—including those, like Anh and Jonathan, whose practices are deeply social. Though each artist benefited in various ways from community-facing engagement—Jonathan, for example, moved permanently from stitching to crocheting after one residency strongly encouraged him to make his practice more accessible to a wider (and younger) audience—all eight artists reported certain tensions when navigating these residencies.

The artists' suspicions around the ethics of community engagement are supported by some recent literature. Lithgow and Wall (2017) write:

> The discourse around the cultural economy, including ideas about creative industries, cultural industries, and creative cities, concerns the production and circulation of creative content in service and knowledge economies. As components of a cultural economy, AiRs [Artist-in-Residencies] that offer varieties of community engagement and the integration of art into daily life also typically serve economic goals of regeneration and inter-city competition. Critics have found residency programs complicit in supporting the

interests of capitalism and globalization, such as, for instance, the gentrification of marginal neighbourhoods. (para. 22)

Anh encapsulated this sentiment by distinguishing between an artist who works *within* the community versus an artist who works *with* the community, stressing the need for time to immerse oneself within a community and to build authentic connections. According to Badham (2017), this "uneasy relationship [between] artistic, institutional, and community motivations" should be carefully considered:

> The risk of instrumentalising the arts and clarity of stakeholder expectations within the often unpredictable creative and community process of socially engaged arts require careful negotiation. These are both practical and conceptual concerns for stakeholders to consider including the potential for harm when institutional hosts invite guest artists to engage with communities not their own. These concerns can be amplified when artists are travelling to new cultural contexts or wanting to make work with vulnerable communities about issues they are less familiar with. (para. 8)

Interestingly, the artist participants in this study who worked on larger, public-facing projects, workshops, and/or talks did so within a community that was familiar to them. Richard's meditation walks at X Residency took place within a community he was once a part of, as he taught at a nearby university a few years prior. Emma's larger project at T Residency involved fellow community members in "El Sobrante," widening her existing local network. Emma particularly felt supported by the larger reach and professional infrastructure provided by T Residency, and this encouraged her to collect affirmations from community members for her beaded hair curtain—her largest piece to date. Aaron's public projects and talks at Y Residency—located within the Bay Area, where Aaron lived and worked—centered around trans art, history, and rights and took place during Pride Month, thereby addressing a community of which he was a part. Finally, Christina's work at D Residency—located in a largely Black neighborhood—culminated in a public-facing performance that basked in this common identity. Thus, the artists seem to have negotiated—more or less consciously—the challenges of

community engagement by pursuing residencies of this nature within geographically, ethnically, or otherwise proximate settings.

However, it is not sufficient to leave this negotiation up to artists, as it saddles them with undue responsibility. As Claire Bishop (2006) pointed out in her article, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents":

> What serious criticism has arisen in relation to socially collaborative art has been framed in a particular way: The social turn in contemporary art has prompted an ethical turn in art criticism … artists are increasingly judged by their working process—the degree to which they supply good or bad models of collaboration—and criticized for any hint of potential exploitation that fails to "fully" represent their subjects, as if such a thing were possible. This emphasis on process over product (i.e., means over ends) is justified as oppositional to capitalism's predilection for the contrary. … Accusations of mastery and egocentrism are leveled at artists who work with participants to realize a project instead of allowing it to emerge through consensual collaboration. (p. 179)

Clearly, the social and ethical implications of community engagement and collaborative practice have burdened the artist with apprehension and unease, potentially stifling their creative ambitions. Thus, these concerns require further research, examination, and larger discussion within the framework of art criticism and contemporary art.

**The Effects of Disruption on Creativity.** Several of the artist participants addressed the sense of distraction, and at times anxiety, that arose from open studio events and public workshops. However, contingent on the context, it appears as though these moments of public disruption could sometimes foster their practice as much as they hindered it. To examine how disruption fosters or stifles creativity, Wiruchnipawan (2015) conducted a series of studies in which she measured the effects of these distractions. She concluded that individuals were receptive to unplanned distraction in different ways, depending on their mode of thinking: divergent or convergent. Ultimately, Wiruchnipawan concluded that low levels of unexpected distractions helped to cultivate creativity.

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The present findings corroborate Wiruchnipawan's conclusions, showing that low levels of engagement proved useful for the majority of artist participants. As an example, we might compare Jesse's different community outreach experiences within residencies: where structured workshops were difficult and overwhelming, even with the support of residency staff (F Residency), more natural and organic forms of community interaction, such as informal talks, tours, and potlucks, enriched his residency experience (B Residency). Emma and Christina expressed their anxiety and unease about the "revolving door" of visitors during open studios, but were nonetheless able to reframe these disruptions, utilizing the visitors' presence to create new work that hinged on community engagement. With passersby constantly tip-toeing into Emma's studio space, she invited visitors to write affirmations on porcelain beads for one of her works. In the absence of a material "thing" to display to studio visitors, Christina collected the notes tacked along her studio wall and used the recorded ideas to create a talk-show-inspired performance that played with improvisation, engaging visitors in new ways. Because Richard was expected to host a public workshop during his cycle at X Residency, he facilitated deep listening, meditative walks with the community. In this sense, Richard's habitual ways of working, often in solitude or with a sole collaborator, were disrupted by the newness of guiding others through nature, enabling him to share his interest in the natural environment. Richard reported that he would not have hosted this activity unless he was required to by an arts institution. Thus, informal or minimally obtrusive community-centered projects can push artists outside of their comfort zone, forcing them to adapt their practice in new and unanticipated ways.

***Community Ecosystem Beyond the Residency***

The outermost layer within the community ecosystem—the space beyond the residency—includes the natural and constructed environment, its inhabitants, and even the political and social atmosphere that permeates the macro and microcosms of the given society. Many have long debated the characteristics and boundaries that define "public" life; according to Johanna Burton et al. (2016), "public" toes the line between "collectivity" and "anonymous coexistence" (p. xv). Rather than inventorying its components, we can better understand this outermost layer by considering how it coalesces to inform the artist's creative practice—that is, through serendipity and/or what Jung (1973/2015) called "synchronicity." Moreover, we may usefully examine the artists' responses to this convergence by appealing to Rachel and Stephen Kaplan's (1989) attention restoration theory.

**The Atmospheric Ecosystem: Serendipity and Synchronicity.** Serendipity, better understood as fortunate chance encounters, has primarily been discussed within the sciences, "having played a key role in many significant discoveries" (André et al., 2009, p. 305). However, serendipity is also at play within the arts. Indeed, van Andel (1994) defines serendipity as "the art of making an unsought finding," continuing:

> If I define true serendipity as the art of making an 'unsought finding', what do I mean by a 'finding'? I speak of a 'finding' when two or more elements (observations, hypotheses, ideas, facts, relations or insights) are combined originally, for the finder or anybody, to something new and true (science), new and useful (technology), or new and fascinating (arts). … The 'unsought' is related to the finder or anybody, and does not exclude that the finder sought something else when he found the 'unsought' finding (in fact this is mostly the case). (p. 643)

Framing serendipity as the "art of making an unsought finding" implies that serendipity can be deliberately pursued (as when one takes a walk to get the mental "juices" flowing) or otherwise constructed. In his writing "Anatomy of the Unsought Finding. Serendipity: Origin, History, Domains, Traditions, Appearances, Patterns and Programmability," van Andel (1994)

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identifies patterns, or qualities, that often lead to serendipity. For the present study, the most important are analogy, one or several recurring surprising observations, successful error, scarcity, outsider, interruption of work, playing, and forgetting. Unsurprisingly, these characteristics were often cited by the artist participants as they described those residency experiences that led to major shifts in their art practice. Emma's surprising observations and unexpected encounters during residencies abroad informed her practice, which deals explicitly with cultural complexity, history, and identity. Richard and Aaron, who work primarily in screen-based practices, grappled with resource scarcity at some of the artist residencies that they attended, which led them to consider different ways to approach their respective processes. Jesse's residency encounter with an "outsider" artist led to a profound material shift from painting to textiles. Christina produced work that stemmed from the interruptions of her space during residency open studios. Sarah began to perceive play and fieldwork as active components of her studio practice during her residency at a botanical garden. C Residency provided Anh with the opportunity to play with their renowned printmaking facilities, and she has since incorporated printmaking into her practice. Based on the various residency experiences of these eight very different artists, we may speculate that residencies provide a context for cultivating serendipity, thereby leading to unexpected discoveries within one's artistic practice.

We may also extend this discussion from the topic of serendipity to that of synchronicity. Coined by Carl Jung (1973/2015), synchronicity can be defined as:

> … the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state—and, in certain cases, vice versa. (p. 25)

Referring back to the artist participants' residency experiences, we can see instances of this phenomenon within the narratives of Jonathan, Emma, and Anh. While at N Residency, Jonathan

reflected on the then-current political climate and noted his own psychological state: broken, thrown away, sharp. His words and feelings would thereafter materialize through broken ceramics found by chance in the scrap yard. Realizing the synchronicity between this event, his emotions, and the political climate, Jonathan decided then and there to work with shards, and has done so ever since. In a similar vein, Emma constructed her piece "Ching Chong" after the intersection of two interactions she experienced while completing a residency in Europe. First, she was told by her fellow artists in residence that the concepts in her work were only relevant in the United States. Shortly thereafter, she and her visiting relatives experienced verbal racist attacks. While the second event added insult to injury, further "othering" her in this foreign setting, it also directly defied the European colleagues' narrative. This ultimately inspired Emma to spotlight the racism directed toward the Asian community. Anh also encountered synchronicity during her time in Berlin, when the Syrian refugee crisis was at its peak. She was moved by the media coverage featuring lifejackets strewn across the coast of Greece, relating these images to her own history as a refugee. She proceeded to use lifejackets in her work, painting on them, sculpting with them, and even re-creating a traditional Vietnamese craft—sơn mài—with eggshells on the life jacket. It is possible that the other artist participants also encountered synchronicity while in residence, and it would be interesting to further explore these occurrences.

**The Natural Ecosystem: Attention Restoration.** Artist residencies are located in a variety of places: some occupy crowded urban scapes, while others exist tucked away in isolated natural environments. Contingent on the characteristics of both the residency and the artist, the environment outside of the institution may play a major role in shaping the artistic direction of the resident. All eight of this study's artist participants reported some measure of such

environmental influence when living and working in places drastically different from their everyday environments. For Richard, environment was a major inspiration during his expeditionary residency, as he was able to witness first-hand the effects of climate change. Both Aaron and Jesse availed themselves of a residency known for being an LGBTQ safe haven, in contrast to their more ambivalent urban home bases. Emma participated in residencies in China and Europe, hoping to study the history of porcelain from the two cultures that make up her heritage. Jonathan and Anh also found inspiration abroad, though in environments far removed from their own cultural backgrounds. For Christina, her first residency transpired abroad in an environment suffused with Afro-Latino culture, though she was the only artist who did not attribute long-term artistic changes to this environmental shift.

According to psychologists Rachel and Stephen Kaplan (1989), time spent within the natural world restores and reinvigorates the mind. "Directed attention fatigues people through overuse," Stephen Kaplan explains, "If you can find an environment where the attention is automatic, you allow directed attention to rest. And that means an environment that's strong on fascination" (Clay, 2001, p. 40). This shift from directed to automatic attention constitutes attention restoration theory, and, for an artist, it can have significant effects on the creative process. Rachel and Stephen Kaplan (1989) go on to argue that human functioning depends on information, and our ability to "extract information from an environment" is what lends itself to our ability to thrive in that environment (p. 50). Furthermore, they assert that humans intrinsically strive towards "understanding and exploration," both of which involve a "degree of inference" (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989, p. 52).

Nature, however, is not homogenous, and only those spaces that have the properties of "being away" (exposure to new cognitive content), compatibility (perceived purpose in being

there), fascination (experiences of wonder, as per Chapter IV, Part II), and extent (large scope of content) are shown to fully and holistically enrich the artist's practice in new and interesting ways, inspiring them to explore new materials, resources, techniques, and ideas. For example, Jonathan's time at N Residency ignited a sense of wonder and fascination due to its drastically different environment compared to his everyday surroundings. It was particularly unique in that the parameters of the residency involved scavenging for materials in a 47-acre facility. The sense of novelty provided ample opportunities for serendipity, and it motivated him to work with found objects ongoingly, transforming them in new and interesting ways. For Aaron, as his project and research on trans art and history expanded, he participated in evermore shows and residencies in new locations. Each space inspired Aaron to engage with the specific history of the trans experience in that geographical location; thus, location becomes both context and material in Aaron's work. Christina also allowed new environments to fertilize her ideas, and she pursued residency experiences with this in mind. For instance, while participating in W Residency, Christina witnessed a drug addict ambling down the sidewalk, an event she perceived as hauntingly beautiful. As such, Christina was inspired to create a performance piece that married the concepts of heaviness and depression, materialized in the movements of this person she watched for a short period of time. These examples provide a new lens for viewing the framework of attention restoration theory within the context of the creative process; as artists encounter new spaces, fleeting moments become profound.

**Residencies and Transformative Learning**

As evidenced in the eight cases presented in Chapter IV, the artist participants underwent moments of creative growth and transformation in different periods of their artistic trajectories, many of which involved new environments, interactions with people, and alternate solitude and

community. Ultimately, shifts in trajectories occurred during periods of change and challenge, newness and disruption, and through a balance between periods of introspection and extrospection. Given that residency experiences often involve uprooting one's everyday life to work within a vastly different environment, residencies may provide the conditions of possibility for disorienting dilemmas/trigger events, as per Mezirow's theory of transformative learning. Indeed, according to the Alliance of Artists Communities, the purpose of residencies is to disrupt patterns of routine and monotony and thereby invite creative exploration:

> Artist residencies are inherently about disruption – stepping out of a comfort zone into a new context, pushing oneself to explore and experiment, shifting between the validation that someone deemed you worthy and the uncertainty of being worthwhile. They have consistently placed greater value on people and process than on products, and have embraced the messy, unpredictable nature of art-making for over a century. (Strokosch, n.d.-b)

Disruption often entails challenge and disorientation, particularly when residency environments are drastically different from artists' everyday environments. Hence, this section examines the artist participants' narratives about residency experiences within the context of transformative learning to better understand how residencies function as complex contexts that invoke such metamorphoses.

For the artist participants in this study, disorienting dilemmas often occurred while participating in residency programs abroad, or in a culture or region vastly different from their home community and environment. This is consistent with Maddux et al.'s (2010) findings:

> Learning within and about a foreign culture—in particular, learning that certain behaviors one has long grown accustomed to as natural and inevitable can suddenly have very different functions in a different cultural environment—may help individuals perceive and understand why cultural differences occur. These experiences then seem to enhance cognitive complexity and flexibility, heightening the ability to approach problems from new and multiple perspectives and ultimately enhancing the creative process. (p. 73)

As Maddux et al. suggest, when placed in an unfamiliar environment, artists must develop sufficient cognitive flexibility to tailor the relationship between "the self" and "the unknown." This involves both intro- and extrospection, and it can lead to a greater sense of self-awareness and potentially prompt transformative learning.

Emma's residencies abroad, both in China and in Europe, present the starkest examples of residencies inciting disorienting dilemmas. The porcelain workshop (G Residency) in China that Emma revisited several times throughout her career exposed her to the deep and detailed cultural history of porcelain within East Asia. It also alerted Emma to the significant role that hair plays within one's identity, as her shaved head during her third trip to China complicated others' ability to identify her Asian attributes. In this sense, the experience provided a "disorienting dilemma" by means of a drastically different environment, which triggered Emma to reflect inwards and to incorporate specific elements of her cultural identity into her art practice. While in Europe, Emma faced difficult encounters with both her international residency cohort and hostile strangers and suffered a medical emergency that placed her in a difficult situation in a foreign hospital. There too, she recalled the doctors struggling to identify her ethnicity. These experiences directly informed Emma's artistic practice: curtains of hair referenced the idea of "crossing thresholds"; traditional blue and white porcelain patterns were painted on long feminine nails adorned with large porcelain brass-knuckle-style rings with the phrase "basic bitch"; a bright neon red sign with a stereotypically Asian-style font broadcasted the slur "Ching Chong." Through her materials, Emma transformed these difficult encounters into conceptual critiques.

While Emma's experiences fit neatly within Mezirow's definition of a "disorienting dilemma," those of the other seven artist participants were somewhat more subtle. During his

polar expedition with A Residency, Richard was confronted with the effects of global warming, thereafter developing an interest in climate change and environmentalism. Anh's time in Berlin during the Syrian refugee crisis led her to focus on the personal and universal dimensions of the refugee experience. Although Jonathan, Jesse, and Sarah did not necessarily encounter "disorienting dilemmas" abroad while participating in residencies, they did live and/or study in different countries for an extended period of time and were subsequently influenced by these new environments and cultures. Jonathan's time in Japan introduced him to new traditional materials like Japanese Sumi ink and led him to reflect on the differences between being Black in Japan vs. Black in the United States. Sarah and Jesse, both of whom were initially abstract painters, were largely inspired by the unique architecture they encountered in Europe. While Aaron and Christina didn't necessarily encounter profound moments of transformation while abroad, their experiences outside of the United States did enrich their practice.

### *Critiques of Transformative Learning*

Despite the transformations listed above, I would argue that there is still much to be discovered with regard to the relationship between transformative learning and artistic development. Additionally, there are gaps in the theory of transformative learning that require further discussion. Laros et al. (2017) reason that the characteristics and parameters of disorienting dilemmas are vague or totally unspecified in Mezirow's work (2000, pp. 84–88). Scholars within the field in general have spoken about the looseness and ambiguity of the language used to define the first stage of transformation (Cranton, 2009; Laros et al., 2017; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). More importantly, within the context of artist residency experiences, transformation may not be linear. Eisner (2002) claims that artists continually recreate themselves through their practice:

The arts are among the resources through which individuals recreate themselves. The work of art is a process that culminates in a new art form. That art form is the recreation of the individual. Recreation is a form of re-creation. The arts are among the most powerful means of promoting re-creation. … They are sources of deep enrichment for all of us. (pp. 240–241)

This process of transformation is often cyclical; in her book *The Storm of Creativity*, Professor Kyna Leski (2015) describes the creative process as a "helix" of unordered stages that involve learning and unlearning:

The helix can be described as comprising the stages of the creative process. Again, the order is somewhat arbitrary. You unlearn and rid yourself of preconceptions, which creates the need/want to know. Your need makes a problem, which you define and redefine, and then you move forward to gather and track that with which you will solve the problem. You propel forward with the language of your creative endeavor into perception, from which you derive conception. With your concept, you move forward still, seeing ahead with your imagination. Through all this, you reiterate back into different phases of the creative process, in and out until you can transform quantity into quality by connecting all material you have gathered and giving it meaning. Your goal looms ahead, but again it will not be the end point. (p. 165)

Artist residencies provide material, conceptual, and professional resources that facilitate this ongoing process, and they also present a means for piecing together the ways in which creativity unfolds and molds itself. Thus, further study of transformative learning in the context of artist residencies and art education could enhance the theory of transformative learning overall.

### Reinterpreting Mezirow: Difference, Challenge, Change, and Empowerment

As evidenced in the prior sections, artistic growth unfolds in a plethora of ways. The undulating relationship between routine, challenge, and change is, perhaps, the substance of the artist's trajectory. Though the markers of this trajectory may be similar for different individuals—for instance, encounters with new and unfamiliar places, spaces, and people—their iteration and occurrence varies, ultimately producing different repercussions. Some of the encounters with challenge and change reported in this study were destabilizing, while others

were empowering. Although the research question at hand asks us to consider the ways in which residency programs foster the development of an artist, it is obvious that residencies are not the sole proprietor of transformation. Artist participants experienced bouts of artistic growth outside of the residency experience, through the loss of loved ones, the birth of children, their struggles with health and conflicts with identity, through spirituality, politics, studies, and many, many other personal encounters with the world around and within them. Nonetheless, I would argue that residencies, by providing time, space, and support for artists to explore, ruminate, and—most importantly—create, can help to give form to this transformative process so that it becomes perceptible and real for the artists themselves. Thus, placing the artist participants' experiences within Mezirow's framework of transformative learning, we may say that the residency experience contains different *entry points* to transformation, which manifest as opportunities for challenge or change. These opportunities may, in turn, redirect the artist's development, and—by activating the artist's awareness and creative agency[14]—ultimately empower them.

**Summary**

Insofar as residency programs provide unique community contexts that foster the development of the artist, we may conceive of them as educational resources. Furthermore, insofar as the kind of learning achieved in artist residencies differs from established educational models, we may begin to formulate a different kind of educational model at work in these programs. The first theme in this chapter, *Residencies and the Community Ecosystem,* mapped the different types of "community" identified in Chapter IV to existing theoretical concepts in

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[14] In some ways, this element of awareness/agency/reflection seems to constitute the difference between "empowering" challenge/change and "destabilizing" challenge/change. Thus, insofar as the challenges and changes presented by the residency stimulate/are amenable to creative agency, they can lead to growth. Challenges and changes that are beyond the artist's control (that is, that can't be meaningfully addressed/reformulated through creative practice) would lead to conflict or frustration (as in the case of "the game," residency bureaucracies, and political posturing).

the field of education. This exercise enabled us to clarify the role that these elements played in the artist's "education," or development. We found, firstly, that residency cohorts may serve as a community of inquiry (Lipman, 2003), which is characterized by inclusiveness, participation, shared cognition, face-to-face relationships, the quest for meaning, feelings of social solidarity, deliberation, impartiality, modeling, thinking for oneself, challenging as a procedure, reasonableness, and dichotomy between inquiry and discussion. Secondly, we found that social practice and community engagement within the residency experience can present ethical challenges for artists, as suggested in the writings of Lithgow and Wall, Badham, and Bishop. Lastly, we found that the community ecosystem beyond the residency—including chance encounters, political developments, and surrounding nature—provides artists with opportunities for serendipity and synchronicity, as well as attention restoration, which facilitate artistic growth.

These different elements of the community ecosystem cohere at the level of the artist residency, presenting different and diverse potentials for challenge and change. Thus, having established the vectors of change, the second theme, *Residencies and Transformative Learning*, elaborates upon the *process* of change, framing the artist participants' narratives in terms of the literature on transformative learning (Cranton, 2009; Mezirow, 2000), creative growth (Eisner, 2002; Leski, 2015), and adult development. Within this framework, artist residences act as complex contexts for transformation, providing latent disorienting dilemmas and/or trigger events to stimulate challenges and changes for participating artists, depending on each artist's unique positionality. The resulting artistic "transformation" is non-linear—borrowing Eisner's words, it is a cyclical process that evolves and re-evolves with no end. In this light, the kind of learning that occurs within residencies is a variation of transformative learning, recast as a

revolving process of challenge and change that persists for the duration of an individual's life.

Perhaps we may refer to this as a potential educational model for adult artists.

## Chapter VI

## Educational Implications

**Introduction**

This study aimed to identify significant characteristics of artist residencies that support artists' growth and development. By extension, it sought to understand the particular ways in which residencies provide a learning environment for artists. Drawing upon the personal narratives of the eight artist participants, it becomes clear that artist residencies can serve as sites, or even cultural nuclei, within larger community ecosystems of learning. Each artist participant's residency encounters were as unique as the range of different residency programs that exist all over the globe. As we have seen, the degree of artistic growth that the participants experienced was contingent upon the unique characteristics of the residency site and the individual proclivities and disposition of the artist. Some residency programs placed an emphasis on cultural exchange, others provided artists with access to new materials, processes, and technologies, and several involved social practice and community engagement. With this in mind, the following section (*Residencies as a Potential Education Model*) will delineate how residencies may serve as a potential education model wherein artistic pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy, and place-based pedagogy merge and inflect the artist's encounters. This education model enriches the learning and growth of the artist by (1) fostering a range of values not previously experienced, (2) creating an emotional experience within the organizational environment, (3) introducing participants to new contexts and new knowledge, and (4) creating opportunities beyond the original focus of the intervention. The final section, *Towards the Democratization of Art Practice,* will explore how residency spaces facilitate democratic

learning and enable participants to dismantle the political and social barriers presented by elitism and insularity, which are often encountered within the "art world."

**Residencies as a Potential Education Model**

Given the lack of research on the artistic, educational development of adult artists within the framework of residency programs, this section proposes a model of artist residencies as continued education that can begin to fill this gap. I will highlight how the pedagogical approaches presented in Chapter II manifested in practice within the artist participants' residency encounters. In particular, I will map the interactions between *artistic pedagogy* (via the artists/experts), *culturally-responsive pedagogy* (via the community), *place-based pedagogy* (via cultural and environmental contexts), and *collaborative/interpersonal learning* (via their interrelation, facilitating reciprocity and adaptability).

Together, these pedagogies constitute what I would like to identify as "holistic" or lifestyle-based learning. Holistic approaches to art education that combine artistic, scientific, historiographic, or anthropological perspectives on culture, society, and the world allow individuals to develop different skills, techniques, and entry points to the creative process. More importantly, they also enable learners to derive meaning from the art they are creating. Karen Lee Carroll (2006), scholar and Dean Emeritus for the Center of Art Education at the Maryland Institute College of Art, conducted a study wherein she chronicled the development and growth of holistic methodologies and philosophies "in the context of teacher preparation and development in a professional school of art" (p. 16). Not only did the study achieve instantaneous positive results, confirming that holistic practices and approaches benefit the learning experience, it also revealed that holistic practices promote higher-quality art:

> The quality of artwork produced in response to holistic approaches appeared to be very strong, in one case twice verified by national recognition at the highest level. It might

also be argued that some learners would have remained entirely resistant to artmaking had holistic considerations and approaches not been used. With the group's expertise in art, tasks given to learners were neither too hard nor too easy, offering the right level of challenge and appropriate opportunities to engage with sensuous materials, interesting processes, open-ended problems, and important questions. (p. 21)

Given these profound results for both learning and implementation, it is imperative to move towards a paradigm of holistic and culturally responsive teaching.

Insofar as artist residencies operate at the intersection of artistic, cultural, and environmental concerns, continuing the legacy of travel-based learning while striving to honor the histories and traditions of local communities and places, they foster a kind of holistic learning. Thus, artist residencies can serve as spaces for democratic learning and empowerment. As arts advocate Courtney Fink writes in "The Artist as Culture Producer," by Sharon Louden (2017):

> … at a time of great change in cities across the U.S., when issues of equity and affordability present tangible challenges for artists, it has become crystal clear that spaces for artists and the public to come together are essential. Even more, it's imperative to better educate the population about how critical artists are in their communities—from ensuring cultural hubs can remain sustainable to artists and organizations' work improving the changing social landscape. (p. 394)

As suggested by these quotes, the implications of this model could exceed the particular context of artist residencies. According to Burton (2016), successful principles from the education of the artist could also apply to larger educational settings:

> … the sociocultural and increasingly global zeitgeist within which artists flourish has exploded the knowledge base and practices of the discipline and has challenged traditional certainties about curriculum, pedagogy, and instructional practice. (p. 918)

> Over time, the education of the artist has been inflected by other disciplines both within and outside the arts, and the resulting collapse of traditional boundaries has opened new space for theoretical speculation and sociopolitical activism … there is evidence to suggest that the education of the artist has opened new and more flexible contexts for practice; art education envisions porous spaces for the inquiring and imaginative mind. (p. 936)

Thus, revisiting these pedagogies from the lens of the artist's development may mobilize the environmental and methodical characteristics of residency programs for the benefit of the broader community.

### *Artistic Pedagogy via Artists/Experts*

The educational potential of art practice and artistic experiences has been theorized since antiquity, with the arts presented as a means of documenting, processing, and transforming our perspectives on the world around us. According to Elliot Eisner (2002), the arts have profound implications for the mind and consciousness:

> So how do the arts affect consciousness? They do so in a number of ways. They refine our senses so that our ability to experience the world is made more complex and subtle; they promote the use of our imaginative capacities so that we can envision what we cannot actually see, taste, touch, hear, and smell; they provide models though which we can experience the world in new ways; and they provide the materials and occasions for learning to grapple with problems that depend on arts-related forms of thinking. (p. 19)

As such, Eisner contends that arts curricula may serve as a "mind altering device," wherein material transformations parallel mental transformations:

> … every task and each material with which we work both imposes constraints and provides opportunities for the development of the mind. For example, if students are to develop their ability to think metaphorically, they need opportunities, examples, and encouragement to use metaphors in their speech and writing. The ability to think metaphorically is not the outcome of a single occasion; it requires repeated opportunities to explore the poetic use of language, a use of language that generates meaning through indirection, allusion, and innuendo. (p. 12)

Although Eisner's ideas about the arts and the creation of the mind were developed in the context of primary and secondary education, they may also describe how art pedagogy informs and enriches the mind of an adult artist. Education is a life-long exploit, and even the most innovative artists may occasionally experience periods of stagnation (or "creative blocks") and require external stimuli to overcome them. As Eisner suggests, "deliberately designed tasks" within the

arts may enrich one's experience and artistic development, and I contend that residency programs serve this purpose, working to "impose constraints and provide opportunities for the development of the mind" (Eisner, 2002, p. 13).

From the varied experiences of the eight artist participants in this study, data revealed that residencies deliberately provide constraints and opportunities for material and conceptual exploration by curating unique cultural and technical environments (in terms of both cultural exchange and access to unique studio facilities and equipment). For Jonathan, the limitations imposed at Z Residency incited his material transition from stitching to crocheting, while the serendipitous material opportunities at "the dump" in N Residency provoked him to blend crocheting with ceramics. Anh's time at a residency known for its printing press enabled her to introduce printmaking into her social practice. Access to S Residency's well-known mass archive of analog and digital resources gave Richard the chance to experiment with different programs and equipment, which eventually stimulated new directions in his work. Medium-specific residencies that emphasize research, technical skill building, and exploration may also present a "deliberately designed curriculum" for artists. For example, Emma attended G Residency in China several times, refining her porcelain technique and expertise with each residency cycle.

Of course, fruitful limitations and opportunities may not always arise by design. From Aaron's early residency experiences, wherein lack of electricity or internet connection obstructed his film-based practice, the mismatches between artists and residencies can also present opportunities for artistic learning: rather than making work, Aaron spent much of his time writing, exploring each new environment, and recharging. Eventually, Aaron's practice came to rely on this kind of archival research and writing, as opposed to a discrete material medium.

Similarly, Jesse's experience at F Residency, where he worked in a "fish-bowl"-like space with little privacy, led him to expand upon an ongoing textile project that involved intuitively quilting patterns based on grid structures. Christina's extended time at U Residency—located in a relatively remote area of upstate New York with limited access to art supply stores—encouraged her to be resourceful: she utilized the packing paper from her husband's shipments in a new performance piece.

> According to Billmayer (2015), who draws upon Eisner and his theories:

> … public education is based on the idea that children and young people are lacking knowledge and skills which they cannot acquire just by living in society. This lack has to be eliminated through systematic teaching and learning. (p. 81)

He posits that an educational system grounded in the arts can enrich learning, citing various benefits (which are delimited in Chapter II, Figure 2). These benefits can also apply equally to adult artists as they continue to grow and develop in their work. However, where Billmayer predominantly speaks towards the deficit education model, subordinating museums and other arts institutions to centers for this kind of teaching and learning, I would argue that residency programs offer a unique kind of active space for its own mode of teaching and learning, both by and for resident artists and residency visitors. This is because residencies enable a kind of "critical reciprocity" with their environments that is often inhibited within *traditional* museum settings: the specific limitations imposed by residencies (and, where relevant, community engagement) give artists the opportunity to exercise creative problem solving while also enabling community members to witness and learn from the artist's process. Critical reciprocity, thus, is a salutary ingredient of art education that contributes to broader artistic and identity development. The pairing of artist and audience, process and product, and experience and enquiry presents avenues for embodied learning and wholeness, culminating in a concept of art that, in Burton's

(2011) words, furnishes a "voice, a vernacular through which to construct meaning, to wonder, to appreciate beauty, and situate [the self] in the continuity of human history" (p. 106). Systems like residency programs facilitate these pairings, thereby providing a valued resource.

### *Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy via Community*

Many residency programs are situated within a particular community, and artists are invited there to share their practice and projects through public-facing activities like studio visits, artist talks, collaborative projects, and workshops. Though the particular relationship that emerges between the artist and the outlying community, as mediated by the residency space, depends on the historical and interpersonal dimensions of these entities, it is common for artists and visitors to share aspects of their personal histories, experiences, and cultures with each other over the course of their interaction. This kind of cultural exchange and community-based learning exhibits aspects of what Ladson-Billings (1994) called "culturally responsive pedagogy," which empowers students "intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 17). According to Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally relevant teaching enables students to (1) experience academic success; (2) develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (3) develop a critical consciousness through which to challenge the prevailing social order (see Table 8). In the paragraphs below, I demonstrate that these principles are manifest in community-based residency programs, and can potentially arise beyond the walls of a classroom environment.

**Table 8**

*Adaptation of Gloria Ladson-Billing's Three Principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*

| Principles of culturally responsive pedagogy | Mode of action |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Experience academic success | Emphasizes student-centered learning and maintains high and transparent academic expectations. |
| Develop and/or maintain cultural competence | Connects culture and education; educators take responsibility for learning about their students' culture and community; interrogate their own identity, culture, biases, and privilege; and critically assess and strengthen their instructional practice. |
| Develop a critical consciousness through which to challenge the prevailing social order | Encourages students to think about and consistently question why things are the way they are and encourages students to see themselves as agents of social change and transformation. |

*Note.* Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17.

Regarding the prospect of students' academic success, Ladson-Billings (1995) explains

that:

> … despite the current social inequities and hostile classroom environments, students develop their academic skills. The way those skills are developed may vary, but all students need literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills in order to be active participants in a democracy. (p. 160)

Applying this concept to the residency experience, and based on the artist participants'

conceptualizations of their ideal residencies, data has shown that artists need social, physical,

political, and financial support to experience artistic success, though this may vary depending on

the artist. Social support often materialized as interactions with helpful staff and a cohort of

artists, with the prospect of cultivating inspiration and sharing best practices. Physical support

embodied sufficient space, amenities, and extended time (approximately one month, minimum)

to develop and refine artistic projects and explore new environments. Political support, or

institutional legitimization, constitutes the avenues and channels of opportunity and prospect

forged from the artists' professional relationship with the residency. Financial support

encompassed funds and other material resources—including physical support teams—and

several artist participants cited it as a factor that enabled them to realize their projects. For

instance, Christina and Emma both benefited from the sizable materials budget, private

apartment, individual studio space, and monthly living stipend provided by T Residency, which

they utilized to realize more ambitious projects in terms of scale, production, and ideas. Both

artists also utilized the T Residency studio support team to fabricate different components for

their exhibitions. These resources not only empowered them as artists, but also shifted their

views about the role of residency programs, which they came to regard as tools for artists.

Christina and Emma created lasting relationships with T Residency and returned for talks,

workshops, and exhibitions.

Despite the significance of financial support, it does not necessarily guarantee artistic

empowerment on its own. For instance, Y Residency provided Aaron with a sizable stipend that

allowed him to launch his large project on trans art and history; however, Aaron's time there was

not exemplary. Because Aaron was the sole artist in residence and was only provided space for

workshops and talks, he described his experience at Y Residency as quiet:

> I didn't have a studio space, so it felt … kind of like an empty title in some ways. I didn't
> even have a presence in the space aside from the programs and the events that took place
> in association with my residency. They still had a lot of stuff to work out in terms of that
> [residency]. I don't know how they're configuring it now, it just felt like an imperative,
> "Okay, we need a community engagement artist; let's get one on the books." They didn't
> quite know how to support something like that. It just didn't feel like I had a presence in
> the institution and that I was engaging the public in a bigger way. (2020, a4, i1)

Although Aaron was able to utilize this experience to critique and parody the institution, it seems

that he would have benefited more from a multi-faceted residency that offers holistic support.

Residencies that provide such holistic support—such as T Residency—enable artists to cultivate

the kind of empowerment and agency that Ladson-Billings described. The more residencies do to

empower the artist and enrich their learning, the likelier artists are to enrich the surrounding

community.

The second principle that Ladson-Billings (1995) identified is the need for students to "develop and/or maintain their cultural competence," further arguing that, "culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (p. 161). Situating this principle within the framework of residency experiences, where there are no concrete "teachers,"[15] cultural competence is developed and nurtured through a complex combination of the residency, the community ecosystem, the prevailing political atmosphere, and the unique histories, cultures, and identities of the artists and participants who navigate these experiences. For example, Emma was able to cultivate her cultural competence regarding her own heritage through her experiences both inside and outside residencies abroad. During her residencies in China, she learned that hair plays a critical role in mediating how others perceive her ethnicity, going on to incorporate this medium into her work. During her residencies in Europe, difficult conversations with other artists in residence caused Emma to confront her nationality as an American, while instances of racism and othering in daily life led her to confront her identity as an Asian-European-American. For Jesse, a queer Filipino artist whose work explores ways of queering or abstracting through sewn paintings and coded visual language, residencies in proximate and contrasting environments presented opportunities to explore his own cultural and racial identity. During his time at I Residency, a residency specifically dedicated to LGBTQ+ artists, Jesse realized that he felt both included as a queer man and excluded as a person of color. Carrying these ideas over to B Residency, which was situated in a largely white community, Jesse became interested in the textile history of his own culture, weaving these specific cultural motifs into his practice. In Jonathan's case, residency experiences helped him to unify what had previously been two

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[15] Indeed, it would be presumptuous to suppose that artists act as cultural "teachers" in a given community, or that the residency itself serves as an educational tool for implementing cultural competence. Rather, learning and teaching in residency contexts is never unidirectional.

distinct ways of making: social practice work involving community-based stitching and crocheting circles and interdisciplinary work that explored Blackness and queerness based on his memories from the Jim Crow-era South. At N Residency, where artists scavenge for materials at a recycling dump, a serendipitous moment that synchronized with Jonathan's feelings of precarity as a Black, queer male in the age of Donald Trump led him to crochet broken ceramic shards together. This new process built upon his social practice rooted in agency and healing to create a new body of sculptures that embodied empowerment and grace. These three examples shed light on how residencies afford opportunities for cultural articulation and exploration, and how these pursuits manifest within artistic practice.

The third and final principle Ladson-Billings (1995) identified is the need for students to "develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (p. 160). This principle translates most easily into the realm of contemporary art, where many artists base their practice in social critique and commentary. In residency contexts, artists are encouraged to weave together the elements they uncover there to create works that are conversant with both their own identities and the community ecosystem, be they celebratory (as in Christina's open studio performance piece) or critical (as in Emma's "Ching Chong" piece). All the artist participants in this study have challenged the "status quo of the current social order" in one way or another. After Richard's once-in-a-lifetime voyage with A Residency, where he became more critically conscious of environmental injustice, he explicitly incorporated environmental themes and content into his artistic practice. Following her residency in China, Emma launched an exhibition that commented on the unique challenges of being female and multi-racial when traveling abroad, even in environments that are supposed to embody ancestral "homes." Sarah's exposure to historians and scientists at the multi-disciplinary residencies she

attended led her to shift from painterly abstraction to a more embodied, research-based practice, and to highlight the often-overlooked contributions of female scholars to scientific fields. Through residencies, Aaron pursued his research into trans history and art, gradually coming to parody the historically exclusionary institutions that now legitimized his practice while reimagining them in the form of his own institution. Jesse's experiences of otherness and belonging within different environments led him to assert both his LGBTQ+ and Filipino identities by queering abstraction through culturally coded textiles. Though Anh's social practice already involved substantial critique of the status quo, her material, printmaking pursuits at C Residency led her to create a body of work based on a target practice sheet, subverting the intention of this object to address gun violence. Similarly, Christina used residencies to augment her socially-engaged performance work, critiquing racial and gender conventions while promoting art access for marginalized communities. Lastly, Jonathan utilized residencies as a platform for his community-based crocheting practice and as a means to give voice to the black and queer experience. His resulting work implicitly asserted that systems designed to marginalize people cannot fundamentally break their spirits, as being broken and being whole are not mutually exclusive.

### *Place-Based Pedagogy via Cultural and Environmental Contexts*

Because residencies exist in a variety of places and spaces, they present opportunities for context-specific learning and exploration. In educational parlance, residencies have the potential to engage in place-based pedagogy, or place-based education, which Gregory Smith and David Sobel (2010) describes as an "approach to teaching and learning that connects learning to the local" (p. i). In this framework, student learning centers around:

> … the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular
> place. The community provides the context for learning, student work focuses on

community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning. (Rural School and Community Trust, 2005)

While this framework can apply to learning experiences in familiar or foreign environments, it is often explored in relation to one's home environment.

In addition to the large number of residency programs that host artists from *different* places, there has been a rise in residency programs that support *local* artists and community members. In fact, all of the artist participants in this study attended at least one residency program in the city where they contemporaneously lived and worked. Richard, Christina, Jesse, and Sarah all participated in different residency programs within the greater New York City area while living in one of the five boroughs. Interestingly, none of them reported place-based learning experiences; though they did encounter new people and environments, they credited the changes in their work mainly to the time and space afforded for deeper focus on their artistic practices. However, Sarah's experience at a local residency supported by a botanical garden did inadvertently lead her to explore nearby natural environments and incorporate them into her work. This instance of place-based learning may be a consequence of her particular practice, which is rooted in the macro- and microcosms of the world around us. Compare this, for example, to Aaron's place-based practice, where he produces work or curates pieces based on historical archives from the specific geographic locations where he exhibits and/or is in residence. However, it may also result from the intrinsically holistic nature of the residency itself.

Arguably, residencies housed within context-aware institutions like gardens, natural science facilities, or historical or ethnographic sites hold great potential for place-based pedagogy, both for artists and visitors. According to Graham (2007), natural history, cultural journalism, and transformative education highlight "the complex relationships among

communities, nature, and culture" (p. 380), thereby providing avenues for place-based pedagogy (see Chapter II, Table 5). Take, for example, Aaron's research within historical archives in different geographic locations, where he unearths evidence of trans experience and uses this to produce/curate pieces that demonstrate the influence of trans culture on mainstream culture in specific settings. Thus, though Graham specifically speaks towards place-based pedagogy within a classroom environment, I would argue that community-based residencies can also present entry points for place-based pedagogy.

Put differently, insofar as residencies move artists to act as observers to broader natural, social, and interpersonal relationships, they may succeed in implementing place-based pedagogy. We see this in the case of Jonathan, whose experience at N Residency exposed him to new materials and ways of making that left a profound impression on his artistic practice. By its very nature as a residency situated within a recycling dump, N Residency focuses on context-aware/place-based topics like environmentalism and sustainability, thereby centering the relationship between man and the natural world and how our waste changes the environment (natural history). Encountering this waste elicits a sense of empathy from artists, who often encounter objects that evoke intimate memories of home and identity (cultural journalism). From this embodied involvement and understanding, artists may develop a sense of responsibility and advocacy, seeking to transform discarded materials into a tangible reflection of their experience (transformative education). For Jonathan, this manifested as a moment of synchronicity wherein his experiences as a queer Black man in a hostile political atmosphere were mirrored in shattered ceramics:

> Shards—alienated, dispossessed, beautiful, raw, broken, rejected, detached, discarded, thrown-out, dangerous, deadly, razor-sharp, jagged, abandoned, eternal, worthless, marginalized, hard, unsympathetic—are stand-ins for my anxiety, anger, fear, bitterness,

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and hopelessness associated with the permanence of racism and White-body supremacy. (2020, a8, i2)

Of course, the potential for place-based learning in local residencies can only be realized given appropriate opportunities, and this potential can be squandered with poor planning. For instance, Anh once attended a pilot residency program at C Residency that was specifically designed for local artists and would run during the "off peak" period of their normal international cycle. However, Anh recalled that many of the local artists were granted fewer privileges than the international residency cohort. For instance, they were not given individual studios, having to collectively share one studio space, and they were often tucked away from public tours until they explicitly communicated their interest in speaking with the public to the residency staff. Furthermore, this pilot program elapsed over a shorter period of time: four weeks rather than 13 weeks. Consequently, the residency failed to support local artists to the extent that they could meaningfully engage with their context and community.

Place-based pedagogy is an untapped approach for many residency programs. Indeed, none of the residency programs listed here explicitly enshrined place-based pedagogy within their mission and program objectives. Deliberate planning and fuller integration of community resources could further enable residencies to reciprocally enrich the experiences of both artists and surrounding communities, helping them to tap into "the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place" (Rural School and Community Trust, 2005).

**Towards the Democratization of Art Practice**

Increasing travel and information accessibility in the age of social media has changed the way that artists discover new opportunities and resources. Indeed, the younger, web-savvy artists in this study (between the ages of 35 and 45) had participated in at least twice the number of artists residencies as their older compatriots. Moreover, online connectivity has changed the way

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that artist residencies develop, as more and more residencies are arising from artist-run initiatives and community-led grassroots organizations. Thus, as evidenced throughout this dissertation, residency programs have become as diverse and unique as the artists they host and support.

Residencies are constructed and conglomerated in a variety of formations; they may exist within larger institutions, as stand-alone organizations, in buildings, boats, or campsites, and even in virtual spaces. They may support a community of local artists or bring together individuals from different continents and disciplines. Finally, they may be medium specific, or emphasize medium experimentation. Regardless, artist residency programs often exist to bolster their artist participants and provide them with time and space for creative exploration. Many have shifted away from isolationism and toward engagement with the surrounding community. Residencies now mediate connections between artists and visitors through various degrees of public engagement, and this presents an opportunity to cultivate reciprocity in learning. As artists are encouraged to share their experiences and material practices with the public through open studios, workshops, artist talks, and exhibitions, visitors are invited to receive, respond, question, and share their own unique experiences with the artist, if they so choose. Hein (1991) argues that learning is, first and foremost, a social activity, and that:

> Learning is contextual: we do not learn isolated facts and theories in some abstract ethereal land of the mind separate from the rest of our lives; we learn in relationship to what else we know, what we believe, our prejudices and our fears. On reflection, it becomes clear that this point is actually a corollary of the idea that learning is active and social. We cannot divorce our learning from our lives. (p. 32)

Given the eclecticism of the artist's learning process, artist residencies may provide an accessible means for artists to expand their knowledge and transform their practice in new and exciting ways. As Jesse pointed out when reflecting on his own developmental trajectory, artist residencies could pose as an alternative to the MFA, whose high-cost tuition limits art-world

access to more affluent individuals. However, this is not to say that residency programs are intrinsically democratic or readily available to all, as there is a level of selectivity in the screening process. One must apply and be invited to attend, and—as Jonathan pointed out—this can itself become a breeding ground for structural inequality. With that said, perhaps one could imagine a residency program without a juried process; what implications would this resource have for the artistic development of emerging artists? This is a question that I'd like to pursue in future research.

In this dissertation, I have argued that residencies act as an incubator, fermenting the artist's practice by enabling democratization, critical consciousness, and holistic learning, which is both unique to the individuals but universal to the human condition. If previous literature advocates for a type of knowledge that reflects the specificity and reality of human experience, I would argue that residencies allow this didactic possibility, connecting artists with larger community contexts and inviting them to explore new spaces and ways of working. Built-in encounters with community visitors stimulate a sense of critical reciprocity, unveiling deeper meanings within the artistic practice and cultivating a sense of identity between the artist and the visitor. Critical reciprocity, in turn, furthers the democratization of art practice by dismantling hierarchical arrangements in the art world. These concepts have the potential to transform and enhance education—and particularly art education—framing the process of art and making as a dynamic co-production of shared meaning. According to Bell Hooks (2017), although the institution is riddled with flaws, it retains the possibility for imagining and creating paradise:

> The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our compadres, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom. (p. 207)

Applying this argument to the residency experience, artists are invited into spaces of

possibility,[16] wherein encounters with change and challenge encourage them to move beyond the

boundaries of their own practice. Within the multi-layered community ecosystem, the

community becomes the teacher to the artist, and the artist reciprocates. This, I argue, constitutes

a new wave of art education that supports the democratization of art practice in the larger field of

community activism. Based on the dissertation data, Table 9 specifies the characteristics that

might define a "democratic model" for residency programs.

**Table 9**

*Democratic Model for Artist Residency Programs*

| Characteristic | Justification |
| --- | --- |
| Time length \| 1–2 months | Allows for resident participants to settle into their new environment, explore, and experiment in their own practice. For those with a social-based practice, they have ample time to foster relationships with both resident artists and external community members. |
| Resident participants \| Minimum 3 participants | A diverse cohort of resident participants allows for the eclectic sharing of ideas, perspectives, positionalities, and best practices. |
| Amenities \| Housing, studio, funding | With housing, a private studio, and ample funding, artists are able to fully commit to their own practice and are thus encouraged to push the boundaries of their work. |
| Community engagement \| Optional | Giving resident artists the agency to choose their own open studio hours, along with the option and support to facilitate public engagement activities, will make community engagement initiatives more functional and transparent, thereby building a sense of trust and respect between the institution and the artist. |

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[16] Writing from the field of anthropology (e.g., Kapferer, 2004) would express this as "ritual" space; "the notion of ritual as virtuality in the twofold sense of an imaginal space and a technical site for entering within the dynamics of reality formation" (p. 49).

**Summary**

This study investigated the ways in which an artist learns, changes, and develops within a community-based artist residency. By identifying the specific factors of the residency that support the artist's education, we can begin to see how different residency sites and placements support different kinds of growth and development. Ultimately, this research confirmed the diversity and plurality of residency programs and their potential to become even more so in the future.

**Chapter VII**

**Conclusions**

The form and emphasis of this dissertation are a result of my own experiences as a young artist and my time spent working as an educator beside a diverse group of artists over the course of thirteen years. Had it not been for a seemingly fleeting encounter with an artist while I was on a grade-school field trip to a residency program in my hometown, I might have pursued a very different vocational and/or thematic path. As it so happens, this passing encounter provoked me to explore how residencies shift the developmental trajectories of practicing artists. Furthermore, my research questions and priorities directly arose from my interest in what I view as the reciprocal relationship between artists and communities within residencies. After I began my educational journey at Teachers College in 2015, I built upon my phenomenological investigation of artist residency experiences by conducting four different studies over the course of five years. As noted in Chapter I, these preliminary studies also informed this dissertation, primarily by causing me to focus my research on the artist, their own development, and how, if at all, artist residencies challenged and/or changed their unique trajectories.

Consequently, this study investigated the ways in which an artist learns, changes, and develops within a community-based artist residency. While the COVID-19 pandemic forced me to change my initial methodology from a multi-case study of different community-based residency sites to a narrative-specific interview-based study, I believe that this narrative approach provided a more neutral atmosphere in which artists were able to authentically reflect on their experiences and offer specific critiques and suggestions for residency programs. By selecting a diverse group of eight mid-to-late-career artists and identifying the specific factors of

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residencies that supported their education, I was able to collect sufficient data to support my exploration of residencies, reciprocity, and growth within a community context.

This dissertation revealed that "community" assumes different forms and exists across different layers of the residency experience. Three different layers were identified: the *community of residents*, the *community of visitors*, and the *community ecosystem beyond the residency*. Each of these layers held contrasting levels of *value* for each of the eight artist participants in this study, depending on their dispositions and the particular characteristics of the residency site. With that said, the majority of artist participants considered the community of resident artists to be particularly influential in their own development and practice. Attending a residency program with a cohort allowed artists to exchange best practices, share information, discuss and explore new materials and ideas, and foster long-lasting relationships. In this sense, the group resembled what Lipman (2003) calls as a *community of inquiry*, wherein cohorts participate in "questioning, reasoning, connecting, deliberating, challenging, and developing problem-solving techniques" (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 91).

The artist participants in this study regarded the in/external layer of the residency ecosystem—or the community of visitors—as the most complicated layer. This aspect involved the intermingling of civilians, residency staff, and resident artists through activities such as open studios, talks, workshops, and exhibitions. Depending on the duration of the residency and the level of transparency exercised by residency staff, the artist participants ultimately conceded that the community of visitors was somewhat beneficial to their overall residency experience. Dialogues and public events with visitors challenged the artist participants to frame their work for different types of people, opening up new avenues and means for creating work within a community context. However, community engagement also raised several ethical questions

amongst the artist participants, especially when it came to working with unfamiliar communities. More often than not, community engagement was most successful when artists attended residencies within their local community. Artists' ability to foster a reciprocal relationship with the surrounding community was closely linked to their own identities and their level of experience with social practice and public engagement. While some participants found working within a community context engaging, others found it somewhat exploitative and objectifying for both sides.

The outermost layer, the community ecosystem beyond the residency, encapsulates not only the natural environment and urban scape beyond the walls of the artist residency, but also the political climate and atmosphere in which participants generate new ideas and create new projects. The eight artist participants in the present study were most able to invigorate their practice when they worked abroad or in a vastly different environment from their everyday studio space. Exposure to different cultures and landscapes influenced their artistic practice, either by stimulating new ideas or provoking research about region-specific materials and mediums. Despite the more-than-human scope of this ecosystem layer, there was a degree of reciprocity in the artist participants' interactions with it. Jonathan and Emma both commented on the value of interacting with individuals who are totally unaffiliated with/unversed in contemporary art or its institutions. For Jonathan, this involved provoking difficult questions about masculinity within a larger culture where people may not be critically reflective of their gender performance. For Emma, this entailed finding intellectual and emotional nourishment in African hair salons outside of her European residency program.

The artist participants identified specific characteristics within each level of the community context that cultivated their sense of artistic growth and development. Though these

selections were rooted in their own unique residency experiences, there was a degree of consistency in the specified ideal attributes of residency programs. One underlying but crucial component was the importance of *time*: relationships between the three layers of community could not organically or authentically evolve without sufficient gestation time in the new environment. Generally speaking, artist participants agreed that one-to-two-month durations were ideal.

- *The community of residents:* All eight artist participants valued the ability to work alongside other practicing artists, so long as artists were provided with a private studio space to maintain focus. They were especially eager to work alongside artists with different cultural backgrounds, histories, positionalities, and medium concentrations. By extension, those artists who were able to attend residencies that branched beyond the arts felt that their practice was further enriched by the relationships they fostered with other kinds of specialists, from scientists to writers. The interest and feedback sustained from these external individuals encouraged the artist participants to move beyond the insular artist community, placing their work within a larger, more interdisciplinary context.

- *The community of visitors*: According to the artist participants, the primary factor of positive community engagement was agency. This was true for both artists and visitors, as both of these parties are potentially at risk for exploitation and objectification at the hands of art institutions. Thus, the artist participants specified that agency should be protected by foregrounding ethical considerations and demanding accountability from residency programs. Richard and Christina even suggested that the residency institution should shoulder more responsibility

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for engaging the local community, rather than relying on artists to perform this work.

- *The community ecosystem beyond the residency:* Virtually all the artist participants agreed that the ideal residency environment for artistic growth was an environment different from, or in contrast to, their everyday life. For artists who live and work in a rural community, this would be a residency in a metropolitan area (and vice versa). Such an environment would expose the artist to a different landscape, culture, and pace of life, and even to new materials, resources, and tools (as was the case for Jonathan when he incorporated Japanese sumi ink into his work). Residencies that provided experiential activities (like field trips) and structured opportunities for immersion were particularly influential, as can be seen from the narratives of Richard and Emma. All the artist participants stressed the importance of cultural exchange and access to resources for research and material exploration.

Each artist participant's residency experiences were highly situational, and this was especially true for challenging experiences.

- *The community of residents:* Although artist participants welcomed the opportunity to work alongside others, not every residency cycle resulted in friendship and professional networking. At times, conversations among cohorts were difficult and frustrating, resulting in prolonged tension. Consider, for example, the experiences reported by Emma and Sarah, wherein cultural disagreements or art world posturing undermined the potential for a community of inquiry. Ultimately, the outcomes of artistic collaboration depended on the

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personalities, temperaments, and skill sets of the artists in any particular cohort, as well as the management practices of the residency staff (as was the case with Anh during her time at C Residency).

- *The community of visitors*: How the artist participants responded to the community of visitors was extremely situational. Artist participants who attended residencies located in close proximity to their home community generally felt more comfortable engaging with the community on a macro level. However, open studio events were often a concern, as they could become distracting or even invasive, undermining the utility of solitary studio practice. Given the artist participants' valuation of private studios, even in the midst of diverse residency cohorts, it would seem that the outcomes of public engagement partially depend on the degree of balance established between group time and individual time.

- *The community ecosystem beyond the residency:* The larger environment beyond the walls of the residency played a more elusive role in the development of the artist participants, though we can remark on the affordances of these environments. Specifically, residencies located in spaces that lacked necessary supplies and resources sometimes hindered the artist participants' creative practice (as was the case for Aaron), though it could also challenge them to improvise with new methods, materials, and ideas (as was the case for Christina). Furthermore, artists who participated in residencies located in predominantly homogenous areas often felt a sense of contrast, confronting their own position as the "other" and, in response, becoming increasingly interested in their sense of self and identity (see, for instance, the narratives of Jesse and Emma). For the

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artist participants in this study, these challenging experiences informed their work

and encouraged them to revise the scope of their practice, though it could also

conceivably undermine artists' confidence and compromise their practice if taken

to the extreme (as was perhaps the case with Jonathan's childhood in the Jim

Crow-era South).

In summary, this dissertation revealed the range and complexity of residency

experiences, which continue to proliferate as residencies expand around the globe. It also

highlighted the extremely rich and unique developmental trajectories of each of the eight artist

participants, as well as their interactions with the multi-layered community ecosystem within and

beyond the residency site. Despite the deeply individual character of each artist participant's

trajectory, the overlaps in their narratives revealed the most salient attributes of residencies for

creative growth. As such, we can begin to outline a potential education model based on the

growth that happens within residencies, wherein art, culture, and place-based pedagogies are

mobilized to stimulate cycles of change, challenge, and relationality. The result is a process of

life-long, materially-inflected learning, which benefits both the artist and the non-artists who

interact with them. From this basis, we can derive a few recommendations and implications for

practice, as well as some recommendations for future research topics that expand upon the

outcomes of this dissertation.

## Implications for Further Research

- Given that more than 1,500 distinct artist residency programs exist internationally,
  practicing artists have considerable scope to select a residency that suits their particular
  interests and needs. However, due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, many residencies
  have halted operations or have implemented social distancing measures for artists while

in residence. How have these new distancing protocols changed the way artists experience their residency? In what ways do artists change and grow under these circumstances?

- Artist residencies are temporary placements, often lasting anywhere from a few days to a few months. This begs the question: how might the results have differed had the artists attended a long-term residency with a minimum of a one-year cycle? Would the salient factors for artistic growth change? Would the residency present different kinds of challenges?

- Many artist residency programs are progressively incorporating community engagement within their public programming. How might this gradual mode of engagement affect the development of practicing artists, and how does this influence differ for social practice vs. non-social practice artists?

- Given that MFA programs across the globe have become increasingly expensive in recent decades, how can artist residencies supplement emerging artists' educational experiences? What could be learned from studying two control groups of emerging artists: those with an MFA and those with a vitae of residency participation? How does their learning differ? How is it similar?

- Given that artist residencies host and support the work of practicing, contemporary artists, how can residency spaces be used by educational institutions to promote broader thought, education, and exploration through the arts? How might the use of residency sites as educational spaces contribute to the learning of K-12 students, of undergraduate students, or of graduate students in non-artistic fields?

- Serendipity and disorienting dilemmas/trigger events are both involved in catalyzing change in residency contexts. Both of these stimuli involve many moving parts and emerge from the relationships between various ecosystem components, but they may be distinguished based on (1) whether they generate consonance or dissonance, and (2) whether they instigate passive or active responses. Further research may help to clarify the distinctions and interrelations between these concepts and their role in residency-mediated creative growth.

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# Appendix A

# Interview Protocol

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Your Name: CARIANNA ARREDONDO** | | |

**Research Question:**
RESEARCH QUESTION:
Given that different forms of artist residencies have existed in the United States since the late 1900s and often function as a means to foster the creative development of participating artists, what kind of reciprocity emerges between a participating artist and their resident community and what impact does this reciprocity have on each artists' development?
SUB QUESTIONS:
1.Which specific factors in a community context become particularly salient in fostering the educational experiences and development of an individual artist? To what extent are these determinants consistent across diverse placements or specific to individual situations and artists' dispositions or a mix of both?
2.Given that there are a number of factors, both situational and personal, that foster the development of community-based artists, how do these factors emerge across diverse community placements and what specific developmental trajectories do they give rise to? For example, what role do community directors, boards, and participants play in challenging or inhibiting artists' development?

**How will you record your interview:**
X  iPhone

**Other data to be collected (check all that is applicable):**

**Number of Participants: 6-8**
**Duration of Interview: 1 hour (per person) Potential Date & Time: TBD**
**Location: ONLINE TBD**
X Semi-structured & open ended

| ARTIST<br>Interview Questions | Theme | Probe |
|---|---|---|
| Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your role as a working artist?<br>• I'd like to leave this question generally open and up to your interpretation. | Background | X The Tell Me More |
| Can you please tell me about your history and relationship with art?<br>• What are some of your earlier memories either making art or being exposed to artworks? | Background | X The Uh-huh Probe |
| When did you first hear about artist residency programs?<br>• What made you interested? | Perspectives on Residencies | X The Echo Probe |
| What is it like working in spaces that are not your normal everyday studio?<br>• How do you feel about the process of traveling to work in new spaces? | Perspectives on working in different environments | X The Uh-huh Probe |
| Can you speak specifically to the community-based residency you recently participated in?<br>• What was the experience like?<br>• What was surprising?<br>• Did anything challenge you?<br>• How do you think these encounters influenced your work? | Experience in current residency | X The Tell Me More |
| Can you talk a little bit about the ways in which the artist residency program you've participated in have changed your work or yourself as an artist?<br>• What factors or experiences do you think contributed to this? | Experience in current residency | X The Silent Probe |

**Interview Protocol**

| Did you typically engage with the communities you have worked with? <br>    • If so, in what ways? <br>    • If not, why is that? | Experience in current residency | X The Silent Probe |
|---|---|---|
| If you think about your development as an artist, from your first residency to your last, how would you describe your own development? <br>    • How have these changes influenced the way you work with communities? | Residency reflections | X The Silent Probe |
| Is there anything you'd like to add before we conclude this interview? | | |
| \*\*\*Probe questions will be introduced to request clarification and additional information, or concrete examples, should these be necessary. \*\*\* | | |
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# Appendix B

# Consent Forms

## INFORMED CONSENT

**Protocol Title**: ARTIST RESIDENCIES AND COMMUNITY, A JOURNEY TOWARDS RECIPROCITY:

The Artist Perspective: Interview Consent

**Principal Investigator**: Carianna Arredondo, EdM, Teachers College
719.238.8385, cdg2140@tc.columbia.edu

### INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called "*ARTIST RESIDENCIES AND COMMUNITY, A JOURNEY TOWARDS CRITICAL RECIPROCITY*." You may qualify to take part in this research study because you have: 1) participated in a residency site located in the greater [REGION] within the last 5 years (2015-2020). 2) participated in more than one artist residency 3) maintained a professional artistic practice for more than 5 years. Approximately 6-8 people will participate in this study and it will take 2 hours of your time to complete.

### WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

This study is being done to better understand and determine the potential factors that influence an artist's creative growth in new, and temporary, studio spaces. Furthermore, this study aims to examine the potential relationship of reciprocal learning that occurs between the artist and visitors to the residency site.

### WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. During the interview you will be asked to discuss your artistic trajectory, residency experiences, and in greater detail, your most recent participation in an artist-in-residence program. This interview will be audio-recorded and last no more than 1 hour. After the audio-recording is written down (transcribed) the audio-recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, will not be able to participate. The interview will take approximately one hour and be conducted online via Zoom (or any other online video/audio platform, such as Skype, Facetime, Google Meet, etc.). You will be given a pseudonym or false name/de-identified code in order to keep your identity confidential.

# Appendix B (cont'd.)

# Consent Forms

Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York NY 10027
212 678 3000

## INFORMED CONSENT

### WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?(Cont'd.)

Following the interview, the principal investigator will contact you via e-mail within the week with follow-up questions along with a request to review the transcribed interview that will be shared via GoogleDocs. If there are any sections of the interview that you would like to revise or omit, you may do so at this time. Transcription review and follow-up questions will take about 1 hour or less.

### WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. However, there are some risks to consider. You might feel embarrassed to discuss problems that you experienced during your participation in artist residencies. **However, you do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you don't want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.** You might feel concerned that things you say might get back to any former residency organization you have participated in. The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

### WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of art education to better understand the role of the artist residency within the context of community education.

### WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

# Appendix B (cont'd.)

# Consent Forms

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New York NY 10027
212 678 3000

## INFORMED CONSENT

### WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when you have completed follow up questions and transcription review. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven't finished.

### PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The investigator will keep all written materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio-recording will be written down and the audio-recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. Regulations require that research data be kept for at least three years.

### HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

The results of this study will be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

### CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING

Audio recording (and/or video recording – specify which one or both) is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in this research study.

☐ I give my consent to be recorded _____
                                                                    Signature

☐ I **do not** consent to be recorded _____
                                                                    Signature

Teachers College, Columbia University
Institutional Review Board
Protocol Number:  20-279
Consent Form Approved Until: No Expiration Date

## Appendix B (cont'd.)

## Consent Forms

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New York NY 10027
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## INFORMED CONSENT

### WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

☐ I consent to allow written and/or audio taped materials viewed at an educational

setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College _____
                                                                Signature


☐ **I do not** consent to allow written and/or audio taped materials viewed outside of

Teachers College Columbia University _____
                                                Signature


### WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

**If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator**, Carianna Arredondo, at 719.238.8385 or at cdg2140@tc.columbia.edu. **You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Judith Burton, jmb62@tc.columbia.edu.**

**If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002.  The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.**

# Consent Forms

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212 678 3000

## INFORMED CONSENT

### PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

☐ I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.

☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty.

☐ The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.

☐ If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.

☐ Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

☐ I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

**My signature means that I agree to participate in this study**

**Print name**: _____ **Date**: _____

**Signature**: _____