

Pearl and Murray Greenberg Award Lectures

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*“...we must
approach each
other as people,
not as ages and
stages.”*

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Figure 1

Murray and Pearl Greenberg.



The Pearl and Murray Greenberg Awards were established through a generous gift from Ken Greenberg and his wife, Clara Gerdes, to the National Art Education Association's Committee on Lifelong Learning. The recipients of these awards' focus on their contributions to the field of art education for post-secondary learners across the lifespan, including creative aging, community-based art education, and/or intergenerational arts learning. The Murray Greenberg Award specifically supports an emerging scholar (zero to four years beyond the completion of their graduate degree program thesis or dissertation) with \$1000. The Pearl Greenberg Award for Teaching and Research recognizes an artist/educator/researcher at the national level who has made distinguished contributions with \$2,500. This article includes excerpts from the 2023 acceptance speeches given during the Committee on Lifelong Learning Awards' Ceremony at the 2023 San Antonio Texas National Art Education Association Convention.

**Pearl and Murray Greenberg Award Recipient
Susan Whiteland**

Thank you award committee for the opportunity to carry on the legacy implied by this award that Pearl Greenberg, and her husband, Murray have made possible through their generous gifts. The award recognizes one who advances art experiences for older adults, research on the benefits of art for the aging, and/or intergenerational arts learning programs. My predecessors for receiving this award, Pam Lawton and Angela La Porte have set the bar high in their commitment to promote quality art education that includes programming for learners of all ages—womb to tomb.

I am reminded of the first time I encountered the word, intergenerational. I was talking with my advisor at North Texas State University early in my master's program. I shared with her my desire to develop a research agenda that was related to children and older adults doing art together. She said, oh you mean a focus on art that is intergenerational. I had witnessed firsthand the close bond that can be established between a child and a great-grandparent. I have a mental picture of my mother at 82 sitting on her bed with my granddaughter. They were making collages from stamps she had received in the mail and coloring pictures together. They displayed their

handiwork on her bedroom door using scotch tape—a definite no-no when I was growing up to tape anything to my painted bedroom door. I carried the desire forward to see trust and understanding built between the generations that I first saw exemplified through the visual art experiences between my mom and her great-granddaughter.

Figure 1

Grandmother and Great-Granddaughter



I wrote my master's thesis in 2009 entitled Examination of Learning Relationships between Intergenerational Students in an After School Art Program. It was a qualitative case study of older active adults and elementary students who were involved in visual art experiences that provided a contextual learning environment that had the potential to foster lifelong learning and address the interpersonal issues of an aging society. I quoted the then president of LifeLong Learning, Angela LaPorte, in my thesis as I wrote that societal changes in the 20th century promoted negative stereotypes, mistrust, and fear of those outside one's age group. Angela said loneliness and a decline in self-esteem was becoming prevalent among older adults, children were less aware of their cultural and historical background, and ageing was becoming a fearful subject. I also quoted from an article that our fellow colleague, Pam Layton wrote talking about her study, Artstories. At the conclusion of Layton's study, she said the teens and seniors who were involved in a collaborative art project obtained a feeling of empowerment because they had connected with someone different from themselves and had created artifacts with personal and social significance.

Figure 2*Jaguars Collaborative Mosaic*

In the case study designed for my thesis, I invited six older adult volunteers to team with nine students ages 6-9 who were part of an after-school extended day program. I facilitated art experiences for the group that involved creating memory books for reflections of our time together as well as the creation of a tile mosaic that would be hung at the elementary school. Later I published an article about the study, Making friends and making art: An intergenerational learning experience (2012) *Journal of Art for Life* 3(1) 4-19. The study suggested that the art experience was instrumental in building positive relationships among the participants.

Figure 3*Collaborative Drawing*

I graduated with my doctoral degree from University of North Texas in December of 2012. My dissertation examined visual art experiences for shared site locations. I became acquainted with the idea of a shared site where a preschool or childcare center was integrated with an assisted living facility under the same roof after spending a six-week residency at St. Vincent's on the Mount in Seattle, Washington. It was there that I facilitated art lessons for the older residents and children separately as well as intergenerational group art lessons. One of our projects was a story quilt that was later hung in the childcare center. That practice based research where I saw art as the catalyst for fostering a sense of community and acceptance among generations influenced my dissertation and my future trajectory in art education.

I have been teaching future art educators for the last 11 years at Arkansas State University. In my students' coursework I strive to provide opportunities for service-learning experiences so that they may be able to apply the art skills, and pedagogical approaches they are learning in school to real world situations seeing that art is a lifelong learning endeavor that spans beyond the K-12 classroom. Among these experiences I try to include opportunities to work with various ages in a variety of contexts. Some of the places we have been include assisted living facilities, nursing homes, therapeutic day care centers, senior centers, after school programs, elementary classes, and rehabilitation centers. We have used traditional media and processes such as printmaking, drawing, painting, fiber arts, and clay work as well as digital media, puppetry, STEAM and Maker Space tools.

Figure 4

Student and Healthy Ageders construct Mugs



Figure 5*Claymation Preparation*

The first picture in this series is of one of my students in a special topics class I am offering this semester. It has a service-learning component that involves working with a group of older adults that are enrolled in a Healthy Agers program. My student is showing two older adults how to hand build a clay mug. The goal of this class is to explore if using clay has therapeutic potential for reducing stress. The second picture was taken in an after-school program where volunteering older adults were involved in co-learning with elementary students on how to create a stop frame clay animation or Claymation movie.

Figure 6*Students and a Nursing Home Resident printmaking*

The third image is of university students at a nursing home teaching a print-making lesson. The fourth image is of a student helping an older adult in an adult day-care memory unit.

Figure 7

Preparing the Surface for Making a Print



These photos attest to how older and younger generations can connect through art making. I enjoy being a contributor to the process. As I continue to guide future art educators in their quest for becoming licensed professionals, I will look for opportunities to pursue intergenerational art experiences. Receiving this Greenberg Award from the Lifelong Learning in Art Education Interest Group conveys to me that we share a mutual desire to further our research and our practice in art education for all ages and stages of life; thereby, paving the way for cultivating a more compassionate society that values the contributions that we each can make.

**Pearl and Murray Greenberg Award for Emerging Scholar Award Recipient
Eli Burke**

Like many others, I was raised in an environment that was not created for queer, trans, or creative people like me to thrive. As a young person with little support around how to navigate my future, I knew it would be a challenge for me to survive, let alone thrive in a fast-paced environment focused on financial success. I especially had a very difficult time adapting within the classroom where my undiagnosed ADHD had me frequently sitting alone on the floor in the back of the classroom and my tomboyish ways left me feeling isolated, ashamed, and lonely. Spending the bulk of my education (and childhood) preoccupied with how to manage each day in

a body that did not fit in the spaces I occupied made it difficult to prioritize my education, and I floundered until graduation, which included several trips to the psychiatric hospital in my junior year of high school, skipping prom, and no college admission I could proudly display on the wall along with my peers. How would I make it through college when I could barely manage high school?

After years of working and struggling financially I did pursue my education, earning an associate degree at the age of 27 from Pima Community College, where I found the confidence and support, I needed to pursue a degree in the arts. I transferred to the Art Institute of Chicago where I earned my BFA and continued to receive my MFA. Much of my undergraduate work was an exploration of my experiences, which were often centered around trauma. When I entered the Art and Visual Culture Education PhD program at the University of Arizona I took an Arts-based Research course. I was set on not addressing LGBTQ+ identities in my research. I felt like I needed to prove myself within the field without leaning on my identity. It was there that I decided to revisit my path as an artist and write about work I had made at the beginning of my education as an artist, and it was there I discovered I could not separate who I was from how I engaged with the world. The following is what emerged from this research.

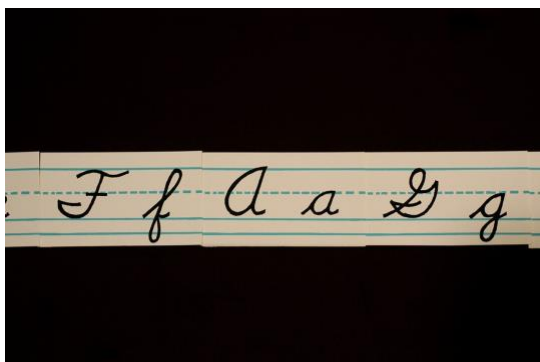
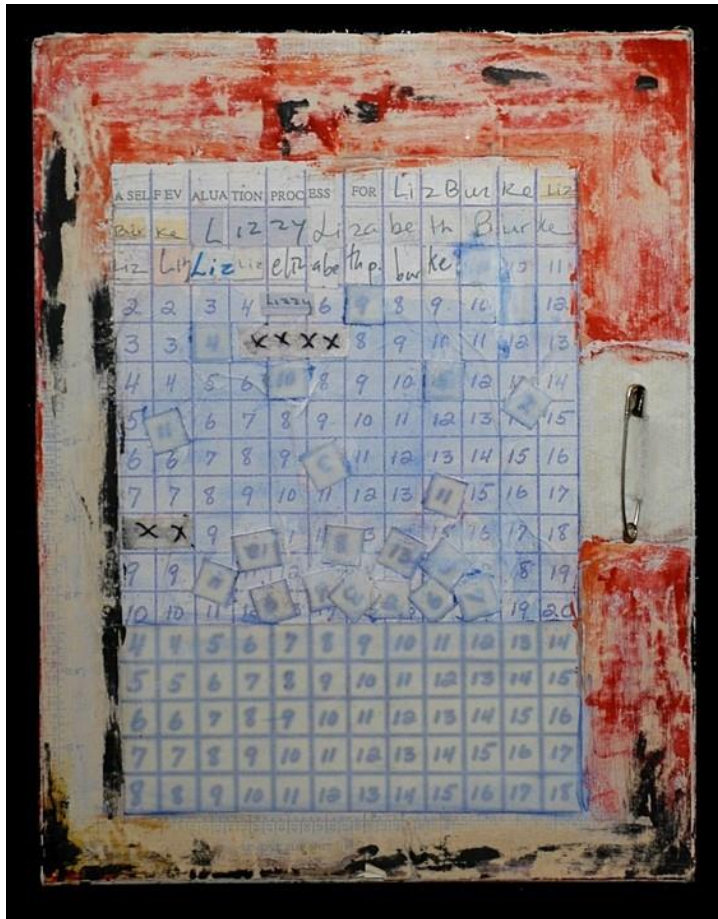
Figure 1

Begins



Figure 1 *Begins* is a reflection on my time spent in psychiatric institutions during high school, where I dealt with extreme anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. It also became a symbolic representation of my realization that art is not simply an act of making, but a way of looking at the world. This was the beginning.

Figure 2
Self-evaluation



In revisiting *Self-evaluation* (Figure 2) I recognized the reflection of self through the eyes of those I loved. The handwritten collaged elements were taken from letters I received while in treatment. The piece was made prior to my transition, and I began to see my own history through a new lens.

As I moved deeper into the foundations of how I perceived myself and my body among others I began to examine the spaces I occupied as a child, which were largely educational spaces. Harm is often done in unmediated spaces at school and was often echoed by teachers and administration. It was simply a system not created for the body I occupied, the person I was within that body, or who I would become. I followed the thread through my artwork to finally recognize that nature is the only place where I don't feel judged. But aren't we all a part of nature (Figure 3)?

Figure 3

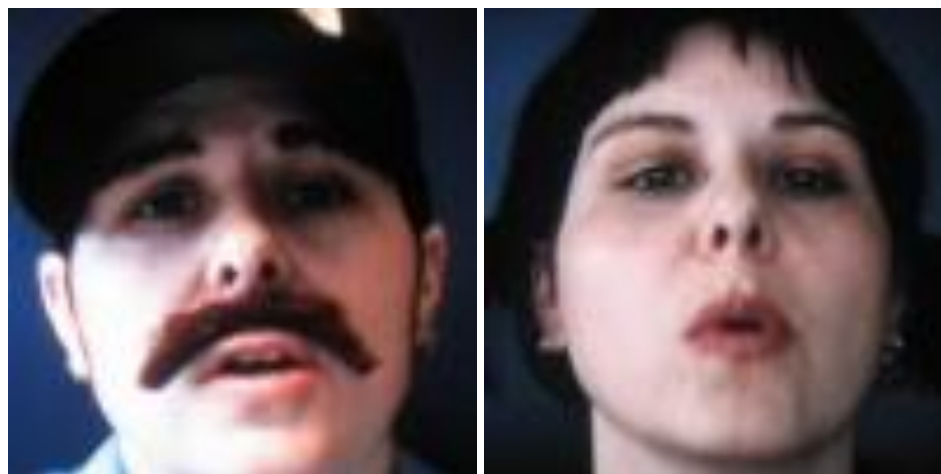
Paradox Part I: To the Waters and the Wild, 2007, installation



This brought me to recognize the body as the site for all learning, interpretation, and cultural production. I entered the program determined to succeed without leaning on my identity, however through this ABR project I realized that this was impossible. I revisited prior work that centered the body and began to see how I could never really separate myself from my body or my identity and that I had been stuck living within a binary worldview (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Anyone but You, 2006, video stills



I analyzed how I felt in my own body as I began transitioning in 2014 (Figure 5). Art became a tool to express what was hard to say in words and helped me sift through the complicated and painful feelings of shame. I began to examine my relationships to other bodies. How did I respond and react? Why?

Figure 5
Dress Pattern, 2014, video Stills

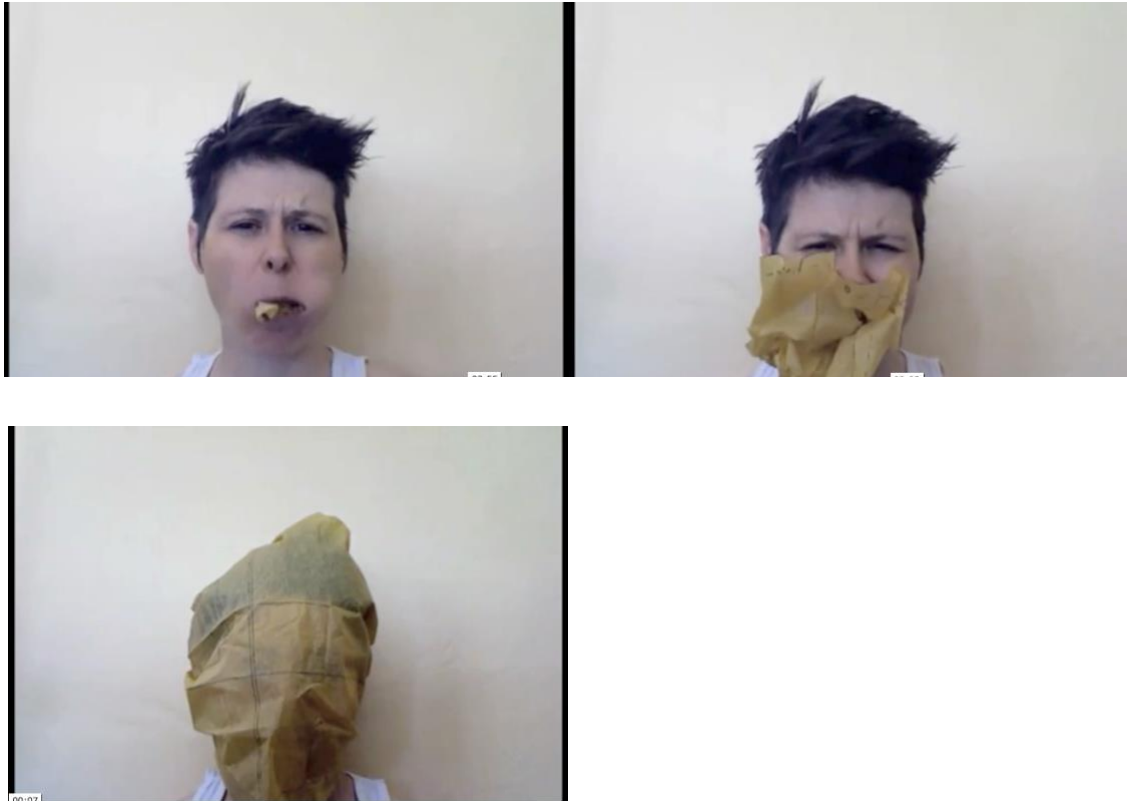


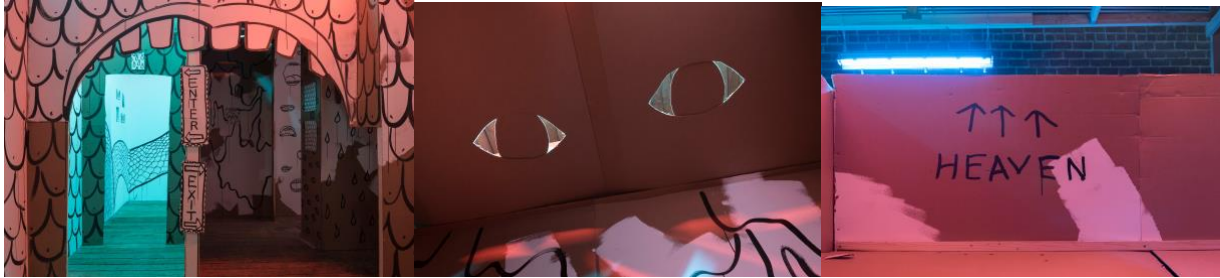
Figure 6



I made representations of my body as both a shelter and a visible object (Figure 6). I began creating spaces for others to experience, both a reflection of my own body and an invitation to others to walk through the experience of transition.

Figure 7

The river, 2017, Mixed media installation

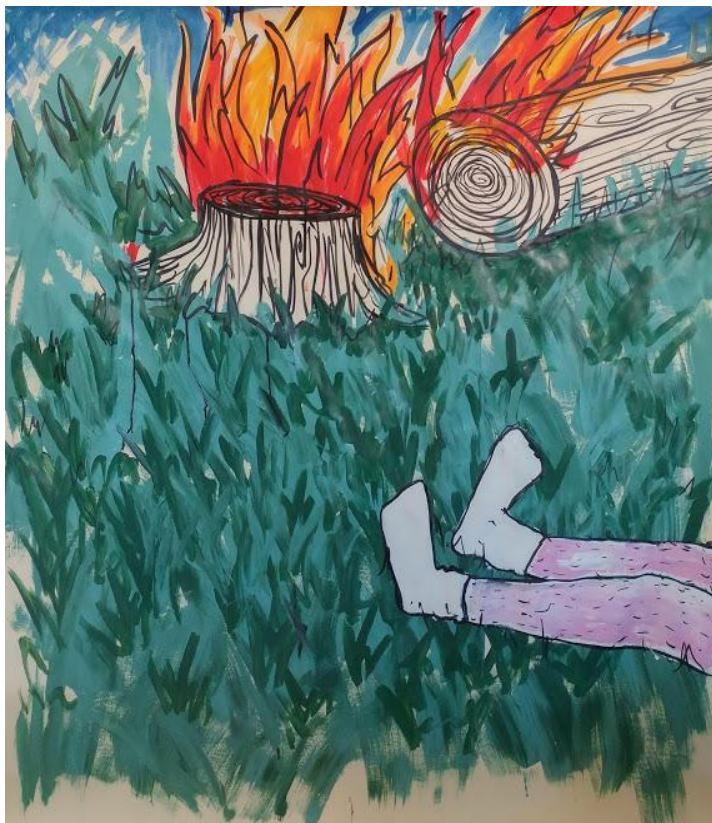


And finally, an acceptance of the body and an acknowledgement of its deep interdependence with nature (Figure 7).

I began to abstract the body, exploring ambiguity and attempting to reconcile who I am within a world not created for bodies like mine (Figure 8).

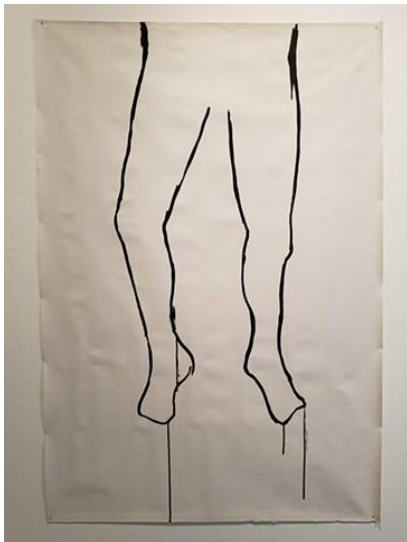
Figure 8

End of Summer, 2018, Acrylic and ink on manila pattern paper, 4' x 5'



I asked myself: What does it mean to be in a space, in a body with other bodies? I realized through the process of responding to my own work across time that empathy and vulnerability are central to this work. It allowed me to acknowledge and address my own discomfort as an educator and with my own body in public spaces. I needed it to bridge the gap between that discomfort and students. It highlighted the need for me connect with myself and my community on a deeper, more holistic level. This process was necessary to understand the role my body played in the classroom, allowing me to be a “better” educator. The work in ABR would open the door for what was to come.

Figure 9



That same year I was in a course taught by Dr. Carissa DiCindio. What came out of that class was the creation of Stay Gold, an intergenerational LGBTQ+ arts program, which would likely not been created had I continued my misguided path to prove myself rather than authentically engage with the world through who I was. The name Stay Gold comes from the Robert Frost poem, Nothing Gold Can Stay and the book and subsequent film, *The Outsiders*.

The program was inspired by previous work I had done with youth and elder LGBTQIA+ communities. One of these programs was Mapping Q, a youth program developed by Chelsea Farrar that invites queer youth into the University of Arizona Museum of Art (UAMA) to interrogate institutional spaces and map the ways queerness shows up. This iteration of Mapping Q became a collaboration with Tucson Museum of Art, University of Arizona Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson, where I was the Education Director. We used video and the concept of fragments to create portraits of queer life/spaces.

In addition to my experience working with queer youth in Mapping Q I also facilitated studio session with The Latona Project, an elder arts program that was created by Becky Black and David Romero. “The Latona Project is a student-initiated collaborative community outreach project developed to examine the issues of changing LGBTQI senior identity within art

museums” (Black, 2016 page #?). Through my experiences with these two programs, I became acutely aware of the need for a program that invites LGBTQIA+ communities to come together across generations. In addition, I was able to recognize that we embody many different versions of ourselves, often simultaneously and contradictory. Words like queer can act as a symbol of freedom or a symbol of oppression. Many LGBTQIA+ people had to imagine futures before they could even name the difference they embody. The invisibility of queerness as children, both around and within us, causes us to imagine in isolation and often within the framework of what already exists. I turned toward the term “queer imaginary” to define this space, a term deeply inspired by Afrofuturism.

Stay Gold was created to bring queer bodies together across generations to explore who and how we are through acts of making/creating and dialogue. It is social and educational. Participants facilitate sessions, create space agreements, and act as experts of their own experience within the museum, rather than the museum dictating what community goals and needs are. The program is now in its seventh year at MOCA Tucson. Art has the power to foster empathy between bodies.

Questions that emerged from this process:

- What do bodies say?
- What do bodies teach those who both occupy them and those who encounter other bodies?
- What is heard or learned by institutions?
- How do individuals/groups/institutions respond/react to bodies?
- How does this affect how and what we learn?

These questions led me to question how we might create a new model of art education that encompasses all cultural production and connects the body and the environment to what and how we learn. Through my current role at the University of Arizona where I teach life-centered design, I recognized the power this creative problem-solving methodology could offer art education. After all, isn't artmaking a problem we create for ourselves? Life-centered design is interdisciplinary, used to solve problems or challenges, uses empathy as the foundation, encourages us to slow down and look at a problem from all angles before jumping to possible solutions. My goal is to create a space that acknowledges the unique knowledge system and histories our bodies hold. The disconnection across generations within the queer community is due to a lack of spaces (church, family, etc.) where we can connect. I ask:

- Can we center the body in art education as both a pedagogy and the foundation from which we scaffold what is taught, learned, and how?
- Can we create a space where cultural production is central to inquiry and the body is the site of and from which all inquiry emerges and is explored?
- Can we ground our work in healing?
- Can we search for knowledge at the intersections, where new knowledge is born?
- Can we connect and learn across generations to mitigate the inadvertent exchange of trauma that often silently occurs?
- Can we locate lost histories in service to the future?

How might art education offer a more holistic approach to education? How might we use our uniqueness and embodied knowledge as tools to both teach and learn from and with one another? I recognized that bodies are politicized, and therefore so is art. How might we undo this through our shared experiences, healing, and acknowledgement that all experiences and bodies carry unique knowledge and deserve to exist, learn, and thrive?