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Using The Old To Speak To The New: An Appropriative Studio Approach

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USING THE OLD TO SPEAK TO THE NEW: AN APPROPRIATIVE STUDIO APPROACH

by

DAVID BATTERMAN

Under the Direction of Dr. Kevin Hsieh

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an A/R/Tographically-based investigation of my appropriative studio approach, resulting in a series of multi-media collage work entitled "Tonight's Programming," dealing with issues of militarism and commercialism in our everyday lives. Through research regarding appropriation in art history, examination of personal artistic influences, and regarding the work through the lenses of Artist, Researcher, and Teacher, I gained a deeper insight into not only my appropriative practices, but how these practices could be applied in the high school art classroom.

INDEX WORDS: Appropriation, Multi-media, Militarism, Commercialism, A/R/Tography

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my lovely, patient, and understanding wife, whose encouragement and

faith in me has led to an amazing journey I never dreamed I would ever undertake.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Examining My Early Influences: Two Anecdotes

In order to establish a base understanding of where my artistic influences come from, I felt that a couple of anecdotes concerning crucial developmental points in my early life are in order. First I have described how my childhood experiences with my father in military settings began my interest in the aesthetics of militarism, and then I have narrated the influence of punk rock style as a visual vocabulary in my formative teenage years.

As a child, once a month on Sunday afternoons my father would take me to the Air National Guard unit that he commanded, the 202 Engineering Installation Squadron. It was located by the Macon, Georgia airport in a squat, mid-century, typically institutional brick building behind a barbed-wire fence, but out front there was a gleaming F-86D Sabre fighter, one of one 20 surviving examples in America. Its silver, graceful lines were mesmerizing to me, a gleaming streak that seemed to be going immensely fast even as it sat motionless atop its pedestal. As it was Sunday, usually we were the only people there, so Dad would let us into the building, and set me up at a drafting table with some pencils and paper so I could draw. I remember each table had a brutish and heavy electric eraser tethered to it, and I would spend a good amount of time drawing random things only to have an excuse to use the eraser, which seemed a hugely overcompensated device for something as delicate as pencil lines.

So as my father worked in his office, I would draw and erase and draw and erase, and think about the Sabre out front, and then draw some more and run the drawings over to my dad to show them off, before I went back to the drafting table and erased them again. Eventually I would tire of this and wander around the wide, polished asbestos-tiled hallways, looking endlessly at the patterns, imaging them as streaks from the tires of landing planes, or exhaust

from ships all hurling in a million directions. The interior walls were typically seventies wood-paneling, and along these long corridors were framed prints of paintings showing air combat situations from throughout the years, from WWI all the way up to what was then the relatively new F-16. Each of these prints had a small caption, some even had descriptive paragraphs of the particular combat situations that were being shown. There must have been fifty or so of these, and I would dutifully walk to each one, studying and imagining, enveloped by the narrative and brash, dynamic heroics shown in each. Once I finished looking at all of them, often I would just start over again, coming up with new narratives for each one. Then I would go back to the drafting table and make more drawings inspired by these passing stories in my head.

The reason I shared this story is because it is one of my first memories of a creative process when it comes to my life as an artist. In my current creative process, I often find inspiration in the mundane, industrial veneer of outdated buildings, the stenciled fonts of military hardware, and the dull greasy smell of old metal. The imagery that I deal with reflects these sensory inspirations, utilizing an aesthetic rooted in the past, in obsolete forms of technology, machinery and commercialism. It might seem unremarkable that the son of a career Air Force officer would be fascinated by planes, but the memory is what I think is crucial to understanding some of the aesthetic forces that I utilize in my current practice, and especially in the course of my proposed body of work that brings up themes of militarism in our society. The importance of this anecdote is the fact that many of my memories of early creative inspirations, and the environment and tools that I utilized to bring them forth, were all within the physical environment of a military installation. Certainly, I drew and sketched a lot at home as well, but this institutional, militarized seed is something that I find in the center of my current work as an

adult, and the conflicted and complex relationship I have to it is a central personal question that

informs the process by which I develop my visual and aural reactions to its legacy.

The second anecdote that informed this creative process comes from when I was around

13 years old and a newly christened skateboarder. I began to hang around with a crowd of older

neighborhood kids who were also into skating, and diving into the normal social interchange of

music, clothing and ideas that comes so often with these associations. This was when I first

started to hear about punk rock, and reading skate magazines like Thrasher that incorporated a

visual style that I had never seen before, which I now know as appropriative art. These Do It

Yourself (DIY) pieces had a huge impact on me visually and intellectually: it was the first time

that I began to realize that all is not what it seems: that the things I had learned about society and

the way the world worked were not a straight, linear line, but had many divergent points of view.

I saw the work of Winston Smith, who I will later discuss, on album covers, saw reproductions

Figure 1.1, Various DIY Collage Flyers. Adapted from classic punk flyers, in

dcscorpiongirl.com, Retrieved on June 6, 2014 from

https://dcscorpiongirl.wordpress.com/2011/08/01/classic-show-flyers/

of flyers for bands consisting of dense, anarchic collage of appropriated images (Figure 1.1), and began to learn about Zine culture, where people were publishing their own homemade, Xeroxed magazines. I was amazed that these people, most of whom were not the traditional stereotype of an artist, were able to utilize these readily-available technologies to take a variety of images and make new compositions, with direct messages about the various socio-political issues of the day. For the most part, they addressed political injustice, rampant commercialism, and militarism in all its forms.

An Appropriative Studio Approach

One of the first major artists to enumerate appropriation as a studio approach in a formal way was Pablo Picasso, who, according to Burgard (1991) "perceived appropriation as a magical transference of power that could be applied to both historical and contemporary art and to objects and people" (p. 479). This notion, combined with the idea that appropriative collage as a medium can "forcefully intervene in the beholder's consciousness" (Kreibel, 2009, p. 61), led me to be intrigued by the notion of developing a body of work that was appropriative in nature, as opposed to my normal photographic output. I wanted to see if I could accomplish, by utilizing the kinds of militaristic and retro commercial images that I am drawn to, the kind of transformative final product that "adds something new…altering the original with new expression, meaning or message" (McEneaney, 2013, p. 1531). These kind of aesthetic sensibility, and the urge to use appropriation of the visual language of the predominating cultural institutions to critique those very institutions themselves, is central to my body of work, which I have titled *Tonight's Programming*. I used the imagery of commercial advertising, as well as video and audio elements from military and other governmental sources, to discuss the

commercialization of militarism and its effects on our current socio-political reality. To wit, I used this series to address the following question:

> Through an A/R/Tographic, appropriative, studio-based approach to discussing issues of commercialism and militarism, what can my own artistic practice teach me, and how can I apply those lessons and my research into my own teaching strategy?

The A/R/Tographic aspect of this research, meaning to look at a research problem through the lenses of artist, researcher, and teacher (Irwin & DeCosson, 2004), gave me the overarching framework for investigation. As an artist, I reflected on the influence, meaning and development of my work; as researcher, I investigated the historical precedents for appropriative art and how they addressed political realities of their time; as teacher, I considered the applications and implications for my own teaching practice and the world of art education at large. The studio-based approach in my research involved me undertaking a qualitative consideration of my body of work that bring to light the undercurrents of my own influences (Marshall, 2010). This combination of A/R/Tographic framework and studio-based inquiry gave me the ability to not only develop and carefully study a large body of artistic work, but to put those considerations into a format for concise explanation in clear categories. In the interest of a concise and clear base from which to continue, I have defined several key terms that were used throughout this thesis.

Definition of Key Terms

      Appropriation: (in art) the use of pre-existing imagery or objects in new compositions

Militarism: the belief or desire of a government or people that a country should maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively to defend or promote national interests

Commercialism: the attitude or actions of people who are influenced too strongly by the desire to earn money or buy goods rather than by other values

Socio-political: of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and political factors

With these considerations and terms in mind, I embarked next on the first lens of my investigation, to research the history of appropriation as a force in art to discuss current realities. I used three different general categories within this research: a general overview of appropriation as a force in art, appropriation in the ancient world, and appropriation by specific artists addressing their current political realities.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A General Overview: Appropriation As A Force In Art

Appropriation as a concept in art is at the very base of how the artistic process developed, and continues to be applied in our modern practices. As McLean (2012) asserts,

"That "appropriate" is one iteration of a panoply of terms associated

with art—copy, duplicate, emulate, homage, imitate, influence,

mimesis, mimic, mirror, plagiarize, quote, reflect, repeat,

replicate, represent, reproduce, simulate—attests to the

subtleties, complexities, longevity, and ubiquity of the idea of

repetition and imitation in thinking about what art is" (p. 179)

This concept can be seen in a myriad of ways when it comes to applying the notion of appropriation to art. As defined in a direct reproductive sense, appropriation has been a tool since the beginning of artistic expression, as a methodology and for transmitting knowledge through agreed upon symbols and stylistic traditions. This tradition is seen in the Indigenous art of Australia, the "longest continuous tradition of art making, (where) replication or appropriation of ancestral designs is a founding aesthetic principle" (McLean, 2012, p. 179). This is the simplest idea of appropriation, where it goes beyond mere artistic representation, and enters the world of cultural language. For societies where the written word was slow to develop, this kind of appropriative art use might well be the only language they had for communication and positing of themes, ideas, and cultural norms. While the individual hand has its mark, the overarching concept is the exact reproduction of time honored forms, and not necessarily a new expression or transformation of the accepted images into new ones. This must be learned through direct observation or individual instruction in the particular canon. The idea of reproduction as a learning method is central to much of our Western artistic canon as well, as Irvin (2005) notes

that, "borrowing from the work of other artists has been a time-honored practice throughout much of art history: painters, for instance, have often repainted the works of others in order to explore the application of their own style to a familiar composition and subject matter" (p. 124). The concept of the various Academies, individual tutorship or apprenticeship, or even the modern conception of studio assistants can all be drawn within this ideal.

However, the particular aspect of appropriation which informs my work has more to do with its use as a transformative vehicle, where imagery that has come before is reworked, remodeled, or used to translate a specific narrative or ideal in a current context. This is only a natural course of human artistic thinking: the catalog of artistic image is exponential: each generation has a fuller canon to draw from as time moves on, just by the sheer force of human creation, and this canon comes with a wide array of inferences and meaning. If appropriation in this manner can be defined as, "a form of translation, a way of exchanging knowledge or of brokering difference" (McLean, 2012, p. 180), then there must be a base of visual knowledge to draw from for the meaning or difference to be inferred.

These pre-existing definitions do not limit the original imagery to their original intent, indeed the "appropriation of images or objects has served to communicate messages about contemporary society and the nature of art itself" (McEneaney, 2014, p. 1526). This gets at the dual nature of this particular application of appropriative art: it uses the visual language of the past to say something about the present, simultaneously containing the archive of the old while speaking to the new. Through proxy the artist reinvents history or gives it new faces, like a painting that has been reworked, or in the modern sense, an image digitally manipulated. The identification with the past sets a stage upon which the appropriative artist can present their

version of the present and future, while simultaneously giving their new vision a sense of legitimacy or validity that the older, accepted past confers.

Figure 2.1, Arch of Constantine, detail, Adapted from "Instances of Appropriation in Late Roman and Early Christian Art", by D. Kinney, 2012, *Essays In Medieval Studies*, *28*(1), p.6.

Figure 2.2, Statuette of Good Shepherd, Adapted from "Instances of Appropriation in Late Roman and Early Christian Art", by D. Kinney, 2012, *Essays In Medieval Studies*, *28*(1), p.10.

Appropriation in the Ancient World

      The history of this notion can be seen in the ancient world through two examples: the appropriation of sculptural and architectural elements in Constantine's Rome, and early Christian

symbolic work. The first such example can be seen in the *Arch of Constantine* (Figure 2.1). The Arch was erected during Constantine's rule, and heavily utilizes the format of spolia, a term denoting "in secondary use" (Kinney, 2004, p. 5). This is the utilization of old monumental building materials or sculptural elements in the decoration and construction of new forms. While there is some practical recycling of marble stock involved in this work, the exemplary appropriative aspect concerns the re-sculpting of the faces from the original source material. The original emperors depicted in the decorative elements, like Hadrian, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius have had their heads and faces re-carved to depict Constantine instead. Here we see the transformative example personified: by taking older narratives, material and imagery and reformatting them, the artisans imbue the work with the legitimacy of history, but remake it to comment on their current time. By doing this, "it was intended to present Constantine bringing back the golden age of Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius" (Kinney, 2004, p. 6).

Another example of appropriation in the ancient world was the use of the *Good Shepherd* (Figure 2.2) imagery by early Christianity. As Kinney (2004) notes, "(this) formula was not only pre-Christian but pre-classical, seen already in Cretan *kriophoros* (ram-carrying) statuettes of the seventh century BCE 46" (p. 10). Again here we see a group using already-established imagery to put for their own ideals and new meaning: while the image was not necessarily physically transformed, but underwent more of a "semantic expansion" (Kinney, 2004, p. 7), the same idea of using the old to speak to the new applies. It could even be suggested that these sculptures represent a sort of readymade, an existing object repurposed by intent and cultural context (Kinney, 2004). Both these examples serve to show that appropriating old imagery to recast it in new light with new meanings, whether physically or narratively, is not only a long-standing tradition in the arts, but also has lasting effectiveness: Constantine is and was nobly regarded in

Roman history, and most modern Western viewers of a good shepherd motif would recognize its Christian overtones.

Artists Who Utilized The Method Of Appropriation To Speak To New Political Realities

As my work used appropriation to deal with current socio-political realities in our era, I examined four different artists well known for their use of appropriation to speak to the political realities of their time, using imagery rooted in the past: Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), Cindy Sherman (1954-), Barbara Kruger (1945-), and Winston Smith (1952-).

An Early Western Example: Jacques Louis David

Jacques-Louis David's neo-classicist works are probably some of the most well-known and obvious examples of appropriation in the Western art-historical canon. His use of classical figures, narratives and scenes to comment on the current events of his day, specifically the French Revolution and the ideology of the Enlightenment, is a valuable tool to examine the roots of appropriation in Western art history, because they strove to represent these ideals through

Figure 2.3, The Oath of the Horatii, Adapted from *"The Oath of the Horatii",* by O. Lerouge, Retrieved June 13, 2014, from http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/oath-horatii, Copyright 2009 by Musee de Louvre by Erich Lessing

appropriating the imagery of the ancient world. In his most famous work, the *Oath of the Horatii* (Figure 2.3) David chose a scene from the histories of Livy, in which the warring states of Rome and Alba chose three champions from each side to represent each other in deciding the end of the conflict. The three champions from Rome, the Horatii, are seen swearing an oath of victory, while their father holds aloft their swords. This was one of the first real masterpieces of the neoclassical form, and was originally commissioned by King Louis XVI to bolster the idea of fealty towards the crown and state. While there remains lively debate about the true nature of David's original intent (Carrier, 2003; Kemp, 1994), the use of Roman history to frame this work is an obvious appropriation of ancient imagery for new political ends. As Carrier (2003) quotes Schamer (1989) it would be foolish "not to notice that all the required ingredients for revolutionary rhetoric were spectacularly announced in this painting: patriotism, fraternity and martyrdom" (p. 741). The Horatii are cast as resolute and unwavering in their purpose, and their father holds aloft the swords with almost religious reverence, echoing the sacred act of their oath. This allegory for noble, binding allegiance might have originally been intended by the King to inspire personal loyalty to the crown, but considering David's admitted allegiance to Enlightenment ideals, and the concepts within Rousseau's social contract, it can easily be seen as symbolic of a unifying action towards the general will which figures so prominently in Rousseau's writings (Boime, 1987). The Neo-Classicist and Republican movements in France were also well-known to take their inspiration from Roman ideals, as Wilson (1998) notes: "republican Rome seemed to offer the most inspirational model--an ideal society (created, it should be noted, by overthrowing a hated ruler) and one that cherished civic virtue, physical courage, frugality and hard work" (p. 81). Through appropriating the imagery of the Roman world, David speaks to the new ideals beginning to form in the national politics of France; by

"depicting Romans…David is showing the French as they saw themselves" (Carrier, 2003, p.

Figure 2.4, The Intervention of the Sabine Women, Adapted from *"The Intervention of the Sabine Women",* by O. Lerouge, Retrieved June 13, 2014, from http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/intervention-sabine-women, Copyright 2010 by Musee de Louvre by Angele Dequier

740). David's use of ancient imagery to comment on his contemporary political realities is again shown in his work, *The Intervention of the Sabine Women* (Figure 2.4). Completed in 1799, it was begun in 1795 while David was imprisoned for his support for Robespierre during the Reign of Terror, and was partly inspired by love for his wife. What is most telling about this work is that while David is still using figures and narratives from history to illustrate a contemporary political reality, it is a much different reality than the one he previously addressed in *The Oath of the Horatii*. In *The Intervention of the Sabine Women*, instead of a composition utilizing virile Roman men as paragons of virtue while the women look on submissive and helpless, as in *Oath*, the women in *Sabines* are the heroes, intervening for peace and an end to the bloodshed between Romulus and Tatius. In the *Oath* the protagonists stand on the eve of battle, swearing to engage their enemies for the glory of their state, in *Sabines* the men are already engaged in battle, and the noble women are the ones pleading for sanity. These changes reflect the metamorphosis in

the political climate of France between the two paintings: while *Oath* was painted just before the Revolution, *Sabines* was seen as a plea for reconciliation and peace after the decade-long bloodbath that followed (McMullen, 2014). The fact that similar appropriation of classical imagery can serve two very different purposes is crucial here to a greater understanding of the malleability of original sources in art that appropriates, and to the contemporary context in which the work is created and shown.

David's work still resonates with contemporary art historians and critique, as Carrier (2003) notes, he "is the politically radical figure that many recent American critics desire – a painter who offers serious commentary on contemporary public events" (p. 748). He was able to offer these commentaries in his time by utilizing the images from a time long before his, and transform them into new interpretations that spoke to his particular age, and this is exactly what I intend to do through *Tonight's Programming*: utilize the images of the old to comment on the politics of the contemporary.

Feminism and Commercialism: Cindy Sherman And Barbara Kruger

Next I will examine the work of two more recent artists whose work uses imagery appropriated from media and other commercial sources to speak about socio-political trends of the day: Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger. The primary selections of Cindy Sherman's work that is most relevant to this examination are her *Untitled Film Stills*, done between 1977-1980. These 70 black and white photographs show Sherman in a number of settings, often utilizing costuming and composition that references female stereotypes from the 1950's and 60's. In *Untitled Film Still #10* (Figure 2.5) we see a woman kneeling on the floor of a kitchen, her outfit

Figure 2.5, Untitled Film Still #10, Adapted from *"Cindy Sherman",*n.a,, Retrieved July 10,

2014, http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=56555, Copyright 2014 by

Cindy Sherman

and makeup connoting a sixties time period. It is inferred that her groceries have dropped, and

she is looking off camera. As Herd (2012) notes, "The woman in the image is not only

sexualized but also domesticated (in the kitchen) and made helpless (she's clumsily dropped her

shopping bag)" (p. 26). Despite this apparent powerlessness, her expression seems on the edge of

Figure 2.6, Untitled Film Still #21, Adapted from *"Cindy Sherman",*n.a,, Retrieved July 10,

2014, http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=56618, Copyright 2014 by

Cindy Sherman

anger, somewhat subverting the overall narrative. This use of an enigmatic expression can be seen again in *Untitled Film Still #21* (Figure 2.6), where Sherman adopts a 1950's secretarial style of dress, but with a look of trepidation. Her expression in both of these works form an interesting duality: while the characters she portrays are wrapped in the trappings of traditional settings and dress, they also seem to exude an air of nascent empowerment as well. Sherman says of the series, "The work is what it is and hopefully it's seen as feminist work, or feminist-advised work" (Saner, 2011, para. 4), and indeed, usurping these images of old-fashioned female stereotypes speaks to the duality of successes and setbacks during the time this series was made. While the Second Wave of Feminism had made great strides in the late sixties and early seventies, at the dawn of the 1980's the ERA amendment had failed to be ratified, and was removed from the Republican platform with the ascension of Ronald Reagan. The Moral Majority, and the beginnings of the Christian Right's campaign to return America to traditional values all sought to undo the advances that feminism had achieved, and these trends still persist today. So through her use of imagery from a more recent past, Sherman managed to speak to the women of the late

Figure. 2.7, Untitled We Don't Need Another Hero, Adapted from *Untitled We Don't Need Another Hero*, n.a., Retrieved July 10, 2010, http://www.wikiart.org/en/barbara-kruger/untitled-we-don-t-need-another-hero-1986

seventies and early eighties about the struggles they faced, and still today their lasting ability to

use this version of appropriation rings true. Another artist who approached similar issues of

commercial culture and feminism is Barbara Kruger, whose work meshes text and photographs

into "a new type of composition...made up of altered found images, mostly from mid-century

American media sources" (McGee, 2009, p. 26). Her piece, *We Don't Need Another Hero*

(Figure 2.7) is a perfect example of this style: the idealized picture of the two children, a boy

flexing his arm in the standard expression of male strength, and the girl, curiously impressed by

his bicep, is intersected and subverted by the bold text, which offers a direct critique of the

source image. By juxtaposing the text onto the the image, she is offering a critique of the kind of

macho, militaristic indoctrination we see so often in the portrayal of children, especially little

boys. We see here the kind of direct commentary on commercial imagery that I accomplished

Figure 2.8, Untitled (Super rich/Ultra gorgeous/Extra skinny/Forever young), Adapted from

Untitled (Super-rich/Ultra gorgeous/Extra Skinny/Forever Young,, n.a., Retrieved July 10, 2010,

http://www.wikiart.org/en/barbara-kruger/untitled-super-rich

in my *Tonight's Programming* series, to "help to undercut the authority of consumerism and

cultures of power using the very tools that perpetuate it" (McGee, 2009, p. 27). We can again see

this concept in use in her work, *Untitled (Super rich/Ultra gorgeous/Extra skinny/Forever*

young) (Figure 2.8). The words of the title are overlaid on a mid-century picture of a woman

with a bizarre, ice-cube laden apparatus on her face, and again we see how Kruger uses text, with

its connotations of unrealistic societal expectations to comment on the vintage image of an

impossibly unpractical, somewhat torturous beauty device. Both these images speak to the

subversion of commercial imagery from the 50's and 60's, which is exactly the kind of work that

I did with my series.

Cold War Collage: Winston Smith

Perhaps the biggest influence on the work that I did is a giant among contemporary

collage artists who uses appropriation to speak to political and societal realities: Winston Smith.

He is an outspoken critic of right-wing politics and the societal forces of greed, militarism,

consumerism, and uses a dense collage technique of appropriated images to "provide what

Aristotle called "the shock of recognition. Through his eyes we see the familiar, the pedestrian

images and icons of our society as we have never seen them before" (Profile: Winston Smith,

Figure 2.9, Force Fed War, Adapted from *Featured Art,* by Winston Smith, Retrieved May 4,

2014, http://winstonsmith.com/featured-art/, Copyright 1982 by Winston Smith

1996, para. 3). His style is both explicit and complex, and his utilization of Cold-War era images

to illustrate our contemporary socio-political realities is directly in line with the body of work

that I plan to develop. Smith directly addresses the militarism of the Reagan era in his work**,**

Force Fed War (Figure 2.9). Here, he appropriates a mid-century stereotypical image of a

mother feeding a baby, but subverts it by replacing the bottle with an early Air Force cruise

missile. This image was inspired, Smith says, "when Reagan was president in '83 and cut off the

lunch program for children…but gave more money to the Pentagon" (Vice Meets Winston

Smith, 2012, [Video File]). By using an iconic image such as mother and child, but undermining

it with the machinery of war, he is able to raise larger questions: what are we feeding our

children about war and our country's armed forces? how does war separate and destroy families?

It is this exact kind of subversion utilizing domestic and commercial imagery combined with

industrial and military machinery that *Tonight's Programming* undertook.

Figure 2.10, Paranoid's Nightmare*,* Adapted from *Featured Art,* by Winston Smith, Retrieved

May 4, 2014, http://winstonsmith.com/featured-art/, Copyright 1982 by Winston Smith

Another example of Smith's use of vintage imagery is in *Paranoid's Nightmare* (Figure 2.10).

This piece speaks directly to his experience upon returning to the United States in 1976, after

leaving at the height of progressive political protest in 1969 to study art in Italy. "It was like

night and day," Smith says, "and most of the people I knew to be pretty progressive had just

given up their ideals mainly because it was too hard to pay the rent" (Wilson, 2009, para. 7). He

particularly "couldn't believe that now there were all these video cameras everywhere, not just at

banks, but at donut shops, they'd follow you everywhere" (Vice Meets Winston Smith, 2012,

[Video File]). We can see the direct correlation between this notion and how *Paranoid's*

Nightmare uses images of nearly a hundred different vintage cameras, floating ears, staring eyes

and American flags to distill the concept of being watched into a surreal, terrifying vignette.

Smith's gift for using appropriation to address current issues continues today, such as in

Figure 2.11, Armed Madhouse, Adapted from *Featured Art,* by Winston Smith, Retrieved May

4, 2014, http://winstonsmith.com/featured-art/, Copyright 2005 by Winston Smith

his more recent work, like *Armed Madhouse* (Figure 2.11). In this piece, he connects the

ebullient nationalism of the fifties with the militaristic character of the Bush administration. The

happy swinging housewife and clown, and patriotically dressed model atop a chest spilling over

with money are contrasted with images of oil derricks, worried consumers, and a nest of weapons crowning a White House that is seemingly beaming American power out into the world. The complex overlapping characters are set on a background that seems to be on fire, heightening the frantic destructive energy contained within the piece as a whole. What is important to note for the purposes of my proposed work, is that the mixture of contemporary and vintage imagery does not detract or distract from the unitary whole: indeed it only serves to strengthen the impact. Since I appropriated video from conflicts both in history and in more contemporary contexts, it is important to see that the mixing of eras does not lead to confusing the viewer.

In all these examples of specific artists using appropriation to speak to new socio-political realities, we see how imagery from the past can be effectively utilized to speak to a new present. Whether that imagery is physically appropriated, such as in the collages of Winston Smith and Barbara Kruger, or utilized by the artist as a narrative or stylistic form, such as with Cindy Sherman and Jacques-Louis David, the result is similar. Also, we can see that the specific appropriation of commercial imagery, mixed with themes of militarism, can be an effective tool to speak to the reality that we live in today. As for informing the Researcher aspect of the A/R/Tographic process, these artists have provided a valuable lesson in the different ways appropriation can be applied, but also how appropriative art combines the past and the present into a new, liminal space that is neither one time or the other. This sense of the in-between is highly important to the A/R/Tographic experience, as Pinar (2004) notes: "artist-researcher-teachers dwell within "in-between spaces" (p. 9). It is this kind of visual syncretism that achieved through the *Tonight's Programming* series.

Appropriative Studio Approach And The Art Education Classroom

As discussed in the beginning of last chapter, appropriation in art is a term that encompasses a wide array of meanings, from literal taking of imagery from one source and applying it to another, to reuse of materials in new contexts, to the simple act of copying pre-existing work in an academic fashion (McLean, 2012). An appropriative studio approach is central to any instructional environment, because most if not all of these definitions will be applied at some point in the curriculum. For the purposes of my particular journey into an appropriative practice, I examined three aspects of *Tonight's Programming* that can directly be tied to instructional methodology in the art education classroom: my use of collage, the use of appropriation in examining visual culture, and the value of producing work that addresses current issues in the classroom.

Appropriation And Collage In The Classroom

Collage is a timeless favorite of art educators for varying reasons. It teaches design and layout, allows for personalization, recycles materials, and diffuses differing traditional art skillsets in a manner that allows more success stories at the end of a lesson. In the context of enhancing student understanding modern art it is particularly valuable, as Gerstenblatt (2013) notes, "collage fragments space and repurposes objects to contextualize multiple realities. The progression of the modern art movement and collage in particular serves as a corollary to postmodernist thought that challenges objectivity and a singular reality" (p. 295). Also, in the digital age, appropriation and collage have become particularly relevant, because of the malleable nature of the digital image. For example, students in Sweden have successfully been using "appropriations through manual and digital media…in order to paraphrase contemporary art, or to make older art in a contemporary perspective" (Marner & Ortegren, 2014, p. 42).

Students have used this method to re-contextualize the Mona Lisa, recreate scenes from classic paintings in new photographs, or used pictures of classic cars to create digital collages inspired by Andy Warhol's soup cans (Marner & Ortegren, 2014). This kind of digital embrace has also found success in lessons dealing with Remix and Mashup culture, where students are not only encouraged to transform various source materials in new ways, but also to lead larger discussions of intent and authorship, as "students should always know the source of their found media, to be able to articulate why they chose to use preexisting content, and how they have repurposed it in a new work" (Freire & McCarthy, 2014, p. 30). Art educators can use collage to teach principles of rhythm, unity and composition (Deaver, 2013), self-portraiture using three dimensional found materials (McCreight, 2010), or a myriad of other concepts. What is notable about these contemporary exercises however, is that they go beyond the traditional notion of collage as cutting and pasting on paper, and utilize digital, 3D or other unique means. My incorporation of video elements into the medium of paper collage in *Tonight's Programming* is an example of this as well: utilizing the traditional methods of appropriation and collage, but taking them a step further. This is key to establishing an art classroom that is sensitive to the realities of STEM and in keeping with educational methodologies that encourage extension and breadth of creative thought.

Appropriation In Examining Visual Culture

Another way that *Tonight's Programming's* appropriative approach has value in the classroom is through using imagery, audio and video elements taken from the realm of visual culture to make statements about our history and current realities. As explained by Duncum (2002) one of the main emphases of visual culture art education is that the "history of representation is often far more determining of contemporary representations than anything in

contemporary life" (p. 8). This history however does not preclude an addressing of contemporary themes; and indeed visual culture as a paradigm only strengthens our ability to discern the contemporary. The rise of visual culture in the art education classroom has led to a myriad of applications: from establishing student-led learning communities through visual culture frameworks (Freedman, Heijnen, Kallio-Taven, Karpati, Papp, 2013), to critical pedagogies regarding the visual culture of marketing (Ciampaglia, 2014), to re-contextualizing the music video as transmissor of visual culture (Taylor, 2007). The images that I have appropriated are taken primarily from advertising, which is in keeping with one of the central notions of visual culture studies: "because so many of the visual images we are exposed to are commercial, an important aspect of this study is advertising – its philosophy, goals, purposes and strategies" (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005, p. 45). If "we need to consider art as a form of thinking and an agent in history making" (Trafi-Prats, 2009, p. 255), then using the appropriation of older commercial images not only allow us to make history by recontextualizing it into new forms, but we are also able to question how those new forms represent parallels in our contemporary time. The visual aspects of advertising that I used in *Tonight's Programming;* even the title of the work itself, speak to the relationship between commercial imagery and its reception by the people and culture at large.

The punk and DIY collage aesthetic that informs my work, derived from artists like Winston Smith and my early influences, also provide an avenue for investigation of visual culture in the classroom, through exercises dealing with culture jamming and contemporary underground movements. The use of video elements, imagery of televisions and advertising sources in *Tonight's Programming* will echo the ideals of culture jamming: "the act of transforming mass media to produce commentary about itself, using the original medium's

communication method" (Keys, 2008, p. 101). Keys (2008) also notes that exercises based on street art, flyering, stickering and other common communal DIY collage techniques provide "glimpses into the visuality of communication in subculture communities of youth and young adults" (p. 98). The same kinds of open-ended inquiry that arise from commercial visual sources also arise from the street art aesthetic: who makes these images? who is the intended audience? what is the intended message? (Keys, 2008).

The video and audio elements that I used in the work are digital in nature, which also touches on visual studies as a touchstone for engaging with new media. As Friere and McCarthy (2014) state, "When artists explore new media for creative, critical expression, and to that end repurpose existing technologies in their practices, they take on an intervention approach to digital culture" (p. 31). This kind of relevant, real-world connection is important in the kind of authentic instruction that Anderson and Milbrandt (2005) champion, and in establishing a community connection to classroom work.

Addressing Current Issues In The Classroom

Incorporating current issues in the classroom can be difficult, however, we cannot ignore the chance to at least attempt "a discursive setting where issues perceived as 'challenging' could be broached in a supportive environment" (Kirlew, 2011, p. 379). The incorporation of current issues also help students form and discuss opinions and overcome stereotypes" (Ruget & Rosero, 2014, p. 19), a crucial step to effective critical thinking skills in effective art education. More specifically, in the same way that appropriation encourages examinations of origination and intent, using appropriative projects in the art classroom can "open up discussion in regards to the socio-political ideas and issues salient within (student's) lives, shifting the authorship and ownership of ideas from teacher to learner" (Kirlew, 2011, p. 382).

Discussions of military issues, such as the ones I have raised in my work, can have very personal meanings to students. With almost 1.5 million active duty personnel currently in our armed forces, there is a large chance that educators will encounter children with parents in the military, and as conflicts and the War on Terror continue, they will inevitably have to deal with parents leaving for extended periods, hearing frightening stories in the media about violence in areas where their parents might be, and other ancillary aspects of their parent's jobs. To be able to talk about these concerns in the caring and secure space of art can only have beneficial consequences, indeed it is "our prerogative to create a safe environment to be able to discuss issues…before they manifest themselves in ways in which they cause harm to others" (Kirlew, 2011, p. 382). Discussion of military issues in the classroom has been successfully applied through visual means before, such as introduction and critique of graphic novels (Decker & Castro, 2012). In this and other ways, art's ability to serve as a process for meaning-making and problem solving has been shown to be beneficial in helping students deal with emotional trauma and as a foundation for increasing resilience (Heise, 2014), and as Darts (2008) notes, "training in visual/media literacy and critical thinking prepare(s) students for active engagement with visual culture and democratic life" (p. 114). Using the kinds of ideas brought up by *Tonight's Programming* as a basis for further investigation and discourse in the classroom, if applied tactfully and with an eye towards meaningful dialogue and thought, can be a valuable way to achieve these aims.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

A/R/Tographic Inquiry and Studio-Based Research

Next, I explained and codified the manner in which I used the methods of A/R/Tographic inquiry and studio-based, autoethnographic examination to understand and explain the work that I undertook, as well as the benefits and limitations of said research methods. First, I discussed A/R/Tography as both a framework and unifying manner to construct my research, and then the ideas of how studio-based and auto-ethnographic methods were used within this framework to fully comprehend my work. Lastly, I briefly described the limitations of my research.

The A/R/Tographic Framework

On the simplest level, the A/R/Tographic method provided the literal framework for my thesis investigation. Through dividing my research into three distinct categories: as artist, as researcher, and as teacher, I was able to organize my thoughts and actions in a manner that coincides neatly with the format of my thesis. As artist, I reflected on my process of creation and influences, as researcher I delved into a review of literature concerning appropriation, and appropriative studio practice, and as teacher I examined the implications for the art classroom. Each of these lenses gives a different focus to the research but remain interconnected and fluid, and lend themselves to what Irwin (2004) calls, "self-expressions of certainty and ambiguity" (p. 29). This relationship is expressed in the certainty of my anti-militaristic stance, but the ambiguity of my admitted fascination for the aesthetics of military and commercial imagery. Through using the A/R/Tographic method, I was also free to establish a mode of looking at my work in a way that was "experimental, producing new alignments, linkages, and connections" Springgay, 2008, p. 4). This notion of fluid self-expression and its auto-ethnographic base not only coincides neatly with a reflective, studio-based approach, but reinforces how the three

lenses redefine and merge, creating very personal but still culturally related identities (Pinar, 2004). These ideas can be seen in many A/R/Tographic investigations, but the specific example of Wendy Stephenson's collage-based work is most helpful to my particular use of this method.

In *A/r/tography: Rendering Self Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry* (Irwin & DeCosson, 2004) the artist Wendy Stephenson conducts a historical inquiry into her family and develops an appropriative, collage-based body of work. She says of the process of gathering objects for use in her work, "the fragments and objects suggest meanings in terms of the personal, the cultural and the social" (Stephenson, 2004, p. 157.) Through utilizing objects from the past incorporated into new compositions, she hoped to "take (the viewer) out of the continuum of time past/time future to feel the eternal present" (Stephenson, 2004, p. 159). This idea of utilizing A/r/tographic inquiry to assign both personal and cultural meaning, and to use objects from the past to speak to a timeless present was at the heart of my body of work.

As I had already begun the artwork that would encompass *Tonight's Programming*, I wanted to establish a historical understanding of appropriation in art, and learn more about specific examples of artists that I was inspired by. This lens of researcher was accomplished through investigation into the very idea of appropriation in art, and then through specific examples, in both the ancient and more contemporary timeframes. I often felt that most references to appropriation in contemporary art criticism seemed to truncate the idea into the tidy examples of Picasso and early cubism and/or the Dada movement. While these artists and movements had certainly enumerated appropriation as a studio approach in a more formal way, I was interested in a wider field of knowledge on the subject, and so structured my research in the abovementioned way, with conscious intent to avoid historical shorthand. The discovery of spolia and its use in ancient Roman contexts I found particularly relevant, as in my collage work

I was literally re-facing the depicted subjects into new beings, much as the Romans had refaced older images into new ones, with new meanings and contexts. In the work of Jaques Louis David I found parallels to my work as he used imagery from an older society to comment on his new political reality, much as I was doing in my work, and this notion was carried on by my investigation into more contemporary artists such as Sherman, Kruger and Smith who had used borrowed imagery from an older time to comment on their own particular presents.

Within the A/R/Tographic lens of teacher, I considered how the lessons I learned in my thesis process would be able to influence my classroom. Specifically, I was able to discern three specific areas where my work had implications for the classroom: in examining appropriation as remixed visual culture, as an aid for compositional development, and in deepening student reflection on artistic voice. These lessons were drawn from the A/R/Tographic method by distilling the sometimes overlapping considerations of my research and artistic practice into concrete examples for student consumption. For example, my considerations of collage as an instrument of visual culture can easily lead into class discussions of remix culture: in the same way that I recontextualized commercial and military imagery, students can recontexualize elements of their visual culture to make new statements of their own reality. Also, I realized that the very act of a deep investigation into my own work using these methodological concerns can inform new ways of getting students to also delve deeper into their own creative output, and discover, using similar methods, the roots of their expressions.

Studio-based and Auto-ethnographic Methods

As this was a studio-based thesis, I also had to emphasize not only the physical production, but a deep exploration as to how the materials that I choose to utilize relate to my own past and present development as an artist, researcher and teacher. This kind of research is

auto-ethnographic in nature, a qualitative methodology that "allows the researcher to use the nontraditional research practice of telling his or her stories in narrative research as a method to reclaim marginalized and self-reflective space in the research" (Eldridge, 2012, p. 71). To achieve these ends, I not only had to develop and construct the body of work, but utilize the thesis as a studio-based exegesis, to "record and elaborate (my) observations, descriptions and analyses" (Marshall, 2010, p. 78). In order to accomplish this, I considered not only the historical appropriative precedents, such as connecting the idea of spolia with my re-facing of subjects, but also the literality and implications of what I meant to convey, within both a compositional and a thematic sense. Similarly, I had to note the transformation of my work through various stages, to observe that through my critical process, "each thought form informed, interacted and interconnected with the others" (Smith, 2009, p. 265). This led to me documenting how the limits of my source material affected my process, how my original imagery was expanded into the smaller collage pieces, and how and why I incorporated the video and audio elements that I did. This was all couched in the idea of my larger narratives of commercialism and militarism, which I also examined in this manner, striving to reach the "in-between spaces" (Pinar, 2004, p. 9) that A/r/tographic inquiry necessitates, but are also brought about through the appropriative process itself. Stephenson's (2004) notions of awareness when it comes to how "old advertisements can make us aware of bygone attitudes" (p. 160) were also an important inspiration, for by examining these attitudes as they were remade into new commentaries by my process, they informed the viewer's concepts of whether or not these attitudes are indeed bygone, or if they have only served to further our alienation from each other.

Limitations of the Investigation

The limitations of my investigation are either few or many, depending on the particular viewpoint one uses to consider the work. The fact that my study is a qualitative exercise versus a quantitative one sets certain limits, namely the nature of qualitative research in and of itself. Quantitative investigations are scientific and produce specific data that can be more easily analyzed and contains more simply discerned patterns (Marshall, 2010), but a studio-based thesis is not a scientific paper. What I uncovered in my work is a personal journey, an auto-ethnographic study that involved internal processes, individual memories, and subjective thought patterns that are not the result of numerative means, so there is a limit inherent in my own viewpoint. While I researched many different works of art and varied artists, the main body of consideration is my own work, so that is also limiting in the scope of the investigation. There is also a limitation in that other's considerations of my work have not been included, as my work has not been exhibited as a whole, this might also have yielded different observations, but the purpose of my research is not necessarily how the work is perceived by others, but how I was able to gain deeper insight into my own working methods by producing and researching it.

CHAPTER 4: THE DEVELOPMENT AND CREATION OF "TONIGHT'S PROGRAMMING

My journey as an artist has taken many turns throughout my life, beginning with my aforementioned obsession with airplanes, through private drawing and painting lessons in my high school years, and more in-depth work in my initial college years through photographic and

Figure 4.1, Aftermath, 1998, 9 x 6 inches

printmaking mediums. The nascent seeds of my current work with militarism can be seen in this early work, where I utilized shell casings, found militaristic items, or purely military imagery within my undergraduate body of work. An example of this is in my piece *Aftermath* (Figure 4.1) which I completed in 1998 as part of my advanced printmaking course at Georgia State, under Oliver Smith. The image of the bomber pilot is based on a photograph I took at the National Air Force Museum, at *Wright Patterson Air Force Base*, where my father was working at the time. I was intrigued by the way the mannequin in my original photo seemed to be turning away, and considered that placing him within the composition as if he were turning away from the aftermath of a bombing raid would be an important way to engage the viewer in questions about

the nature of mass scale bombings on an individual. By putting the pilot on the ground, and having him facing away from his handiwork, almost walking out of frame, I was asking questions about what we leave behind, and where we are headed. This serves to show that by this point, my early fetishizing of military hardware had already transformed into a more inquisitive and reflective fascination with our war machine, and this theme would continue throughout my later work.

While these thematic tendencies might have always been with me in one way or another, the other important aspect of *Tonight's Programming* is the raw materials of which it is comprised: the ephemera of a bygone era of commercial advertising, and the propagandistic advertising of governmental films. These are the base metal, the foundations and elements of what I am composing into a new, juxtapositioned reality of imagery dealing with the thread of militarism in our current history, and an examination of how these raw elements attract me as the artistic editor is certainly relevant to understand the choice of these materials.

Ephemera From A Bygone Time

If there is one activity in my life that brings peace to my ever-fizzing brain, it is the act of browsing through antique stores. As anyone who has spent any time antiquing knows, not all of these places of business are the same. There are the stores that focus mainly on furniture, and are usually very pricey, or the ones whose inventory leans towards the shabby chic aesthetic: rows of hand-painted, faux-distressed signs with kitschy aphorisms, such as "Bless this Mess" or bits of scripture, usually paired with conspicuously non-antique items as French milled soaps, cookbooks, and imported teas. Usually, I hardly get beyond the door in these places. The kind of shops that really set me buzzing are usually referred to as antique malls or smaller independent secondhand shops. These kinds of business are usually large and have stalls where individual

sellers display their wares, with as little to no curation as possible. A wide panoply of items populate these places, and vary hugely from stall to stall. One might have a display case filled with small trinkets: watches, tie pins, brooches, old medals, pocket knives; while the space next door is filled with records and books, clothes on a rack, a shoehorn, a lawn jockey. While some sellers obviously specialize in one kind of offering, such as those who sell china or porcelain wares, others are a treasure trove of random offerings: incongruous groupings of magazines, VHS tapes, farm implements, bookends, salt and pepper shakers, old boots, tattered photos of someone's family. It is in these spaces where I can relax, and casually stroll up and down the aisles, fondling random objects, considering if that mid-century lamp would go in the bedroom, or flipping through records to find old and bizarre offerings like *How to Belly Dance for Your Husband* or *Midnight Moods with Les Baxter.* But in a larger sense, these places are the ersatz museums of somewhat-recent American culture: the repository for a million things unwanted or unused, the hopeful purgatory for items thrown together with no regard for time or place, where a frayed VHS copy of Jane Fonda's Buns and Thighs Workout sits on a shelf next to 1950's copies of the Hardy Boys books and a cast-iron bulldog from 1916. It is in these spaces that I find the print materials for my work, and it is only appropriate, for where better to begin a journey into remixing American culture than amongst the discarded fetishes of its recent past?

Specifically, this entire series began with a find in one of these antique malls in Tennessee, right near the Kentucky border in a little town named Livingston. The creaky boards and uneven floors of this place are warm and inviting, if a bit unnerving, and in a small stall the back is where I found the catalogue that started it all. In a corner stall near a pile of disturbingly

broken dolls, I came upon a large, hardcover 1968 folio from Sylvania, with an amazing three

Figure 4.2, Sylvania Catalogue, 1967

color graphic on the front. (Figure 4.2). Upon opening the folio, I discovered a treasure trove of

large color prints, showing the various television and stereo products offered at the time, placed

within large domestic set photographs. Families or couples populated these scenes, relaxing

pleasantly, smiling and docile, enjoying the glorious visions and sound afforded to them by their

Sylvania products. I was struck immediately by the nostalgia of the images: these men and

women relaxing at home in evening dresses and suits, the bizarre color schemes and shag
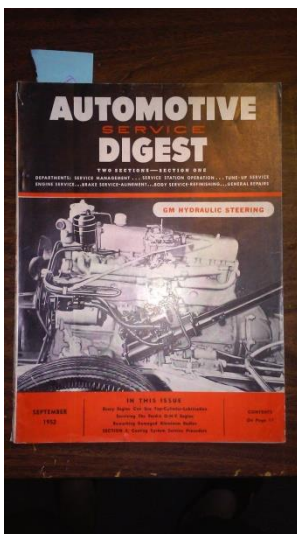
Figure 4.3, Automotive Service Digest, September 1952

carpeting, the overtly bourgeoisie trappings of the late sixties middle class, as well as the idea

that televisions and radios were being sold not just as entertainment delivery devices, but as

furniture itself, an addition to one's home that needed to match the décor as much as a sofa or

end tables. The possibilities for repurposing and collage seemed endless, and the $25 price tag a

small price to pay for such a large amount of raw material to work with. Similarly, about a year

later, I was in another antique mall, this one close to my house in Stone Mountain, when I

chanced upon a copy of Automotive Service Digest from September 1952 (Figure 4.3), and

while leafing through was struck by the awesome array of vintage advertising and old school

font styles. These kinds of assets struck me as similar to those seen in Winston Smith's work,

and with a vague idea to reassemble them digitally, I bought the magazine.

All these disparate elements only came together after a couple of years, when after

enrolling in the MAEd program getting back into formal studio classes, I was inspired to finally

do something with the Sylvania catalogue. It had been sitting in my studio untouched as I

debated how to use it, originally thinking that it would be a digital process for not wanting to

physically change the photos themselves, but finally receiving a spurring from my wife to quit

being precious about it and just use it. This call to action, plus my rediscovery of a book that had

been central to my initial fascination with planes and military hardware, the Encyclopedia of

Military Aircraft, became the beginnings of what would become *Tonight's Programming*.

The Key to Illustrating the Dissonance of Distant War

Now that all of the raw materials were in place, I began the process of how to integrate

them in a meaningful way. The background images from the Sylvania catalogue were the canvas,

and despite their anachronistic aesthetics, I wanted to transform them into statements that would

comment on our present times, as well as the era from which they came, and I felt they were

uniquely suited to this end. The time period of the fifties and sixties, is the nodal point at which I envision our current hyper-patriotic atmosphere being conceived. These images of happy families, living in a variety of both banal and exotically colored rooms, were published in 1968, a year that began with the Tet offensive, and ended with the election of Richard Nixon. Somewhere in America, a family was thumbing through this folio, considering their next Hi-Fi purchase as a salesmen cooingly spoke to them about hardwood finishes and Spanish accents, while on the other side of the world Operation Rolling Thunder was coming to an end, after causing an estimated 182,000 civilian Vietnamese casualties and the loss of over 900 American air crews.

This dissonance between the commercialism of everyday life and terrible destruction is the foundation of the entire *Tonight's Programming* series, and has a basis in a very personal experience that I have always struggled to address in my work. On the day that we started Shock and Awe in Bagdad, I was at lunch with a friend. We were in a Mexican restaurant off Jimmy Carter Boulevard, and an enormous big screen television was in the corner, with live footage from the bombing, interrupted only by commercials for fast food chains, car companies, and your friends in the diamond business. As I stepped out into that beautiful March spring day, with people rushing past in their cars to innumerable places, I couldn't help but feel uneasy: we had just finished a fatteningly indulgent meal and were enjoying beautiful weather as half a world away in the middle of the night buildings were exploding into flame, and the people of Bagdad were cowering in terror listening to their city turn into Armageddon. We had been sold a war, and now the footage of that war was a vehicle to sell more toothpaste and pickups and hygiene products. The images in the Sylvania catalogue spoke to me the same way: the televisions and radios in this folio would soon be broadcasting news of Khe Sahn, or the famous footage of

General Nguyen Ngoc Loan casually shooting a Vietcong prisoner in the streets of Saigon, only to be interrupted by commercials for Viceroy cigarettes and Heinz Catsup. Upon finding these images, I felt that I finally had the means to comment on my experience that day.

The materials that I would use for the heads, pictures and other items scattered around the dens and living rooms of the Sylvania photos were from two sources that spoke directly to these themes as well. The hardware and commercial items from the Automotive Service Digest were from the 1950's, a time of ebullient commercialism and the explosion of a cheery, upbeat kind of advertising with rare allusions to the kinds of cravenly fear-based currents in some contemporary ads. These kinds of sources I felt would be a complement to the breezy domestic feel of the folio backgrounds, as they were a product of this sunny advertising environment, but were themselves products that were inherently industrial: oils, gaskets, pistons, etc. This mechanical aspect would be bolstered by the use of color reproductions of bomber engines from the Encyclopedia of Aircraft, used to replace the heads of the people in the background photos. The combination of these domestic and industrial scenes and objects gave me the ability to establish a kind of "in-between space" that is so prominent within the A/R/Tographic method: neither comforting in the domestic spaces pictured, nor completely confrontational in the mechanical accoutrement, but a space with traces of both, melding into a new, unsettling but not unreasonably unidentifiable, place of being.

The Early Process of Construction: Literality and Implications

The initial collage that I did with these materials (Figure 4.4), utilized a smaller page from the Sylvania catalogue and representations of artillery shells, land mines and other military hardware. This is the first time that I started to develop the idea of replacing the heads of the subjects in these photos with the material of war, in a direct correlation between the subjects'

mindset and what their heads would be transformed into. Their bodies would remain elegantly

dressed, composed and relaxed in their comfy environs, but their heads would be literally rigid

with destructive hardware. While I consider this piece successful, the literality is a bit on the

Figure 4.4, Spanish Walnut Collection, 2013, 10 x 13 inches

nose, and it comes across a little too much like a flyer for an old punk show than necessarily a

standalone work of art. Also, the idea of replacing all the heads in the series with just ordinance,

(grenades, shells, cannons, etc.) became limiting: it would be such a specific theme to follow,

that finding appropriate images of varying sizes to use would be incredibly challenging. Also, I

wondered if this kind of specificity would become a note repeated too often, something akin to a

one-trick-pony and too simplistic for the greater purposes of the series. The lack of color within

these appendages also bothered me, it separated the materials in a way that didn't speak to any

real connection, and emphasized the differences in the two source elements that did not serve to

make a unified whole of the composition. After these considerations, I endeavored to find a

different way to address the heads of the subjects in a way that would have a similar disquieting

effect, but would allow for a greater breadth of expression, primary imagery, and allow a more

seamless integration into the various scenes.

My new approach was first tried in the piece *Mission Breakfront Butternut Collection*

(Figure 4.5) when I saw the two page spread in the Encyclopedia of Military Aircraft that had

Figure 4.5, Mission Breakfront Butternut Collection, 2013, 23 x 13 inches

color illustrations of bomber engines from World War II. After cutting these out, I realized the

muted color schemes in these illustrations had a similar feel as the colors in the Sylvania

catalogue pieces, and would provide a richer and wider palette to utilize for the replacements of

the heads. Using the engines would avoid the more obvious connections that the earlier use of

the ordinance had brought up, but still provide an unsettling effect. I still utilized some of these

images in the candlesticks, replacing them with an ICBM and a German 88mm shell, but in this

secondary capacity I was much happier with the overall result, especially as they framed the

photo of the riot police on the wall. This idea of using the picture frames as areas for collage had

a similar root in the idea of images as projections of militarism in the context of these domestic

scenes, and this was the first instance that I had taken advantage of these spaces, which would

appear again in later works. Having settled on the overall stylistic choices within the first few

pieces, I was free now to continue these choices throughout the rest of the series. However, these

base continuities were not to be absolute rules, lest the overall effect become too stale or

repetitive, or lack any variety.

Since the number of Sylvania catalogue pages were limited, and because I wanted to

make a much larger statement, I began to make accompanying pieces that would be able to float

around the main Sylvania works, and add to the overall impression of the piece. The materials

for these would still be mainly from the Automotive magazines, but backgrounds would come

Figure 4.6, They Came Back, 2013, 10 x 11 inches

from varied sources, such as Life Magazine, and vintage issues of Good Housekeeping. I stayed

within the same era of time, from the 50's to the 60's, and utilized the same sorts of mechanical

components that had littered the spaces of the larger Sylvania collages to replace the heads of

subjects in these smaller works. As in the example of *They Came Back* (Figure 4.6), these works

followed much of the same visual ideas as the other, larger collages, and together form a large

group of works that reinforce this bizarre world of mechanized beings, whose identity and

thoughts have been co-opted by the militarized and commercialized society that we inhabit.

The Method of Choice: Collage on the Fly

One of the initial challenges in deciding to work in collage is organization. The process of cutting apart images seems exponential: at first it's a few pieces to keep together, then as the days go on and on, more and more images are cut, and the pieces take on a life of their own, spreading out like some terrifying viral infection that threatens to overwhelm the host studio. Using binders with clear pages, labeled by image type, was my solution, and it has continued to work well. But as the available materials grow, it can easily lead to an overload of choices, which is the second challenge of collage: after a while there are so many possibilities, so many combinations of cut artifacts and backgrounds that it can be overwhelming. This presents a
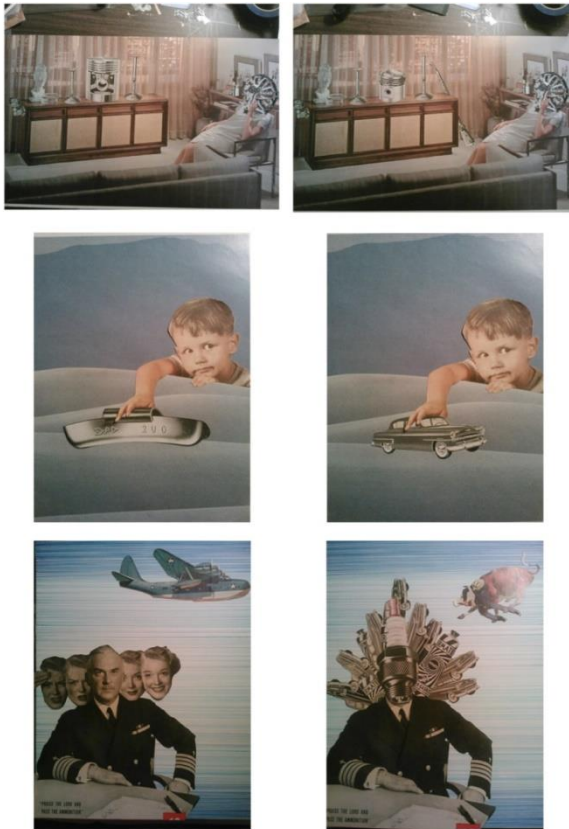

Figure 4.7, Examples of Collage on the Fly, 2013

unique challenge: finding a way to sketch ideas and combinations in a specific way without having to commit materials in a permanent way. In other mediums, such as drawing and painting, this process is literally sketched in rough, working forms; a compositional skeleton that eventually leads to a finished product. There are studies of specific areas to be done, color combinations to be mixed and applied in swatches, and smaller versions of the completed whole that can be tried and edited. However, this method when working with collage is almost superfluous, as all the elements of the finished product are already realized. The solution to this challenge is perhaps one of the most fun aspects of working in collage, a way of testing many compositions in a real-time manner that allows flexibility and efficient choice, which I like to call collage on the fly. This process is not unlike that of a director in a theater piece: the backgrounds are the stage, and the collage elements are the actors, to be blocked and managed by the director within the working space in a way that more effectively allows the material to be understood by the audience. With the addition of the convenience of a cellphone camera, quick snapshots can be taken of each iteration, so that the combinations can be reviewed with the benefit of some percolation of thought. The examples (Figure 4.7) showed several pieces and differing stages of each, illustrative of this process. This method is also significant because of the aforementioned in-between places that the A/R/Tographic method engenders. The planning compositions that result from this technique are temporal, existing only in a state to be reviewed, sometimes never to become realized or be placed the same way again. It is a real-time way of remixing history, both literal and symbolically, where juxtapositions are realized and then discarded, or embraced and subtly nudged into new combinations that present a final whole. I was keenly aware of this remixing as I constructed the series; that not only were the final

products a reworking of materials into a new space, but the very process itself was a birthing process of many new spaces, some never to come to fruition.

Video and Audio: Eyes and Ears of Appropriation

After developing the physical look of the collage pieces, I began to add the multi-media elements to the collages. I wanted these televisions and radios to have a life of their own, and reinforce the kinds of militaristic messages and underpinnings that the collages were addressing, and not just be a single static example image on a screen, or a mute depiction of speakers. After much deliberation, research and consideration, I found that the Coby V-ZON media players were the most compatible for the television screens, and after a crash course in Adobe Premiere, I began to assemble the videos to play on screen. Having had extensive experience with the Internet Archive, I searched on the government films database, downloading a wide array of Department of Defense training films, propaganda newsreels, and other public domain materials. In order to add another layer onto this footage, I combined them in the editing suites by playing clips from two or more films at once, with varying levels of transparency so that the images

Figure 4.8, Video Still from "Tonight's Programming", 2014

would melt and flow into each other, often with one clip running backwards or in slower motion than the other (Figure 4.8). Also, I paid close attention to the thematic and narrative consideration of the films: for example, one combination consists of a military propaganda film called *A Day in Vietnam* which shows soldiers feeding children, building schools, and anything else not involving killing people; and a newsreel touting the Bay of Pigs invasion as a homegrown invasion of Cuban exiles, and definitely not the work of the CIA. Another video consists of footage from the Redstone Arsenal, a base used for Operation Paperclip, where Nazi rocket scientists were smuggled into the United States after WWII and put to work by our military, and secondary footage from the Nuremburg trials. By combining these films, I was remixing the history of American military mendaciousness, layering one timeline of deceit on another, for consumption by the passive, machine-headed protagonists of my collages.

Similarly, when it came to the audio pieces that I assembled for the pieces depicting the radio and stereo sets, I looked to find a combination of sounds and samples that would have a complementary feel to the footage, without being redundant. Initially, I set upon the idea of slowing down patriotic themes that I had loved as a child like Stars and Stripes forever, to give them a warped and off-putting feel. To contrast this, I found speeches from various Presidents (see Appendix) announcing to the American people various military actions, always couched in the language of defending freedom and noble, altruistic motives. Put together, they formed an audio experience that had the same remixing of history, but wasn't directly derivative of the video sources, and thereby added another layer of experience to the series that reinforced the narrative I was trying to establish about militarism, dissonance, and how wars are sold.

Final Reflections as Artist on Appropriative Artistic Practice

Reflecting on my process in doing the *Tonight's Programming* series, I have had an opportunity to examine my creative process and particular visual language with a depth that I had never experienced before. I have acted on my creative urges throughout my life in a direct way, cognizant of meaning, but not placing it particularly in the context of my own personal development and how the currents in my own experience inform the work that I achieve. Addressing my research question of what an examination of my appropriative methods can teach me has led me on a personal journey that not only unearthed my family-based fascination with militarism and commercial ephemera, but also a deeper understanding of why I am drawn to appropriative use in art. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the intersection of a military upbringing and my love of early punk rock aesthetics is the key to my visual style, and this mixing of apparently discordant streams is apparent in my work. This dissonance, like the aforementioned dissonance of war footage and commercials, is a reflection of the kind of random associations that I feel life gives us every day. Similar to the cut-up ideas of William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, the juxtapositions of our visual culture mirror the varied jumble of thoughts each of us has impressed upon our consciousness, the streams and rivers that run and commingle within the landscape of our memories. In my particular landscape, this is demonstrated with both a repulsion of jingoistic nationalism, and a fascination with the aesthetics of war; similarly, with distaste for rampant commercialism but a love of the visual language of vintage advertising and a fascination for the manipulative aspects involved.

For me, appropriation is the most visceral way to achieve a physical translation of these inner themes, and upon my reflection on my artistic process, I can understand why. I certainly would never discount the vast canon of artists who have approached these issues in painting,

illustration, or other media where entirely original imagery is composed, personally, I feel that it is vital for me to utilize the physical artifacts of these institutions to critique them directly. Much in the same idea of my earlier discussion of the use of spolia in the ancient, literal re-facing of history, by using these leftover ephemera, I re-face the history of our militaristic nightmare, and and yet retain their original implied authenticity, despite their new forms. This is the center of my appropriative idea: to hold up the very objects that have caused the psychological noise we live with in a specific moment, to a specific purpose. There are a host of apparent contradictions, random associations and unexpected intersections that live in our brains, and through my work I strive to take just a few and preserve them for contemplation, but this goal is not easily attained. Breaking through the static, in my opinion, requires immediate impact, intuitive recognition, a sense of familiarity. Once this breakthrough has occurred, then I am free to juxtapose and rework the familiar into an unsettling new space, that exists neither definitely in the past nor firmly in the future, and thereby hopefully retains a relevant aura that will last regardless of the context of time. Using appropriated video and audio in concert with these works helps to engage the viewer on multiple levels, cementing home the message I intend to convey, all the while serving to bolster the original appropriative approach and lend a unifying veneer to the series as a whole.

Overall, my artistic reflection has shown me the underlying motivations, conscious and unconscious intent, and aesthetic reasoning behind my choices. This kind of discovery, as well as my considerations with the physical joy of the collage process and use of multiple layers, have strong implications for the art education classroom, as I will discuss next.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ART EDUCATION CLASSROOM

The A/R/Tographic procedure that I have undertaken in examining the "Tonight's Programming" series has not only revealed a personal journey, but many implications and connections to my teaching practice and the Art Education classroom. In the interest of brevity, these can be divided into three main categories: using appropriative practice to illustrate to students themes of remixing visual culture, addressing planning and compositional development through the use of collage on the fly, and encouragement of deeper and more complex reflection on artistic personal voice.

Appropriation as Illustration of a Remixed Visual Culture

The time restraints of a high school art classroom are many, and affected by a myriad of influences, from traditional versus block scheduling, semester or year-long courses, curricular pacing, and even set-up and clean up times. Anyone who has taught in K-12 education can attest to the paucity of minutes and hours in the day, and especially when students are engaged in creative studio practices that rightfully should be given much longer to develop, we are set in a conflict of balance to ensure the best outcomes while trying to fit in material and projects in a timely manner. This consideration, tied with notions of the art educational space as one that should provide pupils with opportunities for relevant and critically thoughtful examinations of our visual world, means that appropriation, either through traditional collage or searching for other's work as inspiration, is always going to remain a strong force in the high school art classroom. For example, appropriation is necessary in my advanced graphic design classes, as we are not an agency with access to stock photography or the ability to generate them ourselves except on a basic level; for some projects and uses, we must be willing to appropriate from

outside sources. Visual-verbal journaling is another area where appropriation is common: the piles of magazines and books available to the students are remixed in a hundred different ways every semester, and while students may not be initially considerate of the idea of appropriation, this use encourages confrontation and embrace of the visual language of our time on a regular basis. In a larger sense, outside of these physical limitations, in order to meaningfully examine the images and themes in visual culture, it is necessary to go beyond simply observing them, but also use them in some manner compositionally to see how their relationships work. Passively critiquing the images we see around us is not enough, for in maintaining the distance of critique we are still consuming these images, instead of interacting and re-casting them in new ways: we cannot learn the experience of what a puppy is by observing it from all angles and giving our informed opinion of what we know of dogs. We must touch, play, and interact with these materials, see what their combinations achieve and how new, if temporal, narratives are discovered and established. In the same way that I became aware of and embraced the idea of remaking and re-contextualizing history and the present, students can have the same experience through utilizing appropriated imagery in their own compositions, and through discussions regarding this idea during class critiques.

Another value of the appropriative system in examining visual culture that I feel can be drawn from my work is establishing reflections on ownership, authorship, and what it means to take appropriation to a level beyond mere mimicry. The images and backgrounds I used in *Tonight's Programming* are entirely from sources other than myself, there is no hand-made imagery within their visual fields. However, through application and remixing, it is apparent that these works are not derivative but establish new visual spaces and compositions that are greater than the sum of their parts. These kinds of discussions are keenly important in the art classroom,

especially in the age of Pintrest and Google image searches, where students so often can find

ready-made inspiration with a few flicks of their fingers. As part of my Graphic Design class, I

hold a discussion on the case of Shepard Fairey, and the controversy regarding the AP photo

from which his famous Obama poster is derived. The students had seen previously a clip from

the movie *They Live* where the character sees numerous subliminal messages in advertising, one

of which simply states, OBEY. Fairey developed the entire OBEY brand from this one simple

image, and while the themes of authoritarianism and rampant commercialism come into play in

these designs, (which ironically are used to sell his clothing line) they constitute an appropriation

that is removed from its source enough to not be derivative. Then I move on to note the

AP/Obama campaign poster controversy, and lead a discussion on the differences between the

two cases. The campaign poster is obviously visually much different than the photo, but the

photo, which is someone else's property, is the exact basis of Shepard's poster itself. The

conversations that arise as a result of comparing these works, about what constitutes derivative

work, who owns an image and what has to be done to change that ownership, copyright issues

and the idea of the public domain, are all essential to student's understanding of how

appropriation works, should work effectively, and how to properly apply it within original

works, regardless of the remixed intent. In *Tonight's Programming* I utilized imagery from

corporate sources and advertising agencies, but also audio and video that was strictly public

domain. In the same way that I had to consider a wide variety of issues while completing the

series, students can also be led to these same considerations. Are the images transformed enough

into a new idea? What are the associated risks of using these materials? Where do intellectual

property rights end and the artist's right for parody or commentary being? Do these materials

have inherent reactive qualities or associations that will undercut my intent? When they are

assembled into a new composition, will it still be derivative, or comment only on the past, instead of the present as well? Am I only commenting on a specific time, or do I want my message to be free of the constraints of a certain period?

All these questions and more are also brought up directly by the relatively new trends of culture jamming and remix culture, as seen in popular application by organizations like Adbusters, and especially in the remix cultures apparent in Youtube videos, musical sampling, street art, and the manipulative properties of Photoshop and other imaging softwares. These applications and trends are here to stay; a central theme of the visual culture we inhabit, and if we are as educators to teach our students to navigate our visual world they must be addressed in concrete and thoughtful ways. They refer to the earlier mentioned ideas on authorship, but also extrapolate out to larger, more universal themes like intent, truth, agendas and obscured meanings. Meditation on these notions is a crucial part of critical thought concerning visual culture, and much in the same that I find my inspiration in the ephemera of bygone eras and must consider the associations that come with them, students must also be cognizant of the associations that come with remixed culture, and the artifacts, current or not, that they contain. All these considerations can be addressed through a variety of projects that contain elements that I have utilized in *Tonight's Programming*, including remixing advertising campaigns through commentary-based rebranding, collage-based assignments on the power of juxtaposition in creating new relationships, digital manipulations of mass media images, combination of audio/visual elements into traditional artistic forms, extrapolating imagery out into larger series based on initial compositions, and others.

Addressing Compositional Development through Collage on the Fly

Another almost universal issue that teachers of high school students encounter is trying to encourage and instill compositional planning habits in their pupils. This is a struggle that in my short time in the classroom I have seen again and again, and is a primary need to ingrain early in artistic development, and in the artistic mindset. I cannot count the number of times I have observed AP conferences with students hemming and hawing to justify bad compositional choices, or saying "I just went ahead and started painting/drawing/etc., and now I'm not happy with how it looks," or works of art that show sensitivity and quality in every aspect except the basic composition and layout of the piece. In my own classes, such as Graphic Design and Photography, students struggle with learning the physical skillsets to be sure, but most often the larger concepts revolving around planning, composition, experimentation and adaptation of work are the most difficult for them to grasp and fully embrace into their creative workflow. Admittedly, these are issues that all artists wrestle with at one time or another, but especially at the secondary level, students are reaching a point of mental maturity where these avenues of thinking can be instilled, and if so, will go on to serve them in whatever field they choose, as these are essentially steps for problem solving.

This is why I believe the method of collage on the fly, as I call it, can be a powerful tool for students to engage with compositional decisions and take advantage of the temporal spaces that this exercise engenders. I have already suggested this method to a few students who were struggling with visual-verbal journal collages, and they seemed to embrace them quickly. By arranging elements, snapping photos with a phone or similar device, and engaging in review, the students can see in both real time and in frozen moments the results of choices, comparing elements as they move from one composition to another, and remix their ideas in a more

considered way. Collage on the fly is a planning tool that allows immediate feedback from compositional choices, and while sketching is always a powerful tool as well, with collage especially, the instant gratification of seeing elements move around a piece I think feeds directly into the student's technological fascinations and also the sense of immediacy that teenagers have always had, but today's students seem strongly imbued with.

Beyond the literal considerations of collage on the fly as a compositional tool, it is the underlying concerns about composition and planning in general that are useful from this method. Students in high school often begin with one image that they are accustomed to utilizing, whether it be Anime characters, or animals, patterns, etc. Most often, we also see them place these images directly in the center of the page, and proceed to build a composition around it. Unfortunately at this point, the idea of compositional flexibility is already lost. Even if the students are not taking collage elements and moving them around, the idea within collage on the fly that each iteration is documented is still helpful: as they make multiple planning sketches, they can think of their elements as elements of collage, and move them around their compositional space, all the while being cognizant of the kinds of relationships established within these movements. Simply undertaking this act broadens the compositional vocabulary that they are able to acquire, and allows them to see beyond the stereotypical and into more vibrant and meaningful compositional choices.

Encouraging Meaningful Reflection on Personal Artistic Voice

If there is one struggle in the art education classroom that seems to be universally strived for, and yet extremely hard to achieve, it is getting students to reflect on their personal artistic voice. To be fair, this is an issue that can plague artists throughout their entire artistic careers, and usually to their detriment, so this is why it is so crucial that we start as early as possible in

developing student's abilities to not only talk about their work, but be able to plumb the depths of where their style comes from, and where it's going.

      I am a big proponent of playing music in my classroom, not only because I feel that it helps the overall creative environment, but because personally I prefer to have music in my environment as much as possible. The playlists that I create for work days are extremely varied, encompassing Little Richard, Milt Jackson, traditional gypsy recordings, Bach and Jamaican ska; all the way to modern indie rock, surf music, Johnny Cash, and a host of others. Inevitably I am asked every week or two "how did you find all this music? how did you get exposed to it?" What I tell my students is the same response that I tell them when we are discussing finding their artistic voice: trace things back to their source. If you like Miles Davis's "Kind of Blue", then ask yourself, where did hard bop start? What came before hard bop? What came before that? If you like Nirvana,who influenced them? And who influenced those bands? Etc. etc. Music, like art, and indeed like any subject that one can be interested in, can always be traced down the rabbit hole by asking what came before, and what came before that, and how did all these things influence the new. In the same way, we can ask ourselves the same questions about our particular artistic voice: where did the imagery in our current work come from? What shaped those influences, and where did those things that shaped our influences come from? Much like the brainstorming activities of wordclouds, and association games, each facet of our artistic personality can be peeled back and researched, considered and pondered upon. If we are to educate a generation of authentic artists, and students who have a genuinely perceptive habit of thinking about their work, their lives and the culture we inhabit, this procedure is important to establish as early as possible. For as we flesh out where we have come from and how that affects the images, compositions and work that we put out into the world, we see how our work can

develop in new ways in the future. Too often we put work out into the world because of a stylistic fancy, without true, meaningful reflection on its nature and purpose. Especially in the embryonic creative minds of the high school student, true reflection is lost in the pressure to create and put forth, that burning urge that begins to take flame so often at this point in our lives. We must nurture that flame and let it ignite fully, but it is just as important to allow these young artists to consider the nature of that flame, why it burns them so, in their particular way. I know personally, that after such deep consideration and research on my current body of work, I have an understanding not just of my particular artistic voice, but a real connection to my own history, my own development, and my place within time.

Even though these considerations might seem to be mainly backward-looking, the beauty of self-reflection on artistic voice is that while it allows us to understand our past, it simultaneously gives us fuel for the future. With this greater understanding of voice, one can then begin to see a way forward that is consistent with that voice: once we understand what we are and what we are making, the gates are open to what we can make. What's more, what we can make in the future will now be informed by a style that is fully understood, and so will be consistent with the vision that we have, and can be expanded upon. This understanding of personal artistic voice is the root from which our branches grow, the foundation from which our levels rise, and if those roots and foundation are strong, then success is only limited by our own ambition and willingness to persevere.

In this investigation, I have examined my body of work, *Tonight's Programming* through the lenses of an A/R/Tographic, appropriative, studio-based investigation. I have presented historical and literary research on the nature of appropriative art and its power to comment on current political and social realities, examined my process of artistic being and creating in an

auto-ethnographic fashion, focusing on the changing, the becoming, and the implications of my work, and presented specific ways in which my research has implications for the art educational classroom. My investigation has taught me that my process is steeped in historical relevance, and the traditions of collage and appropriation as a way to comment on contemporary reality, and that the very process of undertaking this investigation has led me to greater realizations of how to address visual culture, compositional skills and deeper personal meaning in my student's work. Further studies could focus on similar bodies of work, utilizing the same methods, or I could apply these methods to future projects that I am already conceiving in the wake of this study.

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APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTIONS OF SPEECHES USED IN *TONIGHT'S PROGRAMMING*

President Ronald Reagan: Address on Central America (April 27, 1983)

And let me set the record straight on Nicaragua, a country next to El Salvador. In 1979 when the new government took over in Nicaragua, after a revolution which overthrew the authoritarian rule of Somoza, everyone hoped for the growth of democracy. We in the United States did, too. By January of 1981, our emergency relief and recovery aid to Nicaragua totalled $118 million-more than provided by any other developed country. In fact, in the first 2 years of Sandinista rule, the United States directly or indirectly sent five times more aid to Nicaragua than it had in the 2 years prior to the revolution. Can anyone doubt the generosity and the good faith of the American people?

These were hardly the actions of a nation implacably hostile to Nicaragua. Yet, the Government of Nicaragua has treated us as an enemy. It has rejected our repeated peace efforts. It has broken its promises to us, to the Organization of American States and, most important of all, to the people of Nicaragua.

No sooner was victory achieved than a small clique ousted others who had been part of the revolution from having any voice in the government. Humberto Ortega, the Minister of Defense, declared Marxism-Leninism would be their guide, and so it is.

The Government of Nicaragua has imposed a new dictatorship. It has refused to hold the elections it promised. It has seized control of most media and subjects all media to heavy prior censorship. It denied the bishops and priests of the Roman Catholic Church the right to say Mass on radio during Holy Week. It insulted and mocked the Pope. It has driven the Miskito Indians from their homelands, burning their villages, destroying their crops, and forcing them into

involuntary internment camps far from home. It has moved against the private sector and free labor unions. It condoned mob action against Nicaragua's independent human rights commission and drove the director of that commission into exile.

In short, after all these acts of repression by the government, is it any wonder that opposition has formed? Contrary to propaganda, the opponents of the Sandinistas are not diehard supporters of the previous Somoza regime. In fact, many are anti-Somoza heroes and fought beside the Sandinistas to bring down the Somoza government. Now they've been denied any part in the new government because they truly wanted democracy for Nicaragua and they still do. Others are Miskito Indians fighting for their homes, their lands, and their lives.

The Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua turned out to be just an exchange of one set of autocratic rulers for another, and the people still have no freedom, no democratic rights, and more poverty. Even worse than its predecessor, it is helping Cuba and the Soviets to destabilize our hemisphere.

Meanwhile, the Government of El Salvador, making every effort to guarantee democracy, free labor unions, freedom of religion, and a free press, is under attack by guerrillas dedicated to the same philosophy that prevails in Nicaragua, Cuba, and, yes, the Soviet Union. Violence has been Nicaragua's most important export to the world. It is the ultimate in hypocrisy for the unelected Nicaraguan Government to charge that we seek their overthrow, when they're doing everything they can to bring down the elected Government of El Salvador. Thank you. The guerrilla attacks are directed from a headquarters in Managua, the capital of Nicaragua.

But let us be clear as to the American attitude toward the Government of Nicaragua. We do not seek its overthrow. Our interest is to ensure that it does not infect its neighbors through the export of subversion and violence. Our purpose, in conformity with American and

international law, is to prevent the flow of arms to El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. We have attempted to have a dialog with the Government of Nicaragua, but it persists in its efforts to spread violence.

We should not, and we will not, protect the Nicaraguan Government from the anger of its own people. But we should, through diplomacy, offer an alternative. And as Nicaragua ponders its options, we can and will—with all the resources of diplomacy-protect each country of Central America from the danger of war.

Even Costa Rica, Central America's oldest and strongest democracy—a government so peaceful it doesn't even have an army—is the object of bullying and threats from Nicaragua's dictators.

Nicaragua's neighbors know that Sandinista promises of peace, nonalliance, and nonintervention have not been kept. Some 36 new military bases have been built. There were only 13 during the Somoza years. Nicaragua's new army numbers 25,000 men, supported by a militia of 50,000. It is the largest army in Central America, supplemented by 2,000 Cuban military and security advisers. It is equipped with the most modern weapons-dozens of Soviet-made tanks, 800 Sovietbloc trucks, Soviet 152-millimeter howitzers, 100 anti-aircraft guns, plus planes and helicopters. There are additional thousands of civilian advisers from Cuba, the Soviet Union, East Germany, Libya, and the PLO. And we're attacked because we have 55 military trainers in El Salvador.

The goal of the professional guerrilla movements in Central America is as simple as it is sinister: to destabilize the entire region from the Panama Canal to Mexico. And if you doubt beyond this point, just consider what Cayetano Carpio, the now-deceased Salvadoran guerrilla

leader, said earlier this month. Carpio said that after El Salvador falls, El Salvador and Nicaragua would be "arm-in-arm and struggling for the total liberation of Central America." Nicaragua's dictatorial junta, who themselves made war and won power operating from bases in Honduras and Costa Rica, like to pretend that they are today being attacked by forces based in Honduras. The fact is, it is Nicaragua's government that threatens Honduras, not the reverse. It is Nicaragua who has moved heavy tanks close to the border, and Nicaragua who speaks of war. It was Nicaraguan radio that announced on April 8th the creation of a new, unified, revolutionary coordinating board to push forward the Marxist struggle in Honduras.

Nicaragua, supported by weapons and military resources provided by the Communist bloc, represses its own people, refuses to make peace, and sponsors a guerrilla war against El Salvador.

President George W. Bush: Announcing Operation Iraqi Freedom, (March 19, 2003)

My fellow citizens. At this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger.

On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war. These are opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign.

More than 35 countries are giving crucial support from the use of naval and air bases to help with intelligence and logistics to deployment of combat units.

Every nation in this coalition has chosen to bear the duty and share the honour of serving in our common defence.

To all the men and women of the United States armed forces now in the Middle East, the peace of a troubled world and the hopes of an oppressed people now depend on you. That trust is well placed.

The enemies you confront will come to know your skill and bravery. The people you liberate will witness the honourable and decent spirit of the American military.

In this conflict America faces an enemy that has no regard for conventions of war or rules of morality.

Saddam Hussein has placed Iraqi troops and equipment in civilian areas, attempting to use innocent men, women and children as shields for his own military. A final atrocity against his people.

I want Americans and all the world to know that coalition forces will make every effort to spare innocent civilians from harm.

A campaign on the harsh terrain of the nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict and helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment.

We come to Iraq with respect for its citizens, for their great civilisation and for the religious faiths they practise.

We have no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people.

I know that the families of our military are praying that all those who serve will return safely and soon.

Millions of Americans are praying with you for the safety of your loved ones and for the protection of the innocent.

For your sacrifice you have the gratitude and respect of the American people and you can know that our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done.

Our nation enters this conflict reluctantly, yet our purpose is sure. The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder.

We will meet that threat now with our army, air force, navy, coastguard and marines so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of firefighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities. Now that conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force and I assure you this will not be a campaign of half measures and we will accept no outcome but victory.

My fellow citizens, the dangers to our country and the world will be overcome. We will pass through this time of peril and carry on the work of peace. We will defend our freedom. We will bring freedom to others and we will prevail.

May God bless our country and all who defend her.

President Bill Clinton: Address on Iraqi Air Strike (December 16, 1998)

Earlier today, I ordered America's armed forces to strike military and security targets in Iraq. They are joined by British forces. Their mission is to attack Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs and its military capacity to threaten its neighbors.

Their purpose is to protect the national interest of the United States, and indeed the interests of people throughout the Middle East and around the world.

Saddam Hussein must not be allowed to threaten his neighbors or the world with nuclear arms, poison gas or biological weapons.

I want to explain why I have decided, with the unanimous recommendation of my national security team, to use force in Iraq; why we have acted now; and what we aim to accomplish.

Six weeks ago, Saddam Hussein announced that he would no longer cooperate with the United Nations weapons inspectors called UNSCOM. They are highly professional experts from dozens of countries. Their job is to oversee the elimination of Iraq's capability to retain, create and use weapons of mass destruction, and to verify that Iraq does not attempt to rebuild that capability.

The inspectors undertook this mission first 7.5 years ago at the end of the Gulf War when Iraq agreed to declare and destroy its arsenal as a condition of the ceasefire.

The international community had good reason to set this requirement. Other countries possess weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. With Saddam, there is one big difference: He has used them. Not once, but repeatedly. Unleashing chemical weapons against Iranian troops during a decade-long war. Not only against soldiers, but against civilians, firing Scud missiles at the citizens of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Iran. And not only against a foreign enemy, but even against his own people, gassing Kurdish civilians in Northern Iraq.

President Barack Obama: Remarks at the National Defense University (May 23, 2013)

Our efforts must be measured against the history of putting American troops in distant lands among hostile populations. In Vietnam, hundreds of thousands of civilians died in a war where the boundaries of battle were blurred. In Iraq and Afghanistan, despite the extraordinary courage and discipline of our troops, thousands of civilians have been killed. So neither conventional military action nor waiting for attacks to occur offers moral safe harbor, and neither

does a sole reliance on law enforcement in territories that have no functioning police or security services -- and indeed, have no functioning law.

Now, this is not to say that the risks are not real. Any U.S. military action in foreign lands risks creating more enemies and impacts public opinion overseas. Moreover, our laws constrain the power of the President even during wartime, and I have taken an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States. The very precision of drone strikes and the necessary secrecy often involved in such actions can end up shielding our government from the public scrutiny that a troop deployment invites. It can also lead a President and his team to view drone strikes as a cure-all for terrorism.

And for this reason, I've insisted on strong oversight of all lethal action. After I took office, my administration began briefing all strikes outside of Iraq and Afghanistan to the appropriate committees of Congress. Let me repeat that: Not only did Congress authorize the use of force, it is briefed on every strike that America takes. Every strike. That includes the one instance when we targeted an American citizen -- Anwar Awlaki, the chief of external operations for AQAP.

This week, I authorized the declassification of this action, and the deaths of three other Americans in drone strikes, to facilitate transparency and debate on this issue and to dismiss some of the more outlandish claims that have been made. For the record, I do not believe it would be constitutional for the government to target and kill any U.S. citizen -- with a drone, or with a shotgun -- without due process, nor should any President deploy armed drones over U.S. soil.

But when a U.S. citizen goes abroad to wage war against America and is actively plotting to kill U.S. citizens, and when neither the United States, nor our partners are in a position to capture him before he carries out a plot, his citizenship should no more serve as a shield than a sniper shooting down on an innocent crowd should be protected from a SWAT team.

That's who Anwar Awlaki was -- he was continuously trying to kill people. He helped oversee the 2010 plot to detonate explosive devices on two U.S.-bound cargo planes. He was involved in planning to blow up an airliner in 2009. When Farouk Abdulmutallab -- the Christmas Day bomber -- went to Yemen in 2009, Awlaki hosted him, approved his suicide operation, helped him tape a martyrdom video to be shown after the attack, and his last instructions were to blow up the airplane when it was over American soil. I would have detained and prosecuted Awlaki if we captured him before he carried out a plot, but we couldn't. And as President, I would have been derelict in my duty had I not authorized the strike that took him out.

Of course, the targeting of any American raises constitutional issues that are not present in other strikes -- which is why my administration submitted information about Awlaki to the Department of Justice months before Awlaki was killed, and briefed the Congress before this strike as well. But the high threshold that we've set for taking lethal action applies to all potential terrorist targets, regardless of whether or not they are American citizens. This threshold respects the inherent dignity of every human life. Alongside the decision to put our men and women in uniform in harm's way, the decision to use force against individuals or groups -- even against a sworn enemy of the United States -- is the hardest thing I do as President. But these decisions must be made, given my responsibility to protect the American people.

Going forward, I've asked my administration to review proposals to extend oversight of lethal actions outside of warzones that go beyond our reporting to Congress. Each option has virtues in theory, but poses difficulties in practice. For example, the establishment of a special court to evaluate and authorize lethal action has the benefit of bringing a third branch of government into the process, but raises serious constitutional issues about presidential and judicial authority. Another idea that's been suggested -- the establishment of an independent oversight board in the executive branch -- avoids those problems, but may introduce a layer of bureaucracy into national security decision-making, without inspiring additional public confidence in the process. But despite these challenges, I look forward to actively engaging Congress to explore these and other options for increased oversight.