

## Fragments from/of child art

Fragmentos que se originam/pertencem a arte infantil

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### Abstract:

My practice as a teacher and artist/academic in early childhood education has always attended to children and the materials and processes available for learning. The pedagogical approach in this research with very young children focusses on their interests and perspectives. I am wondering about what I/we can do and how I/we might teach (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) with art in early childhood education. Fragments I gathered from and with Child Art (Viola, 1942; Peterken, 2015, unpublished doctoral dissertation) to think about early childhood practice have circled back (Burke, LasczikCutcher, Peterken & Potts, 2017). The images and artworks encountered in my doctoral work have me returning to contemplate the images and quilt made earlier with young children aged one to five years in their day care setting (Peterken, 2009, unpublished honours dissertation) to consider how moments of making are productive.

### Keywords.

early childhood education; Public Pedagogy; a/r/tography; Quiltmaking.

### Resumo:

Minha prática como professora e artista/professora na educação infantil sempre atendeu as crianças e os materiais e processos disponíveis para a aprendizagem. A abordagem pedagógica nesta pesquisa com crianças muito novas centra-se em seus interesses e perspectivas. Estou me perguntando sobre o que eu/nós podemos fazer e como eu/nós podemos ensinar (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) com arte na educação infantil. Reuni fragmentos da ChildArt (Viola, 1942; Peterken, 2015, dissertação de doutorado não publicada) para pensar sobre a prática da primeira infância fecharam um ciclo (Burke, LasczikCutcher, Peterken&Potts, 2017). As imagens e obras de arte encontradas no meu trabalho de doutorado fazem com que eu volte a contemplar as imagens e colchas feitas anteriormente com crianças de 1 a 5 anos em sua sala de atendimento (Peterken, 2009, dissertação de lendas inéditas) para considerar como os momentos de produção são produtivos .

### Palavras-chave:

Primeira infância; Pedagogia pública; A / r / tografia; .

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### *Artmaking moments and fragments*

Digital photographs produced by children to show ‘what is important’ are pieces of their lives and learning. Images were transferred to fabric using ink jet printing onto transfer paper, then ironed on to calico and made into a quilt; a community artwork. They are becoming more than product or process. They are provocations for thinking with materials and the learning, play and worlds of young children. Six of the children’s images from our artmaking encounter are chosen due to their provocative impact in that research and are presented, titled with that child’s comment in italics, below. These images are fragments used to consider, as suggested by Christina MacRae (2012), how the artmaking encounter was productive. Her work that engages with process and product as children make art opened to her wondering how and what was productive in the encounters we have with artmaking. Each child (and I) participated in a moment of thinking, and the process of making art, while each photograph was produced. The children and I engaged with their fused fabric images as we quilted together and moments of learning emerged. These moments were productive for children to inquire in their world and present their understandings. The images as fragments of learning and teaching are also productive for me to think about pedagogy that incorporates art in early childhood.

I am wondering with fragments, materials and moments; “interested in how the moments help us think differently...[and] help us make a difference” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind & Kocher, 2017). Children were thinking with materials as we engaged with the items they chose to photograph. I am thinking with their images as I return to them to consider what young children did, can, and might do, with art. Gathering and working with these fragments brings forth further questions about what I/we can do and how I/we might teach (Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Peterken, 2015, unpublished doctoral dissertation) using art in early childhood education in ways that make a difference.

The very young children (and I) like the ducks photographed by a child, moved across and in-between. We traversed artist/researcher/teacher as we were with the images, words and the quilt in a process where there was “an attention to the in-between where meanings reside[d] in the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time” (Irwin and Springgay, 2008: xix). This artistic meaning

making was in-between and with fragments, moments, materials and the images and quilt as artefacts.

Young children have few, or no words. I/we can and might use materials and moments with them to enhance productive encounters. Teaching through art in early childhood education allows for children's perspectives and supports their 'Belonging, being and becoming' (Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2009). The encounters we had while making images and the quilt opened to the images, words and more-than-word spaces being material for transformation (Leggo, 2007). These children, the process and the images also taught and changed me. Children's understandings and my practice moved with this thinking and I am contemplating pedagogy that can and might be effective and affective as I/we attend to materials and children for shifting selves. This artmaking encounter was productive (MacRae, 2012) as children's and my learner/teacher selves entwined with artist/researcher/teacher (Springgay et al., 2008) selves to transform us and support our participation with process and product to present our learning environment and community.



Figure 1 and 2.

## Encounters

Fragments of lives and materials gathered

evoked documented using art

making art and making research

I am taken back to the quilt

I now see children's images as fragments of lives

love

play

knowing

connection.

Making sacred space,

Warmth ... with a quilt

stitching the images together

each a bound moment

to think with.

Tying through with ribbons

while sunlight refracts

colors of the rainbow

connecting and making

where one word, no words or a few words from a child are becoming an encounter:

In-between, across and through



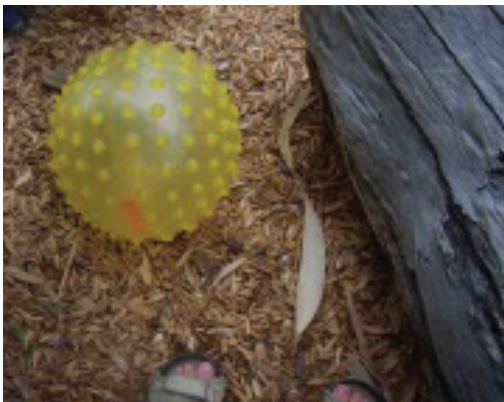


Figure 3. “ducks”, “splash”, “water”. Obstacles to traverse

Figure 4. “I like walking on the stones” Objects for playing, understanding the world

Figure 5. “Ball”

Figure 6. “It looks like a slithering snake”

Figure 7. “ ” ...and beyond words



current possession of a much-shared object

captured in hand and image

The most important thing

The most important thing for now

For now

he knows;

“knowing is just as much a matter of the body and the material as it is a matter of understanding and thinking through discourse/language” (Lenz Taguchi, 2010: 40).

He needs the image  
more than the words  
to own this,  
for now

In making and returning to the quilt, knowing is flowing in and out  
and folding through our selves and allowing “diverse possibilities for  
identity” (Leggo, 2008: 16).

for now. We, materials and moments, are in the making. It is fuzzy.



Figure 8. *“bunny ears”*

Fuzzy selves  
celebrating  
moments and situations  
materials  
for now  
putting on  
becoming (Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

Finding opportunities for inquiring  
in the moment  
  
with materials and ways of 'Belonging, being and becoming' (DEEWR, 2009).

I wonder about creating the conditions for productive encounters as I/we can and might" teach ... in a state of a listening dialogue with children as well as with matter, artefacts and environments" (Lenz Taguchi, 2010: 61). These images and the children's words as fragments and moments teach me about these children and their belonging and being and becoming as I am teaching and learning with them about us and our environment. What next?







For now, as I listen, learning and teaching with and through art, I am

more thoughtful about these materials: fragments that are images/ words and the quilt as artefacts where teaching and researching with art can allow children to present and investigate their perspectives through digital photography.

generating knowing with these fragments: I can see that children's art and artefacts make a difference as I think with these images and that teachers might value and encourage what is important to a child.

learning and continuing conversations with fragments, materials and moments: these can and might open spaces for inquiry to continue.

continuing to wonder how that encounter was productive,

and still questioning what else I/we can do and how I/we might teach (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) with art in early childhood education.

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