



Building Place-Consciousness: An Art Museum and Entangled Relations

Rina Kundu Little, Texas Tech University, USA

Candance Doerr-Stevens, University of Wisconsin, USA

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Abstract: The authors explore the Lynden Sculpture Garden's mission of place-conscious art education. Temporary outdoor work ranging from three-dimensional to performance and artists who work at the intersection of art and nature support its interest in place-conscious art education. Place-based education is often associated with schooling, which offers learners authentic experiences with the local for the purposes of increasing engagement and achievement, while place-conscious education helps to build a conceptual framework that articulates an ability to engage socially with the politics of place. The authors' investigation examines aspects of the museum's capacity to act as a shifting node in a network of relations and spaces and as a communicator of cultural knowledge.

Keywords: *Place-Based Education, Art Education, Decolonization, Narrative Inquiry, Entanglements*

Introduction

Members of the American Association of Museums, as well as the International Council of Museums, have asked museums to imagine their environments differently, as places for ideas and community interactions versus storehouses of objects to visit (*Mastering* 2002). The Lynden Sculpture Garden (Lynden), located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, responds to this call through place-conscious art education. It creates social engagement through its Call and Response Program (CRP) and its Innovative Educators Institute (IEI), acting as part of a network of relations.¹

The Lynden was formerly the estate of industrialist Harry Bradley and his wife Margaret Bradley, who created the park on their property and placed their collection of monumental sculptures in it. In 2010, the site was opened to the public as a museum and staff began working toward place-conscious art education. Planners of the CRP and the IEI facilitate an understanding of place by grounding learning through artifacts and the environment; inviting participants to listen and learn from the community and the land; building cooperative teaching and learning structures; and facilitating restoration through artistry (Sanger 1997). In this article, we focus on narrative in order to understand how the Lynden's place-conscious approach presents invitations to co-construct and engage, creates thresholds for "decolonization," and extends into the "reinhabitation" of space (Greenwood 2013). Encounter and entanglement become the context in which knowledge

¹ The authors embrace Massey's (1994) contention that place is a network of social relations, a product of practices, trajectories, and interdependencies. The museum is situated within this network as a cultural site and a place of memory, with programs that relate to the city, its inhabitants, and its histories (Till 2005).

is produced. Entanglement here means how humans and things depend on and co-constitute each other (Hodder and Mol 2015).

From Place-Based to Place-Conscious Education

Place-based pedagogies are part of a movement and methodology of study, in which students have a way to contextualize knowledge using local assets. Sobel (2004), for example, suggests using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach subjects. He emphasizes hands-on and real-world applications to increase academic achievement, civic engagement, and an appreciation for nature. Furthermore, place-based pedagogies also seek to address how we can be connected to places and communities. Orr (1992) suggests that knowledge is abstract and needs to be situated to reflect the life of a larger society and in order for communities to learn to live together. More recently, place-based pedagogies have taken a critical turn. The romantic view that the local is more authentic and meaningful has been challenged to consider how the environment is intertwined with social and political issues (Gruenewald 2003), including investigations into how power relations inscribe spaces, for instance, how power creates multiple and conflicting meanings and different modes of emplacement and how cultural work in and through places enhances or limits potential (Ball and Lai 2006; Graham 2007; Greenwood 2013; Gruenewald 2003; Kwon 2004; Ruitenberg 2005).

The Lynden has adopted a critical place-based pedagogy in which place is performed through a process of drifting and dwelling and sculptures, and installations become a function of the space (Kwon 2004). We understand that place is made up of the human and nonhuman and as something that does not preexist but is made material in entanglements with histories, past and present. Place is understood as composed of fragments of environments where meanings, activities, and landscapes implicate and enfold into each other (Wattshow and Brown 2011). An experience of place is always mediated, offering up interdependent, sensorial environments (Ruitenberg 2005). According to Smith (2002), “place-based education [also] holds out the potential of resituating learning within the context of communities” (594). In our formulation, however, all communities are structurally incomplete and imperfect in their identities, so emphasis instead is on a “community-to-come,” a call of hospitality to those outside its borders (Ruitenberg 2005).

With this movement away from seeing place as a fixed backdrop for activities, the Lynden constructs its programming differently. The organization uses its expertise, assets, and resources to recreate place with others. According to Greenwood (2013), place-conscious education extends place-based education to build a conceptual framework that socially engages with the politics of place. Greenwood (2013) goes on to recommend decolonization and reinhabitation as the aims of place-conscious education, explaining decolonization as

the educational process of identifying and unlearning patterned and familiar ways of experiencing and knowing to make room for practices that are unfamiliar [while]...reinhabitation involves learning to live well socially and ecologically in a place and learning to live in a way that does not harm other people and places. (108)

Decolonization and reinhabitation are theoretical constructs from goals set by a critical pedagogy of place.² “Meanings around decolonization, for example, are in various contexts similar to meanings surrounding deconstruction, deinstitutionalization, deschooling, and other terms that signal a strong critique of cultural practices and their underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions” (Greenwood 2013, 108).

According to Greenwood (2013), a critique of cultural practice is not enough, so it needs to be paired with reinhabitation, which involves reimagining and recovering an ecologically conscious relationship between peoples and places. The museum facilitates unsettling encounters within settler colonial places and spaces, of which it is part. As an institution in the highly segregated city of Milwaukee based on race and economics (Spicuzza 2019), its leadership made a commitment to attend to the entanglements of settler colonialism, specifically anti-blackness, bringing the contestations of place into view (Nxumalo 2019). The museum’s programs create storied places, as a way of inhabiting the city differently, foregrounding African American histories, knowledge, and relationalities. As a necessary part of decolonization, it is a way to resist erasures of Blackness from cultural and natural spaces.

Furthermore, Greenwood (2013) suggests ways in which to contribute to place-conscious education that are inquiry oriented. He asks that we investigate the historical, socioecological, and ethical dimensions of place relations by posing such questions as: What happened here? What is happening here now? What should happen here? The Lynden translates these queries into pedagogy focused on how: (1) places have histories, often contested, of the people who inhabit it and as such have narratives; (2) places offer a physical, sensory, and sociocultural environment of sounds, movements, interactions, images, and objects open to multiple interpretations and as such are constructed through points of view; (3) people make place in the world by continuously recreating it and as such places require narration through a variety of means and activities (Ruitenbergh 2005).

The Lynden Sculpture Garden Entangles Us and Constructs Place

The Lynden is a unique space to study how museums are changing to enable social engagement. Here, contemporary art is used to facilitate place-conscious education. Thus, our research questions include: (1) How do artworks and instructional strategies at the Lynden help participants of the Innovative Educator Institute (IEI) understand place? (2) How does the museum, including its art, artists, and educators, become resources for knowledge and catalysts for new entangled relations among people, communities, and places (Peer and Brown 2003)?

We focus on our own participation at the Lynden and that of two teachers, Sue and Katie, and their navigation across multiple learning spaces during the 2017–2018 IEI. We, Rina Kundu Little and Candance Doerr-Stevens, are each participant observers. The IEI is designed to bring together educators for mentorship in teaching with and through the arts and in relation to place and cultures. Organized around teaching teams that include an art specialist

² Places “are not so much bounded areas as open and porous networks of social relations” (Massey 1994, 121).

with one or two classrooms or subject areas, teachers from a variety of grade levels plan interdisciplinary curriculum that facilitates inquiry. Every year, about thirty teachers work with the Lynden Sculpture Garden staff, university art education faculty, artists, artists-in-residence, and teachers-in-residence through critical hands-on site investigations that include art and the environment, classroom visits, and reconvening meetings. These teachers, who are mostly middle class and white, then bring their classes, about thirty to sixty students per school, to engage with the Lynden as part of their interdisciplinary curriculum. Most students are from the urban areas of Milwaukee. Since 2016, one of us has been a lead planner and facilitator for the IEI, and the other has been an evaluator for the institute.³

We use narrative inquiry as discussed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Clandinin, Caine, and Lessard (2018), and Rosiek and Snyder (2018). These approaches to narrative inquiry position stories as lived experiences that simultaneously shape the teller as the teller shapes the narrative. This active positioning of the story provides a fitting entry to develop relations that might be promising to place-conscious art education. As researchers who work in the post-qualitative moment, we do not believe narratives constructed through our inquiry are already formed waiting to be discovered. We acknowledge that there is no way to accurately capture lived experience. Our narratives are not fixed but a product of material flows with capacities performed through our questions and our responses to and with others and could be relived differently (La Grange 2017, 2018; Lather 2013).

Stories help us to experience things and shape understanding. The Lynden's theme for the 2017–2018 IEI entitled “Narrating Space: Wandering, Encountering, Dwelling, and Resonating” involved the active relationship between bodies and spaces including entanglements among people, places, and things. Specifically, participants were asked to “write” about spaces, or physically deploy narratives within spaces using creative modes of representation to reconfigure engagement with them. The emphasis was that space should not be understood as static or isolated from those who inhabit it, but one in which mind, body, objects, and terrain shape each other (Ruitenberg 2005). We used the word “entanglement,” as defined by Hodder and Mol (2015), to mean the dependency of humans and things on each other. As Hodder and Mol note, entanglements “capture the ways in which human reliance” on the material draws them into interactions where there are complex co-dependencies (2015). Things are not inert but transform, grow, change, break, and die. We acknowledge that the narratives we tell or gather here shape us as we use them. As such, the ethics of our research inquiry require responsibility and accountability to the site. We embrace narrative as sensemaking, performative, and transformative, where what we write shapes us and others (La Grange 2018). This understanding of narrative is thus a valuable means for co-constructing stories that highlight entanglements among IEI participants, artworks, the museum,

³ The authors wish to recognize the involvement of Laura Trafi-Prats as the original lead planner and facilitator of the IEI and Anna Grosch, who introduced place-based education to programming.

classrooms, and community spaces. We begin with a narrative designed to open a connection to place-based experiences and how people, things, land, and culture are entwined:

As we **wander** across the lawn of the Lynden, we pass many sculptures and enter a wooded area. We see a slave cabin and a vegetable garden in the distance. We enter and **encounter** many unexpected objects. As we **dwell** within the space, we come to know aspects of a life through objects—a journal; a desk; photographs; turtles; animal skulls; fish; sculptures; musical instruments; birds; and more. The cabin **resonates** with the life of an accomplished individual born before the Civil War. There are also objects that do not seem to fit, such as a Princess Leia action figure. We learn that this cabin is the work of contemporary artist Fodayemi Wilson and we experience *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosity*. Wilson's character of Eliza is an African-American slave, scientist, time-traveler, artist, collector, and writer. (Rina Kundu Little, personal communication, August 2018)

To highlight a commitment to place that is culturally and environmentally responsive, the Director of the Lynden, Polly Morris, invited Wilson to create this installation (see Figure 1). The work imagines what an educated nineteenth-century woman of African descent might collect. The house is both a slave cabin and a cabinet of curiosities. According to Greenblatt (1990), cabinets of curiosities first emerged in sixteenth-century Europe as collections of nature, art, and rare and exotic objects and specimens, discoveries made by those that studied and traveled and were educated, wealthy, and had taste. Furthermore, these cabinets were not only about possession but also wonder (Greenblatt 1990). Eliza's house was filled with wonders and displayed to have us reimagine what a slave can be. These material objects become important because they give voice to a slave, a person who has usually been made silent (Wilson 2017).



Figure 1: IEI Participants Encountering Fo Wilson's *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosity*

The cabin anchors the Call and Response Program (CRP) where artists from multiple disciplines share a commitment to the radical Black imagination. The radical Black imagination is a process of thinking otherwise by imagining a different world and transgressing the limits and boundaries given historically to Blacks (Kelly 2003). Afrofuturist art is part of the radical Black imagination because it reclaims the past and provides a vision for a future where Blacks play a central role in producing the world (Derby 1994). As an Afrofuturist artist, Wilson decolonizes and reinhabits a space through storytelling that offers up new ways of imagining the past to reconfigure the present and future. She investigates belonging, or emplacement, by presenting a counter narrative through science fiction, fantasy, and history. Wilson shares, “The project foregrounds Eliza’s experience—fictional or not—and the imaginations of others like her as a unique technology of Black agency, resistance, and survival, and as the under-appreciated gift of Blackness from which all of America has benefitted” (Wilson 2017). This is a world which mixes fact with fiction, showcasing the interesting and creative life of Eliza. Visitors are taken back into the past so that they can reimagine the Other,⁴ countering their knowledge of enslaved people (Little and Cobb 2022). And in presenting this story, Wilson also calls on others to respond. She, with the support of the Lynden, invites other artists to visit the cabin to respond.

In calling for responses, Wilson and the museum reinvent curatorial practice as emergent, situated, and relational to lived experiences. Call and response, for example in music, is often thought of as a pattern where one phrase is heard as commentary in response to another. Here it modulates the resonance of voices of a variety of Black artists, one responding to another. Through this exchange, the museum becomes a shifting node in a network of relationships, versus a center with margins and peripheries (Gere 1997; Ruitenbergh 2005).

Filmmaker Portia Cobb’s *Rooted: The Storied Land, Memory, and Belonging* is a work that responds to Wilson’s call. It memorializes food ways that survived slavery through the use of a vegetable garden cared for by another fictional character, Lizzie, a woman born free and a relative of Eliza (see Figure 2). Cobb also invites others to respond to both Lizzie and Eliza, such as anthropologist Scott Barton, who pickled produce from the garden and organized a harvest story, and textile artist Arianne King Comer, who worked with the community to make a cloth recipe book related to the garden using indigo dyeing techniques. All are entanglements and co-creations working as vectors in a network of relations, calling us into connection with a web of movements, actions, and materials that construct modes of emplacement. History here has a point of view, exposed, and contested, and emplacement is made through environments of movements, dialogues, interactions, images, and objects open to multiple interpretations.

⁴ Othering is a practice of exclusion and displacement by defining a person as a subaltern and belonging to the socially subordinate category of the Other.

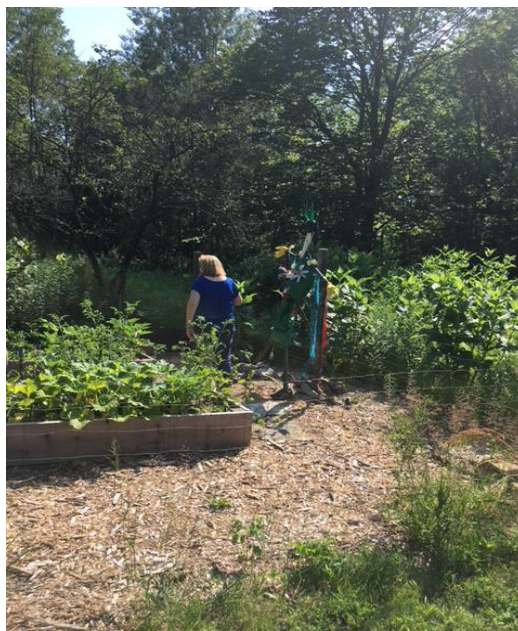


Figure 2: IEI Participants Encountering Lizzie's Garden in *Rooted: The Storied Land, Memory and Belonging*

The CRP gathers together artists as a means to re-examine the past and imagine a better future and to address belonging through decolonization and reinhabitation. It is a space where artists investigate complex issues, collaborate, and extend dialogue, and their productions become catalysts for new relationships and knowledge constructs. The Innovative Educators Institute (IEI) is designed similarly, bringing together teachers for mentorship and sustained relations that looks beyond the museum's borders to facilitate place-conscious education in relation to the larger community.

Pulsating Nodes Within the Innovative Educators Institute (IEI)

The Lynden's Innovative Educators Institute (IEI) also facilitates interactions with participants, particularly with teachers who are re-envisioning curricula for their classroom. The perspectives of the museum, educators, artists, and participants intersect with and inform each other. In this zone, they have reason to come into contact with each other because they have aims that extend beyond the borders of their disciplines, to imagine new public spheres, relationships with place, and the rewriting of histories and relations. The Lynden stretches beyond preserving and contextualizing objects alone⁵ and instead, acts as a resource for

⁵ Museums, as a type of archive, are often imagined as containers to be filled with the materiality of the past where preservation and contextualization are the focus. But according to Appadurai (2003), archiving can also be an act of the imagination in anticipation of collective memory. Materials become the matter by which to craft different possibilities, worlds, and selves—as an exercise in the “capacity to aspire,” (19) as a deliberate project of collective recuperation, allowing us to envision many stories and perspectives. The Lynden enables collective recuperation by acting as a resource for rewriting histories and social relations.

rewriting histories and social relationships with surrounding communities and classrooms. Curricula writing at the IEI is based on the concept of lived curricula, where spaces for stories, anecdotes, and narratives that embody the lived dimension of lives can take place (Aoki 2004).

In the narratives below, we share three processes used at the IEI. We start with the museum, not as the center of activity but as an invitation to engage. Next, we describe the classroom as the threshold for decolonization. Lastly, we describe the community as the space for reinhabitation, where students, teachers, artists, objects, and discourses interact with each other to reclaim spaces by inscribing them differently through creative processes. Presented in a linear fashion for this article, it is important to recognize that each partial narrative exists interconnected and multilayered.

Museum Node: Site of Invitation and Intra-action

During the 2017–2018 Innovative Educators Institute (IEI) year, we discussed how space could serve a narrative role, for it is a bearer of meaning and an object of investment. Participants were invited to explore and to narrate space through the strategies of wandering, encountering, and dwelling, which are borrowed from practices of contemporary artists, including the Situationist International and social practice artists. These activities investigated how movement, behaviors, sounds, poses, rituals, objects, structures, flora, and fauna interact and entangle, facilitating an understanding of spaces. For example, on day two of the summer lab, participants were led on a walk and asked to decenter their reliance on the visual as a way of making meaning. Instead of looking and sketching, they were asked to find a spot on the Lynden grounds, sit, close their eyes, listen, touch, smell, and taste their surroundings. This experience inspired many of the educators to reconsider their use of the senses in their surroundings.

Another example of activities on days one and four included narrating spaces and mapping curiosities, emphasizing three key practices: (1) investigating and mediating space; (2) interrogating traditional practices of mapmaking and narration; and (3) exploring mapmaking as an artistic practice that can represent deep space (ecological, social, historical, and cultural space). In asking participants to map their experience with the Lynden grounds, participants were challenged to move beyond mapping as documentation to a more holistic understanding that is user-generated and speaks to ecological, historical, and cultural issues. In response to this invitation, participants created diverse mappings, which reconfigured engagement, allowing all to pause, dwell, and touch. Katie's group created sound maps, recording aspects of life in the environment and representing its noise levels from the center of the garden toward its borders. Instead of understanding the museum as a liminal space, we were conscious of its connection to the land and city, through the sounds heard. Sue's group created a readers' theater in which after dark the sculptures came alive as vibrating matter, having lives, dependencies of their own, and stories. In both cases, the teachers decentered usual ways of knowing within a museum and spoke to interconnections to other senses, spaces, and vitalities beyond perception.

We took on contemporary art practices to research how spaces could be reinhabited moving the museum beyond the mere dissemination of knowledge to integrating individual experiences and priorities through participation. Instead of understanding the museum as the center of knowledge, questions and experiences were constructed so that participants come to insights for themselves and in relation to other spaces. People and objects become a function of the space. (Rina Kundu Little, personal communication, August 2018)

As the summer workshop ended, the curriculum emerging from participants indicated a direction for the reconvenings. Narratives about reclaiming space appeared in about half the participants' work, so the reconvening meetings focused on this. Using examples of contemporary monument building from across the nation presented by graduate fellow Claudia Orjuela and lead facilitator Rina Kundu Little, participants were introduced to how monument building decolonizes spaces and reinhabits them differently. Classroom visits made by museum educator Anna Grosch and artists-in-residence Colin Matthes and Rose Curly also facilitated co-creative relationships that supported teachers and students in their spaces, extended students' engagement with art, and shaped curriculum. Teacher teams, furthermore, integrated student field trips to the Lynden as part of their curriculum and updated other participants on their progress.

Classroom Nodes: Urban Classrooms as Thresholds for Decolonization

Katie's middle school art classroom is an urban charter school that enrolls over 1,200 students in grades K4-8, set in a campus with many different social services. Sue's elementary art classroom is set in an urban public school with a dual language focus. Her school serves over 450 K3-5th grade students.

Katie and Sue's classrooms are places where students have opportunities to reimagine spaces through stories, monuments, and activities and to enact authentic, place-conscious art engagements for learners. Sue describes the questions used for reimagination:

I wanted to create an attitude of observing, of being mindful, understanding that we were being researchers...what does it mean to observe our surroundings? How can we record these observations and share them with others? Where do we find nature in our neighborhood? And what does having natural spaces mean for us? Is it important, and if so, how? (Sue Pezanowski Brown, personal communication, July 2018)

Seeking to grow in her practice to emphasize "art as activism" in her classroom, Katie decided to bring her 8th graders to the Lynden for a field trip.

The main disconnect that I felt after the [recycled sea] turtle project was, here we are talking about being more conscious of plastic use in our community but we really didn't have many connections...how do we push it beyond that?...I felt like I wanted

to have a more concrete community connection. (Katie Hobday, personal communication, August 2018)

Planning in collaboration with the museum educators, Katie and her colleague, a science teacher, identified art as activism and outdoor exploration as objectives for their museum experience, which was comprised of stations, each engaging students with place in different ways. One station, led by educator Anna Grosch, invited students to visit *Eliza's Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosity*. Anna asked the students to explore the cabin, look at the objects and wonder, "Who is it that lives here, and what is her struggle?" The students noted the presence of writing on the ceiling, a ladder through the roof, and a Princess Leia figurine. Through discussion, students noted the chronological inconsistencies between references to US slavery and space travel. Building on notions of Afrofuturism learned in class, the students were asked to imagine that they, similar to Eliza, could travel in time. If so, where would they travel and why? How would traveling to such a place improve life today? To ponder these questions, the students made drawings of the where, when, and what they would visit and bring back to improve their lives.

Building upon the metaphor of portals, another station, led by educator Jeremy Stepien, involved students in collaborative art-making. Jeremy opened the session by asking the students how art can be used to imagine a better future. In preparation, the students were asked to review issues that they would like to improve in this other world. The issues ranged from war, racism, child abuse, and animal testing, to expanding on women's and immigrants' rights. The students then wrote the issues on tags and threaded these concerns along strips of tape that were entangled around stakes, ultimately becoming a portal to another world the students could step into (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Students Imagine New Futures through Naming and Plotting Social Issues

In both stations, students were invited to imagine alternative realities and reinvent space. In the cabin, they investigated the character of Eliza, a person who deliberately curated objects to reinhabit her place through time and space. In the next station, students constructed a portal for travel elsewhere, harnessing collaborative art-making to create a shared alternative reality with their peers. Through engagement with these passageways, the students interrogated the situationality of Eliza and their own “here and now.” This decolonizing of the classroom and museum space, this unlearning of patterned and familiar ways of experiencing and knowing through the creation of alternative realities, invited students to reconsider boundaries and routines through collaborative artwork. Such reinhabitation of daily spaces provoked wonder, imagination, and the revisioning of their social and historical surroundings. Seeking to reiterate and entangle itself with Katie’s practice to connect her students to actively imagine better worlds for the community, the Lynden space became an extension of her classroom that shaped her curriculum design and social positioning as a teacher (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: Students’ “Collaborative Portal”

Community Node: Reinhabitation of Red Arrow Park Through Layered Entanglements

Looking to step outside its own borders during the December reconvening, the Lynden workshop leaders asked teachers to investigate Red Arrow Park, a local site with contested histories.⁶ Investigations required participants to research the park. Participants were provided with a

⁶ There are a number of histories and memories that define Red Arrow Park, including that it serves to honor the 32nd Infantry Division of the United States, known after World War I as the 32nd Red Arrow Division and that it is also the site where Dontre Hamilton was shot and killed by a police officer who was later found to be guilty of not following departmental defense and arrest tactics. A monument represents the infantry, while a bench is dedicated to Dontre Hamilton.

questionnaire shaped by Greenwood's notions of decolonization and reinhabitation (2013) to investigate and design a monument that would redefine social engagement in the park.

After completing the research individually, participants gathered during the reconvening in February. The Innovative Educators Institute (IEI) lead facilitator asked groups to create an accordion book to share, review, and synthesize their individual research findings collectively. Participants were encouraged to draw upon several materials, each with their own potential to explore, interrogate, and examine their understandings of the park (see Figures 5 and 6).

Personally, I knew very little about the park. Like some of the teachers, my experience of the park was limited to Internet research. News coverage had depicted the park as space of neglect and danger given the recent police shooting of an unarmed African American man, Dontre Hamilton. Some teachers visited the park to interview pedestrians on their views for the monument and its purpose for the park. For others, the park had long, personal histories for their families and Milwaukee.

I was surprised with how easily the teachers negotiated the competing narratives that emerged. Instead of feeling compelled to find consensus within their representation of the park, they used the materials to create pluralistic narratives about the space. For example, Citra Solv was used to transfer images on top of each other. Acetate sheets were used for tracing and layering histories. Each spoke into the park space, from different points in time, be that of the Hamilton family or military veterans honored by the Red Arrow Monument. I sensed a complexity of knowing not possible in verbal representations. (Candance Doerr-Stevens, personal communication, September 2018)

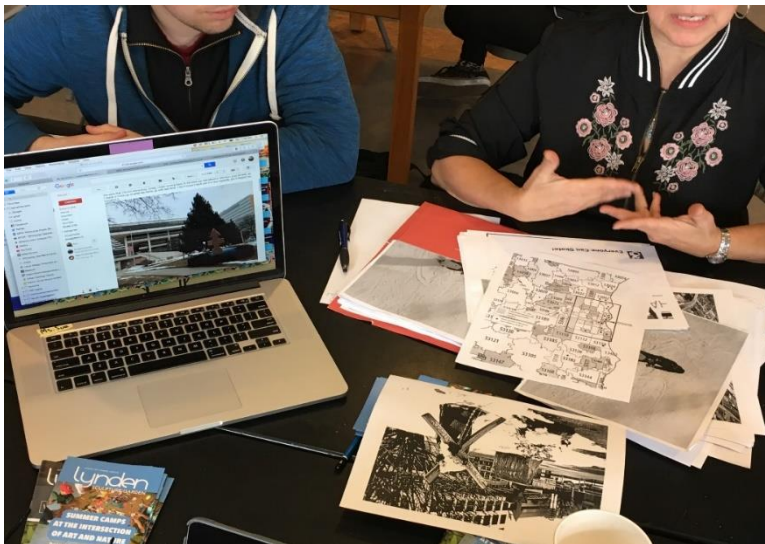


Figure 5: Teachers Share Researched Findings on Red Arrow Park



Figure 6: Teachers Present Accordion Books on Red Arrow Park

Occurring in tandem with the teacher investigations of Red Arrow Park were several local Milwaukee initiatives honoring the youth activism of 1967 known as the “200 Nights of Freedom.” This extended protest gained national attention and influenced federal laws on fair housing. To celebrate the 50-year anniversary of this march, local leaders organized events to honor and reignite youth activism and civic engagement. One event invited students to design a monument. Others invited teachers to design curriculum. Both Katie and Sue answered the call to engage, entangling themselves and their students in the activist legacy of Milwaukee. Positioning teaching as a practice of activism, Sue worked with other educators and local community members to create curriculum in relation to this history. Such practices entangle her engagement with the museum, her classroom, and the community. Yet, instead of seeing the entanglements as hindrances, she senses them as tools for navigation. As she describes, “With everything going on in the world, we [teachers] are doing our own navigation as adults about how we feel about the things that are happening in the world. And then also at the same time, sort of navigating how we inform our teaching” (Sue Pezanowski Brown, personal communication, July 2018).

Building on her experience during the IEI reconvening, Katie also answered the call by inviting her students to design a monument on an issue of importance to them. Students designed monuments on issues of gun violence and immigration, just to name a few. The design process invited much research. As Katie describes,

Through their research they found and discovered a lot of places in Milwaukee [to which] that they hadn’t been, or didn’t know...That was interesting, their entanglement with the community and also me restructuring...if I want this to be a

personal connection for them, how can I make sure they understand where they are placing it?...[There were] also entanglements with working together, trying to hash out their ideas...entanglements within the materials...there was a lot of trial and error of trying to navigate through that...our experiences and what we knew or what we could share with each other was almost more important than the process. (Katie Hobday, personal communication, August 2018)

Similar to negotiating the life experiences and knowledge sets used to re-narrate Red Arrow Park, Katie's student participants also drew upon various materials, sites, and histories to reinhabit places in Milwaukee. Moreover, for Katie, her previous experiences creating the accordion book at the Lynden attuned her capacity to notice that her students, like herself, were also entangled in a process of becoming, an experience of knowledge in-the-making.

We talked about what happened at Red Arrow Park...the person who was killed by police...they were really bothered by the fact that they didn't know that happened. They were really annoyed with the Slice of Ice [Skating Rink], like "here are these people skating along and they're not thinking about it." So, this group wanted to create a bench and then the person would be cast in metal...they wanted people to not be able to use the bench, but be forced to think about what happened there. (Katie Hobday, personal communication, August 2018)

Katie's students were in early elementary school when Dontre Hamilton was shot and killed. The incident is still potent and painful in many adults' memories and as Katie's students pointed out, a striking juxtaposition with continued winter recreation in the same space. Through conversation, research, and collaborative monument design, Katie's students began to understand this layer of experience in the park and make some sense of their own "not knowing" as they proposed a way to partially reinhabit the space by confronting the event through a memorial.

Conclusion

Art classrooms do not always engage with place, but it is urgent. You cannot isolate what is happening in your classroom from bigger contexts. Schooling is contested in our area, rooted in systemic inequities that affect resources and public services. We try to make this visible in our own classes because we know that most of the future teachers we work with are coming from other settings. We did too. It takes time and continual encounters with multiple perspectives and spaces to grasp what is going on and it is necessary work to forge place. We think everyone involved in the IEI has seen that in some way we have the opportunity to listen deeply, engage with counternarratives, and re-envision what our classrooms and communities can look like. We are reflecting on how it might extend our own classroom with place-conscious education now too. (Rina Kundu Little and Candance Doerr-Stevens, personal communication, September 2018)

We and our stories become together. As Rosiek and Snyder (2018) note, “by the time we arrive at what is generally understood as the ‘research process’, both the researcher and the object of study have worked extensive influence on one another” (2). We the authors share our own coming to terms with place-conscious art education in the context of this environment. We reiterate that it embodies process, involves dialogue and exchange, is embedded in intersubjective experiences, and establishes relations with others. Just as the museum shapes the classroom, so too do the classroom and the materiality of artistic practice shape the museum.

The Lynden constructs contact zones where social engagement and exchange take place through pedagogical commitments. In the Call and Response Program (CRP) and the Innovative Educators Institute (IEI), participants are included in social interactions surrounding the production and reception of place through artist practices in order to connect people and ideas to their surroundings and to understand creative modes of emplacement. In this case, messages no longer go from the museum to the people where the museum fails to engage in how the messages are received or are extended through local histories and identities in a kind of closed circuit.⁷ Instead, the museum here becomes a shifting node in an open network of interactive relations with people and other spaces, a resonance involving exchange, negotiation, and communication (Gere 1997). Professional development opportunities should allow for meaningful considerations of how art and exhibitions might become significant in shaping a world. What we have found is that practice can move beyond the model of individual consumption of art (Kundu and Kalin 2015) toward an educational framing that supports modes of looking and doing that direct one’s gaze to responsibilities in relation to a wider society and to the construction of place.

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Informed Consent

The author has obtained informed consent from all participants.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

⁷ Public engagement is highlighted in the mission statements of many museums but is frequently unexamined and embedded with assumptions (Ashley 2013). This museum follows up by investing staff and resources into supporting teachers and how they use its collection to create curriculum and connect to histories.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rina Kundu Little: Associate Professor, School of Art, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA

Corresponding Author's Email: rina.little@ttu.edu

Candance Doerr-Stevens: Associate Professor, School of Education, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, USA

Email: doerrste@uwm.edu