

**Reconfiguring a history of art and design curriculum in a South African
university of technology: Becoming-with critical arts-based
pedagogical encounters**

**De herschrijving van de geschiedenis van het kunst en design onderwijs
op een Zuid-Afrikaanse hogeschool: kunst gebaseerde kritische
pedagogische ontmoetingen**

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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English summary

The South African #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall student struggles prised open spaces for critical arts-based pedagogies to disrupt art history, a discipline that embodies Eurocentric cultural hegemony. While a growing body of literature explores the relationship between arts-based learning and socially just pedagogies in the global north, not enough scholarship has attended to how critical art-based pedagogical practices contribute to the doing of academia differently in the south, and more particularly, within South African higher education (SA HE) settings. Located in an Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP), my thesis explores the question of how critical-arts based pedagogies can be used to reconfigure an art history curriculum. Using a diffractive methodological approach that generates differences within, that are perceived as affirmative rather than oppositional, the inquiry further explores how critical arts-based pedagogies might disrupt the hegemonic canon of Western art history and build relationships of solidarity and trust in classroom encounters in order to make a difference that matters. Drawing on feminist new materialist, critical posthumanist perspectives, care ethics studies and postphilosophies scholarship, this thesis constitutes 5 peer reviewed scholarly articles that explore the novel contributions of critical-arts based pedagogies to socially just academic practices in SA HE in order to challenge coloniality.

Premised on how distrust is endemic to SA HE, Chapter 1 provides the overarching ethical framework that guides my pedagogical approach to teaching art history at ECP level. Bringing together Tronto's feminist ethics of care, Ettinger's carriage and Boler's pedagogies of discomfort, the role that care practices play in building ethical relations across difference in the classroom is explored in detail. Chapter 2 attends to how my own artistic-research practice, that operates in the interstices of making and thinking, activates modes of inquiry in "the between" of words and images in the classroom. Following an immanent speculative inquiry that unsettles the hegemony of language, these practices inform pedagogies that trouble traditional logocentric, linear approaches associated with Cartesian thought. Chapter 3 further explores how critical arts-based pedagogies trouble issues of inclusion, exclusion and assimilation within the academy with the conviction that "decolonising the mind" hinges on disruptive knowledges that decentre Eurocentric cultural dominance. Structured around an ancient Greek vase painting lesson, the chapter positions students' knowledges as central to their learning, by foregrounding how their embodied encounters with ancient artefacts manifest visual and written narratives that disrupt Eurocentrism. Chapter 4 is concerned with how educators and students might work affirmatively with difference(s), by diffracting the intra-actions between students, myself, artist Sethembile Msezane's performance *Chapungu, the day Rhodes Fell* (2015) and the *Winged Nike of Samothrace* (190 BCE). This process prompted new imaginaries whilst working with ambivalent and painful pasts in ways that matter for art history teaching by troubling the canon without reinscribing it as normative. Chapter 5 examines how critical arts-based pedagogies might address our haunted past by activating a speaking-with and drawing-with the ghosts of Sarah Baartman and

the “Hottentot Venus” in the classroom. In so doing, a literal and figurative re-remembering of the past is activated within the context of the present that has bearing on the future.

In keeping with decolonial imperatives, the study concludes with the following overall findings: Critical arts-based pedagogies play an important role in critiquing issues of inclusion, exclusion and assimilation within contemporary academic contexts. These pedagogies also activate embodied modalities, materials and non-discursive modes of expression that simultaneously question what counts as knowledge and explore how knowledge is produced. Being processual and relational practices, critical arts-based pedagogies enable a disruption of student/educator and researcher/practitioner boundaries. Together with ghosts, we are able to reimagine different futures through our non-innocent entanglements with the haunted and haunting discipline of art history. In summary, the thesis argues that in foregrounding students’ “non-dominant” subjectivities, their artworkings disrupt hegemonic discourses. Situating themselves as producers of knowledge, students begin to challenge the dominance of science-based approaches to educational research practice.

Keywords: Art history, critical arts-based pedagogies, South African higher education, research-creation, becoming-with, aesthetic wit(h)nessing, carriage, response-ability

Nederlandse samenvatting

Door de #RhodesMustFall en #FeesMustFall studentenopstanden in Zuid-Afrika ontstond er in het kritische kunstonderwijs ruimte om de kunstgeschiedenis, als vakdiscipline de belichaming van eurocentrische culturele hegemonie, te ontwrichten. Hoewel er in het noordelijk halfrond steeds meer studies verschijnen over hoe kunstonderwijs zich kan verhouden tot het uitgangspunt van sociaal rechtvaardig onderwijs, is er te weinig aandacht voor de vraag hoe in het zuidelijk halfrond de praktijk van kritisch kunstonderwijs kan bijdragen aan andere pedagogische benaderingen in hoger onderwijs, en meer in het bijzonder in de setting van hoger onderwijs in Zuid-Afrika (HOZA). Mijn proefschrift betreft de vraag hoe in het Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) in Zuid-Afrika kritisch kunstonderwijs kan worden benut om het curriculum van kunstgeschiedenis te herconfigureren. Aan de hand van een diffractief methodologische benadering, waarin verschillen op zo'n manier van binnenuit gegenereerd worden dat ze eerder bevestigend zijn dan tegenover elkaar staan, gaat het onderzoek daarnaast ook in op de vraag hoe in de praktijk van het kunstonderwijs de onderwijskundige methode erin kan slagen om de hegemonie van de canon in westerse kunstgeschiedenis te ontwrichten; en daarmee in het klaslokaal een werkelijk verschil kan maken door saamhorigheid en vertrouwen tot stand te brengen. Met als vertrekpunt een combinatie van een feministisch nieuw-materialistisch en kritisch posthumanistisch perspectief, zorgethiek en postfilosofische wetenschap, bestaat dit proefschrift uit vijf peer reviewed artikelen. Daarin wordt onderzocht wat de specifieke bijdrage is van kritisch kunstonderwijs tot een sociaal rechtvaardige manier van lesgeven in HOZA waarin ruimte is om kolonialisme kritisch te bevragen.

Gebaseerd op de veronderstelling dat in HOZA wantrouwen endemisch is, behandelt het eerste hoofdstuk het overkoepelende ethische raamwerk dat mijn pedagogische aanpak van kunsthistorisch onderwijs op ECP-niveau vormgeeft. De theorieën van Tronto (feministische zorgethiek), Ettinger (carriance) en Boler (de pedagogie van discomfort) worden gecombineerd om op detailniveau de rol te onderzoeken die een zorgende benadering kan spelen in het opbouwen van ethische relaties door de verschillen in een klaslokaal heen. Het tweede hoofdstuk richt zich op hoe mijn eigen creatieve onderzoekspraktijk, die zich in de ruimte tussen maken en denken afspeelt, in de klas een onderzoekende houding activeert naar de ruimte tussen woord en beeld in. Uitgaand van immanent speculatief onderzoek, dat de hegemonie van taal ontzet, draagt dit bij tot een manier van onderwijs die de traditionele logocentrische en lineaire benaderingen geassocieerd met het Cartesiaanse denken ontwricht. Vanuit de overtuiging dat 'dekoloniseren van het denken' over disruptieve kennis gaat die de eurocentrische culturele dominantie decentraliseert, wordt in hoofdstuk drie verder onderzocht hoe kritisch kunstonderwijs ideeën over inclusie, exclusie en assimilatie in het hoger onderwijs van slag brengen. Aan de hand van een les 'schilderen van oud- Griekse vazen' wordt in dit hoofdstuk de eigen kennis van studenten in hun leerproces centraal gesteld, door te laten zien hoe hun eigen belichaamde ontmoetingen met een artefact uit de oudheid visuele en schriftelijke narratieven behelzen waarmee eurocentrisme

wordt ontwricht. Het vierde hoofdstuk richt zich op hoe docenten en studenten op een bevestigende manier met verschil(len) kunnen omgaan, door diffractie van intra-acties tussen studenten, mijzelf, de performance Chapungu, de dag dat Rhodes viel (2015) van kunstnares Sethembile Msezane, en de gevleugelde Nike van Samothrake (190 v.Chr.). Dit proces zet aan tot het creëren van een nieuwe verbeelding aan de hand van werken met een ambivalente en pijnlijke geschiedenis op een manier die belangrijk is voor het onderwijzen van kunstgeschiedenis, omdat het de canon bevraagt zonder hem daarmee opnieuw als normatief voor te schrijven. In het vijfde hoofdstuk wordt nagegaan hoe het kritisch kunstonderwijs de geschiedenis die ons blijft achtervolgen, in de klas kan betrekken via een spreken-met en tekenen-met de geesten van Sarah Baartman en de 'Hottentot Venus'. Door het zo aan te pakken, wordt, binnen het heden dat gericht is op de toekomst, een letterlijke en een figuurlijke her-innering van het verleden geactiveerd.

In lijn met dekolonisering, wordt het onderzoek afgesloten met de volgende overkoepelende bevindingen: kritisch kunstonderwijs speelt een belangrijke rol bij het kritisch bevragen van zaken rond inclusie, exclusie en assimilatie binnen de hedendaagse context van hoger onderwijs. Deze pedagogische praktijk activeert ook belichaamde modaliteiten, materialen en non-discursieve manieren om zich uit te drukken die zowel bevraagt wat als kennis wordt aanvaard als de kennisproductie onderzoekt. Kritisch kunstonderwijs is een praktijk van proces en relaties, waarmee het een vervaging van de traditionele grenzen tussen student/docent en onderzoeker/praktijkbeoefenaar mogelijk maakt. Samen met de geesten van het verleden lukt het ons, door middel van onze niet-onschuldige verwevenheid met het spookhuis van de kunstgeschiedenis, om toch verschillende toekomstversies in te beelden. Samenvattend beargumenteer ik dat door de 'non-dominante' subjectiviteit van de studenten naar voor te schuiven, hun kunstwerkingen het heersende discours kunnen ontwrichten. Doordat studenten zichzelf als producenten van kennis positioneren, kunnen ze een begin maken met het onderuithalen van de dominantie van op wetenschap gebaseerde benaderingen binnen onderwijskundig onderzoek.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

ANC — African National Congress

BCE — Before the common era

CHEC — Cape Higher Education Consortium

CPUT — Cape Peninsula University of Technology

ECP — Extended Curriculum Programme

FID — Faculty of Informatics and Design

HBU — Historically Black University

HE — Higher Education

HEI — Higher Education Institution

HWU — Historically White University

#RMF — #RhodesMustFall

#FMF — #FeesMustFall

UCT — University of Cape Town

SA — South Africa

SA HE — South African Higher Education



Introduction

1. Context

Erupting on 9 March 2015 at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) student protests called for the removal of the statue of arch-colonialist Cecil John Rhodes that occupied a prominent position on the university's main campus. #RMF rapidly gained momentum and developed into a wider national movement under the banner of #FeesMustFall (#FMF). While #RMF called for the decolonisation of the university, #FMF fought for universal access to South African higher education (SAHE). The protests exposed the underlying fractures in SAHE and South African society at large. Under the banner of "Decolonising the University", students set out to disrupt prevailing power relations within the academy. While their demands included equal access to education and insourcing of workers, this thesis responds to their calls to decolonise curricula and pedagogies. These calls highlighted an urgent need for the research and development of socially just curricula and pedagogies in SAHE (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2016); Leibowitz, 2016; Leibowitz & Naidoo, 2017; Zembylas & Bozalek, 2017).

The #RMF and #FMF movements responded to South Africa's deeply divided education system, one that carries the scars of the combined legacies of colonialism and apartheid. The apartheid policy of "separate development" reserved 87% of the land for the white minority, leaving the remaining 13% for African people in the *bantustans*.¹ This policy, together with the *Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953*, which ushered in a separate system of inferior education for black students, continue to contour and haunt the contemporary education landscape.² Also known as "gutter education", the *Bantu* education system was an elaborate apartheid apparatus that comprised separate education departments, each one shaped and governed along racial lines.³

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- ¹ The bantustans were also called "homelands". They were established by the apartheid government in order to deprive Africans of their citizenship by creating 10 parallel "countries" constructed along ethnic lines. By the 1980s there were four "independent" bantustans (Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana) and six "self-governing" territories (Lebowa, Gazankulu, KwaNdebele, Qwaqwa, KaNgwane, and KwaZulu).
 - ² In the "white" areas of South Africa, 19 higher education institutions were reserved for the use of whites, two were designated for coloured people, two were for the exclusive use of Indians and six were reserved for Africans. There were seven institutions in the bantustans which were essentially for Africans (Badat, 2016, p. 176).
 - ³ The term "black" refers to the socially constructed apartheid racial categories of African, coloured and Indian. However, this thesis rejects their validity and value as classificatory terms (Cooper, 2019, p. 238).

Accordingly, higher education institutions (HEIs) were disproportionately resourced, with historically white universities (HWUs) receiving the bulk of state funding (Badat, 2016). Curricula were differently designed to ensure that black people were trained for subordinate positions in the labour market.

Following the first democratic election in 1994, the African National Congress-led government set about transforming the education system with a view to redressing the inequalities of the past. Plans to restructure higher education (HE), as stipulated in the *Higher Education Amendment Act 38 of 2003*, sought to build a system of HE “based on equity, quality, excellence, responsiveness, good governance and management” (Gachago et al., 2015, p. 20). Part of the transformation process as proposed by the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, included a structural integration of the SAHE system that would be free of racial inequalities (Jansen, 2003, p. 32). In accordance with this call, the number of universities was reduced from 36 to 23 through incorporations and mergers. In addition to restructuring, Asmal also sought to connect SAHE to the globalising economy, especially the expanding sectors of information and technology (2003, p. 32).

However, neither the structural nor the global integration strategies sought to address the issue of decolonisation. As a result the predominant colonial culture and practices of the academy remained for the most part unchallenged. Black students continued to feel the pressure to assimilate in order to feel included into the dominant culture, which by and large uncritically foregrounded and reproduced normative Western hegemonies, logics and practices while excluding local knowledges and cultural practices. Trying to build socially just HEIs became increasingly difficult after the 2008 world financial crash when South Africa’s economy plummeted and the government experienced severe fiscal constraints.⁴ With black households getting poorer and unemployment rising, there was a growing schism between the lives of black students and the epistemologies and power relations embedded in them. Black students today are therefore arguably in a more precarious position than black students were 20 years ago (Cooper, 2019). Furthermore, the discrepancies in terms of financial and material resources of HEIs in post-apartheid South Africa remain largely unchanged (Davids & Wahid, 2018). Policy reforms in SAHE have apparently not been effectively translated into practice on the ground.

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), where I teach, is the product of a merger between a historically white university (HWU), the Cape Tech-

⁴ This period coincided with increased corruption and state capture, the extent of which, once revealed, fuelled cynicism and mistrust in institutions of governance and leadership.

nikon, located controversially in District Six⁵ in Cape Town, and a historically black university, the Peninsula Technikon, located in Bellville South.⁶ CPUT is a haunted institution that carries the marks of conflicts, tensions and traumas arising out of its troubled past (Gachago et al., 2015). These troublings include issues of access, the haunted land and the socio-economic precarity of students. I joined CPUT's Design Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) of the Faculty of Informatics and Design in 2014, the year before the #RMF student protests began. At first the ripple effects of the student protests at UCT were minimal. However, the following year, the #FMF protests gained traction at CPUT resulting in numerous instances of violent protests, increased police and security presence, and campus shutdowns. Our faculty building was petrol bombed, and the academic years for 2017 and 2018 were abruptly curtailed. Students and staff were understandably traumatised by the events on campus. The situation calmed down after the Minister of Education announced fee-free HE. By 2019 the full academic year was restored, albeit briefly. Unbeknown to us, the spectre of COVID-19 was beginning to make its presence felt in the East. By April 2020, South Africa entered into a national lockdown.

ECPs, also known as Foundation Provision (FP), were developed by the Department of Higher Education in the 1980s and 1990s to increase “equity in access and outcomes so as to ‘improve success and graduation rates particularly amongst disadvantaged⁷ students’ in the then HWUs (*Education White Paper 3* (DoE 1997)” (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2015, p. 11). In recent years, however, the efforts of ECPs have been directed towards grappling with the problem of increased attrition and failure rates of first year students (Garraway & Bozalek, 2019, p. 9). The rationale of ECPs is that if “disadvantaged” students are given an additional extended Year 1, they will be better prepared for their mainstream programmes. ECPs therefore support those students who have accessed the university but are not adequately prepared due to prior educational and social disadvantage (2019, p. 9). Accordingly, ECP pedagogies tend to focus on developing academic literacy skills as well as introducing students to rudimentary discipline-specific knowledge that will equip them for their further years

⁵ In 1966, District Six, a municipal district of Cape Town, was declared a “white area” under the Group Areas Act of 1950. More than 60,000 people were forcibly removed to outlying areas of Cape Town, and their houses flattened by bulldozers. Chapter 4 elaborates on CPUT as a haunted institution on this site.

⁶ Bellville South is a semi-industrial area on the urban edge and is surrounded by low-cost housing and informal settlements. Removed from urban amenities, the location impacts significantly on the quality of campus life and on the sense of community and identity for students and staff (Bozalek & McMillan, 2013).

⁷ Gore and Walker use the term “historically disadvantaged” to refer to “black students who are marginalised in higher education due to structural factors associated with the apartheid legacy of segregation” (2020, p.55).

of study. However, by teaching students how to perform well within the normative academic framework, academic literacies risk reinforcing assimilationist positions that render students as reproducers rather than producers of knowledge (McKenna, 2010, p.14).

Rather than using Year 1 to mould students to fit in, Garraway and Bozalek advocate for a more complex approach that develops “innovative and responsive teaching techniques [and] ... deliver[s] an enriched and supportive curriculum that prepares students for their current and future studies” (2019, p.9). Similarly, Sioux McKenna argues that instead of trying to “fix” students with a one-year “band-aid” solution, mainstream structures need to make significant changes to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. She adds that individual students should not be positioned as the problem (2014, p. 53).⁸ Understood in this way, disadvantage is a structural social justice issue in which the institution is implicated and has an obligation to redress (2014, p. 53).

Another challenge that affects the teaching in ECP is related to staffing issues. ECP teachers tend to be employed on short- to medium-term contracts, and therefore have minimal teacher development training. As a result, they resort to common-sense approaches to pedagogy (Garraway & Bozalek, 2019, p. 10). Moreover, given their precarious employment position, there is also a rapid turnover of ECP staff which results in minimal attention and resources being invested in FP teaching and learning practices, curriculum development and theorisation of ECP as well as encouragement of scholarship for ECP teachers (2019, p. 10).

2. Reasons for undertaking study

I was employed to teach art and design history in the Design ECP Foundation course at CPUT in 2014. In addition to providing students with extensive pedagogical and curricula support, Design ECP offers students psychosocial support as they make the transition from school to university learning and towards the mainstream programmes that they will join the following year.⁹ Typically, there are about 80 students participating in the ECP Design course every year, most of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The majority of them are second-language English speakers who have never received any formal art or design training. Coming from a visual arts and graphic design background, I am one of those teachers who is untrained and at first adopted a common-sense approach to teaching and learning. Given that SAHE

⁸ In her paper, McKenna emphasises the need for all levels of the institution to adapt, not just FP. While I agree with her proposal, this inquiry focuses specifically on ECP.

⁹ These mainstream disciplines include fashion design, product design, jewellery design and visual communication design.

was in crisis when I started teaching at CPUT (from 2014 onwards), I thought it would be useful to explore how art and design history pedagogies might respond to the aims of the #RMF and #FMF movements. I wanted to interrogate how colonial violences are re-enacted through the dissemination of Western cultural hegemonies and their associated exclusionary Eurocentric humanist ideals within the academy. I was particularly interested in exploring approaches of working with the canon of Western art that simultaneously troubled the canon and foregrounded South African design students' subjectivities and epistemologies within the university.

As Walter Mignolo points out, the ubiquitous effects of the global dissemination of Western knowledge, as embodied in the Greco-Roman alphabet, literally and figuratively gives shape to the literary canon (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 201). In a similar way, the canon of art history also embodies the ideals of classicism that were seeded in ancient Greco-Roman culture. Mignolo contends that to counter the hegemonic ontological effects of colonialism, scholars need to "start from concepts introduced by Western philosophy, science, religion, arts, and knowledge in general in order to depart (to delink) from them" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 201). In other words, if we are to move beyond the canon, we need to understand how it has affected our becoming.¹⁰ Mignolo's proposition helps me to navigate the inherent paradox of working within the Western art history paradigm so as to dismantle Eurocentric cultural hegemony in ways that do not reposition the canon as central.

Under that banner of Western humanism, art history traditionally champions Western cultural superiority that simultaneously renders invisible indigenous cultural production within its opaque shadow (Van Eeden, 2004). Put differently, the single-point perspective of humanism's gaze is a powerful apparatus that colonists used to subjugate colonised peoples by positioning Western culture as normative, to the exclusion of all others. Comprising a plethora of well-preserved artefacts and research, the canon and its associated discourses therefore not only position Western humanist practices and aesthetics as supreme, they also render others as less-than human, or as void. The ongoing dehumanising effects of coloniality are felt in the traces of these erasures that were implemented in the name of humanism. As #RMF and #FMF showed, their hauntings continue to trouble the contemporary HE context. Furthermore, as testament to the impossibility of erasing the past, these humanist colonial hauntings offer opportunities for rediscovering the humane beyond humanist conceptions of what it means to be human.

¹⁰ The "we" in this instance is in line with Braidotti's "situated, feminist-minded, anti-racist, post- and de-colonial thinkers and practitioners, who are trying to come to terms with the challenges of the posthuman convergence, while avoiding a universal posture or undue generalizations" (2019, p. 86).

Sylvia Wynter, in her quest to rethink the human, sets out to unsettle Western conceptions of the human and explore how “we might give humanness a different future” (McKittrick, 2015, p. 10). Wynter traces a genealogy of the genres of Man¹¹—what she calls Man1 and Man2—that marks the transition from medieval theocratic to secular Enlightenment societal structures until the biocentric order of *homo oeconomicus*. This foregrounds how race displaced religion as a framework for understanding the human. In so doing, Wynter shows how these genres reinforce the hegemony of whiteness through the over-representation of the human as being white, Christian, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgendered male against whom all others are measured and considered less-than human. In a move beyond the “European super structure of civilisation”, Wynter turns to “the interstices of history” in which she explores the “evidences of a powerful and pervasive cultural process which has largely determined the unconscious springs of our being” (1970, p. 35).

In this thesis, I explore how Wynter’s “interstices” might not only carry these hidden histories but also offer opportunities for affective art history encounters that make a difference to students whose indigenous histories and cultural practices have been excluded by the canon. Moreover, in addition to foregrounding absent histories and the effects of these absences, I am also interested in inquiring how pedagogical encounters with art history might reveal the centrality of students’ experiences and knowledges to their learning in ways that unsettle hegemonic discourses. Thinking with how Wynter reconfigures humanness as a collective body and being human as an ongoing praxis (McKittrick, 2015), my intention is to open up radical possibilities for centering relational ways of being and knowing in relationships between knowledge, curricula, pedagogy and personhood (Desai & Sanya, 2016, p. 722). In other words, in addition to exploring the ontological relationship between students’ becoming-with art history, the thesis will also examine the becoming-with pedagogical encounters of art history. Put differently, by working with pedagogies that are grounded in being human as ongoing praxis, my dissertation will examine how troubling hegemonic discourses might affect art history’s becoming differently, and in so doing bring the relationship between ethics, ontology and epistemology to the fore.

¹¹ Wynter argues that Man1 was constructed to prop up humanist hierarchies that asserted European dominance over indigenous people after coming into contact with the Americas at the end of the 15th century. Also known as *homo politicus*, Man1 marks Western Europe’s transition from theo-Scholasticism predicated on a Latin Catholic theistic curriculum towards the secular *studia humanitatis*, or the humanities, that sought to revive the cultural legacy and moral philosophy of classical antiquity. The construction of Man2, or *homo oeconomicus*, coincided with the rise of capitalism and scientific knowledge systems that included the discovery by Copernicus that the earth rotates around the sun, as well as Darwinian notions of natural selection that underscored a biological social order.

In a similar manner, Rosi Braidotti's critique of the "mutually enriching" effects of Western humanism and anthropocentrism has resonances with Wynter's critique of "the racialized ontology of Man in Western philosophy as being non-representative of humanity" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 160). Like Wynter, Braidotti questions how certain populations are educated, and what knowledge is considered worthy of being preserved or valorised. In so doing, she offers important contributions to teaching art history in ways that emphasise the ethical and ontological affects of art history pedagogical encounters. These reverberations are felt, for example, in Braidotti's critical posthumanist account of how the human as configured in humanism includes "specific forms of de-humanization and discrimination, the inhumane and necropolitical aspects that define our era" (2019, p. 142). In a move towards recuperating the humane within the human, Braidotti therefore proposes working affirmatively with difference to challenge the pejorative binary oppositions embodied in the classical humanist "Man" (2019, p. 8).¹² In so doing, Braidotti puts forward posthuman subjectivity that is based on a different difference, or what she calls affirmative difference (2019, p. 8) in which the human is configured as "materially embedded and embodied, differential, affective and relational". Freed from the fixity of difference founded within reductive binary logics, posthuman subjectivity is an affirmative difference that is "imminent, positive and dynamic [and] emphasises affectivity and relationality as an alternative to individualist autonomy" (2019, p. 12). This understanding emphasises the importance of affirmative and affective art history teaching and learning practices through which students' embedded and embodied subjectivities are in a continual state of becoming-with epistemological encounters.

3. Problems with current process and content of art history courses in South Africa

The complexities, ambiguities and hauntings outlined above permeate the teaching and learning of art and design history in South African ECP. As I have noted, the Western canon reinforces Western European superiority while simultaneously obliterating indigenous cultural production. The effects are such that while there is an overwhelming number of images and associated research that celebrate the Western canon, there are significant absences of local art history and cultural production.

Matthew Kiem's conception of "decolonizing design" is that of a political project that positions design as "both an object and medium of action" (Schultz et al., 2018). This gives shape to my inquiry in that it puts art and design history to work to reveal the generative possibilities that these disciplines, or practices, offer teaching and learning

¹² Artist and philosopher Bracha Ettinger also explores ways of recuperating the humane in the human in her theory of the matrixial, as will be elaborated further in this thesis.

(2018, p. 82). In the same vein is Ahmed Ansari's critique of the predominant trend in design education that prioritises a representational approach to history. Ansari argues that decolonising design should attend to how "design brings into being new ontologies and ontological categories and their corresponding subjects and subjectivities" (Schultz et al., 2018, p. 83). Therefore, rather than focusing on specific movements and their associated aesthetics, art and design history can be conceptualised as performative practices through which students develop a better understanding and critique of the ontological effects of modernism in moulding and shaping their subjectivities (2018, p. 88). For example, as transgressive pedagogical practices, art and design history can provocatively engage the politics of representation and valorisation in visual culture, thereby challenging the established dominance of Western aesthetics as the pinnacle of beauty against which all else is measured.

The canon of Western art history entrenches Western aesthetics as universalising and normative. Moreover, beauty is synonymous with classical ideals of beauty that originated during the brief classical period of ancient Greece when artists represented the ideal human form as an expression of the divine. As time passed, these ideals were assimilated into and distributed across the Roman Empire. They lay dormant until their resurrection during the Renaissance and the rebirth of Classical Humanism when they took on an uncanny Christian religiosity. Concomitant to upholding these tenets of idealised beauty, art history implicitly denigrates other forms of cultural production by judging them as inferior "other" or excluding them entirely from the canon. One way of addressing these violences is by foregrounding the relationship between ethics and aesthetics that is activated during affective encounters with art history in which traumatic pasts are surfaced. Bettina Papenburg and Marta Zarzycka, in their work on the socio-political nature of contemporary visual culture, challenge traditional understandings of aesthetics that reinforce inherent pejorative universalising claims of beauty. Concerned with the cultural and ethical forces of embodiment, the authors' notion of "carnal aesthetics" foregrounds the "significance of cultural valuing of certain sense impressions and the dismissal of others" (Papenburg & Zarzycka, 2013, p. 3).

Unpacking the effects of beauty is also one of the main threads that runs through my thesis as a whole. I set out to trouble how a culturally inscribed "hierarchy of the senses" (Papenburg & Zarzycka, 2013, p. 3) reduces aesthetic apprehension to the visual only. Foregrounding the nuances of embodied difference and sensorial affect is important for art history pedagogies that seek to redress the hierarchical valorisation of the visual. Furthermore, the attunement to these nuances can open art history to matters of value, and in so doing, trouble the canon. Therefore, in this thesis I explore whether the shifting of art history's focus on aesthetic objects towards affective aesthetic encounters and ethical relations within the aesthetic realm might be activated in ways that challenge the "dominance of vision prevailing in Western epistemes"

(2013, p. 3). Moreover, I explore how encounters with art history events might underscore the important role that “sensorial faculties and affective forces” could play in understanding the “various dimension[s] of embodied difference” (2013, p. 3) in order to challenge the dominance of contemporary Western notions of beauty within the canon.

4. **Reconfiguring the ECP art history curriculum**

The South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) argues that in order to decolonise SAHE, the apparatuses that reinforce coloniality must be dismantled (CHE, 2017, p. 2). One such apparatus is the assimilationist pressure on students to “fit in” under the guise of celebrating diversity within the dominant colonial culture of whiteness in the academy. However, Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman, in their inquiry into participation from a vital and materialist perspective, point out that when the structural logics of whiteness are not critiqued, participation framed as diversity reinforces problems of inclusion, exclusion and assimilation into the dominant culture (2017, p. 66). In other words, how can students participate in a system without feeling that they have to “change into that logic in order to be included” (Truman, 2021 p. 44)?

In addition to drawing attention to the nature of the content that is taught—specifically whether there is an “Africanisation or indigenisation of the syllabus” (CHE, 2017, p. 2), the above question also highlights the importance of *how* content is taught, particularly if students are to become active participants in their learning and to begin to trust HE. Distrust is endemic to SAHE for many entangled reasons. It is hardly surprising that students distrust a system steeped in coloniality, especially art history, the discipline that embodies and celebrates colonial hegemonies, practices and ideologies. By the same token, it is to be expected that black students distrust me, a white person of settler descent whose name and culture embody the tropes of Western civilisation and culture.

When I started my teaching career, I wanted to teach art history in ways that mattered to young South African design students facing difficult issues such as poverty, homelessness and sustainability. The challenge was that the course that I inherited from previous iterations followed a traditional Eurocentric linear approach to teaching the Western canon. The inherited curriculum was not locally contextualised; rather, it focused on formal and stylistic characteristics of the various “art movements” without paying any attention to how these movements came about, what their embodied role in perpetuating and disseminating Eurocentrism signified, and how these effects continue to affect us.

If art history was to support design ECP students' becoming in the university, the course that I was about to teach would have to be reconfigured in ways that were relevant, relatable, and had resonance with students' lives. Moreover, if art history pedagogies are to make a difference that matters, they need to recuperate the aforementioned absences—by exploring how co-affective encounters with art and design history might make visible students' experiences and knowledges, and show how these knowledges are central to their learning.

5. Aims and objectives of the study and research questions

Against the context, rationale and problematic issues outlined above, this study is guided by the following aim: To gain an understanding of how critical arts-based pedagogies contribute to reconfiguring an ECP history of art and design course in a South African university of technology, as one possible response to the call to decolonise the academy. The three objectives of this thesis are as follows: Firstly, together with active participation of students, to explore how critical arts-based pedagogies might be used to disrupt the hegemonic canon of Western art history. Secondly, to understand how critical arts-based pedagogies might be used to work affirmatively with difference. Flowing from this, the third objective is to inquire how critical arts-based pedagogies might be used to build trust and solidarity within pedagogical praxis.

The dissertation is centered around the following research questions and concerns:

How might critical arts-based pedagogies, as a response to the call to decolonise the academy, be put to work in order to reconfigure an ECP history of art and design course in a South African university of technology?

In order to do this, the study is framed by the following three sub-questions:

- How might critical arts-based pedagogies be used to build trust and solidarity within pedagogical praxis?
- How might critical arts-based pedagogies be used to disrupt the hegemonic canon of Western art history?
- How might critical arts-based pedagogies be used to work affirmatively with difference?

6. Approaches to the inquiry

To address the questions posed by the study, I use non-representational practices that

include research-creation and diffractive methodology. Similarly, my approach to data moves away from conventional humanist qualitative methodologies.

*Research-creation, arts-based research, arts-based inquiry*¹³

The term *research-creation* was developed as a research grant funding category within Canadian HE that acknowledges and justifies artistic practice as a valid mode of research in order to enable artists to apply and qualify for research grants (Manning, 2016, p. 11). Over time, however, research-creation has shifted from being an instrument of the neoliberal university system to becoming, as Natalie Loveless writes, “an intervention into academic discourse and production” that destabilises normative pedagogies and standardised research outputs (2020, p. 219). While Springgay differentiates between arts-based research and research-creation, arguing that the former repositions art as a limited practice that has nothing to offer research (Truman et al., 2020, p. 231), in my research practice I use the terms interchangeably. However, I share the concern that researchers tend to misunderstand arts-based research as a way of presenting research creatively, thereby “problematically assum[ing] that the ‘how’ of research is separate from the theory or thinking of research” (Springgay & Truman, 2017, p. 3). In such instances, art is confined to being a visual add-on that presents research aesthetically but does not activate a thinking in its own right.

Erin Manning theorises the hyphen between research and creation as the “differential between making and thinking across art and philosophy” (Truman et al., 2020, p. 228). In so doing, Manning puts forward research-creation as the difference that makes a difference in the creation of new knowledge (2020, p. 228). Understood in this way, research-creation not only generates new knowledge, it also transforms *how* inquiry is done and disseminated within the academy (2020, p. 228). By turning to different modes of inquiry, research-creation not only opens up important exploration of how thinking happens, it also touches on, as Manning writes, “that which doesn’t register directly as thought [that is] the difference that makes a difference” (2020, p. 228).

In this thesis, I elaborate on how research-creation is “the difference that makes a difference”. For example, in Chapter 2, I think with Manning’s positioning of research-creation—as a mode of inquiry that is drawn to the more-than that moves at the edges of inquiry’s linguistic limits. I do so to show how my thinking-through-making practices in the between of writing and drawing cut across normative accounts of what it means to know. Similarly, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 each concentrate on specific pedagogical encounters that examine the potential of research-creation to dismantle traditional pedagogies and notions of what is deemed

¹³ The terms arts-based research, arts-based inquiry and research-creation are used interchangeably in this thesis.

valuable within the university by showing how students think-make-with art history using a variety of different modes (Truman et al., 2020, p. 228). Importantly, the chapters in this dissertation attest to how, by working with modes other than academic writing, students think differently and express knowledge that otherwise would not have been accessed had they used traditional modes.

Considering the “how” of inquiry, Springgay puts forward research-creation as an embodiment of theory that “events” concepts (Truman et al., 2020, p. 226). Put differently, Springgay contends that research-creation is a “way of *doing* theory/ thinking that is bodily, experimental, and considers research (knowledge making) as a (speculative) *event* emerging from a practice, rather than preformed or predetermined” (2020, p. 226). Conceptualised as such, research-creation opens up pedagogical spaces in which students can engage speculative and embodied thinking-making practices that are situated, experimental, generative and open ended. Chapter 3 of this dissertation treats this matter specifically. Here, I develop an account of an affective pedagogical encounter whereby students think-make with ancient Greek vases. As will be shown, in this pedagogical setting students created visual and written narratives as a speculative and embodied response to the historical artefacts in ways that countered traditional modes of transferring “abstract historically reified knowledge” (Hickey-Moody et al., 2016, p. 214). In other words, in addition to *learning about* Greek vase painting, students also *created new* embodied and affective knowledges in relation to the ancient urns that have ontological effects on themselves and the ancient vases.

Thinking with Haraway’s notion of the material-semiotic that positions an object of knowledge as an “active, meaning-generating axis of the apparatus of bodily production” (Haraway, 1991, p. 200), Natasha Myers also puts forward research-creation as both method and event that troubles binary distinctions between art/science and scholarly/artistic research practice by foregrounding “the creative and ethical work involved in making matter come to matter” (Truman et al., 2020, p. 227). To express this further, Myers writes that “art practices make matter come to matter differently in ways that prompt new research questions” (2020, p. 227). Conceptualised as such, research-creation becomes a mode of inquiry in which practices of making are immanent to knowledge production. Furthermore, when the creation process is situated as central to the research strategy, artistic practices and forms are understood as “legitimate mode[s] of research dissemination” (2020, p. 230) that materialise new forms of knowledge and expression. An example of making matter come to matter through art practice is provided in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, in which students write-with and draw-with the ghosts of Saartjie Baartman and the “Hottentot Venus” construct. As will be shown, students’ embodied practices of thinking-making with art history materialised artworks that prompted new imaginaries and provocations for art history teaching and learning practices.

Thinking-making-doing processes that trouble art/science, scholarly/artistic and research/practice binaries, can challenge normative logics of the institution. By engaging different modes,¹⁴ arts-based inquiry situates the creation process as central to the research strategy. Moreover, in recognising research-creation as immanent to knowledge production, artistic forms become valued modes of research dissemination (Truman et al., 2020, p. 227). As a speculative practice, research-creation activates thinking-making-doing enactments which instantiate theory (Springgay & Truman, 2017) that moves at the edges of inquiry's linguistic limits (Manning, 2016). In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I show specifically how the art-research-creative practices of stencilling-with, drawing-with, writing-with, and doodling-with enact a thinking-with academic texts. Similar practices are described in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. My inquiries in all these chapters show how students, through a variety of modes, trouble normative knowledge practices and knowledge production by materialising knowledge beyond the frames of pre-existing taxonomies.

Diffraction methodology

Donna Haraway, in her critique of notions of reflectivity and reflexivity in science studies that “displace the same elsewhere” (1997, p. 16), turns to the process of diffraction as “an optical metaphor for another kind of critical consciousness ... [that is] ... committed to *making* a difference” (2000, p. 102). Karen Barad's posthumanist theory of agential realism builds on Haraway's thinking with diffraction by reading Bohr's quantum understanding of diffraction through queer theory and the works of Judith Butler and Michel Foucault. Agential realism is concerned with the entangled nature of material-discursive practices. Diffraction methodology is premised on a performative understanding of discursive practices in which “thinking, observing and theorizing as practices of engagement with [are] part of the world in which we have our being” (Barad, 2007, p. 133). As such, diffraction methodology reveals how the material and discursive cannot be “articulated/articulate in the absence of the other” (2007, p. 822). Agential realism moves beyond the representational role of language that describes reality and thereby distances humans from the world. From an agential realist position, Barad foregrounds how performativity “allows matter its due as an active participant in the world's becoming ... [and] ... provides an understanding of how discursive practices matter” (2007, p. 136). Configured in this way, material-discursive practices decentre anthropocentrism by positioning humans as part of the world rather than separate from it. This understanding, as well as an understanding of the entanglement between ethics, epistemology and ontology, termed the “ethico-onto-epistemological”, has important implications for pedagogical practices. In addition to having material consequences, practices of knowing are specific material engagements that participate

¹⁴ In this context, modes refer to multiple modes of meaning making i.e. drawing, writing, image making.

in (re)configuring the world (Barad, 2007, p. 91). From this perspective, it would be important to bear in mind how the intra-action of specific art history events might generate ethico-onto-epistemological affects for the discipline.

Bringing together the ethico-onto-epistemological, agential realism highlights how knowledge is co-produced through intra-active entanglements between artefacts, art-making, teaching and learning practices, and materiality. In so doing, diffractive methodology confirms how knowing and becoming are both integral to, and the result of, the production of knowledge. With this understanding, lessons can be curated as diffractive encounters in which multiple spatial-temporalities open students and myself to working with art history in novel ways. For example, the excesses of the ancient Egyptian ruling elites read through the Rococo could throw light on contemporary issues of inequality, overconsumption and sustainability. Similarly, diffractive intra-actions (Barad, 2007) between Venus figurations could deepen understandings of gender and racial stereotypes. A diffractive methodology is therefore central to my research in relation to what kinds of knowledges are generated by the intra-actions between art-making, teaching and learning practices, materiality and artefacts. Furthermore, in addition to looking at how matter and becoming are both integral to and the result of the production of knowledge, diffractive methodology foregrounds differentiation as a process of finding connections and commitments (Barad, 2007, p. 386). This is helpful in trying to find ways of building solidarity and trust between students and educators. Rather than focusing on difference as negative, possibilities materialise for working affirmatively with difference.

Data relations

My thesis is permeated by haunted data—as manifested in students’ and my affective visual and written responses to our haunted inheritances. My approach to data is in line with relational and performative non-representational research practices activating “novel reverberations [that bring forth] a different orientation to data” (Vannini, 2015, p. 12). Accordingly, I move away from conventional humanist qualitative methodologies (St. Pierre, 2020; 2021), processes and practices that utilise traditional methods of collecting, coding and interpreting data which reinforce binaries between researcher/researched and reinforce human extractionist practices that underpin human exceptionalism (St. Pierre, 2013). For me, research practices engender entangled relations of becoming-with data, whereby intra-actions between researcher/s, processes and artefacts are read through one another. In this research, I think with St. Pierre’s refusal of representational logics that code information arising out of data analysis assuming “there is the real out there and then a representation of the real in a different ontological order” (2021, p. 6). The shift that St. Pierre manifests here from representation of the real towards speculative and open-ended inquiry requires a reconceptualisation of data itself (2021, p. 6).

MacLure argues that within a materialist ontology, that is, one that foregrounds agentiality of all matters, data cannot be seen as inert; nor can it be moulded, interpreted or organised into coding systems (2013a, p. 660). In foregrounding data as agential, Maclure attends to the relational effects generated through affective encounters with data, that she terms “data that glows” (2013a, p. 661). In her article entitled *The Wonder of Data*, Maclure considers further how the affective agency of wonder “that resides and radiates in data ... [might activate] ... a kind of fascination to animate further thought” (2013b, p. 228). Contrary to traditional research practices, where data is rendered passive, David Rousell configures engagements with data as “material for the next coming together of the research event” (2017, p. 204).

Building on the notion of affective data, Rousell proposes a posthumanist approach to art|education|research¹⁵ that he calls the “data event”. As Rousell and Fell explain, the data event is “specifically attuned to the performativity of a diffractive practice of research-creation that does not cleave the datum from the more than human ecologies in which it is encountered” (2018, p. 96). In other words, the data event is an iterative relational process that moves through and across bodies, materials, surfaces and articulations, and generates multiple “disjunctive experiments with order and disorder ... [that] ... are always subject to metamorphosis, as new connections spark among words, bodies, objects, and ideas” (2018, p. 96).

Springgay and Truman (2017) also forgo a predetermined linear trajectory that follows a model of gathering or collecting data. They propose instead more ontologically nuanced research events that generate new modes of thinking-making-doing, beginning in the “speculative middle” (2017, p. 4). These shifts away from human-centred research methodologies prompt a “thinking otherwise”. It is no longer what we (subjects) do to data (objects). Rather, what matters is how together with “data” *we become-with* research events. For example, when art history encounters through and across time are entangled with students’ lived experience, these encounters become provocations for thinking otherwise about both (their) lived experience and art history. Each provocation leads to further provocations that have ongoing onto-epistemological effects. Rousell and Fell’s formulation of the data-event also has resonances with Lisa Blackman’s (2019) affective approach to “haunted data” that escapes normative qualitative frames. Citing examples that include “not just texts or statements or practices, but spectres, displacements, disjointed times, submerged events and multiple temporalities” (2019, p. 17), Blackman draws attention to the affective pull of those forces and histories that have been discounted or displaced by the emphasis of humanist methodologies on ordering and classification.

¹⁵ Rousell’s hybrid concept art|education|research operates as a shorthand for inquiry that is simultaneously an artwork, an ecology of learning experiences and an empirical process that produces new modes of conceptualisation and knowledge production.

7. Pedagogical matters

Mindful of how unequal power relations in the classroom can perpetuate teacher/learner, racial, class and gender binaries, this thesis explores pedagogical approaches that are guided by an ethos of working affirmatively with difference. The dissertation focuses on how relationships of trust and solidarity might be nurtured between student/teacher, student/student as well as trust in art history itself. Particular attention is paid to uncovering how these relations are established, what purpose they serve, how we are implicated in them, how they continue to affect us and how they can be changed. In order to nurture and openness around curiosity and difference, it is important to practice response-ability.

For Haraway, response-ability is a non-innocent, cultivated and ethical “praxis of care and response” (2016, p. 105) that activates a relational ontology of “becoming-with” (2016, p. 78) in which some worlds are not only prioritised over others, but they also compose worlds with worlds (2016, p. 178). For Ettinger, who stays more focused on the human dimensions (though not in opposition to the non-human others), co-response-ability constitutes a “proto-ethical basis for responsibility and respect” (2009, p. 18). This “elicits an affective response in the viewer that paves the sense of personal responsibility” (Ettinger in Evans, 2017). Co-response-ability is concerned with humans’ ability to respond to “risk of the threat to humanness compromised by the cruelty of violence” (Pollock, 2010, p. 838). As such, co-response-ability also eliminates the risk of assimilation because the subject/object split does not exist in the matrixial sphere (Ettinger, 2009, p. 9). Barad, in her agential realist account of response-ability, like Ettinger, attends to the risky nature of response-ability as an “embodied re-membering” that risks a sense of self (2017a, p. 85). Response-ability enables responsiveness, as we trace multiple histories with our bodies in a “committed response-ability to those who have died and those not yet born” (2017a, p. 82). Unlike an objective theorisation from the outside whereby we respond to a “radically exterior/ized other” (Barad, 2007, p. 393), response-ability is thus conceived as an ongoing process of being ethically accountable and responsible for the “lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part” (2007, p. 393).

The above theorisations of response-ability have a bearing on Bozalek and Zembylas’s configuration of response-able pedagogies as “ethico-political practices that incorporate a relational ontology into teaching and learning activities” (2017b, p. 62). This in turn guides my approach to teaching and learning. Their prioritisation of practices such as attentiveness, responsibility, curiosity, and rendering each other capable are very helpful when dealing with discomfort in the classroom as well as responding to students’ narratives and artworks.

For me, as a lecturer in a design ECP, a key pedagogical aim is to nurture students’ confidence and critical thinking skills as they begin to navigate the academy. I

therefore focus on encouraging students to critically bridge the gap between learning and lived experience in an attempt to support their transition from school to university (hooks, 2009; Giroux, 2013). As explained earlier, one of the reasons for undertaking the study was to challenge the way in which students feel pressurised to assimilate into the dominant culture of the academy in order to feel included. In the following chapters, I investigate specifically how pedagogical strategies might challenge the normative and universalising logics of participation by reframing participation as situational and relational (Springgay & Truman, 2017, p. 4).

One way that ECP students feel pressured to assimilate is the way that academic literacies focus narrowly on epistemological access with a view to improving success rates among disadvantaged students (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2015, p. 9). In other words, when the emphasis is solely on inducting students into the dominant cultural capital of the academy, they are not positioned as situated generators of knowledges (Haraway, 1988). Given that academic literacies are not value-neutral sets of skills to be passively acquired by students (Boughey & McKenna, 2016, p. 7), the intention of the pedagogical approach I develop in this thesis is to embrace a decolonial epistemic mission that “forge[s] new categories of thought, construction of new subjectivities and creation of new modes of being and becoming” (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 107). For this to happen, design ECP students need to be encouraged to think critically. However, in order to become critical thinkers, it is essential that we address our haunted past. In the next section, I explore how hauntings affect pedagogy by paying particular attention to Michalinos Zembylas’s (2013) pedagogies of hauntology. The aim is to think-with our haunted histories, as a thinking beyond, so that we might create from them (Haraway, 2016, p. 88).

Pedagogies of hauntology

The concept of hauntology is a homophone for French ontology. It was developed by Jacques Derrida to theorise the indeterminate ontology of the ghost figure as an ambiguous figure that is “neither living nor dead, present nor absent” (1994, p. 63). In addition to transgressing ontological fixity such as dead/alive, spectres also undo spatio-temporal binaries of absent/present and past/present. As Barad reminds us, hauntings are material in that “they are not mere recollections or reverberations of what was[,] [they] are an integral part of existing material conditions” (2017a, p. 74). In other words, hauntings are both material and they matter.

In grappling with art history’s hauntings, I think with Zembylas’s pedagogies of hauntology that encourage a welcoming, rather than an exorcising, of the ghost. According to Zembylas, in troubling the hegemonic status of representational modes of knowledge in remembrance practices, the figure of the ghost simultaneously undermines ontological frames and ideological histories. In so doing, hauntology becomes a pedagogical methodology that positions histories of absence

and loss as fertile points of departure. For example, a pedagogy of hauntology not only acknowledges the complexities and contradictions emerging from haunting, but also reconfigures history learning in ways that lean towards a “promise for radical openness in the future rather than as a remembrance practice that ontologizes the ghosts of the past” (Zembylas, 2013, p. 71). Zembylas shifts history education from “revealing and mastering unknown facts and stories about the past and its victims [towards an] openness for the yet formulated possibilities of the future ... that extends normative notions of identity, memory and justice”. In so doing, Zembylas shows how pedagogies of hauntology have the potential to contribute to ECP pedagogies in ways that seek to understand our inherited practices of mastery so as not to reproduce them (Singh, 2018, p. 2).

Barad’s notion of “re-turning” troubles time in a similar way—by activating temporal diffractions through which we respond to “the places and times from which we came but never arrived and never leave” (2007, p. 184). Unlike a mode of reflection that reproduces binary splits between past/present, *diffractive re-turning* produces (new) diffractive patterns that loop back to themes as an act of turning them “over and over again—iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities” (Barad, 2014, p. 168). It is within these disjointed spatio-temporalities that a multiplicity of entangled themes and histories can be explored in non-linear ways (Barad, 2017a, p. 69). Thinking here also with Thiele’s proposition of entanglement as hauntology, whereby “there is no simple opposite to entangledness, but only the in(de)finite rearrangement of everything in its differential becoming” (Bunz et al., 2017, p. 46), my thesis explores in all chapters whether pedagogical practices that include writing-with and drawing-with the ghosts of the past might surface the past in the present in ways that open towards different futures.

Closely linked to re-turning is Barad’s conceptualisation of “re-membering” as “[a]counterhegemonic practice, or a counterpolitics to colonialism’s avoidances and erasures” (2017a, p. 80). Understood in this way, re-membering is a bodily activity of re-turning to enfolded materialisations of all traces of memory that are neither held nor merely fixed in human subjectivity (Barad 2017a; 2017b). Like re-turning that generates new diffractive patterns through “looping back”, re-membering is also a generative process that produces iterative sedimented enfoldings that refute the “erasure of memory and the restoration of a present past” (Barad, 2010, p. 261). My thesis will explore in each of its concrete pedagogical settings how, rather than going back to what was, re-membering might enact ongoing reconfigurations and re-articulations of the world (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 17).

Pedagogies of discomfort

Ghostly encounters are troubling in that they bring difficult memories, emotions and discomfort to the fore. My thesis in its entirety explores whether one way of “staying with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016) of our haunted past in pedagogical settings might be to draw on these difficult emotions and discomfort as affective provocations that prompt us to think anew (Boler, 1999; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012). A “pedagogy of discomfort”, as conceptualised by Megan Boler (1999), foregrounds the productive role that discomfort affords pedagogical encounters that deal with social injustice. Understood as a practice that is both inquiry and a call to action, a pedagogy of discomfort invites educators and students to engage in “the discomforting process of questioning cherished beliefs and assumptions [in order to understand whether] *collectively* it is possible to step into [a] murky minefield and come out as allies ... without severe injury to any party” (Boler, 1999, p. 176). A pedagogy of discomfort pushes students and teachers beyond their comfort zones at both a cognitive and emotional level in order to understand how norms and differences are produced (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 110).¹⁶ By drawing attention to discourses as social and political practices with material affects, Boler and Zembylas contend that we all internalise dominant cultural values, albeit differently.

The thesis explores how a pedagogy of discomfort is useful in understanding how these values are produced in order to move beyond the binary logics that underpin dominant culture. In Chapters 4 and 5, I explore how discomforting yet generative pedagogical spaces of ambiguity, nuance and contradiction might challenge mind-sets, habits and emotions—both for the teacher and the students (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 117). As Zembylas points out, teachers and students must use their discomfort to “construct new emotional understandings into ways of living *with* others” (quoted in Leibowitz, 2011, para 1).

Critical arts-based pedagogies

In their inquiry into the relationship between art and qualitative research, Knowles and Cole (2008) propose the systemic use of the artistic process as a primary way of understanding and examining experience. Building on this assertion, they argue that arts-based learning represents “an unfolding and expanding orientation to qualitative social science that draws inspiration, concepts, processes, and representation from the arts, broadly defined” (2008, p. xi). While their contribution

¹⁶ Boler and Zembylas conceptualise a comfort zone as “the inscribed cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice and more by virtue of hegemony ... that by and large remain unexamined because they have been woven into the everyday fabric of what is considered common sense” (2003, p. 108).

provides a useful starting point for the discussion about arts-based learning, for me, this “broad definition” of arts-based pedagogies is not enough. The problem rests in the failure to take into account art’s performative and affective possibilities that move beyond neoliberal notions of art making and art appreciation as aesthetic endeavours produced for the market.

In this thesis, I explore how arts-based learning, rather than being a creative well of inspiration for other disciplines to draw from, may provoke affective encounters as an instance of a socially just pedagogy (Finley, 2014; 2017); (Bagley & Castro-Salazar, 2012). Each chapter of my thesis explores how critical arts-based pedagogies respond to calls to decolonise education in South African universities. I interrogate how arts-based pedagogies provoke critical engagements with visual cultural codes and ideologies, and resist social injustice (Finley, 2017, p. 24). In this way, the thesis asks how spaces might be opened up for educators and students to de-centre dominant discourses in educational practice and research (Pasque et al., 2012). In this thesis, then, the use of critique is linked to feminist traditions of affirmation (rather than negation) which imagine critique as immanent rather than transcendent, diffractive (rather than reflexive). As Thiele writes, by practicing affirmation as a critical tool we can detect the “inequalities, asymmetries, and the never innocent differentiations we live in” with the view of transforming them (Bunz et al., 2017, p. 26).

The thesis explores how critical arts-based pedagogies might trouble the history, theory and practices of the Western canon and how in turn these troublings might generate new knowledges from intra-actions between “art, teaching and life” (Stewart, 2007, p. 130). Furthermore, I explore how critical arts-based pedagogies might encourage students to draw from the aesthetic realm in ways that open up new pathways for knowledge creation that think-with, and find expression through embodied modalities, materials and non-discursive language (Barone & Eisner, 2011; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Leavy, 2009). Critical arts-based pedagogies offer innovative ways of materialising experiences into ground-breaking forms that can unsettle traditional beliefs and values (Denzin, 2001, p. 26). In addition, they foreground less dominant modes of knowing (Liamputtong & Rumbold, 2008).

Arts-based teaching and learning practices support marginalised students to utilise diverse means of expression of their lived experiences beyond the limitations of written and spoken language (Bolt, 2004, 49). This approach is particularly suited to ECP design students who are drawn to multimodal approaches that extend beyond monomodal approaches to teaching and learning to include “more concrete, material, sensory and bodily practices” (Newfield, 2011, p. 29). Such approaches simultaneously de-centre the hegemony of language while foregrounding performative and experiential methods (Archer & Newfield, 2014) and offer a “means to engage with and give voice to a multiplicity of learner subjectivities” (Hickey-Moody et al., 2016, p. 220).

Bolt, concerned with a materialist ontological formulation of art “as material and somatic processes that implicate the life of matter” (2004, p. 173), explores the dynamic material exchanges between makers, materials and processes. In so doing, humans are positioned as “part of” rather than “makers of the world and the world as a resource for human endeavours” (Bolt, 2013, p. 2). Concerned with a materialist ontological formulation of art “as material and somatic processes that implicate the life of matter” (2004, p. 173), Bolt explores the dynamic material exchanges between makers, materials and processes in order to emphasise the importance of relational pedagogies that are not “motivated by mastery” (2004, p. 9). Bolt’s insights reverberate with Julietta Singh’s inquiry into dehumanism and decolonial entanglements with mastery, where she states that we cannot undo mastery by “mastering mastery” as this would perpetuate the logics and power relations embedded in the inheritances of mastery (2018, p. 6).

In moving away from motivations of mastery, my dissertation focuses instead on whether the process of drawing-with might engage the complexities of human experience in ways that encourage “marginalised and vulnerable people, who may be seeking ways, other than word-based means, to express themselves” (Guillemin & Westall, 2008, p. 122). I do this to explore whether critical arts-based pedagogies might usher in a critical engagement with academic literacy and visual literacy skills in ways that trouble what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is produced. This will require careful attention to how academic and visual literacy skills are taught: in addition to learning how to perform traditional academic literacy skills, students have to learn to critically decode our visually dominated world by “reading” images, and write about them in ways that unsettle dominant discursive approaches (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 2013). In other words, I will examine whether engagements with critical arts-based pedagogies activate enlivened and integrated responses to art history that draw on students’ affinities and resources with those literacies that are not necessarily understood as traditional academic literacies (Leavy, 2017, p. 191). In so doing, the thesis explores whether by thinking-making with artefacts, students and I can respond to the complexities and paradoxes of lived experience through embodied engagements with making, and imagine different futures in a commitment to building a justice-to-come.¹⁷

¹⁷ Barad’s notion of justice-to-come traces “entanglements of violent histories of colonialism (with its practices of erasure and avoidance) as an integral part of an embodied practice of re-remembering—which is not about going back to what was, but rather about the material reconfiguring of spacetime-mattering in ways that attempt to do justice to account for the devastation wrought as well as to produce openings, new possible histories by which time-beings might find ways to endure” (2017a, pp. 62–63).

8. Chapter outlines

The dissertation consists of five blind peer-reviewed publications. Chapter 1 discusses the broad theoretical framework of my study. Entitled *Aesthetic wit(h)nessing and the political ethics of care: Generating solidarity and trust in pedagogical encounters*, it brings together Tronto's political ethics of care (1993, 1995, 2013) and Ettinger's (2005, 2006, 2009, 2016; Ettinger & Virtanen, 2005) "care-carriance" and "matrixial wit[h]nessing" in order to explore the role that care practices play in building ethical relations in pedagogical practice. Mindful of the unequal power relations in the classroom that can perpetuate teacher/learner, racial, class and gender binaries, the chapter investigates ways of working affirmatively with difference. It is argued that for this to happen, relationships of trust and solidarity must be built between student/teacher, student/student as well as trust in art history itself. Accordingly, the chapter includes an uncovering of how these relations were established, what purposes they serve, how we are implicated in them and how they continue to affect us. The chapter therefore explores ways of working affirmatively with the complexities of situatedness, complicity and partial subjectivity in order to recuperate losses and histories that in many cases remain invisible to many South Africans. In addition, the intention is to put art history to work to highlight how the ontological relationship between aesthetics and ethics affects students' subjectivity as becoming-designers as well as how entanglements with art history might develop students' critical thinking skills and encourage a sense of response-ability (Barad, 2007; Ettinger, 2006; Haraway, 2016) towards society at large.

By carefully attending to the complexities of our asymmetrical inheritances and how they continue to affect us, both myself and students uncover how coloniality operates, whose purposes it serves, and how it continues to affect us. The chapter attends to a broad ethos of how classroom relations materialise and, in so doing, provides the overall ethical framework of the inquiry, rather than focusing on specific examples of pedagogical encounters.

The themes of wit(h)nessing, trust, caring-with and carriance are further elaborated on in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 where I attend to specific pedagogical case studies that explore how, by thinking-making with artefacts, students and I can imagine different futures in a commitment to building a justice-to-come.

Chapter 2 explores how my artistic-research practice, that operates in the interstices of making and thinking, opens up different registers that cut across normative accounts of what it means to know (Manning, 2016, p. 27). Entitled *Touching on text: Finding my way through research-creation*, the chapter diffracts my thinking-making studio practice through thinking-making research practice to show how knowledge materialises through different modes and practices, both within and beyond language.

In foregrounding the reciprocity between artistic research practice and research methodological practice, I consider how making practices that exceed the realms of normative academic modes of inquiry might shape content in ways that make more sense than those knowledges presented in traditional linguistic form. As I grapple with the conundrum of how to explicate precisely that which I argue is not expressible in traditional linguistic form, I document my research practice of thinking-through-making, as a thinking-through artworking, generating understandings of the world which manifest in more-than linguistic registers that sediment my thinking and draw me back to words.

In attending to how materiality and making processes conjugate new languages, I show how artistic-research leads me towards different ways of doing inquiry. By practising immanent research inquiry as an iterative process that cannot be replicated or formularised, writing-with, drawing-with, doodling-with, scrawling-with, and stencilling-with trouble the traditional logocentric, linear approaches that are associated with academic research and shape my thinking otherwise, beyond the strictures of Cartesian thought. Furthermore, by turning to the performativity of these research-creation practices, not only is visual art liberated from the limitations of representation and aesthetics, but binary splits between making and thinking are also dismantled.

The chapter foregrounds the potential of research-creation to generate new connections and concepts by using different modes of expression, in this way better explicating that which, for me, is difficult to explain in words. As examples of my situated response to doing inquiry differently, the practices confirm the importance of practice-led and speculative inquiry which breaks down the hegemony of language. Accordingly, they inform my approach to pedagogy by activating and agitating the space between words and their more-than, as is evidenced in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis.

Entitled *Narrative vases as markers of subjectivity, agency and voice: Engaging feminist pedagogies within the context of #FeesMustFall*, Chapter 3 explores how critical arts-based pedagogies challenge issues of inclusion, exclusion and assimilation within the academy. Inspired by ancient Greek vase painting practices, the chapter describes and analyses a pedagogic intervention that focuses on the performativity of the vases within ancient Greek society, as relatable objects that, much like contemporary social media, depict scenes of everyday life. The associated assignment invites students to create their own written and visual narratives about key life events that they inscribe onto a Greek vase silhouette. My intention is to teach art history in ways that matter to students.

Thinking-with Haraway's (1988) theory of situated knowledges, the chapter disrupts hierarchical power relations that characterise teachers as "knowers" and students

as “learners”, as well as the tensions between the discourse of the “expert” and the discourse of “local negotiation” in relation to visual art (Sayers, 2011; 2015). This allows students and teachers to co-create critical arts-based pedagogical strategies that make visible students’ non-dominant identities and knowledges within the canon of art history. Here, the Eurocentric gaze is unsettled and the marginalised or “not yet recognised” become visible within the discourse (Barrett, 2007, p. 4).

The emphasis on both situatedness (as opposed to universal frames) and diffraction (rather than reflection), encourages students to differentiate between their artworks and the classical style in ways that are speculative rather than comparative, opening up spaces of nuance rather than right or wrong. The diffraction of the matrixial through agential realism also broadens the understanding of the agency of artwork-ing. For Ettinger (2005) art generates the possibilities for co-affective ontological encounters between artists, viewers and artworks in a matrixial compassionate “co-response-ability” with each other.

Following Haraway, who reminds us that it is important what stories we tell stories with, the chapter shows that it is also important *how* we tell stories. By foregrounding visual and written narratives, the pedagogical approaches counter issues of inclusion, exclusion and assimilation by decentering the hegemony of language and the colonising curriculum. Moreover, considering that the processes of self-assessment foreground lived experience over mimetic mastering of facts about the Ancient Greek vase painting styles, students not only co-transform pedagogical (and wider social) relationships and practices, they also confirm how their becoming is both central to and dependent on the co-creation of new pedagogies (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015).

Chapter 4 describes the first lesson of 2018, which set out to familiarise ECP students with the art history course and model how content would be “taught”. Entitled *Just(ice) Do It!: Re-membering the past through co-affective aesthetic encounters with art/history*, the chapter gives an account of the diffraction of the ancient Hellenistic sculpture entitled the *Winged Nike of Samothrace* (190 BCE), also known as the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, through artist Sethembile Msezane’s *Chapungu—the day Rhodes Fell* (2015). This was a site-specific performance enacted alongside the statue of Cecil John Rhodes as it was being removed from UCT’s campus on 9 April 2015.

Contrary to deficit discourses that tend to position first-year students as unable to deal with complexity, the pedagogical aim was to surface important issues and concerns that students might be experiencing as newcomers to the university through the lens of art history. The aim was to challenge the hegemonic pressures on students to assimilate into the academy to address their possible concerns about epistemological access, and to avoid assuming prior knowledge.

The uncanny resonances generated by the intra-action between these two artworks seeded important themes¹⁸ that we would re-turn to throughout the year. For example, given that the *Nike of Samothrace* bears my namesake, the lesson afforded the opportunity to acknowledge my positionality and the legacy of my heritage from the outset. In positioning art history as non-innocent, the lesson invited students to work affirmatively with the ambivalence and ambiguities produced by the discipline in order to “stay with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016). Unlike the *Winged Victory*, the *Chapungu* performance is relatable to students by directly addressing issues of race, class, gender and coloniality. The intra-action between the two artworks, the falling of Rhodes and students’ lived experience undoes traditional art history from within. Students worked with the affective capacity of art history pedagogies to allude, allure, attract and trouble. In this way, students simultaneously co-create and become-with art history pedagogies. Art history is thereby reconfigured as a discipline that matters.

Chapter 5 explores some of the complexities of teaching art and design history to ECP students in the context of contemporary South African society—a society troubled by the ghosts of colonial and apartheid histories that agitate the present/future. Entitled *Writing and drawing with Venus: Spectral re-turns to a haunted art history curriculum*, the chapter tracks a series of diffractive pedagogical encounters that re-present the ghosts of the past through the figure/s of Sarah Baartman and the so-called “Hottentot Venus” performance. This is done to make explicit how art history is both a haunted and haunting discipline. The chapter sets out to foreground how, as a discipline, art history haunts the curriculum by reinforcing Western cultural superiority and how, by activating practices of speaking-with and drawing-with the ghosts of Sarah Baartman and the “Hottentot Venus”, these hegemonies are undone. Traversing multiple spatial-temporalities, the chapter shows how critical arts-based pedagogies can be put to work with the ghosts of colonialism and apartheid in ways that conjure up shape, form and vocabulary to engage with the troublings of art history. Baartman’s story provides a means to literally and figuratively re-member the past within the context of the present.

The chapter threads Derrida’s notion of hauntology and Zembylas’s pedagogies of hauntology through the work of Haraway, Barad and Ettinger. In so doing, it addresses the ambivalences and complexities of art history pedagogies, and argues that speaking with and responding to ghosts from the past generates new relationalities within SAHE and society at large. The chapter argues that speaking-with and drawing-with dis/appeared ghosts offers new possibilities for reconfiguring art history

¹⁸ These included the racial and gender stereotypes, what and how the female body represents, performativity, the relationship between the goddess of victory, the Enlightenment and imperialism.

curriculum studies that both valorise historicity and in turn open us towards different futures. The case study centres around the construction of the “Venus figure” as an embodiment of humanist Western cultural ideologies and practices that reduce the female body to an object of capture for man. Students intra-act with various representations of the Venus figure across art history through the story of Sarah Baartman, whose haunting presence continues to contour, colour and texture discourses around decolonising the curriculum in SAHE.

Although the chapters referred to above are presented as discrete publications and were published over a period of three years, they are thematically closely interconnected. Each of them addresses the research questions and concerns of this thesis in different ways. When read together as a whole, they enact an iterative exploration of how critical arts-based pedagogies contribute to reconfiguring an ECP history of art and design course in a South African university of technology, as one possible response to the call to decolonise the academy.



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Chapter 1

Aesthetic wit(h)nessing and the political ethics of care: Generating solidarity and trust in pedagogical encounters¹⁹

1.1 Abstract

This chapter diffracts feminist theorist Bracha Ettinger's matrixial theory (2005a, 2005b, 2009) through political theorist Joan Tronto's (1993, 1995, 2013) feminist ethics of care framework with a view to exploring whether entanglements between care practices in the ethical, aesthetic and political realms might generate possibilities for thinking about building trust and solidarity within teaching and learning encounters in South African Higher Education (SAHE). This is done with a view to working affirmatively with the complexities of situatedness, complicity and partial subjectivity in order to recuperate losses and histories that in many cases remain invisible to many South Africans. What's more, the intention is to put art history to work to highlight how the ontological relationship between aesthetics and ethics affects students' subjectivity as becoming designers, as well as how entanglements with art history might develop students' critical thinking skills and encourage a sense of response-ability (Barad, 2007; Ettinger, 2006; Haraway, 2016) towards society at large. Given South Africa's traumatic past, entanglements with relational pedagogical and curricular activities can potentially surface discomfiting emotions which require care-full pedagogical practice (Thiele, Górska & Türer, 2021), both on the part of educators and students alike (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). It follows therefore that educators prioritise care practices as central to teaching and learning. The paper argues

¹⁹ This chapter was published in Bozalek, V., Zembylas, M., & Tronto, J. (Eds). (2021). *Posthuman and Political Care Ethics for Reconfiguring Higher Education Pedagogies*. Routledge.

that by placing care at the centre of pedagogical practice, students and educators can build relationships of solidarity and trust across difference and inequality.

1.2 Introduction

To begin with, the chapter locates design education within the broader context of SAHE. This is followed by a description of the course that I teach. Following that, I discuss care practices in higher education that draw on Tronto's political feminist ethics of care framework, paying particular attention to her fifth phase of care that emphasises "caring with" and the associated moral elements of solidarity and trust. Moving from the political domain towards the aesthetic realm, the paper then turns to Ettinger's matrixial theory in order to think with her notions of response-ability, wit(h)nessing and care-carrying/carriance (Ettinger in Kaiser & Thiele, 2018). Born out of her practice as visual artist and feminist theorist, matrixial theory is particularly, although not exclusively, pertinent to art and design educational practice. Rather than focus on a specific pedagogical event, the paper tracks ongoing issues that have arisen during classroom encounters that speak to the complexities, ambivalences and ambiguities associated with care practices in SAHE.

1.3 Context

Having entered the third decade of South Africa's democracy, and the birth of the so-called "Rainbow Nation,"²⁰ South Africa's complex history of colonialism and apartheid continues to haunt our society which is plagued by increasing economic, social and gender inequality. The metaphor of the rainbow is rich in paradox and ambiguity. Based on optics theory, a rainbow appears when rays of light are refracted, reflected and dispersed through water drops, thereby making visible the spectrum of colour that makes up white light. However, in the South African context, the emphasis on rainbow nationalism has resulted in a paradoxically obliterating effect that occludes the many divisions and inequalities that characterise contemporary South African society.

It is these occlusions that surfaced during the 2015–2017 #rhodesmustfall and #feesmustfall student protests that called for equitable access to higher education, Africanisation and decolonisation of the academy. Similarly, following a spate of femicides and incidences of gender-based violence, students and citizens launched the #enoughisenough campaign that called on government to address the increasing

²⁰ Coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the term Rainbow Nation signifies both religious and political connotations. The former references the Rainbow people of God and the latter refers to non-racialism as promoted by the African National Congress.

violence in South Africa.²¹ Given these ongoing inequalities, it is not surprising that students have lost trust in the ephemeral promises of rainbowism. The challenge for educators and students is to find ways of working together to address the aforementioned inequalities in ways that do not give up on trust itself.

In thinking about what decolonising design education might look like, these aforementioned challenges offer rich possibilities for reconceptualising art history teaching and learning practices in SAHE not only in terms of what content is taught, but importantly too, *how* content is taught. Canli conceptualises decolonising design praxis as both a doing and undoing that performs as “an act of passivating, unravelling and no longer contributing to material-discursive configurations that privilege certain bodies while oppressing and dehumanizing others” (in Schultz et al., 2018, p. 98). This reading is in line with the imperatives of decolonising design education in South Africa that is in the process of reorienting from its northern proclivities towards a more situatedness that not only champions indigenous creative production but seeks to undo the “dehumanising” and “oppressive” effects.

1.4 The Design Foundation Extended Curriculum Programme

Located within the Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) of the Faculty of Informatics and Design at a university of technology, the aim of ECP is to increase the throughput rate of “at risk” students who, due to their secondary education backgrounds, are not adequately prepared for higher education/university study. In addition to providing students with extensive pedagogical and curricula support, ECP also offers students psychosocial support, as they make the transition from school to university learning towards the mainstream programmes that they will join the following year.²² Typically, there are about 70 students participating in the ECP Design programme every year, most of whom come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Not only are the majority of them learning in their second language, but many have never studied art or design before.

Rather than follow a chronological approach to teaching history that reinforces Western Enlightenment notions of linearity and progress, the *ECP Design Theory* course underscores critical thinking skills, response-ability (Barad, 2007; Ettinger, 2006;

²¹ In September 2019, thousands of South Africans participated in the protests throughout the country where they called on the government to address the rising acts of violence against women. In the Crime against Women report of 2018, Stats SA reports that 138 women are raped per 100,000. This figure is among the highest in the world.

²² These mainstream disciplines include fashion design, product design, jewellery design and visual communication design.

Haraway, 2016) and an understanding of the ontological effects that are generated through encounters with art history in and across time. In paying attention to the aforementioned criteria, the course sets out to disrupt dominant hegemonic norms and practices in higher education more generally as well as within design education in particular. In giving prominence to students' indigenous knowledges, it is anticipated that a modest contribution to weakening the dominance of Eurocentric modernity within the institution will be made and that students will produce artefacts that help materialise different futures and imaginaries.

Working in the field of art and design history, classroom encounters typically focus on the performative and affective role of artefacts from the “here and now” and the “there and then” (Barad, 2013, p. 16). The archive is haunted by violences from the past and present, in which images and artefacts that both document and reinforce colonial ideologies and practices perpetuate the colonial and imperial gaze. Like the rainbow effect, these gazes not only reinforce Western cultural hegemony—and its concomitant underpinning of Western superiority—but also systematically obliterate indigenous cultural production, thereby leaving a void that is paradoxically overflowing with absence. Moreover, in addition to suppressing indigenous histories, the misrepresentation and stereotyping that is imposed on indigenous peoples further exacerbates the problem. For example, the diffraction of the male spectator gaze (Berger, 1972) reveals how the archive continues to both denigrate and objectify women in ways that have ongoing effects that trigger potential traumas for women in a country that is known for one of the highest rates of gender-based violence (Romano, Mitchell & Bozalek, 2019). This male gaze is primarily grounded in whiteness, through the colonial and imperial gaze that performs racialised and gendered violence.

In an attempt to support students in their studio practice, in the following section I explore how art history pedagogical praxis might aid the surfacing and processing of collective and subjective traumatic past/present through affective encounters with artworks. The challenge therefore becomes one of not only developing pedagogical strategies that offer the possibility of recuperating loss through engagements with art history praxis, but also to find ways in which participants can grapple with their asymmetrical and ambivalent past/presents by adopting an ethico-political ethos that foregrounds an affirmative politics of difference(s) for the future (Thiele, 2014). In these instances, it is imperative that educators practise an ethics of care, as will be discussed below.

1.5 Feminist ethics of care

Feminist ethics of care in/forms my teaching and learning practice, as will be shown in the following discussion around care that will follow two entangled threads. The first is concerned with instilling values and practices that encourage becoming de-

signers to care for the future that is both literally and figuratively in their hands. This is in line with the implications of care and responsibility, as made explicit in Tronto and Fisher's generic definition of care which they define as:

a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.

(Tronto, 1993, p. 103)

The second thread is concerned with relational pedagogies in which care ethics are practised during teaching and learning interventions in ways that build solidarity and trust within the teaching and learning environment. Rather than focus on a specific pedagogical case study, the emphasis is on the theoretical framework that attunes me to different pedagogical and curricula encounters.²³ In/formed by Barad's ethico-onto-epistemological relational ontology that links knowing, being and doing, relational pedagogies foreground how matter and meaning are co-constituted through material discursive entanglements that have ontological affects on students and teachers alike (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 112). The intention is to show how these two streams in/form one another and thicken the understanding of care practices in higher education.

The foregrounding of the relationship between care and responsibility in curriculum design reinforces an ethical stance that underpins all aspects of the design discipline. In so doing, students are made aware of the need for care that, as Fisher and Tronto stipulate above, "includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" and calls on them to design for a better future.

In her model of agential realism, Barad's posthumanist ethico-onto-epistemological configuration of material-discursive encounters that reveal how ethics, knowing and becoming are inextricably linked, provides a useful starting point in understanding designers' implicatedness and responsibility in the creation of a justice-to-come for humans and non-humans (2010, p. 268). In this regard, Barad proposes an understanding of ethics as more than "responsible actions in relation to human experiences of the world". She argues instead that "ethics is a question of material entanglements and how each intra-action matters in the reconfiguring of these entanglements, that is, it is a matter of the ethical call that is embodied in the very worlding of the world" (2007, p. 160). Her figuration of the ethico-onto-epistemological as responsibility which is more than "... ours alone. And yet our responsibility is greater than it would

²³ I am grateful to the feedback from the reviewer who made this distinction explicit.

be if it were ours alone,” not only alerts designers to their responsibility but also reassures them that we are all in this together (2007, p. 394). While agential realism provides an ethos for design education pedagogies, feminist ethics of care practices model the moral elements that are required of students and educators to design a better world. It is to the latter that we now turn.²⁴

In her overview of Tronto and Fisher’s definition of care, Bozalek notes that their conceptualisation of care as a practice and a disposition transcends the hegemonic Cartesian body/mind binaries of Western cultures and in so doing, reorientates the focus of care on repairing our world (2016, p. 84). This is in keeping with design education’s imperatives to support design students in finding solutions that improve human, non-human and more-than-human lives in “a life sustaining web”. Furthermore, in commenting on the modest goal of living “in the world as well as possible,” Bozalek (2016, p. 84) draws attention to the realistic and situated application of care that also resonates with the practicalities and priorities of design. Tronto (2013) elaborates on the definition of care as a disposition and a practice in her five phases of care and their associated moral elements, which I summarise below.

The first is *caring about* and its associated attentiveness that emphasises the importance of becoming aware of and paying attention to the needs of the care receiver. The second phase is *responsibility* that calls on the caregiver to respond to the need of the care receiver. This is followed by the third phase—*competence*—that calls for the provision of good care by responding to and meeting the needs of the care receiver. The fourth phase—*responsiveness*—refers to how the care receiver responds to the care given. Finally, the fifth phase—*caring-with*—draws attention to how relationships of trust and solidarity develop over time, as Bozalek elaborates: “Conditions of trust are created where reliance can be developed through the caring practices of others. Solidarity develops when people realise they are relational beings who are better off engaged in such processes of care together rather than alone” (2016, p. 88).

I now unpack some of the complexities and ambivalences associated with Tronto’s five phases of care practices as outlined above. Given the relational ontology of care practices, it is necessary to note that care is not necessarily universally good as a practice. For instance, when interrogating how care was a mis-used tool by colonial powers in the colonial project, Tronto (following Narayan) notes that care was not

²⁴ Note the use of the term *moral* refers to Tronto’s identification of moral qualities associated with her ethics of care framework and should not be read as moralistic. Tronto writes: “In a society that has systematically devalued care, then, the kinds of moral qualities and capacities associated with care often are not seen among the most important ethical values, either. Thus, thinkers concerned with a feminist ethic of care began to provide accounts of other values that should be seen as important moral qualities” (2013, p. 34).

“deployed discursively to good purpose” (2013, p. 24). On the contrary, the missionaries inflicted care in order to subjugate indigenous people under the guise of Christianising, civilising and assimilating them into the dominant Western culture. It is not surprising therefore that care is treated with scepticism and criticism within the current debates around decolonisation of the academy, specifically in relation to issues of assimilation and cultural and social capital.

In her critique of neoliberalism’s focus on the individualisation of care, Tronto (2013) argues that the paternalism and parochialism inherent in care practices distort the kinds of responsibilities that people ought to appropriately assume. On the one hand, she argues that paternalistic practices exercise too much authority in the allocation of responsibility to themselves. On the other hand, she notes that parochialism limits the boundaries of care responsibility too narrowly. Concerned with this inequality, Tronto introduces her moral element of “caring with” as an alternative to “caring for,” the latter of which reinforces a binary distancing between caregivers and care receivers. In so doing, she proposes care as an ongoing social practice of caring-with, and thereby highlights the relational and the ontological agency of caring practices; the notion of caring-with also acknowledges how care receivers and caregivers are mutually, albeit asymmetrically, implicated. Tronto argues that it is important for caregivers to acknowledge their own need for care, because in doing this, we expand our capacity for empathy. Consequently, while the notion of caring-with attends to the relationality of care and potentially lays the ground for building feelings of trust and solidarity, these responses are not a guaranteed outcome. To give an illustration, the unequal power relationship between myself—as lecturer—and students is further complicated by my positionality as a white woman of privilege. While I endeavour to build solidarity and trust within classroom encounters, I am cognisant of the need for care practices that acknowledge inequality without being paternalistic and parochial.

In thinking through the above-mentioned complexities, Tronto distinguishes between the universal need for care and the cultural specificity of standards of care. Tronto makes the relationship between care ethics and people’s lived experience explicit. It follows therefore that in order to practise good care the care-giver takes the time to learn about the care receiver. Applied to an educational context, it follows that in order to build caring relationships, educators need to get to know their students through carefully curated pedagogical interventions that foreground the specificities of what matters to students. In this context, the etymology of *curate* is significant because it draws from the Latin verb *curare* which means “to care” and “to cure” or “to heal,” and resonates with Ettinger’s matrixial *carriance*, as will be discussed further on in the section on ethics and aesthetics.

According to Zembylas, Bozalek and Shefer (2014), the moral qualities of trust and solidarity coming with/from care can be used as points of departure for struggles against different practices of privileged irresponsibility in higher education. For

instance, they argue that trust and solidarity are helpful for students and educators who “seek to critically explore the intersections between power, emotion, and praxis in society and education” (2014, p. 201). In this regard, as I explore ways in which I can become both more attentive to and learn from students’ lives and their indigenous cultural norms and practices, I am mindful of Antrop-González and De Jesús’s (2006) theory of critical care that alerts us to ambiguous readings of the term caring, and how caring is often interpreted through culturally, racially and gender-biased lenses. This is further reinforced by Hobart and Kneese, who theorise care as a “collective capacity to build an alternative to colonialism and capitalism” whilst cautioning that the dominant classes have the power to exploit care and empathy for their own benefit (2020, p. 8). It is therefore incumbent on me to interrogate the limits and possibilities of my own positionality—as a privileged, white settler—as well as how I am implicated in the ongoing construction of Eurocentrism that both underpins and champions the colonial and imperial projects. Similarly, how I respond to students’ stories and lived experience is crucial so as not to further entrench unequal power relations between us.

Megan Boler’s (1999) notion of pedagogies of discomfort provides another useful framework within which to investigate the relationship between emotions and power. Of particular concern is her provocation that educators should take collective responsibility in recognising how their economic and social positions are implicated in their teaching practices. Accordingly, Boler critiques “passive empathy,” whereby the educator runs the risk of both distancing the other “whom we cannot directly help” whilst simultaneously distancing ourselves from recognising our own implication “in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront” (1999, p. 158). Boler offers instead the notion of “testimonial reading,” whereby the educator recognises herself as a “battleground for forces raging ... to which [she] must pay attention ... to properly carry out [her] task” (1999, p. 167). In other words, Boler points out the ethical responsibility of the teacher to not only teach critical thinking, but to encourage testimonial reading in order for teachers and students to take responsibility for their implicatedness in historic moments.

Equally important are Boler’s insights into the politics of listening and the risk that educators might perpetuate trauma within the pedagogical encounter in the event that testimonial reading is not practised. With this in mind, she highlights the need for students and educators to develop a nuanced ethical language that recognises the ambiguity of ethical interrelations and acknowledges the complexity of working with/in difference during classroom encounters.

In other words, passive empathy is a mechanism that simultaneously reinforces othering and absolves us of our implication in the social forces that have brought about inequality and social injustice. In addition to positioning the self unquestioningly as judge of the other and thereby setting up a binary distancing, Boler argues, follow-

ing Nussbaum, that passive empathy also paradoxically hinges on our identification with the other “in order to consume its sameness” (Boler, 1999, p. 159). The resulting effect of this consumptive identification of the other is one of annihilation as we insert ourselves “in the other person’s shoes” (1999, p. 158), thereby reinforcing our existence at their expense.

Unlike passive empathy that absolves us from responsibility, Boler argues that in bearing testimony, the witness shifts their attention away from the other towards a potentially discomfiting interrogation of their own assumptions and implicatedness in unequal power relations. To put it differently, the process of bearing witness hinges on the witness rendering herself vulnerable.

In proclaiming testimony as trauma’s genre, Boler reveals how, as a process and performative act, the unspeakable and excessive are voiced in ways that refute identification between speaker and listener by calling into question the forces at play that have rendered the speaker as “other” and the listener as “judge” (1999, p. 166).

In a comparable manner, Tronto also urges educators to pay attention to the “voices that count”. She writes that “those who have the most to say may not be those who speak the eloquent language of the academy or of the realm of public policymakers”. The challenge to educators therefore is one of transforming the “abstract ideas” of dominant discourses on “issues of justice and fairness” towards discourses that are put forward by the “voices that count” (1995, p. 145).

The above-mentioned thoughts in/form my pedagogy as, following Haraway who writes, “it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with” (2016, p. 12). As a design educator, for example, I seek to work with art and design histories in ways that do not render those students whose indigenous knowledges and histories have systematically been excluded, to experience feelings of deficit due to lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979). Moreover, contrary to deficit discourses that tend to position students as unable to deal with complexity, the pedagogical challenge becomes one of initiating open-ended processes that build students’ confidence in engaging with discourses without fear of getting “them” wrong. Furthermore, the focus on students’ subjective encounters with artefacts alleviates the pressure on students who might have felt compelled to compete against one another. At the same time, the foregrounding of subjectivity not only models how difference can be worked with affirmatively in SAHE, but also confirms a commitment to working with difference differently in order to make a difference that matters (Haraway, 1997).

With reference to the above concerns, Zaccor (2015) argues that simply working affirmatively with difference is not enough. Instead, she calls on teachers and students to actively grapple with “issues of power as related to difference” so as not “to reproduce inequalities that exist in greater society” (2015, p. 28). In this regard,

Rolón-Dow proposes “color(full) critical care” that calls on students and educators to work with “such issues as white privilege and racism, colonisation, migration, and citizenship [that] have played out in the communities where they teach” (2005, p. 104). Following from this, Antrop-González stresses the need for the situatedness of educational caring that is located within students’ sociocultural context in order to “forge a new caring framework that privileges the cultural values and political economy of communities of color as a foundation for education” (2011, p. 90). Valenzuela also advocates that educational caring must “more explicitly challenge the notion that assimilation is a neutral process” (1999, p. 25). She maintains that in order for schools to be truly caring institutions for students from historically oppressed backgrounds, “students’ cultural world and their structural position must also be fully apprehended, with school-based adults deliberately bringing issues of race, difference, and power into central focus” (1999, p. 109).²⁵ In telling their own stories, instead, students position themselves as situated generators of knowledge within the academy and, in so doing, alleviate the pressures of assimilation and alienation.

Given my own privileged positionality, I strive to practise pedagogies that do not reproduce the inequalities that exist in greater society. In order to do this, I utilise the emotions that surface as a result of my privileged position “as points of departure for critical reflection and renewed action towards relational responsibility and attentiveness” (Zembylas et al., p. 2014). This is done in the hope of transforming the epistemic violences enacted in the name of education against indigenous knowledges and cultural production.

1.6 Ethics and personal narrative

Of concern when setting assignments based on personal narrative and lived experience is the risk that some students might be re-traumatised when they revisit difficult memories and experiences. While it is not the intention to cause unnecessary trauma and pain, given the high levels of poverty, the culture of gangsterism and violence that are prevalent in many of the townships where students live, the high rate of HIV infections in South Africa and, as already alluded to, the ongoing threat of gender-based violence, it is not surprising when students share traumatic stories. In citing these examples, I want to emphasise that it is not my intention to pathologise students by focusing on trauma, nor do I mean to position students within a deficit discourse. To the contrary, I witness students’ courage as they navigate the difficult challenges that they face on a daily basis. In these instances, how we respond as educators becomes critical to the experience and practice of caring pedagogies so as not to reinforce deficit discourses and

²⁵ Even though Valenzuela’s research refers to secondary school education, her findings are relevant to and have resonance with students’ experiences of SAHE.

not to reinforce binary othering that can leave the students feeling misheard, stereotyped, pathologised and annihilated. In the next section, I discuss feminist propositions regarding responsibility practices in order to deepen the understanding around the relationship between responsibility and care in education.

1.7 Response-ability

In developing her proposition of a (post)humanist ethics, Thiele diffracts posthumanist ethics through Ettinger's inhuman ethics in order to explore an ethicality that "no longer aspires an (always failing) responsibility *for* the other, with the subsequent question which responsibility to choose in order not to either appropriate otherness into sameness or patronise others via protectionism ... (and) suggests response-ability *with* others" (2014a, p. 213). This resonates with Tronto's notion of responsibility that focuses on the action that the caregiver takes in order to respond to and take care of the need of the care receiver.

Of importance to this chapter is how students communicate their needs through the creation of narrative artefacts as well as identifying how best educators can respond to these needs through their affective encounter with students' artefacts. In other words, teachers' ability to respond—their response-ability—becomes crucial to the way that students experience the care offered to them. As stated in the introduction, the paper argues that by placing care at the centre of pedagogical practice, students and educators can build relationships of solidarity and trust across difference and inequality. When it comes to visual narratives in particular, teachers can become attuned through co-affective, aesthetic encounters as conceptualised by Ettinger, with students' artworks. Let us now turn to Ettinger's theory of matrixial trans-subjectivity to examine how the ethico-political possibilities it offers for the human(e) in the aesthetic realm might materialise (Thiele, 2014a).

1.8 Matrixial trans-subjectivity

Modelled on the co-emerging trans-subjective relationship of the becoming m/other and becoming child in the final trimester of pregnancy, Ettinger's matrixial theory of trauma, aesthetics and sexual difference is grounded in her practices as psychoanalyst and visual artist (Pollock, 2010). Characterised as compassionate, hospitable and asymmetrical, Ettinger argues that this relationship is humans' primary relational model that is non-verbal, pre-phallic and conceives of subjectivity as difference-with-in-difference rather than difference based on binary splits between self and others. Importantly, she argues that humans can access the matrixial through encounters with art, both as artist and viewer.

Coining the term “artworking,” Ettinger moves beyond the representational role of art as aesthetic object to be appreciated towards the performative function of art as the “transport station of trauma,” which offers the potential for healing as an “ethics-in-action”. She writes: “Artworking, like psychoanalytical healing of long duration, is a compassionate encounter-event of prolonged generosity...” Importantly, she adds, “as an aesthetic practice artworking is an ethical working-through that occurs when subjective emergence is woven within a trans-subjective borderspace” (2005a, p. 708). In/formed by the intergenerational trauma of the holocaust in which many of her family members were murdered, Ettinger conceptualises artworking as a “space and a practice that invites and evokes the possibility of trust after the end of trust” (Ettinger in Kaiser & Thiele 2018, p. 104).

In the context of teaching and learning, artworking offers a possibility for trans-subjective rapport between the students themselves, their artworks and myself. In such instances, a threshold opens up between, as Pollock writes, “now and then, us and them” that simultaneously holds the gap between different beings, times and places, while ethically making each partner vulnerable to the other’s trauma and making us want to know it and even able to process it “precisely because of the different, matrixial nature of the difference between unknown but co-affecting partners in difference” (2010, p. 838). To put this differently, artworks generate affects that activate ethical possibilities for trans-subjective fragilisation and sharing.

1.9 Wit(h)nessing

Ettinger proposes the co-poetic aesthetic relationship of wit[h]nessing as a being with and bearing witness to the trauma of the other. Importantly, this relationship offers compassionate co-response-ability and risks vulnerability, yet does not give way to assimilation with the other (Ettinger, 2005a). Pollock writes that by conjoining the two words witness and wit(h)ness, Ettinger constructs a neologism wit(h)nessing with the bracketing of the letter (h) “... [that] suspends an undecidable condition between them” (2017, p. 270). Significantly, as Pollock elucidates, the notion of wit(h)nessing expands the “legal and testimonial” conceptions of bearing witness *to* the other, which reinforces binary difference. Instead, wit(h)nessing embodies, as Pollock writes, “being beside the other in a gesture that is more than mere ethical solidarity” (2010, p. 831). In other words, the neologism reveals the foundational relationship between co-responsibility and compassion in the formation of subjectivity in the matrixial realm, one that involves both risk and trust. Given that human subjectivity in the matrixial is in/formed through the primary relationship of feminine-maternal-matrixial, Ettinger argues that all humans have the capacity for wit(h)nessing “without desecration and without abusing a trust” (Ettinger in Kaiser & Thiele 2018, p. 105).

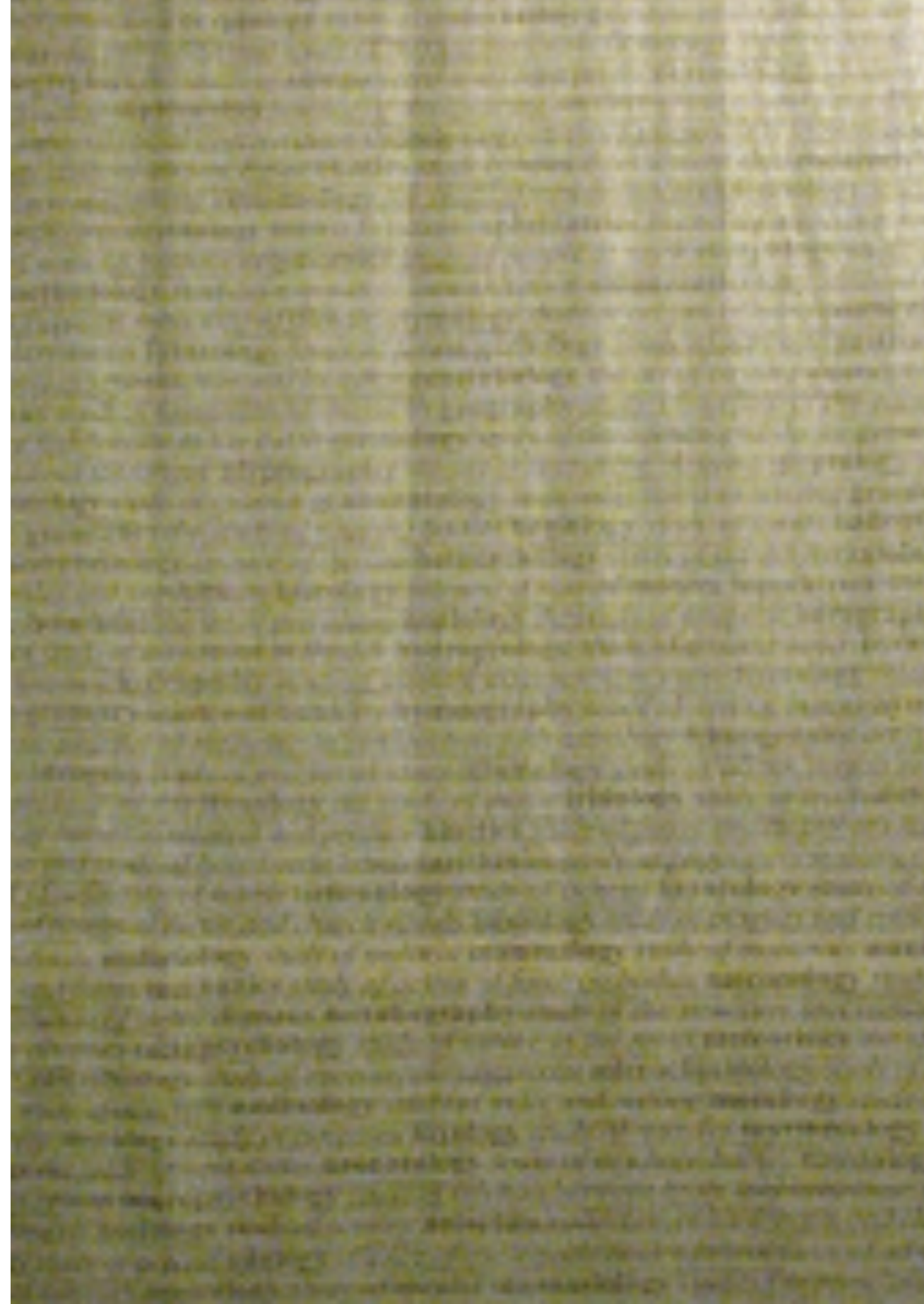
1.10 Carriance

In theorising further the relationship between the mother-to-be and the becoming child who share a common psychic space during the final stages of pregnancy, Ettinger in her recent work develops her notion of *carriance* in which trust is identified as a primary human instinct. In so doing, Ettinger argues that *carriance* offers possibilities for recovering the human(e) in the human. This move is made by turning to the ancient Hebrew meaning of the subject as a “carrier” rather than the more literal interpretation of subject as subjugated through the Latin root. As she further elaborates: “*carriance* draws its meaning from our passage into life, and from a forever beforeness. Being carried, the imprints of the passage via the m/Other who carried, are intermingled with imprints from our own becoming as carried-cared-for beings” (Ettinger in Kaiser & Thiele 2018, p. 114). Significantly, because all humans have experienced being carried by a maternal body in coming into life, the primal imprints of this “shared gestational period in which together with the mother-to-be and the becoming child co-emerge through co-affective reciprocal and asymmetrical relations in difference” (IPAK Centar, 2014). To put this provocative statement in another way, within this reciprocal trans-subjective relationship, we are neither separate nor merged. Rather, we co-emerge with/in difference. In drawing attention to the connection between the foundational asymmetrical relations of *carriance* and the “basic asymmetry of ethics, or ethical relations”, Ettinger emphasises how there is “no human and/or humane-ness without the ethical instruction, or demand, or imperative ‘to carry’” (IPAK Centar, 2014). In other words, it is because of our primary transconnected experience of carrying and being carried that we come to know and to trust the capacity of *carriance* as a primary model of relating “that offers the possibility of hope for the future after all is lost because humans have the capacity to hold on to trust, even after the death of trust” (Ettinger in Kaiser & Thiele, 2018). To put it in another way, while we have no idea what the future will bring, implicit in the notion of *carriance* is a trust in the unknown.

This is helpful in formulating how together students and educators might carry the burden of South Africa’s traumatic past/present and the current crisis within the university. Building on Ettinger’s response-able wit(h)nessing, the notion of care-carriance becomes key to building trust and solidarity within the learning environment. As students and lecturers enter into open and compassionate co-response-ability with each other, the possibility for wit(h)nessing each other through co-poietic encounters is activated. When this occurs, a space opens up in which the potential of transforming traumatic events into subjectivising potentiality materialises (Ettinger, 2005a). It is important to understand that while care-carriance hinges an opening up of oneself to self-fragilisation, it requires an openness that does not lead to the disintegration of the self. In other words, opening up oneself to the other is not about self-sacrifice; rather, it is about bearing the pain and the trauma of the other when they can no longer bear it themselves.

1.11 Conclusion

Concerned with how trust is built and shared amongst participants who come from different class, cultural and racial backgrounds in SAHE, this chapter has explored the potential for entanglements between arts-based practices, care ethics and matrixial aesthetic wit[h]nessing to generate relational pedagogies that are in/formed by solidarity and trust. Furthermore, the diffraction of Ettinger's aesthetic wit[h]nessing—that invites the possibility of co-response-ability with/for “the unknown other” (2010, p. 93)—through Tronto's “caring-with” draws attention to how relationships of trust and solidarity can develop over time in pedagogical settings. Moreover, in recognising the role that our own vulnerability plays in caring-with practices, both theorists not only acknowledge our own need for care, but show how by risking vulnerability with others we expand our capacity for building trust and solidarity across difference. Drawing from Barad's (2007) proclamations that “our responsibility is greater than it would be if it were ours alone” and Haraway's (2016) campaign of “staying with the trouble,” this chapter has attempted to expand conversations around caring practices and trust in the field of higher education that call on students and teachers to recuperate ambiguous pasts that continue to in/form the present and have ongoing consequences for the future. Just as Thiele et al. (2021) emphasise that their desire for trust and care in their teaching and learning practice is not about striving for purity or innocence, this chapter has attempted to diffract the rainbow differently in the hope of expanding rather than flattening the possibilities of building trust and solidarity in SAHE.



No conservative population control policies.

trans / eugenics: ongoing.

people voted out of land.

criters radically remembered — (could be)



radical
of entire bio

SCIENCE IS A
IMAGINATION

Ability to take account:

obligation to the other



Chapter 2

Touching text:

Feeling my way through research-creation²⁶

2.1 Abstract

This article explores how artistic research practice, as a thinking through art, generates different understandings of the world. Having come to higher education through my visual arts practice, I trace threads of thinking-making practices that, while seeded in the studio, continue to generate new connections and concepts that in/form my PhD inquiry into different ways of learning in South African Higher Education contexts. Guided by Manning's conceptualisation of research-creation as an ecology of practices operative within the interstices of making and thinking, I show how artmaking as an intuitive process nudges my thinking through-and-around concerns obliquely, attuned towards different registers and levels of intensities, cutting across normative accounts of what it means to know (Manning, 2016). Referring to two bodies of my work, *sum of the parts* (2010) and *Evidence of Things Unseen* (2014), the paper shows how materiality and making conjugate new languages that give expression to the ineffable obscured in the name of Science and Fine Art. Exploring the diffractive entanglements of thinking-making practices in the between of writing and drawing (Barad, 2007), the paper shows how writing-with, drawing-with, doodling-with, and scrawling-with activate and agitate the between of words and images in order to do inquiry differently.

²⁶ This article has been blind peer-reviewed by the guest editors of *Qualitative Inquiry* and still needs to be submitted to the editors.

When the artist refuses to produce an object as the object of her work, when the artist refuses to be the subject of the work, when the philosopher refuses to write at a distance, when the work becomes the practice, when the practice invents its own language, research-creation deeply threatens the power/knowledge that holds the academy in place.
(Manning, 2020, p. 221)

2.2 Introduction

On completion of my Masters of Fine Arts in 2013, I began to teach art and design history at a university of technology in Cape Town. Having had no prior teaching experience, I turned to my studio practice to guide my approach to pedagogy. Like studio practice, the pedagogical encounters became learning opportunities that propelled me to re/turn to the academy where I embarked on my doctoral project that explores ways of doing academia differently, or more specifically, to consider how art does its work of thinking anew. As an undergraduate student of art history and economic history, I was frustrated by the schism between the disciplines. While intricately entangled, the two did not “speak to each” other in the academy. I understood economic history through my encounters with artworks because for me, these artworks somehow made more sense than academic texts. I have always struggled to express myself with words, so it is with some surprise and consternation that at this point, I find myself in the final stages of “writing” up my thesis. Moreover, given that my research focus is on finding ways of producing knowledge using more-than-linguistic modes, I find myself in the challenging position of trying to explicate precisely that which I argue is not expressible in traditional linguistic form. How then do I make explicit my research methodology of thinking-through-making, as a thinking-through-artworking, that generates understandings of the world that manifest in more-than-linguistic registers? In this article, I show how in extending beyond traditional academic modes, tentative making practices in the studio and in my research practice sediment my thinking and draw me back to words.

I trace threads of thinking-making practices that, while seeded in the studio, continue to generate new connections and concepts about how knowledge is produced. In

so doing, I foreground the reciprocity between artistic research practice and research methodological practice. The point of this is to consider how art making practices that exceed the realms of normative academic modes of inquiry might shape content in ways that make more sense than those knowledges presented in traditional linguistic form. Erin Manning's understanding of research-creation is as an ecology of practices (from Isabelle Stengers) that operates in the interstices of making and thinking which in turn activates new registers beyond "making on the one end and thinking on the other [that are] neither art per se nor philosophy" (Manning, 2016, p. 13). Guided by this understanding, I put forward artmaking as an intuitive process that nudges my thinking through-and-around concerns obliquely, and opens towards different registers and levels of intensities that cut across normative accounts of what it means to know (Manning, 2016, p. 27). The aim is to make explicit how thinking-making processes in/form my PhD research inquiry and show how these embodied practices help me to understand the world obliquely, in ways that make more sense to me than traditional academic forms. These processes help my approach to pedagogies that urgently seek other ways of creating knowledges within the academy.

The article is structured in two parts. The first section focuses on studio thinking-making practices that enact a "way of learning, [that] acts as a bridge toward new processes, [and] new pathways and highlights the generative possibilities that an aesthetics of experience offers learning" (Manning, 2016, p. 47). In order to do this, I refer to two bodies of my work —*sum of the parts* (2010) and *Evidence of Things Unseen* (2014)—that explore the opening between Art and Science through the lens of feminism, and usher forth nuanced understandings of how Knowledge²⁷ is constructed and in so doing, how new knowledges are created.

In the second section, I attend to my PhD research inquiry that draws on feminist new materialist and critical posthumanist reconfigurations of research methodologies that seek to dismantle humanist Cartesian logic and its foundations on transcendent binary splits. I give a detailed description of the methodological keystones of my PhD research process and explain how, like my studio practice, writing-with, drawing-with, doodling-with and scrawling-with academic text help me to both trouble the authority of text and make sense of it. In addition to referencing specific artworks, the article includes visual documentation of thinking-through-drawing and thinking-through-writing journaling extracts that trace trajectories of my PhD research journey in order to explore the "fragile differences" that materialise when practices—construed as modes of "thought in the act"—are diffracted through one another (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. viii). Rather than setting up a binary juxtaposition between studio and research inquiry, this arrangement generates iterative

²⁷ The capitalisation of "Knowledge" references the hegemonic positioning of Western knowledge production and practices as normative within the academy.

diffractive²⁸ intra-actions²⁹ through which different practices build on and through ongoing entanglements with each other (Barad, 2007). Importantly, given that these practices are activated by techniques immanent to their process, I attend to their intra-actions, as ruptures out of which new and complex patterns manifest, patterns greater than the sum of their parts, entangled like inextricable threads of felt³⁰ (Springgay, 2019, p. 62).

2.3 Studio matters

My artistic practice is informed by the medieval understanding of art that emphasises art's performative function as "manner", or "way" that "shows the way". Valued as a processual practice rather than a process that produces objects of aesthetic value for the art market, this understanding orients me towards the "what else [that] art can do" (Manning, 2016, p. 46). When opened towards the "what else", also referred to as the "more-than", art activates an immanent process of "artfulness" defined by Manning as "an aesthetic yield that opens experience to the participatory quality of the more-than ... [and] ... opens up new conduits for expression and experimentation" emerging in the in-act (2016, p. 55). In order to attune to these "conduits for expression and experimentation", I adopt speculative processes that respond to ideas as they seed in the in-act. In other words, rather than setting out to create something new in the studio, the practice is best described as one of sense-making in which I think-make through entangled relationships with materials, processes and materiality. The intended effect is not to reduce art's role to didactic sense-making, but rather to show how artmaking can recast the very question of value within the academy.³¹ For example, these slow repetitive practices take time and make time in ways that iteratively thicken sense-making and allow what needs to be known to make itself felt.

²⁸ Understood as a process of "reading insights through one another" (Barad, 2007, p. 25), diffractive analysis foregrounds the entangled relationship between material and discursive processes in the production of knowledge and positions researchers as part of ongoing diffractive entanglements.

²⁹ Barad distinguishes between interactions (premised on separate individual agencies that precede their interaction), and "intra-actions" (conceptualised as the mutual constitution of entangled agencies). Discrete agencies emerge through their intra-actions and are "distinct" in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don't exist as individual elements (Barad, 2007: 33).

³⁰ As an enmeshed composite material that is made by laborious rubbing together wet wool fibres with soap, felt undermines the gridded warp and weft structure of woven textiles. For Deleuze and Guattari, felt's rhizomatic structure comprises "a supple solid [...] anti-fabric [that] is in no way homogenous [...] it is in principle infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction" (1987, p. 475).

³¹ Thank you to the anonymous reviewers who helped me to make my intentions more explicit regarding the urgency of what counts in the academy.

In what follows, I discuss *sum of the parts*, an exhibition that sought to give expression to the more-than that exceeds the normative frame of Enlightenment hegemonic discourse that is founded on limitations and exclusions in its pursuit of ordering and classifying the natural world. I was frustrated by how the latter form of ordering and classifying in its desire to “know everything” fails to take into account that which cannot be known within those frames, yet makes itself felt. The exhibition embraced a range of materials and technologies that include handcraft practices—traditionally associated with the feminine and not deemed “high” art—as well as mechanised processes such as laser cutting and digital printing technologies. In doing so, the exhibition enacted a diffractive entanglement between the laboratory, the domestic and the spiritual, making palpable the more-than aesthetic affects that each of these practices on their own occlude. The installation was activated within the bounds of an artwork, entitled *veil of sciences*, that served as both “foreground” and “backdrop” of the exhibition.

In its first iteration, a three-metre square diaphanous veil was suspended at the entrance to the installation (see *Figure 2.1*). Made from mull, a coarse muslin used to bind books, I laboriously traced with charcoal the taxonomies and definitions of all the scientific practices I could find on the internet. Held together by magnets and iron filings, the veil embodied my ambivalent pull towards humans’ need to make sense of the world and concomitant repulsion of how, in order to do that, Humans³² had carved it up. The second iteration of the veil comprises the faint charcoal residue that filtered through the mull onto the surface of tissue paper placed below (see *Figure 2.2*). Hung on the opposite wall of the gallery, the veil is reconstituted as a fragile ghostly figure, the delicate sheets of tissue held together precariously with pins. The artwork enacts the damaging effects of humans’ extractivist approach to producing Universal Knowledge as well the futility of conceptualising and presenting knowledge as a complete whole.

³² The capitalisation of Human is in line with Wynter’s conceptualisation of Man that embodies the notion of the human as Christian, white, heterosexual male.





Figure 2.2. (above) Tissue paper veil of sciences against which the Star Chart is hung.
Photo: Mike Hall

Figure 2.1.(left). Installation view of sum of the parts showing mull version of the veil of sciences.
Photo: Mike Hall

Set against the paper veil is the *Star Chart*, an altarpiece that hovers above a modest altar. Incorporating all identified star types to date, this work holds the virtual and the real of the known universe. Unlike the hand-scribed *veil of sciences*, the *Star Chart* is constructed from mechanically laser-cut perspex rays, each a different star name. Temporarily secured to a central ring with detachable bulldog clips, the rays are sheathed in metallic gold wool that is wrapped in such a way that the loosely exposed threads are ambiguously un/ravelling. The circular arrangement allows for multiple non-hierarchical configurations that can expand to accommodate potential new discoveries in time to come, a reminder of the ongoing unfolding of infinite and incomplete knowledges. The work also re-enacts and troubles the Scientific gaze's obliteration of other knowledge systems by recasting the shadows as fertile sites of knowledge production. It is when light is directed towards the transparent perspex that its shadows are revealed, making the words to some extent visible only when light and shadow are combined (see *Figure 2.3*).



Figure 2.3. Detail of *Star Chart* (2010) and tissue paper *veil of science* (2010), revealing the play between light and shadow.

Photo: Mike Hall

The task of laser cutting the 93 rays was a time-consuming process. After each cutting, I removed the many curiously shaped “in between bits” of the letter forms. Known as counters, apertures and eyes,³³ these pieces signalled the ineffable quality that I sought to express. It became imperative that rather than disposing of these off-cuts, they become central to the work as reference to that which is sacrificed in the pursuit of Knowledge (see *Figure 2.4*).



Figure 2.4. Counters, apertures and eyes on the altar, sum of the parts (2010).
Photo: Mike Hall

Thinking with Manning and Massumi, I now understand that the artwork activated “new modes of activity, already in germ [that offered] a potential to escape or over-spill ready-made channelings into the dominant value system” (2014, p. 87). In other words, the forms not only embodied that which was excised and undervalued within Cartesian thinking; they also gave expression and value to the ineffable and the more-than of words. Drawn to further explore the more-than that *sum of the parts* alluded to, I returned to art school to commence my Masters in Fine Art (MFA) inquiry that culminated in *Evidence of Things Unseen* (2014), an exhibition that sought to visualise, materialise and make visible felt experience, or “things”, that while palpable, could not be expressed or measured within a normative modernist frame. I was curious as to how disrupting the grid, a trope of modernism, might claim territories for the feminine.

³³ Inner parts of letters such as the inside of an “O” and “D” are called *counters*. The spaces inside letters that are open at one end e.g. “n” and “u” are the *apertures*. The *eye* is the counter of an “e”.

Eschewing transcendent modernist ideals of individualism, perfection and patriarchal hegemony, the ruptures materialised through practical and conceptual troublings of the x and y binary logic of the grid. Troubled by hierarchical distinctions of value inherent in modernist culture, I thought-with materials synonymous with children's craft practices, decoration, parties and dress-up deemed unworthy of high art. Mulling over the proverb "all that glitters is not gold", a paradoxical truism implicated with value, I worked with sweetie papers, sticky tape, gift wrap and glitter, the undervalued "stuff" discarded after the party is over. Before long, glitter covered every surface of the studio. Evoking Edmond Locard's basic principle of forensic science stating that "every contact leaves a trace" (Blackledge, 2007, p. 1), the ubiquitous sparkles revealed the points of contact where the inquiry touched ground, giving texture to the quality of the "something that is exchanged and taken away ... [thus forming] ... the basis of the transfer and recovery of all scientific evidence" (2007, p. 1).³⁴

I was pulled towards the quality of difference between the "something" that was exchanged and the "something" that was taken away in the contact trace of the glitter. Each twinkle shone light on the inquiry, tracking infinitesimal potential points of departure and return that signalled the elusive and ineffable felt experience that I struggled to articulate in words. In retrospect, I recognise I was coming into proximity with Marcel Duchamp's indefinable notion of the "infrathin", characterised by a "sensitivity to difference ... [that is] ... a form of difference ... [that] simultaneously destabilizes and generates" (Murray, 2013). Concerned with the "similarities in difference and difference in similarities", Duchamp maintained that the infrathin is a specific quality of difference that eludes generalisation and can only be gleaned through example³⁵ (Murray, 2013). Put differently, the infrathin is not difference per se, but the quality of the "between" of difference. In other words, the quality of the infrathin is what really makes the difference (Manning, 2020, p. 16). In *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*, Manning explains that the infrathin makes manifest a capacious relational field in which all that makes up a particular experience "cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts" (2020, p. 16). Of significance is how the infrathin touches on the differences at play, materialising them as both figure and ground, opening up fields of perception to the potential of more-than. Put differently, she writes, "[that which] is not seen within the seeable is more-than appearance ... is [what is] at stake in a politics of the infrathin" (2020, p. 1). In other words, Manning argues that in backgrounding/foregrounding, the infrathin not only attends to the more-than of perception but also manifests its capacity to activate both/and.

³⁴ In his 2007 presentation at the Trace Evidence Symposium, Florida, USA, Blackledge identifies glitter as the ideal trace (2007, p. 1). See: <http://projects.nfstc.org/trace/docs/Trace%20Presentations%20CD-2/keil.pdf>

³⁵ There are 46 known examples that Duchamp jotted down on scraps of paper that have since been posthumously published.

The infrathin, as elaborated above, has for me resonances with feminist theorist, psychoanalyst and artist Bracha Ettinger's theory of the matrixial borderspace³⁶ that gave shape to my MFA artworking. Born out of her artistic praxis, matrixial theory is modelled on the trans-subjective relationship between becoming-mother and becoming-child during the final trimester of pregnancy as they hospitably co-inhabit a joint-yet-separate psychic space in which they recognise each other without actually knowing the other (Ettinger, 2006, p. 220). Unlike phallogocentric configurations of subjectivity defined by discrete boundaries based on cuts and splits, matrixial subjectivity is partial, trans-subjective and co-affecting within and along shared border linkages (Pollock, 2004, p. 6). Crucially, this asymmetrical, yet non-hierarchical and capacious relationship "between" I and non-I allows difference to flourish within a compassionate and interdependent web. Conceived as an invisible web that materialises within and alongside phallic logic, the matrixial critiques without rejecting the phallic model in its entirety (2004, p. 6). Mindful of the othering a/effects of the scopoc gaze that reinforce separations between the subject as active seer, from the object that is passively observed, the matrixial gaze is spectral, revealing a difference-within that shifts attention from the visual to the felt (Pollock, 2010). Unlike the male spectator gaze's emphasis on "looking and seeing, looking and knowing, sight and power, vision and desire" (2010, p. 857), the matrixial gaze is felt and distributed within and across the aesthetic field, "connected to and affected by the unconscious of the Other and the consciousness of the Cosmos" (Ettinger, 2005, p. 710).

Like Gilles Deleuze, the image for Ettinger is not a mirror that reflects the world, and art's work is not to represent nor aestheticise reality. Thinking through her painting practice, Ettinger conceptualises the shareable "matrixial" space-subject that unfurls within the luminous layers of her paintings. For her, it is within this space that ideas become translucent and the "space of a potential subject and the subject of that becoming-space" co-emerge (Evans, 2017). Ettinger's conceptualisation of the matrixial symbolic feminine co-existing within and alongside the phallic framework resonated with my engagement with rupture, intersection and overlap as ways of understanding difference differently. In following a speculative process, I never "knew" in advance what the invisible would "look" like. Instead, I was guided by thinking-making processes and materialities that allowed what needed to be revealed to make itself shown. The non-linear approach was punctuated by questions that prompted further exploration. For example, in the *Partial Eclipse* series of black glitter paintings, a single directed spotlight triggered a blinding flash that repelled one's eye, enacting the difference between looking and seeing (see *Figure 2.5*). When lit obliquely with soft ambient light, however, a myriad of sparkles shimmered, evoking the infinity of the night sky. Cast in

³⁶ Ettinger defines the matrixial borderspace as "a psychic sphere of encounters of I(s) and non-I(s) where traces, imprints and waves are exchanged and experienced by fragmented and assembled I(s) and non-I(s) in trans-subjectivity and sub-subjectivity" (1999, p. 7).

this light, the dark paintings became more alluring, their sparkles shimmering above the paintings' surfaces, dancing in the vertiginous space between viewer and canvas, signalling the inherently relational encounter. The following thinking-through-writing journal excerpt is an account of how thinking-through-making foregrounded the elusive difference between seeing and looking:

Evidence of Things Unseen and *sum of the parts* materialised in the between of seeing and looking. In agitating the relationship between foreground and background, both projects helped me make sense of looking and seeing. For me, seeing prehends that which is visible and immediately apparent, that which is there to be seen, that exposes itself to be seen, that is available to be seen. Looking, however, is a quest that is borne from curiosity and desire, requiring more energy and engagement—a relational reaching and opening towards. Pulling cannot happen in isolation, something pulls something, something pushes something. The challenge is to find other modes, means and materials that respond not only to what cannot be seen and overlooked but also that which infrathinly has yet to find form and expression. It is not simply about joining the dots, but a following of lines of flight that open up new thinking and new knowledges, not knowing what I would find.



Figure 2.5. *Detail of Partial Eclipse 1* (2013). One of six paintings measuring 1800mm x 1800mm. Black glitter and paint on board.

Photo: Nike Romano

Embodying the multiplicity, complexity and nuance of the diffractive gaze, encounters with the *Partial Eclipse* paintings elude the capture of photographic form, an uncanny enactment of Manning's account of how "there is much more that shimmers in experience than can be captured consciously" (2020, p. 96). For me, *Evidence of*

Things Unseen exemplified how iterative inquiry affects a differential becoming-with inquiry. As each artworking catalysed new provocations prompting further inquiry, the iterative encounters materialised more textured understandings of what had come before, driving non-linear ongoing reciprocal in/formings across multiple temporalities.



Figure 2.6. *Mary, Mary quite contrary* (detail), 2013, acrylic paint, iridescent paint, marker, glue, tissue paper on board, 180 x 180cm.

Photo: Vanessa Cowling

Griselda Pollock suggests that Ettinger's use of the term "matrix" operates both metaphorically and mathematically to signify a certain complex or originary³⁷ composite of elements. She proposes that language itself has remembered, or unconsciously registered, in the double sense of the term matrix, that the maternal is a generating structure that brings forth new life while symbolically represent-

³⁷ Understood as beginning from something rather than a beginning as original.

ing imaginative and intellectual potentiality (2009, p. 13). The title of the painting *Mary, Mary, quite contrary* (see *Figure 2.6*) alludes to a nursery rhyme that references a young girl's garden (the second line reads, "how does your garden grow?").³⁸ "Contrary" is a term usually associated with binary oppositions. However, in this instance, the qualifying adjective "quite" offers a more nuanced understanding of difference that resonates with the matrixial. Curious to explore the limits and possibilities of language as a means of accessing early childhood memory, I began a daily practice of recording early recollections onto sheets of tissue paper.³⁹ While the ritual afforded an opportunity for thoughts to flow freely, I became frustrated with the inability of language to "paint a full picture" of events that elude conscious memory yet continue to texture and contour experience. I began to layer the tissue texts onto a large board smothered with wood glue. On drying, I tore off sections that were then reapplied in other areas and began to paint. The gaping holes and overlays formed a complex palimpsest that paradoxically obscured the legibility of my writing yet spoke more eloquently of the felt experience. The layers of tissue paper texts absorbed the pigment in the *Mary, Mary* work, thereby collapsing the division between figure and ground. The slippage and spillage between the broken bits of text and pigment dismantled either/or and inclusion/exclusion binaries, offering instead new configurations of multiplicity, and/and.

Feeling thwarted by the expressive limitations of language, I turned to French feminist Hélène Cixous' *L'Écriture Feminine*. This work addresses the conundrum of trying to articulate the feminine within inherent phallogocentric logics that pervade language and reinforce patriarchal expression. In her essay entitled *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous (1976) encourages women to practise *l'écriture féminine* as an act of writing ourselves into history. In like manner, Ettinger inscribes the feminine in her construction of words that embody the invisible symbolic feminine. While her writings are dense and complex, she is able to highlight gaps in language and utilise the space of these lacunae to open up towards the invisible feminine.

Profound learnings were activated by *sum of the parts* and *Evidence of Things Unseen*. The exhibition events became further points of rupture that left me feeling unexpectedly troubled. The display of the artworks had re-positioned them as objects to be looked at by viewers rather than ongoing materialisations of thinking-with-making practices. By casting them as objects of aesthetic appreciation in the gallery space, rather than agential figurations that activated new knowledges, the works became fixed figures against the white cube background. Paradoxically, it was in the blinding

³⁸ The earliest version reads: "Mistress Mary, Quite contrary, How does your garden grow? With Silver Bells and Cockle Shells, And so my garden grows," in *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Songbook* (c. 1744).

³⁹ Using a black marker, the enabling constraint was to fill three A2 sheets with text without paying attention to "good" English, neatness, correct grammar and punctuation.

light of the spectator gaze that for me, art as the way, had lost its way. My graduation from art school coincided with taking up a position as art history lecturer. As previously mentioned, my studio practice guides my approach to pedagogy. This led to speculative, experimental and affective pedagogical interventions whereby students and I explored different modes through which to express our entangled encounters with art history. Excited by the intra-action between these practices that included drawing-with and writing-with art history, I re/turned to the academy where, moving from Fine Art to higher education, I embarked on my doctoral project to further explore how art does its work of thinking anew. What follows is an account of my research methodology that entangles studio practice and feminist new materialist and critical posthumanist scholarship in order to find ways that materialise new knowledges by doing inquiry differently.

2.4 A matter of thinking-making anew

I begin this section with a discussion on feminist new materialist theorisations of research-creation (also known as arts-based inquiry).⁴⁰ This is followed by a description of my immanent research-creation practices that have become the methodological keystone of my inquiry.

In recent years, arts-based inquiry has attracted considerable interest among educational researchers because it opens up a space for educators/students/researchers to de-centre dominant discourses in educational practice and research (Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz & Gildersleeve, 2012). Arts-based research is generally conceptualised as a primary way of understanding and examining experience through the systematic use of the artistic process. It represents “an unfolding and expanding orientation to qualitative social science that draws inspiration, concepts, processes, and representation from the arts, broadly defined” (Knowles & Cole, 2008: xi). This “broad definition” of the arts is interesting in the sense that it foregrounds artistic processes and expands on different forms of doing research. However, it fails to take into account the performative and affective possibilities of art that move beyond neoliberal notions of art making and art appreciation as aesthetic endeavours produced for the market. In other words, when arts-based practices are utilised as supplementary to traditional research methodologies, they don’t necessarily make the difference that matters to research because they simply illustrate or translate concepts into different forms within the normative humanist, qualitative research methodological framework (Rousell, 2019, p. 888). In order to move beyond art being in service to research methodology, I think with the following provocations: How might arts-based research instantiate theory (Loveless, 2020;

⁴⁰ As a term that originated in Canada, research-creation is also known as art-based research in other parts of the world.

Springgay, 2019)? How might researchers explain what a work of art is, the potentials of what art can do, and how art does its work in the study (Rousell, 2017). How might art become “a problem, a provocation, and an irritant for the humanities and social sciences” (2019, p. 888) that is real rather than representational?

In expanding an understanding of art as “an event that is both an object of encounter and the name of the encounter itself”, Deleuze ushers in new possibilities for art and thought beyond representation towards, as Simon O’Sullivan writes, “an aesthetic function of transformation ... [that is] ... involved in exploring the possibilities of being in—and becoming with—the world” (2006, p. 52). This understanding has resonance with feminist new materialist scholarship that, as a counter to humanist Cartesian logic that is founded on the transcendent binary splits, reconfigures relations between humans and nonhumans by foregrounding “‘vitality’ across all kinds of matter, and a capacity for agency (or even thought) within all kinds of matter ... as well as immaterial ‘materials’ such as thoughts, theories, and the relationships between things” (Truman, 2019, p. 3). It follows therefore, that new materialist research methodologies are grounded in a “non-dualistic study of the world within, beside and among us, the world that precedes, includes and exceeds us” (Van der Tuin, 2018, p. 277). Barbara Bolt calls for the decolonisation of art from cultural theory in order to free art from “the textual, the linguistic and the discursive” (2013, p. 13). What does this mean in practice, or more specifically, how might new materialist artistic practice “engage with the *matter* of things and at the same time acknowledge the material groundedness of cultural practices” (2013, p. 13)?

Bolt’s thinking has resonance with Barad’s often-quoted statement “language has been granted too much power” that draws attention to how matter itself has been “turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation” (Barad, 2003, p. 801). Barad’s agential realist theory does away with notions of “a correspondence between words and things” (2007, p. 44) by proposing a performative understanding of material-discursive practices as “material conditions that define what counts as meaningful statements” (2003, p. 63). Therefore, rather than highlighting the specificity and “temporality of knowledge” itself, non-representational research turns towards generative possibilities of the present moment as a potential space in which open-ended questions seek new understandings of the ontological implications of knowledge and how it affects the future (Vannini, 2015, p. 12). Springgay and Truman also turn towards more ontologically nuanced research events that generate new modes of thinking-making-doing that begin in the “speculative middle” (2017, p. 4). For them, speculative middles are “future provocation[s] for thinking-making-doing [that] emerge as agitations and as affective force ... As the agitations take shape, it is the (in)tensions that incite further action, which elicits additional propositions, and new speculative middles to emerge” (2017, p. 207). This has implications for their notion of “being inside the research event” that troubles bi-

naries between the knower/known and researcher/data because it is only through the experience of the material-discursive encounter that both the knower and the known come into being. Just as my studio practice is guided by a speculative and indeterminate process, so too my PhD research inquiry follows ongoing immanent research events that escape predetermined formularisation and “might *not* be recognizable in existing structures of intelligibility” (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 7). Responding to and informed by the thisness of the event, immanent critique practices problematise traditional research methods and draw me towards such thinking-making practices in the “between” of writing and drawing that conceive of research processes as “more-than-writing” and “more-than-drawing” respectively.

Manning theorises research-creation as a field of inquiry that follows immanent propositional processes that rattle the “strong frames drawn by disciplines and methodological modes of inquiry” (2016, p. 43). As I think with the differential activated by the hyphenation of research and creation, Manning’s configuration of research-creation becomes central to my inquiry. Her configuration of research-creation is that of an operative assemblage that “brings making to thinking and thinking to making”. This process materialises extralinguistic forms of knowledge that exceed traditional academic registers (2016, p. 13).

Reluctant to label my thinking-making practice/s as either “this” or “that”, I allow the inquiry, in its unfurling, to lead me towards processes that best respond to the proposition at hand. These practices—that include writing-with, drawing-with, doodling-with, scrawling-with, and stencilling-with—signal my interest in and desire to give shape and expression to the more-than of language and drawing, in order to think anew with academic text. In other words, these performative practices activate and agitate spaces between words and images in order to touch on the more-than, to flesh them out so to speak.

Writing-with

In this art-practicing, I am inspired by Elisabeth St. Pierre’s use of the “aside” in writing that simultaneously enacts her resistance to the linearity of conventional qualitative research report writing and affirms writing as an empirical field of inquiry. An aside is a theatrical device whereby a remark or passage is directed at the audience and supposed to be unheard by the other characters in the play (OED). However, in St. Pierre’s case, it activates a thinking through writing that is not intended to be read as part of the main act (read as Academic Text). She describes the aside as “a breather in the long, formal text of the dissertation” that facilitated a space in which she could “playfully and poetically deconstruct the formal, academic text I believed I had to write even as I wrote it” (2018, p. 605). Working with St. Pierre’s notion of the aside in writing, and Manning’s understanding of art, I think-write together with

ongoing making-doing-thinking practices as I, to quote Manning again, “pause to allow language to find its way” in shaping these encounters and drawing me towards and beyond words (2016, p. 2). St. Pierre is mindful of the limitations of an enquiry driven by the scientific methods of the Enlightenment in that it discards “too strange” or “too big of inquiry”. She advocates instead beginning with the “too strange [and] too much that demands experimentation” (2018, p. 607). In embracing writing as a method of inquiry, St. Pierre invites us

to trust that something unimaginable might come out that might change the world bit by bit, word by word, sentence by sentence.... In writing, we can and do invent and reinvent the world (2018, p. 607).

The above encourages me to experiment with new ways of thinking in-the-act that nudge me beyond what I already know towards new concepts that are immanent to each specific material-discursive encounter. One example of how studio practice has steered research practice is the affective force of the *Star Chart*'s residual letterforms that led me to explore the development of writing and its imbricatedness with so-called Western Civilisation. Writing developed hand in hand with humans' transition from nomadic to agrarian culture, the so-called “beginning of civilisation”. Humans were initially part of the world but the transition to farming set them apart from nature. Concomitant with the production of surplus food came trade and the need to record commercial transactions. Underwritten in the narrative of humans marking text into clay is civilisation's imbricatedness with increasing disparities between humans and humans as well as humans and non-humans. The following aside documents my thinking-through-writing about the power relations embedded in bodies of text:

How does academic text perform? What practices and hierarchies does it reproduce? How can one work with text? How can one open the text to its more than? Knowledge is packaged in a particular form. As readers we are presented with finished text, neatly framed and laid-out according to the grid of the page, using fonts that are legible, line spacing that is regular, hyphenation turned on so that the text is moulded into the rectilinear shape of the page, rendering reading more difficult. The writer's drafts are occluded from the reader. So too are the reviewers' comments. As a student I was unaware of the iterative re-writing process and felt so intimidated by the finished Text, in fact I still am ...

(Journal extract, 12 May 2021)

Linked to the Renaissance and subsequent Enlightenment eras, the invention of Gutenberg's printing press marked the transition from handcrafted manuscripts to printed texts, as my thinking-through-writing elaborates:

Constructed by Humans for humans ... it is no wonder that letterforms are anthropomorphised. In the anatomy of a typeface, letters are struc-

tured according to the human body ... each has its own leg, arm, ear, spine, shoulder, to mention a few. Typography is categorised into families of fonts, united in their sameness, in their similar characteristics. The “body” of text marks the transition of human (thinking) beings from being embodied-thinkers. Text materialises as the repository of knowledge, thinking no longer resides in the body of the human. Instead it inhabits the body of the letter forms themselves ... abstracted from the body, channelled out of the body, disembodied between mind and font. This was exacerbated by the invention of the printing press and the moulding of letterforms out of molten lead. Detached from the embodied gesture of handwritten manuscript to mechanically produced typescript, letters no longer flow with the movement of thought. They become fixed within the grid of the letter press. The page feels impenetrable, gridded, barred off. Is it possible to physically enter into the text, to play-with, to think-with, to make-with, to muddle-with, to swim-with the text?

(Journal extract, 14 May 2021)

The etymological roots of “text” are from Latin *textus* which means “to weave, to join, fit together, braid, interweave, construct, fabricate, build”. I understand that *textus* refers to the process of how text materialises as interwoven thoughts and ideas. However, when presented as Text, they are posited as fixed and impenetrable, leaving me as a reader at a loss for words. While the notion “at a loss for words” can be associated with lack, it also holds the potential for the more-than of felt experience⁴¹ that drawing-with-writing touches on as it moves through and beyond the letterforms. Rather than drawing lines between image and text, they enact movements towards new modes of thinking and expression.

In addition to interrogating the relationship between the scripto-visual, I explore how drawing-with text not only undermines the centrality and authority of language but also generates a different way of thinking with academic texts. Taking a leaf from Barad’s book, I ascribe to material-discursive entanglements that are generative, rather than descriptive, and immanent rather than transcendent, in order to explore the interstices of language and attend to “not what is said ... [but] ... that which constrains and enables what can be said” (Barad, 2007, p. 146). This resonates with Manning and Massumi’s notion of enabling constraints that are “enabling” because in and of itself a constraint does not necessarily provoke

⁴¹ I have written elsewhere about a particular intervention with Manning’s text “Radical pedagogies and metamodelings of knowledge in the making” (<https://doi.org/10.14426/cristal.v8iSI.303>) in which I showed how drawing, mapping, tracing and circling between the text exposed its more-than and drew me closer to the heart of Manning’s concerns.

techniques for process, and “constraint” because in and of itself openness does not create the conditions for collaborative exploration” (2014, p. 94).

Drawing-with

Drawing-with-writing is not a translation between two modalities attempting to articulate the same expression through different forms. It is an ecology of practices that not only reveals how writing and drawing do different things, but also gives shape and expression to the more-than of language and drawing. In this regard, I think with the etymological roots of “to draw”. For example, in Old English “to draw” comes from *draggan*, understood as “to drag, protract”; and in Proto-Germanic drawing comes from “*to draw, pull*”; whereas in Middle Dutch to draw meant “to carry, bring, throw”. For me, these readings evoke how drawing-with-text becomes an embodied act of drawing out or extending out of the text in ways that both enliven and prolong its possibilities and expression. As a thinking in-the-act, writing-with-drawing reaches towards the unthought within thought, producing figurations for learning-with, and responding to problems as they surface. Unlike the fixity of academic knowledge, drawing-with-writing draws breath from the liveliness of concepts that mutate according to the specificities of their evolving assemblage. As a practice, it touches on the qualitative affects germinated in academic texts that on reading glow in ways that words signal but cannot fully articulate (Maclure, 2013a, p. 661).

Manning configures “the ineffable felt experience of the more-than [that] is also a kind of thinking, a kind of knowledge in the making [that] changes experience” (2016, p. 31). In so doing she proposes autistic perception that “engages with the edges of perception in the forming [that] dwells in the shaping” (2016, p. 286). Put differently, she writes that “autistic perception feels-with the world in difference without separability, incapable of reducing experience to a common denominator” (2020, p. 256). For me, drawing-with-writing becomes a pedagogical practice that activates and agitates that which is not immediately apparent but is nevertheless palpable between the words. In other words, the inquiry is drawn towards the infrathin quality in the between of writing and drawing, a quality that is felt but nevertheless remains elusive, a quality that touches on that which words alone cannot express.

If the research is about the ineffable ... how does one foreground that which has no form or shape but matters? Why is this important to me? Because of the limitations of parsed out knowledge that excludes so much. The other senses need to come into play, with all their other knowings. Drawing moves ink across the page. Doodles in between and alongside the text follow different directions, flows, movements and expressions. Taking their time, they

linger with the text, inhabiting a shared space-time they do something else, something different ... They bring into being new ideas, they are new ideas (they don't represent new ideas). The marks beget new marks, the marks generate new marks, they are part of the thinking, they think-with the text. Dismantling the grid as they move through the text. They are concepts, they are creative forces, they are the in-act of thought.

(Journal extract, 11 May 2021)

More-than-margins

While mindful of new materialist critiques of the linguistic turn, Sarah Truman seeks to free language from Maggie MacLure's positioning of language as imperial mediator of the world (2013b, p. 633). Arguing that language is both "a material force and a material event", Truman does not jettison linguistic theorising from the materiality of her research practice (2021, p. 38). In her chapter *Minor interferences: Marginalia as research-creation*, Truman explores how "radical 'reading-writing' practices and annotation might affect engagement with texts and disrupt the genealogy and meaning of texts" (2021, p. 58). Margins denote edges, brinks and borders; they are the areas of the page around the text. Marginalia are illustrations and notes in the margins and are associated with being of little effect or importance; they are the sideshow to the main event of the text. In my practice, I attempt to re-centre and redeem that which is marginalised. Drawing-with-writing also opens up possibilities for different kinds of writing brought into being through material-discursive encounters that unsettle binaries between text and image as well as hierarchies between the material and discursive. Each mark-making leads to further mark-makings between the scripto/visual as I attempt to articulate the ineffable effectively.

Doodling-with

The word "doodle" originally denoted a simpleton or fool. However, in contemporary use, doodling describes "scribbling or scrawling aimlessly". As a noun a doodle is defined as "a rough drawing made absentmindedly". Encoded within these definitions are value judgements that position doodling as a mindless activity that is not to be taken seriously. For me, however, the embodied "mindlessness" of doodling is valuable because it offers the potential to articulate the more-than of text. Doodling becomes a way of spending time with academic text whereby I roam in, through and around the text, getting to know it, slowly. Doodling is not a breaking-down of the text in order to extract its meaning; rather, it builds with the text thereby foregrounding the role of expanded perceptual sense-making through

material-discursive encounters. Brushing up close to the letterforms, I touch, colour and trace their contours, coming into proximity with the more-than of content that they in/form. Doodling becomes a process of metabolising the text's embodied concepts. Doodling doesn't simply take time; it makes time, marking the materialisation of sense-making, of thinking in-the-act.

In his article "In praise of doodling", Matthew Battles says doodles are "the most common and most ignored art form" (2004, p. 105). Battles adds that in their sensuous immediacy, doodles are not forms of expression. Moreover, being "beyond craft and criticism", doodles escape value judgements because it is "impossible to do it badly—or well". He writes that doodles spring "from that flourishing thicket, common to everyone, where mind shoots forth its florid branches from the rootstock of the animal brain" (2004, p. 105). While I don't ascribe to the arboreal structure of Battles' framework, I am interested in his allusion to doodles as being prelinguistic as well as how, as a performative practice, doodles become co-creators of knowledge. Whereas for Bennet, who writes that doodles "don't need a lot of space" (2020, p. 10), for me doodles make time-space in which thinking flourishes in the margins. More liquid than solid, doodles flow, they trickle, like matter following the pull of gravity, drawn towards the edges of the lines in their making.

Scrawling-with

I am also drawn to the verb "to scrawl", meaning to write or draw untidily. It is a verb of uncertain origin but thought to come from Middle English "scrawled" meaning "to spread out the limbs". Scrawling escapes the frame of the text; it melds and merges the body; gives new form and new shape; it reaches to the space around, the background; it leaks and seeps. It is bodily.

Concerned with the performativity of the text and the drawings, I explore how they think differently, how they produce newness rather than sameness, whether they can touch on the more-than of the text without being illustrative or decorative. In other words, how do the drawings lead me through the text and draw the text towards the more-than of the text?

I write differently when I write by hand, I scribble, I hesitate, I erase, I change fonts and pens, the nibs sometimes sharper are more incisive ... If scrawling is a practice, what is its technique? Scrawling, like crawling, moves between modes ... lines of ink draw through lines of text, interweaving, interlacing, tracking, tracing, thinking-in-movement. As a technique, scrawling wanders and follows the line as it touches the page. Leading and following, scrawling is a perpetual mark in-the-making. Unlike St. Pierre's aside, scrawling materialises inside the main text. Neither pretty nor decorative, scrawling is untimely.

Embracing varied tempos, scrawling is attuned to haphazard movements and pauses of the hands gestures. Depending on the hand's pressure on the pen, scrawling makes itself felt on both sides of the paper, incisive on the front, its imprint embossed on the reverse side of the page where lines protruding like veins, texture what will come after ... woven threads of ideas ... like felt that cannot be untangled ... diffraction patterns.⁴²

(Journal extract, 14 May 2021)

Figure 2.7 and Figure 2.8 show both sides of a journal page. On the left is a thinking about mimesis using black liner. The reverse side, on the right, depicts a diffractive thinking-with Haraway's situated knowledges, using pen, pencil and iridescent paint. The lines of the page on the left are embossed on the reverse, texturing further complexity into the layering.

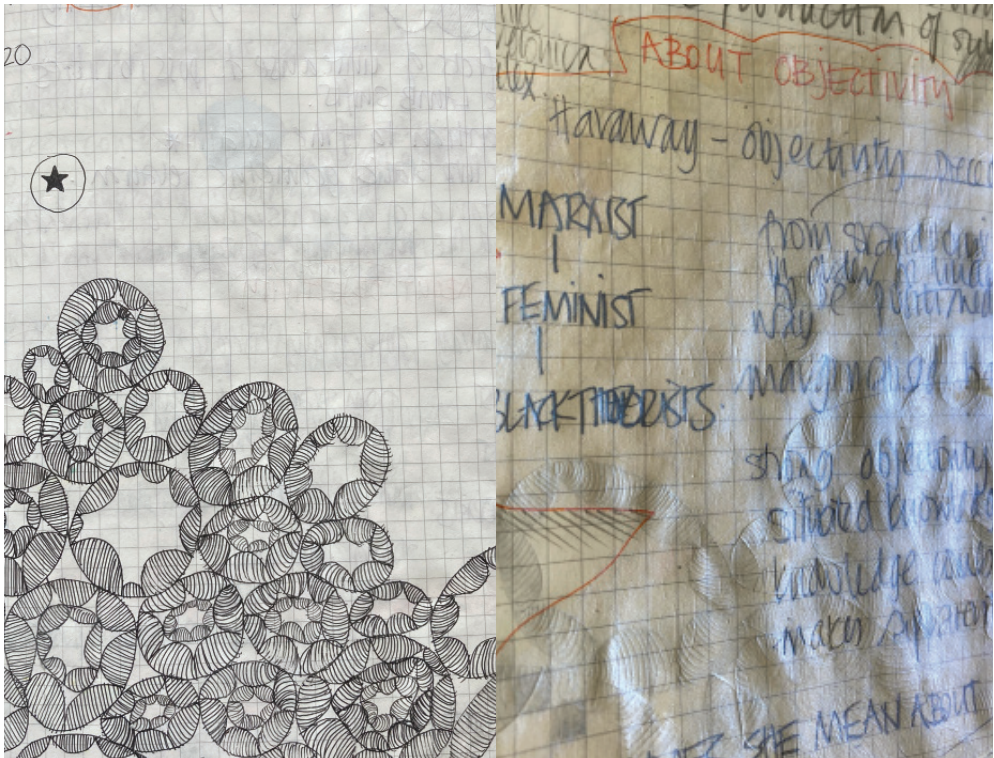


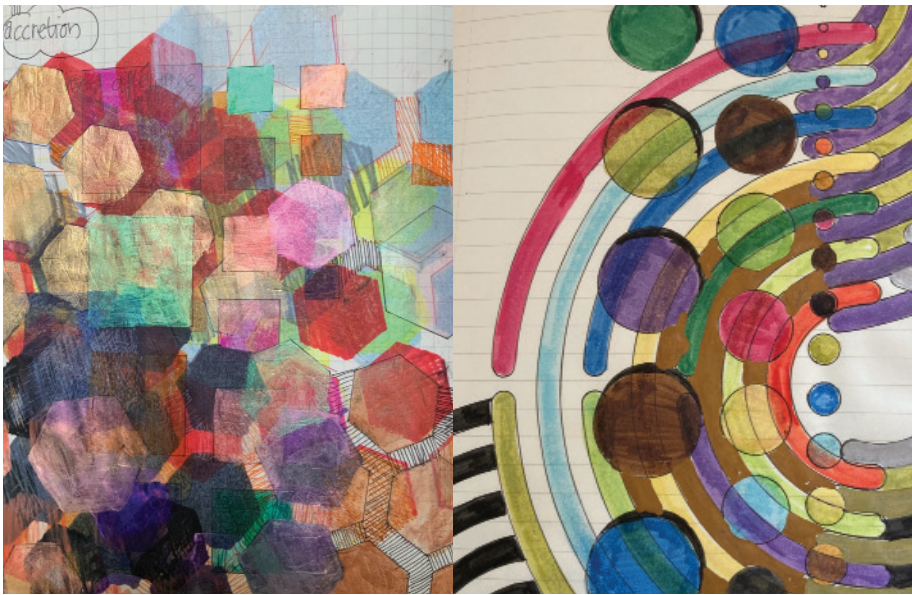
Figure 2.7. and Figure 2.8 journal pages
Photos: Nike Romano

⁴² See Figures 2.10 and 2.11.

Stencilling-with

Stencils have shaped my making-thinking practice for as long as I can remember. They help me to think through the perceptual relationship of figure/ground. My recent research into the etymological roots of the word “stencil” serendipitously uncovered uncanny resonances with my interest in glitter, iridescence and sparkly materials. Stencil comes from the Latin *scintilla* meaning “particle of fire,

spark, glittering speck, atom”. How is it that the name of hard-edged templates embodies the sparks of interest, the specks of glitter that trace the something that is exchanged and the something that is taken away, and shine light on my inquiry? Does the differential edge between the figure/ground of a stencil activate the infra-thin?



Figures 2.9 (left) and 2.10. Journal extracts, June and April 2020.

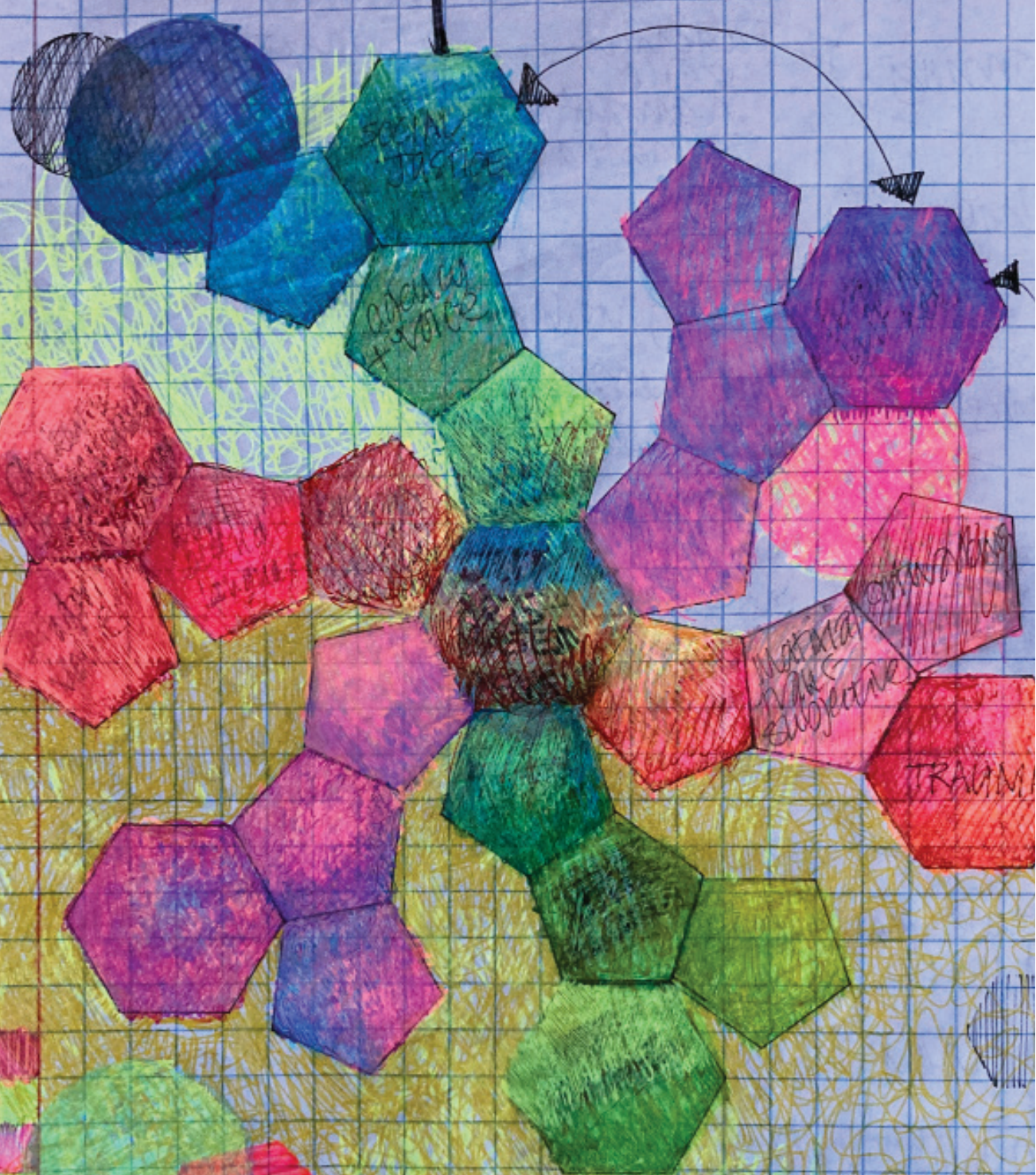
Photos Nike Romano

Figure 2.9 shows a sense-making of diffractive methodology. While there are no words to speak of, the faint lines of the *moleskine* page invoke lines of text. Using two stencils, a small circle stencil and a large circle radius arc stencil, the mark-making activates ambiguous space and depth that attract different readings. The image can be read as an aerial view, conjuring the all-seeing gaze of Haraway’s “god trick” (1988). Viewed from the side, it can also be perceived as a perpendicular to the horizon transection common to architectural drawings, the circles suspended in an up/down flow bubbling somewhere between land, sea and sky. A diagonal movement is also generated by the arcs that elicit a transversal gaze that flows between the circles and the arcs, drawing attention to the lively spaces around the shapes themselves.

Working with stencils teaches me about the ever-shifting relationship between figure/ground. Depending on the cut, shapes become either figure or ground, or both figure and ground (see *Figure 2.10*).

2.5 Conclusion

Driven by a desire to express the ineffable and touch on that which is excluded or occluded from Knowledge, I have shown how my artistic-research practice, that operates in the interstices of making and thinking, nudges me through-and-around concerns obliquely and opens me towards different registers that cut across normative accounts of what it means to know (Manning, 2016). In referring to two exhibitions, *sum of the parts* (2010) and *Evidence of Things Unseen* (2014), I have highlighted how materiality and making processes that conjugate new languages draw me towards different ways of doing inquiry. In exploring the differences that materialise when practices—construed as modes of thought in the act—are diffracted through one another, I have shown how practices build on and through each other in ongoing iterative entanglements (Barad, 2007). In paying particular attention to how thinking-making practices in the between of writing and drawing can activate and agitate the space between words and their more-than, the paper has offered new ways of becoming-with academic texts. Immanent research inquiry is practised as an iterative process that cannot be replicated or formularised. As a result, writing-with, drawing-with, doodling-with, scrawling-with and stencilling-with trouble the traditional logocentric, linear approaches that are associated with academic research and shape my thinking otherwise beyond the strictures of Cartesian thought. Furthermore, by turning to the performativity of these research-creation practices, not only is visual art liberated from the limitations of representation and aesthetics, but binary splits between making and thinking are also dismantled, thereby confirming Manning’s claim that “making is a thinking in its own right, and conceptualization a practice in its own right” (2016, p. 41). My article thinks with Manning’s theorisation of art as “an operative process that maps the way toward a certain attunement of world and expression” (2016, p. 47) and David Rousell’s foregrounding of art’s “unique potential to explore creative modes of thinking and practice that resist the capture of human language and cognition” (Rousell & Fell, 2018, p. 93). In so doing, the article has foregrounded the potential of research-creation to generate new connections and concepts by using different modes of expression that better explicate that which for me is difficult to explain in words.



VERBAL MEDIA
PRACTICES
LOGOCENTRICISM

NONLINGUISTIC MODES

Chapter 3

Narrative vases as markers of subjectivity, agency and voice: Engaging feminist pedagogies within the context of #feesmustfall⁴³

3.1 Abstract

This chapter explores an art history pedagogical response to the South African #FeesMustFall (#FMF) movement's call to decolonise the university and develop an African epistemological curriculum. While stakeholders in South African higher education grapple with the notion of decolonisation, it is not immediately clear what form decolonisation of the curriculum and pedagogy will take. For the purposes of this chapter however, decolonisation is understood as an open-ended process in which art history pedagogies that transform teaching and learning history of art and design praxes are explored with a view to building social justice. Located in the Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) of the Faculty of Informatics and Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, this inquiry focuses on a pedagogical intervention in the Design Foundation art history course that I convene. Structured around the teaching and learning of Ancient Greek vase painting, the chapter explores pedagogical strategies that seek to develop learner agency and voice through students' embodied encounters with artefacts. Drawing on Karen Barad's (2007) posthumanist theory of agential realism—that theorises diffraction as a process that embodies disruption as its being—the research utilises

⁴³ Chapter published in Bozalek, V., Braidotti, R., Shefer, T., & Zembylas, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Socially just pedagogies: Posthumanist, feminist and materialist perspectives in higher education*. Bloomsbury Academic.

diffractive methodology to explore the intra-action⁴⁴ between Western art history through students' lived experience.

Concomitant with the call to “decolonise the mind” is the demand for the creation of new knowledges that interrupt Eurocentric cultural dominance within the academy. To this end, the relationship between personal narrative (both written and visual) and student empowerment is central to students becoming conscious of themselves as situated knowers who produce new knowledges that challenge Eurocentric hegemony (Haraway, 1988).

In keeping with the relationality of empirical research, the chapter draws on students' narratives, reflections and insights, as well as my own voice, as testament to the role that students and educators play in co-creating knowledge. Consequently, learner agency, meaning-making and knowledge-construction are understood as mutually implicated in an ongoing process of becoming with/through encounters with others. Having undergone no formal teacher training, my learning emerges out of the intra-action (Barad, 2007) between my practices as visual artist and teacher. Characterised as learning through embodied engagement—both in the classroom and studio—I seek to uncover, recover and discover new forms of understanding that co-emerge through my encounters with the students, processes, materials and materiality.⁴⁵ Within this frame, the performative function of artworks as co-creators of knowledge and the process of art-making have ontological effects on my subjectivity as becoming teacher (Bolt, 2004, pp. 9, 173).

3.2 Introduction

I begin by discussing the challenges to art history pedagogies that have arisen out of the decolonisation of the academy debates. Thereafter I locate the enquiry within feminist theories of subjectivity and difference, that include situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988), matrixial theory (Ettinger, 1992) and posthumanist agential realism (Barad, 2007), so as to explore how ongoing thresholds of interconnection, co-existence and becoming offer new ethical possibilities for design praxis in a differenti-

⁴⁴ Intra-action is a key concept of agential realism that is understood as “agential cuts that do not produce absolute separations, but cut together apart (one move)” (Barad, 2014, p. 168). Barad's distinction between intra-action—that signifies “the mutual constitution of entangled agencies”—and interaction—that is premised on discrete singular agencies—is critical in understanding how agencies emerge through their intra-action (Barad, 2007, p. 33).

⁴⁵ Barbara Bolt's understanding of materiality as the operation of the energy of the matter in an artwork is useful to this inquiry. For further elucidation on the productive materiality of artworks and their power to produce ontological effects through material and somatic processes, see Bolt (2004).

ated world.⁴⁶ Finally, I provide background to the Design Foundation course before elaborating on the pedagogical intervention itself.

Issues of inclusion, inequality and assimilation are key to understanding the call to decolonise South African universities where many black students feel pressured to assimilate into the dominant culture of white privilege. As a result, they feel alienated, invisible and disempowered within the social and academic environment. It follows, therefore, that higher educators' respond to the above issues by developing pedagogies that support students' need for visibility and belonging within the academy. Building an African epistemological art history curriculum is concomitant with a critique of the normative Eurocentric gaze that perpetuates unequal power relations whilst reinforcing African inferiority. In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger's (1972) critical engagement with looking and seeing reveals how Western art history is re-presented retrospectively by the ruling class to justify history through the lens of privilege, inequality and exclusion. Arguing that the reciprocal nature of vision is more fundamental than that of spoken dialogue, Berger refers to early childhood development and notes that preverbal infants are aware of being seen and that "the eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are part of the visible world" (1985, p. 9). This observation is helpful in understanding the effect that in/visibility has on students' sense of agency, because in/visibility is key to one's sense of self.

The Eurocentric gaze has multiple effects that simultaneously exclude indigenous cultural production whilst foregrounding Western cultural production as a dominant and normative practice. This inequality is further exacerbated by the predominant representation of the black body in positions of subservience, humiliation and violence within the canon (Enwezor, 1997).⁴⁷ Likewise, the relative absence of an African Art History discourse within the canon intensifies an absence of agency and recognition of the majority of students' histories that have been systematically excluded and remain invisible to them. Bearing in mind these concerns, the inquiry turns to the transformative potential of a diffractive gaze whereby students' subjective engagement with artefacts redresses Eurocentric hegemony.

In the context of increasingly polarised local and global politics, the onus falls on educators and students to critique unequal power relations by addressing and navigating difference(s) in the classroom and thereby model compassionate behaviours that promote social justice. To this end, I refer to feminist theories that move beyond the dominant Cartesian logic of binary "othering" to explore the notion of both/and

⁴⁶ For further reading on how Barad, Haraway and Ettinger's imaginings of difference(s) and diffraction resonate with one another, see Thiele (2014a).

⁴⁷ The aforementioned observation is corroborated by students during class discussions. They confirm that these stereotypes continue to traumatise them.

conceptions of difference(s) and to share a common understanding of subjectivity as partial, co-affecting and co-emerging. I begin by discussing Haraway's (1998) theory of situated knowledges, thereafter I examine Ettinger's (1992) matrixial theory and, finally, I engage with Barad's (2007) posthumanist agential realism.

3.3 Situated knowledges

Following Donna Haraway's (1988) theory of situated knowledges challenges to Eurocentric positivist notions of knowledge as universal, objective and value free, the teaching intervention recognises students as situated knowers who actively construct knowledge through their lived experience. Similarly, hierarchical power relations that characterise teachers as "knowers" and students as "learners" are disrupted as learners and educators co-create more socially just pedagogies that redress structural inequalities within institutions of higher education and society at large (Giroux, 1998). In this regard, Sayers' (2011, p. 409) identification of the tensions between the discourse of the "expert" and the discourse of "local negotiation" in relation to visual art is helpful in understanding how teachers and learners can co-create critical pedagogical strategies that make visible students' non-dominant identities and knowledges within the canon of art history. In addition to transforming power relations within the classroom, situated knowledges also unsettle the Eurocentric gaze as the marginalised or "not yet recognised" become visible within the discourse (Barrett, 2007, p. 4).

3.4 Matrixial trans-subjectivity

Co-emerging out of her practices as visual artist, psychoanalyst, and philosopher, Bracha Ettinger's (1992) matrixial theory of trans-subjectivity resonates with arts-based pedagogies —such as embodied practices of learning-through-making and becoming-with materials and materiality. Ettinger critiques dominant phallic notions of subjectivity that are founded on discrete boundaries and splits, and offers an alternative understanding of subjectivity that embraces sexual difference as its core (Pollock, 2009). Imagined as an invisible web that co-exists within and alongside the phallic framework, Ettinger theorises humans' prenatal/prematernal relationship—that simultaneously generates and defines human becoming—as partial, reciprocal, asymmetrical and co-emerging. Understood as such, matrixial subjectivity both embodies and generates difference[s] within a compassionate, inter-dependent and non-hierarchical web, thus foregrounding humans' inherent primary capacity for recognising, understanding and tolerating difference(s).

Concerned with the possibilities for accessing and processing trauma through aesthetic encounters, Ettinger moves beyond art's representational role and coins the

term *artworking* so as to foreground the agential role of art as a symbolic “transport station”—whereby trauma can be processed in a matrixial time-space that “links the time of too-early to the time of too-late and plants them in the world’s time” (Ettinger & Virtanen, 2005, p. 694). Furthermore, the matrixial gaze—which is understood as embodied and felt through all the senses as well as “other unconscious dimensions of the psyche” (Ettinger, 2005, p. 710; 2008, p. 61)—offers a possibility of a copoietic⁴⁸ compassionate encounter-event between the artist, the artwork and viewer. Such an exchange depends on a compassionate response-ability as wit[h]ness to the unknown other in this aesthetic encounter (2009, p. 10). In her article entitled “Aesthetic Wit(h)nessing in the Era of Trauma” (2010), Griselda Pollock attends to the ethical implications of wit(h)nessing when she writes:

... We cannot but share the pain or trauma, i.e. the events of the other. We cannot but bear it, transport it, and potentially create a future precisely by such sharing, by recognizing co-humanity rather than anxiously policing the boundaries of difference which are the hallmark of the phallic model. (2010, p. 837)

3.5 Agential realism

Karen Barad’s posthumanist theory of agential realism offers insight into the ethical possibilities and responsibility that teachers have in shaping the future for humans, non-humans and the material environment in the production of knowledge (Dolphijn & Van der Tuin, 2012, 69). Modelled on a quantum understanding of the process of diffraction, agential realism reveals how the ethico-onto-epistemological is activated through diffractive entanglements with others (Barad, 2007, p. 132). Barad offers insights into how matter comes into relationship with knowing through material-discursive practices, and emphasises humans’ position as part of, rather than separate from the world. As a methodology, diffraction highlights how knowledge is co-produced through entanglements of encounters between artefacts, art-making, teaching and learning practices, and materiality and confirms how matter and becoming are both integral to, and the result of, the production of knowledge.

3.6 Background to the Design Foundation course

The Design Foundation course aims to develop students’ becoming through their engagement with history of art and design praxes. Rather than adopt a positivist meth-

⁴⁸ Copoiesis is understood as a transformational potentiality that evolves along aesthetic and ethical unconscious paths and produces a particular kind of knowledge. See Ettinger (2005).

odology of teaching art history along a chronological timeline, relevant themes that resonate with students' lived experience are traced in multi-directions that traverse space and time. Coming from varied race and class backgrounds, many students encounter barriers to learning on entering the academy, where they learn in their second, sometimes third language. Likewise, whilst some students study visual art and design at high school, most attend schools that do not offer these subjects, and can feel they have little to contribute to class discussion. These feelings of exclusion highlight the role that cultural capital plays in entrenching unequal power relations (Bourdieu, 2011), as those who are unfamiliar with the canon of art history believe they have nothing of value to contribute to the learning community.⁴⁹ These feelings provide a useful starting point for this enquiry that explores various strategies that encourage students to participate equally.

Blair argues that agency is contingent on one's sense of self and the potential for one's transformative growth. Furthermore, she maintains that it is through using one's voice and listening to the voices of others that learners begin to feel part of the learning community (2009, p. 180). However, participation in the learning environment requires courage as learners run the risk of appearing to be incompetent in front of their peers and teachers. It follows therefore, that in order to feel safe, students are recognised and valued by their teachers and peers (Blair, 2009, p. 181) and need to ensure that pedagogical encounters embrace mutual tolerance, compassion and respect. I now turn to the case study to examine how learner-generated content can empower students' agency and voice, and highlight how learner informed processes such as self-reflection and assessment can position learners as co-creators of pedagogy and knowledge.

3.7 Case study: Design your own Greek vase

Ceramic pot making is a cultural practice that has a long and established tradition in Africa.⁵⁰ It made sense therefore, to foreground students' familiarity with this art form whilst they learned about the history of ancient Greek vase painting. I hoped, following Stewart (2007, p. 130), that new knowledge that disrupts the hegemony of Western art history, would emerge out of the intra-action between "art, teaching and life". The inherent paradox of working within the paradigm of Western art history whilst trying to dismantle Eurocentric cultural dominance is in keeping with critical feminist concerns of understanding difference(s) differently (Thiele, 2014b, p. 10). Similarly, Haraway's

⁴⁹ These observations resonate with Hempel-Jorgensen's account of United Kingdom-based secondary school learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who display low self-esteem, feel they come from deficit and do not belong in the school environment. See Hempel-Jorgensen (2015).

⁵⁰ Fired clay represents one of the oldest artistic practices and techniques in the history of African material culture. Evidence of its production dates from the eighth millennium BCE. (See Berns, 1989, p. 32.)

(2016, p. 20) notion of staying with the trouble—that advocates the recuperation of non-innocent and ambivalent pasts that are continuously present in ongoing patterns of differentiation—is helpful because it encapsulates students’ transformative entanglements with the very objects that embody the contradictions of South Africa’s colonial legacy. The intention of the pedagogical intervention is one that works affirmatively with these differences in order to move beyond the phallogocentric understanding of binary difference that is limited to either/or, towards an understanding of difference as an ongoing differentiation in which new commonalities are imagined (Thiele, 2014a, p. 202).

After being introduced to the formal and stylistic characteristics of ancient Greek vase painting, students learned the various functions of the vases—as containers, as grave markers and importantly, as the ground on which visual narratives were depicted. The latter function provided the impetus for the assignment, which is discussed below.

Entitled *Design your own Greek vase*, the assignment was structured in two parts. To begin, students wrote a story about an important life event that they then translated into visual form onto the silhouette of an ancient Greek vase. The aims of the first part of the assignment were complex and manifold. History of art and design teaching and learning practices at ECP level foreground the complexities arising out of the relationship between visual and spoken/written language. In addition to developing reading and writing skills, students need to learn to decode and critically engage with a visually dominated world. For example, I have observed that while students might understand concepts, they may have difficulty explaining what they understand these concepts to mean. The notion of “voice” is understood as both spoken and visual, therefore voice and visibility are central to pedagogical praxis. The vase project created an opportunity for students to practise both reading images and writing about them. The assignment also explored the ongoing diffractive intra-actions between the scripto/visual, as a potential space in which students could articulate concepts through drawing that they had difficulty verbalising. By drawing from personal experience, students engaged narratives that mattered to them and came to understand how their being is inextricably linked to their learning. Furthermore, by narrating in the first person, students overcame their resistance to writing and their confidence grew as they felt seen and heard. Students began to grasp that writing is a transformative ontological process of coming to know oneself, rather than the procedural practice they engaged in mainstream pedagogies (Yagelski, 2012, p. 188–90).

Sometimes when I write I feel like I’m connecting to someone or something that won’t judge me but let me state what I want to state without offering any advice or lecturing me cause ... writing has helped me to realize what was going on in my head.

(Student reflection)

Students' embodied intra-action with the ancient vases foregrounds the transformative role of a moderate hermeneutic approach that supports their exploration of subjectivity and meaning (Sayers, 2015, 134; 2011, 411). This theme is further elaborated by Spector (2015, p. 448) who recognises the potential of diffractive pedagogies that by-pass the reproduction of knowledge and in so doing prioritise the co-creation of something new. This approach collapses the theory/practice divide through the engagement with material discursive practices that are mutually implicated in and through the production of knowledge (Barad, 2007, p. 136).

The emphasis on personal narrative redressed issues of inequality arising out of blanket inclusivity as students' values and frames of reference challenge normative cultural tastes and pervasive ideologies that reinforce feelings of alienation (Sayers, 2015, p. 144). Furthermore, the intra-action of the ancient artefacts through students' narratives produced ongoing interferences that made visible the relative absence of recorded indigenous artistic production. Through foregrounding these absences, students re-presented their subjectivity in relation to the past. The subjective interpretation of Greek stylistic characteristics allowed for new knowledges to be produced and therefore bypassed the reproduction of knowledge that reinforces oppressive discourses and power relations (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015, p. 539). The following excerpt reveals how such a diffractive encounter empowered a student who grew up in rural poverty, as he reflects on himself as a young African who believes in culture and ancestors.

Everything that I mentioned on my story it's about the struggle that I was facing in my childhood, growing up under my grandmother's warm care so I thought that will be wise if I use my story on decorating my vase so that I can celebrate my past with my grandmother who was involved to my life.

I believe that what is on my vase it's all about me, as a village boy who was struggling in life and I showed the activities that I used to do back then which we still do in our village now but in a better way than before. As I also include the way we're living back then, like we were using traditional huts for shelter and our field we were ploughing to get food for the families, that's the culture of Africans and I'm proud of being an African child because I'm a young African who believe in culture and on ancestors. I couldn't able to put everything that I mention to my story, instead of that I managed to use the important scenes that can make a viewer to be interested and can be easy to compare my story with the story that I decorated on the vase.

Living on our villages in that time it was a good life to us although we were struggling to get modern life and to get a better education but we enjoy to live that life because we had no other option and we knew that god knew why he chose to give us that life. But I enjoyed to be in that environment of being suf-

fering to live because it makes you to experience the challenges of life and it is also give you the courage of how to fight to live a better life and I think now I'm still on the mission of fighting to live a better life than before but I don't want to lie, I see the changes now than the life I was living on it back then.

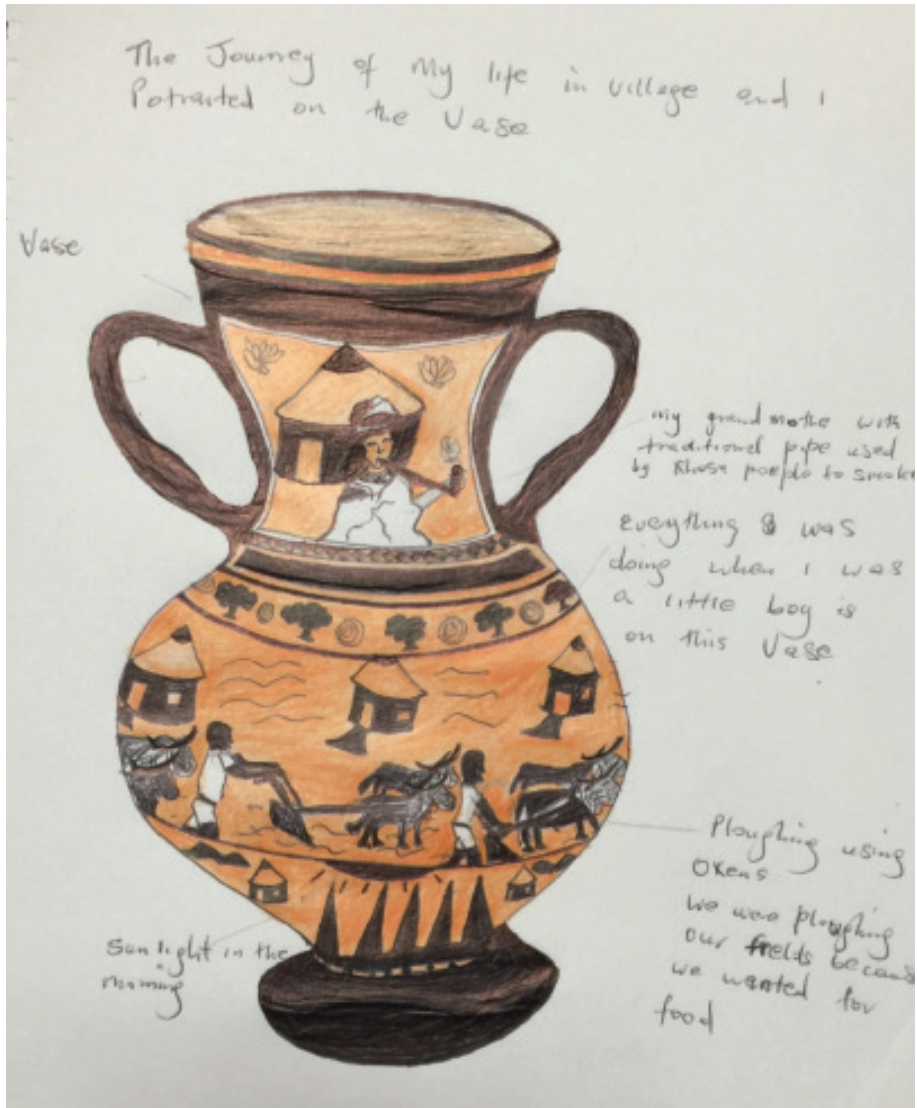


Figure 3.1. Story entitled *The story of a village boy*.

The hermeneutic approach is a useful indicator for assessment because I can ascertain from their drawings whether students have understood key concepts that may have been difficult to explain in words. Furthermore, the emphasis on interpretation rather than mimicry diminishes the fear of being judged as right or wrong, as students are assessed as equivalent and unique individuals. By the same token, rather than being pitted against one another, students are assessed in relation to their own progress, as the following reflection reveals.

I did enjoy writing my own story, because it is the best way for our lecturer to see and get the right perspective our own ways we could paint the vases.

(Student reflection)

Ettinger's notion of wit[h]nessing informed a compassionate response to those students who shared traumatic stories, and where necessary, some students were referred for additional support. In these instances, the artworks performed the function of containers through which students mediated their internal and external worlds by recording and processing their emotions through the embodied writing/drawing of their stories.⁵¹

It felt like a load had been taken off my shoulder, and now I feel so relieved and free. It's like I've been wanting to tell my story but I wasn't ready but I'm glad I did now I can carry on with my life.

(Student feedback)

Below is an excerpt of the same student's reflexive writing where he lists the various ways in which his vase design embodies the story of his best friend's tragic murder whilst celebrating his birthday in a tavern in Khayelitsha.⁵² I have included this example because it is symptomatic of the kind of violent trauma that many of our students face on a daily basis.

The Greek vase that I drew or designed which portrayed a story about my friend who died last year unexpectedly. All the decorations and colours that are there have their own purpose that I used them for.

I will start about the decorations that I have used explaining how they reflect the story. As we know that life have its own ups and downs which means sometimes it is bad and good, happy today and not tomorrow. That is what I have seen when I look at that thick line on Keys decorations it goes up and down and that is what is on the story.

⁵¹ For more reading on art as a transitional space, see Winnicott (1971).

⁵² Khayelitsha is a large displaced urban settlement on the edges of the Cape Town Metropolitan area.

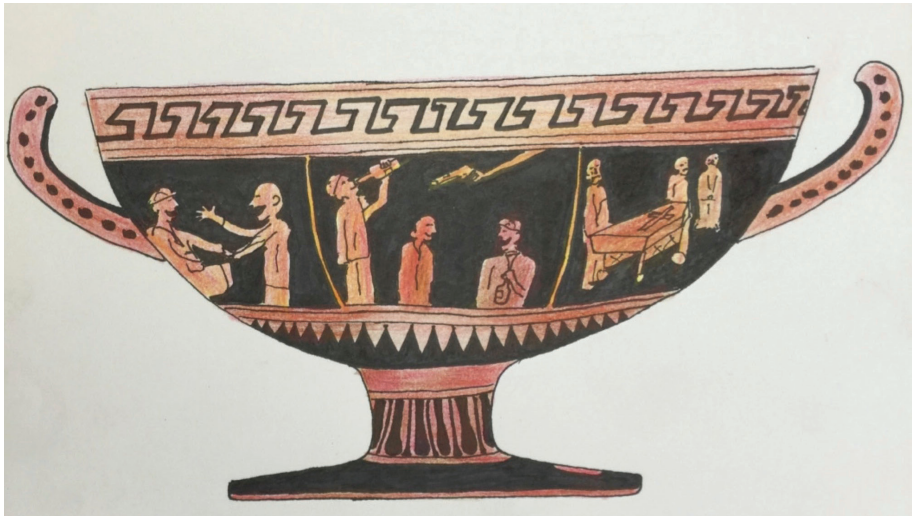


Figure 3.2 Story entitled *Expect the unexpected in life.*

Now it is about the Tongues decorations when I look around the tongue shape there on the negative space on that red I see a 'U shape' like. That which stand for unexpected when you link it to the story. I did not expect what happened to my friend especially on that day it was really unexpected. I am getting on Rays decorations when I look at that decoration I see triangles that are very close to each other. The way that they are close to each other reminds me the friendship that we had with my friend. We were very close like those triangles that they form one thing. I am referring that to us as we were close as if there was nothing that can do us apart as friends.

I am still talking about those triangles although they are close like that they are in different sizes they are not equal. In the middle they are big and at the end and at the beginning of the decoration they are small. All that inequality of them remind me the way that his funeral was big and full of unequal people in terms of age, youth and old people which are same as those unequal triangles.

The last thing about the decoration on the handles both of them there are dots that are black and if you add them on both handles they will be 21. Which is how old he was when he died and also on his 21st birthday. Black colour it is about being in a darkness whereby you feel like world the whole world is against you referring to me, his family, friends and the whole community as whole, we were all in that situation of darkness.

In addition to assigning symbolic meaning to his design and highlighting the expressive possibilities generated through the intra-action between the scripto-visual, the

student also reflected on his somatic responses to the trauma:

I think in drawing to analyze the story that is in the vase, I see the pictures about what is happening in the story, it is easier than the words ... at the same time it was healing me inside just because its like sharing it by writing it so I used to think about it a lot but since I wrote about it, its kind of healing me inside.

Gibbs' (2015, p. 223) enquiries into the affect on researchers (in this case students and educator) by traumatic histories being researched resonate with current debates around decoloniality. In this regard, the vases' agential role foregrounds how the traditional hierarchy of teacher/knower and student/learner is transformed. As I grapple with my position of privilege as a white middle-class woman who has benefitted under the system of apartheid and the current regime, I understand the need for researchers to analyse their relationship to the past and to research subjects in order to redress unequal relationships and positions of privilege. I learn from the students' knowledges through my encounter with their artworks, and my role as wit[h]ness to their experiences continues to affect my own becoming as teacher. In this light, Spector's (2015) writings on relational ontology are helpful in understanding how being with, and for others, underpins an ethical engagement with the world which should be the core of socially just pedagogies.

The second part of the assignment is self-evaluative. Students assess whether their vases reflect Ancient Greek stylistic characteristics and appraise the success of their translations between their written and visual and thereby learn how images "speak" in ways that words cannot and conversely, what words "reveal" that images cannot. Students were invited to offer feedback on the project and ethical clearance was given by those who were comfortable to share their stories in this research. The task of self-evaluation and critical enquiry marks the transformation of students as objects of research to becoming-with-research subjects each (Gibbs, 2015 p. 224) thus positioning them as co-producers and generators of new knowledges and pedagogies that impact on the curriculum (Barrett, 2007, p. 5).

In keeping with Bolt's (2007, p. 30) findings that we come to know the world theoretically after we have come to understand it through handling the process of learning through making, afforded the time/space for students to "figure out" knowledge for themselves. The making process also activated entanglements between the students, the artefacts, and the ancient makers, thus affecting students ontological understanding of themselves as becoming-designers and thereby reaffirming how subjectivity is not pre-constituted. Similarly, agency is not discretely held in the student nor in their vase; rather it co-emerges through the entanglements between themselves, the ancient artists, and the ancient vases (Barad, 2007, p. 178).

Every time I look at my vase now, knowing that I created the story, I sort of like try and think about the people who are making their Greek vases so they were trying to tell their stories through their vase, the whole vase through . . .

(Student reflection)

By foregrounding the contemporary through the ancient, new interpretations and understandings of both past and present co-emerged, thereby disrupting Western positivistic notions of progress and superiority.

It made me try and relate with the artists that were creating those ancient Greek vases and since I was now in the same position as them I had to try and make sure that each painting on that vase has a meaning that creates the story in an easy way that is understandable by the reader/observer.

(Student reflection)

The assignment also highlighted the link between the process of drawing and the ontological process of the “drawing out” of voice. In this regard, Catherine de Zegher’s (2010) reflections on Ettinger’s praxis resonate as she conceptualises the process of drawing out and sharing of stories as a core moral responsibility to the world. De Zegher writes, “Art is congruent with our acting in the world: art draws from life as much as life draws from art. It enables attention to what surrounds us and for some understanding of our life” (2010, pp. 118–9). Similarly, in keeping with Barad’s notion of agential cuts as “diffractive readings [that] bring inventive provocations [and] are good to think with”⁵³ (Dolphijn and Van der Tuin, 2012, p. 50), the intra-action between the written and visual generated a multitude of possibilities that would not have occurred had students simply written or drawn their stories.

My journey of becoming a designer was not easy, I had to prove everyone wrong. Being left by your father at the age of 1 . . . really affected me a lot, and watching my mother struggling to raise me, she had to go and sell apples for us to eat, sometimes she would only sell 2 apples and that means no food for us for the night . . . I think that’s what groomed me and made me to be who I am right now.

(Student narrative)

⁵³ This resonates with Pollock’s proposal that language itself has remembered, or unconsciously registered, in the double sense of the term matrix, that the maternal is both a generating structure that brings forth new life while symbolically representing imaginative and intellectual potentiality (Pollock, 2009, p. 13).



Figure 3.3. Story entitled My journey in becoming a designer.

In addition to becoming conscious of themselves as writers/artists, students gained understanding of the limits and possibilities of both written and visual language. Through distinguishing and embracing these differences, students developed a sense of “ownership of knowledge” and its production, as interpreted through their internalised lived experience (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015, p. 541). Students also recognised their agency as storytellers with important messages to convey as the following excerpt by a usually reserved student reveals. Concerned with gender-based violence, the student writes:

The story line I have chosen is based on an experience I feel very close to. On the vase there is a woman on the floor and a man standing in front of her and another fighting him. My story is basically about woman abuse and a man standing up to the perpetrator by protecting her ... what John did was unacceptable and does not deserve a second chance. You have no idea how strongly I feel about this, and think more should be done for awareness.

(Student narrative)



Figure 3.4. Untitled story about gender-based violence.

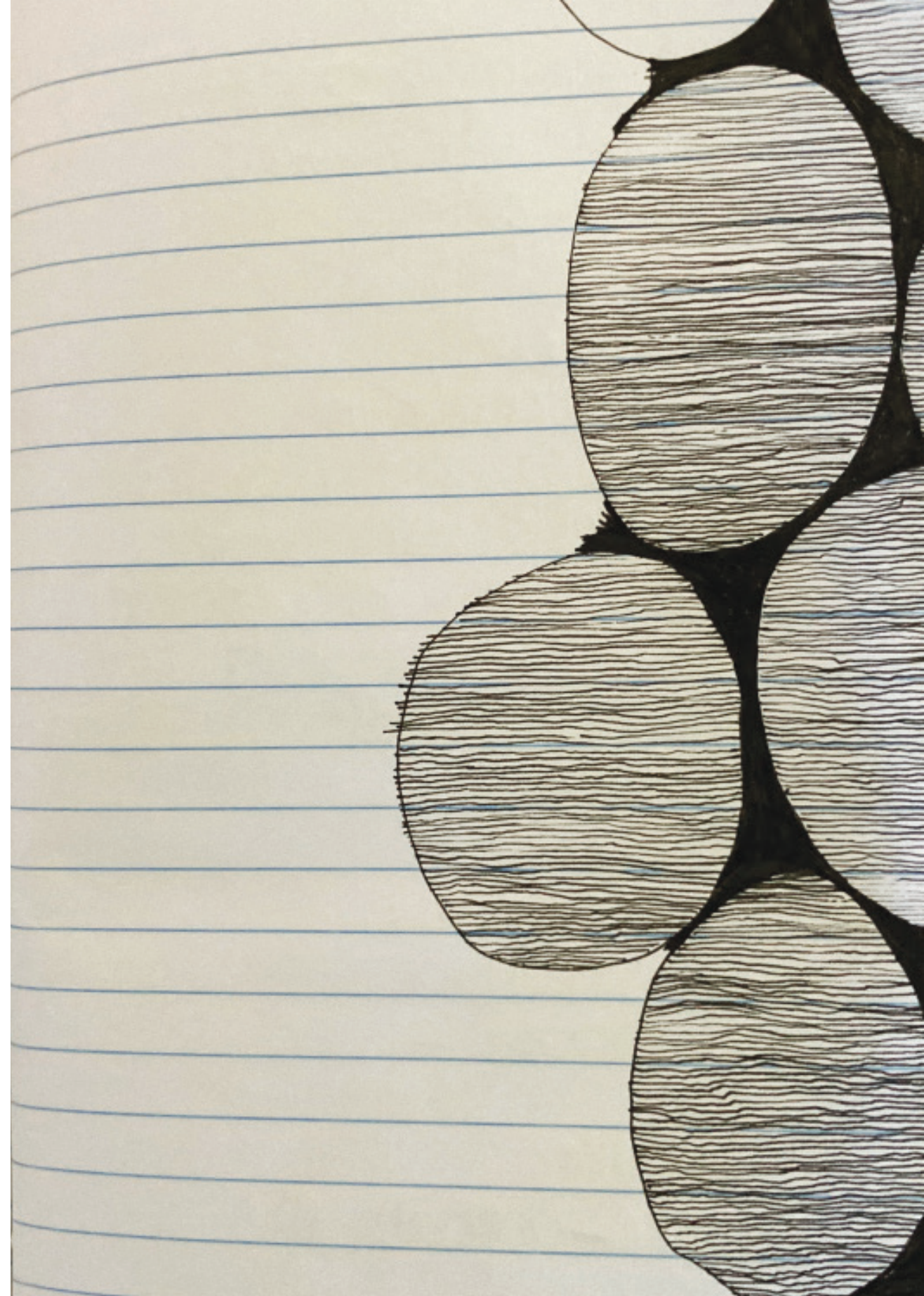
3.8 Conclusion

The case study describes and analyses an art history pedagogical response to the #FMF protests' demand to decolonise the academy. Concerned with the call to "decolonise the mind", the research explores how personal narrative challenges Eurocentric cultural dominance and validates students' lived experiences and local knowledges through encounters with ancient artefacts that embody the ambivalences of our colonial history (Haraway, 1988; 2016). Furthermore, through processes of self-assessment and reflection, the research interrogates how students co-transform pedagogical (and wider social) relationships and practices, and reveals how their becoming is both central to and dependent on the co-creation of new pedagogies (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015). Barad's agential realist approach shows how locally produced meanings can emerge out of encounters with artworks in and across space and time. By the same token, the diffractive gaze makes visible the mutually transformative ontological and epistemological encounters between the ancient makers, the students and their respective vases.

The diffraction of the matrixial through agential realism broadens the understanding of the performative role of artworking. Whereas for Barad, agency is "an enactment, a matter of possibilities for reconfiguring entanglements",⁵⁴ Ettinger (2005) theorises art's ontological possibilities whereby artists, viewers and artworks have a "response-ability" to the other. By the same token, the entanglement between Ettinger's notion of art as the "transport station of trauma" and Barad's material-discursive intra-actions collapse the temporal and the spatial, thereby creating a space-time in which iterations of the past entangle with the present, thereby affecting outcomes for the future.

Finally, the diffraction of the theories of situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988), matrixial trans-subjectivity (Ettinger, 1995) and agential realism (Barad, 2007) through one another generates an important conversation between inhuman and posthuman understandings of ethics that impact on both the present and the future, and thereby expand ethico-onto-epistemological possibilities of co-emergence and compassion in our increasingly polarised world (Thiele, 2014a).

⁵⁴ Karen Barad interviewed in Dolphijn and Van der Tuin (2012, p. 54).



accountability and responsibility must be thought in terms of what matters and what is excluded from mattering. fn. 71

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JUSTICE + RESPONSIBILITY

objectivity - taking responsibility for marks on bodies

arranged responsibility
what is included + excluded.

create iterative reconfiguring of possibilities
within our ~~present~~ ^{past} ~~advent~~ ^{advent} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~universe~~ ^{universe}



Chapter 4

Just(ice) Do It! Re-memembering the past through co-affective aesthetic encounters with art/history⁵⁵

4.1 Abstract

The article explores the possibilities of reconfiguring an Extended Curriculum Programme's (ECP) history of art and design curriculum in a South African university of technology, and examines whether critical arts-based pedagogical encounters can affect students and my own becoming. To this end, the paper describes and analyses an art history pedagogical encounter that explores ways in which educators and students might respond to calls to decolonise the academy and work affirmatively with difference(s) both within classroom encounters and society at large. The paper draws on the work of Donna Haraway, Karen Barad and Bracha Ettinger, three feminist theorists who move beyond binary "othering" and explore notions of both/and conceptions of difference(s) and share a common understanding of subjectivity as partial, co-affecting and co-emerging. The entanglement between the aforementioned theories brings together posthuman(ist) theories of diffraction and Ettinger's human(ist) matrixial theory that emerges out of her psychoanalytic and aesthetic practices. Rather than position them as incompatible, it is my hope that by reading them through each other, new possibilities for shifting the binaries between, to quote Thiele (2014a, p. 203), "what supposedly counts as posthumanism and humanism respectively" may emerge.

⁵⁵ This chapter was published in *Alternation Journal*. Romano, N. (2019). Just(ice) Do It! Re-memembering the past through co-affective aesthetic encounters with art/history. *Alternation* 26(2), 62–88.

Raising questions of history, memory, and politics (all of which are rooted in and invested in particular conceptions of time and being) ... [is] ... about the possibilities of justice-to-come, the tracing of entanglements of violent histories of colonialism (with its practices of erasure and avoidance) as an integral part of an embodied practice of re-membering—which is not about going back to what was, but rather about the material reconfiguring of spacetime-mattering in ways that attempt to do justice to account for the devastation wrought as well as to produce openings, new possible histories by which time-beings might find ways to endure. (Barad, 2017, p. 62)

4.2 Introduction

In the context of ongoing contestations within institutions of higher education in South Africa, this article describes and analyses an art history pedagogical encounter that sought to find ways in which educators and students might respond to calls to decolonise the academy and work affirmatively with difference(s) both within classroom encounters and society at large. Located in the Design ECP foundation course of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), the research explores the possibilities of reconfiguring a history of art and design curriculum in a South African university of technology and examines whether critical arts-based pedagogical encounters can affect students and my own becoming.

The aim of CPUT's ECP is to increase the throughput rate of at-risk students who, due to their secondary education backgrounds, may not be adequately prepared for higher education/university study. Following the guidelines for the implementation of ECPs at CPUT, the enquiry adopts multi-faceted approaches that seek to provide students with extensive pedagogical curricula and psycho-social support in order to assist their transition to university learning and prepare them for the mainstream programmes that they will join the following year (CPUT, 2016/2017, p. 75).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016) notes that South Africa continues to be “haunted by the struggle for inclusion and equality by those who have been excluded, peripheralised and pauperised since the time of colonial encounters”. These hauntings are imbricated in CPUT, an institution that is traumatised on many levels. For exam-

ple, following the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education, CPUT was grafted from the merger between two technikons that had been conceived within the violent history and logic of apartheid South Africa.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the campus is built on the ruins of District Six,⁵⁷ a once vibrant mixed-race community that was annihilated after the land was declared a whites-only area under the *Group Areas Act of 1950*. More recently, student protests that highlight the ongoing struggles that students face on a daily basis continue to haunt the troubled institution by challenging ongoing epistemological domination and cognitive injustice, and by demanding quality, relevant and fee-free higher education (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016). It is within these interconnected layers of trauma and troubling times that I explore how teachers and learners might co-create socially just pedagogies through pedagogical encounters that foreground the need to acknowledge, respect and work affirmatively with differences so as to create spaces in which transformation can occur.

Given the complexity of the above-mentioned histories, the paper will argue that affective encounters with art history can offer possibilities for students' and my own becoming, within the university. In particular it will foreground the need for both lecturers and students to deal with the ongoing traumas associated with historical apartheid injustices that affect our lives, as well as site-specific traumas that arose out of student protest action that resulted in the early closure of our campus in 2017. In this regard, the research outlines a pedagogical strategy that activates possibilities for participants (both students and myself) to grapple with our asymmetrical and ambivalent past/presents in order to surface, access and bear witness to the trauma of each other in ways that are neither engulfing nor assimilating.⁵⁸ This is important because it not only foregrounds the crucial role that relational pedagogies play in challenging traditional hierarchies between lecturer/learner, but also offers the possibilities for building trust and solidarity during classroom encounters.

Given the precarious state of the university after months of ongoing student protest action the previous year, the lesson sought to work with epistemological imperatives that would have ongoing ethico-ontological effects on students as they embarked on their university careers. At the same time it foregrounded some of the complexities and ambivalences associated with the teaching and learning of art history, a disci-

⁵⁶ See Gachago et al. (2015) for the effects of merging.

⁵⁷ District Six was a municipal district of Cape Town that was home to a mixed community of freed slaves, merchants, artisans, labourers and immigrants. In 1966 it was declared a whites-only area under the *Group Areas Act of 1950*. More than 60,000 people were forcibly removed to outlying areas of Cape Town, and their houses flattened by bulldozers.

⁵⁸ In this context, trauma is therefore understood as grounded in an ethics of solidarity, compassion and encounter.

pline that is both founded on and embodies Eurocentric cultural hegemonic ideologies that are “embedded in both theory and institutional and pedagogical practices” (Braidotti, 2013, 15).

With this in mind, as educator, the challenge was to find ways of critically disrupting the pejorative Western canon of art history without reinforcing it as normative, whilst positioning students as central rather than marginalised within the university. To this end, critical posthumanism/feminist new materialism and critical arts-based pedagogies provide the theoretical lenses through which an understanding is gained of how students’ lived experience is both central to and productive of new knowledges.

To begin, I summarise key debates about decolonisation of the university. I then locate the research within a critical posthumanism/feminist new materialism theoretical framework. This is followed by the case study and pedagogical findings that continue to inform my practice. Strands of students’ writings as well as excerpts of my own reflexive journaling are interwoven through this text as we research-create⁵⁹ (Manning, 2016) and render each other capable throughout relational encounters with art/history (Haraway, 2016).

4.3 Summary of decolonisation debates

The Council of Higher Education’s (CHE) November 2017 issue of *Briefly Speaking* arranges the debates around decolonisation into four themes that I summarise in what follows. The *first* deals with what content is taught, and calls for content that is “relevant, effective and empowering for the people of Africa and, more particularly, for the immediate African societies the universities serve” (Nkoane, 2006, p. 49).

Premised on an understanding of academic literacies as socially constructed, the *second theme* focuses on the transformation of how content is taught. Arguing that academic literacies are not a value-neutral set of skills (Boughey & McKenna, 2016), it becomes critical that educators do not assume prior knowledge as this can result in students feeling alienated and pressurised to assimilate into the “dominant meanings, norms, codes, practices and values of academia” (CHE, 2017, p. 5). It is imperative therefore, that in order to decolonise, students become co-constructors of a curriculum that is reconfigured as “a co-constructed set of understandings rather than a static object that students passively receive” (2017, p. 5). Considering the above

⁵⁹ Manning argues that the term *research-creation* opens up the differential between making and thinking, and offers a “fertile field for thinking this coming-into-relation of difference” (2016, p. 11).

imperatives, it is important for educators to find ways of working with art/history so as not to render those students whose indigenous knowledges and histories have traditionally been excluded to experience feelings of deficit due to lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979).

Concerned with the Cartesian dualist structure of the academic project, the *third theme* focuses on foregrounding of “subjugated knowledges” and troubling of the split between epistemology and ontology that privileges knowledges based on Western rationalism over indigenous knowledges (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016). Following on from this, the *fourth theme* attends to how social and power relations are practised in pedagogical encounters, as well as between the researcher and those being researched. For the purposes of this article, the above-mentioned themes are read through one another because they are differentially entangled and all have impact on and are implicated in this study.

4.4 Theoretical framework

Working in the field of visual art/design, I am drawn to theoretical frameworks that theorise the process of diffraction as a way of seeing and understanding the world differently. In this regard, I turn to feminist new materialism/critical posthumanism theories that trouble binary logics that separate teacher/student and researcher/researched and reconceptualise them as co-creative, becoming-with and co-response(a)ble (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017b). Bozalek and Zembylas also argue that they challenge neoliberal society’s privileging of binary thinking that valorises the human over the non-human, the individual over the collective and the discursive over the material world (2017a). Accordingly, rather than limit understanding to a representationalist view of words and things, emphasis is placed on relationships and importantly, on finding commonalities (rather than differences) in human and non-human entanglements.

I refer to Donna Haraway (1988, 2000, 2016), Karen Barad (2007, 2010, 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2018) and Bracha Ettinger (2005a, 2005b, 2006), three feminist theorists who move beyond binary “othering” and explore notions of both/and conceptions of difference(s) and share a common understanding of subjectivity as partial and co-affecting. Following Thiele’s (2014a, p. 202) inquiry into “an ethos of diffraction as primary relating-in-difference”, the entanglement between the aforementioned theories brings together posthuman(ist) theories of diffraction and Ettinger’s human(ist) matrixial theory that emerges out of her psychoanalytic and aesthetic practices. Rather than position them as incompatible, it is my hope that in reading them through each other, new possibilities for shifting the binaries between, to quote Thiele, “what supposedly

counts as posthumanism and humanism respectively” (2014a, p. 203), may emerge.⁶⁰ I elaborate on these theorists in turn.

Haraway’s seminal work on situated knowledges (1988) critiques Western Enlightenment notions of universal knowledge as value-free because it positions students as situated generators of knowledge in their own right and thereby challenges unequal power relations embedded in traditional pedagogy and curricula. Of relevance too, are her more recent writings on “staying with the trouble” (2016) whereby she advocates working affirmatively with ambiguous and damaged pasts in order to build more sustainable futures. By urging us to “make trouble ... [and] ... stir up potent response[s] to devastating events ... [and] ... settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places” (2016, p. 1), Haraway proposes response-ability as an ethical way of being in the world and argues that rather than “clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations”, we render each other capable through our ongoing relations in the thickening present (2016, p. 1).

Exploring optics in science studies, Haraway moves beyond notions of reflectivity and reflexivity that “displace the same elsewhere”, and turns to the “process of diffraction as an optical metaphor for another kind of critical consciousness ... [that is] ... committed to *making* a difference” (2000, p. 102). Significantly, the process of diffraction maps both the process and where the effects of difference appear and, as Haraway explains, makes visible “all those things that have been lost in an object; not in order to make the other meanings disappear, but rather to make it impossible for the bottom line to be one single statement” (2000, p. 105).⁶¹

Building on Haraway’s (2000) recognition of the possibilities that diffraction offers the understanding of difference and of making a difference that matters, Barad’s post-humanist theory of agential realism, that is generated out of “a diffractive reading of quantum physics through contemporary issues of social justice”, reveals difference/s as ongoing and non-binary (2017b, p. G110). In/formed by physicist Niels’ Bohr’s diffraction experiments that show how the process of diffraction, as a methodological apparatus, implicates humans in the production of knowledge, Barad coins the term “ethico-onto-epistemological”, thus drawing attention to how ethics, ontology and epistemology are mutually constituted. The shift towards an ethico-onto-epistemological understanding of knowledge production de-centres the dominant representational

⁶⁰ Thiele’s proposition is helpful in the South African context where an ongoing critique of posthumanism is that it ignores the structural needs of those presently disempowered, and that it assumes that all people are treated equally as humans.

⁶¹ Haraway elaborates: “Diffraction does not produce ‘the same’ displaced, as reflection and refraction do. Diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear” (2000, p. 101).

role that language plays in positioning humans as separate from the world and foregrounds performativity that shifts the focus from “descriptions of reality ... to matters of practices/doings/actions” (Barad, 2003, p. 802). This approach “allows matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming ... and it provides an understanding of how discursive practices matter” (Barad, 2007, p. 136). By highlighting the relationship between ontology, materiality and agency, Baradian ethics reveals the crucial role that response(a)bility and accountability play in the lively relationalities of becoming of which we are a part (2007, p. 393). This is useful within the context of higher education because it offers ethical possibilities and responsibilities for teachers and students in shaping the future for humans, non-humans and the material environment in the production of knowledge (Dolphijn & Van der Tuin, 2012, p. 69).

A quantum understanding of diffraction troubles Newtonian understandings of the universality and homogeneity of space, time, and matter, and also undoes the idea of dichotomy itself (Barad, 2017b, p. G110). Accordingly, Barad develops the notion of the agential cut that—rather than split entities into two separate parts—cuts “together-apart” as a “material act that is not about radical separation, but on the contrary, about making connections and commitments” (2014, p. 184). Barad writes that “there is no singular act of absolute differentiation, fracturing this from that, now from then” (2014, p. 168). Instead, differences shift within “every ‘thing,’ reworking and being reworked through reiterative reconfigurings of spacetime-matterings^[62] [...] each being (re)threaded through the other” (2014 pp. 178–179). Barad’s insights are significant for the teaching and learning of art history because they reveal how the present is full of ongoing intra-actions⁶³ that continue to be in/formed by “ghostly causalities” that trouble time. Drawing on Derrida’s (1994) notion of hauntology, she writes, “Hauntings are not immaterial, and they are not mere recollections or reverberations of what was. Hauntings are an integral part of existing material conditions” (Barad, 2017a, p. 74). It is to these hauntologies from the past with/in the present/future, that the case study will turn.

Ettinger’s theory of matrixial trans-subjectivity emerges out of a psychoanalytic and aesthetic register that also disrupts the linearity of Cartesian time. Working with arts-

⁶² Barad explains that the “past” and the “future” are iteratively reworked and enfolded through the iterative practices of spacetime-mattering because space and time are phenomenal and are intra-actively produced in the making of phenomena. Therefore neither space nor time exist as determinate givens outside of phenomena (2007, p. 315).

⁶³ Barad’s neologism “intra-action” signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. She writes, that “in contrast to the usual ‘interaction,’ which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action” (Barad, 2007, p. 33).

based practices, that she terms “artworking”, Ettinger explores trans-subjective aesthetic encounters that are generated within a matrixial time-space that “links the time of too-early to the time of too-late and plants them in the world’s time” (2015b, p. 710). Ettinger conceptualises matrixial aesthetic practice as a “means to effect the passage to a future that accepts the burden of sharing the trauma while processing and transforming it ... whereby we can be with and remember for the other through the artistic act and through an aesthetic encounter” (Ettinger in Pollock, 2010, p. 830).

Ettinger’s theorisation of art as a “transport station of trauma” (2005b, p. 711) activates a space-time that not only looks backwards but also forwards, thus reinforcing her proposition that art “has to do with primary meanings and imaginable futures for the humane” (Kaiser & Thiele, 2018, p. 105). Art in the matrixial functions as a relational postconceptual practice in which art’s function moves beyond art as testimony (given by the witness), towards an aesthetic wit(h)nessing. In other words, art has the potential to activate a compassionate and co-affective rapport between the artist, artwork and viewer that offers healing possibilities of “historical memory for the injured other ... that is simultaneously witness and wit(h)ness”⁶⁴ (Pollock, 2010, p. 831). Arguing that the artist/viewer “can’t not-share with an-other, she can’t not witness the other” during matrixial aesthetic encounters, instead Ettinger writes, “they become partialised, vulnerable and fragilised wit(h)ness to one another” (2005b, p. 704). Her construction of the neologism “wit[h]nessing” expands the notion of witnessing—that sets people apart from and therefore reinforces othering—in order to accommodate a compassionate response-ability of “being with” and “bearing witness” to the trauma of the other. Unlike an engulfing merging-with the other, matrixial wit(h)nessing does not give way to assimilation (Ettinger, 2005b; 2009). Pollock writes that the insertion of the letter (h) into the word witness embodies the notion of being beside the other in a gesture that does not risk the assimilation of the other and is therefore “much more than mere ethical solidarity” (2010, p. 831).

Matrixial theory offers helpful insights for pedagogical praxis in which co-response-ability becomes key to building trust and solidarity within the learning environment. Arguing that there is no discrete separation between subject and object, Ettinger foregrounds the transconnectedness of matrixial trans-subjectivity that is incapable of not sharing (2009, p. 9). Importantly, Ettinger cautions that while matrixial aesthetic encounters offer possibilities for healing, they are also potentially risky because they inhabit matrixial time-space in which individual boundaries are transgressed and call forward self-relinquishment and fragilisation (2005b,

⁶⁴ “The artist who is working through the cross-inscribed traces and is worked through by virtual, phantasmatic or traumatic real strings practises her art—art that is an aesthetic-in-action—as a healing, healing that is an ethics-in-action. Such is the co-response-ability of artworking and of healing in copoiesis” (Ettinger, 2005, p. 708).

p. 705). As lecturer, I recognise that while entering into open and compassionate co-response-ability with students as we wit(h)ness each other through co-poietic encounters requires risk, matrixial encounters offer the potential of transforming traumatic events into subjectivising potentiality. The role that research-creation plays in affectively responding to/within trauma-and-affect as generative, rather than pathological, supports the move away from the deficit model that has historically been central to the South African Department of Higher Education and Training's notions of foundation pedagogy (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2015, p. 11). It seeks instead, to move beyond "disadvantaged" narratives about victimhood, or pain, that rely on a deficit model, and explore possibilities of research-creation that think-with and move-with students' productive and affective sites of resistance in order to "open new critical spaces that can sustain the connection between bearing witness and political transformation" (Zembylas, 2006, p. 324).

The following case study focuses on a diffractive intra-action in which Cartesian spatio-temporality is troubled by the entanglements of artworks from the "here and now" with artworks from the "there and then" (Barad, 2010, p. 244).⁶⁵ The intention is to find different ways of working with the past by re-presenting and troubling histories so as to make a difference that matters (Barad, 2007).

4.5 Case Study

The case study describes and analyses the introductory lesson of the 2018 theory course that aims to familiarise students with the discipline of art and design history and introduce them to current debates around the role that art and design history performs in contemporary design practices. While the pedagogical aims included orienting students towards the kind of material the syllabus would cover, they also emphasised the importance of relationality and how students could expect the content to be "taught" during the course of the year.

With this in mind, the broad strategy focused on threading students' subjectivities through these art/histories, in order to foreground their lived experience as central to their learning. At the same time, it aimed to highlight the valuable role that art/history can contribute to the re-presenting of troubled histories that continue to affect our lives on a daily basis. Following Haraway's understanding of diffraction as an apparatus for making visible invisible histories, it seemed fitting to begin with the academy as site of contestation because it impacts directly on students. As a methodology, the

⁶⁵ Barad conceptualises diffraction as an iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entangling in which there is no moving beyond the past and there is no absolute boundary between here-now and there-then. For her, there is nothing that is new and there is nothing that is not new.

intra-active diffractive process generated debates across the spatial/temporal through students' and my subjective lived experience.

Barad provides helpful strategies in dealing with our troubled times by troubling understandings of time itself. She does this in order to “undo pervasive conceptions of temporality that take progress as inevitable and the past as something that has passed and is no longer with us as is” (2017a, p. 57). These insights informed the conceptualisation of the lesson which referenced the pivotal moment when the statue of arch-colonialist Cecil John Rhodes was removed from the University of Cape Town's (UCT) campus.⁶⁶ Fisher argues that “haunting happens when a place is stained by time, or when a particular place becomes the site for an encounter with broken time” (2015, p. 19). For UCT students, this time had come. Protesting against the systemic violence of the predominantly colonial culture of whiteness within the academy that left them feeling pressurised to assimilate, for students the statue not only reinforced Eurocentric hegemonic ideologies and practices, but also served as a haunting reminder that even though South Africa's democracy began in 1994, transformation had not taken place throughout South African Higher Education (SAHE).

The #rhodesmustfall movement garnered a groundswell of popular support and in the aftermath of the removal of the statue, the #feesmustfall campaign that called for fee-free higher education for all and the insourcing of outsourced workers gathered momentum. What followed was two years of protest action at higher education institutions across the country. In 2017, CPUT's classes were interrupted from August and in September after several arson attacks and violent protest action, the university closed prematurely for the year. The effects of the protests reinforced the precarious position of the institution which in turn affected those students who were beginning their studies in 2018. Many of them had applied for admission in 2018, but because of the four-month closure, their applications were not processed timeously and they never knew, until the last minute, whether they would be able to begin their studies the following year. Due to the intensity of the protests and the damage to property, it was also unclear whether the university would be up and running and open in time for the 2018 academic year.

At the beginning of 2018, it felt important to reference these uncertainties in order to encourage beginner students to actively grapple with the complexities and contestations around SAHE. At the same time, rather than limit the discussion to the fall of Rhodes, and risk paradoxically re-positioning him as central, I wanted to open up debates across the spatial/temporal that could forge understandings of

⁶⁶ After months of student protests led by the #rhodesmustfall movement, the statue was removed on 9 April 2015.

art/history's performative function and in so doing, highlight the ethico-onto-epistemological implications that arise out of material-discursive practices. By adopting this strategy, I also hoped that our discussions would surface broader themes around social justice that we could re-turn to throughout the course of the year. My understanding of re-turning follows Barad's (2017a) notion of re-turning that is more than simply revisiting broader themes in a linear way. Rather, it is about looping back to themes and "re-turning and turning our attention to a multiplicity of entangled histories" (Barad, 2018, p. 69).

Mignolo argues that given the ubiquitous presence of Western Modern aesthetics, decolonial thinkers should start with the legacy of modern aesthetics and its Greek and Roman legacies in order to delink from them (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014, p. 201). To this end, the lesson was structured around the diffraction of the removal of the Rhodes monument through two additional artworks. The first was the ancient Greek sculpture entitled *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, also known as the *Winged Nike* (Figure 4.1), and the second was artist Sethembile Msezane's performance entitled, *Chapungu—the day Rhodes fell* (Figure 4.2) that took place as the statue of Rhodes was removed.⁶⁷



Figure 4.1. The Nike of Samothrace, left side, three-quarter view (Louvre, Ma 2369). (Photo: Philippe Fuzeau)

⁶⁷ Unearthed on the island of Samothrace in 1863 by French consul Charles Champoiseau, the *Winged Nike* was sent to France where it remains in the Louvre Museum.



Figure 4.2. Sethembile Msezane performing *Chapungu—the day Rhodes fell*.
(Image: <http://www.sethembile-msezane.com>)

The pedagogical aim was to encourage students to engage with South Africa's colonial cultural legacy through and across time, in order to explore the relationship between art and power, as well as the transformative potential role that art plays in inspiring and building social justice. Moreover, following Garneau, who argues that decolonial aesthetic activism should move beyond the mere revival of indigenous cultural practices towards the need for "Indigenous ways of knowing and being [to] reinvigorate and rebalance Western aesthetic practices, even to the point of de-Westernizing them" (2013, p. 21), I was curious whether the diffractive encounter between an indigenous contemporary South African artwork and an ancient Hellenistic sculpture artwork might thicken an understanding of both artworks.

While Msezane's performance did not explicitly reference the *Winged Nike*, I was struck by the uncanny resemblance between the two artworks that embody such differing ideologies. I hoped that the patterns of difference generated through their intra-action would offer a useful introduction to the kinds of concerns that the course would be dealing with.

Msezane's performance references and challenges the unmitigated colonial practice of the pillaging of African artefacts, in this case one of the soapstone sculptures of the bateleur/short-tailed eagle, known as the Chapungu, that guarded the Great Zimbabwe settlement site. Rhodes had bought and housed the sculpture in Groote Schuur,

his residence in Cape Town.⁶⁸ According to Shona cosmology, the Chapungu is the divine messenger that intercedes between Mwari (the creator of human beings), the ancestral spirits and the living (Matenga, 2011). The artist explains:

The story of Chapungu and Rhodes in the same space and time asks important questions related to gender, power, self-representation, history making and repatriation.... On that day, I embodied her existence using my body, while standing in the blazing sun for nearly four hours. Twenty-three years after apartheid, a new generation of radicals has arisen in South Africa.... From then on, I realised that my spiritual beliefs and dreams texture my material reality. (Msezane, 2017)

Shortly after the removal of the Rhodes statue, Msezane visited Great Zimbabwe and reperformed Chapungu as a symbolic act of returning the bird to its spiritual home (Figure 4.3).⁶⁹



Figure 4.3. Sthembile Msezane, *Chapungu—The Return to Great Zimbabwe*, 2015. (Image: <http://www.sethembile--msezane.com>)

⁶⁸ The remains of the sculpture are in the house, which was the official residence of 11 South African prime ministers, in Cape Town, from 1911 – 1994, before the residence was moved to Westbrooke, under P.W. Botha. The latter was also taken up by Mr. Nelson Mandela, but renamed, as Genadendal, after the 1994 election.

⁶⁹ See Msezane’s TED Talk in which she tells the story of Chapungu at https://www.ted.com/talks/sethembile_msezane_living_sculptures_that_stand_for_history_s_truths/transcript?language=en.

Nike, the goddess of Victory, was an attribute of Athena and Zeus. Her Roman equivalent was Victoria. With the advent of Renaissance humanism and subsequent Enlightenment thinking, she has come to embody notions of victory, progress and reason—key tenets that underpin the colonial and imperialist projects that in/form South Africa’s violent history. The overlays of this construct are felt in the haunting presence of the statues of Victoria, Queen of the British Empire, that stand proudly outside the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town and in the Botanical Gardens in Durban respectively. (See *Figures 4.4 and 4.5*).



Figure 4.4. Queen Victoria, Houses of Parliament, Cape Town.
(Image: Wikicommons)



Figure 4.5. Queen Victoria, Botanical Gardens, Durban.
(Image: kznpr.co.za)

Mindful of the sensitivity and complexity that the diffraction of the above-mentioned artworks might generate, I knew the encounter would necessitate an openness to risk and vulnerability on the part of participants. I was therefore guided by Boler’s (1999) writings on pedagogies of discomfort that provide a useful framework within which to explore the relationship between emotions and power. Boler urges educators to take collective responsibility in recognising how their economic and social positions are implicated in their teaching practices. Furthermore, her critique of “passive empathy” alerts educators to the risk of both distancing the other “whom we cannot directly help” whilst simultaneously distancing ourselves from recognising our own implication “in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront” (1999, p. 158). In other words, in addition to teaching critical thinking, Boler calls on educators to take responsibility for their implicatedness in historic moments and highlights the

need for students and educators to develop a nuanced ethical language that recognises the ambiguity of ethical interrelations and acknowledges the complexity of working with/in difference during classroom encounters. In this regard, her proposal of “collective witnessing” is “understood in relation to others, and in relation to personal and cultural histories and material conditions” (1999, p. 178).

Given the complex and ambiguous nature of the content, I understood, with some trepidation, that as educator I would have to “wing it” because the encounter would be unpredictable. I drew on Roth’s (2014) post-constructivist perspective of the “living curriculum” and Sellers’ (2013) notion of the “becoming curriculum” because they emphasise the need for ongoing, contingent response(a)bility and openness to indeterminate outcomes in pedagogical practice. I was curious to participate in an open-ended process that would reveal a multitude of patterns of difference that could trouble the flattening effects of dualistic thinking practices that reduce differences to either/or.

To begin, students watched a short documentary about Msezane as well as video footage of her performance. Thereafter students were introduced to the *Winged Nike*. Working in small groups, students discussed the similarities and differences between the artworks. The intention was not one of juxtaposition that reinforces binary thinking; rather the aim was paradoxically to expose the limitations of binary logic as students began to trace the patterns of difference that emerged from the diffractive overlays and in so doing, questioned the very notion of a binary itself (Barad, 2014, p. 174). Some examples of similarities included how both artworks reference the female body, have wings and were created to perform in public spaces. Students also noted differences such as time and context; one is human while the other is stone; the one embodies notions of victory and power that the other seeks to overturn. However, it was the commonalities that the intra-action generated out that were significant to the teaching and learning encounter. After reporting back to the plenary, students were tasked with an in-depth written assignment in which, rather than working with a given definition of decolonisation, they explored their subjective opinions and understandings of decolonisation and considered the transformative possibilities of artworks in bringing about social change.

Registered for a Master of Fine Art at UCT, Msezane describes how, on coming to Cape Town, she was struck by the proliferation of public sculptures commemorating South Africa’s colonial and apartheid history throughout the city. She set about redressing the absence of the black female body in public space in a series of performances that insert the black female body in public space.

Walking down the street in the city that was now my home, I couldn’t identify with the symbols and the figures that were supposed to represent a kind of national identity. These [monuments and statues] were white men.... They were colonial ... Dutch, Afrikaner nationalist men.... I couldn’t see anything

African.... anything that was women.... anything that was like my mother and my aunts, or women that I knew. So for me, it was a task of reclaiming histories that had been omitted from public spaces.

(Msezane quoted in Matroos, 2018)

Msezane's words summarise the challenge of teaching relevant art/history in South Africa after centuries of systematic exclusion and absence on the one hand and the simultaneous inclusion and foregrounding of an art/history that promotes colonial ideology and hegemony on the other. With this "double whammy" in mind, the assignment called on participants to engage with Southern Africa's colonial cultural legacy and the arbitrary creation of colonial borders, through and across time, in order to understand how art functions as a symbol of power and, as in the case of Msezane's performance, how art offers the transformative potential to inspire and build social justice.

The simultaneous falling of Rhodes and the rising of Chapungu was a spectacle that was wit(h)nessed and documented by thousands of students. What follows is the artist's account of the event:

As the time came, the crane came alive. The people did, too—shouting, screaming, clenching their fists and taking pictures of the moment on their phones and cameras. Chapungu's wings, along with the crane, rose to declare the fall of Cecil John Rhodes. Euphoria filled the air as he became absent from his base, while she remained still, very present, half an hour after his removal.

(Matroos, 2018).

In terms of my own privileged subject position as a white, middle-class second-generation South African/Greek woman, the haunting of the *Winged Nike* is also my own haunting because it is my namesake. Following Boler's proposal of "testimonial reading" that encourages the educator to recognise herself as a "battleground for forces raging ... to which [she] must pay attention ... to properly carry out [her] task" (1999, p. 167), it was important to acknowledge the legacy of my subjectivity from day one.⁷⁰ "Not in my name" is not an option as I recognise the repercussions of my cultural heritage that perpetuates systems of exclusion and exploitation. Similarly, encouraged by Haraway, I explore possibilities of working affirmatively with the complexities of situatedness, complicity and partial subjectivity in order to recuperate ambivalent losses and non-innocent pasts that continue to affect the present so that, "like all offspring of colonizing and imperial histories ... we relearn how to conjugate worlds with partial connections and not universals and particulars" (2016, p. 20).

⁷⁰ Boler's (1999, p. 168) notion of testimonial reading calls for the analysis of the historical genealogy of emotional consciousness as part of the structure that forms and accounts for the other's testimony.

Given students' familiarity with Nike as a global sports brand, the lesson also laid the foundations for deconstructing how notions of power and victory are inextricably linked to Ancient Greek culture's valorisation of the Olympic hero. Similarly, in looking backwards to the construction of the Victory ideal and by drawing attention to the ethical practices of the Nike brand with regards to the exploitation of child labour in the manufacturing of their products, the encounter also provided an opportunity to engage the underlying cultural biases and imperatives that prop up global capitalism. In addition to making visible new connections of understanding the world and implicatedness in its ongoing worlding, the diffractive encounter also drew attention to our ongoing response(a)bility in working proactively in addressing issues of social justice. It seems fitting therefore to create the neologism *Just(ice) Do It!* as a play on the Nike brand slogan *Just Do It!*, in order to imagine a future of inclusivity and to understand difference as generative and affirmative. At the same time I question my privileged position as is evidenced in the following journal extract:

Can I question students' desire for globally branded goods, the Rolexes, the Adidas, the beats by Dre? Is it my place as a white woman of privilege to point out the inbuilt contradictions of global branding, the social and political implications of buying these products, the effect that they have on social relations, the environment, the reinforcing of the west as the leader of the world?

Concerned with mourning and justice, Barad asks what "would make it possible to trace the practices of historical erasure and political a-void-ance, to hear the silent cries, the murmuring silence of the void in its materiality and potentiality?" (2017a, p. 64). Her words resonate with an ongoing lament on the part of students who express their sense of loss of and desire for making visible their own histories that were systematically erased by colonial and apartheid hegemonic practices. As one student writes:

In Africa we have been taught that it is okay to undermine our very own intelligence.... We have been taught that the only way to be educated is through thinking like the colonists that occupied our country and exploited our economy. The people that came to our country and labeled our beliefs and culture as witchcraft, and they introduced us to their culture and made us undermine ours.

Unlike the Rhodes statue that looked eastwards towards the sunrise, Msezane turned her back on the statue and faced the university. By inserting herself between the statue and the university buildings, the artist simultaneously redressed the absence and erasure of indigenous histories brought about by colonialism and made visible the spectral possibility of an Afrocentric future.

One student reacted to Msezane's stance as follows:

Msezane is standing there in the crowd while other students remove the statue of the colonial man, she is not even facing the crowd, but what she does is

lift her wings once she hears the crowd celebrating. This whole performance shows that Africans were never ready for the Colonial Government. They came while they all were not looking and the same way they came we [s]hall rise with our faces covered showing no individuality, but rising as Africans. Take control of our education, think like the Africans that we are, take back what the colonials stole from us: our culture, dignity and pride. As much as they have undermined us and dehumanized us we are rising above all those things and taking back all that has been stolen/taken.

Some students commented on the vulnerability of the Rhodes statue. As one student writes:

The Rhodes statue was powerless. If it had power, there wouldn't be much joy amongst the students of the University of Cape Town. Throughout that removal process, the statue was vulnerable because it was vandalised before the removal and during the protest.

The *Winged Nike* was also perceived in different ways. For one student it represented how "Western culture has and still continues to dominate the world", whereas for another student, the artwork functions as "success, triumph [and] superiority". A third student read the sculpture as a symbol of freedom.

Paradoxically, the intra-action of the two artworks was interpreted by one student as a powerful act of colonising the West. He wrote:

Msezane's performance flipped that notion on its head ... by taking such a powerful symbol, highly esteemed highly European symbol and Africanizing it. In a sense colonializing it, very much like the Europeans did Africa. How ironic. Removing the symbol's old European identity and titling it as *Chapungu-the day Rhodes fell*.

What follows is a summary of the main pedagogical learnings that emerged from the lesson. To begin, the lesson confirmed the significance of working with artefacts that resonate with students' lives. Furthermore, because students could identify with the artist and her performance they understood the importance of symbols and their performative power, as well as their agency to affect change. Following on from this, the pedagogical exchange provided an opportunity for students to foreground their subjectivity in relation to the pressing debates around decoloniality within the academy. In other words, they understood through the material discursive encounter how we are all implicated in these performances, for example:

Her bravery is an inspiration to many people around the country period she shows that women should also Stand Up For Themselves. She's powerful, Fearless, brave, strong physically and probably emotionally, spiritually ... [She]

shows the country of South Africa that the removal of the statue is a symbol that bit by bit South Africa is moving further apart from the British colony and being colonised.

The intra-action also revealed how iterations of the past continue to impact on the present/future as they constantly re-turned to the time of the Ancient Greeks, the time of colonialism, the moment of the Chapungu rising. Similarly, the notion of the future in the present was also evident as students discussed how Msezane's performance in the present would impact on their year ahead.

As a precursor to the year ahead, the lesson laid the foundations for various themes such as redressing the effects of absence/presence, and developing literacies around the representation of the female body, that we re-turned to throughout the year.

While the diffractive encounter encouraged students to address the concerns around decolonisation, it also afforded them an opportunity to make themselves visible as they positioned themselves within the academy. Similarly, the initial discussion paved the way for ongoing conversations that dealt specifically with understanding difference and beginning to build trust as we navigate asymmetrical differences,⁷¹ both from the past and the present in the classroom.

With regards to my own learnings, I am gaining a better understanding of the notion of response(a)bility, understood in this context as an ability to respond to students, that has become of increasing concern to my practice as educator.

4.6 Conclusion

As an introduction to the course, the lesson generated ethico-onto-epistemological effects for students and myself. The encounter also positioned students' knowledges as central to the course from the outset and helped to bridge the transition from community/school lives to their first year in the university. Similarly, by drawing on students' situated knowledges, concerns about epistemological access and the risk of assuming prior knowledge were addressed. Consequently, rather than feeling marginalised and pressurised to assimilate, students affirmed their own knowledges and understandings through their encounter with the artworks. Moreover, contrary to deficit discourses that tend to position first year students as unable to deal with complexity, the open-ended process encouraged students to grapple with layered and interconnected concepts without fear of getting them wrong. The pedagogical encounter also posi-

⁷¹ These asymmetrical differences included those between gender, race, class, religion, teacher, student etc.

tioned the legacy of my heritage and surfaced the complexities of my implicatedness in the “historic moment”, an issue that continues to haunt and in/form my practice (Boler, 1999). Finally, for some of us, the aesthetic encounter activated a matrixial rapport through which the relationship between ethics, epistemology and ontology were enacted as students and I engaged issues of decoloniality and social justice, both within the academy and beyond.



Figure 4.6. The remains of the Rhodes statue bearing an inscription of a poem by Rudyard Kipling that reads, “I dream my dream, by rock and heath and pine, Of Empire to the northward. Ay, one land From Lion’s Head to Line!” and graffiti demanding a living wage and commemorating the 2012 Marikana Massacre in which 17 striking miners were massacred by South African security forces.

(Image: Kate-Lyn Moore/UCT)

The plinth of the statue marks the site where the Rhodes statue stood on the UCT campus (*Figure 4.6*). As a rhizomatic assemblage, it traces lines of flight that traverse the past, the present and the future. In addition to re-memorizing the past, graffiti references the ongoing struggles around social and economic exclusion that defines many South Africans’ lives (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, pp. 9–10).





Chapter 5

Writing and drawing with Venus: Spectral re-turns to a haunted art history curriculum⁷²

5.1 Abstract

This article explores some of the complexities of teaching art and design history to students in a Design Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) at a university of technology in the context of post-1994 South African society—a society troubled by the ghosts of colonial and apartheid histories that agitate the present/future. Tracking a series of diffractive pedagogical encounters, the article makes visible how, as a discipline, art history haunts the curriculum by reinforcing Western cultural superiority. The article argues that speaking-with and drawing-with dis/appeared ghosts offers new possibilities for reconfiguring art history curriculum studies that both valorise historicity and in turn open us towards different futures. The case study centres around the construction of the “Venus figure” as an embodiment of humanist Western cultural ideologies and practices that reduce the female body to an object of capture for man. Students intra-act with various representations of the Venus figure across art history through the story of Sarah Baartman, the so-called “Hottentot Venus”, whose haunting presence continues to contour, colour and texture discourses around decolonising the curriculum in South African Higher Education (SAHE).

⁷² This chapter was published in *Education as Change*, 25(1), 1–26. <https://dx.doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/9069>

5.2 Introduction

Post-1994 South African society is haunted by colonial and apartheid ghosts that continue to agitate the present/future. In the field of SAHE, instances of such troublings manifested during the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall student protests (2015–2018) and challenged, among other things, the ongoing dominance of Eurocentric pedagogical and curricula discourses and practices, and called for the decolonisation of the academy. It is within this context that this article explores a hauntological pedagogical approach to the teaching and learning of art and design history within an ECP at a university of technology. The inquiry makes visible the complexities of teaching art and design history in general, and in ECP in particular. The intention is to show how injustices, practices, structures and operations that underpinned the colonial and imperial projects are embedded in the discipline of art history and how the ramifications of these continue to impact the present and the future. The study will focus on a series of pedagogical encounters that critically engage the construction of the “Venus figure” as an embodiment of humanist Western cultural ideologies and practices that, in the name of “love” and “beauty”, reduce the female body to an object of capture for Man (Wynter, 2003).⁷³

Drawing on Michalinos Zembylas’s (2013) pedagogies of hauntology, the article proposes strategies of working with art histories in ways that reach towards new futures rather than seeking to “fi[x] the past” (2013, p. 70). What follows is an inquiry into how encounters with ghosts from the past might trouble dominant discourses and generate different ways of thinking/being/becoming with the past, present and future. This will be done by writing and drawing with the ghostly figure of Sara Baartman⁷⁴—the so-called “Hottentot Venus”,⁷⁵ who both haunts and is haunted by normative iterations of the figure of Venus—goddess of love and beauty. In addition to decolonising the discipline, the intention is to show how these hauntings also agitate and impact contemporary concerns such as the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo campaigns.

To begin, the article contextualises the Design Foundation ECP course and outlines some of the complexities associated with teaching and learning art history in SAHE.

⁷³ In critiquing humanism, Wynter exposes how the construction of the figure of Man is founded on Western bourgeois tenets that position the white, Christian male as human against which all others are marginalised.

⁷⁴ Also known as Sarah and Saartjie.

⁷⁵ According to Scully and Crais (2008), “Hottentot” is a pejorative term invented by the Dutch during the 17th century. Stemming from *Huttentut*, “to stammer”, Hottentot refers to Khoekhoe pastoralist communities who spoke complex click languages. It implies that because the Khoekhoe were presumed to be without language they were of inferior intellect and culture (2008, p. 307).

The article then discusses the concept of hauntology (Derrida, 1994), pedagogies of hauntology (Zembylas, 2013) and agential realism (Barad, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2019). This is followed by a brief account of Sara Baartman's life and death before moving on to the case study itself.

5.3 Design Foundation ECP

The Design Foundation Programme is a one-year multi-disciplinary course that introduces students to the basics of design and the specificities of the disciplines⁷⁶ they have chosen to study when they progress to the mainstream programmes the following year. The 2020 cohort comprised approximately 80 students of colour, the majority of whom were South African. Even though they are part of the so-called “born-free” generation,⁷⁷ the students' lives are differentially affected by the ghosts of the past. Given that the majority of them matriculated from schools that do not offer art and design as subjects, it is crucial that we identify and prioritise what will be most useful to becoming designers in their first year of study. In addition to the aforementioned content specific to design education, the course foregrounds the relationship between ethics, epistemology and ontology in educational encounters.

In keeping with the aforementioned strategy, the aims of the design theory component of the course include the following: to support and reinforce studio practice, familiarise students with art and design history, and foreground the ethics and responsibilities of design processes, principles and practices. Moreover, guided by the call to decolonise the academy and informed by the graduate attributes—including critical thinking, resilience and empathy—that the institution strives to instill, emphasis is placed on multilayered complexity and finding new knowledges other than representational modes of knowledge that reproduce the status quo.⁷⁸ In this regard, the following questions help define what the priorities of art history should be: How can art history be taught in ways that matter, in ways that resonate with students' lives? How can art history be put to work within the decolonisation movement? How can art history help students to become critical thinkers? How might art history activate issues of ethics and response-ability⁷⁹ in young designers who will be shaping the future? What can art history offer young South African design students as they

⁷⁶ These include jewellery, fashion, product or visual communication design.

⁷⁷ The term “born-free” refers to the generation of South Africans born after the birth of the new democracy in 1994.

⁷⁸ See Garraway, Sabata and Ralarala (2016).

⁷⁹ For more on response-able pedagogies, see Bozalek and Zembylas's (2017b) article that draws on Barad's (2007) conceptualisation of response-ability as a yearning for social justice and Haraway's (1997) moving towards possible worlds.

begin their journey of becoming designers in an increasingly violent society in which gender-based violence, poverty and unemployment are among the highest in the world? Thinking with Zembylas's (2013) pedagogies of hauntology,⁸⁰ how might writing and drawing with the ghosts of a haunted art history curriculum open up new possibilities for addressing the ambivalence of memory, justice, and (re)conciliation in education?

5.4 From the spectacle to the spectral

Jacques Derrida's theory of hauntology, which is a homophone of the French *ontology*, sheds light on the spectrality of the ghost as a figure that is "neither living nor dead, present nor absent" (1994, p. 63). Importantly, ghosts transgress ontological fixity such as dead/alive, absent/present and past/present. Thinking with Derrida, Zembylas conceptualises pedagogies of hauntology as both metaphor and pedagogical methodology for deconstructing the orthodoxies of academic history thinking and learning. He argues that as metaphor, hauntology evokes the figure of the ghost that both troubles the hegemonic status of representational modes of knowledge in remembrance practices and undermines their ontological frames and ideological histories. As pedagogical methodology, hauntology reframes histories of loss and absence, and uses them as points of departure that acknowledge the complexities and contradictions emerging from haunting. In so doing, Zembylas expands history learning beyond the limitations of simply studying the past in order to uncover and master unknown facts by interrogating how "the spectral constitutes an object of analysis that enables us to see history education as a promise for radical openness in the future rather than as a remembrance practice that ontologizes the ghosts of the past" (2013, p. 71). For this to work, he eschews the exorcising of ghosts of the past and proposes instead a welcoming "living with ghosts" in order to activate critical learning practices that open towards "a still unformulated future that extends normative notions of identity, memory, and justice" (2013, p. 70).

In like manner, Avery Gordon argues that it is impossible to do away with the ghosts of abusive systems of power—such as slavery and colonialism—because their hauntings continue to make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life. For her, the meeting of the living and the lived is a "forking of the future and the past ... that alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future" (2008, p. xvi). Gordon's words can be put in conversation with Karen Barad's theory of agential realism that is generated by a diffractive reading of quantum physics through contemporary theories of social justice (2017, p. G110).

⁸⁰ Although Zembylas proposes pedagogies of hauntology in history education as a way of learning about the disappeared victims in history education, his findings resonate with concerns specific to art history (Zembylas, 2013).

Agential realism reworks classical concepts of space, time, matter and the void, and undoes Newtonian assumptions of separability and metaphysical individualism (Barad, 2017b, p. G110). In her conceptualisation of loss as “a marking that troubles the divide between absence and presence” (2017b, p. G106), Barad illuminates how, far from being immaterial, “hauntings are an ineliminable feature of material conditions” (2017b, G107), and in so doing foregrounds the hauntological relationship within ethics, ontology and epistemology, and by implication, new possibilities for pedagogical practices and curricula design.

As a forewarning against spectacle pedagogies that reinforce representational figurations of ghosts “in a sensationalized and ideological manner”, Zembylas encourages entering into conversation with ghosts in order to trouble the relationship between spectator and the observed (2013, p. 69). The shift from the spectacle to the spectral gaze not only shatters binaries of the observer and the observed and breaks down distinctions between now and then, it also affects our relationality, and by implication our ethical response-ability with others across space and time. It is to these diffractive insights that we now turn.

Sylvia Wynter’s interrogation of the Western construction of Man as white European against which all else is measured—and fails to meet the standards—provides a useful starting point in understanding the machinations and repercussions of the hetero-normative Western gaze (2003). Wynter focuses on two effects that are relevant to this inquiry. The first deals with the Western gaze’s denigration of difference that obliterates that which does not fit into a normative frame. Grounded in difference as other, the second effect positions the figure as fixed and trapped forever in the past. Unlike the aforementioned, a diffractive gaze interferes with the “white-washing” effects of the Western gaze by opening up radical possibilities for looking and seeing that reveal multiple patterns of difference within the spectrum of white light. Significantly, these differences are not set apart from each other; rather they are read through each other. In other words, in shifting the spotlight away from the spectacle—that shines light *on* that which is separate—the diffractive gaze sheds light on the differences *within* the spectral, thereby illuminating that which would have remained unseen or foreclosed. Rather than emphasising epistemological fixity, diffractive pedagogies open towards indeterminate futures in which together with the ghost, we are all implicated.

As an alternative to returning that reflects back on and reinforces separations between subject/object, observer/observed, past/present, Barad proposes diffractive re-turning as a multiplicity of processes that “turn it over and over again—iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns” (2014, p. 168). In light of the above, the adoption of a thematic approach to art history lends itself to uncovering intra-ac-

tive⁸¹ diffractive patterns that are generated through and across time. It is within this posthumanist spatio-temporality that time is disjointed and together with multiple ghosts we re-turn to events, turning them over and over in order to conjure depth, nuance, percolation and sedimentation. In like manner, and linked to the aforementioned, is Barad's proposition of memory as the "pattern of sedimented enfoldings of iterative intra-activity" that refute the "erasure of memory and the restoration of a present past" (2010, p. 261). Understood in this way, the world comprises ongoing re-membering as a bodily activity of re-turning to enfolded materialisations of all traces of memory that are neither held nor fixed in human subjectivity. Instead, re-membering enacts an ongoing "reconfiguring/re-articulating (of) the world" (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 17).

5.5 Sara, Sarah, Saartje, Saartjie Baartman

McKittrick argues that Baartman's life story not only embodies "the biased racial-sexual discourses of her day [but] also demonstrates how our present system of knowledge (the tables, the ranks, the statistics, the measurements) continue to be informed by such discourses" (2010, p. 115). What follows is an overview of the life and death of Sara Baartman, the construction of "Hottentot Venus" performance, and how her ghost/s continues to contour contemporary South African society.

Baartman's birth name is not known.⁸² Born in the mid-1770s in the Eastern Cape, she lived the first decade of her life working on a farm⁸³ before travelling to the Cape where she worked as a wet nurse and washerwoman in the Cesar household.⁸⁴ The 15 years that she spent in the Cape coincided with the transfer from Dutch to British rule in 1806. Despite the Cape's legislation that forbade enslavement of Khoisan people, while not officially identified as a slave, for all intents and purposes Baartman

⁸¹ Barad's neologism "intra-action" signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. She writes, intra-action is "in contrast to the usual 'interaction', which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action" (Barad, 2007, p. 33).

⁸² The first known record of Baartman is from the Cape when she is identified as Saartje, a Dutch diminutive of Sara (Scully & Crais, 2008, p. 307). Significantly, the diminutive signifies servitude.

⁸³ Her people, the Gonaqua Khoekhoe, were pastoralists who were forced into agricultural labour after the land was stolen by the Dutch (Scully & Crais, 2008, p. 307).

⁸⁴ She initially worked in Pieter Cesar's household before moving to the home of his brother, Hendrik Cesar, and his wife, Katharina Staal. It was with Hendrik that Baartman travelled to London in 1810.

was treated as one (Scully & Crais, 2008, p. 309). Records reveal that Baartman lived in the Cape 10 years longer than was previously thought. During this time, she gave birth to three children, all of whom died within days of being born. She also had a relationship with a Batavian drummer, Hendrik De Jongh,⁸⁵ with whom she would live for periods of time.

In their analysis of the complex relationship between Sara Baartman and the “Hottentot Venus” performance, Scully and Crais argue that learning to act the part credibly necessitated an erasure of Baartman’s situated subjectivity (2008, p. 304). Furthermore, in presenting a more complex rendering of her life, they caution against “the trope of Sara Baartman as innocent indigenous woman” (2008, p. 306). As a port city, the Cape was inundated with itinerant sailors whose desire for entertainment and the sale of women’s bodies became fundamental to the local economy (2008, p. 309). So much so that Berg Street was renamed Venus Street due to the proliferation of brothels that sprang up (Picard, 1968, pp. 91–93).⁸⁶ In response to this demand, Alexander Dunlop, a military medical doctor, began to organise events at the Slave Lodge where Baartman would perform for visiting seamen. Scully and Crais speculate that it was during these encounters that Dunlop and Hendrik Cesar realised the economic potential of Baartman’s performances and began to hatch their plan of taking her to England to perform the “Hottentot Venus”.

In 1810, together with Hendrik Cesar and the recently retired Dunlop, Baartman set sail for England where, for the next five years, she was displayed first to British and then French publics as both pornographic spectacle and scientific specimen—as the “Hottentot Venus” and “Venus Noir”, respectively (Jackson, 2020, p. 8). The move to France coincided with a shift in how Baartman was perceived. Whereas in England her performance was billed as a titillating and novel freak show, in Paris she attracted attention from scientists at the Musée d’Histoire Naturelle who alleged that her supposed abnormal genitalia were proof that the black human being was more closely related to orangutans than Man (Buikema, 2017)

In the year before her death, Baartman spent three days at the Musée d’Histoire Naturelle where she was observed as a specimen of curiosity. It was during this time that the notorious illustrations portraying Baartman in a manner characteristic of zoological mammalian specimens were created. Appearing first in Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Frédéric Cuvier’s *Histoire naturelle des mammifères*, Baartman’s anterior and lateral profiles are depicted. In her analysis of these images, Sadiya Qureshi suggests that Baartman’s pose is indicative of her dehumanised position because rather than

⁸⁵ De Jongh returned to the Netherlands after the British assumed control of the colony.

⁸⁶ Initially named Eerste Berg Dwars Straat (First Mountain Cross Street) and then shortened to Berg Street, during the 1780s it was known as Venus Street. In 1791 it reverted to Berg Street at the insistence of Dominee Johannes Serrurier (see Picard, 1968).

being portrayed in a classical pose as was the norm at the time, Baartman's figure "appears rigid with the air of a stuffed specimen rather than a live model" (2004, p. 241). The scientists had also hoped to perform physical examinations on Baartman, but their plans were thwarted when Baartman refused to oblige them. However, after her death the following year, what she had refused in life was ignored and, with permission from the powers that be, her body was delivered to the museum where naturalist Georges Cuvier performed the dissection. He made a plaster cast of her body before removing her brain and genitals, which were placed as specimens in glass jars. For the next 150 years, Baartman's skeleton and cast of her body were exhibited on public display for all to see.

The campaign to return Baartman's remains to her ancestral home was catalysed by two South African artists, Diana Ferrus and Willie Bester. In 1978, Ferrus, a writer who has Khoisan and slave ancestry, composed a poem for Baartman titled "I Have Come to Take You Home".⁸⁷ Inspired by Ferrus's poem, Bester created the sculpture *Saartjie Baartman* that the University of Cape Town (UCT) acquired in 2001. After years of fraught negotiation, in 2002 Baartman's remains were finally returned to South Africa for a ceremonial burial at Hankey in the Eastern Cape.

Some scholars have cautioned against working with Sara Baartman's story. For example, Dunton (2015), who is concerned with ethics of representation, interrogates the unequal power relations embedded in research practices. By asking "who has the power to represent —power both in the sense of status (endowed by class position, gender, race) and in the sense of access to resources" (2015, p. 35), Dunton alerts us to the risk that researchers might be "treating Baartman as capital" and through this process re-inscribing Baartman as an object of scientific dissection (2015, p. 44). While I am mindful of these concerns, as an art history instructor, I argue that it would be remiss to ignore ongoing agitations and learnings activated by iterations of Baartman's ghost that materialise within the context of SAHE. While I am in a quandary as to whether working with Baartman's figure might further traumatise her legacy, I feel it would be irresponsive-able not to tell her story because it exposes how hegemonic Western cultural normative thinking and practices both perpetuated and propped up the colonial project that continues to reinforce racial and gender stereotypes today. I also feel conflicted because I want to protect her legacy and leave her to rest, yet her story embodies violent colonial histories that have relevance today both in terms of the decolonisation of knowledge and practice but also with regard to

⁸⁷ I witnessed Ferrus perform this poem at the University of the Western Cape in 2015. At this event she described the evening when, as a postgraduate student at Utrecht University and feeling isolated and homesick, she heard the plaintiff cries of Baartman's ghost calling her from Paris. Her response was to write the poem. Ferrus was part of the delegation that escorted Baartman's remains back to South Africa.

gender-based violence in contemporary South African society.⁸⁸ Given their relevance, it felt imperative to find ways in which students could become-with Baartman and the ghost of the “Hottentot Venus” in order to gain a better understanding of our haunted past and its relationship to art history.

The figure of Baartman has captured the imagination of students and artists alike. This is evident, for example, in the controversy about Bester’s aforementioned piece, *Saartjie Baartman*, that was displayed in UCT’s Engineering and Sciences library.⁸⁹ On the anniversary of the removal of Cecil Rhodes’s statue from campus, students covered Bester’s sculpture arguing that “the violent objectification and sexualisation of the black body is a system, which feeds into the stereotype of racial superiority” (Naidoo, 2015, p. 7). Seeking a respectful recontextualisation of Saartjie Baartman’s spirit and legacy, protesters exposed how “violences inflicted on the black body and psychology still continue, and we will not stop until we decolonise the black body and mind!” (Naidoo, 2015, p. 7). While the constraints of this article limit an elaboration of the furore arising from the “cover up”, it is worth mentioning that the debates and learning opportunities “revealed the centrality of art in the project of articulating a decolonial consciousness, decolonial sensibilities and the possibilities for institutional change” (Kessi, 2019, p. 84), as is evidenced in the renaming of Jameson Memorial Hall, which previously embodied imperial and colonial authority as typified in its neoclassical design, to the Sarah Baartman Hall, a reconfigured space in which Baartman’s ghost now presides.⁹⁰

5.6 Writing and drawing with Venus

The case study presented here is an account of a series of lessons that ran at the beginning of Term 1 of the 2020 academic year. As part of a larger module, the programme was interrupted by an eruption of student protests culminating in a two-week closure of the campus that also coincided with the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown⁹¹ in South Africa, which brought face-to-face teaching to

⁸⁸ The *Crime against Women in South Africa* report released by Stats SA in 2018 shows that the South African murder rate of women was more than five times the global average.

⁸⁹ For a detailed analysis of Bester’s sculpture see Buikema (2017).

⁹⁰ A statement released by the Chair of Council, Siphosiso M. Pityana and UCT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, reads: “We hope to honour her memory and restore to her name the dignity that was so brutally stolen from her in the 19th century... While we cannot undo the wrongs she suffered, we can lift her up as a potent symbol of the new campus community we are building” (Pityana & Phakeng, 2018).

⁹¹ In 2021 I will adapt the assignment for the remote teaching and learning space. This will have implications for how group discussions are facilitated and not being able to “read” the room.

an abrupt halt for the remainder of the year. As a result, initial plans to develop the module with students were curtailed as we transitioned to remote learning.

Design ECP focuses on setting the scene for academic life, both in terms of content and pedagogical relations. Given that students are transitioning to higher education, and in many cases navigating a new city for the first time, attention is paid to putting them at ease and alleviating feelings of alienation, anxiety and overwhelmedness. With this in mind, the theory course introduces students to art history in a relatable fashion by drawing links between art history and their lived experience with a view to positioning students as central to their learning.

Given contemporary culture's emphasis on the spectacle, beauty and desire and its impact on young people's lives, the course prioritises young designers' responsibility and accountability in challenging stereotypes of beauty and desire. Considering their import, it is crucial that these concerns are foregrounded from the outset in order to track how notions of beauty, love and desire have been constructed over time. The Venus figure became the agent through which stereotypes and hegemonic discourses could be addressed, through and across space and time. It ushered forth important learnings about the performativity of the female body—and as will be shown in this inquiry, the black female body in particular.

5.6.1 Lesson 1: Venus,⁹² Goddess of Love and Beauty

The lesson introduces students to art history by using a diffractive methodology that reads iterations of Venus figures across time in order to show how unequal hegemonic forces embedded within Western culture continue to haunt us on a daily basis. The intention is to set the scene for the course by showing how the female body is represented in art history and to trouble this gaze. To begin, students learn about the so-called *Venus of Willendorf* figurine (28 000–25 000 BCE), one of the earliest known Palaeolithic limestone artefacts depicting the human figure. Discovered in 1908 (93 years after Baartman's death) in Willendorf, an Austrian town, it was named *Venus of Willendorf* because of the sexual connotations associated with the enlarged breasts and buttocks. Continuing within a Western frame, we then look at various representations of Venus figures over time, such as the *Venus de Milo* (100 BCE), Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (1486–1486), Édouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863) and Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1543), in order to understand the subjugating operative mechanism of the scopic male spectator gaze as a consuming and objectifying gaze that positions women as passive beings who are looked at (Berger, 1972).

⁹² Originally the ancient Greek Olympian goddess, Aphrodite, she was later assimilated into Roman culture and renamed Venus.

5.6.2 Assignment 1: Free writing exercise

As written homework, students identify their understanding of love, beauty and desire, and critique stereotypes that dominate contemporary culture. Through this exercise, they trouble Western constructions of Venus as the Goddess of Love and Beauty, and make explicit the numerous nuanced and pejorative forces that continue to texture their lives.

5.6.3 Lesson 2: Sara Baartman and the “Hottentot Venus”

Following McKittrick’s proclamation that Baartman is a pivotal figure through which black femininity is founded because “she serves as a unitary scientific spectacle of alterity, as well as an almost seamless past-present-past theoretical avenue through which to think about contemporary narratives of the body, race, and representation” (2010, p. 119), this lesson focuses on Baartman’s life story and the construction of the “Hottentot Venus”. To begin, students watch a video clip of Ferrus reciting “I’ve Come to Take You Home”.⁹³ This is followed by an account of Baartman’s life story. Students also view some of the cartoons and caricatures of the “Hottentot Venus” that were circulated in 18th century English and French society. The aim of this lesson is to make explicit and trouble art history’s implicated role in producing and propagating colonial ideologies. Saartjie Baartman’s story embodies the violence of the male spectator gaze (Berger, 1972) and the racialised colonial gaze (McKittrick, 2006) that is underpinned by racism and reinforces hierarchies that position white men as superior, civilised and the norm against which all else is measured.

Concerned with reclaiming black femininity, McKittrick encourages artists to find a present-day avenue through which Baartman might finally “talk back” (2010, p. 121). With this in mind, Baartman is read through the lens of art history in order to disrupt Western hegemonic discourses and generate different narratives in which she might finally “talk back” (2010, p. 121). The intention is to redress past wrongs by addressing pejorative racial and gender stereotyping in the hope of uncovering future imaginaries free from deficit models that position black female bodies as subjugated and primitive. McKittrick argues that Baartman’s life story not only embodies “the biased racial-sexual discourses of her day [but]

⁹³ Follow the link to view the poet’s performance of “I’ve Come to Take You Home”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pCmu4uyj5c&t=3s&ab_channel=LiefvirSuidAfrika (Lief vir Suid Afrika, 2014).

also demonstrates how our present system of knowledge (the tables, the ranks, the statistics, the measurements) continue to be informed by such discourses” (2010, p. 115). The diffraction of the white and black Venus figures through each other makes visible more nuanced patterns of difference that expose the complexities of the construction of gender, “race” and identity.

5.6.4 Assignment 2: Writing with Baartman’s ghost

After the lecture, students perform a freewriting exercise structured in two parts. Adopting practices of “speaking with” was an attempt to disrupt the risk of reinscribing othering by “speaking for” Baartman. Students addressed her ghost in the form of written letters in which they disclosed how their encounter with her had affected them. The second part of the exercise gave Baartman an opportunity to write back to them. From the outset it was made clear that their writing was private, and would not be assessed in any way. I too performed this exercise. As a person who comes from a white settler community, I too am haunted. Acutely aware of my privileged position as a white South African who has benefitted from both the colonial and apartheid systems, I grapple with the challenges of teaching a subject that was born to reinforce white supremacy and foreground particular power relations expressed and maintained by European aesthetics. The intention is not to clear the slate and thereby reinscribe past violences, but to make visible how layers of history are sedimented in contemporary life.

5.6.5 Assignment 3: Drawing with Baartman’s ghost

Following the writing activity, students are invited to creatively re-dress the ghost of Baartman as a move away from the spectre of the “Hottentot Venus”. Thinking with McKittrick who, following Wynter, proposes a different approach to questions of biological determinism and “scientific racism” that explore how creative works might “intervene in, and nourish, our understandings of science” (2010, p. 114), students are invited to work with the images from *Histoire naturelle des mammifères*. I hoped that by drawing with Baartman’s ghost, she might be repositioned as “a figure that generates and enables a commensurately scientific and relationally creative space” (McKittrick, 2010, p. 115). It must be noted that students were not obliged to work with these specific images; nor were they obliged to show her body. Some students opted to incorporate their freewriting into their artworks; others composed poems and narratives; a few opted not to show her body at all.

Thinking with Wynter, Nathan Snaza is concerned with how humanist practices produce one “specific genre of the human (Man) ... as if it were the only permissible way to perform being human” (2020, p. 132). Snaza proposes reframing the humanities as “an assemblage that articulates energies across a wide variety of actants, and (or most) of whom are not human” (2019, p. 2). To this end, he conceptualises animate literacies as an animate practice that offers a posthumanist critique of educational institutions by calling for an enlarged sense of affective participation in events of literacy in order to understand how literacy practices are implicated in a “particular conception of the human (Man) and in relation to imperialist states during the period of modernity” (Snaza, 2019, p. 3). Arguing that animate literacies cannot be reduced to a particular form or methodology, Snaza conceptualises them as actants for thinking, becoming and making anew. Understood in this way, animate literacies are helpful for reconfiguring response-able pedagogies and curricula that encourage specific and situated responses rather than prescribed forms or methods. More than the standard academic literacies that many institutions foreground, animate literacies breathe life into the interstices of what literacies are and can be, by working transversally across and between the boundaries of visual, written and spoken literacies.

In *Figure 5.1*, for example, the text performs a complex role that both covers the body and simultaneously surfaces and inscribes troubling emotions on the skin. In thinking through her artwork, the student explains that “COVER ME UP!!” is written in red because “the colour screams” and “makes the mood more emotional”. She continues:

I covered her body up with her words, her emotions and feelings, I did not give her a rag or clothing because she was naked, no one sympathized with her, no one cared, she had no one but herself, not even through her own will she could help herself. The only person that even spoke to her was herself, the only person that saw her as human was herself.

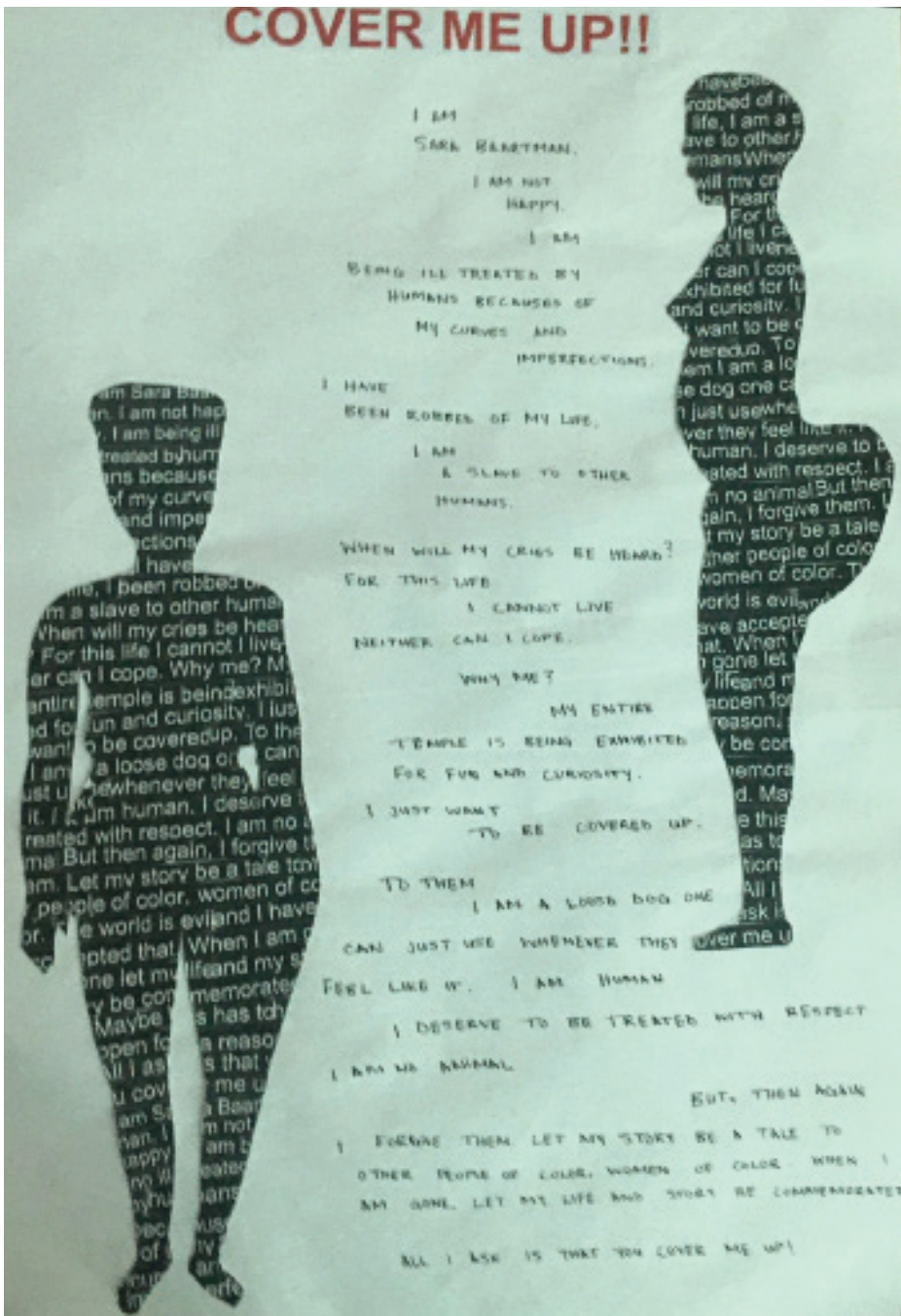


Figure 5.1. "COVER ME UP!!"

I enjoyed the exercise of writing to Sarah and having her writing back. It was a liberating feeling and it was almost as if we were a vessel for her to express what she needed to. It was almost as if she was moving through us when we were writing to her and vice versa and it was a personal moment that I enjoyed.

In “The Emotional Box” (Figure 5.2), the artist foregrounds “the emotions that Sarah Baartman went through while she was in a foreign country mistreated” in order to “let the emotions out”. Unlike the image above (Figure 5.1), where Sara’s body was protected by words, the student chose not to cover her “because I feel we can be more closer to her history”. She adds that the assignment affected her positively because “it makes me to be proud for being a woman with colour and that I am worth more than anything. To love my body.”

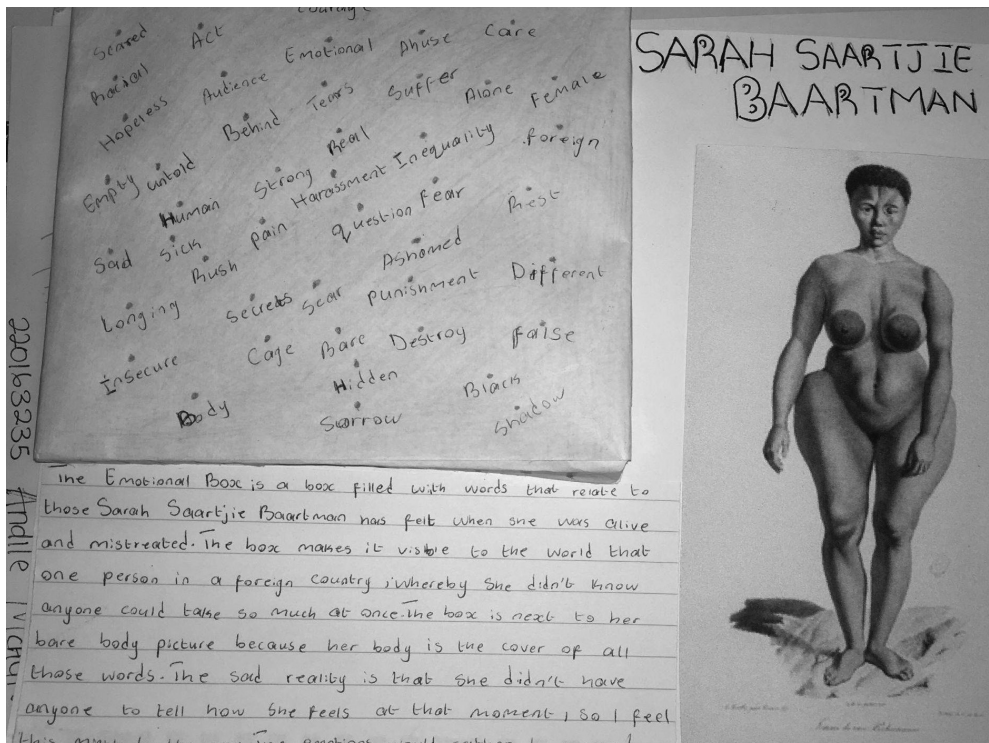


Figure 5.2. “The Emotional Box”

Some students sought to free Baartman from essentialising gazes that reduce her to genitalia and buttocks that “serve[d] as the central image for the black female throughout the nineteenth century” (Gilman, 1985, p. 216) by working solely with her face. For the maker of *Figure 5.3*, for example, the exclusion of Baartman’s body, which “is no longer symbolic of who she is”, was a powerful act. In addition to the visual artwork, he also composed a poem that is written in the first person by Baartman who, like her portrait, addresses the audience directly as an act of “finally claiming what is hers, and that is her exposed body”. His poem reads:

I am **not** what you make me to be.
My body does **not** define me.
I can finally rest
knowing I am **no longer**
an object or some animal
you compare me.
I know freedom now;
Unlike **you**.
– Sarah Baartman

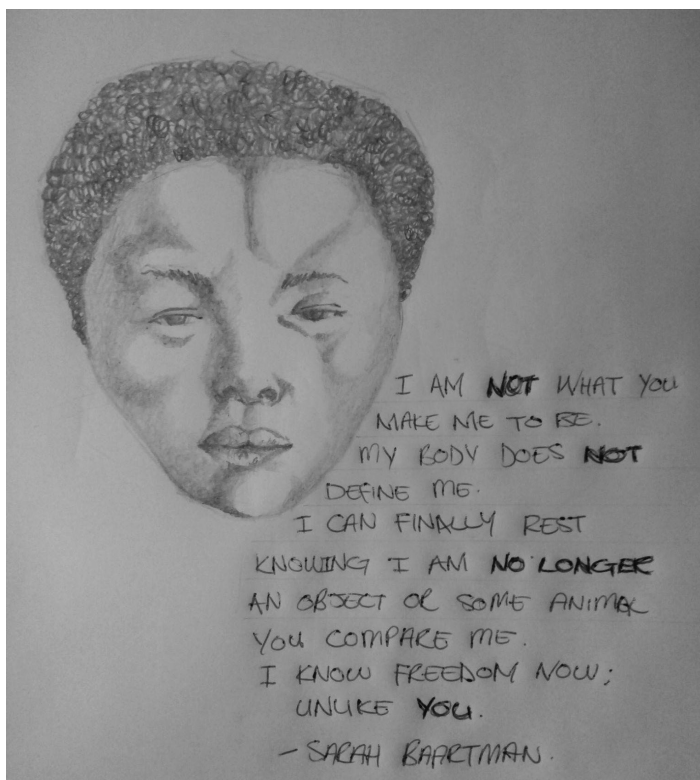


Figure 5.3. “I am not what you make me to be.”

In reconfiguring possibilities for the humanities, Snaza, as I have argued before, foregrounds the imbricatedness of academic disciplines and their disciplining effects and explores different ways of working within the humanities in order to decolonise them. For example, he cautions against critiquing “the human—Man ... without offering anything substantially different in relation to the operative model of Man” (2019, p. 3). In other words, by eschewing the limitations of critique alone, which reproduces the very system that it is troubling, Snaza considers how various discourses might “coalesce in their capacity not for critique but for spurring experimental forms of thinking and being ... or, still better, becoming [and] moving together” (2019, p. 3). These insights resonate with the concerns of the writing and drawing-with Venus assignment that set out to activate transformative co-affective encounters with Venus figures that continue to haunt the curriculum. In *Figure 5.4* below, we see how another student also works exclusively with the face, using both clay and charcoal. She elaborates on her decision as follows:

I tried as best I could to remind people of where human discrimination and more specifically where female discrimination began, which is why I used Sarah’s face. I wanted to display her in my work but I didn’t want to show her body since she has been on display most of her life.

Sensitised to the co-affective encounter through making, she comments that charcoal’s soft materiality “can create very dark and emotional lines” and describes how “upon drawing her face my hand felt light and an ocean of emotions went through my body. It was as though Sarah wrote her story through me.”



Figure 5.4. “It was as though Sarah wrote her story through me.”

In *Becoming Human* (2020), Zakiyyah Jackson contends that black studies' interrogation of humanism challenges liberal humanism's basic unit of analysis, "Man", and simultaneously sets apart "the human" versus "the animal", while positioning the black(ened) female as abjectly animalised. Following Gilman (1985, pp. 83–85), Jackson contends Baartman's posterior and genitals were used to reinforce categories of "female" and "woman" by positioning an idealised Western European bourgeois femininity as the normative embodiment of womanhood against the perceived abject African "female" who is paradoxically placed under the sign of lack (2020, p. 8).

Writing and drawing with Venus also laid bare the destructive effects of "humanising" education in the name of love and beauty—as framed within Western humanist aesthetics and ideology—and also alerted students to how "humanizing education cannot proceed without simultaneously dehumanizing" (Snaza, 2019, p. 13). The intention was to alert students to how the "Hottentot Venus" construct and simultaneous dislocation of Baartman from her homeland served to reinforce the human in Europe as contrasted with the dehumanised "Hottentot Venus". The excerpt below reveals a student's empathetic response that draws links between her contemporary lived experience as a person of colour and Baartman's treatment by 18th century Europe:

People of colour are still experiencing struggles when it comes to representation and racism. Having experienced this on a minor level, I cannot imagine how Sarah dealt with it all alone feeling isolated in a strange country, it has given me a lot of respect for Sarah and what she went through.

Figures 5.5a and *5.5b* present a student's multifaceted response to Baartman's ghost. In *Figure 5.5a* Baartman materialises as a brittle puppet, precariously held together by split pins in an enactment of how her body was broken apart by the spectator gaze in life and through dissection after her death. In dismembering and re-membering the *Histoire naturelle des mammifères* images, the artist activates a literal and figurative re-enactment of how Baartman was broken apart both in life and death. In *Figure 5.5b* we see Sarah as an "African Goddess", cocooned in a womb-like sack constructed with handwritten repetitions of the phrase "African Goddess". The overall effect is one of comfort and cossetting; her figure becomes an embryo, waiting to be born. Signalling an act of redemption, the student writes "we [are] all women of different races and we should always appreciate our bodies and curves".

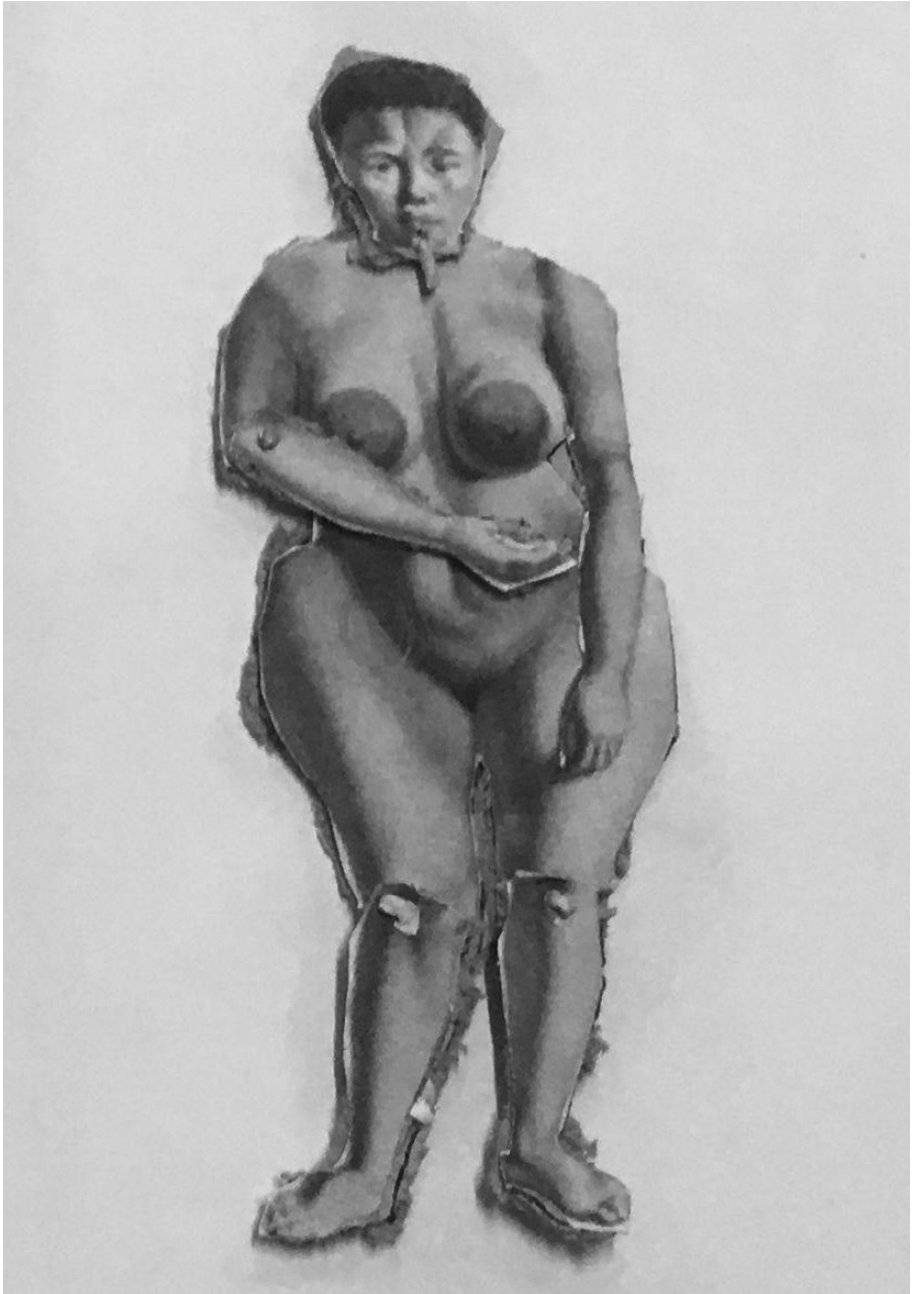


Figure 5.5a. “Broken apart in life and death”

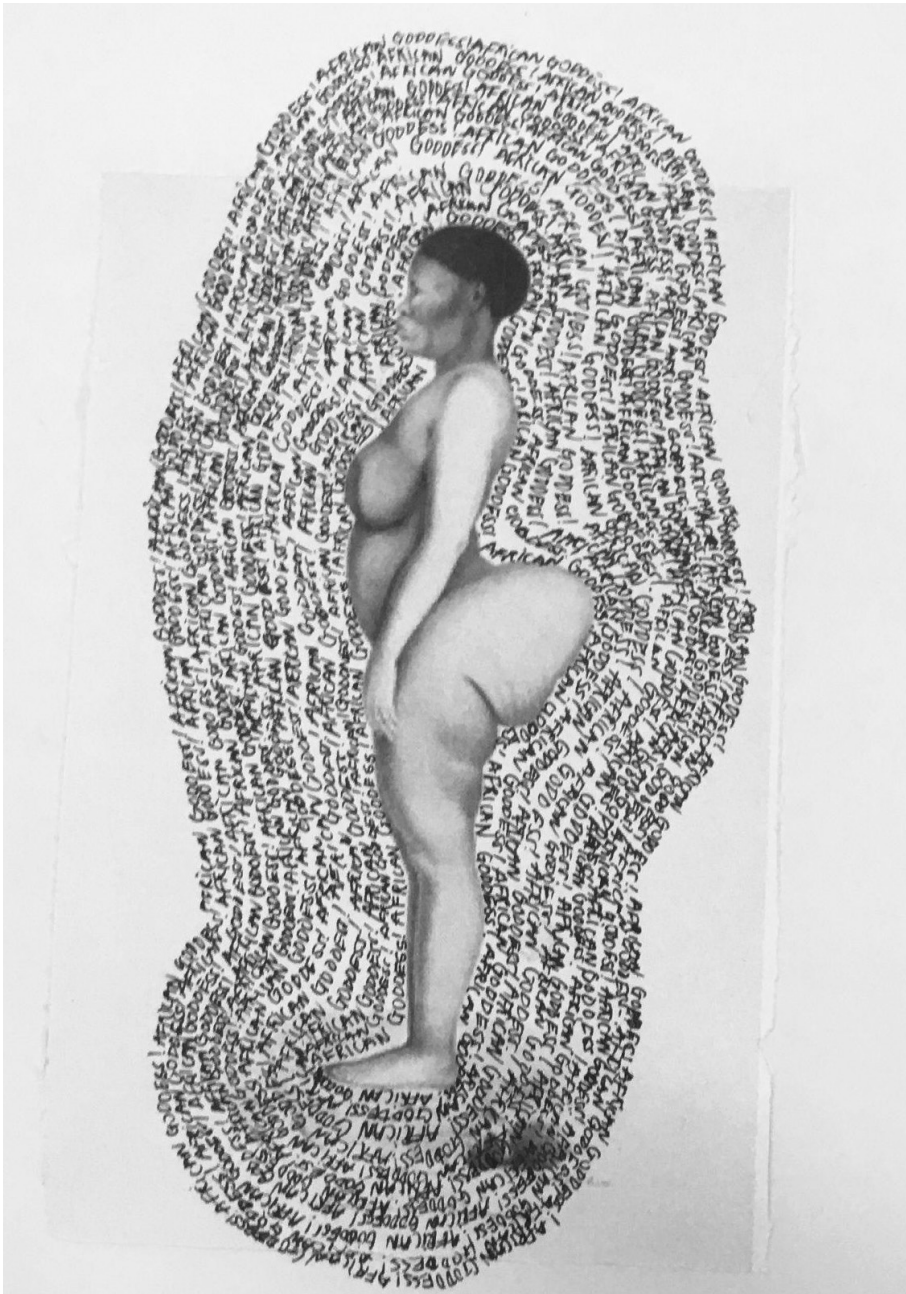


Figure 5.5b. "African Goddess"

Magubane alerts us to the inherent contradiction that Gilman (1985) makes by conflating how Baartman's colour and sexual difference mark her as different while simultaneously rendering her "fundamentally the same as all other black people" (2001, p. 822). At the same time, she identifies the need to think through the complexities of what constitutes blackness and how it is differently construed. In other words, she argues that while it is important to critique racism and biological essentialism, it is crucial that we do not reinscribe essentialist views of what constitutes blackness. The students' spectral drawings-with Baartman's ghost reveal a myriad of manifestations of the black female body. In *Figure 5.6* Baartman is in a bikini that, as the artist explains, covers her body "so that she can also be respected and not be taken advantage of ... [and] ... raise her self confidence ... [and] ... remind her that she is a black woman who deserves respect". She writes:

I have learnt so much. That most of black women were being abused back then, and is still happening now but not that much. And that we as women should stand together and support each other through thick and thin. And make sure no one control us. I learnt a lot about the women who were very brave, very proud of their bodies. But had no one that believed in them and their dreams. I'm talking about those women who died because of not being a straight women.

We as women will always be treated as useless people, that we will never be strong enough like men. Or do anything without men being included in our lives. Of which that is not true, women are the strongest people in the world.

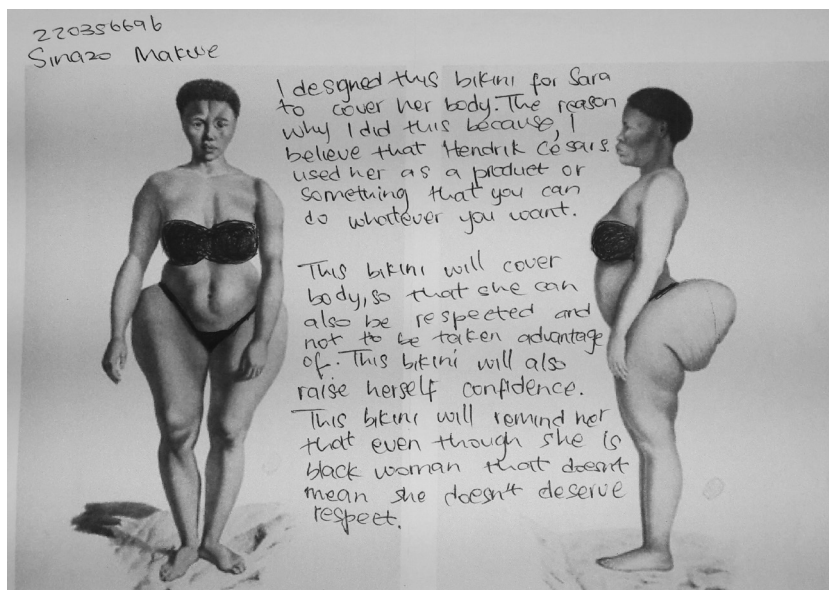


Figure 5.6. "Sara deserves respect"

In *Figure 5.7*, unlike an ephemeral spectre that hovers in ambiguous space, Baartman's ghost is grounded firmly in the continent, as an angelic figure of Mother Africa. The artist explains:

I made it black and white because I wanted to show its true colour and it didn't need any colour because it's beautiful on its own and it tells enough information about the picture. And I used the symbols like the angel symbol over her head showing that she's an angel now and she's standing on the continent of Africa showing that she's the mother of Africa.



Figure 5.7. "Mother of Africa"

Redressing is a powerful act that both addresses the past pains and injustices and pursues a justice-to-come.⁹⁴ In describing his creative process, a student explains how he was “inspired by the pain that Sarah had experienced back then” and how he believed that had she remained in South Africa, she would have become a queen (see *Figure 5.8*). He places Baartman in different worlds, both modern and traditional, and chooses to depict her in ways most familiar to him, as a queen and in “modern day” traditional dress. In doing so, he wanted to show “Sarah was a very strong person [who] actually deserves to be praised and honored in all manners”. Mulling over Baartman’s written response to him, he notes the following:

I have learnt Sarah wished us to all just to see and learn from her story, she wished us to learn and apply all the perseverance she had. She wants us to hold fast our ground though things change against us but we should endure and strive. She wishes all of us to be strong and humble. I had a privilege to be a vessel to express her suffering to the world. I will utilise this story to motivate others who might find themselves overwhelmed by life.



Figure 5.8. “She wants us to hold fast our ground”

⁹⁴ Barad conceptualises justice-to-come as an ongoing ethical practice that is understood as “a material set of im/possibilities with-in (of!) the world, what the world calls out for is an embodied practice of tracing the entanglements of violent histories” (2019, p. 539).

Figure 5.9 shows Baartman wearing traditional Xhosa attire as is evidenced by the headdress and the skirt. The artist explains that in traditional Xhosa culture, a young woman dresses in a “respectable way to show she has dignity”. For her it was important to re-dress Sarah respectfully because she had been “displayed in a non respectable manner in Europe”. She continues:

It challenged me about the positions that woman have in the world. It also made me question how other woman look at other woman. How people treated her so badly and not feel a fraction of shame.

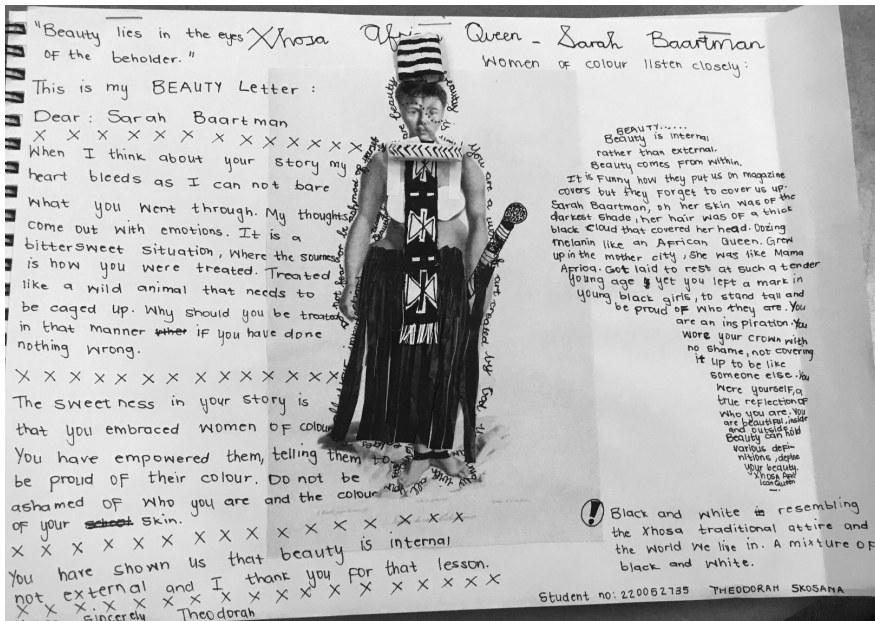


Figure 5.9. “Queen Sarah Baartman”

Given that the narrative of the “Hottentot Venus” is instrumental in the construction of Man as white European against which all else that is measured fails dismally, the assignment sought to elicit different stories that not only trouble the notion of Man but encourage students to think, make and do anew. Put differently, rather than simply replicate the non-critical known views on Man, the assignment elicited nuanced ongoing iterative re-memberings of the Venus figure that expanded understandings of Baartman, the construction of the “Hottentot Venus” performance, and how their ghosts continue to inform contemporary culture and society. This resonates with Gordon who argues that in order to transform society “we must identify hauntings and reckon with ghosts ... [and] ... learn how to make contact with what is without doubt painful, difficult, unsettling” (2008, p. 23). The challenge was to find ways of “making contact”, and to

this end the assignment turned towards drawing, writing, making, poetry and freewriting in order to accommodate different learning proclivities as well as orient students towards art historical approaches that foreground their knowledges and response-abilities to current debates. For example, as one student explains, the assignment exposed that the exploitation of women has been happening for years. He writes:

The assignment affected me in terms of learning how she was mistreated and what she was put through just because of her body. It hit close to home especially due to [the] climate we are living in now in South Africa and across the world with gender based violence being a serious conversation and it was a sore reminder that woman have always been mistreated and in her case, in some terrible gruesome ways.

5.7 Conclusion

Inspired by Snaza's animate literacies and Jackson's becoming human (2020), the case study activated inquiry-focused learning that foregrounded particular forms of personhood and politics (Snaza, 2019, pp. 4–6) that do not rely on animal abjection to define being (human) and do not re-establish "human recognition" within liberal humanism as an antidote to racialisation (Snaza, 2019, p. 1). Put differently, the lessons and associated assignments encouraged working with art history in ways that "don't presume Man and which enable creative, experimental practices of performing the human differently" (Snaza, 2019, p. 4). The act of writing-with and drawing-with the ghosts of Baartman and the "Hottentot Venus" activated art history's performative role in the present. In order to do this, it was necessary to shift from a representational reading of artefacts and art history towards a diffractive reading through artefacts and art history. Writing-with and drawing-with ghosts made knowledge more accessible in the ECP by challenging both dominant representational modes of knowledge and their "ontological frames and ideological histories" (Zembylas, 2013, p. 69), and in doing so, contributed to socially just pedagogies. In addition to circumventing barriers to language, the multimodal also encouraged students to explore and develop an affinity with forms of expression that are key to the discipline of design.

Diffractive pedagogies of hauntology exposed the differential between the "Hottentot Venus" spectacle and Sarah Baartman's ghost. The patterns of difference emanating from these ghostly entanglements shone light on the ambiguous manifestations of observation and obliteration because in order to become the "Hottentot Venus", Baartman had to "erase aspects of her personal history, experience, and identity in order to make her performance of the Venus credible to the audience that was staring at her" (Scully & Crais, 2008, p. 304).

Students' diffractive encounter with art history foregrounded some of the complexities the course deals with in ways that matter to students' lives. For example, by responding to Venus figures from "here and now" and "then and there" (Barad, 2013, p. 16), the case study afforded students an opportunity to think through issues of justice in the present and understand the ambiguous challenges posed by the spectacle that simultaneously captures attention and lures us away from real life (Debord, 2004, p. 117). This is crucial for becoming-designers as they grapple with ethical dilemmas brought about by contemporary culture's promotion of the spectacle gaze that reinforces inequality and othering. Understood in this way, the intra-active encounter with Baartman offered transformative potential within contemporary society as students threaded her story through issues such as gender-based violence, racism and decoloniality that continue to contour their lives today. The adoption of this approach contributed to ECP students becoming producers rather than receivers of knowledge. As one student reflects:

I learnt from this assignment that art history is a great way of showing us how we got to where we are and what has influenced our culture today [and] that even though it can affect us in negative ways, it is important to know what has happened in history so that we can learn from it and so that we can understand why things happened and how those things affect us in our day to day lives.

The act of re-membering Saartjie Baartman also touched on a number of ethical challenges arising out of the representation of the black female body. These include the risk of perpetuating additional trauma to the ghost of Saartjie Baartman as well as the potential risk of triggering students' own trauma, both past and present. The intention was not to cause further violences. On the contrary, together with students, it explored whether speaking-with and drawing-with the ghosts that dis/appeared throughout art history might reconfigure curriculum studies to "reclaim a sense of historicity" and open us to the "not yet formulated possibilities of the future" (Zembylas, 2013, p. 85). As students and I re-turned to the iterative visual and conceptual representations of Venus throughout art history, we encountered iterative haunting presences of Venus that contour, colour and texture the discourses around decolonising the curriculum in SAHE and ECP in particular. Moreover, as was shown, the act of drawing-with and writing-with the ghost of Sara Baartman and the "Hottentot Venus" activated entangled personal narratives and collective memories. Living in the ruins of colonialism, imperialism and apartheid, while Baartman's bare bones have been laid to rest in the Eastern Cape, the re-turnings of the "Hottentot Venus" and Baartman's ghosts materialise "mourning as promise for a different future" (Zembylas, 2013, p. 83).

Acknowledgements

I thank the 2020 ECP students who shared their artworks and insights that gave life to this article. Thanks too to the anonymous reviewers whose incisive and insightful comments I have incorporated into the article. To my supervisors, Vivienne Bozalek and Kathrin Thiele, thank you for your ongoing guidance in my PhD project. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Sara, Sarah, Saartjie Baartman whose legacy is a constant reminder of the need to decolonise the academy and do academia differently. This work is based on the research supported by the National Research Foundation of South Africa (Grant Number: 120845).

Fundamental feature of the quantum world

Substantial independent cases

Interference is an effect in a state of superposition

superpositions

sum of effect of constituent waves

$$\psi_1 + \psi_2$$
$$\psi = a\psi_1 + b\psi_2$$

crisis mathematically result of linearity of SE

uncertainty

Indeterminacy

measurements distributed

properties determined given material arrangements

SE = SCHRÖDINGER EQUATION

material arrangements

Conclusion

The thesis set out to understand how students' becoming-with critical arts-based pedagogies play a part in reconfiguring an Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) history of art and design course in a South African university of technology, as one possible response to the call to decolonise the academy. To this end the inquiry focused on three objectives. The first sub-question engages with how critical arts-based pedagogies might build trust and solidarity within pedagogical praxis. The second sub-question explores how, together with active participation of students, critical arts-based pedagogies might disrupt the hegemonic canon of Western art history. The third sub-question inquires how critical arts-based pedagogies might work affirmatively with difference. In this conclusion, I reflect on how the thesis has addressed each of these focal points to make explicit, firstly, its contribution to the scholarly literature(s), and secondly, the implications for pedagogical and curricula studies in South African higher education (SAHE).

Chapter 1 attends to the first sub-question by providing the overarching theoretical framework of this thesis in which I foreground the need for teachers and students to build relationships of solidarity and trust in SAHE settings. However, given South Africa's traumatic past/present, I argue that entanglements with relational pedagogies and curricula can potentially surface discomfoting emotions which require careful pedagogical practice (Thiele, Górska & Türer, 2021) on the part of educators and students alike (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). I therefore draw on the work of Joan Tronto (1993, 1995, 2013) and Bracha Ettinger (2005, 2009, 2016; Ettinger & Virtanen, 2005) to show how entanglements between care ethics and matrixial aesthetic wit[h]nessing offer new possibilities for critical arts-based pedagogies that are in/formed by solidarity and trust. The intra-action between matrixial theory and a feminist ethics of care framework is particularly helpful to my study because it generates entanglements between care practices in the ethical, aesthetic and political realms that offer possibilities for thinking about building trust and solidarity within critical arts-based pedagogical encounters. Tronto's insightful formulation of the "fifth phase" (2013) of care emphasises "caring with" and the associated moral elements of solidarity and trust. It is especially useful because it shows how, by placing care at the centre of pedagogical practice, students and educators can build relationships across difference and inequality. In moving from the political domain towards the aesthetic realm, Ettinger's conceptualisation of "care-carriance" is generative for grasping how educators need to prioritise care practices as central to teaching and learning. Moreover, her theorisation of art in the matrixial is useful in that it broadens the understanding of the agency of artworking when dealing with trauma.

The chapter also foregrounds Boler's proposition of "testimonial reading". This calls on the witness to shift attention away from the other, towards a potentially discomfiting interrogation of her own assumptions and implicatedness in unequal power relations (1999, p. 158). I found that Boler's distinction between "passive empathy"—that absolves responsibility and distances—and "testimonial reading", encourages me to recognise how as a teacher I am implicated in the social forces that reinforce the inequalities that many of our students confront on a daily basis. The chapter argues, therefore, that teachers have an ethical responsibility to practise testimonial reading and to provoke affirmative criticality so that teachers and students can work with their implicatedness in historic moments. By attending to my own discomfort and how it affects my approach to art history pedagogical praxis, I take up Boler's provocation that educators need to assume collective responsibility for recognising how their economic and social positions are implicated in their teaching practices. This is helpful in becoming attuned to emotional reactions and responses as well as developing an awareness of my relationship to privilege and complicity in perpetuating dominant ideologies.

Moving from the theoretical framing of Chapter 1, the thesis examines the need for careful attunement to the politics of listening, particularly when difficult conversations arise in pedagogical settings. For example, Chapter 4 attests to the importance of developing and practising a nuanced ethical language that recognises the ambiguity and complexity of entangled practices when working with/in difference during classroom encounters. The chapter shows how the art history pedagogical intervention sought to redress absences in the curriculum design in ways that called on students to imagine how art history entanglements might nurture a justice-to-come and "gain a new sense of interconnection with others and expand the borders of comfort zones" (Boler, 1999, p. 127). Furthermore, given that the *Nike of Samothrace* bears my namesake, the lesson afforded the opportunity to acknowledge my positionality and the legacy of my heritage from the outset. The foregrounding of art history's non-innocence opened spaces in which students and I could begin to work affirmatively with the ambivalence and ambiguities embodied by the discipline and "stay with the trouble" of our haunted inheritances (Haraway, 2016). The chapter shows how discourses, which include spoken and written words as well as silences and absences, also have implications for my approach to curriculum design: what is excluded from curricula reinforces what is considered as normative knowledge, thereby impacting profoundly on the subjectivities of both teachers and learners.

The second sub-question of this dissertation explores how, together with active participation of students, critical arts-based pedagogies might be used to disrupt the hegemonic canon of Western art history. This is done by adopting multiple strategies that seek to disrupt the Western canon and normative approaches to research, pedagogy and curriculum. Chapter 2 of my dissertation is an account of how my

situated response to doing research differently troubles the traditional logocentric, linear approaches associated with traditional academic research. In attending to how materiality and making processes conjugate new languages, I foreground how artistic-research leads me towards different ways of doing inquiry. The chapter reveals how thinking-making practices— that include writing-with, drawing-with, doodling-with, scrawling-with, and stencilling-with—nudge my thinking beyond the strictures of Cartesian thought. In my (methodological) inquiry, I also found that making practices that exceed the realms of normative academic modes of inquiry shape content in ways that make more sense than those knowledges presented in traditional linguistic form. As Chapter 2 foregrounds, research-creation is an iterative process that cannot be replicated or formalised. Rather, it generates new connections and concepts by using different modes of expression that help me to grapple with the conundrum of having to explicate precisely that which is inexpressible in traditional linguistic form. In addition, by extending beyond traditional academic modes, thinking-through-making practices sedimented my thinking, and in so doing, drew me back to words. These immanent practices confirmed the importance of practice-led and speculative inquiry that breaks down the hegemony of academic language.

The second sub-question of the thesis also shows how critical arts-based pedagogies challenge hegemonies of traditional academic teaching and learning practices by offering students opportunities to metabolise situated, embodied and embedded responses to art history in ways that matter to them. This is seen in Chapter 5, where students re-presented the ghosts of the past through the figure/s of Sarah Baartman and her performance of the so-called “Hottentot Venus” in order to highlight how art history is both a haunted and haunting discipline. Traversing multiple spatial-temporalities, the chapter shows how critical arts-based pedagogies activated the ghosts of colonialism and apartheid in ways that helped students conjure up new forms and vocabularies that engaged the troublings of art history. Critical arts-based pedagogies alleviate the barriers to learning associated with language difficulties by inviting second-language English students to experiment with a variety of processes, practices and materials in the between of writing and drawing. Baartman’s story provided a means to literally and figuratively re-member the past within the context of the present, as students “made-with” her ghost. In spending and making time with the ghosts of the past, students were drawn to modes of expression with which they felt comfortable, working with materials that embodied what they sought to express. Students came to understand art history and why it matters through their embodied engagements with the processes of writing-with and drawing-with the ghosts of Baartman and the “Hottentot Venus”.

These performative and experiential methods challenge the hegemony of language, and at the same time give expression to learner subjectivities. These embodied modalities of drawing-with and writing-with elicit non-discursive modes of expression

that not only question what counts as knowledge but also engage the practice of producing new knowledge beyond the Western canon. In addition to giving shape to learning, entanglements with the ghosts of Baartman and the Hottentot Venus performance reveal how the effects of history continue to texture lived experience. Writing-with and drawing-with the ghosts of the past generate opportunities for nuanced ethical rapport as, together with ghosts, different futures are re-imagined through non-innocent entanglements with the haunted and haunting discipline of art history.

The final and third sub-question of my thesis interrogates how critical arts-based pedagogies might work affirmatively with difference. Here my most important insights are developed in Chapter 3, which shows how critical arts-based pedagogies challenge taken-for-granted notions of inclusion/exclusion and assimilation within the academy and predicated on normative pedagogical practices. This is done by foregrounding students “non-dominant” subjectivities as expressed through their visual and written narratives. Centred around ancient Greek vase production, the pedagogic intervention focuses on the performativity of the ancient urns as relatable objects which, much like contemporary social media, depict scenes of everyday life. The practice of making written and visual narratives of key life events which are then inscribed onto ancient forms, emphasises the importance of situatedness—as opposed to universalising frames. Being neither prescriptive nor formulaic, the chapter also shows how the diffraction between students’ artworks and the Greek vases elicits nuanced differentiations that alleviate students’ fears of getting it right or wrong. This action serves to delink participation from the pressure of assimilation whereby students either fit in by participating or feel excluded.

By foregrounding visual and written narratives, the chapter explicitly builds on Haraway’s proclamation that it is important what stories we tell stories with, adding to this by emphasising that *how* we tell stories also matters. When the pressure to assimilate into sameness is removed, students can practise affirmative difference and become agents in changing the dominant system rather than feeling coerced into the culture of the academy. Student’s co-affective encounters with the ancient Greek urns generated visual and written narratives that marked both their bodies and the bodies of the vases in a powerful act that simultaneously positioned their subjectivity and reconfigured notions of value within the canon.

Similarly, while recognising that these objects embody hegemonic Western ideals of beauty, the lesson also made explicit how so-called democratic ancient Greek society was founded on inequality and exclusions. Presented as neither pure nor innocent, the ancient vases bear the traces of imperial and colonial sedimentations that continue to shape their meaning and import over time and in time to come. In re-turning to the ancient artefacts through writing-drawing their artworks, students uncovered these embodied sedimentations and understood how power relations are instilled

in cultural norms and practices that render some cultures more valuable than others. The students' artefacts are examples of affirmative art history encounters that seek to recuperate the humane beyond Western humanism and position students as situated knowledge producers. The knowledge that students made through their encounters with the canon transformed the canon from within. This also troubled the transmission notion of lecturer, who as the "expert", transfers knowledge of the canon.

Also concerned with sub-question three, Chapter 4 focuses on art history's affective capacity to allude, allure, attract and trouble, as students become-with decolonial art history pedagogies. In this chapter, students worked affirmatively with difference through a diffractive reading of the *Winged Nike of Samothrace* (190 BCE) and Sethembile Msezane's site-specific performance *Chapungu—the day Rhodes fell* in 2015 that marked the pivotal moment when the statue of Cecil John Rhodes was removed from its prominent position on the University of Cape Town's campus. Contrary to deficit discourses that tend to position first year students as "lacking" and unable to deal with complexity, the practice of open-ended co-affective entanglement with these artworks prompted nuanced and multilayered debates among the students. For example, the figure of *Winged Nike*, like the statue of Rhodes, embodies the colonial and imperialist projects that in/form South Africa's violent history; Msezane's performance of *Chapungu*, meanwhile, sets out to topple this project. The intra-action between the two thickened students' understanding of the performativity of the female body in art.

Students worked affirmatively with the differences embodied within these artworks rather than juxtaposing them against one another within binary logic—and this generated important discussions in the classroom. For example, the rich engagement with the *Chapungu* performance provoked an important conversation about the lack of public sculptures commemorating women in South Africa. This in turn led to thinking about how the female body is portrayed in popular culture. Such discussions engage with contestations of the power of stereotypes that both reinforce and reiterate pejorative and foreclosed binary categories that tend to flatten difference(s). The chapter also highlights the critical role that practices of immanence and response-ability play in art history pedagogies that seek to recognise and nurture a rapport about what matters in the interstices between art history and contemporary lived experience.

Re-turning to the umbrella question of my dissertation that asks how critical arts-based pedagogies contribute to decolonising the academy, my thesis contributes to curriculum transformation in a number of significant and multi-layered ways. Firstly, as I have shown repeatedly, performative and experimental approaches to teaching and learning—that include practices of drawing-with and writing-with—challenge the hegemony of academic language and give expression to students' subjectivities. Coloniality operates throughout the university. Yet my inquiry shows how critical

arts-based pedagogies, in moving beyond the logocentric order, challenge hegemonic discourses and practices. They open the university to the more-than normative accounts of what knowledge is and what it means to know. Rather than focusing on mastery, critical arts-based pedagogies encourage students to experiment with a variety of modes to find ways of expressing their knowledges and experience.


Secondly, my research into critical arts-based pedagogies also has important implications in view of how art history teaching and learning can be practised in the Global South from a situated perspective. As is shown in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, the art history canon usually propagates Western humanist cultural superiority and invisibilises indigenous cultural production. As a result, the excluding humanist gaze positions Western culture as the norm, rendering others as less-than human, or as void. Inspired by feminist new materialisms and critical posthumanisms, this study argues for working affirmatively with the canon through ongoing iterative material-discursive encounters with art history that foreground students' knowledges and lived experience. Feminist new materialist and critical posthumanist scholarship offer innovative approaches to pedagogies by foregrounding experimental and speculative thinking-through-making practices that generate new knowledges. Their emphasis on the production of new knowledges rather than regurgitating what is already known marks a shift from representational to non-representational modes, thereby contesting notions of being that is made up of "individual entities which precede relationships and have inherent characteristics, prior to their representations" (Garraway & Bozalek, 2019, p. 27).

In foregrounding how vibrant matter is distributed across all entities, both human and more-than human, we come into being through intra-active material-discursive encounters and, in so doing, confirm the inseparability of meaning and matter (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010). These approaches reveal how agency is iteratively enacted through entanglements rather than being the property of intentional human beings (Garraway & Bozalek, 2019, p. 28). In addition, practices of writing-with and drawing-with the ghosts of art history have paradoxically breathed new life into art history's hauntings—by producing new knowledges that continue to trouble, provoke and disturb.

In this dissertation I argue that my pedagogical interventions, although located in a Design ECP, should not be limited to design curricula and students alone. I propose instead that critical arts-based pedagogical approaches contribute to doing academia differently in all disciplines by seeking to produce new knowledges which challenge the hegemony of the academy. Besides, if we were to confine critical arts-based pedagogies to the visual arts, there is risk of further reinforcing binaries between arts and sciences, as well as fine art and the humanities. In other words, although this research study contributes specifically to ECP scholarship, it is not limited to this because the learnings can be applied more generally to higher education (HE).

As a whole, my thesis has put feminist new materialist and critical posthumanist theories to work with HE teaching and learning practices. While these theories have originated in the Global North, the inquiry has applied them to HE in a specific southern context in which colonial and apartheid hauntings manifested during the #RMF and #FMF student protests. Given the immediacy of the struggles in SAHE, in the institution and in the course itself, I have tried to paint a picture of the extent of the crisis at my university—in terms of the violence that resulted in the institutional shutdown, the abrupt curtailment of the 2017 and 2018 academic years following the student protests, and the concomitant traumatic effects on students and staff members. It is within the context of actual practices of decoloniality that are immediate and raw, that theories of feminist new materialism and critical posthumanism can be activated. And these theories have in turn been affected through these activations. Relationships of coloniality are alive and well in the Global North, even though the difference is that South Africa remains a starkly unequal society due to the violence and ongoingness of the effects of colonialism and apartheid. Bringing together Barad's assertion that "our responsibility is greater than it would be if it were ours alone" (2007, p. 394), Haraway's (2016) campaign of "staying with the trouble" and Ettinger's assertion that "aesthetics today is *the* ethical challenge while art evokes memory, it invents a memory *for* the future" (Evans, 2017, n.p.), it is my hope that this dissertation expands the possibilities of art history pedagogies and caring practices in the field of HE globally.

Braidotti, in her forceful discussion of *Posthuman Knowledge*, writes: "We-Are-(All)-In-This-Together-But-We-Are-Not-One-And-The-Same" (2019, p. 52). Sitting in Utrecht as I write this conclusion, I feel the presence of Diana Ferrus who, as a student herself at Utrecht University, wrote her tribute to Baartman entitled *I've come to take you home*. I, too, feel the presence of Saartjie Baartman and the other ghosts from the North and the South, the colonisers and the colonised. Scholars from both from the Global South and Global North have much to learn from these ghosts because together with them, we can create new knowledges and imagine different futures. It is my hope therefore that this study will also contribute to approaches to pedagogy in the Global North where marginalised and indigenous students might also feel pressure to assimilate in the colonial culture of the academy.



THOUGHT IN THE ACT

Edited by Erin Manning and Brian Massumi

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chapter six

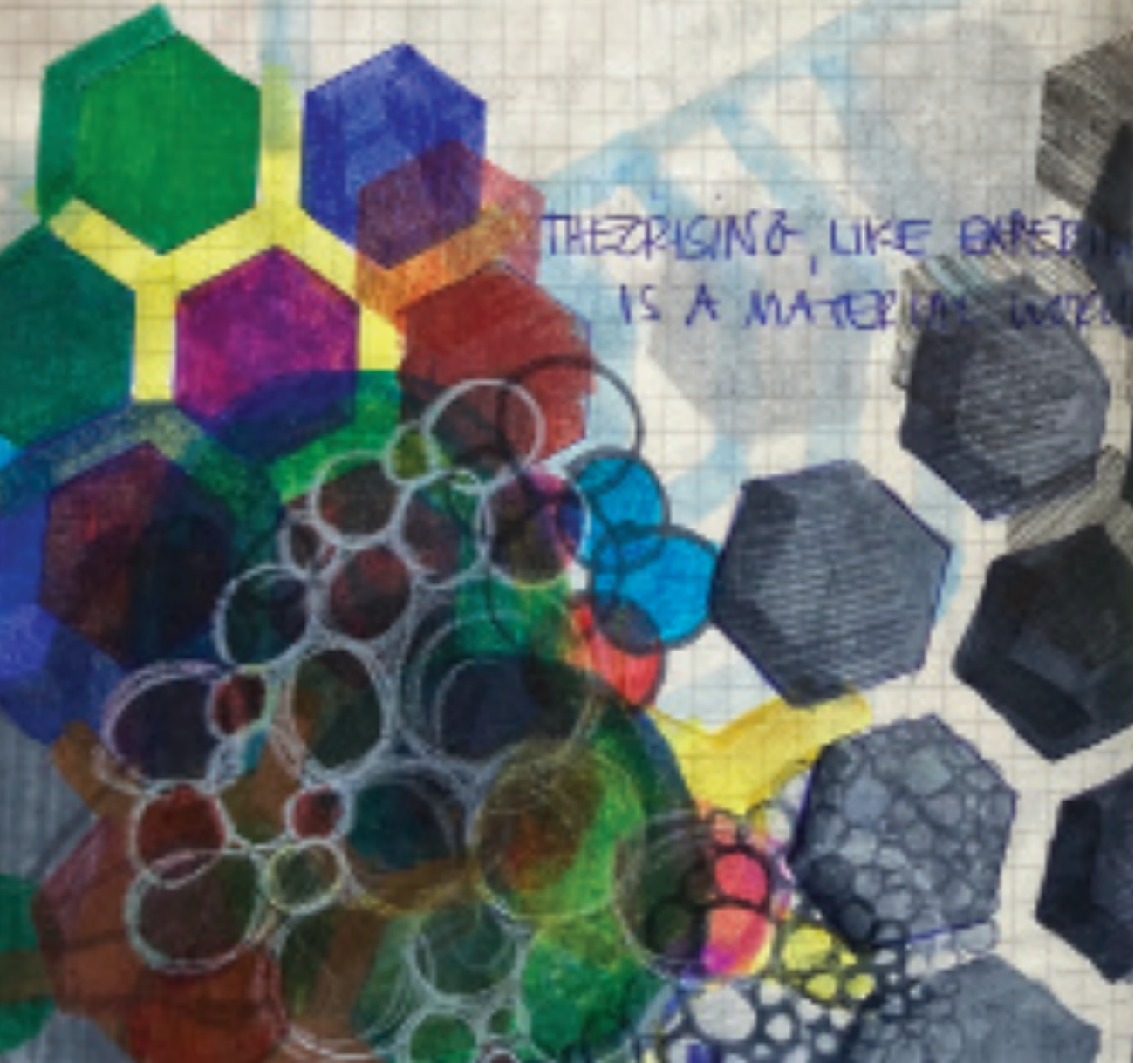
SPACE TIME RE(CONFIGURIN

the difference between fact and artifact depends
on the proper selection of "being"
evidence based is being covered by
said.

object of observation, observation itself, & obser-

theorizing is an embodied practice

concepts are specific physical arrangements.



THEORIZING, LIKE EXPERIMENTATION,
IS A MATERIAL WORK

Curriculum Vitae

Nike Irimi Romano was born in Cape Town, South Africa on July 25, 1964. She is a visual artist, lecturer and artistic researcher. In 1987, she completed her diploma in Graphic Design at the University of Cape Town, in South Africa. The following year she completed her bachelor's degree in Art History and Economic History. After working as a graphic designer for many years, she returned to art school in 2009 to do her Post Graduate Diploma (Fine Art), at the University of Cape Town. She then went on to complete her Master's degree in Fine Art in 2013. Since 2014, she has been teaching art and design history at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

In May 2017 she started her PhD at the University of the Western Cape under the supervision of Prof. dr. Vivienne Bozalek and Ass. Prof. dr. Kathrin Thiele. In 2019, the PhD became a Joint Doctoral Degree in a cotutelle agreement between the University of the Western Cape and Utrecht University. She has been the recipient of numerous grants including the *Knowledge, Interchange & Collaboration (KIC)* Grant for Travel of the National Research Foundation (2017). She has also been awarded a grant as a research assistant on the *Tri-Lateral Continental Partnership Grant* – between the University of Missouri, the University of the Western Cape and Ghent University – which is producing a webinar series on *Doing Academia Differently: In Conversation with Neuroatypicality* (2021–2022).

She has participated in several research projects as a doctoral candidate. These include the *Reconfiguring Higher Education: Doing Academia Differently* National Research Fund (NRF) Project (2020–2022); the SASUF STINT Grant (*Re*)*configuring scholarship in higher education*, Principal Investigators Vivienne Bozalek – University of Cape Town and Hillevi Lenz Taguchi – University of Stockholm (2019–2020); the *Reconceptualising socially just pedagogies across diverse geopolitical settings* NRF Project (2017–2019). She has presented at several international conferences including the *2020 Design Culture(s) cumulusroma* conference in Rome, Italy; the *10th Annual New Materialisms Conference: New Materialist Reconfigurations of Higher Education*, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, 2-4 December 2019; the *Leveraging Education Research in a “Post-Truth” Era: Multimodal Narratives to Democratize Evidence* Annual AERA (American Educational Research Association) Conference, 5 – 9 April, Toronto, Canada; the *Resituating Accountability in Curriculum Studies: Relationality, Responsibility & Refusal*, AAACS (American Associations for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies) Annual Conference, 3 – 5 April, Toronto, Canada; the *European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ECQI)* 2019, 13 – 15 February, Edinburgh, Scotland; *the Capacious: Affect, Inquiry/Making Space*, August 8 – 11, 2018, Millersville University's Ware Center, Lancaster, PA, USA; *Troubling Legacies* South African Visual Art Historians Conference, Stellenbosch University, 4-6 July 2018.

Her work has been exhibited in *PAINT MATTERS*, an exhibition highlighting selected recent developments in painting in emerging South African artists at the Barnard Gallery in Cape Town. She has also held two solo exhibitions – *Evidence of things unseen* (2014) held at the Michaelis Galleries and *sum of the parts* (2010) held at Association of Visual Art, Cape Town.

Her recent publications include:

Romano, N. 2020. Thinking-with-drawing: Wandering/wondering through Manning's text. Special Issue "Reconfiguring Higher Education: 10th Annual New Materialism Conference". *CriSTaL Journal*, 8(2).

Romano, N., Mitchell, V & Bozalek, V. 2019. Why a walk on the Common is more than a walk in the Park. Special issue Walking in/as Publics of the *Public Pedagogy Journal*. Guest edited by Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman.

Romano, N. 2016. Diffracting the present through the past: Engaging socially just art history pedagogies in the context of #feesmustfall. *de arte*, 51(2) pp. 44–58. To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00043389.2016.1241566>.

