



Public Reading as Resistance, 2019, Bowen St, RMIT University. Picture by Ceri Hann

Publicness

Public Pedagogies Institute 2021 Seminar Series

October 8 – November 12

Week 1

Friday October 8, 10.30 am-12.30 pm

Public Space, Spontaneous Memorials and 'Everyday' Cultures of Grief During Covid-19

Deborah Madden

An Exploration of the Politics of Public Statues –their Installation, Denigration and Destruction

Debbie Qadri

Week 2

Friday October 15, 10.30 am - 12.30 pm

Playspaces in public places: The ethical and social challenges of a pop up urban playspace in Melbourne, Australia

Mary-Rose McLaren and colleagues

Publicness and pages: co-publishing with children then and now

Victoria Ryle and Simon Spain

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Private Life is Public Business

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The Ephemeral Public

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The Mid-Apocalypse of Mass Incarceration: Conceptualizing new Publics by Generating Pedagogies of Publicness

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Local publics and community-determined action

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Forms for Encounter and Exchange: towards a reparative approach to social aesthetics

Kelly Hussey-Smith and Marnie Badham, School of Art, RMIT University accompanied by students and community partners

Week 6

Friday, November 12, 10:30am -12:30pm

Plenary session

Bronwyn Sutton, Jake Burdick and Debbie Qadri

Journal of Public Pedagogies—Launch

Guest Editors: Jennifer Sandlin and Jake Burdick

Week 1

Friday October 8, 10.30 am-12.30 pm

Public Space, Spontaneous Memorials and 'Everyday' Cultures of Grief During Covid-19

Deborah Madden

Discussions focused on the privatisation of public space have informed much critique of the pre-Covid neo-liberal era. Well before the pandemic, there had already been calls for a new 'public spaces narrative' (Carmona, 2015). Using the case study of London, Matthew Carmona has since argued that, despite recent campaigns highlighting concerns about the privatisation of public space, London has undergone a complex process of what he terms the 'public-isation of private space'. What matters more, he says, is access, permissive use and the rights of citizens who use them, which might usefully be adopted in a public space 'rights charter' (Carmona, 2021). Other scholars have sought to go beyond the issues of accessibility and visibility, emphasising instead the variegated epistemologies and conceptual frameworks needed to map public spaces as simultaneously situated, lived, embodied and liminal (Qian, 2020), part and parcel of what Doreen Massey described as the 'throwntogetherness' in any given moment when people, things, movement and place come together (Massey, 2005).

The social distancing regulations required by Covid-19 has produced many disruptive anomalies in terms of public space and its social, civic and political usage, whether through the empty streets of lockdown, or, conversely, the convergence of BLM activists in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder. New modes of publicness were quickly facilitated through the use of digital media, where people found innovative ways to connect online and engage in translocal and glocalised spaces (Pfetsch and Trenz, 2020). These new modes have inevitably demanded that we rethink public space, publicness and counterpublics, specifically in terms of navigating pandemic crises, but also as a means with which to posit alternative futures (McCann, 2020). Certainly, responses to the pandemic have further galvanised earlier proposals like the Green New Deal, universal basic income and mutual aid, as well as the resurgence of a feminist care ethics that can embrace interdependency or, as in the case of The Care Collective's Care Manifesto, envision collective care 'at every scale of life', be it local, national or global (2020).

This paper will note these shifts of critical perspective within the field, before considering the extent to which they can help inform an analysis of public spaces and spontaneous sites of mourning at key moments during the UK's second lockdown. Using oral histories with frontline healthworkers, this paper explores 'everyday' subjective experiences and emotional responses to Covid-19, evaluating its unequal impacts, as well as its differing affective scales related to illness, dying, anticipatory grief and mourning. Within end-of-life care, 'anticipatory grief' is defined as being a response to loss, identity, changes in roles, in addition to an impending death. Anticipatory grief is experienced, not only by the terminally ill person, but by family, friends, and caregivers. However, the experience of anticipatory grief, whilst intensifying emotional responses that include separation anxiety, existential aloneness, denial, sadness, disappointment, anger, resentment, guilt, exhaustion, and desperation, is also thought to be beneficial in as much as it can create time and space to anticipate and prepare for changes to come in the future.

Public and personal expressions of grief during Covid-19 have been as much metaphorical as literal, mourning past lives, grieving lost futures. Yet, if we accept that 'grief blurs time-space', we might also see that

these temporal shifts have created the possibility to envisage the pandemic as what Arundhati Roy has described as a 'portal' into a radically different future. It is in this spirit that a more capacious reading of 'anticipatory grief' is understood – as a way of thinking about the myriad personal and cultural expressions of grief as an activist call for change. A 'pandemic 'portal' could thus be regarded as an instance of 'anticipatory grief', not least because of the incalculable losses and unequal intersectional impacts experienced over the last year. Yet the portal also offers a glimpse to envisage and prepare for an alternative future. This moves away from the 'doom-laden' apocalyptic narrative frequently ascribed to our current pandemic, and, as has been recently suggested by Florian Mussgnug, asks us to think about grief as 'a site of progressive activism' with which to build 'liveable futures'. He argues for an ecological re-thinking of grief, challenging the view that contemporary attitudes towards death leave no room for the work of mourning; that Covid has been a powerful reminder of the omnipresence of death, but also of the inexhaustible, generative force of human and more-than-human communities and the interconnected strength of social ties. People have responded to hardship and to the prospect of mass death with purposefulness, immediacy and creativity. Expressions of grief are communal and therefore best understood in ecological terms (2021).

Two key spontaneous sites of mourning that emerged in the UK in March 2021 will be analysed within this expanded conceptual framework of grief; the first is the Clapham Common vigil, which took place on 13 March following the murder of Sarah Everard. The vigil ended with the Metropolitan Police forcibly breaking up assembled mourners and arresting four people for breach of the Coronavirus Act 2020. The second spontaneous site came later that same month in the form of a public mural stretching a mile along London's South Bank, instigated by Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice. Both sites of mourning and grief are linked to political activism and evidence how public space is constituted in a multiplicity of discursive, embodied and highly contested ways.

Presenter

Dr Deborah Madden is a cultural historian and Deputy Director for the Centre for Memory, Narrative and Histories at the University of Brighton, where she leads on the area of medical histories. Her forthcoming book, *Victorian lives between Empires: Perspectives on Colonial Knowledge, Imperialism and British Cultural Memory*, is due to be published in the Palgrave Studies in Life Writing series. She has two forthcoming articles based on an 'Exploring Everyday Cultures of Grief' project she leads: 'Covid-19 and anticipatory grief: critical perspectives on the "narrative turn" in end-of-life care during pandemic times' and 'Pandemic times, apocalyptic temporalities and re-setting the future: using public pedagogy to explore historical and anticipatory grief'.

An Exploration of the Politics of Public Statues –their Installation, Denigration and Destruction

Debbie Qadri

Actions of the creation and destruction of public statues are acts of which evoke history and our responses to it. We are reminded that public statuary makes one story very visible but at the same time repress other stories and renderings of history.

During the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter campaign gained momentum and provided a context to question the role of historical statues. During this time in many countries long-simmering debates about

statues were also aired more publicly. Other movements seek to install statues to expose hidden histories - such as the comfort women statues of Korea. This seminar presentation will explore some of the stories and arguments about public statuary and its relationship to history, truth-telling and equity.

Presenter

Debbie Qadri is a PhD graduate of Victoria University and a researcher with the Institute of Public Pedagogies. She works as an art educator and public artist. Her research interests lie in the field of collaborative public art made with members of the community.

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Week 2

Friday October 15, 10.30 am - 12.30 pm

Playspaces in public places: The ethical and social challenges of a pop up urban playspace in Melbourne, Australia

Mary-Rose McLaren and colleagues

This paper documents a partnership between the Early Childhood education team at VU, Public Realm Lab (architects) and Maribyrnong City Council with the aim of reactivating a public space in Footscray by introducing a pop-up playspace. Apart from a one-week break and a two-week lockdown due to COVID, Mini Maddern opened every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday between 8.00am and 2.00 pm from March 26 to June 26. It was staffed by Early Childhood students from Victoria University, with Early childhood teachers as mentors. More than 150 students undertook placement at Mini Maddern. The play space was well supported by local families. Footscray has less green space than any other suburb in the west of Melbourne. Many families live in apartment blocks and have no garden. Coming out of a very long and harsh lockdown at the end of 2020, when even playgrounds were closed, Melbourne families often felt strung out, isolated and desperate for local activities. Mid-week attendance at Mini Maddern was between 5 and 25 children a day (there was some hostile weather during the residency); Saturday attendances were between 25 and 80 children a day. Parents and children loved the freedom, the activity, the social engagement, and the collaborative interactions. This unique project drew on Playwork expertise, the collaboration of Early Childhood pre-service teachers and staff, architects, local council, families and community. Although overwhelmingly successful in terms of the engagement of local families, the intervention in the space was marked by social and ethical challenges and, at times, competing values. Our aim, as Early childhood academics, was to provide a playwork playspace for children on public urban land. Public Realm Lab, as architects, had the aim of creating models of family friendly city environments. The city council had the aim of replacing the regular inhabitants of the square with families, and so 'cleaning it up.' Maddern Square can be identified as a 'haunted place' (Avery Gordon, 2008. 2011). It is a hidden pocket in an inner urban area, surrounded by the backs of shops. The square's regular inhabitants include marginalised people of all ages, 'colourful characters' (Dan Oakes, The Age newspaper, 2012): it is a hangout space for teenagers, retired people, sojourners, those with nowhere else to go, people with possible trauma in their backgrounds, people who appear to be homeless, and hundreds of pigeons. Prior to this pop-up playspace, it was an area that local children frequently walked through, but rarely stopped in. By introducing Playwork in the space, children became active agents in the place by building, shaping, imagining, experimenting, exploring, and inhabiting it.

However, Australian history is fraught with stories of displacement and VU academics foresaw the possibilities of stories of colonisation repeating in this inner urban square. We sought to introduce the playspace without displacing the existing community. But how do we foster inclusion in a space where violence is sometimes visible, and where the after-effects of violence are very present? Drawing on Haraway's (2016) idea of response-ability and notions of public pedagogy, this seminar explores the social and ethical challenges posed by the implementation of a playspace in public space. In making choices about the utilisation of this space, and in reflecting on this experience, we explore the questions:

Whose voices were heard and valued?

How can we plan for play and design the built environment to create a shared sense of place?

And how can this creation cater for disparate communities with competing values and needs?

In what ways did Playwork and the children's play redesign and reshape the boundaries of community in this place?

Presenter

Mary-Rose McLaren is Associate Professor and co-chair of the undergraduate Early Childhood courses at Victoria University, Melbourne, and leads the Early Childhood team. She teaches creativity, Arts, Drama, and Literacy in Early Childhood and other courses. The team researches around communities of learning and practice, public pedagogies, and play.

Publicness and pages: co-publishing with children then and now

Victoria Ryle and Dr Simon Spain

The antecedents of publishing books with children as authors came out of a rhizomic entanglement of thinking from progressive, radical 'modern' education and de-schooling pedagogues of the 19th and 20th centuries. Among them, FW Parker, Celestin Freinet and Francisco Ferrer i Guàrdia shared the adoption of the printing press to give voice to children and young people through publishing. A common theme across the progressive school movement is a belief that children are more energised, enthusiastic and excited when they learn outside in nature, the urban environment, and connected with their wider community identity – in other words, in spaces outside of classrooms and schools.

The stories of these early pioneers shed light on my contemporary practice of co-publishing books with children, and how it can be used to dissolve boundaries between public, private and formal education spaces. Within some of these old accounts I have unearthed some examples of early publishing – with, for and by children – that go some way to explain how surprisingly political the simple idea of publishing books with children is and appears to have always been. (For example, Francisco Ferrer i Guàrdia was persecuted and executed for his anarcho-collectivist 'modern school'.)

For this seminar, my (his)torical curiosity joins with the knowledge and experience of my long-term collaborator in co-publishing with children, Simon Spain. Simon worked on Colin Ward's Bulletin of Environmental Education magazine in Notting Dale in London in the 1980s and was later the Streetwork co-ordinator of the Urban Studies Centres across London. The Urban Studies movement emerged from English writer and anarchist Colin Ward who highlighted the new opportunities for political and environmental agency of the child in post war Britain in *The Child in the City* (1978). A variety of arts-based methods were explored to engage children and young people in their local environments promoting the idea of the 'exploding

classroom'. Innovative technologies of cheap and accessible publishing, through ventures such as Centerprise in East London, and the longest running UK community publishers, Queenspark Books who partnered with The Lewes Cohen Urban Studies Centre in Brighton, offered a new form for communities to tell their stories. As a trained printmaker Simon turned his hand to the printing of limited-edition books with children and we then worked together to create a fusion between his craft and my literacy skills to begin a lifelong journey publishing the voices of children and their communities.

Using as key text extracts from *Education, Childhood and Anarchism: Talking* Colin Ward (Burke & Jones, 2014), we will share our thoughts at the intersections of the community arts movement & publishing in communities; the role of creativity in fostering excitement about learning in and outside classrooms; publishing as a means of validating home identity within school based knowledge-systems.

Coming into the here and now, we will share some current work around children's voices in a time of Covid; the role of co-publishing at a time of online learning; dissolving of boundaries between child and adult authorship; and public policy consultation with children.

Presenters

Victoria Ryle is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Education, University of Tasmania, researching pedagogies for publishing books with children as authors. She co-founded Kids' Own Publishing in Ireland (1997) and in Melbourne, Australia (2003), two non-profit arts organisations that give children a voice by publishing books through artist-led community partnerships. Victoria is also co-director of all that we are, a residency space connecting communities through creativity in southern Tasmania.

Dr Simon Spain is a visual and socially engaged artist. His career spans three countries, four decades and multiple community partnerships. As an advocate of holistic creative practice his work encompasses personal visual artwork, local community engaged creative encounters, and national leadership in his role as founding creative producer of ArtPlay for the City of Melbourne, and currently Chair of Regional Arts Australia. Simon currently lives and works in an immersive practice project overlooking tidal waters in Tasmania, Australia.

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Week 3

Friday October 22, 10.30 am-12.30 pm

Private Life is Public Business

Jaye Early

The way the subject (or individual) is interpellated by the controls of society and how we navigate that control is, I feel, a pressing one for contemporary society and also for contemporary art. Although our faith in outright revolution, or avant-gardist critique has faded, we now seek new modes of resistance without waging full protest against power. In this context, my video work, the business of life is the acquisition of memories, comments on the mechanism of the creation of the contemporary subject's autonomy, while critically engaging with the increasingly nebulous concept of subjectivity within a confessional twenty-first century landscape. Aspects of my video practice are characterised by the temporary autonomous zones of self-doubt, or 'wasted' labour, that Boris Groys maintains should be the aim of contemporary art today. In other words, contemporary art practice should aim to weigh out options, hesitate, and question without necessarily

giving answers. My video work embodies this contemporary malaise. As the boundaries between private/public space and spheres become increasingly problematised within our confessional society (e.g. Instagram and Facebook, the blogosphere), the work suggests that contemporary confessional video art can give voice to displaced subjectivities to present a more complex politics of self.

Shot on my iPhone, the video reveals the artist (me) mediating and cycling through a variety of personal video-clips on my laptop that fluctuate between states of banality, awkwardness and the abject. Such technologies underline the embeddedness of social media-like platforms and often succeed blurring the private/public dichotomy that situates and mediates the politics of the self and the construction and deconstruction of contemporary subjectivity and also notions of subjecthood.

More generally, my video practice equivocates between the serious and the humorous, the sincere and the ironic without foreclosing, perpetrating to the idea of the self as a process of becoming, always hesitating and uncertain, trying new approaches and modes of being. An overall intention of my video practice is to ask: How do new forms of technology and modes of communication influence self-knowledge in public spaces and spheres?; Do such technologies commodify subjectivity?; Do the everyday roles we play, and the management of social interactions, produce or conceal who we are?

Presenter

Jaye Early is a visual artist and academic working across a variety of mediums including, painting and video-based performance. Jaye Early is a full-time lecturer currently working within the UniSA Creative academic unit at University of South Australia where is teaches contemporary art.

The Ephemeral Public

Karen Charman and Mary Dixon

In 2020 as a response to COVID 19 Melbournians were required to remain at home for 112 successive days. With the exception of daily one hour of exercise and a visit to a shop for food, we remained bunkered down. Exercise and shopping could only occur within a five kilometre radius of our homes. Face masks were mandatory. A curfew came into force from 8.00pm each evening until 5.00am. Heavy penalties applied for those who did not comply. This changed and challenged our collective relationship to a geographically bounded space. These directives were considered for the common good and were subject to occasional modification. In this instance of lockdown, we note two changes to the public, one is the boundary of the public and private experienced in the home and the second is the nature of assembly. The question these changes raised for us was where had the public gone? In this seminar we address the changing nature of what constitutes the public during such a lockdown. Specifically, we introduce the concept of the ephemeral public. We read the occurrence of the ephemeral public as punctuated through images and texts encountered on daily walks during the COVID 19 lockdown. The intent of the use of the images is not to consider the quality of the photograph or the artwork that is depicted. In putting to work these images, we are working from 'the middle' (St. Pierre et al. 2016) of the unfolding of the nature of the public in these times. Our focus was and still is not on things already thought or made but on things in the making. This work is in nature and shape an immanent and distributed empiricism. The distributed nature of this work relates to its movement through theory practice. These images provoke attention to the complexity of knowledge of the public in the making. Eisner argues (2008) that arts based research generates questions and addresses awareness of complex subtleties. The knowledge we are

seeking is sometimes ephemeral. The nuances of pedagogical encounters are especially difficult to ascertain in the de-institutionalised space of the public realm. These images, and the pedagogical encounters they suggest, address these nuances. The images depict objects and words as messages. Teddy bears were placed on windows and outside to be spotted by children on their walks. Local children made spoon puppets for the community garden. Written messages to the local rubbish removers (garbos), post people and to the public were placed on the walkways and fences. Angels and other small figurines hung from tree branches over the heads of the walkers.

In order to understand the public manifestation of these artistic incursions we draw on the work of Hannah Arendt, in regard to the public, Michel Foucault in regard to what we term the educative agent and Michael Warner for an understanding of the public address. We consider how these messages might be understood as incursions into power and as an iteration of the educative agent speaking on their own authority in the public realm (Charman & Dixon, 2021). Our engagement with the term public looks at what can occur through a different relationship with geographical bounded spaces. The response to COVID 19 through the lockdown in Melbourne generated a different engagement writ large. The teleological structure of capitalism ground to a halt albeit momentarily. However, at the time there was no knowing how long this moment was going to be. We became bound together as a public in unexpected ways. In looking at the images of these objects and words we read them as incursions into institutional demarcations of geographical spaces. The nature of this authority carried through these incursions was an address to our affective experience. The educative agent placed their knowledge as object /painted image or word and then left. The walkers came most often in pairs but never as a group. They slowed to watch, linger, discuss and then moved on. The public realm was formed by moving individuals and pairs who avoided any proximity to each other. At best when walking we felt the passing presence of a public - a distributed public, a moving public. In this fragmented way, this public can be said to 'act together in concert' (Arendt, 1958, p. 4) and create a public space where freedom could appear. We recognise this as an ephemeral public.

Presenters

Dr Karen Charman is a Senior Lecturer in Education Studies at Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. She is the founder of the Public Pedagogies Institute and editor of the Journal of Public Pedagogies. Recent publication with Dr Mary Dixon (2021) *Theory and Methods of Public Pedagogy*, Routledge. Research Dr Charman's research interests are in the intersections of public pedagogy, curriculum, memory, psychoanalysis and public history.

Dr. Mary Dixon is treasurer of the Public Pedagogies Institute. She is a well-known researcher in the field of pedagogy. Her academic career includes work in Australia, Singapore, Thailand and Nepal.

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Week 4

Friday October 29, 10.30 am-12.30 pm

The Mid-Apocalypse of Mass Incarceration: Conceptualizing new Publics by Generating Pedagogies of Publicness

Janelle Grant

The mid-apocalypse of mass incarceration in the United States is not only historical, but also resilient in silencing and hiding the bodies that society deems as unwanted. If we work with those hidden to ensure that their narratives are not further silenced, society can begin to generate an idea of the public after the apocalypse of mass incarceration. The Liberation Arts Project (a Black-led art program founded by currently incarcerated people) works to create a pedagogy of publicness and marks their narrative within the mid-apocalyptic space of mass incarceration that exposes and reiterates the historical trauma of a racial caste system. Specifically, their pedagogy challenges discourses of law and order, and if society continues to choose to live as if mass incarceration is not a collective concern, the racism and harm will continue despite the efforts of many teachers, activists, and those who are incarcerated. This paper uses Biesta's (2014) theorization about creating pedagogy in the interest of publicness to understand new conceptions of the public as well as pedagogy that The Liberation Arts Project and similar collectives produced.

Current inmates used their pedagogy in the form of art using an online gallery to expose the ongoing historical trauma of mass incarceration that does not allow society to move into a moment of post-apocalyptic bliss. For example, the current dominant discourse boasts the idea that prisoners' life trajectories are not related to societal failure; rather, the public boasts neoliberal discourse that supports the claim that society is post-apocalyptic in many areas of social inequity.

While it is commonsense (or the prevailing discourse) that incarcerated individuals lost their freedom because of their own actions, researchers give evidence that rates of incarceration in the United States disproportionately affect Black U.S. Americans at an alarming rate—meaning that there is systemic racism behind the larger numbers (Alexander, 2020; Eberhardt, 2020). For example, forms of racialized control are always being re-invented, and Alexander (2020) explains that the racial caste system in the U.S. has not yet moved beyond slavery and Jim Crow eras because the goal of denying full citizenship to Black people still stands. There are also multiple aspects of mass incarceration that greatly influence Black people and Black communities, such as sentencing (length of time in prison) and removing rights of those past and presently incarcerated. Relating to sentencing, the United States Sentencing Commission (2017) found that sentence time imposed on Black men is on average 19.1 percent longer than sentences given to white men for similar circumstances. Using that statistical average of 19.1 percent, if a white man was convicted, he may be sentenced to 7 years in prison while a Black man is sentenced to 8 years and 4 months, which also means that Black men are kept from participating in society alongside their family and friends for a longer amount of time.

Applying a theoretical view of creating publics in the interest of publicness (Biesta, 2014) shows how counter mid-apocalyptic teachings from The Liberation Arts Project enacted a new type of public where prisoners and those not incarcerated learned to foster mutual respect. The Liberation Arts Project led by Lawrence Jenkins (a Black man who was incarcerated at the beginning of his young adulthood in Washington state) demonstrated a new way to be within his community. Pedagogies in the interest of publics characteristically show society new ways to be together. Biesta's (2014) operationalizations of public pedagogy in the interest of publicness argue that not all publics have the same intrinsic qualities. Publicness is enacted by reinventing publics and inspiring a quality of collaborative togetherness.

Presenter

Janelle Grant is a PhD Student in Curriculum Studies at Purdue University, Indiana, USA. Her research interests lie in the area of Black education and public pedagogy. Prior to attending Purdue University, she assisted various research initiatives at Kalamazoo College's psychology department and The W.E. Upjohn

Institute for Employment Research, both in Michigan. She also has experience assisting teaching middle school English literature in Strasbourg, France and teaching undergraduate Multicultural Education courses.

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Local publics and community-determined action

Helen Rodd

In the history of global pandemics, it has been shown that they bring both catastrophe and opportunities for change. They surface that which is not working, the inequalities inherent in society and those dark haunting traumas that lurk in our social consciousness. Through their very exposure it becomes possible to fix our critical gaze, be clearer about our values and needs and mobilise a response. We are living through the chaos of the moment and the emergent power tussle encompassing the resistance to change, and resistance to a return to status quo. This happens at all levels including the local level.

In this presentation I will focus on the local sphere and discuss community-determined ways that local communities have responded to the pandemic and how communities have challenged 'command and control' responses, and by doing so, have laid the groundwork for a more hopeful and regenerative future.

Presenter

Helen Rodd has been working in a range of roles across the community development, youth work and education sectors for over 30 years. Her passions include working alongside diverse communities, and practising (and teaching) community development. Her life pursuit in this field is understanding and facilitating the complex dynamics of generational and social change. Helen seeks an answer to this question: *how do we create environments where we can live well with each other, where all (people and planet) can thrive?* Her current focus is transforming communities through grass roots community participation, community leadership and community-based research. This focus has enabled her to partner with local government to develop and deliver over fifty bespoke community leadership programs, facilitating a groundswell of local action and a platform for community voice, influencing the culture, values and priorities of their local communities. Helen works collaboratively with like-minded creatives and innovators who bring fresh thinking to social justice and community transformation. She partners with SALT Studio Consultancy (a First Nations led enterprise) and Track C Consultancy who bring extraordinary diverse perspectives to the work of community building and inclusion.

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Week 5

Friday, November 5, 2021 10:30am -12:30pm

Forms for Encounter and Exchange: towards a reparative approach to social aesthetics

Dr Kelly Hussey-Smith and Dr Marnie Badham, School of Art, RMIT University accompanied by students and community partners

In this seminar, we explore modes of public pedagogy in art and community through mapping the critical frameworks used in our co-teaching of Forms for Encounter and Exchange: the Collingwood Photo Lab. Examining our shared pedagogy, we will discuss a praxis approach to classroom and community learning

and explore a framework of reparative approaches to social aesthetics in making collaborative arts projects within community partnerships.

Although photography and socially engaged art have developed from distinct discourses and lineages, both practices raise ethical questions about collaboration, representation, and aesthetics. Photography education is shifting in response to postmodern discourses about the politics of representation, and the reframing of photography as a public, relational, and collaborative practice (Azoulay 2015, Palmer 2017). Photography is well-positioned to activate conversations about ethics due to its inherent power dynamics and considerable influence in the public sphere, while socially engaged art practice has risen out historical activism and avant-garde art movements. As a result, artists are now working in urgent, political, and meaningful ways within the public sphere. Moving beyond the university, we draw on artistic precedents for collective pedagogy, such as Tania Bruguera's Immigrant Movement International (1991-present), a long-term art project in the form of an artist-initiated socio-political movement focused on the political representation of immigrants, and Thomas Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument (2013), the short-term activation of a public education site, both in New York (Bruguera 2011, Hirschhorn 2015).

Forms for Encounter and Exchange: the Collingwood Photo Lab is an interdisciplinary undergraduate studio (photo, media, art) which brings students together with community organisations to identify and affect local issues through collaborative creative projects. With expertise in documentary photography and socially engaged arts practice, our co-teaching aims to provide students with practice-led methods for engagement and justice-informed art theory to test and develop their practices. We are interested in exploring the possibilities that emerge when public pedagogies in the creative arts move beyond the rhetoric of inclusion and instead become integrated into community ecosystems as forms of public pedagogy. Building on Susan Best's (2016) reparative aesthetics and Maria Lind's (2007) collaborative aesthetics, our pedagogic approach explores the relationship between systems of local knowledge and collaborative public pedagogies. We propose a reparative approach as one that exists beyond critique, incorporating plurality, relational ethics, and political and affective meaning.

Forms for Encounter and Exchange has grown from The Collingwood Photo Lab, established in 2018 in the photography program in the RMIT University School of Art. In this off-campus project, community become core curriculum with students learning applied critical perspectives on relational ethics, representation, and collaboration. Students are supported through theoretical lectures, creative workshops, walking tours, critical readings, engagement in community projects, and ongoing dialogue to examine and critique their impulses and creative approaches in collaborative and public facing work. Our partners have grown to include schools, social enterprises, community advocacy groups, arts organisations and live music venues located within the local precinct. More recently, we have engaged with visual, fashion and sonic art tenants at Collingwood Yards. Outcomes have included community broadsheets, social history and archival book publications, radio and podcasting projects, and public photography workshops.

Presenters

Dr Kelly Hussey-Smith is an artist, researcher, and educator who regularly collaborates with community and advocacy groups on teaching and research initiatives. Her research interests focus on documentary photography as a social practice, photography and ethics, and photography education. She currently leads The Photo Lab—an off-site project in Collingwood where students, artists, and academics develop

projects with local community groups and initiatives and is a co-developer of Doing Visual Politics—a workshop, symposium, and solidarity network. Kelly is a lecturer at RMIT School of Art.

Dr Marnie Badham: With a twenty-five-year history of art and social justice in Australia and Canada, Marnie's research sits at the intersection of socially-engaged art practice, participatory methodologies and the politics of cultural measurement. Through aesthetic forms of encounter and exchange, her work brings together disparate groups of people in dialogue to examine and affect local issues. Her current focus includes a series of creative cartographies registering emotions in public space; expanded curation projects on the aesthetics and politics of food; and a book project *The Social Life of Artist Residencies*: connecting with people and place not your own. Marnie is Senior Research Fellow at the [School of Art](#) and co-leader for [CAST \(contemporary art and social transformation\) research group](#) and [CVIN Cultural Value Impact Network](#) at RMIT University in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia. www.marniebadham.com.

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Week 6

Friday, November 12, 2021 10:30am - 12:30pm

Plenary session

Bronwyn Sutton, Jake Burdick and Debbie Qadri

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Guest Editors

Jennifer Sandlin and Jake Burdick