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# 'Critical Visual Arts Education'

## A Pedagogy of Conflict Transformation

## *In Search of the 'Moral Imagination'*

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## PhD by Existing Published or Creative Works

Updated April 2018

**Abstract**

The following portfolio is representative of my own artistic practice that combines the role of artist, educator, peace worker and researcher into one entity. The works are drawn from a back catalogue of fifty plus collaborative arts projects that has engaged with individuals and communities in different locations over the past twenty years. These works have been delivered within formal and informal educational settings. While each piece can be read as an individual artwork – collectively they talk to common issues related to visual art practice, public pedagogy and conflict transformation. I have identified four consistent themes present in the work Social Justice, Human Rights, Development Education, Democratic Education, Inclusion and Identity.

My practice can be described as a socially engaged art practice. However, while I pay close attention to the aesthetics and artistic impression of my work, I place a primary importance on education by asking a simple question which often provides a myriad of highly complex answers. I ask - What is being learned?

I have worked with children, young people and others who live in the midst of socio-political conflict or in societies affected by underdevelopment. This combination of experiences has enabled me to forge a deep understanding of the role of identity politics in the construction of division and conflict. I have developed what I choose to call a problem posing[1] visual arts pedagogy that serves to expose and undermine the conditions that sustain such divisions.

My work has uncovered an implicit interconnectivity among art practices, critical pedagogy and the concepts and practices of conflict transformation. This combination coupled with my experience in the field of peace building, has enabled me to develop a unique pedagogical form that is responsive to the context and needs of specific communities. Through the following commentary I posit this pedagogy firmly within the general discourse of peace building.

The portfolio presents new knowledge that aims to inform innovative approaches to the role of the visual arts in conflict transformation and ultimately lead toward

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[1] Problem posing – drawing on Paulo Freire (1970) Pedagogy of the Oppressed: a problem posing pedagogy offers opportunities for learner and teacher to build a relationship based on critical inquiry.

embedding such processes in the field of peace building and international diplomacy.

**Preface**

> *Art should not act as if it can exist for itself and of itself. It should deal with reality, grapple with political circumstances, and work out proposals for improving human coexistence.*
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> Wochenkluaser 'From the object to concrete intervention' (2011 p.64)

> *Conflict is ubiquitous, violence is not. Hence the big question: how can we approach conflict in a non-violent way?'*                Galtung J. (2002 p.151)

The following commentary focuses on the interface between public pedagogy, critical thought, visual art, and conflict transformation. The term 'Critical Visual Art' draws attention to my interrogation of the visual materials that feed and sustain conflict. A Critical Visual Art is a dialectic pedagogy that I have developed through my work in the field of conflict transformation. The term has its roots in critical theory, Held (1980) but in the context of the my work and the following commentary I extend this reading to place critical theory within the paradigm of the dialectical processes I have developed to challenge and reimage the symbols of what I call 'hard difference.' In this sense I posit my work within the concepts explored by Dewey (1944), the Frankfurt School[2] (with specific reference to its philosophical position on social change) and in particular the thoughts expounded through Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997). Drawing on the work of Bernstein (1982) and Dewey (1944), I have formulated a practice that explores the implicit 'pedagogic codes' that exist in formal and informal educational spaces to communicate and distinguish difference as a form of knowledge. In other words – difference becomes a field of reproduction where pedagogic practice takes place. My aim is to disrupt this field by placing an emphasis on the process of production as a pedagogic approach that enhances the development of critical understanding. In doing so my approach aims to create ruptures in existing predications of Self and Other. The processes illustrated and discussed in the section 2 outlines my intention to create new possibilities that question the past by presenting new opportunities to reimagine the future. Each

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[2] "The Frankfurt School and Critical Theory", Marxist Internet Archive (accessed 17th March 2016)

project is driven by a desire to form a praxis between that of the social, intellectual, political, cultural and personal. The ultimate goal of my work is to enable agency to emerge as a right and responsibility that leads to the transformation of existing social orders.

In this regard, I assert that the language and images of hate must play a significant role in the reimagining and emergence of a new language that challenges the purpose of the latter. The projects presented in this portfolio describe how the decommissioning of the images of separation can be utilised as a critical force of transformation. As such, I suggest that they need to be handled with great care – a process akin to ordnance disposal. My work presents critical visual arts as a pedagogical formation that is a crucial element in the transformation of conflict.

Before I start any project, whether it is written, studio work or collaboration, I ask myself, why am I doing this? If the answer is not forthcoming, I most likely abandon the work at that point. When I ask myself this same question about writing the following commentary, the answer has been very clear. From the outset, I have established three core reasons as follows:

Anger: In the course of my work I have met many angry people (mainly men) who have turned their anger toward others with dreadful effect. However, anger is a good emotion when it is utilized in a manner that is safe and enabling, none more so than when it is placed within a solid pedagogical scaffold and aims to serve the purpose of education – in other words used as a reason for learning. My own personal anger is drawn from an experience that took place during the last Research Evaluation Framework (REF) assessment at my previous university in Spring 2014. When the validity of my practice as research was questioned, I was angry that I had neither the confidence nor capacity to argue the case for the following works to be included in the evaluation. Therefore, I contributed to the marginalization of my work and in some way undermined the value and importance of the relationships I had forged with the many people who have contributed to the following portfolio.

Love: Love for my subject (education, conflict transformation and art as one). I trust that this commentary captures the inherent potential embodied in artistic

production that enables individuals to change their life direction. I want to provide some representation to the many artists who have dedicated their lives and work in the cause of peace. I also want position the arts as a central force in the work of conflict transformation and present new methods and approaches that will, through dissemination – influence and transform the working field.

Need: I am compelled to tell these stories simply because I consider myself to be firstly human and secondly an educationalist. As such I have a responsibility - a moral duty to share my experiences with others - to contribute and add to the existing knowledge base through which we as a species need to overcome divisions and conflicts that plague our world.

As a last indication, as previously mentioned, the overall intention of the commentary is pedagogical and educational. I hope to communicate my interactions and do justice to the individuals, who like me, turned their Anger, their Love, and their Need, toward art and learning, in preference to hate and conflict.

**Setting the Context:**

*'Religion is never mentioned here, of course.*
*You know them by their eyes and hold your*
*tongue.*
*"One sides as bad as the other", never*
*worse.'*

Seamus Heaney 'Whatever You Say, Say
Nothing' (1975)

My life and works have been greatly influenced by my experience of growing up during the conflict in Northern Ireland. In my teenage years, I spent many hours trying to avoid the interface areas (physical and psychological) where the conflict was felt most. However, coming from a working class Catholic area of North Belfast placed my family and I in the heart of the conflict zone. It also presented numerous practical and intellectual problems to the many young people who struggled to rationalize and live a normal life in an abnormal situation. While many of my school friends became directly involved with the violence, I resisted and along with my brother, attempted to carve out a normal teenage life set against a backdrop of social and political upheaval. Unfortunately, there were many times when this normality was disrupted and it has been these experiences that have come to shape my art and my subsequent pedagogical and educational work.

During my secondary school years, the art room became a sanctuary that opened my mind to new ways of seeing and understanding this world. Art provided me with a form of communication that helped me rationalize the context and in some ways, gain agency, Bernstein (1982), Dewey (1944). My final art project in school resulted in the production of a Guernica mural that focused on a series of bombs that exploded in Belfast on a market day in July 1972. Twenty-six bombs were detonated that day, each set strategically to capture those who tried to flee the previous explosion. The event became known as 'Bloody Friday'. I had chosen a subject that alienated myself from a number of friends and indeed my teachers.

The Provisional IRA – a paramilitary organization that claimed to represent the cause of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland set the bombs. Many of my contemporaries were members of the junior wing of the Provisionals, (Fianna), and would have implicitly supported the actions of that day.  I made the painting in the main hallway adjacent to the main entrance. The positioning was intentional as it meant that every person who entered the school would be confronted by the images and hence forced to engage with the narrative. This was my first social political art project. The composition captured the tangled bodies of the dead and injured. Most of those killed were from the Protestant community, with two of the nine dead coming from the IRA's primary target, the security forces. The painting did not see their religion or their uniform; it refused to separate the victims according to faith or militia. I showed mothers, fathers and children, twisted and contorted out of shape – torsos and arms ripped apart by the force of the explosions. There were many references to Guernica in the work but instead of arms holding broken swords the victims in my painting held onto the severed hand of a dead child or a loved one.

In divided societies, such as Northern Ireland, events such as Bloody Friday, underline difference and promote a culture of polarity.  Polarity leads to rationality and reasoning leads to excuse. The work sought to build empathy between the viewer and the subject. No matter how I tried to negate the difference between the two, the viewer was Catholic and the subject was Protestant, and polarity leads to rationality and reasoning leads to excuses… 'one side is as bad as the other, never worse.' (Heaney, 1975)

The process of making the work created a disturbance or what I would now call a disruptive learning event, combined with the final artwork I aimed to transform the educational experience from one of passive reception to one of inclusion and dialogue. In this event the artwork triggered a human experience that disrupted the traditional role of art and education (Dewey 1997) and reached beyond mere aesthetics. The intention here was to compel or force the audience think more carefully and in doing so to develop the potentiality for critical analysis and ultimately enable new or 'good judgment' Bernstein (1982) to emerge.

While my art teacher supported the project, many others challenged the content and most importantly, the purpose behind the work. I encouraged this challenge – I had seen it as an opportunity to move art out of the classroom and into a public space. The public nature of the work enabled a form of exchange with teachers, pupils and other staff members including cleaning staff and caretakers. It was clear that the mural was highlighting an uncomfortable truth and eventually after several objections the work was removed and eventually painted over.

Many years have passed since my first encounter with what I now know as 'socially engaged art' and while my current practice may resemble established forms relationality such as those identified by Bourriaud (1998) Kester (2004) Butler & Riess (2007), and Bishop (2012), I prefer to position my work in the spaces between the performative work of Beuys and the current pedagogic projects that prevail in contemporary art discourses in social practice. The later seem to outsource the pedagogic components of an artistic work to teaching professionals, as discussed in Bishop (2012). However, like Beuys[3] (Biesta 2017) and Rollins, Paley (1995) and Geys[4] focus on anti-elitism, pedagogy, education and learning are a central concern of my work.

However, the centre is also occupied by the specificity and complexity of human relations - relations fractured by the impact of social – ethnic and political conflict. To engage with such issues, I must be constantly present as educator and co-creator. This presence is not a performance nor is it an act of teaching – it is an educational practice involving a pedagogical presence that must give of Self to reach new spaces of possibility with Others. To give of oneself in the service of others is one of the greatest risks of education, as an artist educator it seems the only risk worthy of taking.

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[3] Notes taken from Gert Biesta's "Letting Art Teach' Art education after Beuys. ArtEZ Press.
[4] http://cubittartists.org.uk/2013/07/31/jef-geys-2/

## Acknowledgements

**List of Submitted Public Works**

The following list is presented in order of that outlined in the 'project narratives. The texts are supported with integrated images that combine to illustrate the process and outcomes of each project.

The same projects are represented in the form of a 'visual essay' as indicated in appendix 1. While those projects that appear in publications such as chapters in book, catalogues or educational resources are presented in appendix 2.


2.1 Shankill Palestine Mural – Lingusitic landscapes

2.2 The Killing of Michael Mcilveen

2.3 The identity Box

2.4 'Not a Bullet, Not an Ounce.' British Museum Catalogue

2.5 Lusaka Zambia, Street Art as a public pedagogy. 80:20 use of art in development education and Translating Dissent, Chapter 14 – Democratic Walls?

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The proposed portfolio

> Conflicts cannot be fought and won – WE must <u>learn</u> our way out of
> conflict otherwise we only suspend play until a later date.
>
> J. Johnston[5]

The following portfolio and commentary is a selection of five projects selected from an extensive body of work produced between 1999 and 2015. The projects have been funded by a combination of public bodies (including local and national educational authorities) and international funding agencies such as the European Union. Most of the works are held within the collection or archive of each specific organization while others remain in the public domain. My work has been represented in exhibitions, galleries, publications, educational resources, academic journals and television documentaries. I have also presented my work in a number of prestigious national and international conferences (see appendix 2).

The commentary sets in context a series of collaborative engagements that have led to the development of a new pedagogical and educational approach[6] to peace-building and conflict transformation. Each essay serves to highlight this approach through a combination of three visual and dialectical methodologies, which combine to form what I have come to call, as a 'problem posing visual art pedagogy'. Common threads related to the formation of social and cultural identities are explored in order to highlight the connectivity between my art practice and what I believe is a core agenda within peace building – identity construction (see section 2.2 & 2.3). While the narrative connects to a series of concepts first explored by Lederach (2005) I extend these concepts to expose an underlying linkage between art practice and peace building that

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[5] UN Conference on Art, Conflict and Memorialization, Geneva October (2013)

[6] Drawing on Biesta's reading of Foucault- Biesta states that; 'In Foucault's own work the word approach is taken quite literally.' Describing 'approach' as a practical 'mode of critique that takes the form of a possible transgression'. (See section 3.5)

offers new knowledge and pedagogical approaches to the field of conflict transformation.  My intention is to move art from the margins of peace building to the centre and in doing so I present the need to develop of a specific field of applied study in art and design education that is underpinned by the theories and practices of conflict transformation. Such study would focus on the transformative potentiality of arts as a praxis that exposes, questions and undermines the numerous and complex agendas that create and sustain conflict. This new field of study and research applies the arts to the field of conflict transformation to form a new praxis seen through the lens of human rights, social justice and critical education.

As mentioned above, a core thread throughout the portfolio relates to the issue of identity construction Bernstein (1982), Burke and Stetts (2009), and how these themes must be addressed through a pronounced and critical form of creative education to enable transformation. The portfolio will present a range of new pedagogical and educational methods based on what I have termed a 'critical visual arts' pedagogy and approach (see paragraph 1.3), which expose the narratives and fault lines that sustain conflict and feed underdevelopment, particularly in divided societies that are segregated on the  grounds of ethnicity, culture, class, poverty, gender and religion.

1.2 Art Practice and Conflict Transformation

> 'Their (*relational artists')* works involve methods of social exchanges, interactivity with the viewer within the aesthetic experience being offered to him/her, and the various communication processes, in their tangible dimension as tools serving to link individuals and human groups together'. Bourriaud (1998 p.43)

Bourriaud (1998) draws attention to a 'new type of artist' who is guided by the need to form social exchanges as part of their creative language. These artists

use their art (art util)[7], as a vehicle to enable a critical dialogue across societies and groups damaged by conflict. This artistic approach is seen as an aesthetic form in and of itself and as such provides a paradigm that enables the artist to use their work as tool for social change. In the context of conflict this 'tool' aims to undermine the 'languages' and 'behaviours' born out of the identity constructions that underpin and sustain violent indifference.

Divided societies rely on such systems of identity construction that aim to create socio-political boundaries based on perceptions of difference. These differences are promoted through cultural activities – such as language, art and education. They are implicit and often hidden within the policies and behaviours of a state. Galtung (1969) describes this as 'structural violence'. Galtung (1969), Bernstein (1982), Winter and Lieghton (2001, Farmer (2004). Structural violence refers to a system of governance that produces policies that aim to protect the interests of those elites in a given society. Such groups have direct influence over the power structures that govern a society and ultimately they produce policies (social and otherwise) that sustain their power base. In societies scared by a history of cultural and ethnic division, policies are often designed to significantly curtail the mobility of subordinate groups. Subordinate groups can be identified by the cultural, religious or ethnic difference that defines their collective identity from that of the 'elites'. These systems of governance promote fear, suspicion and mistrust of the Other in order to sustain a culture of inequality. However, structural violence also needs a fertile landscape to plant the seeds of mistrust that spawn the hatred that leads to violent conflict. This is a complex landscape where difference is underpinned by the concept of a single narrative that feeds a collective identity. I assert that this concept is at the heart of a discreet pedagogical force that is used to project meaning and reify narratives of difference in order to produce and maintain a mentality of 'them and us´.

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[7] Art Util: Arte Útil roughly translates into English as 'useful art' but it goes further suggesting art as a tool or device. Arte Útil draws on artistic thinking to imagine, create and implement tactics that change how we act in society.
http://www.arte-util.org/about/colophon/ (accessed January 2017)

Galtung (1969) introduced the concept of structural violence, which he proceeded to place within a broader paradigm of Cultural Violence (1990). Galtung describes cultural violence as:

'..these aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science (logic, mathematics) – that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence. Stars, crosses, crescents; flags, anthems and military parades; the ubiquitous portrait of the Leader; the inflammatory speeches and posters all come to mind.'

Galtung, (1990 p. 291) JoPRvol 27.no 3

Galtung raises questions about how culture is utilized to form what I have identified as a paradox in identity construction – that of a group or collective 'single identity'. Through my work in conflict zones I have recognized that a single identity actually refers to a group that is an identity that is shaped and defined by a perception of difference between two ethnic or religious groups. This notion of single identity is particularly prevalent in divided societies such as Northern Ireland, Israel, Palestine, the former Yugoslav Republic - Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, and India and Pakistan to name a few. The common factor in each of these conflicts has been the role of religion and how this aspect of identity has been used to form a single group or collective identity.

That is not to say that religion is the cause of conflict rather that in these contexts, religion has become a major vehicle that fuels and drives conflict. My work has exposed how visual language (particularly that used in public space) is used to 'prop up' religious and ethnic difference. This language has been utilised to form a discreet pedagogical system that serves to gain influence and control over a specific constituency.

In such circumstances, political, religious, cultural leaders and educators may use the images, symbols and other cultural vehicles as noted by Galtung, as a language that promotes a sense of identity that is seen as superior to another therefore establishing division and 'Otherness' as a cultural norm.

Bauman (2004) asserts:

'Culture has both a transparent and hidden presence in everyday activities of human affairs. Like religion, it shapes values and behaviour and provides the basis of individuals and groups' paradigm or worldview. It also plays a critical role in identity of self and "other", behaviourally shapes the "dos and do not's" of human interactions and conceptually frames and reframes what one sees and communicates'. (p.38)

Whereas the arts and culture can play a major role in creating and perpetuating difference, Jean Paul Lederach (2004) talks of a 'moral imagination' as a fundamental need that is central to what he terms as; the 'soul of peace-building'. This emphasis on imagination offers artists a clear mandate to work into and in some way reimagine the field of conflict transformation as a purely creative endeavour. Maiese (2005) explains how Lederach describes the processes associated peacebuilding as similar to that of making art.

'Lederach describes that the "moral imagination" has the capacity to recognize turning points and possibilities in order to venture down unknown paths and create what does not yet exist. In reference to peace building, the moral imagination is the capacity to imagine and generate constructive processes that are rooted in the day-to-day challenges of violence and yet transcend these destructive patterns. In Lederach's view, the moments of possibility that pave the way for constructive change processes do not emerge through the rote application of a set of techniques or strategies, but rather arise out of something that approximates an artistic process.' [8]

The ability to imagine, or what I have termed as 're-imagining' the symbolic language of conflict is crucial to my practice. Lederach's 'Moral imagination' asks those involved or caught up in conflict to take a leap of faith and to trust

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[8] http://www.beyondintractability.org/bksum/lederach-imagination (accessed October 2016)

the possibility of change. Once again this draws on Bernstein's concepts of 'pedagogical rights' and in particular the first 'right of enhancement.'

Bernstein states; 'I see enhancement as a condition, be they social, intellectual, or personal, not prisons, or stereotypes, but tension points condensing the past and opening possible futures.' Bernstein (2000;xx) quoted in Moore (2013 p.154). Artists involved in a critical practice, that is a practice that consistently questions the processes and outcomes of their work, do this daily in their studio. However, Socially Engaged Art or what Bourriaud (1998) terms as a ´relational art,' places this concept in the public realm in an act that transforms the relationship between the artist and the public from one of passivity (receiver of art) to one of collaboration (co-creator/maker of art). This artistic form should compel artists to consider the ethical boundaries that exist between their work and its intention and most importantly, that of the public. Critical questions related to learning and the intention of the work come to the fore and as such education begins to frame the relationship between the artist and the public. My work recognizes and pays careful attention to what I see as a moral responsibility and indeed practice as noted by Dewey (1920) and later Biesta (2007). This moral practice operates within the realities of the lives and conditions of those people who I have worked with. For Dewey this was a fundamental reference point for such pedagogical and educational approaches and underlines my attention to the practice of doing education through art practice. Dewey asserts:

> The organism acts in accordance with its own structure, simple or complex, upon its surroundings. As a consequence, the changes produced in the environment react upon the organism and its activities. The living creature undergoes, suffers, the consequences of its own behaviour. This close connection between doing and suffering or undergoing forms what we call experience. (1920) Cited by Biesta (2007 p.13)

In this regard the context and environments that shape the life experiences of those who participate in the process of coproduction are central to the work. By inviting people to question the very symbols that construct their very sense of

'collective being,' I recognize the connectivity between my work and the concepts pursued by Lederach. My practice is an act that personifies the moral imagination Lederach promotes and as such, I am compelled to consider the ethical dimensions in my work. Through the positioning of my work as a pedagogical act, I draw on by Atkinson (2011) who presents ´pedagogy against the state´ or to be more precise a readymade state of mind.  Atkinson presents art education as an ethical conquest that challenges the status quo of existing hegemonies. He states ´that ´real learning´ and equality *should be* approached as processes of becoming leading to the figuration of new worlds through local curations of learning and practice (p.3). This notion of becoming is drawn through the act of learning and is central to my work, offering a space for the unknown to emerge, enabling participants to ´venture down unknown paths and create what does not yet exist.  Lederach (2007 p.4)

1.3 Disruption and Disturbance

The terms disruption and disturbance are common features and concepts that present in my work. I use these terms to describe the intention of a specific action that occurs within my practice. These actions are deliberate and manifest in critical conversations that are often prompted by visual resources etc. drawn from street art, political murals or mainstream sources such as online blogs and extremist websites. Jarman (1998) acknowledges the importance that such images and symbols play in reifying a sense of belonging for a specific identity group. My objective is to enable a mode of thought that leads to the manipulation and ultimately a disruption of these symbols and hence this sense of belonging. This disruption follows an intense period of interrogation that ultimately questions the values that underpin regressive identity traits that have become 'normative' in the context of divided societies. My work focuses on how these agendas are manifest the public realm through street art, political murals and graffiti. Through dialoguing with contentious images – that is imagery that is often seen as divisive, I search for political potentiality of this 'contentious art' in order to create a tension between what exists and what could be.  The intention to disturb these existing norms is central to my praxis and it is through reflection that I recognise a close connection between this intention and

Ranciere's (2010) thoughts on the relationship between Art and Politics and in particular the concept of dissensus. I believe Ranciere provides a creative space where agreement is no longer necessary to transform the conditions that create conflict. In his introduction to 'Dissensus, On Politics and Aesthetics, Ranciere,' Steven Corcoran writes:

> 'For Ranciere, genuine political or artistic activities always involve forms of innovation that tear bodies from their assigned places and free speech and expression from all reduction to functionality…..In other words, the disruption that they effect is not simply a reordering of the relations of power between existing groups; dissensus is not an institutional overturning. It is an activity that cuts across forms of cultural and identity belonging and hierarchies between discourses and genres, working to introduce new subjects and heterogeneous objects into the field of perception. And as both activities, according to Ranciere, have to do with reorienting general perceptual space and disrupting forms of belonging, their interrelation is not a question that needs asking. It can be shown that politics has an inherently aesthetic dimension and aesthetics an inherently political one. '
>
> Ranciere and Corcoran (2010 p.1)

Drawing on Ranciere, I believe the political potentiality of the arts lies in its capacity to activate and realise change through thought and action. When this action is combined with educational intention, what evolves is a pedagogical force of transformation. In the context of peacebuilding this adds a significant layer to what already exists in regards to the dialogical processes of diplomacy and mediation. The arts, and in particular the visual arts, offer a language that enables the disruption of existing norms to take place through a direct engagement with the language of division. As such a critical visual arts pedagogy as a force for transformation embodies the potential to shift, alter, disrupt and disturb existing behaviours, perceptions and attitudes. This concept is brought to life through the actions of the 'critical arts educator,' a public pedagogue who places learning at the centre of their practice. While Ranciere presents a theory and a discourse to place describe such work, it is the artist

artist educator who provides praxis between the various fields that enable 'real change' to emerge in the form of a creative act. As noted in this commentary I place a value on such disruption and as such I have constructed spaces of praxis for such events to emerge such as the studio, as noted in section 3.3.

## 1.4 Methods: Mural Art as a Method of Public Pedagogy

My origins in Belfast taught me much with regards to how identity is constructed through public spectacle such as, demonstrations, parades, and marching. Throughout my youth I became fascinated by the role street art (graffiti and murals) played in defining space and propagating the narrative of the conflict. These political murals project a combination of symbols and texts onto the public to form what Lederach (2013) describes as a 'unit of identity, that is an identity grouping based on a; 'clan, ethnicity, religion, or geographic/ regional affiliation, or a mix of these.' (p.13). While mural painting in Northern Ireland is often seen as a contributing factor to perpetuating the divisions, I have used the genre to develop a critical praxis, Fuller and Kitchin (2004), that places the realities of the social urban geography of the context at the heart of the practice of transformation. Therefore, the majority of my works exists in public spaces such as; schools, hospitals, youth clubs and the street. I use the large-scale format of mural art to draw multiple participants into a dialectical process that is constructed around the creative process of reimaging through critical thought. In this context my work can also be posited as a 'public pedagogy' (Giroux, 1997, 2010 and Burdick et al, 2014) that aims to redefine public space as a pedagogical space that if approached in a critical manner, can transform the narrative of division and disrupt the images that perpetuate the single collective identity. The works of Freire (1970), hooks (1994), Giroux (2011), Galtung (2002) and Lederach (2003, 2004, 2013), resonate in each project and act as a theoretical scaffold for my work.

1.5 Palimpsest

The concept of identity construction and deconstruction is represented through a method that I have developed informed by the concept of 'Palimpsest'[9]. In my practice palimpsest is related to the overlaying of images and texts that have been formulated through critical dialogue. Following on from Freire's concept of critical pedagogy, this approach aims to expose the forces (implicit and explicit) that serve to form group identities based on the principles of difference and a single socio-political historical narrative. While the process of palimpsest acknowledges and represents this position in visual form, the next phase intends to obscure the original composition by overlaying new images that may question the narrative of the former. Palimpsest presents a tangible visual approach to question the notion of a fixed identity and as such represents identity as a changing entity where the past remains in view but is constantly rewritten or re-imagined by the present. Through Palimpsest, positions are constantly reviewed, obscured and at times resurface, to create new meanings and insights that reflect in physical form a process of critical dialogue.

1.6 Compelled Pedagogy

I position the verb compel before the noun pedagogy to suggest that a critical education must be triggered or at times ignited in order to disrupt existing patterns of belief and behaviour. A compelled pedagogy draws on Freire's (1970) concept of 'conscientizacao' or critical consciousness. Freire asserts that the oppressed are unaware of their position and describes critical consciousness as a crucial capacity that enables victims of injustice to recognize themselves as such and in doing so form an understanding of the structures that are utilized to oppress them. ´For the oppressed, at a certain point in their existential experience, to be is not to resemble the oppressor, but

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[9] A palimpsest /ˈpælɪmpsɛst/ is a manuscript page from a scroll or book from which the text has been scraped or washed off so that it can be used again. Something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form. Oxford English dictionary (2000) p. 881. An example of popular use of the term can be found in George Orwell's Nineteen *Eighty-Four.* **'**All history was a **palimpsest**, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary'. (p35)

to be under him, to depend on him. Accordingly, the oppressed are emotionally dependent (p. 47). Therefore, the educator's responsibility is to assist in this exposition through the implementation of an emancipating pedagogy that reveals this world through a process of critical dialogue.

Mustakova & Possardt (2003) state:

> 'People who exhibit critical consciousness manifest a much clearer balance of a full range of different ways of knowing. In contrast to other people who favour a particular way of knowing, be it heavily intellectual, predominately unconscious, or some other type…In critically conscious people we see a strong sense of personal choice regardless of what life has handed them, they tend to take responsibility for that of positive change and to respond to the needs of the world'. (p. 4)

As such Mustakova & Possardt extend critical consciousness toward a compelled pedagogy describing the concept in practical terms as, 'a way of being,' (p.4), that fully integrates the heart and mind and so creates in the individual a sense of highly principled morality, philosophical expansion, and historical and global vision that represents the acme of human consciousness'[10]. Therefore, a compelled pedagogy sets out to create these possibilities[11]. But rather than waiting for what conflict and peace theorists term 'the ripe moment'[12], a compelled pedagogy, actioned through a process of problem-posing critical visual arts inquiry, creates opportunities for the ripe moment to emerge. A compelled pedagogy reveals the issues that must be addressed to enable transformation by verbal and visual means. Therefore, the abstract becomes concrete and is embedded in the real world and as such

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[10] Source URL: http://onecountry.org/story/there-roadmap-critical-consciousness (accessed 9th January 2016)

[11] Source URL: http://onecountry.org/story/there-roadmap-critical-consciousness (accessed 9th January 2016)

[12] Ripe moment: 'The concept is based on the notion that when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them (although not necessarily in equal degree or for the same reasons), they seek an alternative policy or Way Out'. Zartman W. (2008) available at: http://www.e-ir.info/2008/12/20/ripeness-the-importance-of-timing-in-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/ (accessed 10th January 2016)

becomes a part of the social consciousness of the learner.[13] There are clear parallels here with Bernstein's (1982) 'pedagogical rights of enhancement'. The first right draws attention to the potentiality of such processes to enable 'critical understanding 'and as such open 'new possibilities' (p.11).  A compelled pedagogy asks us to 'experience the boundaries, be they social, intellectual or personal not as prisons, or stereotypes, but as tension points condensing the past and opening possible futures.' Bernstein (2000 p.xx)

1.7 Pedagogy of Doubt

As noted in paragraph 1.3 disruption is a consistent theme explored throughout my work and as such highlights is a core intention of my praxis. I use the term as an 'approach' that aims to inject doubt into the life process through embracing inquiry as a way of life, a way of becoming in the world, Biesta (2015).  Atkinson (2011) draws on Ranciere's (1999) work on politics, Badiou (2005, b) notion of truth and Foucault's (1977, 1980) concepts of regulation to promote a pedagogy of disruption (*a pedagogy against the state*). When discussing Ranciere's concept of the 'distribution of the sensible' (2004) Atkinson states:

> 'A distribution of the sensible is concerned with the organization and legitimating of ways of doing, saying and seeing in particular social contexts. With this notion, he *(Ranciere)* is seeking to explore the ways in which social communities are formatted; how this formatting regulates and defines social spaces and positions; who is able to participate within this particular formatting and who is not; what part individual's play according to the format of particular communities'. (Atkinson, 2011 p.42)

Atkinson proceeds to acknowledge the relationship between Rancière's inquiry and the work of Foucault 'and his concepts of regulation, surveillance, normalization and power´ (p.42). These are concepts that prevail in the reality

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[13] 'The learner refers to all parties involved in the process – artist – teacher – learner.
'Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction,' Freire (1970:53)

of societies entrenched in a protracted conflict such as those of the Middle East and Northern Ireland. In such contexts difference is promoted through social, political and cultural discourses that are used to maintain power and support the historical narratives that sustain division. There is little room for doubt in such zero-sum equations. However, through the introduction of a critical visual arts pedagogy based upon how we create windows of opportunity or 'ripe moments' that inject doubt into the equation and disrupt the notion of absolute truth. Badiou states; every subject believes something without knowing why.[14]

Asking communities and individuals to question their notion of truth is particularly challenging in the context of divided societies who are engaged in the change process of peace building. In such contexts 'truth' is established through the projection of narratives that often present a story of victimhood and oppression. These are extremely powerful discourses that intend to cast an impenetrable image of self and other that is deeply connected to the foundation identity of a specific group. Drawing on Dewey's concept of 'pragmatic epistemology' (1997) and Bernstein's (1982) 'pedagogic right of enhancement', the intention here is not to question such truths but to posit doubt as a pedagogical force in its own right. Freire (1970) states; 'the radical committed to human liberation, does not become a prisoner of a circle of certainty within which reality is also imprisoned.' (p.21)

Pedagogy of doubt develops the capacities needed to disrupt the distribution lines of the so-called 'sensible' that support and sustain this circle of certainty. These lines are formed by brokers of power (at all levels) who use what Freire terms as a 'banking pedagogy' to control, regulate and normalize behaviour. Such brokers are devoid of doubt and 'feel threatened if *(their)* truth is questioned' Freire, (1970 p.21) Therefore, pedagogy of doubt is central to the dialectical processes that inform not only the visual language of a work but also promote doubt as a competence that needs to be learned in order to introduce

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[14] Hallward (2003, p xxxv) – cited in Atkinson (2011 p. 41). Atkinson proceeds to highlight a valuable point that supports by questioning the powerful pedagogical discourses that advocate social and cultural reproduction. 'the idea that learners are inducted into valued and established forms of knowledge'.

the possibility of change. While the product of such exchanges satisfies the need for a physical outcome, such outcomes are in essence the visual residue of a process of inquisition and reflect uncertainty in visual form. The product proceeds to explore further political potentialities in the form of a post-production pedagogy. This enables the viewer/s to engage in a further process of disruption but the work must retain a sense of ambiguity, where the content remains open to various readings and interpretations. In other words, the artwork should resist evangelical intention that promotes 'an answer', on the contrary the work should apply a visual language that is disruptive in both form and content, abstract yet pronounced. Put simply the artwork exists due to a critical dialectical process and as such doubt must be ever present or the artwork and process amounts to little more than 'peace propaganda' a form of art making that is common in post conflict contexts. Although such works have good intention the projects and outcomes have a defined conclusion from the outset and are often shaped by the parameters of funding agencies and well-meaning third parties. In such instances the artists and the art are instrumentalised, such works fail to confront the divisive issues that underpin a specific conflict in fear that such confrontation could lead to further fractures and divisions. This fear is echoed in section 2.2 and 2.4 of the following narrative. Indeed the desire to present a harmonious outcome has created an orthodoxy that has led to the valid claim that the autonomous nature of the arts is lost and hence artists are no more than a tool for the use of policy makers and the political elites. However, through the pursuit of an arts practice that is grounded in criticality and the promotion of doubt, the arts can present a new field of praxis that engages with top down initiatives by employing bottom up strategies and approaches to social practice. In this form the artist maintains her/his integrity and enables a critical pedagogical practice to emerge that counters such orthodoxies and hence promotes doubt as a central force of their work.

1.8 Art practice / Narrative and Dialectical Inquiry as a method of research

'My argument is that to appreciate how visual arts contribute to human understanding, there is a need to locate artistic research within the theories

and practices that surround art making. It is from this central site of creative practice that other forms of inquiry emerge such as critical and philosophical analysis, historical and cultural commentary, and educational experience'. Sullivan G (2007 p. 97)

Through my practice, I have extended an understanding of the various approaches that visual art offers as a means of inquiry and developed several methods that focus on the production and collection of visual material as research data. The pedagogical approaches that create this data combine with the visual and subsequent narratives to form a methodology that clearly posits my practice as arts based research. My portfolio presents a combination of images and narratives, related to art practice, pedagogy and conflict transformation. Each narrative draws on two main research methods that frame my commentary. Art Practice as Research, Sullivan (2010) and Narrative Inquiry, Clandinin & Connelly (1990 & 2000) and Webster & Mertova (2007).

Sullivan (2010) states:

> 'Art is a cognitive process whereby what we know shapes our interactions and transforms our awareness. In these instances, our institution and intellect draw on real-life circumstances that serve as an experiential base that shapes our understanding and allows us to see and do things differently. The capacity to create understanding and thereby critique knowledge is central to arts practice, and artists are actively involved in these kinds of thoughtful research processes'. (p.96)

Therefore, the capacities inherent in art making, promote a practice of critical inquiry, which in turn enables an ongoing process of research and analysis. These capacities are informed by the accumulation of knowledge, judgment, evaluation, reasoning, computation, problem solving and of course problem posing. All cognitive functions that are crucial to the peace worker. These functions also draw on Dewey's concept of 'pragmatic epistemology' (1938) that asks educators to be guided by real-life circumstances. Our lives should be guided, in Dewey's view, by inquiry: "the controlled or directed

transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole." Hickman & Alexander (1998 p.171)

My portfolio is a collective response to 'real-life circumstances' of those individuals and communities embroiled in or emerging from conflict. The processes of making each work provides experiences that are constantly critiqued in order to develop existing knowledge.[15] However, more similar to research than to art practice, there is a certain structure to the project from the beginning. The projects are framed by the context and the specificity of my own visual and pedagogical practice. This combination informs the processes used – working towards a goal, even if the goal is simply the aim to make as many as possible comfortable with questioning, with doubt, rather than seeking refuge in their 'system of belief' or historical narrative.

My portfolio and supporting commentary reflects on the potentiality that a 'critical visual art pedagogy' in combination with the principles of democratic education Dewey (!944) offers the field of conflict transformation. My work presents new methods of educational, pedagogical and artistic practice that are posited within a dialectic inquiry research method. Page (2008) draws on dialectical inquiry to develop a philosophy of peace education. In this context, dialectical inquiry can be seen as a form of exploratory research in that the process of research aims to reveal new understandings of a specific situation or circumstance. A 'critical visual arts pedagogy' deliberately posits the visual arts between critical and pedagogy to describe the method as one that is based on the analysis of the visual though the process of art making in order to promote transformation. In other words, 'critical visual arts as a pedagogy of conflict transformation' is an approach to education and a method of learning

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[15] This approach does not come without its problems – particularly when working under the watchful eye of governmental institutions such as museums (see section 3.2 & 3.3) and funding agencies. Entering into a project without a defined outcome is deeply problematic for many institutions and funding agencies. This can lead to tensions, which in turn may become part of the conflict that one is trying to transform. In such instances the engagement can be enriched as the tensions may expose unforeseen fault-lines that until then have been hidden or implicit. Therefore, a research approach as defined by the OECD requires a critical pedagogy and the principles of democratic education to be an integral part of the process.

that exposes and interrogates what exists in the world, with the aim to transform it, Freire (1970) Bernstein (1982). Therefore, when this method is combined with dialectical inquiry, a new methodology – or system of research - emerges. My portfolio reveals how the interrogation of existing 'identity tabs', such as those highlighted by Galtung in section 1.2, create the conditions for new understandings to emerge. This is particularly effective when such methods are applied within the context of a critical visual arts praxis, as the process of discovery, the pathways that Lederach alludes to, are captured and revealed in the juxtaposition form of old and new images, symbols and texts, the combination of these 'histories'. Unlike standardised approaches to diplomacy and other forms of mediation, the complexity of the dialogues are captured in visual form and as such deposited for further interrogation.

Therefore, my work presents new approaches to educational and pedagogic practice and research methods to the field of conflict transformation that illuminate the otherwise implicit symbols of division while also transforming these symbols through critical visual inquiry. Furthermore, my portfolio highlights how the combination of a critical visual arts practice with dialectical research methods enables an intense critique to emerge that sheds new light on how the arts enable agency in so far as the image-maker gains influence over the language that is often projected onto their world. The process of interrogating existing images or 'identity tabs' exposes many of the implicit cultural languages that form the immovable distinctions of a single collective identity.

The concept of 'single identity' as described by Lieghy & Clegg (2001), is often the starting point for each artwork. My educational practice and pedagogy leads to a critical analysis of these 'identity tabs. ´ I use the symbols of familiarity as they exist in the world (see section 2.3) as an 'abstract representation that helps the viewer translate meaning by being shown something recognizable.' Sullivan, (2010: p.98) However, the reimaging of these 'identity tabs' enables the participant to create and most importantly learn a new language that challenges the established position of the former, thereby challenges the status quo.

Narrative inquiry as a research method is particularly prevalent in the field of teaching and learning and as such represents opportunities to draw on reflective practices to inform future practice. Webster & Mertova (2007) assert:

> 'Narrative records human experience through the construction and reconstruction of personal stories; it is well suited to addressing issues of complexity and cultural centeredness because of its capacity to record and retell those events that have been of most influence on us'. (Ibid pg.1)

In this sense a narrative inquiry research method embodies the educational and pedagogical approaches and practices outlined in the portfolio and can be clearly identified in section 2.5. Each narrative in the portfolio focuses on the development, exploration and exploitation of educational and learning areas in conceptual, intellectual and physical form. I create 'spaces of encounter' (Atkinson, 2010) which are charged with the political potentialities of human experience that aim to focus attention on the critical events, relationships, memories and places as subjects for research and analysis.

## 1.9 Referencing

The commentary is a dialogue presented through image and text - I am conversing with three major subjects (Visual Arts, Conflict Transformation, Democratic Education and Critical Pedagogy) to tell the story of my work. Each concept is weaved and at times entangled within the narrative to emphasize my dependency on each. I have used the Harvard referencing system to enable a flowing narrative, with the implementation of footnotes to broaden the readers' understanding of a particular term, historical context, organization or event.

**Section 2 Project Narratives**

**Introduction**

The following five sections elaborate on works based on the various conceptual frameworks that overlap with each other, including: linguistic landscapes of contested space, engaging conflict and peace through art and identity, decommissioning the visual language of urban conflict, and using street art as democratic educational practice and public pedagogy. These are described within the fields of visual arts, social practice, educational work and conflict transformation. The commentary also encompasses a number of theoretical frameworks that are used to underpin my work within a variety of conceptual paradigms.

These works are generally situated in areas of war and social conflict, and highlight my personal interpretations as elaborated in the introduction. The concepts alluded to in relation to art practice and conflict transformation, the idea of a palimpsest, a compelled pedagogy, a pedagogy of doubt and art practice as a narrative inquiry method of research as implicit and at times explicit through the illustrations and commentary of through each project.

**Section 2.1:**


**Shankill Peace Wall; Palestine Mural**
**Linguistic Landscapes of Contested Space**


Palestine - Shankill - Israel – Falls - Berlin – Nicosia - Baghdad
Security -Separation – Perception –Reality - Fear - Trust - Belief




Catholic children play fighting near the Falls Road 'peace wall' in 1997.
Photograph: Andrew Holbrooke/Corbis


**Preamble:**
Spaces of the linguistic landscape are multiple and multi-faceted. As a product, linguistic landscape alludes to ideas and perceptions that give rise to a space, define it, and are defined by it. The story of producing a linguistic landscape is an outcome of people's minds and perceptions. Mor Somerfield & Johnston, (2012 p.155). In the context of West Belfast 'linguistic landscape' is defined by the history of the streets and those people who live within its boundaries. The so called Peace wall of Cupar way is demarcation line that separates Catholic from Protestant, a landscape defined by mistrust and a history of violence. The wall presents a barrier that aims to protect one side of the divide from the other. Many who live in its shadow feel secure by the physicality of the concrete and

steel that forms the forty-foot high structure that stretches for over three miles from the edge of Belfast city centre to the west of city. The wall is also shadowed by 'Black Mountain' a hill of emerald green that towers over Belfast, the first of many hills that form the beautiful hills of the Antrim Plateau. But it is the steel, the concrete and the graffiti riddled walls that dominate the minds and vision of the people of the Shankill and Falls. This language is born out of hatred and projects messages of division onto each community. In this sense the linguistic landscape is physical, conceptual and pedagogical. It projects narratives of division and creates meaning that serves to reify a history of mistrust and conflict.

This project focuses on *how* Linguistic Landscape is constructed in a given space and by given practices. The narrative has been drawn from my experiences of leading a public art project in West Belfast in 2011 that led to the production of a major artwork on the so-called Peace Wall that separates Catholic from Protestant. This architectural icon of the Northern Ireland conflict (one of almost 100 similar walls across Belfast) informed the conceptual direction of the project. From the outset, I intended to question and expose the failure of human relations that leads to the separation of people due to religious, ethnic and cultural differences. The Shankill Palestine mural (as I call the work) is the result of a complex process of relational art practices[16] and a consciously devised participatory art[17] program.

Through the writing of my work I employ a research methodology drawn from two main areas related to art practice and pedagogy: a/r/tography (2012) – which combines reflective writing with the material product of art making[18] and art practice as research, which defines studio practice and making as form of research in its own right[19]. The capacity to create understanding and thereby

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[16] Bourriaud N. Relational Aesthetics (2002) Les Presse dureel
[17] Alemburg G. (2010) Notes on Participatory Art. Author House
[18] Irwin, R. L., & Springgay, S. (2012). *Visual Arts Research* Special Issue on A/r/tography, 38 (2). University of Illinois Press.
[19] Sullivan G. (2010) Art Practice as Research. Sage Publications.
Exploring art practice as a form of visual inquiry became a central element of the research process in the Shankill Palestine mural.

critique knowledge is central to arts practice, and artists are actively involved in these kinds of thoughtful research processes'. (Sullivan, 2010 p.96)

The methodology implements narratives inspired by Fook & Gardner's *Critical Reflection as Research* (2007), intending to disrupt and 'unsettle individual assumptions to bring about social change' (2007 p.16). This disruption initiated the organization of workshops in Northern Ireland, Israel and the Palestine Authority to gather information that would enhance the visual content of the work. These workshops focused on the production of visual materials drawn from the educational principles of Critical Pedagogy and democratic education Freire: (1970) & Dewey (1944).

The final artwork was the result of over twenty workshops and meetings held in Belfast and in Israel/Palestine throughout the spring of 2009. The finished mural aimed to penetrate and disrupt the existing visual linguistic landscape and in doing so challenge the perceptions of self and other within the deeply contested space of a sectarian interface. The final presentation was a multiple layered collection of images composed into one large mural. The painting was then framed by texts carved into the concrete fabric of the wall. This juxtaposition of intentions, also highlighting the requests of the community, shows a conflict between the accepted and that which is questioned, targeting public pedagogy, and narrowed down by the specifics of the context. Consequently, the artwork becomes a complex combination of ideas and debates while challenging perceptions and assumptions of those who experience it. The project ultimately explored the potentiality of visual art in public spaces in terms of how the work produced a critical public pedagogy – a role still in process of definition and grounded in contested spaces such as Belfast and Israel Palestine.

Fig 1. Tourists on a 'mural tour, discuss the Shankill Palestine Mural, Cupar Way Peace Wall (2011)                                        Photo; J. Johnston

'If Walls Could Talk'

> Based on the process of producing an artwork for the Shankill Wall in Belfast, this project examined how language and art offer a key to spatial practices, negotiating elements of top-down and bottom-up relationships and visual communication. By combining reality and imagination with theory and practice, it presented a defined linguistic landscape, a work that involves practices of art, language and community.

> Mor Somerfeld & Johnston J., (2012 p.161)

**Introduction**

In autumn of 2011, I was approached by representatives of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Greater Shankill Community partnership and asked to consult on the development of a major new public arts commission for the Peace-wall on Cupar way in West Belfast (see fig 1.). Cupar Way is part of network of so-called peace-lines that became operational in September 1969[20] following a prolonged period of public unrest and rioting between the Catholic and Protestant communities across Northern Ireland.[21] The Cupar way interface became a major flashpoint for these clashes and within weeks the British Army had erected a temporary series of barriers that later transformed into the 40ft by two mile wall that exists today.

From an initial brief that set out to decorate the Cupar Way Wall with a new series of artworks, the project evolved to challenge the perceptions of the funding agency and the community who had jointly commissioned the work. 'If walls could talk ', was a joint commission of the Northern Ireland Arts Council, in collaboration with a number of local NGO's including the Greater Shankill Community Partnership. The project fund of £100,000 was divided into three distinct commissions with the aim that all three works would 'turn a negative icon into a celebration of the area (Shankill) and its people'[22].

There was the added notion that this new 'gallery' would attract a substantial number of tourists into an area of extreme social deprivation and therefore create a ripple of economic benefit for the local community.

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[20] Conclusions of meeting of joint security committee 9th September 1969, Stormont Castle.http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/1969/proni_HA-32-3-2_1969-09-09.pdf (accessed 27th April 2015) *Appendix 1.2*

[21] The unrest was the result of months of political and social instability that was prompted by widespread street protests led by the Northern Ireland Civil rights calling for equality for the minority Catholic community in the province. http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch68.htm (accessed 27th April 2016)

[22] Tom Scott OBE Chairman off the Greater Shankill Partnership. 'If Walls Could Talk (2011) *Appendix 1.1*

**The political, historical and social context**

While the Cupar Way Wall was designed to nullify the potential conflict between Catholic and Protestant, it also served to create a ghetto mentality on either side of its divide. This ghettoization had the added effect of creating a separation between the lower and upper areas of the Shankill. As a result two paramilitary groups clashed in a bid to enforce control over the upper and lower areas leading to internecine conflicts within the Protestant/Loyalist community side of the wall[23]. The two main paramilitary groups in Loyalism – The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), claimed to represent the same cause – that is the maintenance of the union between Britain and Northern Ireland. However, they had a contested history based largely on territorial control and issues related to criminal activity. While the UVF had a past connection to the British Army and fashioned its ranks on a strong disciplinary model, the UDA was a reactionary group that consisted of a variety of local gangs and leaders who had little military strategy and lacked the discipline of the UVF. In the winter of 1974 these tensions escalated into violence with each group trying to out-kill the other.  The result of this 'turf war' led to the 'carving up' of the Shankill into two distinct districts - Lower and Upper. The UDA controlled lower Shankill while the UVF took command of the Upper Shankill[24]. Fig. 2 and 3. Illustrate how wall murals are used to claim and mark territory. Each photograph was taken in the 'lower Shankill' and hence the images relate to the dominance of the UDA in this area.  The Cupar Peace Way sits midway between the upper and lower Shankill. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the wall is not only the demarcation line between Catholic and Protestant, it also marks the interface between UDA and UVF control of the Shankill. This separation remains to this day.

To gain access to the wall the project organisers had to negotiate with several conflicting agendas related to this internecine conflict. This would involve

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[23] Byrne, J. The Belfast Peace Walls: The problems, politics and policies of the Troubles architecture, Unpublished PhD, University of Ulster, 2011.
[24] Taylor, P. *Loyalists*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. p.146, 1999.

negotiations with paramilitary organisations and ex-prisoner groups from both the UDA and UVF.



Fig 2. UDA territorial mural Lower Shankill (2015)



Fig 3. UDA Murals Lower Shankill 2015

It was against this backdrop that I was asked to support the application of a prominent Loyalist mural artist who had been decreed by the 'local community' as their artist of choice. David (Dee) Craig (see fig 4.), had been painting political murals for many years that celebrated the history the Protestant ascendency in Ireland. He also painted images that supported the actions and history of the UVF. However, due to his skills as an artist and his ability to combine each of the loyalist agendas through historical murals he had gained the respect of both the UDA and the UVF.

Dee is best known for his many paintings that commemorated Protestant history in Ireland and, in particular, the 1690 Battle of the Boyne.[25] In an interview with Dee, he described his first mural as a repeat of a Unionist protest poster made in response to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. He was 14 years of age and went on to paint the same images on the walls throughout his native east Belfast – producing ten similar murals over a two-week period. He describes that he felt compelled to make the paintings – to 'strike his blow for Ulster', the first of many. Dee proceeded to paint some of the most iconic Loyalist murals of the Troubles and his work has formed a backdrop for journalists and documentary filmmakers.

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[25] The victory of William of Orange (King Billy) over the Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 resulted in the Protestant ascendency in Ireland.King William III was the Protestant head of the Dutch royal house of Orange. He was married to Mary, the Protestant-raised daughter of King James II of Britain, a convert to Catholicism.  The victory of William III is celebrated in Loyalist areas across Northern Ireland form the late spring to early Autumn each year and culminates in the 12th July Orange Order marches.
Padraig Lenihan,1690 The Battle of the Boyne (2003)

David 'Dee Craig and I shortly before the installation of the painting
(June 2010)

While Dee was a popular choice within the community and across the Loyalist divide, his application made the Arts Council extremely uncomfortable. As a publically funded body, the Arts Council had done all it could to avoid associations with paramilitary artists. Consequently, due to my history of working with paramilitary groups, the Arts Council asked me to take leadership on the project and act as the main applicant. I recognized this as a unique opportunity to work on a collaboration that would challenge my own practice and views as well as that of a major figure from within the mural tradition of Loyalism.

The collaboration would lead to the development of a rich and invaluable relationship. The project took us through the Israel/Palestine conflict and offered us the opportunity to reference many other conflicts on the dividing walls of Belfast, questioning the merits of segregation and undermining the normality of dividing walls. The work also combined a practice led research that aimed to form a new public art practice that combined studio work with public pedagogy.

A pedagogy designed to enable moments of disruption, critical reflection and to ultimately dislodge established notions of assumptions of self and other Fook & Gardner (2007). I have come to name this approach as a 'compelled pedagogy'[26]; where moments of possible disruption are deliberately sought, or created by the artist educator to puncture existing norms.

**Setting the Context: Israel/ Palestine and the Shankill**

Each side of the Northern Irish conflict has forged a connection with either Israel or Palestine. While most loyalists do not recognise Palestine as state or as a national people, Republicans support and draw inspiration from the Palestinian cause. Unionist/ Loyalism respects and in many ways, admires the military capacities of the state of Israel, aligning the defensive nature of Loyalism with the Israeli right to defend itself against what they would describe as a hostile Arab Middle East. This notion of defence and isolation provides a clue to the connection between Loyalism and Israel. While many Loyalist groups have close connections with far-right movements across Europe who are by in large anti-Semitic – the same loyalist groups will fly the flag of Israel alongside that of Northern Ireland and the British flag (see fig 5 & 6). The reverse can be seen on the streets of Catholic / Republican areas where the flag of Palestine is flown alongside that of the Irish Republic. Indeed, either side of the sectarian divide in Belfast contests even the name of Israel and Palestine. This issue became a major element of the project, with the word 'Palestine' being rejected by a number of the key stakeholders, including the influential Orange Order. However, this issue was extremely important and I returned to it time and again as we negotiated the composition and content of the work. Eventually I was able to reach an agreement with the Order that enabled the word Palestine to be craved into the surface of the wall. Palestine took its place alongside other names of places scared by division and segregated by walls or physical borders. The carving of Palestine and Israel into the wall, alongside the names

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[26] I am drawing on Freire's (1970) concept of critical consciousness to inform this term and practice. In conflict transformation, a compelled pedagogy would create the conditions for disruption of perceptions of self and other. It is a conscious act by the peace worker to open a new front for discussion and dialogue – acting to encourage reflection on your own circumstances through the introduction of a third party. I call this a compelled pedagogy because it is a forced moment of learning.

of Berlin, Bagdad, and Nicosia, acted to form a symbolic bond between the peace-lines of Ulster and the dividing walls of other contexts, serving to highlight my desire to pronounce the wall not as a gallery but a failure of politics, human relations and most importantly, education.



Fig 5. Loyalism / Israel          Fig 6.  Palestine / Republicanism mural

The above images highlight the connection between each contested space and the symbolic identity of each context. The use of flags in Loyalism and republicanism is a common way of marking territory. In these images we see how flags project a very clear message to the viewer while the Republican paintings use of complex imagery with text which, asks the viewer to give more consideration to the narrative.  Each offer a lens through which the remainder of the commentary can be read but most importantly they also provide a template – that is the combination of symbols, texts and images, that Dee and I used to design the final composition of the mural as can be in fig 7 & 8.

Fig 7. Palestine and separation
Frame images of UVF volunteers
parading in the upper Shankill
(circa 1912)

Fig 8. Edward Carson
founder of the UVF and
seen by many as the father
of Ulster Unionism is
framed by the carved text
of Israel and Security

**Pedagogical & Educational Process - Workshops Belfast, Israel Palestine**

"One fatal tree there stands of Knowledge called,
forbidden them to taste: Knowledge forbidden?
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know,
Can it be death? And do they only stand
By ignorance, is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith?"
Milton J. Paradise Lost, Book IV (1674) Schwartz, R.M (2015
p.38)

The success or failure of the work rested on the pedagogical and educational relationships formed between myself and Dee Craig, plus a range of other subsidiary collaborations as noted below. Drawing on the principles of critical pedagogy and the methods discussed in chapter one I constructed a research programme that involved a series of collaborations with members of the public from the Shankill and Israel Palestine. These public workshops and discussion groups led to the production of visual materials that eventually became integrated into the composition of the artwork.

While I was conscious that the process needed to connect the artwork to the aspirations of the local community and their representatives, I was also committed to challenging existing local perceptions and their aspirations of the work by setting these against other related narratives and contexts as noted previously. To achieve this, I introduced the prospect of Dee and I spending some time researching the connections between the local context and Israel Palestine and in particular the separation walls of Belfast and Jerusalem. I recognised that this form of empirical research would enable the beliefs, narratives, 'place of origin' and ideologies of the Middle East to be integrated into the work. I was also conscious that this specific process would enable Dee to confront his own anti-Palestine prejudice. The proposal was agreed and with a certain degree of naivety and trepidation Dee accepted my invitation to take part in a series of workshops that took place over a period of fourteen days in Israel Palestine.

I turned to my friend and colleague Aura Mor-Somerfield, a lecturer in Arab and Hebrew studies at the University of Haifa, to help organise the workshops. Aura's research is driven by her commitment to challenge the division between Arab and Jew by questioning how public space is utilised to create and promote cultural hegemony. Aura recognised the complexities involved in producing an artwork of this nature in such a sensitive public space. I asked Aura to organize a range of workshops with adults and young people (similar to those organised in Belfast), and though her connections to the Bilingual education sector in

Israel[27] she provided Dee and I with access to Jewish and Arab communities in Haifa and Jerusalem. Aura also organised meetings with peace activists, teachers and parents from the bilingual schools. In addition, and crucially, she introduced Dee and I to a Palestinian woman who had been the victim of Israeli evictions in East Jerusalem (see page 43). These meetings and workshops created a unique infrastructure that enabled Dee and I to gather information from a very broad range of sources.

The Belfast workshops were less inclusive as there was no option to include the narrative of the Catholic community. We worked with a number of individuals and groups including; The Greater Shankill Community Partnership, Alternatives Restorative Justice Project, Impact Youth Training Program plus other local political and community groups including the Progressive Unionist party (the political wing of the UVF), the Shankill Orange Order, school groups and a variety of youth organizations. The dialogues formed between the community, Dee, and I, promoted a political forum based on mutual respect and most importantly, critique. We encouraged debate and welcomed disagreement – using difference of opinions to fuel a critical dialectical process that I had hoped to create.  Drawing on the methods discussed in section 1.7 we developed tools such as displays of drawings, sketches and image-based ideas relating to the themes discussed Dee and I spent many hours working in the studio, discussing and researching the themes drawn from the workshops while also developing images and texts. We held open studios for school groups and other interested parties and welcomed young and old to attend drop-in sessions to discuss and inform the content of the work.

 Consequently, the studio became a place for challenging conversations and analysis to emerge and become resolved.  I would therefore describe our time in the studio as moments that became central to the integrity of the process of transformation. The critical nature of the dialogues presented opportunities to

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[27] Aura Mor Somerfield is a founding member of the Bilingual education sector in Israel Palestine. These schools teach Arab and Jewish children in the same classroom through the medium of Arabic and Hebrew. The sector is committed to building a shared community in Israel based on equality and human rights.

disrupt the existing positions of those involved and as such introduced uncertainty into the process.

While there are many examples to draw on, the most prevalent relates to a visit by a group of four representatives of the Orange Order. As noted later in this section, I had previously met with the same group to discuss the content of the work and although there was a degree of mistrust (based chiefly on the inclusion of the word Palestine on the artwork) we had established a good working relationship. The physical reality of the painting enabled a discussion to emerge related to the various images and symbols embedded in the work. While some images, such as that of the Orangeman and child placed at the centre of the composition, presented a field of recognition (as discussed in section 2.2), others challenged the somewhat static position of the group in relation to the inclusion of the word 'Palestine' in the work. This led to an intense discussion that highlighted a depth of historical knowledge not covered in our original conversation. I recognised the opportunity to push the group further by extending their reading of the images from separate narratives to a collective composite entity. We reached a point where we acknowledged the potentiality of the existence of 'diverse meaning' or what could be termed as a critical disagreement akin to what Ranciere (2010) terms as 'dissensus.' In this context 'dissensus' can be seen as a disruption of established symbols of identity and belonging and can be utilised to broaden our perceptions of self and Other. As such dissensus is an; 'activity that cuts across cultural and identity belonging and hierarchies between discourses and genres, working to introduce new subjects and heterogeneous objects into the field of perception.' Corcoran (2010)

The disruption of the established visual language of Orangism, coupled with debate and challenge, enabled new spaces of possibility to emerge that compel the protagonists to move beyond established norms. In essence such engagements create what peace theorists call 'ripe moments'.[28] The studio

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[28] The concept of a ripe moment centres on the parties' perception of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS), optimally associated with an impending, past or recently avoided catastrophe (Zartman & Berman l982, pp 66-78; Zartman l983; Touval & Zartman l985, ppll, 258-60; Zartman l985/l989). The concept is based on the notion that when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to

exchange led to a negotiated settlement that called for an acceptance of the view of the Other and as such the word 'Palestine' became embedded in the work alongside that of Israel.   In art practice, such moments are translated into the marks the artist may make on the surface of the canvas, marks that open new possibilities, or into thoughts that ~~take~~ move the artists beyond his/her immediate knowledge. The concept of doubt or uncertainty is introduced through the dialectical process where words and images are questioned in regard to their relevance and value to the artwork.  Dewey (2010) recognises that uncertainty leads to reflective thinking - a key capacity needed in the transformation of conflict Lederach (2013). Dewey (2010) revealed two sub-processes that I believe are relevant to the combined practices of art making and conflict transformation that were present in the studio:

> *(a)* A state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and *(b)* an act of searching or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief. (p.9)

These 'studio moments' lead the participant (including myself) into new paths of truth perception, therefore enhancing the pedagogical practice. Borriaud (1998) presents socially engaged art as a point of 'social interstice', where relational processes and possibilities emerge out of performances and happenings. In the studio, the 'interstice' was deliberately and consciously constructed to enable and compel conversations that would create and describe two aspects of material form – the art product and the dialogues. Dewey's (2012) 'pragmatic epistemology' describes how this 'uncertainty' or hesitation leads to active searches of investigation and hence to critical reflection. In the context of the studio, the dialectical process produced new images and hence the artwork embodies these moments of disruption. A disruption ultimately challenges 'existing assumptions' Fook & Garner, (2007 p.28).

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both of them (although not necessarily in equal degree or for the same reasons), they seek an alternative policy or Way Out. (Zartman W.L. 2008 E-International Relations http://www.e-ir.info/2008/12/20/ripeness-the-importance-of-timing-in-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/    . (Accessed 24th April 2015)

Bourriaud (1998) takes this further describing 'Art as a state of encounter' (ibid p.8), he sees this encounter as a creation of artistic and social form; as 'a linking element and a principle of dynamic agglutination'; 'a dot on a line'. (Ibid p.20). That is the clumping together of particles that lead to the formation of new matter.

Therefore, the studio moments between Dee and I were a direct outcome of this process of critical engagement, an engagement that presented opportunities for new ideas to form through a disruption of what already exits. Drawing on Althusser, Bourriaud would suggest that this creation of form is based on a 'random encounter', that is something that happens by default through the process of engagement.

> ..'atoms fall in parallel formations into the void, following a slightly diagonal course. If one of these atoms swerves off course, it causes an encounter with the next atom and from encounter to encounter, a pile up and the birth of the world". This is how form comes into being, from the deviation and random encounter between two hitherto parallel elements'. Bourriaud, (1998 p.18).

Althusser describes this as a 'materialism of encounter'. Althusser (2006 p. 256) 'The swerve upsets, dismantles and transforms situations as it causes collisions between tangentially associated materials'. Odih, (2013 p. 95) My work with Dee both in the studio and in the field forced a collision to take place. This was a process of direct confrontation – an interventionist approach rather than a random encounter.  In this case the educational and pedagogical work comes to the fore. By placing Bourriaud in conversation with Dewey, Fooks and Freire, the action of the artist can be viewed as that of the educator. Furthermore, this action takes on an overall purpose that aims to promote a commitment to change in pursuit of the common good. This is particularly prevalent within the context of conflict transformation. By creating the ripe moment through the art of encounter, the material force that emerges has the capacity to disrupt the narrative of "them and us."  These are targeted

interventions (controlled explosions so to speak) that must be handled with great care.

The workshops in Belfast and Israel had many such moments that cut across the experiences of all partners. However, I believe the key moments occurred in a classroom in Haifa, a bilingual school near Jerusalem, a Tent in East Jerusalem and in our studio close to the peace wall in Belfast.

**Israel/Palestine**

Our visit to Israel coincided with the first Gaza war of 2008-09.

The workshops took place in the relatively new (2010) 'Hand in Hand' bilingual preschool in Haifa and the original bilingual school of Wahat Al Salem, Neve Shalom or Oasis of Peace near Jerusalem.  The Neve Shalom primary school is at the heart of a village established in 1970 to promote interfaith living and co-dependency in Israel[29]. Both schools are part of a small group of five that share the common mission to educate Arab and Jewish children to live with one another avoiding difference and conflict.

Returning to the work of Dewey (2012), Freire (1970), hooks (1994) Giroux (2007) & Kincheloe (2008), the structure of each workshop was based on the principles of critical dialogue and reflection. The workshops were underpinned by a number of questions related to identity.  Dee and I had developed these questions from previous workshops held in Belfast. Participants were asked to respond to each question in the form of drawings. This method involved the use of 'Identity Tabs' (as discussed by Galtung (1990) and eventually led to the production of thumbnail drawings that intend to capture a sense of the individual and also the group identity that he /she may identify with.

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[29] **Neve Shalom** (Hebrew: נְוֵה שָׁלוֹם, *lit.* Oasis of Peace), also known as **Wāħat as-Salām** (Arabic: واحةالسلام)[1] is  a cooperative  village jointly  founded  by Israeli Jews and Palestinian-Israeli Arabs in an attempt to show that the two peoples can live side by side peacefully, as well as to conduct educational work for peace, equality and understanding between the two peoples.
Feuerverger, G. *Oasis of Dreams: Teaching and Learning Peace in a Jewish-Palestinian Village in Israel.* (Accessed 24th April 2015)

Each school promoted the event, describing the workshops as art based focusing on themes of identity and commonality.

**Haifa workshop – (March 2010)**

Our first workshop took place in Haifa, involving a visual art exercise with pre-school children's families, covering commonalities between Arabs and Jews. Approximately 20 parents joined the workshop, which was conducted in English and translated by Aura. Dee and I led the workshop.

The introduction invited the group to explore their identities in visual form. We achieved this by introducing ourselves to the group though the visual language of the Northern Ireland walls murals, talking about differences in content, style, and colour, while defining the historical identities of each community through each painting. A key moment involved forging links between Republicanism and Palestine, and Loyalism with Israel. This planned activity had a great effect particularly demonstrated through an Israeli Jewish teacher of the pre-school, who articulated an individual interpretation of flags and symbolism found within a mural painted by Republicans in support of Palestinian hunger strikes. This mural from a Republican area of West Belfast formed a link between the hunger strikes of Ktzi'ot Prison in the Negev and the IRA hunger strike at the Maze Prison in Belfast in 1981.

The second phase of the workshop set out to divide each group according to ethnicity. This was a controversial exercise that aimed to extract the images and symbols related to each group.

I worked with the group who had identified as Arab – Palestinian. From the outset, the group made their own initiation on colour choice in order to express their identities, refusing the chosen green, red, black (common colours of Palestine), choosing black and white instead. They used small drawings and new words of overlapping Arabic and surprisingly Hebrew, while occasionally pausing to discuss the imagery and word choices. Conclusively, a single image was chosen which seemed to summarise their conversations, an olive tree

emerged on a large sheet of paper. The tree was soon surrounded by the pattern of the Palestinian keffiyeh[30].



Fig 9. Palestinian women make their drawing of the Olive Tree
(March 2010)

Mid-way through the session Aura came into my workshop along with and Dee, they invited me to join their group in another room. When I entered the space, I saw that this group had drawn almost exactly the same image as my group. We were all clearly moved by the outcome of each workshop, while Aura became quite emotional at the recognition of what for her, was a moment of legitimacy and a visible manifestation of the bilingual school concept. Both groups had rejected the colours I had presented to them. Both had questioned the symbols that had been adopted by the Loyalist and Republican mural artists in Belfast and both – even though separated into two distinct groups and divided by a wall, had produced the same olive tree as a symbol of their identity (see

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[30] Traditionally worn by Palestinian farmers, the black and white keffiyeh worn by Palestinian men of any rank became a symbol of Palestinian nationalism during the Arab Revolt of the 1930s. Its prominence increased during the 1960s with the beginning of the Palestinian resistance movement and its adoption by Palestinian politician Yasser Arafat http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/11/fashion/shows/11KAFFIYEH.html (accessed 27th April 2015)

fig 9 & 10). The two Olive Trees of 'Hand in Hand' preschool Haifa became a central motif of the Cupar Street mural on the separation wall of West Belfast.



Fig 10. The Olive tree drawing (Israeli group – Haifa March 2010)

Over the next few days we presented a number of workshops at the Neve Shalom School near Jerusalem. We worked with children, teachers and parents to develop imagery and ideas for the mural. The teachers presented a copy of Milton's account of the temptation of Adam and Eve in Garden of Eden, taken from 'A Paradise Lost', while the parents discussed the issues that they feel separate Jew from Arab. Interestingly religion was never mentioned – only politics. Meanwhile the children produced drawings of separation walls and illustrated what they felt needed to be done in order to remove them. Education was a common theme and this series of quite extraordinary meetings. Dee and I were very moved by the many testimonies that we heard. We collected the data and discussed each workshop in great detail with Aura after the event. The text of Milton's poem and images of the children joined the Haifa trees in our journey back to Belfast. Milton's words became a central feature of our conversations and presented a critique of those 'gate keepers' who would deny knowledge to their fellow citizens.

Fig. 11, 12, 13 School workshops: Wahat Al Salem - Neve Shalom
(March 2010)

**The Cupar Way Shankill Palestine Mural**

We had set a six-week target to complete the 30 ft. mural.  The plan was to paint the artwork on wooden panels and then transfer the collective images onto plastic film, this was designed to protect the piece from the elements. We established a studio in a large warehouse, which was part of a youth training facility in the Shankill. After our two-week research trip in Israel, Dee and I returned to Belfast to continue developing the concepts and content of the artwork through further workshops. As noted earlier, we encouraged on-going conversations through drop in sessions and at the beginning of each week, the work was presented to the local sponsoring organization for critique. Some of the youth working in the centre joined in the painting of the work. They brought some meaningful insights to the narrative and added some ideas to the composition. A few of the young people joined Dee and I during painting sessions. I was delighted with their contribution and recognised that in these moments, the artwork began its journey from the studio to the public space.

The composition adapted a common language of the symbols of Orangism and in keeping with Dee's past works, historical connections to the Ulster Unionist 1912 anti-home rule campaign. This was added by a desire to highlight the Israel-Unionist connection through post-Holocaust images of Jews arriving in Haifa Palestine in 1947. This image was juxtaposed at the opposite end of the composition by that of the Ulster Volunteers parading in 1912, serving the common themes of defiance and defence as can be seen below in fig 14.

Fig 14. The mural in production, Shankill Youth Traing Centre (spring 2010)

Midway through the process, I sent images and sketches of the work to Aura Mor Somerfield.  Aura, disliked the inclusion of Holocaust survivors and the use of the Israeli flag and the iconic yellow Star of David used by Nazis. She felt that the reference to the Holocaust and the nationalistic undertones represented by the flag of Israel, justified the militaristic culture and actions of the Israeli state. Remembering at this time the Israeli Defence force was engaged in a major offensive in Gaza.  Her comments created some conflict within the collaboration. I felt compelled to share her views with Dee and members of the community. Aura wanted me to negotiate the removal of all references to the holocaust. I knew that this would be a non-negotiable issue as Dee and the community had already praised this element of the composition. This brought my mind to an analogy shared with me by the former Loyalist political leader David Ervine[31]. When referring to his role in delivering the Loyalist ceasefire of 1994 he told me how he had to bring two constituencies with him on the journey toward non-violence. The first was the ordinary person on the street who had felt they had lost a sense of identity due to the Good

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[31] David Ervine was the leader of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), the political wing of the UVF. He held office as East Belfast member of the Northern Ireland Assembly between 1998 – 2007.As a leading PUP figure Ervine helped to deliver the loyalist ceasefire of 1994.

Friday Peace Agreement (1998); the second was the combatants and those members of the Loyalist paramilitaries who wanted to continue the 'war' in favour of peace. David talked about his need to stretch each constituency as if attached to him by an elastic band. Even though one might be aware of his or her destination, time is needed to arrive there, therefore being aware of an elastic band and how it always returns to its source. However, each time it is stretched, it changes. This affects its molecular structure in pursuit of delivering the constituency to a new place of understanding.

In this specific episode the elastic band can be seen as a pedagogical instrument with the person who stretches acting as the educator. The language of the mural with its disruptive imagery was stretching and indeed testing the relationship between Dee, Aura and I. Dee was moved by Aura's remarks and he recalled the difficulties he had encountered when returning to Belfast after Israel. He talked about how knowing and getting to know those people (Palestinians) had 'twisted his head', He referred specifically to the Al Kurd family, living in a makeshift tent on a wasteland close to their original home (see fig 15 & 16).



Fig 15 & 16. The Al Kurd 'home' in East Jerusalem (2010)

Dee further elaborated on the parents of the bilingual preschool in Haifa and their rejection of common images in favour of their own symbolism of the Olive Tree. We went on to discuss the importance of the workshops in Israel and how we could use what we learned from them in the process we were now developing. We both knew we could not remove the references to the Holocaust

but we also recognised that we could add new images and symbols, as the parents had done in Haifa. It was at this point I suggested that we carve texts into the surface of the wall and use these texts to draw references to other divided cities and the issues that some of the children in the school workshops in Neve Shalom had shared in reference to what they believed were the reasons for division. We agreed with this strategy and I immediately made a number of sketches to share with the community and Aura. In many ways this was the elastic band that David Ervine described.

However, I had to overcome the reluctance of the Orange Order to have the word 'Palestine' included in the texts. In one studio meeting a member of the Order made his thoughts known, stating that there was no such place as Palestine. To my surprise and with great hope, Dee replied, saying he had been there and he had met the people of Palestine and it most definitely exists and therefore it belongs in the texts. This was a major moment in the process and highlights the learning journey that Dee was on. It also highlighted the importance of this element in the work. We effectively sold the concept by offering to paint an Orangeman at the centre of the composition. The order wanted this image to represent what they saw as the family orientation of the Orange Order. Although I fundamentally disagreed with this presentation of the Orange Order, I acknowledged that the inclusion of the images would enable the word Palestine to be carved into the wall (see fig. 17).

Dee and I reworked the composition and we shared the new concepts with Aura via a skype meeting in the studio. We all had to stretch a little to achieve our goal and within two weeks I commissioned a stonemason to carve the texts into the wall – acting as a frame for the painted images.



Fig. 17. A portion of the text carved into the surface of the Peace/ Separtation Wall.

The final work was erected on the Cupar Way Wall in May 2010. The photograph illustrated in Fig 18 was taken in June 2016, six years after the work was erected.  The mural remains intact with little or no interference from the many graffiti writers who constantly mark the walls. The mural has become a popular stop of point for tourists on so-called 'Mural Tours' and is used by unofficial tourist guides as an example of the international connectivity between the Northern Ireland conflict and the Middle East. Dee and I presented the work to local schools and other agencies such as youth organisations etc. to illustrate the importance of process toward enabling the transformative processes that the piece encouraged.



18. Fig. 'Shankill Palestine Mural (2015)

**Epilogue**



Fig 19. 'No More'.  Mural by David Dee Craig

Painted on the East Belfast, Catholic /Protestant Interface (October 2010)

A few months following the project's completion, Dee produced a new mural (see fig 19), in his neighbourhood of East Belfast, depicting two local school children reaching out to each other to shake hands; the boy dressed in a Protestant school uniform while the girl is dressed in the uniform of a Catholic school. The accompanying text is titled 'No More'.  At that point I had left Northern Ireland and was working at Goldsmiths University of London. Dee emailed an image of the finished work asking for my view. I remember sitting, going to an online archive to find a paramilitary painting made by Dee in the same area in the 1990's, as can be seen in fig. 20.

As can be seen below, the comparison was stark and in that moment my feelings mirrored those of Aura when the olive trees emerged from the workshops in Haifa.

Fig 20. UVF Gunmen. Mural by David Dee Craig

East Belfast Catholic – Protestant interface (circa 1990)

Dee continues to create murals in pursuit of improving peace, highlighting historical or community subjects. I met him in Belfast in summer 2015 when we talked about our experiences of working together and the re-emergence of paramilitary style murals on the streets of Protestant Belfast. He was clear that paintings were in his words, "a damn sight better than digging up the guns and saying here's our cry for help!"[32]  There is little doubt that a painting of a gunman is better than the reality, but these new 'war' paintings suggest that the peace process has failed to address fears of each community.

Prior to separating, Dee took me to the scene of his latest painting on the Shankill produced on a 'gable wall' in a side street in the Upper Shankill (see fig 21).  Dee described his work as his history painting, in which gunmen had discarded their masks, signifying their ordinary selves caught within an extraordinary situation. He said these were real people "who gave their lives in defence of Ulster and it was time that we knew who they were".  David Dee Craig is a loyalist and a proud Ulsterman. His artworks capture the mood of an

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[32] Appendix 4: Recording of interview with David Craig (June 2015)

expansive community in Protestant East and West Belfast. While our mural stands tall on the dividing walls of West Belfast as a reminder of the place of Belfast alongside cities like Berlin and Nicosia – it also asks questions of the very existence of that wall. One day it will come down and the carved names will crumble into dust maybe then the time will be right to remove the 'war murals' but until then we must learn from them and most importantly learn with those who paint them.



Fig 21. UVF Commemorative Mural Shankill Belfast 2015 (David Dee Craig)

**Section 2.2**


**The Killing of Michael McIlveen**



Fig. Detail of the finished work highlighting the 'palimpsest' method-visualization of a process of cultural and historical disruption.

> 'This 'making visible' is not a simple illusion, it participates in positivity I call the 'distribution of the sensible': an overall relation between ways of being, ways of doing and ways of saying. It is not the mask beneath which inequality hides. It is the double-edged visibility of this inequality: inequality applied in its own suppression, proving through its actions the incessant and unending nature of suppression'.
> Jacque Rancière 'On Ignorant School Master' cited in Bingham and Biesta (2010 p.8)

**Preamble**

The peace process of Northern Ireland is caught within a narrative that seems to constantly suppresses the nature of the conflict in favour of the maintaining a 'sense of order' and normality. This image of order is made visible through the institutions of local and regional government and is in my view exemplified through the raft of cultural policies that aim to gloss over the 'sins of the past' in preference to facing the fears and yet possibilities of the future. Cultural policies such as 'reimaging,' are designed with good intention.  They aim to reimage the visual language of the conflict – such as the paramilitary and political murals that adorn the working class walls of Republican and Loyalist areas across Northern Ireland and in doing so project a new image onto and into the communities that have been most affected by the conflict.  In my view these policies support Galtung's concept of structural violence (1969) cultural violence (1996). Reimaging projects aim to paint over the existing visual pedagogies of the street – which are deemed offensive, to present 'non-offensive' images that are the result of what I believe is a deeply misguided process. Rancière's comments, noted at the beginning of this section, draws attention to the 'making visible' as a participant in the 'distribution of the sensible' and therefore part of the articulation of a public narrative, therefore, it is important to consider who or what it is that constructs this narrative and to engage with the visible language that underpins it. Fig. 22 illustrates a method or approach that I have developed that draws attention to this agenda and as such represents the language of division while at the same time recognizing the potential for future cohesion. This is an explicit intention to explore and include, what some have described as, 'offensive language' (see section 2.4), enable the participants and the subsequent viewers to witness and experience the processes or journey that is needed to move from one position to another. It also highlights the reality that the previous position is still present and requires constant attention. Such omissions or 'painting over' the past serve to suppress and deny the conditions that continue to feed conflict. I my view these policies only serve to manage conflict rather than transforming it. In this context a cultural policy, born out of a need to describe Northern Ireland as a peaceful and 'normal 'place, has led to production of superficial artworks. The policy

ignores the potential that the political murals have to play a significant role part in the process of conflict transformation. Hence, the policy of normalization which is born out of sensibility only serves to feed this 'incessant and unending nature of suppression' Ranciere in Bingham and Biesta (2010 p.8).

Lederach (2005) recognizes that peace processes are rarely secure and as such inevitable truths often break through the veneer of normality to expose a narratives and images that feed conflict. The following commentary describes a series of events that exposed the vulnerability of the Northern Ireland peace process and highlighted the ongoing contempt between the two main communities Roman Catholic and Protestant that is founded on centuries division and hurt.

**Introduction**

On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2006, a young boy was beaten and left for dead in an alleyway in the town of Ballymena in Northern Ireland. The boy, 15 year-old Michael McIlveen, died in hospital five days later. The killing provided a stark reminder of the fragility of the process and underlying fault-lines that continue to rupture community relations in Northern Ireland to this day.  Michael's killing came a time of the year that historically has pressurized the fragile relations between Catholic and Protestant in Ulster – the Orange Order Marching season.  In the lead up to Michael's murder there had been a number of sectarian clashes in the town - some believed these were fuelled by the removal of flags and the over-painting of murals in both republican and loyalist areas of the town (see appendix 1(b) – interviews with community workers January 2007). Eventually six young men from the town were charged and sent for trial for the murder of Michael. Tensions were high in the region and there was a significant fear amongst local community leaders and youth workers that the trial could lead to a further rupture in community relations.

**Phase One: Negotiating the terms of the project**

I was asked to visit the town and meet with community leaders, youth workers and young people to discuss the possibility of making a number of artworks that would in some minor way disrupt the potential for further division. Although I

was deeply sceptical about the intention of the project, I had worked with the funding officers before and fully trusted their opinion and understanding of the role of art in such contexts. After an intense period of dialogue with local youth workers and some young people, I agreed to develop a project that would engage with a group of young people from each community. The structure, timing and funding of the project allowed for a reasonable time period of six months to develop and realise the artworks. In consultation with three youth groups I organized a series of separate workshops that brought me into contact with a group of Catholic and Protestant young people. The young people were part of existing youth and friendship groups. Each group had a connection with Michael – the Catholics either knew Michael through school, friendships and one boy in this group was a cousin of the murdered teenager. Meanwhile most of the Protestant group where either related to or knew some if not all the group who were charged with his murder.

My intention was to negotiate a possible meeting between the two groups, using the production of two distinct paintings/ murals on wood a means of introduction. Keeping faithful to previous projects, the content of each painting would reflect a series of dialogues that in this instance would cut across the sectarian divide, in pursuit of making visible the issues separating the two communities. I also planned to use the artworks to trigger further dialogues that could lead to the production of a new combined work.

This projection proved difficult for some individuals within the funding organization, who preferred defined outcomes from application to completion. As such it is valuable to note that the learning experience of such projects is not confined to the direct target groups. In this instance the funder needed to learn to trust the process and after a number of quite intense series of meetings and further negotiations around the purpose of art in such contexts, they agreed to support my proposal.

This reference to negotiation helps to frame the processes of my work within the context of peace building and in doing so further strengthens the connectivity between my practice and conflict transformation. However, unlike

traditional forms of peace building that 'has relied heavily on the word 'training' to refer to events and activities in which people are taught specific ways of responding to conflict,' Lederach (2013 p.108) my approach is not interested in telling people what to do or how to do it. Drawing on the principles of critical pedagogy, the principles of democratic education and the visual dialectic, the processes I promote invite dialogue as means to an end – that is the realization of a coherent visual language.  Hence the outcomes are dictated by critical dialogue and not by a set of predetermined outcomes.

So what comes first the painting or the dialogue? In this instance neither; the first objective of this process was to ensure participation. Once participation was established the project had a foundation that was constructed from self-interest and most importantly interdependency. Therefore, from the outset the 'relationship between the people become an integral part of the work'. Butler and Reiss (2007 p.17). Irish curator and academic Declan McGonacle talks about the role of the 'non- artist' as 'essential in the completion of the artwork and in the negotiation of meaning and value in the art process'. He describes this as ''A new modernity and the need for participation'. Butler and Reiss (2007 p. 17). I turn to Lederach to form the connection between the 'negotiated practices' outlined by Butler, Reiss and McGonacle and that of Peace Building. Lederach (2013) presents the case for a paradigmatic shift in peace building 'away from a concern with the resolution of issues and toward a 'frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships' Lederach (2013:24). However, when such relationships do not exist, they need to be made possible. Consequently, through preliminary dialogues with the youth workers and funding agents, new possibilities emerged, resulting in a fresh understanding with regards to the potentiality of the process.

**Phase Two: Building Relationships**

Over the next three months I travelled to Ballymena twice a week to work with the Catholic group on Tuesday and the Protestant on Thursday. Throughout this time the trial of the six young men accused of Michael's murder was taking place. This was a constant topic of 'quiet conversation'.

Asking the difficult questions

> "What images or symbols do you think the other side would choose if
> they were to make a painting to represent you"?

The first formal workshop focused on negotiating the space between myself, as outsider, and the young people. At the outset I explained that the project was part of a larger effort that could result in a coming together of Protestant and Catholic young people. I made it clear that this was not a necessary outcome but one that we hoped could happen. I went on to explain that other group would make a painting that would attempt to answer the question highlighted above. We viewed previous collaborative works that I made and in doing so discussed a number of potential methods including 'Palimpsest'. We agreed a set of principles in regard to expectations and respect. This was an extremely important conversation for all involved in the project but particularly the youth workers and the finding statutory organizations that were jointly funding and supporting the project. In this way I was recognizing their concerns providing an active response to the meetings I had with them in the first phase of the project. I was aware of the sensitivities of using paramilitary images or sectarian language in the works and wanted to ensure that any introduction of these agendas would be handled with care.

I asked the youth workers to chair a discussion that addressed the issue of acceptability. All agreed that images concerning cultural identity should be included, while also acknowledging that divisive issues and the use of sectarianism language would be implemented if not offensive. However, I was instructed not to address the murder of Michael in any way. While I understood the apprehension of many of the youth workers about discussing the issue, I also felt that the process of engagement and the young people should dictate the outcome of the work not the fear of adults.

The next set of three workshops explored the visual vocabulary of each group - a language that drew heavily on perceptions rather than realities. Each group

began to express an interest in how the other would see them– particularly when referencing images and symbols. This interest presented a 'ripe moment' (See section 2.1) that enabled me to establish another dialectical process that focused on perceptions of Self and Other. This led to an exchange of images and symbols between each group, the visualization became a vehicle of exchange and I as artist, was the intermediary. Similarities can be drawn her between shuttle diplomacy[33] a practice first noted by George Lenzowski in reference to the work of Henry Kissinger as he facilitated the end to the Yom Kippur war in 1973 Lenzowski (1990).

The fifth workshop offered the space to ask each group to bring images that they felt could be shared by their 'opposite number'. Surprisingly for some youth workers, images dealt with collective / single identity, with each drawing on stereotypical images of both Republican/ Catholic and Loyalist/ Protestant content. I brought these images from one group to the other and within a relatively short period of time a composition emerged that reflected the 'visual dialogues' between the groups. While these images and symbols could be seen to cement difference, I recognized an opportunity to utilize the exchange as a first point toward building a relationship between the groups.

One concern of the youth workers regarding the images was their specificity and the targeting of a single identity. However, I felt that the process would needed to reflect the honesty of their choices I also recognized that these images are – to a large extent, part of the problem and as such needed to negotiate not policed out of the work. In the context of protracted conflict, it is worth mentioning the lost notion of self in the desire to belong to a specific group. Kaldor (1998) characterizes such acts as 'fragmentative backward looking and exclusive' (p.78). She further elaborates on the outcome of a narrow controlled identity as a result of this condition, which she states is based on:

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[33] In diplomacy and international relations, **shuttle diplomacy** is the action of an outside party in serving as an intermediary between (or among) principals in a dispute, without direct principal-to-principal contact. George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East*, (Duke University Press: 1990), p. 131

'nostalgia of a heroic past, the memory of injustices, real and imagined, and of famous battles, won and lost. They acquire meaning through insecurity, through rekindled fear of historic enemies, or through a sense of being threatened by those with different labels'. (p. 78)

Many of the wall murals that surround the Catholic and Protestant housing estates of Ballymena fit this description, therefore I felt it was vital that the images – stereotypical or not remained in the painting.



Fig 23. The Protestant youth begin to draw their designs onto the surface of the mural.

These preliminary dialogues also revealed each group's insecurity with regards to what the other group thought of them. The use of stereotypical and symbolic references to historical, cultural and religious narratives not only revealed existing perceptions but it also provided each group with a 'site of recognition' (see section 1.7) that paradoxically gave each group a sense of security. Some

of these images such as the 'Celtic Cross' (see fig 23), Union flag (fig 24) and the Irish tricolour and football symbols (fig 25), were adapted and became part of their respective composition's and would remain as integral images in the painting throughout the process of production. Indeed, some of these images were also re-presented through the palimpsest process and as such became recognized as fundamental symbols (or tabs) of identity.



Fig 24.  Two of the young people from the Catholic group paint the union flag and other symbols to representation the identity of the Protestant group.

Fig 25. Two young people from the Protestant group use the images sent to them by the opposing group to illustrate the traditions and culture of the Catholic community.

While I was aware that the process could reinforce stereotypes, I felt the need to make this exchange so that the 'Other' would be part of the process and a cross community dialogue would emerge. The young people and youth workers needed to be confident that I would not misuse their ideas and would help them produce a result that they would be proud of. Meanwhile, I had to make sure that they understood my role as a combination or entanglement of; artist, educator and peace worker. The success of the project depended on how the young people and the youth leaders understood this 'combined identity' as it highlighted my intention not just to make a work of art, but to use the artistic process to explore the divisive agendas that underpin the conditions that led to the killing of Michael. As such I returned to this issue continuously to promote a conscious understanding of this role which in turn negated the potential ethical dilemmas that such a role can present.

In *Art of Negotiation* (2007), Butler & Riess present eight case studies that 'represent some broad tendencies of current artist led participatory practices' (p. 13), relying on negotiation between the artist and the community. Supportively, the 'art of negotiation' should create continuous, explorative and critical dialogues with a clear purpose and intention, aiming to build relationships of 'truth' that would be tested at times of rupture. In my view this is akin to the swerve that Bourriaud (1998) talks of (see section 2.1). I tend to see this movement as 'pedagogical bump' that enables education and learning to form new ideas that emerge out of a process or moment of disruption Bernstein (1982). This can also be discussed within the context the relationship between a studio artist and her/ his materials, only in this instance I am highlighting the materiality of human relations and hence the 'pedagogical bump' is a gentle 'leaning into 'the process of learning that compels the learner to explore rather than accept what exists. For Lederach, Peace Building demands the same creative forces that ask the artist to explore the unknown and the protagonists to conflict to take a leap of imagination. Lederach, (2005 p.34).

On one occasion, there was a seminar carried by the youth workers and young people for their fellow pupils and teachers in their respective schools. These additional engagements led to a creative momentum that no one had imagined possible at the outset of the project. When the paintings were completed I asked each group if they would be happy to share their work with the other. They were proud of the outcomes and felt a strong connection to the paintings even though the symbols and images 'belonged' to the Other.

Therefore, the project had already succeeded in so far as enabling each group to not only handle the images of the Other but to claim ownership over them. The sense of pride made it possible to introduce the prospect of the groups coming together to exhibit and discuss the works – something that was thought highly unlikely in the beginning of the project.

When I asked them if they would be happy to spend a weekend with the paintings and the other group at a residential centre they all agreed.

Fig. 26. The images seen in the above composition are based on what the Protestant group believed were representitive of the Catholic youth.

Fig. 27 This work reflects a series of images identified by the Catholic to represent their oposite number. The  group drew on their knowledge of street murals and Unionist iconography to inform the composition.

Fig 26, 27 illustrate some of the images that were selected by the young people. Each composition captured the iconography associated with the other religious and cultural tradition represented in the project. The colours, symbols and images signify the 'identity tabs' discussed by Galtung in section 1.2.

One week before the residential I visited the venue based at the Corrymeela Peace and Reconciliation centre with two youth workers from each group. They had never met before. We took care to discuss the strategies that would disable any potential problems that could arise out of disagreement or conflict.  I was advised not to talk about Michael McIlveen however I made it clear that if an opportunity arose, I would pursue the possibility and manage the discussion with great care.

During the visit to the centre I met with two grievance counsellors and discussed my concerns. One offered to take part in the workshops and we agreed a role

for her in the lead up to the residential. I located a studio space and gallery that would act as our base for the weekend.



Fig. 28. Young peole from each youth group (Catholic and Protestant) gather infront of thier respective paintings.

The two groups of young people, (seen in fig 28), brought their respective paintings to Corrymeela and placed them in the room we had set up as a studio. Almost immediately they began to discuss the images on the mural and their historical significance for each community. The discussion was passionate and deeply symbolic and in many ways addressed the ongoing challenges of the Northern Ireland peace process. After some in-depth consultation with the youth workers and members of the Corrymeela staff we decided to attempt to renegotiate the content and meaning of the artworks in an explicit and critical way. In the early hours of Saturday morning I consulted with the groups and asked them to organize a debate. The debate was based on the following proposition. 'Would the group consider redesigning their murals?'

Following a robust discussion between the young people and the youth workers we decided to vote on the possibility to change the paintings.

This was carried out through a private ballot with a significant minority wanting to keep some of the more significant images intact while the reminder wanted to change the entire composition. The vote presented another ripe moment that enabled the group to engage with issues of inclusion or exclusion. The next morning, we addressed the question and explored a number of options that would ensure the minority view could be represented in the new artwork. Drawing on past works I introduced the possibility of using masking tape to protect these areas that would then be reintroduced into the new painting on completion. I now call this technique 'Palimpsest' as discussed in section 1.4. Fig 29 & 30. This captured the first two stages of the process, from application of masking tape to protect specific areas of the composition, to the painting of a new ground colour over the entire surface of the original painting.



Fig 29. Protecting the selected images          Fig. 30 Painting the surface.

Acting as a metaphor for the entire process, the two paintings became one, while at the same time the young people joined forces to design and negotiate their ideas for the new mural. By the end of the day a new body of symbols and imagery was produced, representing joint interests and values.

Fig 31. Drafting of symbols          Fig 32. Development from first drafts



Fig. 33 The new composition begins to emerge.

As time evolved, the discussions and words became images and symbols. These new symbols and images were analysed and questioned. Fig 31, 32 & 33 capture the drafting and devlopment of a new symbolic and most importantly collabrative  langauge, produced as result of the conversations of the previous evening. While some of these new images were discarded, others were redrawn on acetate films. The next stage involved transferring the images onto the surface of the painting, forming a new completely new composition. During

this process the killing of Michael was discussed. There was an agreement to integrate a visual reference to the murder within the new composition. A small group of boys including Michael's cousin went to another room and produced an image of a black coffin with a broken cross on its surface. When the drawing was brought to the rest of the group we breached a major question that eventually became a major feature in the final composition.  What is it that breeds hate and mistrust? In a remarkable session the young people and their youth workers questioned the foundations of the conflict between Protestant and Catholic in Northern Ireland.

The outcome of this discussion became the final layer of the painting.  Bodies of words emerged and following further negotiation a collection of phrases were chosen to join the composition. The text was overlaid onto images and then the strips of masking tape were torn from the surface of the new painting cutting through the surface to reveal the images of the previous work forming the 'palimpsest' discussed earlier.  Fig 34, 35, 36, 37 & 38 catalogue the third part of the process as the new symbols are transferred onto the surface of the mural to produce a new painting representative of the process of debate and agreement. In many ways these illustrations capture a democratic learning process as discussed by Dewey (1916) and Bernstein (2000) pedagogic rights.



Fig 34. Drawing of new symbols          Fig. 35. Building the new composition

Fig 36. An 'Orange Sash' is drawn.



Fig. 37. Irish dancing shoes added to to the new composition the painting.



Fig 38. The composition begins to form into a new mural

As the composition began to form (Fig. 38), the issue of Michael's death became a major concern for the youth workers and young people. What was considered impossible at the outset of the project became a reality on the last day of the residential, as a Protestant boy paints the symbol designed by the Catholic cousin of the murdered 15-year-old schoolboy Michael McIlveen. The black coffin, seen in fig 39, is surrounded by the new images and symbols

designed to signify hope and reconciliation between the two communities and as such represents the stark realities and challenges of building peace.



Fig 39. The symbol representing Michael's coffin is painted into the composition by a young protestant boy from the same family as one of the those accused



Fig 40. Young people select words.



Fig 41. A debate about Choices.

The group discussed the issues that fed the mistrust and hatred that eventually led to the murder of Michael. Fig. 40, 41.42 and 43 reflect this process of critical reflection. Words begin to emerge that are common to other conflicts across the world as the young people make considered judgements about what words belong and those that should be excluded from the design.

Fig. 43 Youth worker organizes the texts.
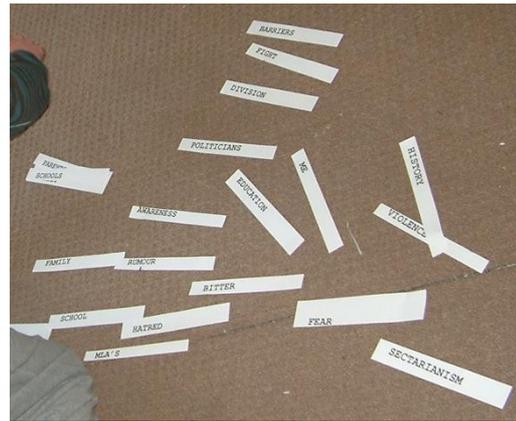


Fig. 44 The words chosen to be included in the composition.

Under the direction of the young people, a youth worker organizes the text in order of importance. The most important are separated and transferred onto acetates and later projected onto the surface of the mural. (fig 45) displays this process as young people and a mediation worker from Corrymeela trace some of the words onto the mural, while fig 46 shows some of the group completing the task by painting the texts in a stark blue black colour chosen by the group.



Fig. 45. The final texts are applied to the surface of the painting. To the left-hand corner, you can see the image used to define the killing of Michael. The black coffin has a broken cross to signify the religious aspects to the death.

Fig. 46 Words drawn from the discussion are painted placed within the composition of the painting.

## The  Reveal-ation



Fig. 47 & 48 The beginning of  the Palimpsest process as tape is stripped from the surface of the painting to reveal the original images that lie below.

Fig. 47 & 48 illustrate the process of 'Palimpsest' as the group begin to strip away the masking tape to reveal the protected images from the previous art work. This process created a real and tangible visual disruption to the surface of the new painting. We talked about how this new composition symbolised the realities that each of the young people would face when they return to their respective communities. The 'Palimpsest' as a form of visual intervention, created a new aesthetic, a painting that captured the essence of an intense process of discussion, disruption, disagreements and agreement.



Fig. 49 The original images begin to re-emerge in the process of revealing.

Fig 50 A new composition is formed through the process of palimpsest.

Fig 49 and 50 capture the re-emergence of the original images serving to disrupt the new surface. Texts mingle with disrupted images to create a new composition that gives the viewer a glimpse of the challenges that conflict transformations present. Painted in 2007, the same challenges face the Northern Ireland peace process today, as a disjointed community tries to come to terms with their pain and prejudice. The Michael McIlveen mural brought two groups of young people from supposedly opposing sides of the sectarian divide together, and offered them the opportunity to change their worlds. Each embraced this opportunity with open arms and, with a high degree of moral imagination, they produced an artwork that recognizes the potential of both communities to become one.

**Epilogue**
**"Human beings suffer,**
**They torture one another,**
**They get hurt and get hard.**
**No poem or play or song**
**Can fully right a wrong**
**Inflicted and endured.**

**The innocent in gaols**
**Beat on their bars together.**
**A hunger-striker's father**
**Stands in the graveyard dumb.**
**The police widow in veils**
**Faints at the funeral home.**

**History says, don't hope**
**On this side of the grave.**
**But then, once in a lifetime**
**The longed-for tidal wave**
**Of justice can rise up,**
**And hope and history rhyme…."**

Seamus Heaney (cited in Bouchard L.D. (2005)

Four men were sentenced to a total of 45 years for the murder of Michael McIlveen, they were teenagers when they killed him, most showed little or no remorse.

The final painting presents education as central to reasons behind the division between Catholic and Protestant in Northern Ireland. This chilling reference is a reminder to all involved in education in zones of conflict of the potential to produce systems of knowledge that is at best damaging and at worse destructive. The process of the project and the production of such a revealing artwork challenges this position and places education and art at the centre of conflict transformation. This is the risk of education as discussed in section 2.5 – it is the risk of change. There was no intercommunity conflict in Ballymena during the trial – I cannot claim that this is solely down to the production of a mural, but it certainly played its part.

In the autumn of 2008, I was invited back to Ballymena to present the artwork at conference designed to promote the peace process. I was informed that local

politicians, members of the statutory services, including education and the police service, teachers and youth workers would be present. I agreed to talk at the conference on one condition – that the young people who co-produced the artwork would share the platform with our painting and me. During the presentation, one boy stepped forward and read each word of the surface of the panels. He pointed at the word "school" (see fig 51) and then simply walked from the the stage.  The message was clear – the young people lay a major part of the responsibility for Michael's killing at the door of education.



Fig. 51 The completed work

It is fitting to leave the last words of this particular commentary to Michael's mother, Gina McIlveen, she wrote:

> *"For anyone to have their son taken from them so suddenly is a horrendous experience. For it to occur in such a violent manner and the public attention that followed only magnifies this.*
> *It has been extremely difficult trying to make any sense of what happened to Michael that night. My health has suffered and there have been times when I have not been able to cope.*
> *We sympathise with the families of those convicted in connection with Michael's murder. We would not wish any other parent or family to experience what our family has gone through over the past three years.*
>
> *Michael was a brilliant wee fella and we were very close. He was happy go lucky and always had a big smile. He made me so proud to see the young man he grew into and I just hope he realises how much we all love and miss him."*

Victims impact report, read to the court after the conviction of the four men who murdered Michael McIlveen.
 Antrim Crown Court 1st May 2009[34]

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[34] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/michael-mcilveens-brutal-killers-get-life-1677359.html (accessed 30th March 2017

**Section 2.3:**

**Engaging Conflict and Peace through Art and Identity**

**The 'Identity Box'**



UNITED NATIONS
RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY
FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES
IN THE NEAR EAST

وكالة الأمم المتحدة
لإغاثة وتشغيل اللاجئين الفلسطينيين
في الشرق الأدنى

REGISTRATION CARD

بطاقة تسجيل

REGISTRATION NO ▼          EX CODE ▼          RANK ▼

43995502  067458          04

FAMILY NAME ► MAHM NAYEF HAYATLEH

IND. NAME ► MUTASEM          SEX ► M   REL. SHIP ► BS002

BIRTH DATE ► 07/70   FIELD ► SYRIA   ISSUE DATE ► 09/83   CAT ► M

ORIGIN ► SHAJARA



Fig. 52 Mutasen, Training Diplomat of Palestinian Authority

(Cells from Identity Box) Euro-Med Human Rights Summer School Malta (2008)

'The essence of fanaticism lies in the desire to force other people to change…The fanatic cares a great deal for you, he is often falling on your neck because he truly loves you, or he is at your throat in case you prove to be unredeemable…. One way or another the fanatic is more interested in you than in himself, for the very simple reason that the fanatic has little self or no self at all'.
(Amos Oz, 2012: pp 65,67)

**Preamble**

Unlike the above narratives that have focused on the process and production of a specific project, this section will provide a generic exploration of a specific concept and series of work that began in response to the racist murder of a young man in South East London in 1993. The narrative reflects on a number of separate projects that have taken place over the last 16 years in various contexts and with a diverse range of groups and individuals. I place these reflections within a theoretical framework related to identity construction and art practice as research.

**Introduction**

In 1999 I took up the post of head of art at a secondary comprehensive school in Eltham, South-east London. The school was situated in a neighbourhood that had become synonymous with the racist murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993. During the autumn term, I was asked by my head teacher and the local authority arts officer to attend a meeting with representatives of the Metropolitan police and a local youth organization. The meeting was part of a series of educational interventions by the Metropolitan police that had been prompted by the publication of MacPherson Report (1999), which condemned the Metropolitan police for their investigation of Stephen's murder and labelled them as 'institutionally racist'. MacPherson (p. 50 para 6.39). I was told that I was currently teaching a relative of one of the main suspects of the murder and asked if I could envisage a project that would question the relationship between what was described as a British identity and racism. As my interest in issues-based art and my community arts background from Northern Ireland was known, I was asked to produce a visual arts program in collaboration with the youth organization, forming issues of identity and producing a critical visual arts method that I now call 'Identity Box'.

**'I am = You are Not'**

The Identity Box project intends to question the notion of a fixed or single identity (Fernando S. 2008:16)[35], the 'I am = You are Not' equation that ultimately leads to misunderstandings, mistrust, social in-cohesion and conflict. Since its inception the project has been delivered in a number of national and international contexts, 'forcing' processes of critical reflection on participants (a compelled pedagogy). The work is flexible in terms of thematic content and participants; I have used the method with young and older people, political leaderships, diplomats, ex-prisoners, security forces, young people, teachers and beginning teachers. Fig 52 displays two images of the journey a Palestinian boy made from the Sabra Shatilla refugee camp in Beirut to his graduation from the school of diplomatic studies in Malta.

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[35] Across Cultures 'Connections': Openmind 153 September/October 2008

Over the years the Identity Box has developed beyond its original format of a box type sculpture into installations, murals and relational works, as noted in previous sections of this commentary.

Can Art Change the World?

In a public lecture given at the Centre for Arts and learning at Goldsmiths University of London in Autumn 2011, I asked the question 'Can art change the world?' Drawing on my experiences of working in various conflict zones, I provided a number of examples of how the processes and production of art enables individuals to reflect on their sense of self and the multiple components that construct their identity. I proceeded to illustrate this process of transformation through the introduction of the identity box as research method that compels the maker to partake in a process of self-objectification. This highlighted the opportunity for change through the actions and transformative nature of individuals who questioned, interpreted and reinterpreted their sense of self. I described educational approach as a compelled pedagogy; a combination of art with critical reflection forced the maker to unpeel the multiple layers of experiences that contribute to the construction of their being.

However, I also highlighted that such transformation required a reimagining of what we understand education to be, a question explored by Dewey (1997, 2012), Freire (1970), Giroux (1981), hooks (1994) and in my view furthered by Biesta (2006, 2010 & 2013). While my presentation cantered on processes and outcomes of individual responses, I also questioned how the institutions such as schools form and orthodoxies of learning also form identities Tracy & Tretheway, (2005), to impose preconceived images of what a learner should be. Atkinson & Dash (2005), Atkinson (2011)

The processes of 'self-research' - that is research into the self, and the subsequent visualization of this data aims to promote doubt, casting a shadow over the concept of absolute truth – the "I am". This intends to overcome social boundaries that can ultimately lead to hierarchical constructions of self over

other, leading to potential 'hostility' that such 'identity roles promote' (Burke & Stets, 2009 p.128). The identity box deliberately disrupts and challenges such constructions through a deconstruction of the social grouping and reinterpretation of the data that presents fluid and rich combinations of self. Multi-layered and abstract, this self is difficult to name, difficult to define and in a constant state of becoming. The artwork in this instance acts as a pedagogical tool that promotes learning as 'event' or 'encounter' (Badiou (2005) and Atkinson (2010 p.120)). The encounter ruptures established notions of self to offer new possibilities for the subject to reimagine their identity through the production of an object.

My experiences of working with group identities, led me to identify symbolic conditions of social identity that reinforce differences towards fixed positions, which David Ervine describes as 'fixed points.' As discussed in previous sections the use of symbols and identity tabs reinforce this sense of the 'collective single identity' as described by Galtung (2002) and Fischer (2013). The identity box is born out of symbols and as such it is a representation of the very 'meaning 'of the individual. That is an interpretation of complex relationships and experiences that construct our meaning. Burke & Stets (2009) describe the fluidity of this form of language stating, 'A symbol derives its meaning and is arbitrary *(subjective[36])*, varying from one culture to another' (p.11). The symbol therefore can be seen as a tool that can transform the 'fixed point' identity position to one of fluidity. In order for this to be effective there is a need to inject doubt into the fixed narrative that informal and formal pedagogies, reinforce and shape our understanding of self and other.

The identity box forms a pedagogical safety space for transgression through experimentation with the various symbols that form our sense of self and lead to a new collective form of meaning. Consequently, the individual escapes symbols imposed by social groups. The outcome is a composite image that collectivizes the multiple experiences that form our values and promote the

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[36] My insertion and emphasis

question 'is that really me'?[37] This is a question that goes to the heart of our existence and one that promotes a level of criticality that is not prevalent in our everyday. The outcome reflects the complex nature of identity construction and enables the maker to reclaim ownership over his or her own sense of being. In communities divided on the grounds of ethnicity, faith or race, the value of such critical awareness is immeasurable and maybe such reflections may interrupt the flow of absoluteness that reifies difference and breeds mistrust.

### Conflict, Identity Politics - Toward a Pedagogy of Doubt

> 'The Organization for Identify and Cultural Development (OICD) estimates that over 60 percent of all the approximately 150 causes of violent conflict (as identified by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research – UNITAR) are rooted in "divisions of identity". Additionally, it is estimated that a majority of the remaining 40 per cent of these causes are indirectly affected by identity factors or contain identity dynamics as they develop'.
> The Organization for Identity and Cultural Development[38]

The OICD highlights the reinforcement of 'divisions of identity' that are discussed in depth by Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996). Huntington warned of new wars describing these as 'Fault lines conflicts, embedded with symbolism, issues of fundamental identity and the outcomes of hatred and genocide.' (p. 253)

Huntington associates these wars with diverse territories and intermixed groups, where violence erupts periodically in both physical and virtual form (Huntington, 1996: p.252). This virtual presence coupled with other agendas such a social exclusion (levied from within and outside social groupings), can expose diaspora communities to the construction of a divisive political identity such as those projected by groups such as the Islamic State and Al- Qaeda. Some influential individuals in the west, such as United States president Donald

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[37] Notes from public lecture Goldsmiths University of London November 2009
[38] Preamble OICD Conference 'Engaging Conflict & Peace Through Identity'. The department of Anthropology, University College London 9th – 10th November 2015

Trump, also promote this divisive narrative,[39] deliberately blurring the line between religious and social identity groupings and thereby supporting the divisive work of extreme fanaticism.

What these identity groups share is a common belief in a representation of an unyielding truth. This truth is absolute and is the spawn of an ideology formed out of a core belief system that is devoid of doubt.

Since the first Gulf War (1990-91) and other misguiding and violent interventions by the West and their allies into the Arab world, a new identity has emerged that has been catastrophic for this world in terms of creating a global identity vacuum out of an introspective and exclusive ideology. This ideology of 'waging Jihad on behalf of the global Muslim community' (El-Badawy et al, 2015) has been the cause of internecine-based conflicts with many of the actors originating from within western nation states that they have come see as their enemy. Kaldor (1999) posits these conflicts within the context of 'disintegration or erosion of modern state structures, especially authoritarian states, which evolve and develop into a more identity driven agenda based on exclusivity and a narrative often constructed around issues of defence and historical oppression.' Kaldor, (1999 p.78)

Kaldor's comments resonate with the conditions described in previous sections – including those of Northern Ireland. However these agendas are particularly prevalent within the global Salafi-jihadism[40] and its entrenchment within the politics of identity. Whereas Jihadi movements of the past were largely limited to the countries of origin – specifically the Middle East, the diaspora of these regions coupled with the expansive potentiality of social media has provided such conflicts with global reach. The centre for Religion and Geopolitics has provided an insight into the identity formation strategies used by organizations such as Islamic State in Syria (ISIS), Jabhat al-Nusra (Syria's al – Qaeda), and

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[39] See (http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/20/muslim-americans-outrage-donald-trump-ben-carson)

[40] 'Salafi-Jihadism ideology is based upon Islamic religious principles which it distorts to produce single minded focus on violent Jihad' See 'Inside the Jihadi Mind' Centre on Religion and Geopolitics. (2015 p.4)

al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP, the group's Yemeni affiliate). Published in 2015 'Inside the Jihadi Mind' focuses its attention on why this ideology has become so seductive to those living well beyond the boundaries of the theatre of conflict. Paragraph three of the introduction resonates with the intention of the 'identity box' as the authors set the challenge for educators in no uncertain terms:

> 'Counter narratives and attempts to tackle extremism are bound to fail if they do not work from the ideology. Narratives are highly adaptable, and will respond to counter narratives swiftly. Ideologies are less flexible but cannot be tackled unless the way they fit together, and the ways they are applied, are understood'.
> (El-Badawy et al, 2015 p. 8)

Therefore, how we understand the role of identity in the construction of conflict has become an urgent agenda for governments and non-governmental organizations to embrace. However, I would contend that there is a major fault-line that runs through our understanding of how such conflicts are formed that may hinder progress in addressing the complex nature of these 'new wars'. (Kaldor 1999)   The OICD supports this view declaring:

> 'Despite wide-ranging evidence that identity is a powerful root cause of strife, there is currently no commonly accepted process through which peace builders can advance in order to (1) gain a full understanding of the way identities are operating and manipulated in any given population (2) utilize an understanding of identity dynamics in order to build effective peace building strategy, and (3) systematically apply identity –based strategy to real-world interventions or programming'. [41]

While El-Badawy *et al* address the first point raised by the OICD, the remaining two are, by and large, in need of further research and development.  In addition,

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[41] Preamble OICD Conference 'Engaging Conflict & Peace Through Identity'. The department of Anthropology, University College London 9th – 10th November 2015

El Badawy *et al* seem to suggest that, in order to destabilize the narrative of division, we need to address the ideology that underpins such divisions from a position of understanding. While I agree in principle with this assertion I question the separation of narrative from ideology and indeed the 'foundational identity' (El-Badawy et al, 2015), that such ideologies require for their survival. It is important to note that these ideologies (much like the religious divide in Northern Ireland) 'do not replace *[the core belief system]* Islam in their adherent identities, but *[much like Northern Ireland and other identity conflicts]* they control and organize their position on certain subjects, and create a belief system that helps to form and guide their world view.' El-Badawy et al (2015 p.9). A worldview that seems to be fixed on absolutes with no room for compromise or doubt. That is why I prefer to see these three strands of identity construction as entangled forms within the same rope. The combination of which results in what I call an absolute identity – that is an identity that sees itself as unquestionable – devoid of doubt.

**Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going?
(Paul Gauguin 1887)**

Fig. 53 Yasini Nswa 'Three skins'

Photographic Collage Crofton School Lewisham London (1994)
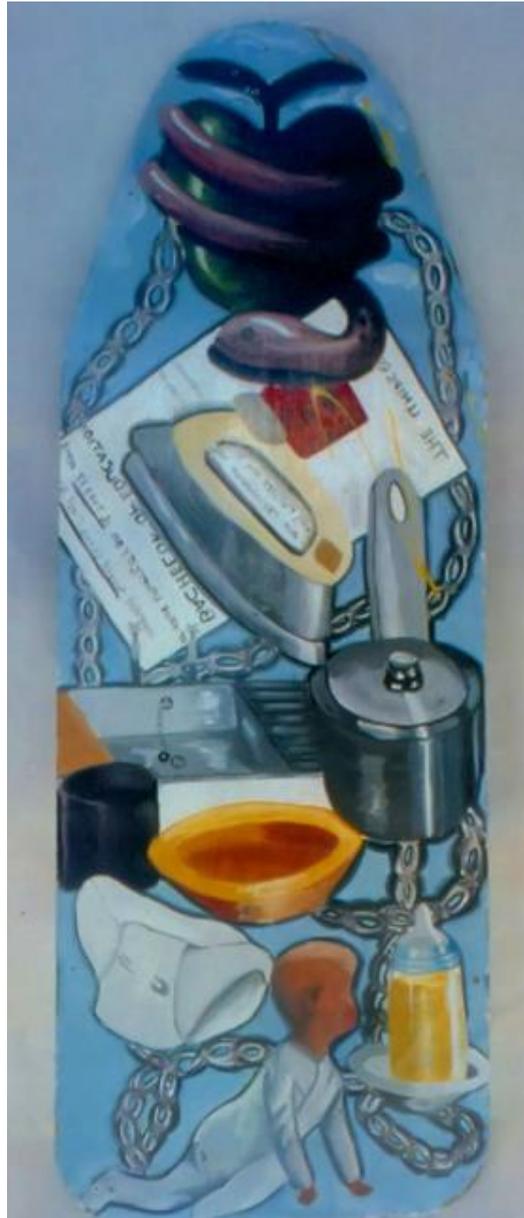
Fig. 54 Nadira Shah 'The kitchen Sink'
Painting on Wood Crofton School Lewisham London (1994)

Paul Gauguin's questions present a value that is critical if we are to overcome the divisive nature of the 'absolute Identity' that dominates the discourse of promoters of hate. Gauguin asks us to doubt our very existence. The issue of doubt has been at the forefront of my pedagogic work for decades. The images depicted in fig 53 and 54, reflect the beginning of my research into the visualization of identity and my work to promote a pedagogy of doubt.

Fig 53. Captures the work of a 15-year-old student who worked with me in the art department at Crofton School Lewisham. Yasini's Nswa arrived into the art department at Crofton School Lewisham in September 1993. He had been excluded from his previous school for fighting.  For his final year exhibition Yasini presented a photographic collage that captured the three generations of his family including his grandmother, mother and sister combined into one composite portrait. Yasini's portrait focuses our view intently on the skin and most importantly the varying tones of black and (brownness) seen in the flesh. This is intended to reference the genetic influences of other skin colours that have come to be part of his cultural and genetic story. On the other hand, fig 54, shows the painting of Nadira Shah, a young girl of Indian decent, which focuses our attention on the symbolic language that serves to communicate her frustrations at being trapped within or by a cultural identity: an identity that projects its limited expectations onto the female, demanding adherence and unquestionable loyalty.   Hours before the private view of the graduates' work, Nadira asked me to remove the piece as she believed it would offend her family. Of course, I agreed.

In both these artworks – made by sixteen -year-old children, we get an insight into the cultural identity crisis that is currently vying for attention across Europe and indeed throughout diasporas across the world. Whereas Yasini's portrait offered a 'quiet' introduction to the issue of identity and race, Nadira's piece was removed before any discussion could be established. The intention of the Identity Box combines both agendas- that the symbolic with the recognizable. Unlike Nadir's piece or for that matter Yasini's collage the Identity box open the possibility for discussion and enables the maker to share their 'complicated story' with others. Nadira's painting became a monologue that served to excite her mind and enable her to gain voice but not agency, Bernstein (1982).  As a piece of research the works asked me to consider the difference in outcome and to re-imagine a process of visualization that would enable individuals such as Nadira to maintain their presence in the face of such powerful identity hegemonies.  As noted in section 2.1.2 these hegemonies act in both explicit and implicit manner and are ever present in our daily experiences. From television to social media, from street art to literature the identity constructors,

from advertisement agencies to jihadist propaganda draw on the symbolic world to reify a sense of belonging or is it a sense of entrapment.

Nadira, Yasini  and the many others who I have worked with on this theme share a common purpose to question who they are, evaluate the answers, investigate these answers and to finally project meaning through the production of images and texts. The completed box is a visualization of their sense of existence, Bernstein (1996) while also acknowledging the complexity of this existence within the ongoing struggle to become. This is what Atkinson (2011) calls a 'pedagogy against the state', [*that is a state of being complete*]. In essence a state that encompasses a fixed-point identity. Therefore, learning through the identity box is a learning that is 'conceived as a problem of existence' (Ibid page 6); the box is a pedagogy of existence that has served to capture the dialectical process that leads to its production and in doing so reflects the production of the maker. As such 'the ethical imperative of pedagogy is concerned with maximizing the power of learning, it is not focused on what we are and should be, that is to say on some transcendent position towards being, but upon the potentiality and the 'unknown' of becoming.' (Ibid p.6). 'Who are we, where do we come from, where are we going.'

**Epilogue**

Issues of identity are a constant thread that runs my practice and re-emerged a few years later when working on a similar agenda in the politically contested spaces of Northern Ireland and the Middle East. Through a series of practice-based workshops the process developed into a more penetrating range of outcomes drawing specifically on the concept of social identity construction. And while on reflection I can confidently place the work within the research and commentaries of Burke and Stets (2009) and other previously mentioned authors, the development of the concepts were entangled in the processes of making; therefore, highlighting the very materiality of art practice as a central value to to that of research (Sullivan 2010). The development of a range of questions that aimed to enable an exploration of self, focused on three strands

or levels of construction. These 'questions of identity' (see appendix) were largely based on my own experiences but they did pay attention to the concept of social identity construction as discussed by Horschild (1997) and yet open to the other influential agendas such as events and memory.

In *Concerning Human Understanding* (1690, Book II, Chapter 27), John Locke famously identified the self with memory. Atherton (1983) draws attention to Locke's concerns and in my opinion highlights the sensitivity required to address such agendas.

> 'Locke found identity in the extension of consciousness backward in time. In Locke's view, a person's identity extends to whatever of his or her past he or she can remember. Consequently, past experiences, thoughts, or actions that the person does not remember are not part of his identity. For Locke, identity and selfhood have nothing to do with continuity of the body, or even continuity of mind. Selfhood consists entirely in continuity of memory. A person who remembers nothing of his or her past literally has no identity'.
>
> Atherton, M. (1983 p. 273)

Therefore, memory becomes a critical element in the process and as such it was vital to capture such 'thoughts' as they materialize. The materials provided a physical entity – a stimulus that led to the emergence of new conversations and possibilities. These 'visual dialogues' recorded the complexity of how an identity is constructed but most importantly the process of construction enabled agency (Bernstein, 1983).

The individual begins to see the complex nature of their being and in doing-so begins to recognize the multiple layers of experiences that serve to shape their values and sense of self. The use of transparent cells acted to frame this process through the translation of these thoughts to the visual materials that each individual either designed or reinterpreted through their reflections. The box itself is constructed from scrap card and decorated by images and texts drawn from the answers to the first level of questioning. These questions relate to the surface or superficial agendas such as favourite foods, sports, hobbies

etc. Such issues are used as starting points as they enable the maker to engage with the process in a relatively unchallenged manner. The next stage of questioning asks the maker to consider the places and events from their past that have shaped their views of the world. The answers to these questions are translated into collages of images and texts and eventually are composed onto acetate sheets. These screens are eventually placed at either end of the framed box. The final stage of questioning asks the maker to consider the people and the influence the most important individuals have contributed to shaping the values of the maker. This is often the most challenging aspect of the project as the maker has to enter a process of deep critical reflection and must relate their answers to the identity traits that they recognize in their own being.

The images that develop from this process are placed on one acetate and eventually this cell is entombed within the centre of the box. The combined images form an abstract view that highlights the complex combination of experiences, places and people that construct a sense of self. While the flags and symbols of the collective identity may remain, they are demoted in level of importance and replaced by the 'real' issues, the memories, the places, the people that help shape our lives and sense of belonging. The completed box is never complete. Every time you look at it (as my mother has with my own box) the Identity Box acts as an 'extension of consciousness backward in time.' I assert that the processes and outcome form a multi-layered 'messy' image that promotes the concept of a change and becoming. This fluid entity reclaims our selfhood from those 'identity constructors' who would otherwise manipulate our being to create a concrete unmovable image that ultimately serves their needs and not that of the individual or community. However, the power of the Identity box lies in how it captures the essence of the individual in a single object. In this instance the 'art of the box 'is both relational and object based – a combination of aesthetic forms. The object has the capacity to communicate the complexity of self through a pedagogical relationship between the maker and the  the viewer. The object, subjectifies the viewer. The box speaks; but it presents a narrative that words cannot. The box teaches but only by invitation. It invites the viewer to engage in vision and thought and asks them to consider the subject as a three-dimensional being. Only then is; 'The work of art is

complete only as it works in the experience of others than the one who created it.' Dewey (2005 p.110)

Fig 55 to 61 illustrate the process and production of the Identity Box. The dialectical process that informs the content of each box enables each participant to explore their identity is missing – and maybe that is the point. Some examples shown belong to politicians and ex combatants from Northern Ireland. These are drawn from a series of workshops that I led during a peace-building programme held in Cape Town South Africa in 2005. The remainder is a combination of works representing projects with young people and others from various contexts including Lebanon, Malta, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland and Zambia.



Fig. 55 & 56 Project workers from National Aids Council and Women for Change begin to make an 'identity box' during a workshop in Lusaka (2007)
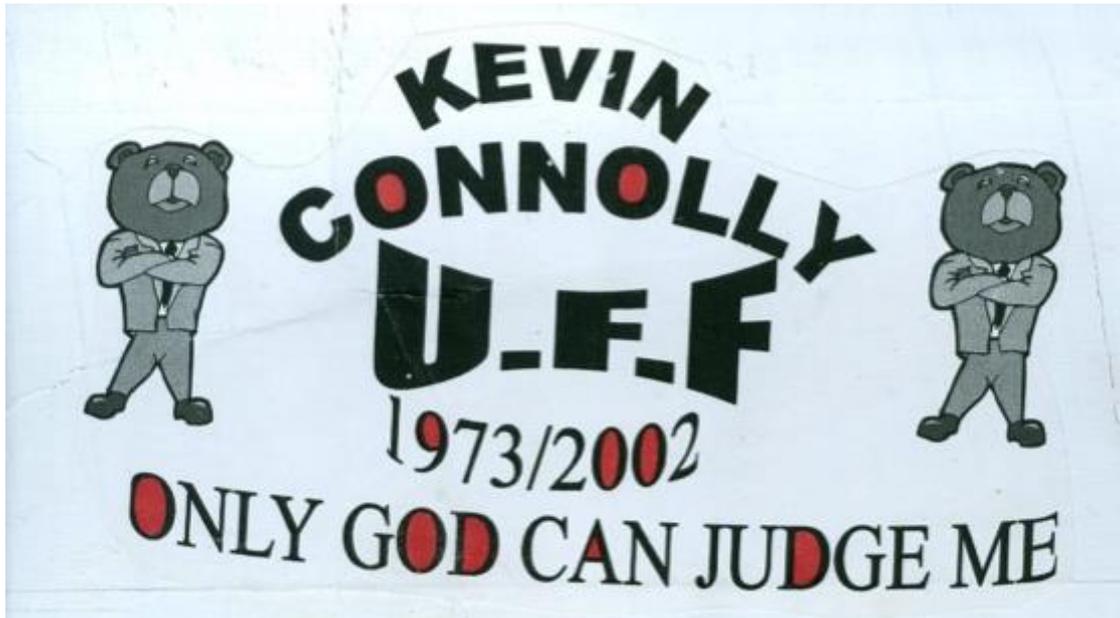
Fig. 57 The frame of the box made by a 13-year-old boy. Belfast (2008)



Fig. 58 A teenager places a transparent cell into his ID box. Belfast (2008)
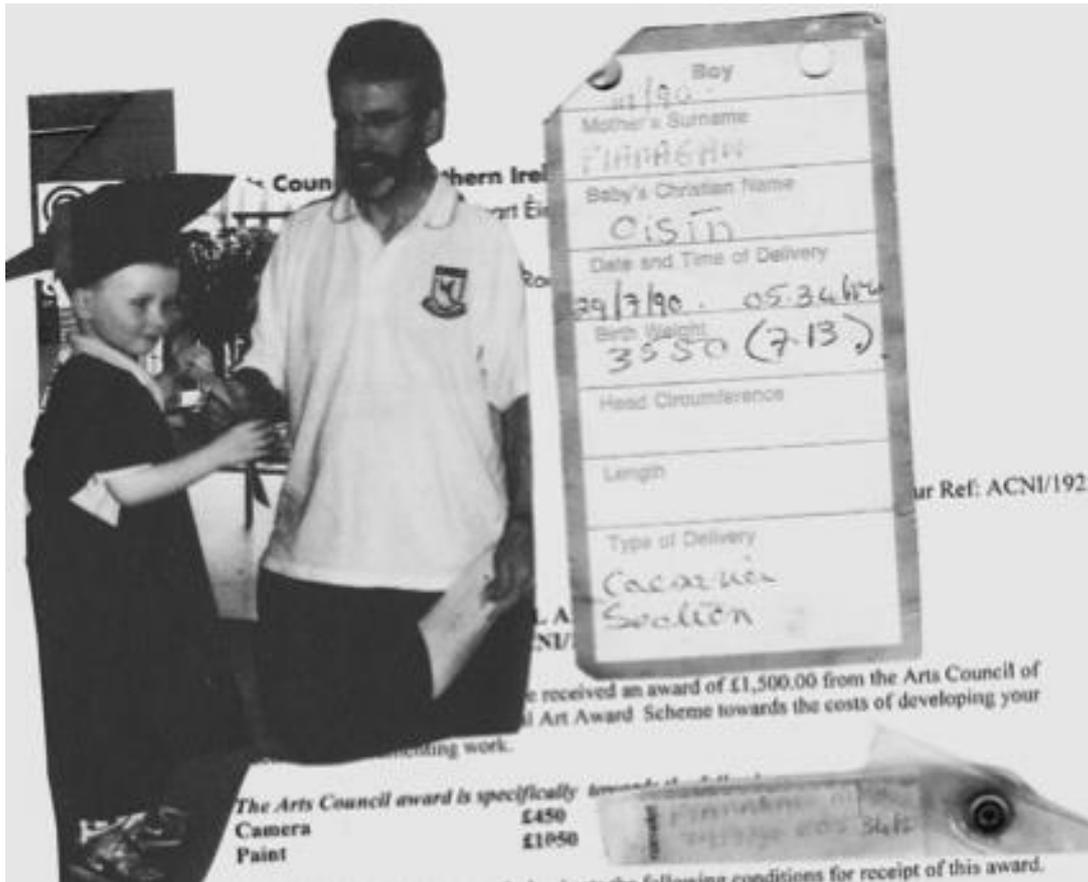
Fig. 59. A cell from a political leadership workshop. South Africa (2004)



Fig 60. The outside surface of a box created by a youth. Belfast (2008)

Fig. 61. The completed Identity Box. Teenager Derry Northern Ireland (2005)

While the ID box is not intended to act as a form of art therapy, some makers project their gravest concerns in the artwork as they reflect on past traumas that have shaped their sense of self. These moments are handled with great care and attention. As the artworks evolve it is vital to draw attention to wholeness of the work, while also recognising the sensitivities of handling such narratives. The concept of the Identity Box has continued to evolve in the hands of some of those I have worked with. Student teachers and artist educators have made their own boxes and proceeded to take the concept further using it to form installation and time based works with the various communities that they now work with throughout the world. In essence the concept and 'practice' has evolved and becomes the embodiment of its original intention - to promote the possibility of change through reclaiming agency over the context and influences that aim to shape our sense of who we are. In the hands and context of others it too has changed but the intention remains true.

## Section 2.4

**'Not a Bullet Not an Ounce/ Prepared for Peace, ready for War'**

Commissioned by the Ulster Museum public education program



Fig 62. Projection of the Republican mural 'Not a Bullet Not an Ounce CIRA. Ulster Museum Belfast: (2007)
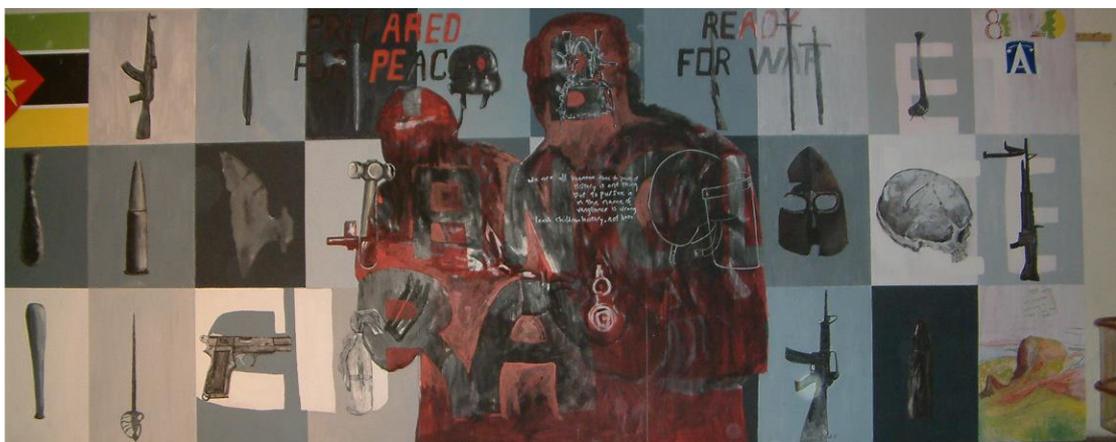


Fig. 63 *Not a Bullet Not an Ounce / Prepared for Peace – Ready for War* (2007) Ulster Museum, Belfast. Acrylic on Wood. 20ft x 8ft

**Decommissioning the Visual Language of urban conflict in Northern Ireland**

**British Museum and Ulster Museum**

*'Not a Bullet – Not an Ounce / Prepared for Peace Ready for War' (2007) Collaborative Partners: 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World, Northern Ireland Alternatives (Restorative Justice), Ulster Museum, British Museum*

> ..'art is not only a way of expressing the element of truth in a culture, but the means of creating it and providing a springboard from which "that which is" can be revealed. Works of art are not merely representations of the way things are, but actually produce a community's shared understanding'.
>
> (Heidegger, 2008 p.143)

**Introduction**

The Peace Process in Northern Ireland was formalized through the signing of the Good Friday Agreement / Belfast Agreement Agreement in April 1998. The signatories included political representatives of the two main paramilitary groups the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Republican Irish Republican Army (IRA). This element or strand of the process was crucial toward building a lasting peace on the island of Ireland and triggered the beginning of a prolonged period of negotiations that aimed to decommission all paramilitary weapons.

The 'Throne of Weapons 'project coincided with this process and was produced in response to the exhibition of the sculpture made by the Mozambican artist, Kester's. Kester's 'Throne of Weapons' is constructed from decommissioned weapons collected following of the Mozambique civil war of 1992. The sculpture was shown at the Ulster Museum in Belfast as part of a national tour curated

by the British Museum and sat in the midst of the museum's collection of weapons amassed from centuries of Irish conflicts.

I had been commissioned to produce a painting that reflected on Kester's piece, however, I recognised the opportunity that the project presented in regard to the current political situation in Northern Ireland - specifically the decommissioning negotiations between the international community and republican and loyalist paramilitaries. The project took place in the public domain over a period of five days in mid-April 2007 and involved collaboration with four young people (2 from Dublin and 2 from Belfast). Both of the Belfast participants were part of the Greater Shankill Alternatives restorative justice programme that aimed to engage with at risk young people who had been identified as potential targets for punishment by the UVF paramilitary group[42]. From the outset I intended to disrupt the somewhat sterile environment of the museum by promoting a critical verbal and visual dialogue with the young people and the viewing public. Drawing on Jarman (1998) I set out to 'redefine mundane public space as politicized place and (can) thereby help to reclaim it for the community.' (pp 176-179). The young people from Belfast had never been to the museum and saw it as a place apart from their day-to-day realities. They were uncomfortable in the setting and thereby the reproduction of political murals and graffiti from Belfast was their way of claim the space for their community. Fig 62 captures the first projection of one such mural onto the surface of our painting. This reclamation was at the heart of the engagement, as we sought to utilize the opportunity presented by Kester's work to juxtapose his sculpture with the specificity of the museum and the historical time.

The young people involved in the project embodied the decommissioning process. While they were victims of the war they had now become instruments

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[42] Paramilitary beatings are the hidden story of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The true nature of the issue - its dimensions, layers, contradictions, impact and legacy are not clearly identifiable. The victims do not sit in the daylight waiting to be examined and probed. They gravitate towards the shadows. http://www.eamonnoneill.com/wp-content/uploads/PUNISHMENT-BEATINGS.pdf (accessed 4th August 2015)
The victims are mainly young men but some women have also fallen victim of these acts of organized violence. Depending on the nature of their 'offence' victims would be either beaten with blunt weapons such as baseball bats or shot in the knees or elbows. (see Kennedy L. 'They shoot Children Don't They'. http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/violence/docs/kennedy01.htm

of the peace process. All four could be seen as numbers on a spreadsheet that intended to show how Catholic and Protestant could work together. However, unlike many other examples of the so-called 'peace projects,' I was interested in how they could learn through confronting and manipulating the images of war that had served to separate them. This learning is one of empowerment as it enables the participants to gain agency over these images of division. This concept underpinned our decisions when choosing the central images seen in figure 65 and 66.

The two youths from Dublin had a very different experience of growing up. Both were sixth form students from a state school outside Dublin and both aspired to attend University. Both were part of the 'Let's talk' political education program established by the education NGO 80:20 educating and acting for a better world. Michael and Felix had been involved in exchange programmes and attended numerous youth conferences, both were also trained as peer educators. Each of them had volunteered for the project in order to gain practical experience of the peace process that would in turn enable them to share their learning with other young people based in schools involved in the 80:20 education network in the Irish Republic.

William (see fig 63) was from the Shankill area of West Belfast while Mary lived on the outskirts of the city. Both were from the Protestant/ Loyalist community. William found himself in trouble with the UVF due to persistent anti-social behaviour, while Mary had been a constant agitator for the organization – 'facing up' and challenging local paramilitary leaders on numerous occasions. Mary was a unique and very strong young woman who had been greatly affected by the impact of paramilitary violence on her family. Her acts of resistance were always carried out in public and in her own words 'aimed to humiliate the bastards on their own turf'[43]. Both Mary and William were part of the Greater Shankill Alternatives youth program – an organization I had worked with on a number of occasions and one that came to trust me and my approach. Through this connection I invited Mary and William to collaborate on the project.

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[43] Taken from project notes (April 2007)

As both were under threat they were assigned a specific youth worker or 'handler' who acted as an interface between the paramilitaries and the young person. Mary was particularly interested in history, and the prospect of working in the Ulster Museum was a particular draw. William was a very conscientious young man who felt compelled to represent the voice of young people and recognized the platform that working in an institution such as the Ulster Museum offered. Therefore, all four young people had their purpose and hopes for the project. Before we set out on the process of research and production, we discussed our hopes, intentions and fears and together we devised a strategy that would protect the integrity of our purpose within the context of the institution.



Fig 64: A caseworker and ex-paramilitary from Alternatives NI discusses the work with a young person from the Shankill Belfast during a visit to museum.

The success of the mural hinged on two central elements or what I would term as enactments: Echoes of all my public works are found within these enactments, which are conscious and pedagogic by design and execution. The first enactment involved an intense period of research that intended to expose a range of potential issues and visual material for inclusion in the painting. This element was carried out in the public domain, within and around the open studio we had established in the heart of the entrance gallery of the museum. The second enactment involved a roundtable discussion that extended the research process into a narrowing of the choice of imagery for the painting. This enactment is carried out in private with group members identifying the central images that formed the content of the artwork. Again, this journey between the privacy of the studio and the public domain is seen as vital to my practice research. As noted in previous sections, the studio offers a place for reflection and difficult conversation to emerge and resolve. The public space asks us to consider the ethical boundaries needed to protect the integrity of the process while at same time stretching the joint understandings of the producer and viewer in regard to the issues explored in the work.



Fig. 65. Graffiti from a republican area of West Belfast stating the view of some that the Republican paramilitaries should not decommission their weapons

As can be seen in fig 65 the content of the work was drawn directly from the street and therefore reflected the immediate socio-political context. Research

involved discussion and visual dialogues using the internet and other primary resources to gather multiple images and texts to inform our discussions.. We drew on our collective experiences and existing knowledge of life and conflict. Early in the process we decided to explore street murals and this led to an interesting discussion about why they exist and for whom they painted. All in the group had a view on their purpose but what followed became pivotal to the construction and composition of the mural. Two images discussed were directly related to the decommissioning debate - Graffiti from Republican West Belfast 'Not a Bullet Not an Ounce' (above) was identified by the Dublin pair from a recent press photograph as a statement that threatened the relative unity of the Republican movement. 'Prepared for Peace Ready for War', (fig 66), UVF mural from North Belfast, indicated the mood within the ranks of working class Protestant communities of the area. These two paintings promoted a discussion about the visual nature of the Northern Ireland conflict and how the murals communicated not only to their immediate publics but also an international audience as noted by Rolston (1998), Santino (2001) and Jarman (1998).



Fig. 66. 'Prepared for Peace Ready for War'. UVF mural (circa 2005). Mount Vernon community house North Belfast.

The question our project posed was how could these images of mistrust and conflict be reinvented (not painted over) to project new meaning We recognized how the murals are used to reinforce stereotypes and embed division but I

particularly wanted to know how they are viewed from both within and beyond the context of Northern Ireland. In his extensive writing on the murals of Northern Ireland professor Neil Jarman noted;

'Once the media had established that murals were the pre-eminent symbolic signifier of the Northern Ireland conflict, the idea of Belfast could now be conjured up by little more than a few frames depicting a painting of a hooded gunman or King William on his white horse. And by the same process it almost seemed that a mural had to be included in every film or news report for it to be convincing, thereby establishing a self-perpetuating cycle'. (Jarman p.198)

While we were surrounded by the entombed weapons of past Irish conflicts - which had passed into objects or symbols of war – we were constantly reminded of the present in our experiences and witness. Therefore, we intended that the images of the day that dominate the walls of working class Belfast would take prominence over the benign and in some way culturally cleansed symbols of the past.  And while the pictorial composition of our work developed we not only succeeded in our intention to project new meaning onto the original images and symbols but we also brought into question the relationship between the past and the present.



Fig 67 First day of painting



Fig 68.  Day two of painting

Over the first two days we deliberately painted one image per day. Fig 67 and fig. 68 capture the painting in process and highlight our desire to draw attention to the process of production as one that requires time and patience. We chose this strategy to encourage debate and draw the public into a dialogue about what they observed both in the painting and around the gallery and to reflect on the importance of process as opposed to outcome. As such we were reflecting the value of seeing peace as a process – possibly an unending process of constant and careful attention. We wanted to forge a relationship between the 'real world' (as the young people from Belfast experienced that world), the world of the museum and the political realities that lay beyond the sanitized environment of the museum. This proved to be highly controversial and many of the museums employees were extremely vocal in their condemnation of the work. It was felt that the museum was not the right place to display such images and without consultation, the painting was covered. While the gallery sought to cover the mural, the group organized a series of public workshops that explored the visual content of the work. Visiting school groups (teachers and pupils) were invited to attend these informal discussions and have/share? input in the ideas and design of the work. This led to an opportunity to form a unique pedagogic relationship with the public that informed the remainder of this and other subsequent projects.

After a number of meetings with the head of security and director of the curatorial team it became clear that the head of education and some members of the security staff felt the content of the work was to confrontational. The words and images drawn from the street had unsettled their view of what the museum should represent to the public. In one conversation the head of security remarked that the museum was there to help people escape the realities of the present while the director of the curatorship asked me to concentrate on the "throne of Weapons' as an inspiration and not the wall murals of Belfast. I disagreed with both views. Eventually the director of the Throne of Weapons project, (who was based at the British Museum), intervened and the work was allowed to proceed.

Fig. 69.  Rifle from the Irish Civil War. Ulster Museum Belfast



Fig. 70 Swords and other weapons from the Williamite War of 1689-90 Ulster Museum



Fig 71. Painting of a handgun into the composition



Fig. 72. 9mm carbine Painting by Dylan Hoskins

The objects seen in fig 69 & 70 where photographed by the young people and then visualized and painted onto the surface of the mural (fig. 71 &72). This process aimed to develop new symbolic order to the objects and the painting. The development from object to image and the subsequent placement within

the composition illustrates a 'closing in of the past' on the present as they surround the images yet to be decommissioned.



Fig. 73: Not a Bullet Not an Ounce – Prepared for Peace Ready for War (Ulster Museum 2007)

## Epilogue

The finished work seen in fig 73, was eventually removed from the gallery when the 'Throne of Weapons' exhibition ended. The work was highly praised and publically acknowledged by the British museum (see appendix 1). However, it has never been exhibited since the event.  This project highlighted the tensions between cultural institutions such as museums and the contexts and times in which they function. In a divided community that is emerging from conflict the role of such institutions is vital. On reflection it is clear that staff working in such contexts must receive training and understand the complexities of handling the materiality of war. Such training would enable museum staff to recognize the need to use the museum as tool to not only review the past but to question the present and prepare for the future. This concept is vital in any context but it should be a central element of policy, particularly in societies emerging from conflict.

We completed the painting by surrounding the central images with the artefacts – or should I say, weapons of past conflicts that filled the galleries surrounding our work. In essence we presented a question to the paramilitaries, some of whom visited the museum during the project, asking them to consign their weapons to history. What was clear is that it may be easier to decommission

weapons than minds. Therefore, this pedagogic work needed to transform conflict must be targeted at specific spaces in society including those institutions, such as museums, who may shield themselves from the impact of the conflict. I assert that this is a dereliction of responsibility and as such falls into Galtung's (1969) concept of structural violence. Policies of silence do not work and in many ways contribute to the status quo. It was refreshing to work with the young people in such a space but it was also disturbing to see how their vision was dismissed because it was too close to a reality that was clearly uncomfortable for some of those working within the confines of the museum. The Throne of Weapons tour was by all accounts a tremendous success for the British Museum. The Belfast Mural features prominently in the subsequent publication (see appendix 2), and certainly made an impact on the young people and institutions involved.

# Section 2.5

**Street Art as Public Pedagogy Belfast to Lusaka**



Fig. 74. 'Yardmen" Painted in collaboration with some of the young people involved in the following project. (Belfast 2004).

**Preamble**

When writing about the political wall murals of Northern Ireland Jarman (1998) looked beyond the images or symbols of the paintings to reveal the importance of the site as a transformative place which, when painted, became a symbolic landscape:

> As images they (wall paintings) always have had functionality: as propaganda, as rhetoric, as ideological and symbolic markers etc., but as artefacts their use is potentially more varied. While on one level it is primarily the image that it is being used and transformed, on another level it is the physical artefact, fixed in space, which is the subject of activity; taken still further it is the public space in which the artefact is sited that is changed. Jarman (1998 p. 1)

The following commentary reflects on two projects that grew out of my work in Belfast, Northern Ireland and Lusaka, Zambia. Both projects embrace the concept discussed by Jarman, but take it further to see such spaces as spaces of transformation and learning. While I do not discuss the "yardmen' project (see fig 74) in any great detail, it is valuable to read the main topic of this narrative (Lusaka HIV Aids Street Art project) with an understanding of how this approach evolved. It is also important to note the challenges and risks of an education that aims to transform attitudes and behaviours in divided and contested communities, as evidenced in each of the previous chapters in this commentary. However, as the  epilogue shows, what is often implicit in such projects can emerge to become explicit. The return journey from Belfast to Lusaka can be thus be seen as the embodiment of the beautiful but sometimes perilous risk of education.

**Introduction**

Between 2002 and 2009 I worked with the development education NGO 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World. This relatively small Irish NGO had established an office in Lusaka, working within the auspices of a local NGO 'Women for Change'.  My time with 80:20 provided a number of opportunities to engage with development and human rights agendas and became one of the most prolific periods in my career.

**HIV Aids Education through Art - Lusaka Zambia 2003-2007**

> One of the functions of art has always been the transformation of living conditions. Since the advent of modernism, with its rejection of religiously founded authority, art has been an especially fertile domain for querying irrational taboos and inherited value standards, and correcting social imbalances. Wochenkluaser (2013 p.63)

If we view art in the way outlined above we begin to understand the significance of embedding learning, education and pedagogy within the framework of socially engaged art. In essence socially engaged art is an attempt to use the arts as a 'tool of social change.' Badham M, (2010 p.88). This form of public art

or to be more specific art in public space, is a visual translation of the socio-political moment and can be used to communicate political ideals as well as heighten social awareness. In such instances the artist or artist collective is moved to action, utilizing the public space and the linguistic landscape of the social as a canvas that acts as a pedagogical platform.

The following project presents a series of entrance and exit points for the public through which the object becomes subject. In other words, the public through a publically posited critical visual arts pedagogy, are  transformed from  spectator of art (or in many cases the subject of art) to becoming an integral co-producer of art.

'I am Alive' was a five-year series of public art projects produced and delivered in Lusaka. Each project was framed within the context of World Aids Day and intended to heighten the issues of human rights within the context of the pandemic. The works intended to force thinking, while triggering encounter (Deleuze, 1994 p.139), striving to enable voice and provide an agency for those denied, from those affected by HIV Aids to those infected.

Each year I was seconded to 80:20's office in Lusaka for three weeks to produce a public education program centred on the theme of World Aids Day for that specific year. The Irish development agency, Irish Aid, funded the work, which helped me build relationships with education authorities, schools, and ministerial offices in Zambia. This network gave me access to schools, teachers and young people, the community and policy makers. Extra support was given from the Irish embassy and the British High Commission, who jointly promoted my activities through media and other networks across the country.

**I AM ALIVE (i)  Stigma - Word Aids Day, December 2004**

I first met Millie (fig. 75), at a shopping centre in Down Town Lusaka.  She heard about the painting on local radio and decided to come and meet the young people and artists who were making the work. She was the first to 'make her mark' on the surface of the painting and as such disrupted the visual language

and reading to bring attention to her personal story of infection and affect. Millie was HIV positive and she became a catalyst that moved the artwork from an objective work to one of subjection. Her actions acted as an amplifier for the voice of those most silenced and marginalised by stigma in Zambia – women.



Fig. 75. 'Millie' Living with HIV Lusaka, Zambia 2004

> 'Factors that perpetuate HIV transmission include: High levels of poverty, High mobility of specific social groups, socio-cultural beliefs and practices, stigma, information, education and communication, gender issues'. [44]

In December 2004, I travelled to Lusaka to develop and deliver the first Zambian HIV Aids project. I was accompanied by three young people who had previously worked with me on the 'Yardmen' project (fig.74). All three were part of the Northern Ireland Alternatives Restorative Justice program (as described

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[44] Ministry of health Republic of Zambia (2005) National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB/Policy. Cited in 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World. (2006: 257)

in section 2.4). These teenagers where charged by the UVF with anti-social behaviour related to their participation in racist attacks. It seemed appropriate that they should join me in the process and production of a major public art project in sub-Sharan Africa. It is important to note that local people from their area of Belfast, including those they attacked, helped raise the funds necessary to enable their participation in the project.

The Belfast 'Yardmen' project embodied the vision I outlined when first employed by 80:20 of an inclusive and co-dependent public education pedagogy that would blur the lines between contexts and purpose. I had developed the Belfast project in collaboration with an artist colleague from Zambia, Stary Mwaba. I first met Stary the previous year while travelling in Zambia and introduced him to 80:20 as a partner artist. Stary had a track record of working with 'street kids' in Lusaka – orphans whose families had been destroyed by the HIV virus. The Yardmen painting took just over four weeks to complete while succeeding in its local goals of becoming a symbol of change in an area surrounded by paramilitary murals, it also constructed a transformative relationship between Stary and the young people and this dialogue became a catalyst for the project in Lusaka as it was Stary who suggested they tavel to Lusaka to work with similar aged young people on a project confronting he stigma of HIV Aids.

While the subject of Yardmen was traditionally Belfast in form the process of production was completed grounded in a critical pedagogy based the values of 'interdependency' as articulated by Bingham and Biesta (2010). This is in contrast to an orthodoxy in development education that creates 'an external intervention by someone who is not subjected by the power that needs to be overcome' (p. 30, 31). In other words, the intervention, which, intends to enable agency, (Bernstein 1982 & 1997), creates another form of dependency based on an imbalance of knowledge and power. Therefore, to achieve pedagogy of interdependency, an intervention based upon shared knowledge needs to be formed. This contradicts a concept of learning that is 'fundamentally inaccessible to the one to be emancipated', (Bingham and Biesta, 2010 p.31). In our project, Stary brought immense knowledge and skill. He also brought a

deeper understanding of the impacts of racism, a concept that was undermined by the very presence of a black man working with white boys to paint a major new artwork on the streets of East Belfast.



Fig. 76 First meeting in Lusaka. (December 2004)

'**Women for Change' Compound Lusaka**

Bringing the young people from Belfast to Lusaka presented a number of significant risks. However, I am not talking about the risk of security that comes with travel – particularly to a country in the developing world. I am talking about the risk of change. This change is inherent in educational processes that are not controlled or dictated by projected outcomes or what Biesta (2010) describes as 'misguided impatience'. (p. 4). Biesta draws attention to the importance of risk in education and believes that such risks enable teachers and learners to engage with and in the world. Biesta asks:

'Are we genuinely interested in the ways in which new beginnings and new beginners come into the world? Such an orientation therefore, is not just about how we can get the world into our children and students; it is also – and perhaps first of all- about how we can help our children and students to engage with, and to come into the world.' (pp 4-5)

We were in Lusaka talking about our experiences of painting the Yardmen mural in Belfast to a group of young people from Lusaka (Fig. 76). It seemed a million miles away from the life experiences of the six young Zambians assembled to co-produce the Lusaka project. We talked about how the Yardmen mural talked to the local and the working class traditions of the shipyard areas of East Belfast. I asked the young people for their views on art, on education, on being Zambian, on being Irish. There was stark contrast between the two groups. The young men from Belfast had no love of their country and certainly no love of education. Their experience of art was limited to the Yardmen project. The Zambian youth believed in their country and cherished education, they saw art as a form of expression and recognised the value of images to communicate complex ideas to a largely illiterate public. The group gathered around the wooded panels and together we began to build relationships and knowledge of each other's narrative. Fig 77 & 78 capture the first phase of preparing the panels and the development of the first layer of compositional motifs. We worked in the courtyard of the Women for Change headquarters in eastern Lusaka, this strategy was deliberate as it enabled the young people to spend time together and to bond around a common goal before moving our work into the public domain.

We anticipated an artwork worthy of their story of losing family and friends to AIDS. In keeping with my practice I decided to turn the courtyard of the compound into an open-air studio. This would be a 'transitional space' a pedagogical site that would bring forward new ideas and enable the group to take risks and establish relationships before entering into the public realm. This project would endeavour to touch the hearts, minds and hands of people. It was to be public pedagogy based on what Ellsworth (2005) describes as the 'sensation of learning'.

"[*A*] Pedagogy of sensation construction is a condition of possible experiences of thinking. It becomes a force for thinking as experimentation".

Ellsworth (2005 p.27)

Along these lines, the Lusaka project proposed a work responsive to the immediate conditions of the street, as they would emerge, subject to the volatile and stigmatized reality of public space. The mural would trigger public conversations around HIV while simultaneously voicing the experiences of those directly affected and indeed infected by the virus. The mural would also capture those vital moments of disruption through the images and texts that would form out of the public engagement.

The first two public days were spent working on the painting's background, implementing crosses as visual gestures of positive HIV symbolism. On the second day, we moved the painting to the centre of downtown Lusaka. At the end of the day we held a pre-arranged 'street seminar' with invited guests from statutory and non-governmental organisations, including the National Aids Council, the Department of Health and Education and HIV Aids support groups, such as Women for Change. The discussion was broadcast on ZNBC radio, which presented an opportunity to advertise the project and invite the public to join us at the various sites where the painting would be positioned as the work travelled from a daily site to cross the city. The fledging mural formed a backdrop that was inviting people to join in the production process.

Fig. 77. The team of young people begin the process of preparing the panels



Fig 78 Developing the background composition.

For the next four days we positioned the painting against the walls of supermarkets, schools, and the National Aids Council headquarters in Lusaka. Each day we were joined by members of 'The Network for Zambian People Living with HIV Aids (NZPL) and community educators from Women for Change (see fig. 82, 83,84 & 85). These pictures capture the evolution of the project from a painting to a pedagogical instrument. In this form the entire process became a significant form of public pedagogy that composed a series of multiple educational events. Through further exposure on ZNBC television news (fig 80.) our studio-based workshops (fig. 79 & 81) were captured on camera and broadcast nationally on the evening news.   The education teams from each were soon joined by other groups and individuals who, in a form of pilgrimage, followed the mural on its journey around the various public sites. This included used the painting as a backdrop for workshops and to promote dialogues with the public. We were joined by young people, musicians, visual artists and theatre makers who had heard about the project and felt compelled to participate in the production of the work. One of them, Millie, requested the participation of children, which turned the site into children's workshops and public debates, illustrating an energy that I had never encountered before. Everyday more people came to visit the painting and following Millie's lead, wrote their stories on the surface. This was a public pedagogy in process and a form of learning that embraced the risk of education, an education that promoted critical dialogue and disruption of an established arts and educational orthodoxy.



Fig. 79 Workshop in downtown Lusaka.   Fig. 80 Promoting the project on

ZNBC.

Fig. 81 Developing the imagery with some of the young artists involved in the project at the studio at Women for Change.



Fig. 82 Women from NZPL) visit the painting on the third day of its 'public life', at a shopping centre in Lusaka.

Fig.83. Members of Women for Change act out a short drama reflecting the rights of women's – UN Convention of Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Fig. 84 Students for Arakan High School listen to Elizabeth from Women For Change youth discussing the content and drawing conversation from the group. One year later I would return to Arakan school to produce another major public work to commemorate World Aids Day 2005. Some of the boys in this photograph became vital contributors of the project.

On the penultimate day, a group of secondary school boys approached the mural and started reading the painting – image-by-image – text by text. This became one of the most motivating experiences of the entire process as I sat listening to the highly emotive dialogue that grew out of the boys' interpretations. They engaged with each piece of text, reading it quietly, word by word, and then used the narratives as a trigger to interpret the images as illustrated in fig 86. The educational workers involved in the project recognised that engaging with young such as these was crucial. This particular age group carried the greatest risk of spreading HIV, and here we have young men reading the words of those infected and affected by the virus. This 'event' was unique to Zambia and underlined my faith in the political potentiality of art as a

tool to reinforce critical public pedagogy and human rights. This was the 'moral imagination' that Lederach (2004) talks of in practice and action. Details of the painting as shown in fig 87 and 88 highlight a number of motifs and the texts that became central to promoting the imagination. The texts all prefixed by 'I am" place the viewer in the painting, thereby breaking down the barriers between 'self and Other' while the images ask the viewer, who by this stage may have begun to 'read themselves into the painting', to consider their meaning. The viewer is transformed, becoming subject to and within the painting and thus the potential for empathy and critical reflection is created. This draws on the theoretical work of Freire, (1970) Dewey (1938, 1997) and Bernstein (2000) but it also is closely connected to acts of transgression - a transgression that sees freedom as fundamental objective of educational work hooks (1994). The project also reflected on the art, pedagogical and political work of Joseph Beuys.

The painting's final destination was the national Aids Clinic at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. We completed the work under the watchful eyes of the patients and families of the lucky few, who were strong enough to receive ARV treatment. Some wrote on the panels while others sat quietly watching and listening to the evolving conversations. Toward mid-afternoon the Irish ambassador and British High Commissioner joined us, engaging in conversations with the young people before unveiling the painting (see fig 91) to the gathered public.

Fig. 85 Musicians and artists join in the event? and in their own way 'colonise' the painting for their own purposes.

Events such as those illustrated in fig 85 are central to my practice. These 'pedagogical happenings' enable education to emerge in spaces (physical and intellectual that too often lie dormant and unknown. The event took place on Saturday afternoon at the largest shopping mall in Lusaka. An audience of multiple hundreds witnessed the many impromptu performances while also engaging dialogue with the educational workers. (See fig 90).
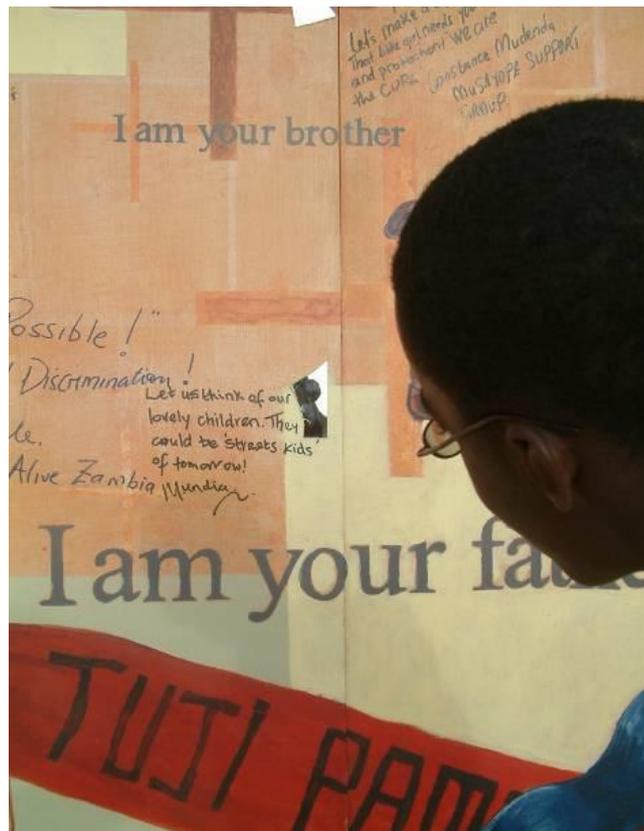
Fig. 86. A boy from Arakan High School Lusaka looks into a shard of mirror that was part of multiple pieces scattered throughout the surface of the painting. While seeing his own reflection he is also confronted with the narratives of those people who had visited the work and committed their story to the artwork. This visual tool was designed to place the subject into the very heart of the painting. Its purpose was to promote critical reflection.  Therefore drawing on the many theoretical works discussed in earlier sections of this commentary.

Fig. 87 A section of the painting displaying some of the images and formal (texts planned and designed by the artists & informal texts (texts added by the community).
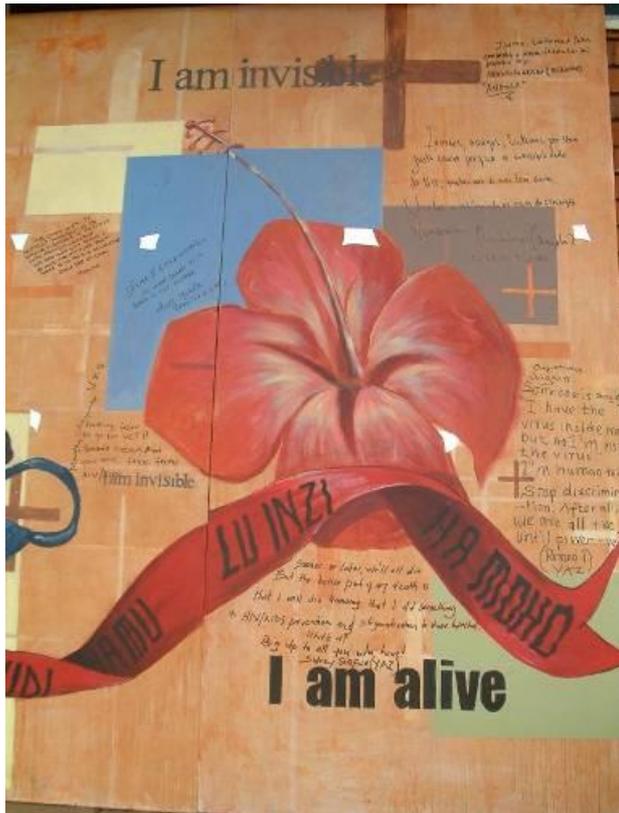
Fig. 88 The red orchid, designed by the youth educators from Women for Change, became a motif that represented the struggle that women face to have their voice heard in the many patriarchal societies that dominate sub- Saharan Africa.



Fig 89.  The text 'I am' and fragments of mirror place the viewer directly into the composition. As such the viewer becomes integrated into very fabric of the issues explored. In this sense they are the 'subject' of the painting and as such they must confront its challenges but also be part of the solution.

Fig 90. The determined look of an educational worker from Women for Change in dialogue with a member of the public. (Manda Hill Shopping Mall Lusaka)



Fig. 91 The Irish Ambassador and the British High Commissioner unveil the finished painting: National University Teaching Hospital Lusaka (World Aids Day 2004).

**Epilogue**

The following year I returned to Lusaka and worked with over fifty young people and teachers at the Arakan High School. Just before I left Belfast I returned to the community centre in East Belfast where I had first met the three boys. I was taken to one side and quietly told how one of the boys, the smallest of the three, had been badly beaten during an attack on him a few months before. A gang of boys had beaten him because he had spoken out against their constant attacks on a black family who had moved into the area.  Even as I write this epilogue I continue to wonder about my part in the beating.

I return to the thoughts of David Ervine and his analogy of the elastic band and the fixed point, as noted in section 2.1. As a critical educator my intention is and will always be to stretch myself and those I work with – to journey to a new place, [*a place of learning*?]. Maybe my hope is that those we work with go back to the point of departure that little bit changed. The risk of education is more than the uncertainty that Biesta (2010) draws our attention to, in divided societies fractured by mistrust and corrupt notions of self and other; the risk of education is that change is lost in the translation. It takes time for societies to catch up with individuals – from institutions like museums and schools to the political systems that support the status quo. Science will tell us that the molecular structure of the elastic band has changed irreparably but the environment at the fixed point may remain the same, therefore we need, we demand 'real education' an education that creates a critical mass of change. The beautiful risk of education is change.

Fig. 92 Dee and I at the Yardmen mural East Belfast (March 2018)

## Postscript

The Yardmen painting has become and iconic image for East Belfast and was recently restored due to the requests of the local community and the funding of Arts Council the Belfast City community arts fund. On a recent visit to Belfast I discovered the restoration project purely by chance. As I drove along the motorway that connects the Belfast city airport to the city centre I noticed an artist on a 'cherry-picker' working on the surface of the painting.  I pulled of the highway and turned into the back streets that lead to the wall which supports the bridge that crosses the highway. To my delight the restoration was carried out by the local artist David (dee) Craig. Dee and I talked over our past projects before he talked about his current work.  it was truly wonderful to hear about he has dedicated his practice to the ongoing peace building project in Belfast. His most recent work bright young people from the Protestant and Polish community tougher to produce a combined artwork that challenges the racial

stereotypes that have led to attacks on immigrant communities. His work is a testimony to potentiality of art and artists to act as 'agents of change.' (March 2018)

## 3. Conclusion

### 3.1. Placement of my practice within the field of Conflict Transformation

In this visual and written commentary, I have presented a body of work that reflects my art practice through a series of interlinked projects. While the narrative captures the process and uniqueness of each work, as a collective they serve to excavate several common methods that present a new approach to conflict transformation through visual arts. The approach merges visual art with critical public pedagogy and conflict transformation to form a new praxis contributing to the current knowledge base. It is important to note that my art is very specific and although it may resonate with practices described as relational, socially engaged and participatory art, it differs in its explicit adherence to critical pedagogy and its trust of the 'intrinsic value of art as de-alienating human endeavour' (Bishop, 2012 p. 284). Therefore, the participatory aspects of my practice are focused much more intently on the process of learning than on outcome. That said the residues of these relational processes are driven toward a visual outcome that fits with what Tania Bruguera describes as 'useful art' *(arte util). (*Bishop, 2012 p. 249). This draws attention to the social utility of the work as a conscious means for creating spaces of learning through the action of making. And while I fully acknowledge my part in the dialogical and making process, therefore emphasizing my role as curator, I also wish to underline the importance of the relational/ social elements of the work.  Capturing the process of how these relationships are constructed and nurtured has been a challenge for this commentary - particularly considering the sensitive nature of each engagement. However, through the commentary I have conversed with my memories, images and the theoretical discourses that have come to inform and describe the approach while maintaining my commitment to the safety and integrity of those individuals and groups who participated in each work.

Through my reflections I recognize how my processes adapt the concept described as 'the rhizome Deleuze & Guatarri (1972 – 1980). While the concept of the Rhizome provides a theoretical frame for my work it also presents an

interesting metaphor that captures the essence of my practice and one that I am currently employing in the creation of a new Masters programme of study at ArtEZ in the Netherlands (see appendix 4). The Rhizome has multiple entrance and exit points and in my view, enables democratic formations of learning to emerge. Delueze and Guatarri draw on nature and the multiple roots that weave their way into the earth, appearing sporadically to feed and nourish the growth of the plant or tree. These roots are rarely seen but they are essential if the plant is to grow and develop. There is no one entrance point, no single root that one can isolate and say – 'that is the one that makes it all possible.' They are a collective entanglement. In my introduction, I describe my work as an emergent educational and pedagogical practice that gives visual form to the dialectical processes that lead to transformation. I have positioned my approach firmly within the paradigm of conflict transformation and learning. Throughout the commentary I have explored this concept through practice and in doing so presented my art as a pedagogical project that promotes action. I have introduced new terms such as; compelling, problem posing, critical visual arts and doubt as creative pedagogical forces. These terms provide a language that gives form to my practice. However, in keeping with my desire to promote doubt, I present these terms not as conclusive statements but as 'words in progress.' The rhizome promotes the concept of possibility without knowing. A concept that is crucial to conflict transformation and indeed art production.

Atkinson (2011) describes my approach as a pedagogical practice that 'treat[s] learning as a risky process, as something concerned with questioning assumptions and representations, as puncturing a hole in current knowledge and understanding within each specific learning context.' (pp. 94-95).

As noted in section 1.1, I realized the social value of making this art with people *(arte util)* at an early age. While in art school, I worked with local communities in my native Belfast to test and develop my practice within the social field. These rather naïve but committed projects led me to consider a career in teaching. It was during my time in the classroom that I recognized the need for art education to move beyond the objective to the subjective- to focus on the lives of students rather than the values of the curriculum. This shift was

exemplified through my commitment to critical pedagogy and, like many other liberal educators, I am indebted to the work of Paulo Freire, whose theories have freed me from an educational position carved through my own experiences of education as victim of oppression. I have used my approaches to form new spaces of practice that aim to promote a subculture of critical learning where the 'difficult questions' Biesta (2007) can be asked.

My pedagogical work places an emphasis on the potentiality of arts education to act as a force for change. This leads one to consider the ethics of my work and how I have formed these spaces to influence the behaviour of others. It is important to note that the space that I talk of does not seek to force opinion or change behaviour per-say. It is used to acknowledge difference through a dialectical process of visual disruption, (as can be seen in section 2.2, 2.3, & 2.4), and to lead on to new encounters and possibilities. As has been clearly noted, the images I draw on are taken directly from the contested spaces of street and indeed, home. That is why I place such value on the space and call it a studio (see section 2.1). This is a safe space that enables the dialectical process to emerge. Therefore, the images of the street are exploited, interrogated and re-imagined with the deliberate intention to promote debate and discord. This is learning by provocation, a compelled pedagogy that aims to expose existing attitudes to enable change and transformation. All my projects begin with the realities that a community may face within a given context. They are formed out of difference and mistrust and while consensus may not be reached, the 'hard difference' that separates and fuels conflict is softened and becomes more pliable. This softening of positions opposes to the fixed identity concept promoted by agents of division, as discussed in section 3.5.

3.2 Studio as a Space of Disruption

'Difficult questions' that is, the questions that disrupt our existing knowledge and perceptions and education must go hand in hand. These questions should play an integral part in the construction of every teacher's identity and form a practice that compels the educator to ask the fundamental epistemological

question why? This 'practical Epistemology (Dewey 1997) cultivates a pedagogy that is founded on critical thought. Biesta (2007) states: 'the responsibility of the educator not only lies in the cultivation of "worldly spaces" in which the encounter with otherness and difference is a real possibility, but that it extends to asking "difficult questions." (p. ix)

Throughout the text I point to the importance of creating pedagogical spaces that protect and nurture new thoughts and enable a reimagining of images of difference. My commentary describes these as 'spaces of disruption.' The concept of the 'studio space' is a crucial element to understanding my work as a method of conflict transformation. Therefore, I assert that the studio creates an environment where the material history of previous works and dialogues are present and therefore have the potentiality to influence the new. For the artist educator as peace worker, the studio compels those who enter to bring with them the material of their past – their history and open this to the possibility of change. While these historical materials create sites of recognition they also supply data that in the context of the studio becomes open to questioning and therefore transformation.

In section 2.1 the studio became a secure place for difficult conversations to emerge and resolve before they were introduced into the world. This is particularly important in contested spaces and such artists working in such contexts need to be aware of the importance of creating such spaces. I should say there is nothing new in this – the studio is historically recognized as a place of inquiry where artists and artisans develop their practice in relative privacy of their own world. What is new is the intention to see the studio as pedagogical place or as an incubator that functions on both a physical and intellectual level. The dissection of images of hate and difference must be carried out with great care and precision. This is akin to bomb disposal and if the process goes wrong the entire project can unravel. The studio becomes a place of mediation between the various materials applied to the work – including relationships, images and narratives. With this in mind, the function of the studio is to create spaces, which are secure and enable disruptions to emerge but it must be remembered this is the material that often forms the identities of those involved

in the process of disruption. Therefore, the studio is open to the 'histories, and memories that are predicated upon highly traumatic or provocative divisions between self and other, us and them, inside and outside, and then they attempt to turn those seemingly absolute boundaries into places of learning by rendering them porous, fluid and palpable.' (Ellsworth, 2005 p.159)

The studio allows the juxtaposition of images that are symbolically charged by residue of conflict, memorials that are utilized to create and reify 'hard difference'. Such symbols as identified in sections 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3, and despite their difficulty in being accepted, they must be included in the process. In this manner, they are similar to the many difficult issues that separate warring parties when they come to the negotiating table to resolve conflict. Therefore, I call on artists not to reject these symbols of hate but rather embrace them and use them as instruments, as a language to be disrupted. When this is managed with care and skill, such languages can become vehicles of disruption as was exemplified in section 2.2. As noted above, handling and disrupting such images is in my view equivalent to an act of ordnance disposal.

Section 2.3 highlights the problematic nature of working in the public gaze set within the institution of the Ulster Museum. The disruption was triggered by the use of paramilitary images. While the general public was intrigued and openly engaged in the process, many individuals from within the museum took offence to the images and campaigned to have the works stopped and removed from the gallery. The experience of the Ulster Museum served to highlight the desire to conserve, tell and curate narratives in favour of disruption. Yet the studio – which in this case was an open space in the midst of the main gallery, served to enable dialogue with the pubic and eventually those who opposed the work became a part of the dialogue. In effect, we were all part of the process of disruption and, while a small minority excluded themselves from the work with which the vast majority engaged, with one member of staff – a vociferous opponent of the work in the first days of the project – asking that her thoughts could be included in the work. The comment read; "We are all human time to prove it. History is one thing but to pursue it in the name of vengeance is wrong. Teach children history not hate." The text was inscribed in the centre of the

finished painting. This text was seen as a criticism of the history embedded in institutions such as museums. As such I read the comment as not a critique of the artwork, but one that was prompted by the artwork, and in particular its placement within the context of the museum. The inclusion of the words highlights the importance of enabling an open process in projects that take place in the public domain. The 'living' nature of the Ulster Museum project was juxtaposed by the inanimate objects that surrounded the space. A space we transformed into an open studio.

In other instances, the studio became a place of intersectionality[45], (Crenshaw, 1989), a more personal space where the relationship between myself and others was explored and at times tested.  Section 2.1 demonstrates how the studio enabled transformation through the intersection of two distinct identities - David Craig and myself. This highlights another vital conclusion – that artists engaged in this work must be subject to the process every bit as much as the participant.

In section 2.3 the studio became a tripartite vehicle of learning with three distinct yet interconnected intentions; the first enabled a relationship between two disparate groups of young people to emerge.  In this case study the first cycle of the studio drew on existing knowledge and imagery that serves to form 'hard difference'. Through the production of these images we created a 'site of recognition' (Atkinson, 2011). The second cycle presents the studio as transitional space where images and narratives from each 'opposing side' were introduced through a process akin to 'shuttle diplomacy' Galtung (2000). In the third cycle the studio was transformed through a critical dialectical process to become a space of disruption. Existing positions were open to question while the images that supported and defined the 'hard differences' became points for critique and brought into question the concept of single identity. This questioning led to the production of new images that were representational of the multiple identities at play in the project. As such the third cycle again draws

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[45] See; http://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/2014/04/kimberl-crenshaw-intersectionality-i-wanted-come-everyday-metaphor-anyone-could(accessed 09/03/17)

on Crenshaw's theory of 'Intersectionality' (1989), that is, the process supported the emergence of each individual voice rather than the block group voice represented in the first and second cycle. Therefore, each individual gained agency over the single – group identity that is projected onto him or her. In other words, she/he became a subject and in doing so rejected the objects associated with 'hard difference' and reimaged these objects to present a critique of what exists and a new potential of what could be.

3.3 Dissemination: Masters in Applied Arts and Conflict Transformation

Through my research, I recognized a significant challenge with regards to the dissemination of my approach beyond conferences, publication or exhibitions. This question has driven me to develop a new Masters in Arts Education that applies the practices and concepts of a critical art education to the theories and practices of peace building and human development. To this end I have designed, and recently introduced, a new programme of study that aims to construct a field of praxis that will position arts education as a force for peace building and conflict transformation. The new International Masters Artist Educator is based at the ArtEZ institute of the Arts in the Netherlands.
The intention of iMAE is described in appendix 4, however, the programme has already received widespread recognition as a unique and innovative approach to conflict transformation through art. This recognition, coupled with the numerous applications I receive from artists who hope to join the course in the coming year, underlines my contention that there is a need to form a new type of artists' educator ( a change maker) – one who uses their art as a pedagogical force – a force for learning in the field of conflict transformation and peace building.

The Masters central aim is to create new fields of learning and research that focus on each student's interests and places these contexts within the framework and dynamics of contemporary conflict. The programme will prepare students to take their place in the field of conflict transformation therefore responding directly to the challenges identified by the Organization for Identity

and Cultural Development (OICD) in section 2.5. and the demands of our deeply divided world.

**Epligoue**

Throughout this narrative, I have stated my belief that the creative processes inherent in arts practice are essential components needed to enable transformation. I have presented five case studies that highlight the potentiality of a critical arts education to act as a force for transformation. My 'writing of my art' has presented many challenges, none more so than the retelling of projects that are deeply human and relational. I have done my utmost to represent the many people who have contributed to my work in a way that retains their voice but I am all too aware that I have in some ways become a translator.

Paulo Friere (1970) acknowledges the tensions between teacher and educator which for me is manifest in not what stories we we tell,  but how we think and tell these stories. Freire asks us to be critically conscious (*conscientização)* of our role, of what we teach and how we teach it. This is a challenge for any artist working in the field of relational art of social practices but it is particularly complex for those who hope to use their work in the field of conflict transformation. The balance between the poetics of art and politics and ethics of learning must be carefully managed and I trust that the methods and approaches presented in this narrative go some way toward describing how this might be achieved.

I conclude with a call on all artists working in the field of social practice to respect and consciously celebrate the educational aspects in their work. They must embrace education as a central force in their art and in doing so they may realise the potential of their work to promote social change and cultivate new 'ways of knowing'. Only then will they realize the ethical bond between artist and community.

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Andrew Holbrooke/Corbis (accessed May 2015)

Cupar Way Peacewall (J. Johnston 2011)

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United Nations Geneva Paper on memorialisation (see appendix 5)

80:20 Educating and Acting for  Better World, 2005.  2 (Vol 5)

# Appendices

# 'Critical Visual Arts Education'
## A Creative Pedagogy of Conflict Transformation

## In Search of the 'Moral Imagination'

John Johnston: PhD by existing publication or creative works
Visual Essay of the submitted in support of my commentary

## 2.1 Belfast Northern Ireland: Shankill – Palestine 'Peace Line' mural
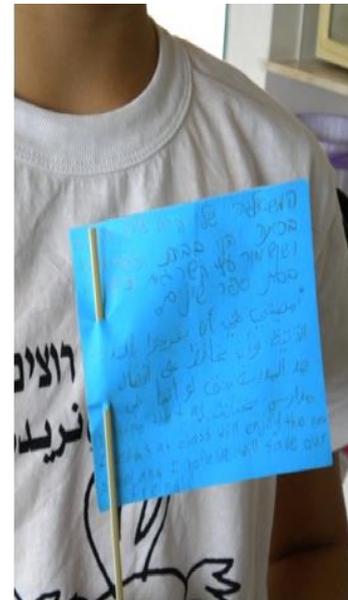


Maps of Peace Wall West Belfast (circa 1969)

Separation wall East /West Jerusalem (2011)

Separation Wall/ Security Wall (Israeli Side): East Jerusalem

Peacewall (Catholic Side): West Belfast
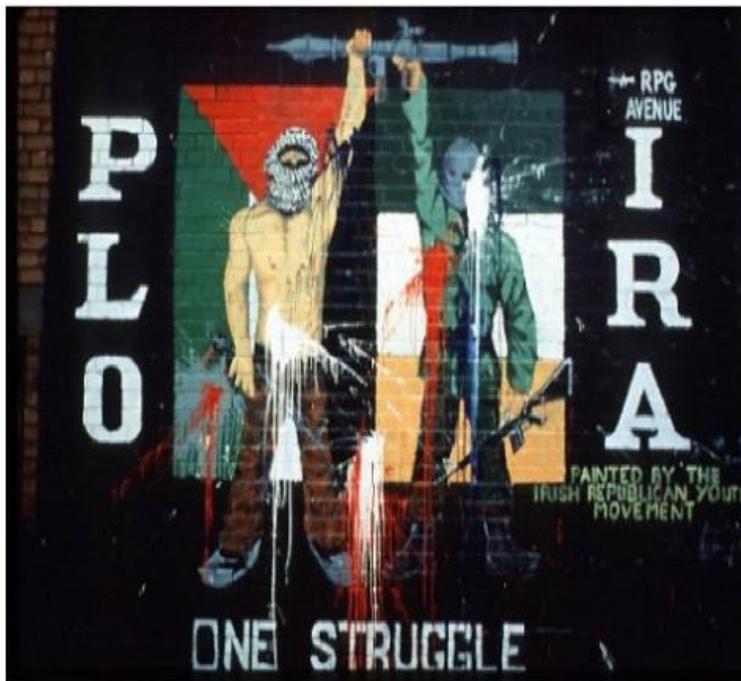
'We have no choice but the path of cooperation and ta'ayush (coexistence). Jews and Arabs will continue living here ... Our hope for our daughter is that she will learn to accept difference and to be compassionate, but also learn to think independently and have a strong identity.'

FAISAL HAIKAL father of primary school child, Neve Shalom – Wahat Al Salem – Oasis of Peace Bilingual School Jerusalem

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LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE:
THE SEEING AND WRITING OF
ART – JERUSALEM/BELFAST
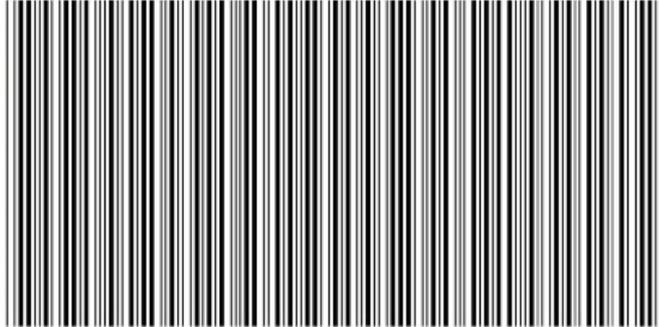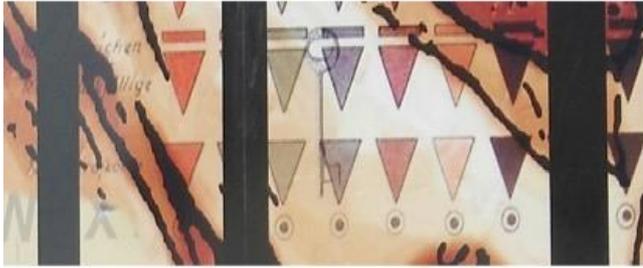
THE BRIDGE ACROSS THE WADI

IDEPENDENCE DAY -
NAKBA

BILINGUAL SCHOOL
WADI ARA
ISRAEL
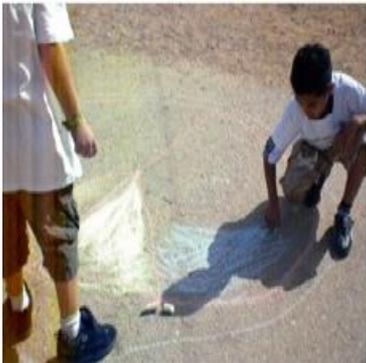
2.2 Ballymena Northern Ireland: The Killing of Michael McIlveen

**THE KILLING OF MICHAEL MCILVEEN**

**DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF A SINGLE IDENTITY**

CONFLICT INTERVENTION
BALLYMENA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Michael Mc Ilvean

**Independent.ie**

## Five teens charged with murder of Ballymena schoolboy

BY DAN MCGINN AND ALAN ERWIN

**THURSDAY MAY 11 2006**

FIVE teenagers were last night charged with the murder of Ballymena schoolboy Michael McIlveen.
THE 15-YEAR-OLD CATHOLIC DIED IN HOSPITAL ON MONDAY, A DAY AFTER HE WAS SAVAGELY BEATEN BY A GANG IN THE CO Antrim TOWN.

The sectarian killing of Michael McIlveen and the subsequent trial of those accused of his murder formed the backdrop to the following project.

**OFM DFM Research Branch**

Children and the Conflict in Northern Ireland :
The Experiences and Perspectives of 3-11 Year Olds
Connolly and Healy (2004)

'The report is organized around two case studies – comparing and contrasting the experiences and perspectives of children living under the shadow of sectarian tensions and violence with those living relatively free from it'.
Connolly & Healy (2004:1 )

The research uncovered a range of sectarian attitudes and behaviors that were prevalent in children as young as 3 years of age. This was partly evidenced in how the children formed connections with the symbols and images of what they recognized as belonging to their 'own community.' '[N]ow being used as markers of difference between the two Communities'. Connolly & Healy (2004 :3)

The Connolly /Healy report raises significant questions for visual arts practice and critical/public pedagogy. These questions were central to pedagogical and material processes of the following project.

The full report can be seen at the following link:
http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/childrenandconflict.pdf

Each group selected the symbols and images of the other. These symbols of familiarity became the starting point for a series of visual exchanges that took place over a four month period. Each group were then invited to 'handle' the symbols of the Other and compose a painting that would ultimately result in a presentation to the opposite group.

## Reimagining:

PALIMPSEST (i)

VISUAL THINKING

PROJECT ZERO HARVARD

WHAT ARE THE 'CONDITIONS' THAT NEED TO EXIST TO SEPARATE CATHOLIC FROM PROTESTANT THAT ULTIMATLELY LED TO KILLING OF MICHAEL MCILVEEN ?

Identity Box:
DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF A
SINGLE IDENTITY

NORTHERN IRELAND – PALESTINE – ISRAEL – LEBANON – ZAMBIA – BOSNIA - MALTA

## 2.4    Ulster Museum Belfast, Northern Ireland: 'Not a Bullet – Not an Ounce'



British Museum and Ulster Museum : Throne of Weapons
Collaboration with Alternatives Restorative Justice NGO, Ulster Museum, British Museum (2007)

..art is not only a way of expressing the element of truth in a culture, but the means of creating it and providing a springboard from which "that which is" can be revealed. Works of art are not merely representations of the way things are, but actually produce a community's shared understanding.

Heidegger (2001)





All murals create a new type of space, they redefine mundane public space as politicised place and can thereby help to reclaim it for the community. Place becomes an activated facet of the ideological struggle. Such paintings are therefore also a means of extending the message of resistance. Murals can be used to claim and define new politicised places as readily as refining or restating old arguments on existing sites.
(Jarman 1998:86)

'The sign can be seen as having two properties - the form of the sign (signifier) and it's meaning signified)'

Baudrillard (1975)

# HIV AIDS; STREET ART as a PEDAGOGY; ZAMBIA
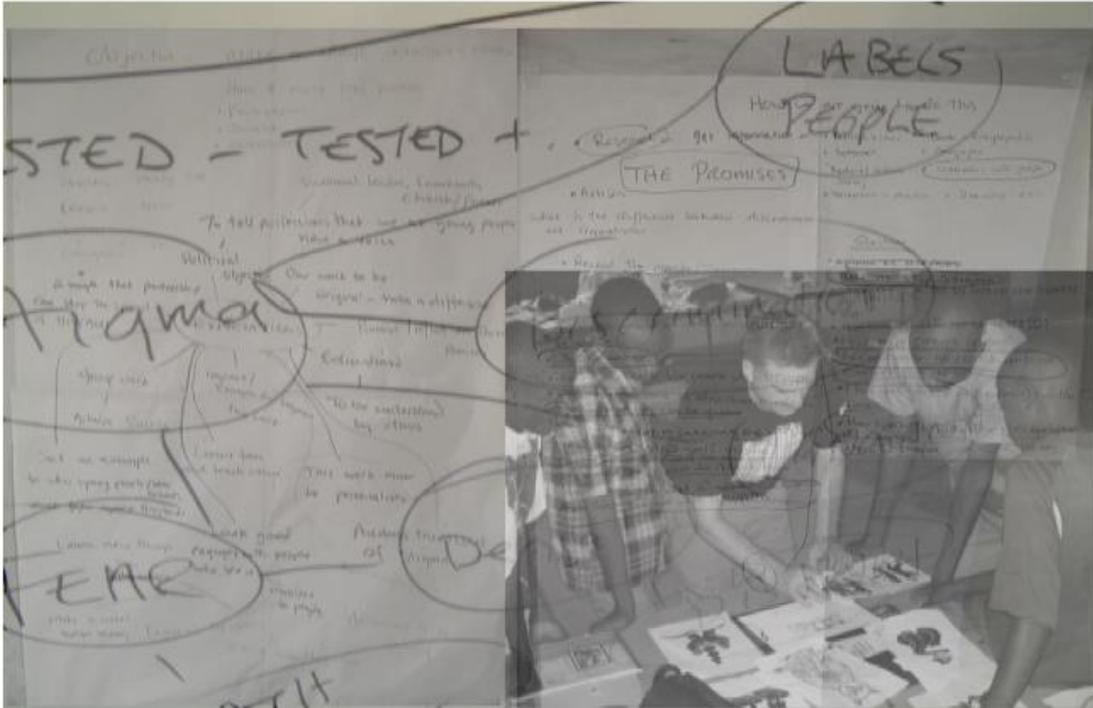
ARAKAN HIGH SCHOOL LUSAKA

WORLD AIDS DAY 2007: PROMOTION OF
YOUTH VOICE - NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL

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## Appendix 2. Scanned materials: Publications and selected educational resources related to the portfolio.

### Section 2.1



Bagna, C. ed., 2012. Linguistic landscapes, Multilingualism and social change. Lang.

Mor-Somerfiled A. & Johnston J.
Chapter 1
Page 155 - 169

The chapter draws on the multimodality of the landscape explored in section 3.1. and the disruption of the symbolic language of the 'peace wall' in West Belfast. Through theory and practice the chapter excavates the connectivity between physical and symbolic language of contested space.

### Section 2.1



**Shankill – Palestine Mural
(Shankill Community Partnership)**

John Johnston and David (Dee) Craig (2011) 'During their consultation with local individuals and groups, they developed empathy and a sensitive bond with the community, they also experienced that the people of the Shankill embrace their history in a truthful and candid way.' (Roz Small Shankill Community Partnership). The Shankill Palestine mural sits to this day on the so-called  "peace wall' between Catholic and Protestant areas of West Belfast. The work has become an visual icon that draws attention from visitors and local  people. However, it is the use of the work as a part of school curriculum that has provided the works greatest value. I have returned to Belfast on a number of occasions to discuss the work with GCSE and A 'Level pupils who use the painting to influence on their own projects.

**Section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3**







**Britishness, Race and Identity**

*In Belfast, one of the partners with which 80:20 works is the Greater Shankill Alternatives - a community based restorative justice project that engages with young people, local community groups, individuals and paramilitary organisations to explore peaceful and non-violent resolutions to conflicts between young people and the community. One of the key issues within that work is the question of identity and, obviously in this context, the question of 'national' and 'cultural' identity.*

*In recent years there has been an increase in racially motivated attacks often on local Asian or Chinese families and Alternatives has become active in challenging the young people involved in such attacks. Working with Alternatives, 80:20 developed a project with the theme 'Declare War on Racism' in 2005/2006. The project explored a range of issues and contexts including those of identity, Britishness, race and racism, the question of ethnic diversity in the British Army during the Second World War etc.*

*Central to the debates was the notion of what 'Britishness' means - being White, Protestant and 'loyal' to the Crown and supporting forces of the Crown. The project focused on visual representations or symbols that embodied these themes and in a series of workshops opened up the possibility that being 'British' could mean something else entirely.*

*Some of those who had been victims of the attacks joined in the project and encouraged conversations that explored the meaning of identity and Britishness and most importantly the tolerance within Britain for the other. Religion was also a topic for discussion – with the Koran being introduced to the workshop. The mural that was produced captured something of this process and formed the basis of a series of workshops held in local schools over a period of six months. Each visit was supported by a number of workshops and the production of a 'mini – mural' responding to the issues raised.*

**Use of Artistic processes in Development Education**

Drawing on the concepts and processes explored in section 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, subsequent projects utilized the palimpsest technique to address issues of racism and Nationalism.

From 80:20 educational resource (2006)

**Section 2.3**





Consultation panel

**Historical and memorial narratives in divided societies: history textbooks, memorials and museums (2013)**

Working under the auspices of the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, Farida Rashid, I was part of an international panel assembled to advise the SR on the use of political murals to reinforce divisive cultural identities and historical narratives. Drawing on my work with political murals in Northern Ireland I proposed that divisive 'identity tabs 'should utilized to introduce the 'other' in to the visual culture of each identity group therefore opening the image of self and other to educational interrogation. The proposal was accepted into the report and presented to the UNHRC in Geneva on 12th March 2014. The report has subsequently been cited as highlighting the importance of educational practice by Brazil at the UN Security Council as a model of good practice. See Appendix 6. for full report.

**Section 2.3**
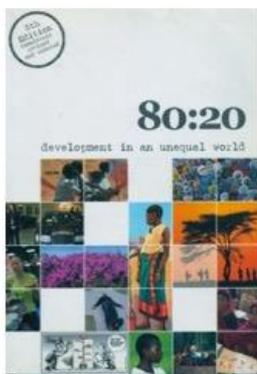
**80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World**
**Chapter 14 Page 215 – 229**

Drawing on section 2.3 this chapter explores the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and presents some of the key political debates related to the role of education in achieving the goals. The chapter draws on my experiences in Zambia.

Section 2.3.2
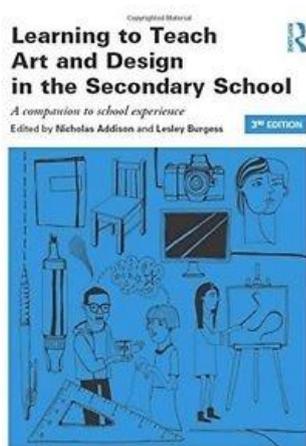
Addison, N., & Burgess, L. Learning to teach art and design in the secondary school: a companion to school experience. 3rd edition.

Chapter 9 Learning Social Justice through Art and Design education – Learning Art and Design through Social Justice Education pg. 190 – 197 London: Routledge.
This chapter calls on beginning teachers to see their classrooms as spaces of disruption and possibility. The chapter focuses on the construction of the teacher identity. Drawing on common themes explored throughout the portfolio the chapter compels teachers of art and design to act as agents of social justice.

## Section 2.4
Ulster Museum Belfast, Not a Bullet Not an Ounce'









**British Museum**
**Issue 52 Summer 2005**
**Page 15 – 16**
**NBNO – The Throne of Weapons**

The British Museum in Association with BBC Africa 05
Exhibition catalogue
Page 20 -21
www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/throne/thronepdf

*"The aim is to produce visible evidence of communities looking to change the corrupted values of the past."*     J.Johnston (2005).

'They produced a powerful piece of work that drew on the tradition of Northern Irish wall painting, featuring slogans and images of gunmen, but used for a different purpose.
John Holden British Museum (2005)

## Section 2.5
Street Art as  Public Pedagogy



**Translating Dissent** (2016) Ed. Baker M. Democratic Walls? Street Art as a Public Pedagogy Chp.14 p.178- 193 New York, Routledge

This award winning book brings together academics and activists from the area of linguistics. My chapter focuses on the role of street art as a public pedagogy and calls on artists to recognize that they are involved in the construction of sites of learning.
Therefore picking up on the threads explored throughout the portfolio but with specific reference to section 2.5.

**Section 2.5**
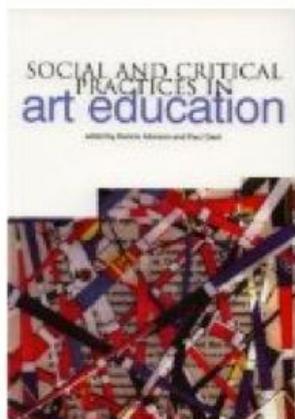


**Atkinson, D. and Dash, P., 2005. Social and Critical Practice in Art Education. Trentham Books. Chapter 2 Page 11- 21**

This chapter explores the contentious nature of the first street art project that took place as part of the 'Lets Talk' political education program referenced in section 3.4. Following a line of enquiry that positioned street art as public pedagogy, the project can be recognized as one of the first public art actions to decommission the visual language of the Northern Ireland conflict.

For more examples of resources inspired by my work visit http://developmenteducation.ie/shop/

**Appendix 3. List of conferences and international workshops**

2014 - On-going    **Theme:** Art and Conflict Transformation

**Place & Context:** Somme France – Belfast Northern Ireland. Re imaging the past – New street art challenging existing narratives of World War One in Ulster Loyalism

**Title:** Memorialisation: The Visual Narrative and Public Pedagogy of the Somme Battlefields: The project explores and questions the aesthetic of the war memorials of the Somme valley and their relationship with commemorative wall murals of West Belfast.

**Outcomes:** A body of paintings, public display, exhibition catalogue, pedagogical resources for use in primary and secondary education plus written paper.

**Partners:** United Nations Human Rights Council Geneva, Alternative RJ Belfast, Professor Richard Grayson, Chair of History Goldsmiths University of London, The Curriculum Council NI.

*:*

2014    **Theme**: Art and Conflict Transformation

**Title:** Tree of Knowledge

**Place & Context:** Bahrain Nakhool Arts festival 2014. This was a collaborative project with street artists from the gulf region exploring issues of interconnectivity and interdependency between the Arab and Western worlds. The process and completed painting questioned the benign nature of the festival and exposed issues of censorship and political interference.

**Outcome:** 20 x 8ft Mural painting on wood. The process has been recorded in both visual and written form. The piece will feature in a report to the John Smith Foundation 2015. Retained by the Ministry of Culture Bahrain.

| | |
|---|---|
| 2005- On-going | **Theme:** Debunking the myth of a Single Identity |
| | **Place & Context:** London, Northern Ireland, Middle East, Bosnia, South Africa. Schools and informal education settings. Working with communities in post conflict scenarios this project drew on experiences of working with a 'single identity group in Eltham South East London. The project was developed in response to the racist killing of Stephen Lawrence. The aim of the project was to revel the complex nature of identity construction by making a transparent multiple layered artworks that was concealed within a screen like box. |
| | **Outcome:** The production of numerous small sculpture works that have become known as 'identity Boxes'. The project led to the publication of an educational resource by a Development Education NGO and was used in a peace-building program for political leaders from Northern Ireland held in South Africa. I continue to use this device in my current position with beginning teachers to reveal the underlying value systems that construct and influence our identities as educators. |
| | |
| 2012-13 | **Theme:** Street Art and Political Potentialities. |
| | **Place & Context:** London. Formal and informal educational settings. |
| | This collaboration brought together two political mural artists from opposing sides of the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland to work with a group of young people from a South London secondary school. The project explored the relationship between historical events and narratives related to the death of 14 young people from the African Caribbean community in New Cross South East London in a house fire in 1993. The event had a major impact on race relations in the United Kingdom. |

**Title:** New Cross 1981 – 2012

**Outcome:** 28x8ft Mural painting on wood. BBC Northern Ireland documentary 'Story Walls' http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pd3jg

The mural is now on permanent display and an integrated part of the curriculum at Addey and Stanhope School Deptford SE London.

2011

**Theme:** Street Art and Political Potentialities; **Linguistic Landscape – The Seeing and Writing of Art**

**Place & Context**: Belfast, Jerusalem; Arts Council of Northern Ireland commission. Project was developed with the collaboration of a Loyalist community in West Belfast and political mural artist from the Protestant tradition. The project also encompassed the development of a key partnership with Israeli human rights activists and bi lingual educators from Palestine and Israel.

**Outcome:** A major mural painting and sculpture produced on the West Belfast Peace wall. The painting has become a part of some school curricular and is also used by community educators as a pedagogical tool.

BBC News feature, Radio and other media references including Internet.

Publication: Linguistic Landscape – The Seeing and Writing of Art. Mor Somerfield A., Johnston J., 2012

2009

**Theme:** Art and conflict Transformation

**Place & Context:** Ballymena Northern Ireland. Michael McIlveen (1990 – 2006) died in hospital on the 8th May 2006 as a result of sectarian assault in Ballymena Northern Ireland.

**Outcome:** The production of two separate mural paintings plus a third realised during a residential event. The project was the result of a six-month engagement with young

people (Catholic and Protestant) from the immediate area of killing. Some were friends of Michael while others were friends and relatives of those accused of his murder. The young people negotiated their way through a challenging process that ultimately questioned their sense of group identity and the values that shape them. Through a process of democratic education, the groups came together to produce a third painting that became a damning indictment of the education system in Northern.

The young people presented their findings at a number of conferences and took the mural on a tour of schools to promote interconnectivity and peace education.

2009        **Theme:** Debunking the Myth of a Single Identity: Restorative Justice

**Place & Context:** Shankill, West Belfast. This visual arts project was made in collaboration with Greater Shankill Alternatives – Restorative Justice NGO working with young people under threat from Paramilitary punishment. I developed a mural project that engaged with a 'gang' of male youths who had been 'convicted' (paramilitary conviction) of racist attacks against an immigrant Asian family.

**Outcomes:** Production of large public art work that eventually brought the victim and family face to face to confront issues of hatred, genocide and identity.

The project led to the formation of a young people's group who toured with the painting, using it as a pedagogical tool in schools and youth centres to promote cultural diversity and religious tolerance.

2005        **Theme:** Conflict Transformation: The Throne of Weapons, Ulster Museum Belfast in partnership with the British Museum London

**Place & Context:** Ulster Museum Belfast. A one-week painting and public performance piece developed in partnership with Alternative Restorative Justice NI.

**Outcome:** Mural work juxtaposing the tools of conflict against the imagery of conflict. The proposed the decommissioning of paramilitary mural paintings through a process of critical and public pedagogies. The project led to development of a Loyalist strategy for the decommissioning military murals. Unfortunately, this strategy was derailed by an internal power struggle within loyalism that led to the expulsion and marginalisation of key figures from the process. See British Museum catalogue 'The Throne of Weapons '(2005) @ www.britishmuseum .org/pdf/throne.pdf

2004- 2007          **Theme:** Human Rights and Development Education

**Place and Context:** Lusaka Zambia; HIV Aids, Learning through Art

Working young people and victims of HIV Aids in community settings. **Outcome:** Production of a number of mural paintings designed to encourage participants and viewers to engage in a range of 'challenging conversations' related to HIV and human rights and traditional cultural beliefs.

**Outcomes:** The presence of the paintings and the process of engagement created a pathway to explore these conversations and led a number of significant outcomes including the formation of young people's council for the HIV education based at Arakan School Lusaka and supported by Irish Aid.

**Other selected works**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2010 | Finding Arts Place: Bilingual to Multilingual Education in Israel/ Palestine |
| 2009 | If Walls Could Talk: Belfast – Israel – Palestine |
| 2007 | Divided Cities Berlin- Belfast |
| 2006 | Millennium Development Goals: Dublin |
| 2004 | Home: Visualisation of the Palestinian Right of Return: Beirut Lebanon |
| 2004 | Cultural Rights in Contested Space: Indigenous Australia, Nambucca Heads |
| 2004 – 2008 | ASBO, Young People & the Community |

**Publications:**

**Book Chapters:**

**Street Art of the Egyptian Revolution as a Public Pedagogy**

A comparative study between political murals of Northern Ireland the street art of the Arab Spring (Cairo)**:** *Never Alone: Voices from the Egyptian Revolution* Mona Baker & Yasmin El-Rifae (2015) Pluto Press

Chapters in Books - Published

**Art, Learning and Social Justice** Johnston J*. Learning to Teach Art and Design in Secondary Schools.* Addison and Burgess, Routledge (2014)

**The Seeing and Writing of Art,** Mor- Somerfield & Johnston J. *Linguistic Landscapes, Multilingualism and Social Change.* Helot C.et al. Lang (2012)

**Art in Contentious Spaces.** Johnston J. Social and Critical Practices in Art Education (Landscapes: The Arts,

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Aesthetics, and Education) by Dennis Atkinson and Paul Dash (Jan 2005). Trentham

**Selected Conferences**
**Invited Speaker**

| 2016 | ArtEZ Arnhem: Arts Based Research (Invited Speaker) |
|------|------|
| 2015 | Kings College London: Pedagogy of Ambiguity (invited speaker) |
| 2015 | INSEA Conference Lisbon. Art and Conflict Transformation (invited speaker) |
| 2014 | Five Nations Citizenship Education (Belfast): Debunking the Myth of a Single Identity (invited speaker) |
| 2014 | University of Manchester: 'Public Pedagogy and the Street Art of the Egyptian Revolution'. Citizen Media in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe, China and East Asia, and the Arab World. (invited speaker) |
| 2014 | Contributor and advisor: UN (Geneva): Memory and Memorial in Post Conflict Contexts. Advisor on street art and memorial Human Rights Council under the auspices of the special rapporteur for cultural rights, Farrida Shaheed |
| 2013 | Institute of Education (London): Social Justice Through Art Education (invited speaker) |
| 2012 | Showroom Gallery, Communal knowledge Art education beyond the classroom (invited speaker) |
| 2012 | Coordinator; Goldsmiths College. Street art and Political Potentialities |
| 2011 | Ijade Conference, University of Chester: What is Art and Design Pedagogy? (invited speaker) |
| 2012 | Panel expert: 3rd Presidential Conference, Jerusalem Israel, 'Facing Tomorrow, Can Co-Existence Exist in Israel's Mixed Cities' |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2011 | Keynote: International Culture Arts Network Conference – Derry NI |
| 2011 | Keynote: Creative Legacies: Community Arts in peace Building, Belfast City Hall Northern Ireland |
| 2010 | Key Note: Can Art Create a Shared Space in Divided Societies? Haifa, Israel |
| 2010 | Goldsmiths University of London 'Can art change the World' |

**Appendix 4. Recording: Interview with David Dee Craig, (June 2014) USB**

The content of this interview was recorded in East Belfast in April 2015 and is presented in the enclosed USB st1ick. The interview covered many issues regarding the use of wall murals as a tool of defence and also aggression within the context of the Northern Ireland conflict. As a loyalist mural artist Dee defended the use of unionist murals as symbols of resilience in the face of what he seen as Republican/ Nationalist aggression against 'his' Protestant / Loyalist community.

The interview also divulged some highly sensitive information, which has been removed to protect the anonymity of those discussed. The use of specific terms and indeed the language may confuse some listeners. I apologize for any offence caused by the use of language.

Available on USB

ArtEZ Hogeschool voor de Kunsten

# iMAE

**international MASTERS ARTIST EDUCATOR**

**Applied & Interdisciplinary**

# Art in Education Masters

**Conflict and Peace Studies
Development
Ecology
Human Rights
Social Justice
International Affairs**

# Programme Handbook 2017 - 18

# Contents

**1 Introduction:**

iMAE is a one year applied arts in education Masters level programme based on 60 ECT (European Credit Transfers). The educational programme is praxis based, that is a combination of theory with practice. We expect our students to spend a minimum of 60% of their time working on their independent practice and research interests while the remainder of their time is spent developing their knowledge and theoretical awareness of the core issues that underpin the programme; Conflict and Peace studies, Development, Human Rights, Ecology, international Affairs and Arts & Critical Pedagogy.



'Identity Deconstruction' (2012). John Johnston with Alternatives Restorative Justice, Belfast Northern Ireland

**1.1 Vision**

**"If Art is to Change the World, then Artists must become Agents of Change"**
John Johnston Director of iMAE

The international Masters Artist Educator is an applied interdisciplinary arts in education Masters programme with global aspiration and intention. At iMAE we aim to produce artist educators who will dedicate their work to the cause of Social Justice through applying their artistry to fields of Conflict Transformation, Development, Human Rights and Ecology. IMAE artists will have a dedication to building and maintaining their knowledge of International Affairs. This innovative and challenging programme aims to position the arts as a new force for learning – a force that draws on the combined creative potentiality that exists within art and education. We aim to undermine the conditions that create discrimination and injustice through the production of socially engaged art that is driven by the principles of critical education.
An iMAE graduate is an agent of change.

**The Artist Educator as Cultural Activist**
Our goal is to develop the capacity and identity of the artist educator beyond that of studio practitioner, performer, entertainer or teacher. We aim to produce a new hybrid Artist Researcher Educator who is committed to using their art to impact positively on the lives of those people and communities they work with. An iMAE graduate will pursue their praxis at local, national and international levels working within governmental and non-governmental sectors and with individuals and or marginalised communities. Their goal is to enable agency through participation in and through the arts.
Our graduates present new approaches and pedagogical formations through the application of contemporary arts to the many challenging issues that create mistrust, division and ultimately, conflict. iMAE graduates will find a new place for arts education in the 21st century and reposition the arts as a central force to meet these challenges that have come to define our time. We exploit the

inherent creativity within the arts to meet these challenges and to ultimately promote agency and enable the construction of critically minded communities. iMAE aims to determine a new place for arts education beyond the traditional 'spaces of practice' such as galleries, studios or school. We seek to work in those areas of society that are fractured by conflict and underdevelopment and formed out of prejudice and injustice. Issues and the theories of Conflict Transformation, Development Education, Ecology, Human Rights underpin the programme. Working from the 'bottom up' we place an emphasis on 'real life' scenarios and hence promote field work through a local and international placement scheme that sees our students work in collaboration with teachers and artist organisations. iMAE combines arts based research with educational research methods and places these approaches directly into the field. We aim to form new frameworks that support the critical educational work needed in Post conflict scenarios such as Northern Ireland and intractable conflicts –such as Palestine Israel. Our programme also addresses issues of underdevelopment and ecological agendas through the introduction of a new module that is dedicated to these specific agendas.

**International Partnerships**:

During the programme students will take part in international study placements. These placements will be delivered in partnership with a local arts and human rights NGO's as well as educational institutions. Our current partnerships provide placements in Israel Palestine and Northern Ireland. In the next year we aim to develop new partnerships with the Van Abbe (Arte Util) Museum in Eindhoven the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland. Students are also expected to collaborate with local communities, including schools, and artists to produce short-term project work. The aim of this vital aspect is to create environments that will enable our students to learn from professional artists, educators and cultural workers in the field.

**Joseph Beuys - Artist Educator:**

'Everyone is an Artist'
(Joseph Beuys)

Over the past forty years the role of the artist has changed significantly. Today we stand at a new age of possibility that asks artists to contribute to the construction of the social and political fabric of our time. This 'new artist' faces many practical, ethical and pedagogical challenges.  While many contemporary artists make their work in response to a given context (such as site specific art), there is a growing need for a new type of artist who engages in conscious acts of critical education. These artists must be trained in the field of education and as such understand the ethical implications of their work within the field of public and critical pedagogy.

Their work should form 'new commons' and activate political and democratic spaces of discussion and dissent. This new artist's educator must form new publics what Hickey Moody (2015) describes as 'Little Publics';

> 'Little Publics can be spaces very much aligned to political norms or hegemonic agendas, or they can be spaces of resistance, they can be conflicted political sites brought together through a shared aesthetic or intellectual concern that can unite politically divergent communities.' (p. 117)

iMAE artists see this space as a place of possibility – a place of learning through and with the arts. Where agency can emerge from the critical and transformative processes of art production. iMAE draws our attention to explicit role of the contemporary artist as educator, one who aims to transform public life from that of passive consumption to one of critical and ethical production. To achieve this goal, the artist needs see their practice as a mobile, malleable form that is responsive to the specific needs of a given context, theme or community but also, and most importantly, the needs of the artist.

Therefore, the Artist Educator – is a cultural activist, one who wants to place their work in 'real time' situations to promote thought, dialogue and social

change. She or he places equal importance on the production of art and learning through art. They posit learning as a driving force within their artistic project. An IMAE artist strives to form a distinct balance between their own artistic goals and the needs of the 'Other'.

## SELF + OTHER = WE

This simple equation sets the Artist educator apart from the traditional role or image of the artist. The programme places an emphasis on the development of the artistic practices of our student. We believe that education evolves out of the process of making and discussing art. Which simply means that the relationship between art and education is a fusion of intentions between the artist and his /her publics. iMAE challenges the historical boundaries between art, artists and the public to reveal a democratic dialectical art based on mutual needs, ethics, responsibilities and respect for our planet and its inhabitants.

### Critical Democracy
An IMAE artist sees democracy as a real and tangible entity – an entity that must be continually questioned in order to recognize what such concepts may mean in the day to day realities of people's lives. Art, culture and politics are part of the one body – hence for iMAE, critical democracy means a restless democracy that relies on a culture of questioning to maintain good health and well-being. The themes that underpin our programme serve to maintain the focus of our students on the crucial issues that shape our present and our future. These themes are interrogated through lectures, seminars and most importantly applied to art practice to form a new pedagogy that is grounded on the potentiality of art as a force to develop new levels of consciousness.

### Socially Engaged Art and Critical Pedagogy
The international Artist Educator is acutely aware of the ethical 'tight rope' that such practices walk and recognizes the value of critical pedagogy and dialectical inquiry offers this agenda. To this end we promote 'pedagogy of doubt' (Johnston 2015) – this means an IMAE artist is constantly questioning their work on ethical grounds. They are inevitably insecure, open to debate,

dialogue and reinvention. She or he is principled and sees art as a value in its own right while recognizing the political potentiality of art as a means to form new audiences, publics and learning communities. This exposition is arrived through a critical dialogue with self and other. Therefore, an iMAE artist educator will not impose their values onto those that they work with and he or she must have vision he must also have the flexibility to respond to the needs of a situation or context. This form of social engagement maintains its integrity through critical reflection and dialectical inquiry – the constant review and analysis of the practices and behaviours of the self-artist in the context and reflection of the Other.

**'The DNA of possibility'**

The Master Artist Educator is a new dynamic program that intends to reconcile the false differences constructed through time that have served to separate the concepts and practices of the artist from that of the educator. Through this unique program these two concepts will be explored, questioned and deconstructed in order to create new forms of practice that will impact on the identity of our students and the communities they serve. Therefore, the historical diversion between artist and teacher, concretized by Bertrand Russell's assertion – that 'those who do, do and those who don't teach', is not only challenged but dismantled and reconciled.

Indeed, reconciliation is a central element of this program and I believe that it must become a core value of education. Our students 'reconciliation will emerge through their interactions with fellow artists who bring to the course a broad range of expertise from across the arts – expertise that will ultimately combine with to produce a multidisciplinary practitioner who realizes their work through collaboration. Each of student will have this possibility embedded in their DNA – IMAE asks students to develop their practice based on the possibilities of others as well as their own.

The reconciliation between the arts – it's multiple functions and the role of the artist educator in this world needs to be defined from two points: Firstly, from the unique individuality that each student brings through their discipline and practice; therefore, the program begins with an exploration of the identity of each individual artists (the self). This is explored through a series of intense

workshops that results in the production and exhibition / performance of a work from each student. Secondly the program will provide opportunities for students to develop collaborative projects within the group to form a community of praxis. The intention here is to enable each individual to move beyond this starting point toward a socially engaged art that is inclusive of the needs of self and other. Through these processes students build the capacity and confidence to take learning beyond the confines of the studio and to develop new spaces of practice within local, national and international contexts.

**Cross Discipline to Interdependency**

We aim to build connections between the work of each student and that of other artists and communities – moving beyond the recognized concept of cross-disciplinary to interdisciplinary and further toward interdependency. This means by the end of the program our students will need to work with others as much as they need a musical instrument, a paintbrush or a script. Hence collaboration becomes a sustainable and integrated art form.

**Sustainable Communities of Praxis**

The issue of sustainability is extremely important to the program and is further enhanced through the attention paid to the development of the entrepreneurial aspects needed to sustain practice beyond the programme. Each student receives specific training in this agenda and is expected to produce a credible business plan to support their practice.  Through the creation of an online portfolio we will aim to keep in contact and to continue to form our community and share practice and opportunities for further collaboration.

**1.3 Teaching  & Support**

**Director of Programme**

John Johnston - Arts Practice/research: Critical pedagogy, Identity, Conflict Transformation and Social Justice j.johnston@artez.nl

**Programme Coordinator**

Marloes Verhoven MA - M.Verhoeven@ArtEZ.nl

**Core Lecturers**

Visual Arts  – Giovanni Dalessi BA;  G.Dalessi@ArtEZ.nl

Gender and Equality – Dr Bibbi Straatman  bibi@irq.org

Dance and Movement – Dr Joao Da Silva;  J.DaSilva@ArtEZ.nl

Theatre - Ines Sauer MA I.Sauer@ArtEZ.nl

Music -  Dr Falk Huber; f.Hubner@ArtEZ.nl

Arts and Humanity - Janeke Weink MA;  J.Wienk@ArtEZ.nl

Human Rights Education & Conflict Transformation– John Johnston


**Guest Lecturers to cover:**

International Affairs

Ecology

Development Education


**International Placement Coordinators**

Elaine Forde (Playhouse Arts Centre Derry) Ireland Coordinator

Stary Mwaba (Visual Artist and Public Pedagogue (Lusaka Zambia) Sub Saharan Africa Coordinator

## 2. Setting the context for the Masters

### 2.1 Finding Arts Place: Art education in the 21st century

The work field has become more diffuse and the distinction between formal and informal art education has become blurred. The public needs to be inspired in order to develop the criticality needed to question traditional assumptions about the place of the arts in society. Today contact with art and culture is more trans-sectional, multidisciplinary, virtual and physical. Modern technology has made the arts more accessible and therefore open to critique. Participation in the arts present a unique opportunity to empower individuals and communities to develop skills and knowledge across a broad spectrum of socio-political and existential issues. Art and culture education are fields where engagement and participation are equally important.

### 2.2 Artist Educator as Agents of Change

Artist educators have decided to use their skills to transfer knowledge, insight and attitudes pertaining to the arts to reach into various groups and communities. Artist educators operate in every layer of education and society. They contribute to shaping the general social and cultural development of children and promote well-being and social cohesion. In addition, they play a special role in training future artists, musicians, designers, performers (theatre and dance), architects and professionals working in the cultural and social field: 'Cultural Workers'. In this role they represent the entire cultural and creative sector and are a crucial component of this environment. Therefore, the artist educator must form praxis between their own discipline, the communities they inhabit and the socio-political agendas that currently shape our world. They must become agents of change.

## 2.3 Philosophical Position

Can art change the world? I a word Yes. Indeed, some would say it already has – on numerous occasions. However, the change needed for today requires the creation of a new pedagogical paradigm – where art and education combine to create a force driven by poetics, radical pedagogies and political intention. Krzysztof Ziarek (2004) calls such work as *'forcework'*, 'where the notion of force relates to an undercurrent, a flow of forces that is pre-linguistic and pre-cognitive but out of which emerge phases of transformation.' In other words, the combination of art practice and pedagogical intention (asking what is to be learned), creates a force where the unknown is seen as a place of discovery, research and possibility. This calls on our students to take risks with their practice and to disrupt their established 'ways of being' in order to become 'new' in the world. It also calls for ethics to be seen as a central component of their work and as such when work intends to engage beyond the self-students must give precedence to considering the power at play between the artist and her/his public.

Independent Studies is designed to offer students the space to explore and test their practice against these issues. The intention is to enable new knowledge to emerge from the individual and the group methodologies explored and exploited by students.  Ultimately students will produce and present words, images, sounds that are poetic and aesthetic but ultimately its primary function to become socially meaningful.


## 3. Pedagogy, Lectures, Workshops, Seminars and Independent Study
## 3.1 Programme Pedagogy

Most seminars and lectures will take place on Monday and Tuesday. Taught sessions intend to follow a dialogical approach and while some will have a philosophical and open format.  Others will be content driven and focus on an exploration of existing knowledge and specific forms of practice to the field of study at that time.  Each approach intends to develop a Rhizomatic pedagogy that is open ended in regards to how a student enters and exists the learning process. Put simply this means that the content and structure is held together with an overall intention rather than a rigid framework. The intention is to construct a culture of critical dialectical inquiry that is purposeful and rigorous.

The combination of the Rhizomatic with critical pedagogy is intended to enable students to develop their own knowledge as they need it in relation to their specific interests and practice while also extending their self-interest to engage with broader themes and concepts related to contemporary issues in art and education.

## 3.2 Programme Structure & Curriculum

| Unit Title | Intention | EC |
|---|---|---|
| PHASE One Sept. – Dec. 2017 | | |
| **01. Independent Study** Practice based Research projects focusing: Identity from Self to Other. | To develop individual means of expression.  To construct collaborative aesthetic forms that communicate ideas and challenge  stereotypes and division. To use the processes and product of contemporary arts to address the overall themes of the phase | 10 |
| 02. **Identity:** Human Rights Social Justice and Identity in Arts and Education | To develop knowledge and understanding and the role of the arts in the specific fields noted in the Unit. | 10 |

| | | 194 |
|---|---|---|
| **PHASE Two:**<br>**Jan. – April 2018** | | |
| **0.3 Independent Study** Practice Based<br>Research Project focusing on: Spaces of Practice. Exploring potential new fields of influence for one's own praxis. | Continued development of own praxis, building their work into a variety community settings. This praxis led unit will lead to the production of artistic outcome/s in the site of the international placement Students will build networking skills that will enable them to develop and deliver project work in a variety of local and international contexts. | 10 |
| **04. Spaces of Practice** Arts Education in Contested Spaces<br>To include fieldwork in an international context. | This essay will draw on the first written work and continue to build the story of the student's development on the programme. Students will also produce a written work that forms clear connections between some of the key national and international debates that currently inform socially | 10 |

| | engaged arts practice agendas. | |
|---|---|---|
| | | 195 |
| **PHASE Three:**<br>**May – July 2018** | | |
| **05. Independent Graduation Project** | This is a prolonged period of praxis that asks students to conceive, design and deliver an arts based educational project in a public field.<br>The processes and outcome/s will form the final portfolio of the Masters programme | 20 |

## 4 Outline of programme pedagogy

The connection between taught and independent studio practice is based on a rhizomatic approach. Each tutor will trigger a number of concepts through a variety of pedagogical strategies and educational approaches. These 'learning events' are explored further in tutorials, practical workshops and seminars with the intention to form praxis between the theoretical and practical components of the programme. Students will draw on texts and research materials that are posted via the ELO and combine these sources of information with core publications. The combination of theory with research will also inform the development of each students individual practice and be expected to form the theoretical foundation for their work. The Rhizomatic approach intends to promote multiple entrance and exit points that promotes self-determination through learning.

**5 Unit Descriptors**

**5.1 Unit 1 & 3 Independent Studies (IS).**

These units are self-led but they will be guided through workshops, studio tutorials (group and individual) and seminars led by various members of the core team and external lecturers. Further input is provided by an artist educator in residence during Unit One.

It is important to note that while each teacher brings their own specialisms; such as dance, theatre, music and visual arts – they will also explore the key themes that underpin each phase through a 'translation' of these themes through their work. We also draw on local and national arts organisations, galleries and museums with the goal that they will also contribute to the field of knowledge pursued in each unit.

**5.2 Unit 2; Human Rights Social Justice and Identity in Arts and Education**

This unit focuses attention on these key issues and while some sessions will be explicitly dedicated to exploring these themes others will pay attention to the underlying complexity that they present to the contemporary artist educator. For example, a series of sub modules such as the Primo Levi module asks a fundamental question of what it is to be Human. Other modules such as 'Translations' address issues of identity through – moving from the self to the other through the form of movement and dance. Other sessions will address the technical agendas surrounding issues of social justice and Human Rights by looking at the governmental and non-governmental frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in a comparative study that aims to expose the values that underpin such conventions. All sessions will be related to education and pedagogy.

**5.3 Unit 4: Spaces of Practice**

The expanding field of arts education calls on Masters programmes such as iMAE, to redefine arts place in both education and society. This unit presents this major challenge to students by exposing them to a variety of existing fields such as schools, galleries and community settings and asks students to find

their space of practice within, between or beyond these fields. During this unit students will work with experienced artists and educators in the field and will further develop their theoretical knowledge through a carefully selected body of texts related to Socially Engaged Arts Practices and Public Pedagogies.

## 5.4 Unit 5: Independent Project

During this final untie ah student will develop a concept that relates to their own research and urgency. The unit culminates in the production of a final project that must focus on collaboration and public pedagogy through the arts. The entire process must be captured and interrogated by each student in a critical and artistic way. This final arts based research project will draw on all previous knowledge and be the ultimate measurement of the student's capacity to enter the field as effective and affective artist educator.

## 6. Studio practice

Studio practice is a term used on IMAE to describe the relationship between the artist and the materials they work with. This materiality can be seen in both the processes and outcomes of the artist's work and therefore promotes the studio as a 'hub' and incubator that aims to develop new understandings and methods of making that will ultimately extend arts place in the contemporary social field.

The iMAE studio acts as an incubation centre that enables ideas to evolve and new assemblages to form in a process similar to that promoted by Whitehead (1929).

The emergence of 'the new' is described by Badiou (2015) as a 'process of becoming.' Therefore, the entanglement of art and education into one entity allows learning to evolve through the art and art to evolve through learning – both entangled in a process of becoming.

## 7. Theoretical Underpinning of iMAE

While each individual tutor brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the programme and hence employ their own theoretical frameworks to inform their individual identities the programme draws on a number of theories to underpin the content and pedagogy. Through the educational lens we look to the work of

philosophers and educationalists such as; John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Basil Bernstein and bell hooks to inform the 'what' and 'how' we approach the programme. In conflict a peace studies we are informed by leading theorists and researchers such as Johan Galtung and Jean Paul Lederach amongst many others who guide our knowledge and vision in relation to the connectivity between art and peace studies. We look to Burke and Stets, Fook & Gardner and Stuart Hall and juxtapose these authors with educationalist such as Gert Biesta and Dennis Atkinson to form a rounded exposure to issues of identity construction in both social and educational contexts. Thinkers such as Judith Butler, Jacque Ranciere, Giles Delueze, Felix Guattari and Michael Foucault place the programme as a political entity that question the relationship between power in all its forms – from gender to the society. Research is explored from the perspective arts practice as research. Therefore, we are constantly updating our references in this relatively new research field. However, Graham Sullivan, Rita Irwin & Stephanie Springgay, Shaun Mc Niff and Leavy (2015) offer some valuable insights into this area.  Finally, 'the Artist' in iMAE is explored as a contemporary entity with multiple perspectives. However, the concept of art as an instrument for social transformation is central to the programme. Therefore, the main inspiration for our view of art is founded in the work of Joseph Beuys.  We are also informed by the thoughts of Nicholas Bourriaud, Grant Kester, and Clare Bishop but not directed – our task is to develop new forms of art that require different language to articulate their presence. In that respect we are open to be transformed by the radical arts and political public pedagogies employed by collectives such as Wochenkluaser and Loseje International and the many other artist's thinkers and educators we have yet to encounter.

## 7.1 Core Texts

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Atkinson & Dash (2005*) Social and Critical Practice in Art Education*, Trentham Books

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Butler, J., 2005. *Giving an account of oneself*. Oxford University Press.

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Dewey, J., 1997. *How we think*. Courier Corporation.

Ellsworth, E., 2005. *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy*. Routledge.

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Freire, P., 1993. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 1970. *New York: Continuum*

Galtung, J., Jacobsen, C.G. and Brand-Jacobsen, K.F., 2002. *Searching for peace: The road to TRANSCEND*. Pluto Pr.

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hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. New York, Routledge.

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Kester, G.H., 2004. *Conversation pieces: Community and communication in modern art*. Univ of California Press.

Leavy, P., 2015. *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. Guilford Publications.

Lederach, J.P., 2005. *The moral imagination: The art and soul of building peace*. Oxford University Press.

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Moore, R., 2013. *Basil Bernstein: The thinker and the field*. Routledge.

Rancière, J., 2014. *The emancipated spectator*. Verso Books.

Sullivan, G. ed., 2010. *Art practice as research: Inquiry in visual arts*. Sage.

Wochenkluaser Klanten, Alonzo, P. and Jansen, G. eds., 2011 'From the object to concrete intervention'. *Art & agenda: political art and activism*. Gestalten.

**For further information, please check the Masters Artist Educator (EN) at www.artez.nl**

# Appendix 6. Report on Memorialization: United Nations

**Human Rights Council**
**Twenty-fifth session**
Agenda item 3
**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,**
**political, economic, social and cultural rights,**
**including the right to development**

### Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed

### Memorialization processes[*]

*Summary*

The Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed, submits the present report in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 19/6.

In the report, the Special Rapporteur addresses memorialization processes of the events of the past in post-conflict and divided societies, with a specific focus on memorials and museums of history/memory.

States exiting conflicts or periods of repression are increasingly propelled to engage in active memorial policies as a means of ensuring recognition for the victims, as reparation for mass or grave violations of human rights and as a guarantee of non-recurrence. The Special Rapporteur stresses the significance of actions in the cultural field for achieving the overall societal goals of transitional justice, while noting that entire cultural and symbolic landscapes are designed through memorials and museums, which both reflect and shape, negatively or positively, social interactions and people's cognition of identities – their own as well as that of others.

Addressing some difficult challenges encountered in memorializing the past, the Special Rapporteur makes a number of recommendations grounded in the principle that memorialization should be understood as a process that provides to those affected by human rights violations the spaces necessary to articulate their narratives. Memorial practices should stimulate and promote civic engagement, critical thinking and discussion regarding the representation of the past, but equally the contemporary challenges of exclusion and violence.

[*] The annex to the present report is circulated in the language of submission only.

**Appendix 7. Workshop - Questions of Identity**

**Burke and Stets Identity Theory (1999)**

**<u>Identity that is given</u>**
Where were you born?
What is your name – What's in your name?
What are your physical features?
What language or languages do you speak?
Name your parents, Grandparents, Great Grandparents?
As far as you know where are they from?

**<u>Identity that is Projected onto you</u>**
Where are you from – your area?
Identify your area?
What school did you go to?

**<u>Identity you choose</u>**
What sports are you interested in?
Music?
Food?
Activities – etc.?

**<u>Identity that evolves</u>**
What countries have you visited?
What is your first memory?
What frightens you?
Describe a place where you feel secure or safe?
What your favourite place and why?
A place where you feel insecure – unsafe?
An incident that changed you?
A person of importance from your childhood?
A person of importance now?
Someone you look up to and why?
What is your dream?
What's your nightmare?
A place you would love to visit and why?

**Appendix 8.1 Notes of support and recognition – Dennis Atkinson**

**John Johnston**

I have known John Johnston for over 20years and have followed his teaching and his art-based work in sites of conflict with increasing interest. As a teacher in London Secondary Schools and elsewhere he promoted what is often called issues-based art education in which he encouraged students to employ art practices to explore social and personal issues. Through the force of art students were able to investigate and discuss issues of identity and value. The work the students produced was quite unique at the time (1995-2005) and John's approach to school art education became an inspiration to other teachers and educators in London.

At the turn of the millennium John left school teaching and studied for an MA in Peace Studies in Belfast, this led to a number of projects in sites of social and cultural conflict, which constitute the focus of his research. This work involved projects in Northern Ireland, Palestine, Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, London and other sites. The pedagogical/artistic force of this work for me lies in John's ability to encourage participants to explore and question their different modes of existence relative to their life contexts. In more philosophical terms the work involves a deep inquiry into ontological and axiological issues pertaining to the different zones of inquiry. The project work on which the research is based encourages participants to inquire into ethical, political and aesthetic factors. This is done not in terms of individual experience, though this is not ignored, but more in terms of collective values emerging from discussion, debate, agreement and disagreement, working towards a collective whole. These discussions seem to reflect Rancière's notion of dissensus and this notion seems to capture to some extent the atmosphere of the working processes in which participants engage, processes of making-with, thinking-with, feeling-with, questioning-with, disagreeing-with, agreeing-with, and so on.

Within the work and the subsequent research, a strong novel feature is the educator/researcher working with visual symbols and other materialisations of difference as they arise in divided social contexts. Such material is not discarded or excluded by the teacher or the students, which often happens, but they form actual materials of encounter whose intentions are discussed, interrogated and debated and often 'left behind' in a process of inquiry and learning that moves towards envisioning new kinds of social collectivises. I see

this as a powerful and novel approach that opens up potential for the ethical, political and aesthetic dimensions of building new social collectives.

The pedagogical dimension of these projects which offers novelty and potential does not rest upon a prescribed idea of outcome or a prescribed route of inquiry. It is much more dynamic and contingent and depends upon ontological and axiological 'backgrounds' of the participants. Decisions about practice and content are made as events happen and evolve within the democracy of the group. These projects raise some interesting pedagogical questions relating to pedagogical emphasis; should we be concerned with educating the individual or should we be more concerned with educating 'together'?

Professor (Emeritus) Dennis Atkinson Goldsmiths University Department of Educational Studies

**From:** Max Beer [mailto:max@derryplayhouse.co.uk] **Sent:** Tuesday, May 16, 2017 12:22 PM **To:** 'Elaine Forde' <elaine@derryplayhouse.co.uk> **Subject:** John Johnston

16<sup>th</sup> May 2017

**JOHN JOHNSTON**

Dear Sir / Madame

We are writing this letter to support John Johnston's Ph.D. portfolio submission to the Fine Art Department at the University of Sunderland.

**About us**

The Playhouse is an Art Centre in Derry Londonderry, Northern Ireland / Ireland. We are constituted as North West Play Resource Centre Ltd, however we are commonly known as The Playhouse. We are Registered Charity No: XR18282, and Registered Company No: NI 26912.

Our Founder / Artistic Director Pauline Ross was awarded an MBE during 2001 for Services to the Arts & Communities in N. Ireland, and The Playhouse was awarded the TMA / Stage Magazine Special Achievement in Regional Theatre Award in 2004, and the Department of Culture Arts & Leisure "Claire's Award" for Best Community Impact in 2014.

We use arts processes to explore social justice, peace building & human rights, working in some of Northern Ireland's most deprived and divided communities and using arts activity to kick start positive personal and social change. We work with former paramilitaries, disabled, unemployed, prisoners, police, relatives of those killed or injured during the Troubles and many others. We've had a significant impact in N. Ireland, and this was acknowledged when we were short-listed for the prestigious Christopher Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize 2014.

**Our Relationship with John Johnston**

The Playhouse's International Culture Arts Network (ICAN) was a three-year project (2010 – 2013) that was part-financed by the European Union's Regional Development fund through EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

(Peace III).

The project brought internationally based artists & arts managers, with experience of working in areas of conflict / post conflict throughout the world, to Northern Ireland to exchange practice and embed learning with communities.

John Johnston was one of the artists who participated in ICAN as a key note speaker in the conference *Borders and Boundaries* which examined the integration and ethics of socially engaged arts practice. In a powerful 40-minute presentation John explained the philosophy behind his work – which included visual arts work with young people in some of Northern Ireland's most segregated communities.

Before we discuss John's work, it's worth putting in context the communities in which John has chosen to locate his arts practice. Northern Ireland's troubled past is well documented through news footage – bombings, shootings, knee capping, hunger strikes...then more

recently Good Friday Agreement, political agreement, breakdown of political agreement, dissident paramilitary activity...but on the whole peace and stability. But this only tells half the story. Ninety-five per cent of the school-age population attend either a Protestant or a Catholic school, more than 90 per cent of social housing is segregated, and research by the University of Ulster *'Too Young to Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 Year Olds in Northern Ireland'* indicates that children as young as three begin to exhibit sectarian attitudes and behaviour.

The effect on young people is often profound and troubling, well described in the Irish Times' article "The Making of a Dissident Movement" which highlighted the threat to young people *"...from sink estates in places like Belfast, Lurgan and Derry, whose lives are blighted by deprivation "*falling under the influence of *"an older generation of disaffected republicans, forty-something's who are ready and able to offer a compelling narrative that explains the problems of their lives: partition and the iniquities of the "British presence" in Ireland...the convergence of these two groups has fuelled the growth in dissident republican activity: the angry young men of Northern Ireland's worst estates allied with older republicans, some of whom have expertise when it comes to carrying out acts of terrorism."*

John Johnston has worked in many of these "sink estates" where attitudes are typically entrenched and volatile; perhaps best illustrated by Belfast's Flags protest – when Belfast Council, in 2012, voted to restrict the number of days

the Union Jack is flown on Belfast City Hall from every day to 18 days per year (in line with other UK Government Buildings). This sparked two months of almost daily protests including petrol bombs, riots, and clashes with police, as well as death threats sent to Belfast Councillors.

Such are the conditions in which John has chosen to work in Northern Ireland. His work in Ballymena, exploring the sectarian killing of Michael McIlveen, and West Belfast, exploring the political & sectarian mural art of Northern Ireland, exemplify John's commitment to provide young people with the tools to critically examine the social and political norms in which they live, and to democratically facilitate positive change. As John acknowledges, this is risky work, requiring lengthy and gradual developmental work to build trust, both between artist and youth / community and amongst youth / communities from both sides of the sectarian divide. John's use of visual arts both taps into the existing culture of political mural art in Northern Ireland and offers a route for change. He encourages young people to ask "why is that mural there?" "what does it mean?" "is it relevant to me / my community?" "how could it change?" "what would I rather see there?" "what are the consequences of change?" "if it did change whose permission would need to be obtained?"

This is urgent work. The young people John worked with live in volatile communities, and are at risk of being drawn into the cul de sac that is Northern Ireland's sectarian conflict. John's work offers hope and routes for change – on an individual level the opportunity to learn about visual arts practice, develop critical thinking, arts skills and perhaps, for some, these will be life-long passions. On a collective level his work provides new insights into how the arts can play a major role in bringing communities toward reconciliation, and transforming the intellectual conditions that perpetuate conflict.

We are delighted to continue to work with John through an on-going collaboration with ArtEZ University of the Arts. John is Programme Leader of the International Masters

Artist Educator & Masters Kunsteducatie with a vision to educate young artists who wish to explore conflict transformation using academic study and field work in areas of conflict / post conflict. As a programme partner, The Playhouse hosted seven young artists who worked in

a range of communities using arts processes to address human rights, democracy and other peace building issues.

These are the arts educators of tomorrow who will engage in peace building work, and this is already producing a legacy. This Summer we will host two

students from ArtEZ who will return to Derry to further develop their work with the LGBT community as part of the annual Pride Festival, producing sire specific visual arts work that will contribute to addressing the high levels of homophobia that exist in Northern Ireland.

We are pleased to support John and his student's efforts to promote the use of arts for social good.

With best wishes Max Beer

**HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT**

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