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Art's Pedagogical Paradox

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This article contributes to conversations concerning art education futures through engaging alternative relations between art, education, and democracy that mobilize education as art projects associated with the *pedagogical turn* as sites of liminality and paradox. An analysis of the art project, Pedagogical Factory, is used to outline connections and disconnections between contemporary artistic practices, antagonism, current neoliberal logics in education, and art education pedagogies. Educational art projects reveal core contradictions and exclusions within the constellation of education, art, and politics that should be a central concern for those currently engaged in art education.

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Increasingly, we exist in a period where education remains “too important to be left to educators” (Efland, 1988, p. 262), where people outside of education speak for us and about what our priorities need to be (see Taubman, 2009). The *pedagogical turn* in art and curation inserts curators into gallery or museum education and artists into schools and communities, paradoxically hijacking the less glamorous tasks of educating while perpetuating the lowly status of educators (Kenning, 2012). As Graham (2010) noted, “In the flurry of art projects, exhibitions, writings and publications on the ‘pedagogical turn’ of the arts in recent years, we seldom hear the voices of workers for whom art and pedagogy have been connected in practice” (para. 1). Meanwhile, the current context of privatization, accountability, and commodification of learning adds intensified urgency to debates concerning politics and knowledge production as well as the “aesthetic organisation of the social order” (Lambert, 2012, p. 212). Moreover, “with so many within the arts education departments of galleries and universities either uninterested or unable to work against the force of these mandates, the impulse to invent an alternative universe of ‘education in art’ is understandable” (Graham, 2010, para. 3). Leaving the critique of the social efficiency agenda of education up to art seems insufficient, especially when art education is so intimately wrapped up at the intersection of these phenomena. But how might the paradoxes these art practices exist within arouse art education out of apathy, neutrality, and reproduction?

This article explores the liminal spaces art education and pedagogical art inhabit within both consensual and antagonistic relations between art, education, economics, and democracy. Pulling primarily from Claire Bishop’s art criticism and Chantal Mouffe’s perspectives on democracy, an analysis of the art project Pedagogical Factory is used to outline connections and disconnections between contemporary artistic practices, antagonism, current neoliberal logics in education, and art education pedagogies. In thinking through education as art projects, such as Pedagogical Factory, the promise of alternative opportunities for public education is subject to similar paradoxes of institutional art education within the knowledge economy. Here, educational art projects reveal core contradictions and exclusions within the constellation of education, art, and politics that should be of central concern for those currently engaged in art education. It is the paradoxes within this constellation, where art threatens to lose itself to life, that art educators and artists alike may be provoked to criticality and antagonism toward the spaces in which we create and are complicit.

Pedagogical Turn

The educational or pedagogical turn marks the use of educational formats, methods, processes, and terms in contemporary art (O’Neill & Wilson, 2010, p. 183). According to Bishop (2012),

There has been a recent surge of interest in examining the relationship between art and pedagogy, dually motivated by artistic concerns (a desire to augment the intellectual content of relational conviviality) and developments in higher education (the rise of academic capitalism)... Both artists and curators have become increasingly engaged in

projects that appropriate the tropes of education as both a method and a form. (p. 241)

These projects differ from other forms of participatory art in their blending of art and educational processes with pedagogy at the core of the work. This parallels the shift in contemporary art over the last decade toward organizations, collectives, and networks incorporating participants as users operating “under conceptual art guidelines while at the same time engaging other fields of knowledge” (Helguera, 2010, p. 104) with specific ethical and sociocultural intents (Helguera, 2011, p. 288).

By embracing art production as a form of educational practice, this turn critiques the instrumentalization of the academy under academic capitalism that has bureaucratized learning in order to monitor the teaching of transferable skills for success within the knowledge economy (Bishop, 2012; Readings, 1996). Distinctively within pedagogical art projects, artists “reconsider sites of learning... and ask how these sites might be expanded to involve new forms of learning, discussion and debate and so, we might deduce, new forms of competence and new economies of knowledge” (Atkinson, 2012, p. 7). Atkinson went further to make the case that participatory or socially engaged art practices also disrupt art worlds in that such work is often ephemeral, without an object, and “it is composed of dialogical social relations between participants, though admittedly organized by the artist or group” (p. 6). Pedagogical Factory is one such project.

Pedagogical Factory

Pedagogical Factory: Exploring Strategies for an Educated City (July 22 – September 23, 2007), hosted by the Stockyard Institute with AREA Chicago, was “an open demonstration of ideas and experimentation, taking place in and around a temporary public laboratory” described as a “portable research center,” “free school supply exchange,” and “radical library,” among other descriptors, at the Hyde Park Art

Center of Chicago (Stockyard Institute, 2011, para. 1). The Stockyard Institute is a Chicago-based artist project headed by Jim Duignan (faculty member of DePaul University) that focuses on connections between activism, the media, art, and education.¹ The “exhibition project” (Stockyard Institute, 2009) or “interactive exhibition” (Hyde Park Art Center, 2012, para. 1) was the culmination of an over-18-month residency during which Stockyard Institute relocated its operations to the Hyde Park Art Center, transforming the gallery space into a temporary factory that designed and implemented a program-heavy series of events throughout the 2-month exhibition. The summer-long, socially engaged program, featuring pedagogical practices related to Pedagogical Factory series, was titled *How We Learn*. Years after its conclusion, videos, programming, writing, and images from the event are accessible online (Bronzeville, 2007; Hyde Park Art Center, 2012; Stockyard Institute, 2009, 2011). A survey of this documentation, along with a review by Bert Stabler (2009)—a Chicago-based art teacher, critic, artist, and curator—provided the basis for the description and subsequent analysis of this project herein.

According to Stabler (2009), Pedagogical Factory attempted to offer “concrete examples for improving education” free from “technocratic arguments over assessments and accountability” (para. 1). Through a series of workshops and events facilitated by Jim Duignan and Daniel Tucker of *AREA Chicago* magazine, a “variety of people who approach socially progressive learning through collaboration, participation, research, and lived experience” (para. 1) were brought together. The diverse programming was described as inspiring, impressive, “exciting and relevant for those doing community cultural work,” (para. 5) with the sharing of alternatives, useful techniques, and successful projects. Despite claiming dialogue as the central aspect of the event, overall the lectures, presentations, and demonstrations seemed to rely on a pedagogy of one-way knowledge transfer that was

then the basis for conversation as well as the asking and answering of questions.

Although Stabler (2009) contended the project aimed to look “past the notion of school as a defined, programmed place” (para. 1), nonetheless, he was still surprised to experience a space very much like a school with a giant chalkboard that listed all the upcoming events and programs: “It felt a bit like the authoritarian instructions of a giant absent teacher, evoking the power dynamics that make school so unpleasant for so many” (para. 2). However, according to the website (Stockyard Institute, 2011), the space was used to embrace audience interaction and feedback while initiating “forums at the intersection of arts and education” highlighting “recent developments in critical education and social art, as well as [asking] questions about the relationship between contemporary life in the city and learning” (para. 1).

In addition to the oversized chalkboard, there were books, chairs, a projector, a screen, and people talking and listening in circles and groups—all familiar props to education and many works associated with dialogic aesthetics (Kester, 2004). There were installations, artists in residence, performances, videos, hands-on making, and walks. Among the works created by other artists and collaboratives was *Proposal for an Experimental Art School*, housed in a roofless structure with graffitied walls; and a library created onsite by Zeb and Jim Duignan, while the artist group rum46 from Denmark was in residence working on *How we Design a School for Non Productive Learning*. Events [rather patronizingly (Stabler, 2009, para. 5)] titled “How We Fund,” “How We Grow,” “How We Listen,” “How We Make a Disorientation Guide to Our University w/Local University Activists,” “How We Remember,” “How We Think Walking Tour: In Honor of John Dewey,” and “How We Learn” were run and/or created by artists, archivists, architects, writers, educators, and other producers. These events were offered as a smorgasbord of choices for participants (Hyde Park Art Center,

2012, para. 2). Furthermore, Stabler (2009) described the scene as follows:

A number of publications, DIY in form and content, are on racks in a spacious but spartan area of reading tables constructed by Material Exchange from salvaged materials. A little trailer in the corner houses a low-power radio station, SPOKE, used primarily to play recordings of teenagers from the Austin neighborhood participating in the Stockyard Institute’s educational radio project. But initially its drab appearance evoked FEMA refugees, or a claustrophobic “time-out” space. The haphazard postings include some sloppy coloring-book-style contributions to *AREA Chicago* magazine’s People’s Atlas project, in which participants invent their own maps, and informative posters from the Celebrate People’s History project. In the audiovisual area is a project of the Experimental Sound Studio, the Found Chicago Sounds listening station, which features an annotated listing of ambient sounds recorded around Chicago (WBEZ has also been broadcasting these everyday soundscapes). In the end, the space didn’t remind me of an art show. It seemed, well, educational. (para. 2)

While the project aimed to “interrogate the overlap between education, economics, art, and activism, creating a venue to explore alternatives to traditional notions of education and social art” (Hyde Park Art Center, 2012, para. 1), it also provided support and resources to the public.

Public Creativity for the Culture Economy

Those involved in Pedagogical Factory were world-making in their attempts to oppose dominant discourses and practices that delimit and inhibit the practices of education through the construction of counter-rhetorics “to action the world differently” (O’Neill & Wilson, 2010, p. 188). As Stabler (2009) declared:

One way to blur the line between the education world and the outside world

is to make a gallery look like a classroom. But it's far better to transform traditional educational spaces with the energy and freedom of people working in the outside world, doing things like dancing and farming. (para. 4)

In order to harness this outside work, Daniel Tucker stated that Pedagogical Factory surveyed Chicago to determine:

...what sort of opportunities there were for adults to engage in.... But one aspect that we wanted to look at are those education opportunities that are not tied into things like job training, improving skill sets to do better in your job, or get new jobs.... We wanted to look at other things that maybe aren't so productive or aren't somehow about moving forward in your career—but instead, those that are about other aspects of your life that are equally, if not more, important. (as cited in Bronzeville, 2007, para. 1)

This bringing together of resources, access to knowledge, and the sharing of information sought "to evade recuperation and co-option by 'creative economy' discourses, institutional agendas and market branding" (O'Neill & Wilson, 2010, p. 186). It was, therefore, necessarily temporary, free, and site-specific, so that in its irreducible particularity it could not become codified or used as a model for other cities outside of Chicago to follow. Consequently, it lacked the features of permanence and standardization required of formal education.

However, by bringing this activity into the art institution, in effect, the educational turn provided a "chance to colonise material and intellectual wealth built up over decades in the public sphere" (Kenning, 2012, p. 7), repatriating the public's creativity (Wright, 2008) and forming new icons of the art world's hierarchical symbolic economy. Pedagogical Factory could be viewed as "part of a much wider national and global ideological agenda to transfer what remains of the non-commodified public sphere into private hands" (Kenning, 2012, p. 7). In this

light, Pedagogical Factory, like other education as art projects, fills a gap in the new education market by providing access to knowledge at a bargain, out-pricing competitors in public education by "masquerading as a radical new DIY programme" (Kenning, 2011, para. 7). The variety of programming aimed at satisfying as many participants as possible echoes the institutionalization and instrumentalized goals of the knowledge economy.

Moreover, the user-friendliness, how-to demonstrations, entertainment value, and array of choices provided by the Pedagogical Factory meet the student-as-consumer or audience-as-self-interested-individuals vying for their own gain in a knowledge, culture economy. "Education, transposed from the terms of 'public good' to that of economic goods, is increasingly construed as a subset of the highly mobile, highly volatile, and highly competitive global service economy" (O'Neill & Wilson, 2010, p. 182). The usefulness and educational aims of Pedagogical Factory make it suspect as art and related to the same accusations as education.

Case in point, Bishop (2004) stated that the British government adopted contemporary art in encouraging art practices that invite mass audiences' participation, inferring the embrace of art that is useable by the public, easily digested by the everyman, and readily understood. This view of instrumentalized cultural consumption by the public is one where art is exploited for commercial potential within creativity industries as an alternative to manufacturing under the knowledge economy, thereby accelerating the processes of neoliberalism (Bishop, 2011). The DIY nature of Pedagogical Factory supports self-employment and living like artists (McRobbie, 2001) to be "entrepreneurial, embrace risk, look after their own self-interest, be their own brands, and be free of dependence on the state" (Bishop, 2011, p. 2) so that the public assumes the individualization associated with creativity and acts as autonomous pioneers for economic gain (McRobbie). Here, the commercialization of culture embraces

depoliticized art. Art's autonomy to critique the social or political undermines, not to mention slows down, the progression of culture as an economic generator.

Edu-tain Me

Participation practices in art at their most populist, diluted, superficial, and consensus-based can amount to audiences engaging with art in a hands-on fashion that aligns with art institutions' strategically seeking art that brings the largest audiences to enjoy and consume "without a qualitative or meaningful engagement with it" (Goldenberg & Reed, 2008, para. 6). As Bishop (2011) put it, an entrepreneurial approach to museums and art venues values "bums in seats" more than "ideas in heads" so that the accessibility and consumption of culture is more important than art as a "vehicle of dissent" (p. 1). In this way, the cultural sector has effectively turned into a "service industry designed to satisfy the desires of clients and consumers" (Bishop, 2011, p. 7), thereby promoting "a blockbuster mentality that serves the patrons first and culture second; social status trumps cultural vitality every time" (p. 5). This "normalization" (Goldenberg & Reed, 2008, para. 8) or "gentrification of aesthetic forms for easy reception" (para. 7) limits the possibilities of participation to active interaction wherein art must be "quickly intelligible and easily digested by everyone" (para. 8) within a vacant *edutainment* (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007, p. 33). Here, art appears to have succumbed to "the endless demands that are foisted on both culture and education to be **accessible**, to provide a simple entry point to complex ideas" (Rogoff, 2008, para. 35). Audiences come into art institutions ready to be entertained and consume experiences. While it is difficult to deduce if Pedagogical Factory worked this way, the lack of critique and engagement with issues associated with institutionalized education places the project under scrutiny.

Confrontational Participation

Education as art projects, such as Pedagogical Factory, typically have encompassed social

encounters and audience participation in line with the primary concerns of participatory, socially engaged, collaborative, and relational art. Under the critiques of relational aesthetics put forward by Bishop (2004) and Foster (2004/2006), positive sociability, happy interactivity, and conviviality are favored with contradiction and conflict glossed over or ignored. For Foster, art has been harnessed to provide compensatory, "remedial work in socialization: come and play, talk, learn with me" for the lack of participation in other spheres (p. 194). Sociability and collaboration without political objectives are pursued through art for their own sakes and as ends in themselves (p. 194). This normalization of participation can come across as aestheticizing the social and the more pleasant aspects of a service economy (p. 195). Moreover, this focus on sociability can amount to a "shaky analogy between an open work and an inclusive society, as if a desultory form might evoke a democratic community, or a non-hierarchical installation predict an egalitarian world" (p. 193). Ironically, this lacks the antagonism, resistance, critique, and conflict required for democracy (Mouffe, 2007).

Instead, Bishop (2004) advocated for confrontational art that leads to transformation through difficulty, frustration, and disruption in line with an anti-capitalist avant-garde. Unlike the *psycho classrooms* set forth in the work of sociologist Cath Lambert (2011), Pedagogical Factory did not appear to effectively act as a site "of antagonism in relation to the dominant ideologies of the neo-liberal institutions in which [it was] embedded" (p. 42). In refraining from turning the tables against itself and instead embracing the inspiring and exciting creative possibilities for the individualization of cultural work permitted within the knowledge economy, the Stockyard Institute and the Pedagogical Factory escaped some of their antagonistic potentiality.

Antagonistic Pedagogies Within an Orthopedic Aesthetic

Alas, instead of heteronomy, there remains a repressive character to Bishop's prioritizing of an art that moves participants toward a priori ends through disruption and confrontation. Ruitenberg (2011a), pulling from the work of Rancière, attended to the "predicament of artists and curators who, in their eagerness to convey a critical message or engage their viewers in an emancipatory process, end up predetermining the outcomes of the experience, hence blocking its critical or emancipatory potential" (p. 211). She compared this predicament to educators with emancipatory or critical objectives within their curricular designs that leave students little intellectual room to maneuver, thereby undermining educators' own objectives through stultification and steering students to preset outcomes.

Art educators will be very familiar with this "orthopedic" aesthetic (in which the viewer's implicitly flawed modes of cognition or perception will be adjusted or imposed via exposure to the work of art)" (Kester, 2011, p. 35). Here, a deficit pedagogy is justified in order to make up for a lack in a viewer or student. As den Heyer (2009) reminded us, "institutionalized curriculum and pedagogy can only proceed by the positing of an inequality—the child's deficit or lack, and by extension, their families and communities—that its agents then appoint themselves, indeed, are certified, to study and rectify" (p. 30). To take this back into art, artists—particularly within a relational antagonistic priority—follow a deficit reasoning and, like educators, take up this inequality as their mandate to solve, specifically in this case, through "discomfort, rupture, or an uncanny derangement of the senses" (Kester, 2011, p. 35). Like a curriculum as planned (Aoki, 1983/2005), the art event, with objectives preset and preconceived by the artist, funnels participants into particular embodied conceptual provocations (Kester, 2011, p. 35).

Conversely, democratic art education, instead of stultifying students toward preset

ends, might mobilize disagreement in learning and facilitate a space for differences to be confronted. In place of ignoring tensions in learning, these disruptions could be confronted as sites of unpredictable potentiality. What's more, antagonistic disturbance might be integrated into art education as a necessary operation of the educational process itself. These

...might well be the very point at which students begin to find their own, unique, responsive, and responsible voice. This also shows that the responsibility of the educator, the educational responsibility, is a responsibility for something that cannot be known in advance—it is a responsibility *without* knowledge of what one is responsible for. (Biesta, 2006, p. 116; emphasis in original)

Mouffe's (2007) notion of politics as agonistic requires making visible what is normally obscured or eradicated in ordinary experience. Therefore, friction, awkwardness, and discomfort forewarn us of relational antagonism in artworks (Bishop, 2004, p. 79). Moreover, going toward antagonism in curriculum might lead us into more reflexive criticality, or what Grimmett and Halvorson (2010) have termed curriculum design as *re-directive practice*. This thinking parallels Biesta's (2006, 2010) *pedagogy of interruption* wherein educators have a double, deconstructive responsibility for the creation of educational spaces and their constant undoing.

Doubling Up

While relational artists "offer a political critique of the dominance of economic transactions by focusing on building relationships rather than objects" (Ruitenberg, 2011a, p. 215), this does not guarantee that their art is exempt from commodification or absorption into the systems of capitalist production and logic they claim to avoid and critique (Martin, 2007; Mouffe, 2007). Moreover, avant-garde claims that artists today can offer such a radical critique as to remain outside of capitalist systems are futile. Still, Mouffe (2007) and Ruitenberg (2011a) do not believe art's political role has come to an

end completely. Art, nevertheless, has a critical role to play in subverting hegemony and domination through intervening into social spaces in order to undermine the mobilization and reproduction of capitalism through making visible whatever a contingent social order based on consensus obscures (Mouffe, 2007).

According to Bishop (2006), artistic gestures that do not “have a life beyond an immediate social goal” leave us with “pleasantly innocuous art. Not non-art, just bland art—and art that easily compensates for inadequate government policies” (p. 24) that conceal the “stakes involved when art is forced to confront its social and institutional character in the liminal space of collaborative practice” (Charnley, 2011, p. 43). As Goldenberg and Reed (2008) shared, “It is very rare to find situations that provide an opportunity for an audience as participants to cross over from being a mere consumer of ideas to engaging with the material setup” (para. 16). While consumption can be a form of participation, participation can also include the opening up of thinking and beliefs to criticality (Goldenberg & Reed, 2008, para. 26), “whereby an exhibition functions to politicize the institution and constitute it as an agent of social change offers a self-critical understanding of education” (Springgay & Carpenter, 2010, p. 3).

Bishop (2012), pulling from Guattari’s notion of double finality, suggested that participatory art projects tread a dual horizon line between both the social field and art that demands success on both fronts “but ideally also testing and revising the criteria we apply to both domains. Without this double finality, such projects risk becoming ‘edu-tainment’ or ‘pedagogical aesthetics’” (p. 274). It is where art risks losing itself to life that the most paradoxical spaces of political practice can be explored (Charnley, 2011). Kenning (2012) addressed this aspect of art turning in on itself:

Art appears to move outward towards the social terrain of education—a deeply political terrain which cannot but confront the reality of art’s own exclusions,

hierarchies and value systems—but only for education to be recuperated and turned back into art, appropriated, mimicked, aestheticized. (p. 6)

Education is, in turn, recuperated and returned as cultural capital.

But the conclusion to draw is not the somewhat utopian notion that, without first establishing a truly democratic comprehensive, equal and dissenting sphere, critical and politically oriented practices will remain doomed to neutralisation and co-option towards opposite ends. Instead, what is crucial is that critical practices themselves can begin to alter notions of what the field can consist of and what institutions may be capable of. (Kenning, 2012, p. 9)

We need to think through art and education together.

Standing on the Sidelines

Education as art can stand on the sidelines and be divorced from actual consequence and engagement with educational issues head on (Aguirre, 2010). As in *Pedagogical Factory*, key critiques of the economic instrumentalism of education went unconsidered. “It is clear that the neoliberal push toward a privatised student-as-consumer model of education is a global phenomenon; a fact rendered visible by student struggles for free and universal access to education in cities across the world” (Kenning, 2012, p. 2). As of late, the city of Chicago (Sfondeles, 2013) and DePaul University (Esposito, 2012) have not been immune to these struggles.

Pedagogical Factory falls under other pedagogical art projects that adapt the “promises of the pedagogical, but without having to be confronted with the tension between these promises and the impossibility of fulfilling them entirely in pedagogical practice” (Mörsch, 2011, p. 6). Kenning (2012) also warned us to be aware of how education-themed art events present alternatives to more formal models of education without addressing the problems confronting the formal models they are sidestepping (p. 2),

so that, in effect, the wider, social contexts and exclusions are ignored. Ironically, education as art, like Pedagogical Factory, may take us outside of institutionalized spaces of art education—as in the case of the Stockyard Institute—only to lead us back into the supposed safety of the assumed neutral art world of the gallery space. Alternative educational forms, sites, and free user-friendly DIY schools that offer flexibility effectively whitewash the greater political context and issues that other educational forms have been experiencing for decades, such as a lack of public funding in the United States and across the globe. Here, the parameters of Pedagogical Factory converge with those of other educational art whose limits seemed “to be any antagonistic injection of the reality of what was happening around us” (Kenning, 2012, p. 6). This avoidance of the bigger context at the borders of collaboration and/or education for its own sake amounts to a bland consensus around education as art event, “contributing little in the way of social influence or action towards change” (Kenning, 2012, p. 6).

I submit that, notwithstanding indications from texts written about the project, our knowledge and understanding of the success of Pedagogical Factory within the specific contexts and conditions of the local, institutional art, and educational networks at the time of its undertaking are far from clear. While the project aimed to remedy the “real pedagogical factory—Chicago public education” from the outside in by offering “inspiring alternatives for improving the city with education” (Stabler, 2009, para. 6), this entangled the project in contradictions advanced by Mörsch (2011). Such pedagogical art assisted

...institutions in presenting themselves as progressive and socially responsible, while leaving the internal logics of operation, which usually function in a strictly hierarchical and less socially aware way, unchanged. More recently, there have been discussions about examples in England, where major art institutions

like to make use of the added value of artistic-pedagogic collectives in the sense of radical chic, but (re-)act inconsistently when these collectives question the logic of operations and the structures of the host institutions with the same radicality. (Mörsch, 2011, p. 4)

Projects claiming to enact models of alternative education exist within a paradox if they fail to “use an engagement with its ‘outside’ to challenge itself” (Charnley, 2011, p. 52). This liminal space between art and the social presents a “paradoxical complexity of the interdependence of ethical, aesthetic and political issues” (p. 37). Art education, too, needs to address the liminal spaces between art and the social, between institutionalized art education and the knowledge economy, along with the paradoxes of democratic learning and dissent amid stultifying best practices synonymous with objectives-based art education.

How We _____

At this time, art education has been embraced within the creative economy and how it might most efficiently meet 21st Century Learning Skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009), career preparation, professional success, and workforce readiness in order to function in a knowledge economy in the US and best fall in line with the Bologna Accord in European higher education. Education has little association with the public good as it has been colonized within education into a service for economic good (O’Neill & Wilson, 2010, pp. 182-183). As we go about our work with the next generation of art educators and art education researchers, debates concerning educational policy and economic instrumentalist rationales for education need to be debated and challenged within this work.

To counter current views of knowledge production in art education as natural and neutral, we need to approach knowledge as problematic in its social construction of representation, interpretation, assessment, and curriculum (Britzman, 2003). We need to question what we think we know and its foundations within

institutions that may view critical thinking and dissent as frivolous or subversive (Strauss, 2012). Knowledge needs to be cast as contextual, contestable, intersubjective, and fluid so that students might be able to participate in social practices and the reordering of knowledge for meaning making that is ever more inclusive. Convention must be questioned so that the production of art education knowledges might be characterized as a site of paradox and struggle (see Desai & Koch, 2012; Rogoff, 2010).

A struggle is precisely what Carpenter and Tavin (2009) claimed the field of art education has been currently engaging in. This state of struggle and reconceptualization has been in response to the postmodern condition and theorizing that “is in opposition to the disciplinary hegemony, decontextualized curricula, and knowledge standardization inherent in the prevailing forms of art education of the past” along with existing “traditional, official, and operational curricula in art classrooms” (Carpenter & Tavin, 2009, p. 250).

Further, these considerations actively make space for content within unquestioned null curricula, those areas of cultural production and content omitted from previous curricular texts. In this sense, the current reconceptualization of art education embodies the need to both understand art education curricula as symbolic representation as well as embrace different symbolic representations as legitimate content for the field. Following the lead in curriculum studies, the reconceptualization of art education asks, “What can be created of what we have been conditioned to be?”—by routine and by omission (Carpenter & Tavin, 2009, p. 250).

This question (borrowed from Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1996, p. 51) is vital to this quest for democratic education now. It requires the doubling gesture incited by a pedagogy of interruption wherein we critically engage with curriculum and pedagogy *as* curriculum, as objects of study (den Heyer, 2008, pp. 254, 258) so that our embedded structures within institutionalized education undergo ongoing analysis,

struggle, and antagonism without preset ends. Harnessing the paradoxes pedagogical art finds itself in while staging education as a visible/participatory encounter is one way to see ourselves reflected back to us so that we too might examine what we have become institutionally, socially, and pedagogically. Art may not only indicate what might be created out of what we have been conditioned to be, but it also allows us to reconsider what we have become.

Hindsight

While there are innumerable ways to interpret and evaluate Pedagogical Factory, hindsight, some 6 years after the project occurred, has its privileges and responsibilities. The feel-good, perhaps flattering allure of the pedagogical turn for educators, artists, critics, and participants alike has been tempered by growing critique coupled with ubiquitous neo-liberal social policy. The alternative solutions promised for education are still urgently needed at all levels. Arts institutions continue to seek funding options that place them within increasingly precarious relations with their sponsors and publics. Nevertheless, works like Pedagogical Factory use forms and practices art educators are very familiar with while claiming the ability to speak for and to institutional education. Ruminating on the implications of these works for art and education might engage us in a pedagogy of interruption directed toward both education and art in a doubling gesture of deconstructive responsibility, the paradoxes of which could arouse art education out of apathy, neutrality, and reproduction within our institutional confines and peripheral position in relation to the art world.

Projects such as Pedagogical Factory are positioned within the constellation of education, art, economy, and politics revealing core contradictions that should be a central concern of those currently engaged in art education. Art that incorporates collaboration, participation, and dialogue offers an opportunity to explore conceptions of democracy that encompass

disagreement and power struggles where conflict is not counter-productive but valuable for educators that do not believe the task of schooling "is to keep such issues outside of the classroom and the curriculum" (Ruitenber, 2011b, p. 98). The experimental conjunctions of art and education may perpetually reinvent one another in "their insistence that we learn to think both fields together and devise adequate new

languages and criteria for communicating these transversal practices" (Bishop, 2012, p. 274). In considering democracy juxtaposed with art and education, we in art education are distinctively placed to ponder these overlaps and incongruities while continuously seeking spaces where we might play out our double, deconstructive responsibility for the creation of art educational spaces and their constant undoing.

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ENDNOTE

- ¹ For a history of the Stockyard Institute since its inception in 1995, see Duignan, J. (2010). A consideration for a social settlement: A brief early history of the Stockyard Institute. *Proximity*, 7. Retrieved from <http://proximity-magazine.com/2010/06/a-consideration-for-a-social-settlement-a-brief-early-history-of-the-stockyard-institute>