Translating Principles From Art Curating to Art Therapy Practice:

A Grounded Theory Research Study

by

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A Culminating Project and Contextual Essay

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School, Mount Mary University,

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Art Therapy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

May 2017

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Abstract

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Art therapy is a field with roots in both psychology and art, yet because of the pressures around being recognized as a legitimate field in the world of counseling and psychology, many art therapists keep pace with contemporary psychotherapy practices more closely than they do with current practices in the art world. This essay proposes that art curating is a field that could provide a new arts-based lens with which to view art therapy practice, and reports on a grounded theory research study that sought to identify principles of art curating that can be applied to art therapy. Three art curators were interviewed, each of whom works in a different setting: museum exhibition, a home museum collection, and a teaching gallery focused on socially engaged art practice. Five principles emerged from the data: (a) curating creates multiple points of access, (b) curating locates the time of significance in the present, (c) curating invites people to experience objects in context, (d) curating emphasizes trust in the nonlinear process of art, and (e) curating serves as a collaborative orienting resource. These principles are translated into art therapy practice and illustrated with vignettes from the researcher's experience as an art therapist. A website was designed to share the five principles of curating and their art therapy translations. The website is intended to disseminate the research to art therapists and facilitate an online discussion about these principles and their application in the field.

Key words: Art curating, art therapy, grounded theory, exhibition, home museum, socially engaged art practice

Acknowledgements

This culminating project would have not been possible without the support of my friends and family. I would like to acknowledge my husband Jay Reagan for his support and patience that was critical in helping me to complete this project. My son Jackson was born during the doctoral program and he is the best thing that I've ever created. His presence has taught me many valuable lessons about my capacity for love, the challenges of motherhood, and the importance of being present. I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Bruce Moon, who stuck with me through this process when it became difficult and anchored me when I began to drift from my project's focus. I am grateful for Dr. Barbara Fish for her extensive home library and her unwavering grounded presence during a critical phase of this project. I would like to thank Dr. Lynn Kapitan for her enthusiasm and solid guidance as a researcher and an editor. Dr. Kapitan helped to strengthen the scholarship of my work and allowed me to deliver my results with clarity. I would also like to thank Dr. Eva Marxen for supporting me and being so gracious with her feedback and time. I would like to acknowledge the three curators who generously shared their practice and thoughts with me in the interviews that provided the data for this research. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the children and families I have worked with throughout the years who are at the heart of my work and this research.

Table of Contents

List of Portfolio Works

Translating Principles from Art Curating to Art Therapy Practice,

https://www.curatingarttherapy.com

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Art therapy is a field with roots in both psychology and art. Historically, art therapists conceptualized and debated a spectrum of polarities between art and psychotherapy approaches to practice (Allen, 1992; Naumberg, 1987; Ulman, 1975; Wadeson, 1980). Due to the pressures around being recognized as a legitimate field in the world of counseling and psychology, many art therapists keep pace with contemporary psychotherapy practices more closely than they do with current practices in the art world (Gilroy, 2008; C. Moon, 2010). Modernist ideas about art—such as the notion of art as a solitary process intended to excavate the unconscious—are historical artifacts that influence art therapy practice today and impede renewed arts-based approaches (Halifax, 1997; C. Moon, 2010). Several art therapists have discussed the need for art therapy practice that draws from knowledge in current art practices (Alter-Muri & Klein, 2007; Gilroy, 2008, 2014; Halifax, 1997; Marxen, 2009; C. Moon, 2010). This research study was designed to address the need for current art frameworks in the field.

From my exposure to the field of art curating, I knew that it contains parallels with art therapy practice. It was the goal of this research to examine if art curating practices could offer a new arts-based lens to conceptualize the work of art therapy. To my knowledge there has not been a research study in the field of art therapy that sought to translate principles from the field of art curating into art therapy practice. Although art therapists have addressed the gap between contemporary artists and art therapy practice (Alter-Muri & Klein, 2007; Marxen, 2009; C. Moon, 2010), the potential parallels between art therapy and art curating have not been examined. After reviewing curating

literature it appeared that some practices and theory from current art curating could provide arts-based guidance to working with clients in art therapy.

Prior to beginning the doctoral program at Mount Mary University I worked for roughly 10 years as an art therapist in programs that were contracted to provide services for children and families involved with the department of children and family services. I felt passionate about serving children and families who were struggling, poor, marginalized, and underserved. At the same time I also was aware of the inherent oppression built into this system and into the treatment protocols that the organizations I worked for were contracted to provide. The treatment plans for the children I served focused on diagnosis and behavior and rarely acknowledged the wider social, community, or political intersections that were at the root of their struggles. In 2013 I had my son, Jackson, and I withdrew temporarily from doctoral work. During this time I also left my job as a clinical supervisor at a residential treatment center. For the first time in my career as an art therapist I suddenly had space to imagine how I might practice if I had no system that dictated how I should provide services. This pause to reflect and think began to profoundly shift the focus of my doctoral work toward arts-based approaches. Looking back to my career as an art therapist working within the child welfare system, my practice always veered toward an arts-based approach. I could speak the language of clinicians from other disciplines and I translated my work in ways that others could understand it. However, I felt the most true to myself as an artist and my beliefs about art therapy when my work had art at the center.

The purpose of this grounded theory research study was to suggest ways that art therapy can draw from practices currently happening in the art world through the lens of

art curating. To address my goals of inquiry I examined the current principles and practices of art curating through a review of the literature and interviews with three curators currently working in the field. This inquiry sought to identify the principles and practices of art curators as they relate to art therapy practice. The curators interviewed for the study included a museum art curator who creates exhibitions, a curator of a home-museum collection, and a curator facilitating a teaching gallery that focuses on social art practice. The results of my study offered five principles from art curating that art therapists could utilize to align their practices with those of the current art world. These principles are: (a) curating creates multiple points of access, (b) curating locates the time of significance in the present, (c) curating invites people to experience objects in context, (d) curating emphasizes trust in the nonlinear process of art, and (e) curating serves as a collaborative orienting resource.

This essay provides a review of the literature in regards to the imbalance between art and psychology influences in the field of art therapy. It highlights the need for current art practices to conceptualize the work of art therapy and introduces art curating practices as a potential guide for arts-based practice in art therapy. It also connects the five curating principles gleaned from the research to current curating practices and to the art therapy translations of these principles. The five curating principles are translated into art therapy practice and illustrated by vignettes demonstrating how these principles appear in art therapy practice. Parallels between my own arts-based ways of working as an art therapist were apparent in the principles, and in order to translate the principles into art therapy practice I have used examples from the art therapy literature and my personal experience as an art therapist.

This essay concludes with scholarly context for the creative work of the culminating project—an interactive website dedicated to disseminating the results of the research process. The intention of the website is to continue a conversation with art therapists about the five principles of curating and their translation to art therapy practice, that will last beyond the life of this doctoral research study.

To define the profession and the practice of art therapy we must draw theory from both art and psychology. This study is important for the field because it offers an arts-based framework for art therapy practitioners that is rooted in current art practices. The findings in this study offer an arts-based lens with which to conceptualize art therapy and the illustrations of the principles offer examples of what the principles look like in practice. By incorporating the principles of this research into practice art therapists can approach their work cohesively by balancing the influences of both art and psychology in their work.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since the beginning of art therapy as an organized profession, art therapists in the United States have debated which end of the spectrum between art and psychotherapy is most appropriate for the field (Allen, 1992; Naumberg, 1987; Ulman & Dachinger, 1996; Wadeson, 1980). Wadeson (2002) reflected that early in the field this polarization was characterized as being between art psychotherapy and "art as therapy," but that more recently it has been thought of as a distinction between clinical and studio approaches. This discussion is divided between two philosophies of art therapists. Some have focused on legitimizing the field by allying with counseling and psychology fields, believing that this will improve licensure efforts and work with managed care (Wadeson, 1996). Other art therapists emphasize the transformational aspects of art and place less focus on the clinical orientation of the field (Allen, 1992; McNiff, 1995; Seiden & Davis, 2013). Some contemporary art therapists believe that focusing on the development of art therapy practices that are guided by current art practices rather than psychology will lead to new, arts-based, postmodern, emancipatory practices for the profession (Alter-Muri, 1998; Alter-Muri & Klein, 2008; Kapitan, Litell, & Torres, 2011; Marxen, 2009; C. Moon, 2010; Timm-Bottos, 2016).

Efforts to Keep Pace With Contemporary Psychology and Counseling

It is common for art therapists to work alongside professionals in other clinical fields. A study conducted on the perception of psychology educators regarding the field of art therapy found that the psychology educators surveyed believed that art therapy lacked credibility and usefulness (Bellmer, Hoshino, Schrader, Strong, & Hutzler, 2003). Although this negative outlook on the field is not always present where art therapists

work, the study results suggest a lack of understanding regarding the work of art therapists. Due to the pressures around being recognized as a legitimate field in the world of counseling and psychology, art therapy professionals tend to keep pace with contemporary psychotherapy practices but do not maintain the same connection with contemporary practices in the art world (Gilroy, 2008, 2014; C. Moon, 2010). Due to the practical need to keep abreast of counseling and psychology, coupled with a desire for legitimacy in the eyes of other practitioners, art therapists sometimes mirror the skills and language of other clinicians in order to fit in while concurrently divesting from art (Allen, 1992; Halifax, 1997).

A focus on contemporary psychology and counseling practices is often a practical career choice that art therapists make in order to keep up with other fields. "Today, professionals in the field operate on the basis of outdated and restricted knowledge of contemporary art practice, a situation that would never be tolerated in relation to knowledge of contemporary psychotherapy theory and practice," wrote C. Moon (2010, p. xv). C. Moon's statement reflects the choice many art therapists make to maintain ongoing learning in the fields of counseling and psychology in order to provide up-to-date services for clients as well as to maintain their licensure as clinicians. To my knowledge, art therapists have no corresponding pressure to keep pace with the art world. Thus, in most circumstances, divesting from the art part of our profession is a result of trying to stay abreast of new research in counseling and psychology and is not a conscious turning away from art.

Modern and Postmodern Influences in the Art Therapy Profession

In order to understand the efforts of art therapists to align with contemporary art practices it is important to first understand how modernism appears in art therapy practice in both art and psychology. In 2000 Spaniol observed that the majority of art therapy educators at the time were mentored in the psychodynamic approach, which is generally based on the medical model. The medical model of treatment refers to an approach to treatment derived from an understanding of disease and illness in functioning, with wellness defined as an absence of disease (Mosak & Maniacci, 1999). Many art therapists doing clinical work with clients use the medical model as a framework for treatment. The medical model is modernist in its framework, meaning that it utilizes a Western cultural orientation that locates illness within the individual rather than looking systemically at institutions, culture, society, and community for the source of struggle (Bertilino & O'Hanlon, 2002). Modernist scientific and psychological theory assert that clinicians must approach their work objectively, yet practitioners create the measures used to maintain objectivity from their own subjective experience (Thomas & Braken, 2004).

Due to the modernist origins of the field, some art therapy practices still remain rooted within a modernist framework. The modernist art paradigm suggests that art is a non-relational, solitary pursuit; that it is unadulterated, autonomous, and isolated from the rest of culture (Alter-Muri, 1998; Halifax, 1997). An example of this in practice is the use of fine art supplies that stress the making of some kind of product. A postmodern shift in the conceptualization of art and its practice includes relational and social practices linked to larger cultural narratives (Alter-Muri, 1998; Alter-Muri & Klein, 2007; C. Moon, 2010). C. Moon (2010) observed that modernist notions of art process and materials have

gone mostly unchallenged in the field due to the preparatory fine arts education required of art therapists. Art therapists such as Kapitan and Newhouse (2000) have begun to challenge the modernist philosophies of art therapy education in our field by pushing the boundaries of contemporary art practice and experimenting with postmodern approaches to materials within education. Postmodernism offers an approach to art therapy that focuses on individual integrity and community values and does not distinguish between home and studio (Alter-Muri, 1998; Alter-Muri & Klein, 2007). Further, Timm-Bottos (2016) envisioned new spaces for art therapy practice that are beyond counseling and psychology. Her vision for the future of the field focused on creating spaces for new types of creativity, solidarity, and inclusion (Timm-Bottos, 2016; Timm-Bottos & Reilly, 2015b).

Ulman (1975) stated that the definition of art therapy hinges on the definition of art. It is clear from my review of the art curating literature that the definition of art has broadened exponentially since modernist thought prevailed in the art world (Hoffman, 2014b; O'Neill, 2012; Smith, 2012). For example, today contemporary art encompasses a large spectrum of objects and activities, from paintings on canvas to social interactions (O'Neill, 2012). In contemporary art, across an array of art practices, there is movement towards participatory, process-based, and collaborative experiences that distance art from the modernist notion of an artist creating an object then presenting it to a viewer (Kester, 2011).

Efforts to Keep Pace With the Art World

Art therapists are both artists and therapists. Many of us are drawn to the art therapy profession because of our own experiences with the therapeutic value of art

making prior to entering the field. Art therapists have suggested that a closer relationship between the fields of art therapy and art would be mutually beneficial to both fields (Lachman-Chapin et al., 1998).

Gilroy (2008) proposed that contemporary art theorizing and art history could inform and enrich the art therapy field. She discussed her personal experience viewing Renaissance paintings in the context in which they were created. One of her conclusions was that art therapists could benefit from viewing client work in a similar fashion to the way we take time to appreciate fine art masterpieces. Gilroy went on to suggest that art therapists might benefit from paying attention to their own implicit knowledge about art and extending their practices of looking at art to include contemporary discourses regarding curating and display. Similarly, C. Moon (2010) urged art therapists to write about their integration of contemporary art, theory, and practices in order to increase the field's knowledge of contemporary art practices and how they can be incorporated into art therapy practice.

In order to propose a framework for art therapy that is based in a current art practice it is important to recognize art therapists who have explored the incorporation of current art practices into their work. Halifax (2003) proposed that an understanding of feminist and contemporary art could support the development of a feminist and relational art therapy practice. She believed that incorporating feminist psychotherapy into her art therapy approach was beneficial in that it brought an awareness of the unequal distribution of power in the therapeutic relationship. Halifax (1997) also highlighted the importance of incorporating feminist art criticism into a feminist approach to art therapy. She believed that if art therapists maintained a connection to the current art world, they

would be less susceptible to their art practice receding and, in turn, less susceptible to unintentionally taking on the characteristics of clinicians in other disciplines.

Many art therapists have used art history concepts as a therapeutic tool to enrich their clients' experience with art or otherwise draw on art history in their practice (Alter-Muri, 1996; Ivanova, 2004; Miller, 1998; Simon, 1985; Wadeson, 2000). For example, Wadeson (2000) suggested incorporating courses on art history and visits to exhibitions as part of art therapy treatment. A pilot study was conducted to examine the potential for partnership between art therapy and museum education (Peacock, 2012). This study found that potential places of partnership between art therapy and museums are museum tours, art exhibitions, and art therapy sessions. Ivanova (2004) incorporated art history workshops into work with children in Bulgaria as part of an art therapy program. In similar fashion, Alter-Muri (1996) incorporated art history into treatment by introducing the work of specific artists chosen for the common struggles they shared with her clients, as well as gallery visits, talks, and slideshows about artists. Simon (1985) categorized the graphic styles of her clients' art in therapy by drawing parallels between their work and the styles of famous artists. Miller (1998) used art history as a therapeutic tool by introducing artists and having clients emulate their styles. She found that tying art-making styles to an artist helped clients feel affirmed in their art making.

Several art therapists have examined the practices of contemporary artists to find useful ideas for art therapy practice. Marxen (2009) examined the contemporary practice of relational art that is social, therapeutic, and political in nature, and surveyed the work of Sophie Calle, who creates art with implicit therapeutic ideas; Krzysztof Wodiczko, who works explicitly with therapeutic ideas informed by trauma literature and research;

and Lygis Clark, whose art practice is considered a form of therapy. Marxen concluded that there were definite similarities between some artists' relational art practices and the process of art therapy. She proposed that art therapists could draw art-based inspiration from the intersections of art, community, politics, and therapy presented in the work of these artists.

Alter-Muri and Klein (2007) discussed contemporary artists who use a postmodern framework and provided examples for how postmodernism could be applied to art therapy. They concluded that a postmodernist perspective informs a multifaceted therapeutic approach that negotiates the border between individual integrity and community values, blurs the distinction between home and studio, and validates all forms of image creation with the overall purpose of healing and social empowerment.

Several art therapists have approached the interface of art therapy and contemporary art by focusing on the ethics of public exhibition of client work (Chambala, 2008; B. Moon, 2015; Spaniol, 1990, 1994; Vick, 1999, 2011). This area of art therapy provides a parallel to art curating due to the fact that creating and facilitating exhibitions is a common practice of art curators (Hoffman, 2014b). B. Moon (2015) discussed ethical decisions that range between potential exploitation and opportunities for empowerment that an art therapist must grapple with surrounding the exhibition of client work. He explained that art therapist must serve as "supporters, defenders and promoters of clients and their images" (B. Moon, 2015, p. 69).

Due to the power differential within the art therapist–client relationship, the exhibition of client work is fraught with ethical considerations (Spaniol, 1994). Spaniol (1990) presented three principles to guide art therapists in the decision-making process

surrounding exhibition: opportunities, safeguards, and empowerment. "Opportunities" refers to providing possibilities for client work to be seen or exhibited. "Safeguards" refers to considering protections for clients and can include negotiating choices about privacy and confidentiality. The principle of "empowerment" involves partnering with clients so they are part of every aspect of the decision-making process surrounding the exhibition of their artwork. In addition to these principles, B. Moon (2015) suggested that art therapists and their clients engage the artwork as a third party in a three-way dialogue, allowing the voice of the artwork to be part of the exhibition decision-making process. The commonalities and differences in exhibition practices provide a potential parallel between the fields of art curating and art therapy.

Although art curating is mentioned briefly in the art therapy literature (Gilroy, 2008, 2014; Gilroy, as cited in Wood, 2011) a research study focusing on translating techniques from art curating for use in art therapy practice doesn't appear to exist in the literature. Unlike art therapists, the primary job of an art curator depends on keeping pace with contemporary art and the practices that surround it and is intrinsically tied to what is happening in the art world (George, 2015). Some curators create exhibitions that involve expertise in linking art, objects, and spatial elements to communicate a narrative or create a conversation (Hoffman, 2014a). Curators are experts at engaging and educating a wide range of people about art (Smith, 2012). Another important function of curators is their ability to position art or artists in the world in a way that best translates the message of their work, and at the same time provide context and relevance to others viewing the work (Schaffner, as cited in Marincola & Nesbett, 2013). Curators provide both care and critique for artists, encouraging and helping with the process but also providing a critical

reflection when needed (Molesworth, as sited in Marincola & Nesbett, 2013). It was these initial findings about the role and responsibilities of a curator within the art world that made me curious about whether art curating could be a potential arts-based lens for art therapy.

A Brief History of Art Curating

The word *curate* comes from the Latin word *curare,* which means "care" (Fowle, 2010). In the 14th century designated guardians or "carers" of minors and mentally disabled people were referred to as curators (George, 2015). In the 15th century the word *curator* began to denote someone who was in charge of a museum or place of exhibit (Smith, 2012). In both iterations a curator is someone who presides over someone or something through a balance of care and control (Fowle, 2010).

In the 17th and 18th centuries curators were the custodians of personal art and curiosity collections belonging to wealthy collectors. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries these collections were amassed and donated, forming early museums (George, 2015; Suarez, 2008). Due to the wealthy origins of the collections, museums were institutions that represented elitism and wealth. The goal of these museums, and thus the goal of the curators caring for the items within them, was to improve society through the critical thinking and reasoning of viewers who acquired culture, new knowledge, and understanding as a result of viewing the museum's collections. Curators sought to communicate information through the display of the collection and thus help the public undergo intellectual and moral improvement (Orosz, 2002).

> From the 18th to the 20th century, curators were scholars who cared for the treasures of the past. They assembled, catalogued and maintained collections, and interpreted and displayed objects within them. They were the intellectual wardens of museums, and their exhibitions served a

straightforward purpose: to make the case that the objects in their care were worthy of protection and would educate the wider public in some form. (Hoffman, 2014a, p. 10)

George (2015) also noted that in the 19th century curators began to symbolize expertise and taste in regards to visual culture.

In the 20th century, museums—and therefore curators—began to shift their focus to the audience rather than the objects they collected (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). Curators' roles began to shift to a focus on education and interfacing with the public about the collection. The educated middle and upper class was the target audience for museums and curators during this time period (Bergman, 2015).

The concept of the contemporary curator began to take shape in the 1960s when curators Szeeman and Hopps both began working independently from institutions; before that time, curators had always been associated with an institution (Strauss, 2010). In the 1960s and '70s these independent curators began to be seen as "auteurs," or artists of the exhibitions they created (O'Neill, 2012). This was a shift in public prominence for curators, who traditionally worked behind the scenes in their selection and interpretation of artwork in an exhibit. The style and personalization that a curator imparts within an exhibition was not available for contemplation when curators were considered caretakers of collections; however, this phenomenon is now evident in discussions of contemporary art (Lind, 2012). The independent curator stepped out of anonymity and established their own style of exhibition making through their new more noticeable position in contemporary culture (von Bismarck, Schafaff, & Weski, 2012).

In the 1990s there was an increase in graduate programs specializing in art curating (O'Neill & Wilson, 2010). The need for training materials for students led to an

increase in publications about the process and role of curating in the late 20th century. Prior to this point in time, information on curating was anecdotal and fairly confined to the field of practitioners. Obrist (2008, 2011) is one author who has addressed the sparsely documented history of the field with a focus not on placing curating into a historical context but rather on understanding why its history is relatively unknown.

Due to wide-ranging practices in art and exhibition, the field has struggled to define what exactly constitutes contemporary curating (Fowle, 2010). Two authors have developed categories that help to explain the role and setting of practice of a contemporary curator. George (2015) separated the role of curators into five types: subject specialist curators, collection-based curators, independent curators, artist-curators, and heads of departments. Although George described each type of curator he also noted that there is crossover between the types. For example, a curator could be a head of a department in a collecting museum with a specific subject of expertise or focus. Smith (2012) delineated the broad practice of contemporary art curating into three areas, or "currents," dominating contemporary art: curators working in collecting museums, curators focusing on local–international exchange (biennials), and curators who work in alternative settings. The latter area encompasses curatorial projects such as Internet-based or direct interactive relational work. These areas illustrate the expansive range of projects within contemporary art practice, and it is easy to see how the definition of curating—as well as the adoption of the title of curator—has become blurred and widely used.

Curating is difficult to precisely define and the label denotes a broad range of roles and practices in the field of art. The widening of the definition of what constitutes a

curator and the practice of curating has unmoored the word from its origins in art and has

been adopted by contemporary culture and applied very broadly (Balzar, 2014).

> The title of curator is everywhere being extended, encompassing every
> kind of organizing of any body of images or set of actions. The title of
> curator is assumed by anyone who has a more than minimal role in
> bringing about a situation in which something creative might be done, who
> manages the possibility of invention, or even organizes opportunities for
> the consumption of created objects or orchestrates art-like occasions.
> (Smith, 2012, pp. 17–18)

Hoffman (2014a) reported that *curating* is being used in contemporary culture to describe

the organization of things like music playlists and menus, and that this misuse or

evolution of the word risks diffusing the rigor of the art curating role. The meticulousness

and attention to detail that Hoffman (2014a) alludes to include the accumulated

knowledge and ongoing commitment to scholarship in the areas of art and culture that are

necessary to the practice of art curating. Misusing the word curating to describe activities

that lay outside of the realm of art curating discounts the significance of art curating as a

discipline that requires knowledge, education, creativity, and rigor. The common human

practices of choosing, organizing and presenting things to an audience should not be held

in the same regard as the skill and practice required to claim the title of art curator.

  The increase of curating in contemporary culture is one response to the need to

create manageable experiences out of the limitless sea of information available to us. Our

current culture and daily life are inundated with information in the form of news and vast

online resources; this information needs curating in order to make it manageable. We

seek curators to tell us what is important and we ourselves become continuous curators of

information, especially with regards to online experiences (Rosenbaum, 2011).

Regardless of their field of practice, curators must be in touch with contemporary culture

and cannot practice in a vacuum if they hope to successfully reach an audience (George, 2015).

Contemporary Exhibition Practices

All three curators interviewed for this research study work with an exhibition format. The curator of the teaching gallery also focuses on socially engaged art practices, which often defy the boundaries of traditional exhibition. Therefore, of interest to this research are contemporary thought and practices for curating both a traditional art exhibition and broader formats for sharing art and art practices. There appears to be a spectrum of practices within contemporary art exhibition, from traditional museum shows to nontraditional transient projects. An example of the latter is *Conflict Kitchen,* an alternative exhibition project in the form of a take-out restaurant that sells food from nations that are in political conflicts with the United States (Smith, 2012). In an article titled "To Show or Not To Show" (Hoffman & Lind, 2011), two curators compared their opposite philosophical approaches to exhibition in relationship to contemporary curating practice. Lind described herself as an innovator in the field and asserted that exhibition making is exhausted and should be abandoned. According to Lind, the format in which art is shared should relate to the logic of how the work is created, as well as the type of art it is and the timeframe and place of its creation (Hoffman & Lind, 2011). In contrast, Hoffman, who is a proponent of formal exhibition, used the word "para-curatorial" to designate those activities that curators engage in outside of the format of the exhibition, including lectures, screenings, creating exhibitions without art, and working with artists without producing material things that can be exhibited (Hoffman & Lind, 2011).

Hoffman believed that these activities lie outside of the practice of curating and should not be considered part of the field.

In a subsequent publication, Hoffman (2014b) stated, "The exhibition is the primary curatorial product. It is a discursive argument realized through the display of artworks. The format is time tested but still fresh, centuries old but full of potential" (p. 15). In this view the public display of art is important because it allows artworks to become visible and accessible to viewing publics. The exhibition format itself can be dynamic, composed of staging and theatrics in a fixed space while also encompassing the performative element of audience viewing (Hoffman, 2014a). Exhibitions are designed so that viewers are able to compare and contrast artworks and generate patterns, themes, and narrative threads (Bergman, 2015). Every exhibition is a form of narrative that tells a story by directing the viewer through the space in a particular order (Groys, 2010).

When art is left un-curated it can be perceived as diminished in importance and understanding (Bergman, 2015). However, artworks placed together in an exhibition reveal each other's features and shared concepts (Bergman, 2015). Thus, exhibitions become important conversational settings where meaning is generated. Within the format of the exhibition curators put artworks in conversation with one another. Unexpected connections often occur when works of art are hung together, and the narrative shifts and changes depending on the exhibition venue (Smith, 2012). The format of the art exhibition contains the possibility for multitudes of stories and histories. An exhibition allows viewers to suspend disbelief, similar to a work of fiction (Hoffman, 2014a). Saltz (2007) described what he referred to as "the alchemy of curating":

> Sometimes placing one work of art near another makes one and one equal
> three. Two artworks arranged alchemically leave each intact, transform

both and create a third thing. This third thing *and* the two original things then trigger cascades of thought and reaction; you know things you didn't know you needed to know until you know them; then you can't imagine ever not knowing them again. Then these things transform all the other things and thoughts you've had. This chain-reaction is thrilling and uncanny. (para. 1)

Due to the temporality of art exhibition, the elements of a curators craft and practice can be difficult to measure. Art exhibitions are evidence that curators reflect on artwork, wrestle with ideas, develop research, and inspire insights (Bergman, 2015; Smith, 2012). Bergman (2015) conducted a research study to generate knowledge of how curators generate ideas for developing an exhibition and how they view their role. Participating curators described two distinct approaches to exhibition making. In the first approach, curators begin with an idea or theme for an exhibition and select artists to illustrate the theme. These curators see themselves as coauthors with a goal of curating to generate dynamic social spaces. The second approach begins with the curator's interest in a particular artist and that artist's work, rather than a theme or idea. Curators working in this manner see themselves as exhibition coordinators and attempt to simply present the artist's work without introducing subject matter beyond that of the work (Bergman, 2015).

The modernist construct of the *white cube* seems to divide the field of curating in regards to exhibition practice. The white cube refers to the neutral space of an artwork hanging on a white wall, removed from the outside world and deeply associated with where and how art is traditionally exhibited (O'Neill, 2012). However, such a space, when located within a museum or institution, cannot perform the neutral or objective function it is assumed to offer. This critique acknowledges that art shown in this manner is staged and removed of its original context while simultaneously given a new

sociopolitical context that is unobserved and commented upon. In an attempt to return art to its intended context and to make the stance of curators and institutions explicit, curators have begun to break down the white cube construct in favor of more authentic options for sharing and experiencing art (Smith, 2012).

There are several exhibition projects I have researched that seem particularity pertinent to creating parallels with art therapy. Wilson's 1993 exhibition *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society was a project of re-curating the museum's collection to include the historical artifacts of slavery that had previously been censored from the public exhibition. Wilson's curating included slave shackles, whipping posts, and other historic objects that he deliberately placed amidst the silverwork and furniture of the 1850s, thus exposing the sociopolitical context of the lives attached to both sets of items and the relationship between them (Hoffman, 2014b). The concept of critically re-curating an existing collection and mining the museum archives for stories that have been censored or buried, bringing to light or choosing to display what has not been seen, is an important contemporary practice within the art world.

Among the many large-scale site-specific community exhibition projects that Jacobs has curated is the community exhibition *Places With a Past* (Hoffman, 2014b). Jacobs worked with 23 artists to resurrect previously unacknowledged history via a public site-specific exhibition in Charleston, South Carolina. The projects illustrated histories outside of the established histories of the area and gave voice to stories rarely heard, including those of slavery, religion, and the military (Hoffman, 2014b).

The explicit collaborations between artists and curators are also of interest to this research, such as one project curated by O'Neill (2012). As an attempt to challenge and

experiment with exhibition formats, O'Neill collaborated on an evolving 5-year curatorial

project called *Coalesce*. The aim was to use exhibition as a medium where artists and

curators could collaborate on every decision and aspect of the exhibition. O'Neill used

the conceptual idea of landscape (foreground, middle ground, and background) as a

formal structuring device with three planes of interactions. Specifically, the background

was approached as the primary layer or the architecture of the space, the middle ground

depicted the layout of the exhibition space and its elements that exist prior to installation

and that condition and mobilize the viewer, and the foreground was regarded as the

subject-to-object relationships brought into the exhibition space that cannot be changed

and that require certain conditions of display. Each layer of the exhibition landscape

offered grounding for the all of the other elements of the exhibit. The framework of a

curatorial landscape allows room for many different curatorial styles that may result in

cooperative and coauthored exhibitions (O'Neill, 2012).

Inspired by Stewart's (1984) concept of the *gigantic* as a landscape that both

contains objects and moving subjects, O'Neill (2012) drew a comparison to how viewers

interact within the entire experience of an exhibition and not just with autonomous art

objects. When engaging with an art exhibition, viewers move through a "container" of

objects and have mobile interactions with them on visual, haptic, and corporeal levels

(O'Neill, 2012, p. 92). In the words of Stewart (1984), "We move through the landscape:

it does not move through us" (p. 71). O'Neill described the planes of interaction as: (a)

surrounding the viewer who moves through the field, (b) interacting partly with the

viewer, and (c) containing the viewer in its plane of display. Using the landscape

structure, artists and curators work cooperatively on a transforming environment of

intersecting artworks. In this format individual projects blend and live together in the space. This structure results in a cross-fertilization of different artistic and curatorial styles that move over time toward a group exhibition form instead of an exhibition of autonomous artworks (O'Neill, 2012).

The concept of "critical curating" emerged in the late 1990s in response to a need to differentiate curatorial projects that sought to generate knowledge, research, and critical theory from the managerial and promotional models that dominated the field at that time (Martinon, 2015; Rand & Kouris, 2010). Critical curating no longer considers the exhibition as the ultimate form of curatorial practice. This form of practice is linked to institutional critique, art for social change, curatorial knowledge, and curatorial agency. Critical curating assumes that the curator is an active societal agent who contributes to cross-referential understandings of art between different artistic, ethnic, cultural, sexual, gender, and class locations and works toward the improvement of society in general (Martinon, 2015).

Lind (2012) proposed that the word *curating* refers to a technical modality and used *the curatorial* to mean "a more viral presence consisting of signification processes and relationships between objects, people, places, ideas, and so forth, that strives to create friction and push new ideas" (p. 20). Lind proposed that "the curatorial" is a methodology that takes art as its starting point and then situates it in relation to specific contexts, times, and questions in order to challenge the status quo. This methodology can be used by many different people in different capacities within the ecosystem of art (Lind, 2012).

The curatorial is critical thought that is unbound from practices and categories. This methodology is guided by staying with questions until they lead to a place that could

not have been predicted (Rogoff, 2006). Rogoff (2006) explored the concept of curating

as an embodied criticality. In this approach the curator stands inside the experience,

instead of orchestrating or judging from the outside. Embodied practice includes living

things out and sticking with questions for as far as they will go. The concept of the

curatorial, where art is employed as the central tenet for exploration and knowledge

construction, is particularly parallel to art therapy practice and warrants further

exploration as an applicable concept for art therapy practice. The curator's practicing in

this manner appear to be open to collaboration with other fields, which indicates a

potential place where the intersection of different fields is possible and welcome.

Curating as Communication and Translation

The concept and importance of translating comes up often in the curating

literature. It is important for curators to understand artists and their work completely and

fully in order to translate meaning to viewers. Hoffman (2014a) defined the role of the

curator as being one of providing context to artwork that allows meaning to proliferate

and have resonance with the viewer. Storr (as cited in Marincola & Nesbett, 2013)

described the fundamentals needed for a curator's role as a translator:

> Wide-ranging, unprejudiced, repeated, protracted, and in depth looking constitutes
> the bare essentials of the curator's craft. Before you can bring anything to another
> person's attention, you must be able to see it and think it and re-see it and rethink
> it yourself. (p. 50)

Developing a full understanding of an artist and the artist's work is also necessary for

curators because they must be skilled at addressing both scholarly audiences and people

who have no specialized knowledge of art (Restauri, 2012). Morgan (2013) called

attention to the curator's power to select work and determine the context that the work is

displayed within, but also recognized that this process of selection and display must be

done with understanding and sensitivity to the artists' intentions. The curator is also responsible for helping viewers to relate to the work or find a "way in."

The curator, in the role of a translator, is a middleman who bridges communication gaps—but translation is also a kind of filter. Curators filter or choose what passes through to the audience and they also have a hand at deciding what is excluded and silenced (Lind, 2012). Before works of art are exhibited they are hidden; exhibiting a work of art allows it to come into view and fulfill its purpose (Hoffman, 2014a). Curating can be used as a radical process of un-concealing art and making it public (Smith, 2012). Curators play an important and powerful role as selectors of what will be seen.

Hunt (2015) drew a distinction between curators who are motivated by fame and attracting large audiences to their exhibitions and curators who seek to use exhibition as a stage for critical thinking that can potentially benefit the institution and the public. Suparak (as cited in Marincola & Nesbett, 2013) explained her personal agenda as a curator as follows: "Curating provides an opportunity to explore ideas in surprising ways; to create memorable experiences; to support artists and politics I feel passionate about; to showcase unique and underrepresented perspectives; to bring different people, from various walks of life together" (p. 45). As a critical social practice curating can be a vehicle to "out" works of art and to unmask the uncritical ideas from the art market and the institutions where art is traditionally seen (Smith, 2012).

The Curator and Artist Relationship

Smith (2012) described the collaborative relationship between curator and artist as one where the curator is in the role of producer and the artist is the director. In response

to contemporary art curators have found that their role is increasingly one of supporting

the artistic process. Engaging with artists is central to the practice. Curators support the

seeds of ideas, sustain dialogue, reform opinions, and constantly update research

(Bergman, 2015). The curator has shifted from holding a governing position that presides

over taste and ideas to one that lies in the midst of artists, art, space, and audience

(Fowle, 2010).

> A curator's responsibility is triangulated between an artist, the work of art and an audience. You represent artists by allowing the work to speak for itself, at the same time you have to give viewers some sense of context, relevance, particularity, or essence that will allow them to hear what the work has to say. (Schaffner, as cited in Marincola & Nesbett, 2013, p. 38)

It is important that curators establish a relationship that permits both critique and

caretaking (Molesworth, as cited in Marincola & Nesbett, 2013).

Literature Review Conclusions

In reviewing the literature specific to the field of art therapy I found that some

practitioners in the field feel that there is an imbalance between current art and

psychology influences in the field. Steps have been taken by art therapists to address this

imbalance and provide frameworks for the field that are based in art. The literature

supported my belief that additional influences from current art practices are needed in the

field in order to offer cohesion between art and psychology based approaches to

contemporary art therapy practice.

In reviewing the art curating literature I found a wide range of theory and practice

that could align with art therapy. This review supported my idea that art curating might

yield potential principles that could be translated into art therapy language and applied as

a framework for practice.

My study was designed to locate principles from art curating and translate them into art therapy practice. Through the literature review I examined the varied settings and practices in the field of art curating. This review was instrumental in the construction of my questionnaire for the interviews and it also guided my choice of curators who participated in the research interviews. The results of this research yielded five principles of curating, described in Chapter 4, which referenced the current state of the art curating literature. In translating these principles into art therapy practice I also found that my initial review of the art therapy literature had connections to the emergent research findings.

CHAPTER 3: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research study was designed to address the following question: What principles from current art curating practices can be identified and translated into art therapy practice? The aim of my inquiry was to generate a theoretical framework for understanding contemporary art curating as it may apply to art therapy practice. The desired outcome was to provide an arts-based lens to conceptualize art therapy practices, which would serve art therapists who wish to draw from a contemporary form of art practice as an alternative framework with clients.

Art curating was an area of study where I expected to find useful data for art therapists, but I wasn't sure. Therefore, I sought methods that allowed me to inquire without predicting or limiting the potential themes or questions that arose. Essentially, the research question called for an emergent approach because I was hopeful but unsure of what I would find when I actually sat down with curators with the intention of exploring their practices and theories as they relate to art therapy.

Research Design

There has been no published research in the field of art therapy attempting to translate principles from the field of art curating into art therapy practice. Therefore, no theory has yet been developed that could be used to examine potential ways that curating knowledge and practice might benefit art therapists. Grounded theory methodology creates a unified theoretical explanation that is grounded in the data collected from a study (Strauss, 1998). Due to the fact that grounded theory is designed to generate and discover new theory, this methodology seemed particularly suited for this study.

There are two main approaches to conducting grounded theory research: a prescribed and structured approach, first proposed by Glaser, Strauss, and Strutzel

(1968), and a constructivist approach, proposed by Charmaz (2006). The constructivist approach to grounded theory is more interpretive, reflexive, and flexible in structure (Creswell, 2013). Constructivism, an epistemological principle, asserts that our different social realities are constructions influenced by life histories and cultural contexts that, in turn, shape our worldview, creativity, and versions of the truth (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, as cited in Kapitan, in press). Due to my wish to remain open to understanding how art curating is constructed by its practitioners, I felt the constructivist approach to grounded theory would be most appropriate for this research study. The fact that intuition is a welcome part of this research methodology, coupled with my intention to use my own art responses in the research process, also influenced my choice.

Grounded theory is an emergent research methodology. As such, it begins with the observed world and builds an understanding of it as events evolve and knowledge accumulates (Charmaz, 2008). Charmaz (2008) defined the term *emergent method* as research that is inductive, indeterminate, and open-ended. Using this methodology allows researchers to pursue unexpected findings as the data emerge from the research. Because I had no prior experience with this topic and nothing had been previously published on the topic, developing theory from the emerging data of the study was essential. The ability to pursue unanticipated directions in research areas that are uncharted is a specific strength of grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2008). Because I wasn't sure what would emerge from this initial inquiry it was essential to choose a methodology that would allow for adjustments along the way and for unanticipated findings to be pursued and incorporated into the study.

Grounded theory also allowed for room to solve puzzles that surfaced and to address questions that arose throughout the process. According to Charmaz (2008), grounded theory involves "creative problem solving and imaginative interpretation" (p. 156). Researchers using grounded theory are encouraged to stop and engage in problem-solving through a process of writing memos. This analytic requirement of the methodology allowed me not only to write memos but also to create and reflect on art work that corresponded with the emergent data throughout the data collection and analysis processes.

Participants

After a preliminary review of art curating literature I was aware that the roles and settings of practice for art curators are vast and varied. George (2015) identified five different types of curators: subject specialists, collection-based curators, independent curators, artist-curators, and heads of a department in a cultural institution. I decided to sample art curators as study participants guided by this list of curator types, as well as the potential areas of parallel between the fields that emerged during the literature review. Because this was an initial research study investigating possible parallels between the fields of curating and art therapy I wanted to include curators whose role and practice setting varied from one another.

I used a grounded research sampling method called theoretical sampling to identify participants who could provide information relevant to categories that I identified in the literature review. In theoretical sampling the participants are chosen to contribute to the study because the researcher believes that their particular knowledge or experience will help to form the best theory (Creswell, 2013). In order to select curators to

participate in the study I researched the practice of several local curators and visited collections or exhibitions that they oversaw.

I chose to include three curators in my sample because it was a manageable number for an initial study exploring the parallels between the fields of art curating and art therapy. Interviewing three curators allowed me to engage deeply with the data from each interview. I chose curators who work in the U.S. Midwest because I wanted to be able to interview each curator face-to-face and observe each one's setting of practice. Although I selected participants for their differences in role and setting, it is important to note that there where also similarities within the group. The three curators I chose to interview were all Caucasian women between the ages of 35 and 65 and they all practiced in the Midwestern United States. This choice reflected my own identity as a woman practitioner in the field of art therapy, which is primarily female. It is important to note that all of the curators I interviewed use an exhibition format within their practice. The curators wished to remain anonymous but are identified by their interview number and setting. One curator worked in a museum; the second curator worked in a house museum, and the third curator worked in a teaching gallery.

Instruments and Procedures

As part of the Institutional Review Process at Mount Mary University I created an 11-item questionnaire (Appendix A) to guide the semi-structured interviews with art curators. In the introduction paragraph of the questionnaire I gave a brief description of the research study. I also emphasized that the interview would be semi-structured and I requested that the participant guide the discussion in anyway that they believed would be helpful to my research. I constructed the questions as guided by potential areas of parallel

between art therapy and art curating that had emerged during the literature review. The

questionnaire began with two broad questions that invited the art curator to describe their

practice and philosophical approach. Three questions inquired about the curator's opinion

about potential areas of parallel or collaboration between art therapy, contemporary art,

and art curating. The remaining questions are directly related to themes, ideas, or

practices I found in the review of the literature and wanted to explore further.

Following institutional review board approval, I emailed three prominent curators

that I felt could provide the best information for my study. In my initial email

correspondence I introduced myself, explained an overview of the research study, and

asked if they would be willing to participate in a 1-hour interview. After receiving

confirmation from the curator that they would participate in the study, I emailed them the

informed consent letter (Appendix B) and the interview questionnaire (Appendix A).

Data Collection

The collection of rich data is critically important to support a grounded theory

study (Charmaz, 2014). I collected data from multiple sources including interviews with

curators, field notes, and my own art works. A primary data source was the semi-

structured interview material from my interviews with three curators. To prepare for each

interview I created a piece of art to visually represent what I knew about the curator and

her setting of practice. Then, at the beginning of each interview, I gave the participant a

copy of the questionnaire and kept a copy of the questions in front of me for reference. I

read the introduction to the questionnaire (Apendix A) aloud in order to re-introduce the

basic premise of the research study. I made it clear that I was seeking the curator's ideas

and expertise. I left room for the curator to take the interview in a different direction if

the interview questions sparked ideas for her about potential parallels between our fields. These interviews took place with each curator for 1 hour in the actual field setting in which she practiced; I also audio recorded the interview. At the conclusion of each interview I gave the art piece I had created to each curator to show gratitude for her participation. The interviews were recorded and transcribed using an iPhone and an application called Rev Recorder.

In tandem with each interview I attended an event that corresponded with the work of each of the curators I interviewed. These field observation opportunities were different for each curator and included viewing an exhibition created by the curator, attending a visiting artist's lecture, and attending a lecture by the curator. My observations were collected in field notes during these events. As prescribed by Charmaz (2006), field notes help to capture and conceptualize an inside view of the work and setting I was seeking in order to understand it more deeply. Observations, artwork, and field notes allowed me to wholly experience the work and setting of each curator in a manner separate from the initial interview questions. This made additional room for themes to arise that I had not considered or predicted.

Summary of the Participant Profiles (From the Data Collection)

Curator 1 . This curator works within a fine art museum in a large metropolitan area. Her work encompasses overseeing a permanent collection and creating special exhibitions from the collection she oversees. Her primary audience is visitors to the museum.

Several months prior to my interview of this participant I viewed a special exhibition she had created. My experience viewing this exhibition and the levels of

engagement it offered inspired me to contact her to invite participation in my study. I met

with Curator 1 for an interview in the museum where she works. I spent time looking at

the collection she oversees prior to and after the interview to provide context for the

interview's content. The curator read the interview questions prior to our meeting. We

engaged in an organic conversation during the hour-long interview that was inspired by

the questions but not strictly tied to them. The curator focused her interview responses on

creating special exhibitions inspired by the collection she oversees. The themes from this

interview related to constructing an exhibition and the experience of the audience.

In the interview Curator 1 revealed the joy and creativity she finds in her work constructing exhibitions. She described a detailed storyboarding technique she utilizes to envision the entire exhibition, including the art and objects, the spatial elements, and the flow of the story. Her work is genera-specific and is focused on expanding the knowledge and current relevance surrounding the

Figure 1. Interview Response, Curator 1

museum's permanent collection. She shared that she hopes that visitors leave her

exhibitions feeling as if they have been transformed as a result of new insights gained

from being immersed in the show. After reading the transcripts of the interview with

Curator 1 I created an art piece (Figure 1) to visually depict the interview material and to

experience it on a deeper level through my art.

Curator 2 . This curator's primary work is overseeing the collection at a house museum. The term *house museum* refers to a historical property that has been preserved and repurposed as a museum. This house museum and its contents is a collection of fine art and other objects donated by an artist. Curator 2 also curates exhibitions of other artists' work within this museum and at other exhibition venues. Her primary audience is students, faculty, and the public who visit the museum to study the collection. I selected this curator due to her focus on nonmainstream art and the importance of collecting, hoping that her perspective would offer useful material for the study.

I met with Curator 2 in the house museum. Prior to our interview she spent considerable time with the interview questionnaire and wrote responses to each of the questions in preparation. During our hour together we followed the format of my original questionnaire but also diverged from the questions. Our conversation focused on the ways that the questions fit with her expertise concerning the collection and the preservation of objects and spaces. The themes from the interview included the importance of juggling multiple histories in a single space while maintaining the present as the time of significance for visitors.

After the interview I attended a presentation facilitated by Curator 2, held in the house museum. The presentation introduced a group of students to the concept of house museum collection and also introduced them to the specific artist's collection. I took field notes during this presentation to include in my research data. After the lecture I viewed the collection along with the curator, the students, and their instructor.

After reading the transcripts from the interview with Curator 2 and reflecting on my experience of the house museum through my field notes, I created an art piece (Figure 2) to visually depict the themes from the interview. This interview stressed the importance of everyday objects and the human urge to collect and organize within our own homes. Curator 2 explained that she hopes that

Figure 2. Interview Response, Curator 2

visitors to the collection leave with an increased understanding of the intersections of life and art and how multiple histories can operate simultaneously within a single space.

Curator 3. This curator oversees a teaching gallery within a college setting. The gallery divides its time between student shows and special exhibitions focused on socially engaged art practices. Curator 3 has worked in other museum settings and in a variety of socially engaged community practice settings. Socially engaged art practice is defined as one where the social interaction is the art and is a reaction to the extremes of individualism prevalent in the art world (Finkelpearl, 2013). I selected this curator as a participant because of her lengthy experience working as a curator in multiple settings both in and out of institutions. I was also interested in including her perspective of curating socially engaged art practices because of potential parallels with art therapy.

Prior to my meeting with Curator 3 I attended a lecture by a socially engaged curator that was given at the gallery where Curator 3 works. Curator 3 felt that this lecture was aligned with my research and would provide a practice example of places that

art therapy and curating might run parallel. After the lecture Curator 3, two other staff members from the gallery's curating staff, several students affiliated with work in the gallery, and the lecturing curator met with me to present further work that could support my research. I used these lectures, presentations, and conversations as field note material in my study.

A week after attending the lecture at the gallery I met with Curator 3 for an interview. She read the questionnaire prior to our meeting; however, the conversation often veered from the questionnaire. Curator 3 saw potential parallels within social art practice that I had not posed in my questionnaire, including the difficulty of measuring

the effectiveness of art when it is applied to social issues. She described challenges of finding funding for socially engaged art and the suspicion that sometimes surrounds the unmeasurable transformative process of art. The data from this interview focused around the challenge of trusting the artist's process of problem-solving social issues when the

Figure 3. Interview Response, Curator 3

process is not predictable or linear. After reading the transcript from the interview and reviewing the field notes taken in conjunction with the guest lecture I created an art piece (Figure 3). The art piece helped me to visually consolidate the experience and to reflect it visually while examining themes from the material.

Data Analysis

In a grounded theory research study the data collection and analysis emerge simultaneously. Researchers are encouraged to pause during data collection when necessary to look more closely and analyze the material then return to data collection guided by the analysis (Charmaz, 2006). This grounded theory method for collecting data and comparing it to emerging categories is referred to as constant comparative coding (Creswell, 2013).

As described above, I had created an art piece to visually represent the material I had received during data collection to explore its meaning on a deeper level and enter into data analysis. After reading each interview transcript and reviewing my field notes, I hung both the transcribed text and the art that corresponded with each interview on the wall so that I could code for thematic patterns. Strauss and Corbin (1990) referred to this initial stage of grounded theory analysis as *open coding*. Open coding is the preliminary phase of coding that serves as a starting point for comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Guided by Charmaz's (2006) model , I coded the data line by line by writing action codes in the margins of the transcribed interviews. Action codes are short phrases assigned to each line of data that describe the actions that are occurring. Assigning action codes to the data is a way to help the researcher stay open to theoretical possibilities. Charmaz (2006) recommended that during the initial coding phase the researcher should quickly and spontaneously code the data in order to avoid creating conceptual categories prematurely.

The next phase of grounded theory coding is called *focused coding* (Charmaz, 2006). During this phase, analytic direction is established by synthesizing the data within the line-by-line codes. The researcher begins to make decisions about what codes are

most significant and make the most sense to the research focus. This is a non-linear process; I found it helpful to write and draw directly on the coded interview material as it hung on the wall. This tactile process allowed me to visually bunch the initial codes into categories.

As categories arose from the data I used memo writing to clarify my ideas. An essential feature of grounded theory, memo writing aids the researcher in thinking more deeply in the moment about themes and ideas that emerge from the data. Memo writing is a step between coding and writing the final research data that allows the researcher to stop, explore ideas, and analyze data in the moment (Charmaz, 2006). As an extension of the memo-writing process, I created an art piece to reflect my evolving understanding of the emergent themes from each interview and to help me to visually analyze what I was learning from the data.

Axial coding is the next phase in grounded theory data analysis. Data are put together in new ways by making connections between categories and developing sub-themes to categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During the axial coding process I created a visual diagram corresponding to each interview that combined the emerging thematic categories with details from the visual data of the artwork. These figures re-organized the data in a visual and aesthetic way and created a frame that clarified the emerging ideas from each interview.

I realized that presenting the themes from the three interviews separately would be thematically vast and confusing. Because some of the categories within the interviews were thematically related, I sought to selectively code these data to arrive at concise core codes (Creswell, 2013). During this final coding phase I created a table to organize the

direct quotes from the interviews a evidence to support the core categories which I placed

under each core category. This final phase grouped all of the interview data and resulted

in five curating principles that reflected the most prevalent codes that emerged.

In order to translate these five curating principles into art therapy practice it was

necessary to conduct a subsequent review of the art therapy literature to locate where and

if each principle appeared in art therapy practice. After locating the curating principles in

the literature I wrote a vignette from my own experience as an art therapist to illustrate

the principle.

Finally, I used the five curating principles, coupled with the art therapy translation

of each principle and a vignette from my experiences as an art therapist, to build a

website that would serve to disseminate the information to art therapists, students of art

therapy, and anyone else who might benefit from the findings. My inspiration to create a

website was to provide an interactive and visually interesting space to share the research

process and the principles. As I created the website I was inspired to illustrate the

vignettes with videos. This last component of my study allowed me to convey the stories

of my experience through my own voice and artwork. Although I did not realize it at the

time, in essence I had taken a step to perform my research concern by *curating* the results

of my grounded research study presented in visual, interactive forms.

The website offered a platform for me to share these stories visually in order to

best convey to viewers what the principles looked like in my own practice. The website

hosts a blog that will be used to collect practice examples from art therapists that reflect

the principles discovered in my research. The website will allow the research to continue

collaboratively with other art therapists beyond my completion of this doctoral dissertation project.

Limitations

I am an art therapist and an artist. I am a White middle-aged female who studied art therapy and has worked as an art therapist in the U.S. Midwest. As a researcher my intention was to own my expertise in art therapy as well as any personal bias I might have as I immersed myself in an unknown field to find potentially useful information for my profession. I chose three curators to participate in the research interviews. This choice provided a manageable number of participants for the grounded theory study however this choice limited the data I obtained as well as the diversity of the sample.

Throughout the research process including the review of the literature, the choice of interview participants, the data collection, and analysis that lead to the final principles, I was guided by my experience as an art therapist about what knowledge might be relevant and helpful to the field. Due to my own subjectivity that I engaged in the process of conducting this study it would be reasonable to argue that another researcher could engage in the same research process and find different results. However, as Kapitan asserted, grounded theory does not seek universal or bias-free explanations that can generalize to populations. Instead, their validity rests on whether the study accurately portrayed a particular reality revealed in a systematic process that other researchers might find to be theoretically meaningful in similar situations (Kapitan, in press).

Like all qualitative research, grounded theory requires a high level of researcher self-awareness to mitigate bias and a commitment to returning again and again to the data for verification of insights. Throughout the data collection and analysis I used my own art

making process to aid my exploration of the interview and field note data. I created art pieces in three phases of the research process: prior to the initial interview with each curator, in response to reading the interview transcripts, and during the coding process to deepen my understanding of themes that emerged from the interview material. These art collages combine images that are literal and metaphorical representations of the interview material, the themes, and the five principles that emerged from the coding of the data.

My analysis of the data identified five principles of art curating and I translated the principles into art therapy practice using the art therapy literature and my own validating experiences as an art therapist. It is possible that another grounded theorist could identify other principles from data collected with another sample of curators or focus on different principles in the analytic process. However, the intent of this design is to contribute these principles to art therapy discourse where they have not been entertained before. Future research can build upon these ideas and be validated with other studies.

CHAPTER 4: MAIN FINDINGS: FIVE PRINCIPLES OF ART CURATING

As a result of this research study I identified five principles of art curating that I posit could inform contemporary art therapy practice. These principles are:

1. Curating creates multiple points of access.

2. Curating locates the time of significance in the present.

3. Curating invites people to experience objects in context.

4. Curating emphasizes trust in the nonlinear process of art.

5. Curating serves as a collaborative orienting resource.

In this chapter I discuss each principle in relationship to the curating practices described within my interviews with participants and the literature. I then translate each principle into art therapy practice and share a vignette that illustrates the way these principles have been reflected by my experiences as an art therapist.

Principle 1: Curating Creates Multiple Points of Access

In art curating, creating multiple points of access means purposefully using art, language, space, and subject matter simultaneously within an exhibition to communicate on different levels with a variety of visitors. Curators are skilled at addressing scholarly audiences as well as people who have no specialized knowledge of art (Restauri, 2012). One of the curators I interviewed explained:

> There must be multiple points of access. If a viewer is not getting the art history maybe they are getting the story. You may not get how this [art] movement leads to another but you're getting an emotional experience. . . . I try to think of as many [ways in] to an exhibition as possible.

Curators also communicate with the audience on multiple levels using the elements of an art exhibition. This requires that a curator be adept at using spatial and design elements within an exhibition to create flow and direct the viewer through the

space in a particular order (Rand & Kouris, 2010). Exhibition shapes the spectators'
experience by taking them on a journey that unfolds and accumulates as they arrive at
insights guided by the space (O'Neill, 2012). Curators use space, color, lighting, and the
placement of art and objects to draw the viewer into the space in a way that conveys the
story.

Written labels are also a point of access that communicate information from the
curator to the viewer. Curator 1 emphasized, "The labels for artwork should help viewers
to relax, not make you feel inferior and wonder, 'what's that word mean?'" She also
stressed t hat "people don't want to say they don't know and we can break through that."
Curator 1 also emphasized the importance of breaking down information, using
uncomplicated language, and teaching visually in lieu of relying on words.

Another way that curators provide a point of access into an exhibition is to begin
with a work of art that is familiar to many people. One participant explained, "We always
try to build on the strengths of our permanent collection [because people know it].
Familiar pieces are a touchstone for visitors and we use them as a launching point for
telling new stories." Exhibition designed around an artist or image that is familiar
provides a point of access for introducing art history, art process, or research so the
viewer can learn more.

Art Therapy Creates Multiple Points of Access

The curating principle of creating multiple points of access can be translated into
art therapy practice in several ways. Art therapists create multiple points of access by
offering a range of art materials and a variety of creative possibilities for engaging in art
making. Art therapists often use visual and spatial elements within the studio

environment to convey information about the use of the space and what happens in it. McNiff (1995) described the art therapist as the keeper of the creative ecology of the studio, responsible for conjuring a creative atmosphere for the artists who use the space. Similarly, B. Moon (2016) described the art therapy group leader as the curator of the art studio space. He explained that by including art, texture, and color on the walls of the studio the art therapist can curate a creative atmosphere that conveys messages to the people who use the space.

Art therapists also offer points of access by providing structure to the materials and proposing directives for art making that make room for a variety of responses, in order to invite people with varying abilities to participate comfortably in the art process. For example, Vick (1999) proposed the use of prestructured art materials for group work with hospitalized adolescents in order to increase their comfort and willingness to participate in art making. In a comprehensive theoretical approach to materials in art therapy, Hinz (2009) discussed the use of art materials as a point of access for engagement and expression in art making. Her approach is nondirective and focuses on exploring the multiple tools of expression within a wide variety of media.

Similar to curating art exhibitions by beginning with a familiar piece of art, art therapists have also used familiar images as a starting point. Art therapists often employ images from art history or techniques inspired by famous artists as a point of access to engage clients and enrich their experience with art therapy (Alter-Muri, 1996; Ivanova, 2004; Miller, 1998; Simon, 1985; Wadeson, 2000). Peacock (2012) conducted a pilot study exploring and locating places of collaboration between art therapy and museums. Art therapy and museum collaborations are an example of the benefits of combining

museum education and art therapy to offer multiple points of access for both visitors and clients.

Thompson (2009) developed a gallery model of art therapy by designing a gallery space and holding exhibitions within a psychiatric institution. This approach to art therapy is intended to offer multiple points of access by facilitating the display of client art work, helping clients cultivate an artistic sense of self, strengthening the creative process, and de-stigmatizing mental illness.

Depending on the population an art therapist is working with it might also be important to balance uncomplicated language with visual teaching in order to communicate clearly and to help clients feel comfortable. For example, Houpt, Balkin, Broom, Roth, and Selma (2016) shared their collaborative experience creating "zines" with older adults and noted that step-by-step simple instructions and a visual comic format provided points of access for those participating in the project. The following vignette from my own art therapy work further illustrates the principle that art therapy creates multiple points of access.

Case Vignette: Group Art Therapy at a Residential Center for Children

While working as an art therapist at a children's residential treatment center I facilitated 10 weekly art therapy groups. The children who attended these group sessions had difficulty being in a group setting for various reasons. In most cases the difficulties that the children had were a result of complex trauma and chronically stressful environments. Most of the children I worked with struggled with hypervigilance regarding their environment and the behaviors of others, anxiety about sharing, and difficulty focusing and managing frustration. It was my task to design an art therapy

space and a group format that could help these children to relax and be successful. Being successful in art therapy group often meant something different for each child. It was possible within a single group to have one child who was committed to using the art therapy process to gain a sense of mastery over her life experiences and another whose work was focused on managing anxiety over sharing space and supplies with other children. In order to accommodate the differing levels and abilities of the clients in these groups it was critical to create multiple points of access for learning and engagement within the art activities, the group structure, and the studio environment.

I began with designing and outfitting the studio space in a manner that conveyed information about the space without using words. I chose a soft purple color for the walls of the art room that contrasted with the dirty off-white walls of the rest of the residential facility. The color was named "quiet refuge" and I hoped painting the studio that color would set it apart as a different kind of space, a refuge from the routine and regimentation of the rest of the facility. I wanted to convey this to the children and staff through their experience of the room's color and atmosphere and not through words.

There was a single art-making table in the center of the room. The table was cleaned often; however, I was careful not to clean all of the art-making remnants from the table surface. This conveyed wordlessly that the space was meant for art making and it was okay for a project to drip or spill over. I was always sure to have the correct number of chairs around the table for the children and staff who were expected to attend the session. Most children liked to sit in their "regular" seats even though seats were not assigned. Having the seats in the expected places around the table conveyed metaverbally (B. Moon, 2016) that I was expecting the group and that I took notice of where the

children liked to be in the space. In addition, it was important that the room was not cluttered with extra furniture and there was always access to the door.

I also conveyed information about the use of our art studio space in the way that I chose to put away or display the supplies. I always arranged the supplies for the project we were currently doing visibly on the side table like an enticing buffet. The supplies we were not using that day were neatly put away and labeled in closed drawers and cabinets. This deliberate choice of display allowed the children to get excited about the supplies we were using that day but also to be aware of the supplies we were not using. Preparing the table of supplies conveyed the message that I had prepared for the group's arrival and I had planned our directive in advance. For children with histories of trauma and neglect, having an organized space, plentiful supplies, and a thoughtfully prepared project helped them to relax knowing that I had prepared for the group and that I had the environment and the group format under control.

The room was interesting and engaging but not over stimulating. I customarily hung art that related to our weekly project on the wall across from the studio door. When children or staff members passed by the art studio the changing artwork often engaged and drew people in from the hallway. This visual prompt provided inspiration and ideas as well as a safe template that could be mimicked or copied if a child wasn't ready to fully experiment with art yet. A Spiderman movie poster signed by Toby McGuire hung in the studio when we did superhero-inspired projects. This signed poster was very inspiring especially because some of the younger children thought the poster was evidence that I had a personal connection to Spiderman. The poster was a point of access

that helped the children to get excited and engage their imaginations creatively around many weeks of superhero-themed projects.

Each week I created a comic strip illustration of the weekly project idea. This comic used both words and pictures to illustrate the steps of the art therapy directive. In our group I used the comic strip to introduce and explain the project and it also provided a visual teaching tool of the project's steps in case a child needed a reminder of them during the session. Illustrating the steps to the project helped children to engage and slow down. The group art therapy projects always changed weekly, but the comic strip format was a familiar element each week for every group. Having a format that children recognized to begin each session and explain the art directive provided a touchstone and a point of access.

Within a single group it was possible to have a child who was new and another who had been in treatment over a year. The art directives offered a range of responses. For example, one project was to use a piece of bendable wood to invent something. Each child received an identical piece of wood at the start of the session and the inventions they created were revealed at the session's end. Children who were feeling less imaginative could choose to make a bracelet with the wood piece, as this was the most obvious and simple invention. Children who were accustomed to art therapy groups could be more daring and experimental in their inventions, linking them to the issues they struggled with or life experiences. An example of this deeper level of engagement with the project was a working conveyor belt that one child constructed with found objects. The invention was designed to keep intrusive bad thoughts moving out of the child's head and into an incinerator. In these groups, which contained children at different points in

their treatment and with differing abilities, it was necessary to create an environment, a group structure, and art therapy directives with multiple points of access.

By constructing the art therapy studio space to metaverbally communicate that it was a space for imagination, relaxation, creativity, and structure —utilizing a comic strip directive format that provided room for a range of responses to accommodate varying abilities and levels of engagement in treatment, and structuring the space with color, organization, visual prompts, and the flow of the room —my experience running these group sessions is an example of how art therapy creates multiple points of access.

Principle 2: Curating Locates the Time of Significance in the Present

The curating principle that the time of significance is in the present was an important theme within the interview data. Both curators working within museums stressed the importance of locating meaning in the present. In relationship to museum practice this means joining art that was created in the past to the reasons for why it is relevant today. One curator stressed that exhibitions that focus on retelling old stories are not relevant or successful. She explained that it is important to center an exhibition on what makes the work and themes relevant to our lives in the present instead of what the meaning was at the time the work originated.

A subtheme to this principle was allowing for multiple histories to operate simultaneously in the present. One curator explained her goal for the house museum space as being "to allow the 19th century building and the 20th century collection to perform fully in the 21th century. Otherwise we've got no reason to be here." She continued, "The guests, the students, and the faculty that visit [the museum] are part of the ongoing history . . . instead of being frozen in the past. . . . Choosing time periods can

be very limiting." This curator spoke about a common historic preservation practice of choosing a time in the past to organize all of the site practices around, then restoring everything to that time period. She equated this practice to being purposefully frozen in time and stated her intention to maintain a collection but also to allow the collection to function in the present and to be part of an ongoing dialogue.

Art Therapy Locates the Time of Significance in the Present

The curating principle of locating the time of significance in the present has clear parallels to art therapy practice. In relationship to group psychotherapy, Yalom and Leszcz (2005) stressed "working in the here and now" as one of the most important aspects of the group therapy experience for clients. They explained that in order to effectively use the here and now in therapy there must be collective willingness to live in the here and now, coupled with self-reflexivity that aims to examine the here-and-now behavior. In therapy it is common to work to help people reflect on both present and past experiences. B. Moon (2016) described art making as a sensual experience with materials and images that is done in the present tense. Similarly, Seiden (2001) reflected on the power of art materials to elicit both sensory memories from the past and create new experiences in the present. In art therapy when a person uses the art process to grapple with experiences the art-making process is always located in the present (B. Moon, 2016). Furthermore, art can allow the meaning of past experiences to be visible and tangible, offering new ways to translate meaning in the present.

The cost of organizing all of your practices to preserve the past instead of living and functioning in the present also has implications for art therapy. What is preserved but also what is missed when we organize our life practices around preserving a significant

period of time or event? Van der Kolk (2014) observed in veterans the unwillingness to let go of past traumatic events even when they were causing debilitating terror or nightmares. For example, a veteran van der Kolk (2014) worked with shared the feeling that if he let go of his traumatic past memories he would no longer be a living memorial to his friends who died. How do we help clients make choices about allowing multiple histories and meanings to coexist while placing the significance and emphasis on the present? In relationship to art therapy and the treatment of trauma, research suggests that creative trauma-informed therapies support resilience and give clients mastery over the past experiences that are disrupting their present lives (Steele & Malchiodi, 2012). Malchiodi's (2015) creative interventions with traumatized children offer emotional reparation and recovery from trauma, focusing on using art therapy to address long-lasting symptoms of trauma that are affecting a child's development in the present. I experienced the power of the arts to help reconcile past trauma and connect to the present firsthand in my work with an adolescent in a group home.

Case Vignette: Making Music With Lamar

I began art therapy with Lamar (pseudonym) when he was admitted to the group home where I worked. When a new adolescent was admitted to the program we often received a file full of information that had accumulated over time from the various agencies involved in the youth's care. Lamar's file was full of past court reports of criminal conduct; safety plans to keep him from hurting others; school reports of bad behavior, suspensions, and expulsions; and lengthy details about past abuse and traumatic experiences that he had survived but also perpetrated.

I had a rocky relationship with Lamar; sometimes he was charming and aloof and at other times he was full of rage and anger. His past experiences had created these two opposite characters and both were designed to enable him to avoid connecting with others and keep from living in the present. When I tried to talk with him about the life experiences he'd had prior to coming to the group home he minimized the ways his past affected his present life. In the art therapy studio he engaged in art projects but simultaneously ridiculed them as being childish and stupid.

Lamar would consistently sing during our therapy sessions, sometimes making up songs and at other times singing along with the radio. He explained that his mother imparted a love of singing to him because she had a great voice and sang out loud often. Lamar's family no longer had custody or contact with him as a result of the abuse that happened in their home. Lamar's relationship to singing was a connection to his past and a way to maintain a link with his mom, whom he no longer had contact with.

I worked with 10 other adolescent boys who also lived in the group home. Some were avid art makers during our art therapy time. Others, like Lamar, were clearly more interested in making music as a creative outlet. In response to this need, I partnered with my husband, who has access to recording studio equipment and the technical skills needed to produce music. Together we created a space and a format to help the residents I worked with create music. Providing studio space and technical assistance to create music opened up new options for expression for the adolescents I worked with.

Lamar created several songs during his time at the group home. He used the songs as containers to hold memories of his past experiences, to celebrate his survival, and to connect with himself and others in the present. One of Lamar's songs was particularly

good—the chorus was catchy, the lyrics were profound, and the beats he created to accompany the song were rhythmic and infectious. After the song's creation he and his peers played this song on repeat throughout the house. The song connected Lamar to the other residents of the house who had similar past trauma, providing Lamar and his group of peers with reparative connection around their shared experience. The song's hook repeated the lines, "I don't think it's right that you leave me alone and you don't hear me," and, "Why was I born? Is my being in vain? Whatever—make a change."

Lamar's lyrics moved between different layers of his history. "I served my hard times in the places of death, but I'm still a young'un, don't let me get beside of myself." It was amazing to see the depth of the sharing that took place in Lamar's song and how it helped him to relate to others. The song served as a vessel to hold his past memories but it was also an art piece to be experienced in the present each time it was played or performed, reminding him that the time of significance was in the present.

Principle 3: Curating Invites People to Experience Objects in Context

Two distinct ideas concerning experiencing objects in context emerged from the interviews with curators. These two ideas differ in that one method relies on deliberate choice and placement to create meaning and the other examines the meaning of objects or art in the context of life.

Curator 1, who designs exhibitions, talked about the process of grouping objects or images to tell a story. In this practice the curator deliberately chooses art and objects, then places them together in a specific context in order to convey information or to tell a story. This curator explained her process as follows:

> I start playing with storyboards and thinking about them in terms of, "How does this become an exhibition? These four objects need to be seen together because

they are part of the same story. Then we are going to have a corridor passage where we're going to be able to look thorough and see the next set of objects that relate."

This form of curating draws from expert knowledge of art, art history, and exhibition design in order to deliberately convey story and ideas to an audience. Curator 1 explained further, "In every exhibition there are paintings without which you don't think you can hang the story . . . if you don't see it together you miss the point. Those paintings need to be together communicating the story."

A second curating approach to experiencing objects in context emerged from my interview with Curator 2, who manages the collection within a house museum. She described the collection and the manner in which meaning is constructed around the assortment of objects and their contexts in the shared space. "I work in an environment where objects are displayed together as a kind of ecosystem; I encourage thinking about hybrid narratives and encouraging guests to choose narratives based on their instincts and their reactions to objects," she reflected. Curator 2 shared that hybrid narratives are endless in the house museum. She described the meaning of hybrid narratives as "when a thing becomes another thing, different than what it was made for, because of the way someone creates a narrative around it." The practice of creating a narrative—not in a vacuum but based on what's in proximity to it—is a creative practice that is encouraged by this curator. The artist who collected and arranged objects within the house museum where Curator 2 works used aesthetic intuition to place the objects in the space, meaning that the objects in a sense find each other and curate themselves, which juxtaposes the other more deliberate method of the placement of objects to illustrate a specific idea.

Recognizing the link between life and art was an important subtheme that emerged from the data pertaining to this principle. One curator explained, "People should be encouraged to understand that art takes place in ordinary life, [in] our homes and gardens and . . . our studios. The modernist fallacy is the separation between art and life—the detached studio." The idea of linking art and life was important and present in different ways in each of the interviews. Curator 1, who designs special exhibitions in a museum, does not work with living artists and stressed the importance of connecting paintings and objects to real human lives; for example, including clothing, furniture, or the artist's easel into an exhibition to illustrate that the works of art were created in the context of someone's life and culture. Curator 2 works within a space—the house museum—where there is evidence or residue of life both past and present. This curator spoke of the choice that is often made in historic preservation to "museumify" or clean a space. They stated: "There are things we will lose if we do a major rehab . . . we'll lose a lot of evidence of the life that was in the space prior to this becoming a museum." Curator 2 seeks to offer an authentic experience for visitors through maintaining evidence that real life has taken place where they might expect art and life to be separated. The link between social art practice and life is often inseparable because the practice itself is the social interaction and intersects with life. Curator 3 explained that "[social practice] artists are dealing with very subjective life experiences of people, creating new experiences within their lives, hoping to impact, remedy, or in some way alter and change their lives."

Another subtheme that is important to discuss in relationship to experiencing objects in context is the significance of collecting and collections. Curator 2 shared:

> In a sense we all curate: We all organize things, we archive things, we save them, or not. The more these roles [of collecting and curating] are considered and the more conscious we are of these processes, I think we can be much better people, better artists, better teachers, better custodians of stuff.

Curator 2 stressed that her hope for visitors was to leave the museum feeling more aware about their relationships to objects and to attach a deeper meaning to the things that they encountered in everyday life. Pamuk (2009) described our homes as the future of museums, and saw the ordinary stories and objects from individual lives as representing the historical narratives of our time. Therefore, fostering awareness around our own personal collections connects us to art in everyday life and also to the historical narratives of our time.

Art Therapy Invites People to Experience Objects in Context

Art therapists collect or group pieces of artwork in order to convey meaning in their practice in various ways. Grouping artwork and discussing their meaning in context is common practice in art therapy work. Art therapists may purposefully group artwork to convey meaning, to review with clients, to conceptualize and install exhibitions, or for closure at the end of therapy. For example, Fish (2016) described the termination and closure process of examining a body of work created by supervisees or clients as a helpful review process for therapy. When imagery is created and reflected on in supervision it provides a vehicle for reflecting on the course of the work and affirming the value of experience (Fish, 2016).

Fostering awareness of the meaning of objects in context is a valuable principle for art therapists. Meaning shifts when something is presented separately within in a manufactured context as compared with the meaning generated when a complex web of other things surround an object. For example, Frostig (2013) used personal letters from

relatives sent during the Holocaust as a catalyst for a large-scale performance project. Guided by these letters, she traveled to Vienna and visited sites of Nazi torture that had been forgotten. Over time she began a collaborative effort with other artists to mark these sights with chalk and with projections, bringing memories into context but also reminding others of the ramifications that forgetting can have on the present.

Another art therapist whose work exemplifies similar efforts to remember the past in order to make informed choices in the present is Klorer (2014), in her project *My Story, Your Stories*. Klorer discovered letters in her art studio, a refurbished gatehouse that demonstrated her community's past practices of racial discrimination. She used these letters to facilitate an arts-based dialogue about the history of discrimination in the community at the public library. Klorer's work also relates to the theme I discovered in my interviews of maintaining the residue of life and resisting the urge to "museumify" or clean. In her work, instead of discarding the racist residue of past life in her community she presented it for dialogue. By resisting the urge to cover up history we can use it to make different choices in the present. My own work on an ongoing community tapestry project further illustrates the curating principle of inviting people to experience objects in context.

Case Vignette: The Red Tent Project

Years ago I read the book *The Red Tent* (Diamant, 1997), which inspired the creative vision that lead to the creation of a tapestry for my wedding that was constructed from fabric given to me by important women in my life. Prior to my wedding I shared my idea for this tapestry with women I hoped would contribute to it, and requested that they send me fabric that carried stories, history, or blessings. A group of women friends

helped me to sew the fabric together and collect the stories in a scrapbook. I used the

tapestry to parade with the women who attended the ceremony as a way to include them

in my rite of passage into marriage and as a symbol of the importance of women in my

life and the bond that we shared.

The power of this project was palpable from the beginning. Visually the red

colors of the tapestry were stunningly beautiful. Each donated piece of fabric had

profound singular meaning in the story that it carried. A scarf my mother-in-law wore on

her first date with my father-in-law, my great-grandmother's hand-stitched apron, a poem

from my aunt, a red dress that belonged to a friend who had died, all layered together to

create an ecosystem that symbolically and literally represented the lives and histories of

women close to me. The women and I who collaborated to create this original tapestry

realized quickly that my wedding was just the origin of the project and that we should

open the experience of interacting with the red tent to others.

After my wedding, I first installed the red tent at a church as part of a month

dedicated to fostering awareness of domestic violence. I included information that

viewers could read about the project, a book in which to write comments, and a suitcase

of art supplies and instructions to embellish or add to the project. I received news from

the church that people were spending time with the tapestry by adding bits of fabric to it

and using the space it was installed in to pray and reflect. The tapestry hung in the

building for a month, then it was paraded during a service to honor the work of a local

women's shelter. When I returned to the church I discovered the book that I had left with

the tapestry was filled with messages and spontaneous poetry inspired by the red tent. I

attended the service and was humbled by the interest and admiration that people shared

about the project. A woman approached me after the service and handed me a folded pink

pashmina scarf. Her eyes were heavy with tears as she told me that she wanted me to add

the scarf to the red tent in honor of her sister who was struggling to leave an abusive

relationship. She hoped that by adding her scarf to the tapestry that the strength of other

women might help to guide her sister through her current experience safely. I was

humbled at the way that this tapestry had taken on a life and a meaning of its own.

As I did workshops and parades with the tapestry I continued to be humbled by

the life of this project and the various ways that people intuitively used it as a memorial,

as a place to meditate, as a keeper of secrets and history too difficult to carry on their

own, and also as a place to share stories and celebrate. In tandem with other women

artists I was invited to use the red tent to facilitate a weeklong retreat for adolescent girls.

Using the red tent as our inspiration I coordinated an activity with a creative writer that

we called "imagined realities of the red tent." The directions for this activity were the

following:

> It is impossible to know all of the stories that the red tent carries. Some of the
> stories are written, some have been passed on verbally, and others have been
> whispered into the fabric that creates the red tent. The power of these stories can
> be experienced even when they are not known. Spend time looking at the tapestry
> and find a contribution to it that is interesting to you. Imagine in detail the person
> who contributed the fabric or embellishment and describe them in writing. Write a
> letter from this person to the group gathered here today explaining their
> contribution to the red tent and the story of the materials they used.

This exercise in creating imagined hybrid narratives was rich and deep. Using our

imaginations we brought other women who were imagined but just as real as the people

who contributed to the project into our circle. These imagined contributors to the red tent

told their stories and gave blessings and advice.

Today the red tent is a massive community tapestry composed of red fabric that has been contributed to by hundreds of people. The tapestry has been embellished and added to as an art piece, paraded by groups of people, hung in galleries, and featured in workshops. I have used the red tent project in various ways in my art therapy practice. I installed it for a year at the residential facility where I worked. The red tent brought its collected histories and hybrid narratives to this space and was a source of inspiration, beauty, and comfort for the staff and resident children and youth. I used the concept of the red tent often in my groups with adolescent girls who frequently fought and had trouble connecting to one another. Each adolescent in the group was allowed to cut off and wear a piece of fabric from the red tent on their wrist as a symbol of solidarity with other females. I overheard one of the girls explain to another, as she pointed to her bracelet, that she refused to argue with her over petty stuff because she "respected all women, since she was a woman of the red tent."

Recently I shared the red tent project in conjunction with coursework about women's development in a graduate art therapy class. My classmates helped me to spread the tapestry on the floor. The students chose to sit amongst the layers of tapestry, taking time to notice the vast collection of fabric offerings and embellishments that make up the red tent. A friend had recently used the tapestry for several ceremonies and workshops and I noticed new additions to the project. Each time I unroll it I find new pieces that I have not seen before. I am so humbled by this ever-growing collaborative collection of shared histories and by the way that individuals are moved by the power of tangibly linking a piece of themselves to the collective. The red tent is a vessel for our stories; a

place where they can be supported and honored alongside many other voices and in context with life.

My experience with the red text project illustrates the principle that art therapy invites people to experience objects in context through providing an example of the ways that individual contributions to the red tent project become part of the collective context.

Principle 4: Curating Emphasizes Trust in the Nonlinear Process of Art

The principle of trusting the nonlinear process of art, although recognized briefly in the other two interviews, was a prevalent theme in the interview with Curator 3, who works in a teaching gallery that also focuses on socially engaged art practice. In socially engaged art practice the social interaction is the art itself (Finkelpearl, 2013). Curator 3 explained the difficulty of predicting goals or outcomes associated with socially engaged art projects. She explained, "The transformational aspects of art are not considered transformational in pragmatic ways." When engaging in art practice there must be room for the unexpected and the counterintuitive to emerge from the process. Therefore, setting goals or predicting outcomes for the art process can curtail the exploration of a problem. Curator 3 explained that defining the problem to be addressed prior to beginning a project is detrimental because "often what we initially view as the problem is not the problem at all." Artistic process must leave room for the unexpected and counterintuitive instead of being confined to what is prescribed or what is considered best practice.

Curator 3 described the curator's role as one of always staying open and being willing to shift perception. She stressed the importance of trusting the process of art and being in dialogue with the artist; of holding space and not pushing for a premature conclusion to a project. She explained:

> Social art practice can sometimes be discounted when applied to address social issues. [The criticism is] "you are not clear," or "you're vague," or "you're just wandering," or "you're being intuitive." What's wrong with intuitive? What do we know from our intuitive sensibilities that are telling us some truths that we developed through experience, which includes book knowledge or through cultural or social evolution or development?

She also stressed that revelation happens from listening in the present process and from being a participant in the world.

Art Therapy Emphasizes Trust in the Nonlinear Process of Art

Early psychology argued that uncensored material through free associations with words leads to deeper symbolic understanding and insight (Freud, 1938). Jung's (1979) work on active imagination and the images of the unconscious welcomed uncensored exploration through images. McNiff (1998) encouraged others to "trust the process" in relationship to art therapy practice. This phrase, often used by art therapists, means staying with the creative process and maintaining faith in the therapeutic value of art making in order to unfold meaning.

An art therapy practice example that embraces the nonlinear aspects of art is Allen's (1995b) open studio process, which used art making as an avenue to increase and deepen consciousness. Further, in her book *Art as a Way of Knowing,* Allen (1995a) explained that accessing the imagination allows artists to confront their beliefs and to grow and change. This manner of intuitive art making allows images and process to guide exploration, rather than words. In her book *Studio Art Therapy,* C. Moon (2002) shared a story of a young man who did not use words to describe his feelings but instead used his art process and materials to communicate. She described the difficulty of gauging the effectiveness of the work and reporting progress to others even when she could see that the work of art therapy was clearly happening. I had a similar experience working with a

young woman in a residential facility that further illustrates the principle that art therapy

emphasizes trust in the nonlinear process of art.

Case Example: Ciara's grocery lists.

Ciara (pseudonym) was adopted when she was 18 months old and from her

reports life was pretty good until her adopted mother died of breast cancer when Ciara

was 12 years old. After her mother's death she experienced multiple hospitalizations,

difficulties in school, and many medication trials. After years of finding no solution to

Ciara's behavioral and mental health issues her grandmother admitted her to residential

treatment.

When I first began working with Ciara her speech was slurred and her movement

was slow and awkward from heavy medications. Despite the volume of medication she

was prescribed she still appeared to struggle with hallucinations, difficulties grooming

herself, and bizarre behavior that made interaction with others difficult. Verbal

communication and relating to others were difficult for Ciara, so I was assigned as her

primary therapist.

Shortly after her admission to the residential facility Ciara's grandmother decided

that she could not come back home and would need residential care into adulthood.

Because Ciara, at 16 was too young for an adult facility, she would remain at the

residential facility where I worked for 2 years awaiting placement in a long-term care

facility. During these two years Ciara and I met every week for art therapy. Ciara had a

treatment plan outlining her goals for treatment, which were focused around social skill

building, symptom reduction, and processing her grief. During the 2 years at the facility

Ciara's medications were reduced and refined to address her issues more specifically. Her

slurred speech and slow movements improved over time but she made it clear that she wasn't interested in talking about her goals, her past experiences, or her progress in treatment. When I attempted to engage her in conversation around goals or treatment she stared blankly at me as if I hadn't said a thing. This made it really difficult for me to report on the outcomes of treatment or find ways to bill for our time spent together in therapy.

Despite her reluctance to talk about her goals Ciara was organized and prolific in our art therapy sessions. Each week she would show up with a written grocery list and ask for my help to make the items on the list out of art materials. Strawberries, chicken legs, Pepsi, salad, and spaghetti one week; taco shells, ground beef, lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese the next week. We would read her list together and then work to create each item from materials in the art room. We found that yarn made great noodles and we perfected our chicken using tape and foil and sealing it with plastic wrap into actual meat cartons from the cafeteria.

I enjoyed meeting with Ciara and seeing what her list contained each week but I worried that we weren't working on any recognizable treatment goals. Any time I brought up treatment goals or asked for her perspective on what she struggled with, my inquiry was met with silence and Ciara would go back to crafting her grocery items. Ciara eventually expanded her weekly grocery lists and began to make take-out foods from restaurants. She and I created Chinese food—to be delivered to her room on the unit after our session—that included shrimp lo mein made from twine, pink foam shrimp shapes, and construction paper green onions. She moved steadily between grocery lists and take-out menus, explaining to me that some nights she just didn't feel like cooking so

she ordered out. She was very dedicated to her process and I was intrigued but clueless as to the deeper meaning of all of the food we created together.

After a year of working together Ciara began making office supplies, a cell phone, a laptop computer, a coffee maker, a wall-mounted house phone, and a set of keys. She outfitted her room on the unit with these items. From my observations she appeared to be setting up a home office or a business. I knew Ciara was in a deep creative process and I trusted this process was what she needed to do even if I wasn't sure what the larger goal was.

About a year and a half into our work together Ciara's grandmother visited the facility and randomly shared that Ciara's late mother had planned and catered parties. This was a profound bit of information for me and it shed light on what Ciara had been doing in the art studio for the past year and a half. Suddenly I understood her work as recreating memories of her mother and the familiar process of planning and grocery shopping that happened often in her home. Ciara had been doing grief work all along in an intuitive way that didn't need explanation. She had been following her instincts to make lists of groceries and to order take-out when she didn't feel like cooking. Her work in the art studio allowed her to morn the loss of her mother and also morn the loss of the life she would never have. Ciara knew that she was headed to a long-term residential facility after her stay at our agency and in the art studio she used our time together to enjoy her imagined life as a party planner. It was through her artwork that she was able to morn the loss of her mother and the loss of her life as she imagined it and it was my job to trust the nonlinear process of her art.

Principle 5: Curating Serves as a Collaborative Orienting Resource

The curators interviewed for this study all had a slightly different angle to describe their central role within a curating project. What was evident was that each of the curators was adept at orienting the "center" or structure of a project in slightly different ways. Curator 3, the teaching gallery curator, described this grounding role as follows:

> As a curator you sometimes do nothing except be a sounding board, or a facilitator, or an organizer. But it can, in the best of projects that I've been a part of, be a certain center. Except that's the trick—when you're in the center you actually don't have any answers either.

Being a "certain center" was also described as being the expert of what they knew but at the same time being clear about what they did not know and inviting others to collaborate. Curator 2, the house museum curator, talked about fostering an atmosphere of exploration for visitors by explaining:

> I try to be a real person, speaking authoritatively about what I know while admitting to the things I don't know, in order to create an atmosphere that is less about teacher versus learner and more about everyone being explorers.

Curator 2 also shared, "We try to respond to what people want to know about, then give them everything we've got—give them all of your knowledge, not leave the ugly things out." What was clear in all of the interviews was the desire to dispel the myth that the curator has all of the answers.

Where creative projects were concerned there were various levels of control that each curator exercised. Curator 1 was the mastermind of the exhibitions she created. Her method of being the center of the project was to storyboard and design the entire vision and then reach out to collaborate on elements that were beyond her expertise. In contrast, Curator 3, whose focus is on socially engaged art practices, juxtaposed this way of

working by opening the whole process to collaboration with artists, students, and colleagues. She explained the importance of being open about the direction of a project, sharing, "Within the art process, as the curator, holding and being in the wings of a process or project, my aim is to be open about where that process might end up so that we don't limit the exploratory nature."

Art Therapy Serves as a Collaborative Orienting Resource

The curating principle that art therapy serves as a collaborative orienting resource translates into art therapy practice in regards to leadership, facilitation, client work, and education. In my practice as an art therapist I have frequently had multiple roles. I am an art therapist, an artist, a supervisor, a researcher, and an agent of change. The curating principle of being a collaborative orienting resource within a project highlights the multiple responsibilities of facilitating, supporting, and owning expertise, but also being open to input and collaboration.

One unique way that art therapists can serve as an orienting resource is through facilitating the use of art process and materials. Fish (2016) described the intentional and nuanced ways of orienting students and holding space in arts-based supervision with materials and image making. She explained that engaging with sensory work with materials helps to ground therapists, allowing them to settle and discuss issues for supervision. Facilitating the use of art materials to provide soothing and grounding can help to orient people, enabling them to listen to the stories of others and to process and contain new material (Fish, 2016).

An early learning experience of my own regarding this principle was participating in *The Art of Connection,* an exhibition at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

facilitated by Vick (2000). I learned firsthand the power of collaborating with clients on the public presentation of artwork. This annual exhibition is an example of art therapists working in partnership with clients to navigate the nuances of artistic identity and the public presentation of artwork while supporting clinical concerns. It is designed to give voice to clients who might otherwise remain unheard as an act of personal and political empowerment (Vick, 2000). The art therapy practice of collaborating with clients to create exhibitions of artwork intended to foster empowerment, de-stigmatize mental illness, (Potash & Ho, 2011; Thompson, 2009) as well as Project Onward, an artist's studio designed to remove barriers to art making for talented artists with disabilities (Lentz, 2008) are examples of how art therapy can serve as a collaborative orienting resource.

Art therapists are particularly good at taking disparate parts and forming them into a cohesive whole (B. Fish, personal communication, February 25, 2017). This skill is reflected in the ways art therapists approach our own imagery and research and in the ways we encourage clients to do the same. It can also be seen in the ways that art therapists approach collaborative research and gather and synthesize information in participatory action research (Kapitan et al., 2011; Spaniol, 2005). Participatory research collaborations invite participants to see, reflect, and become subjects of their own development (Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trochez, & Zuniga, 2012).

The principle that art therapy serves as a collaborative orienting resource is also illustrated in the collaborative community "third space" model proposed by Timm-Bottos and Reilly (2015a). Timm-Bottos and Reilly (2015b) proposed the creation of small-scale sustainable community "art hives" to serve as hubs for community art making, dialogue,

and collaborative learning. Within these arts-based spaces there is equalized participation between community members, students, and facilitators, with the intention of cocreating and generating collaborative learning in the space.

The following vignette illustrates how I learned to be a collaborative orienting resource within a participatory action research project surrounding the creation and facilitation of family strengths workshops in a residential treatment center for children.

Case Vignette: The Family Strengths Workshop Proposal

During my doctoral studies at Mount Mary University I served as the clinical supervisor at a residential facility for children. As part of a leadership course I chose to create programming to address the power differences between staff and families at the facility where I worked. At that time there were no social opportunities for families to meet and interact with other families and staff members at our facility. I saw this gap in services as an opportunity to create a program.

I proposed a monthly 3-hour weekend workshop for the families of children living at the facility. My plan was to facilitate art making that focused on celebrating the strengths of the families, followed by a communal meal. My proposal was for both direct care and clinical staff to come to the workshop in order to have more opportunities to interact with the children and families involved with our program. To my surprise, when I pitched my idea to my colleagues, the majority responded with anger and skepticism.

In an attempt to orient myself and learn more about the reaction to my proposal,

Figure 2. Fish Stew

I created a scribble drawing that turned into an image of a fish stew with whipped cream on top (Figure 4). I shared the drawing with my leadership class, who helped me to understand the drawing's message and how to proceed differently with my proposed family workshop project. My drawing helped me to understand that I was making my plans for change in our agency in isolation. I was metaphorically whipping up a fish stew and trying to serve it to everyone and I hadn't even considered if my colleagues liked or wanted fish stew. In the drawing the stew was topped with whipped cream and a cherry, a metaphor for the way I was trying to make this programming change palatable. I was disguising my agenda to challenge the power dynamics between staff and families as a fun collaborative dinner party and my colleagues saw right through it.

With my plan to mastermind new programming to address the power differentials between staff and families thwarted, I decided to interview and survey staff members about their experiences and feelings surrounding work with families. As I inquired about my coworkers' feelings and experiences with families, I learned there were several problems that I had overlooked in my enthusiastic family workshop planning. First, I was asking my coworkers to spend time making art and eating with the families of the children we worked with. In many cases family members had been abusive or neglectful of the child in our care and some staff members were angry that I was asking them to interact casually with them. I was also offering a free meal to family members and we were already housing their children for them. Some staff members saw my efforts to bring families and staff together for a meal as a reward that overlooked the perception that many were unsuccessful parents. Another issue that arose, specifically for the clinical staff, was that I was asking them to interact in a personal way with families, which

eroded the professional boundaries they believed were important to their therapy practice. By listening to coworkers and reflecting with my artwork I began to understand more deeply why my proposed workshops were outside of their comfort zone and in some cases contrary to what they believed was best practice clinically. I recognized I was pushing my agenda for change without collaborating with the people I expected to help me implement the new program.

I was witness to the disempowerment of families within the agency and wanted to help the staff and other clinicians to reframe their perceptions of families in order to see them as a resource. Because I was an agency administrator I thought it was my responsibility to conceptualize and direct change. Soon I realized I was repeating the same problematic power dynamic that I was seeking to address if I used my authority as an administrator to enforce my agenda. I recognized that effective leadership relied on being open and not having all of the answers. Over time I was able to gain enough support to hold the workshops while honoring that some of my coworkers were not comfortable participating.

This story illustrates my learning, as an art therapist and administrator, to hold or orient the center of a project and also invite collaboration and explore solutions with others. I learned through this process to not leave the "ugly things out" and to acknowledge the negative aspects of the work. The solution was to "be real" and to not gloss over the negative aspects of the difficult work we did with struggling children and their families. I found in this instance that listening, reflection, and collaboration led to workshops for families that were welcomed within the agency instead of forced by my agenda for change. By using my artwork as an orienting resource I was able to make

changes in the way that I was leading. I was able to provide structure and hold the space open for a solution that was collaborative.

Dissemination of Knowledge: Production of the Website

I created a web site guided by the five curating principles that emerged from the research process, the translations of each principle into art therapy and video vignettes illustrating how each principle appeared in my practice as an art therapist. The purpose of this website was to disseminate the findings from this study and to create a place of learning and collaboration for art therapists in regards to the five principles of art curating, their translations to art therapy practice, and possible applications in the field.

The rationale for creating a website was to make the results of the research study, the five principles of art curating, and their translations into art therapy accessible to as many art therapists as possible. Initially I envisioned teaching these principles through a workshop or presentation format. The limitation of this format was that it would not reach many people. The website would allow many more people to access the information and share examples of how the five principles are used in their work. The website also would allow the life of the project to extend beyond that of my doctoral research study.

My research offered only a small sample of what could potentially be learned from using the lens of art curating to conceptualize art therapy practice. The medium of a website will allow me to dialogue and collaborate with art therapists in order to elaborate on the curating principles as they relate to contemporary art therapy practice.

The website is designed to be interactive and offer multiple ways to engage with the five principles of curating and their art therapy translations. On the home page I described that the purpose of the site is to share the five principles of art curating and their art therapy translations. I included descriptions of the different pages associated with the website which included: The five principles, contextual background, the research, blog, references, and contextual essay. To keep the homepage clear and uncluttered I provided a brief description of the website and the specific pages included on the site. I also included a short bio and a contact link on the home page. I wanted a visitor to be able to visit the site's home page and learn quickly about what the site contained instead of having to wade through a lot of information about the study on the home page.

On the website the five principles page contains five videos that combine audio recordings of the vignettes from the contextual essay and photos to illustrate each principle through examples from my own art therapy practice. Following each video there is a short description of the principle in relationship to curating, the principle's translation into art therapy, and a brief description of the video that illustrates the principle. I kept the descriptions of the principle and its art therapy translation brief on the website. I directed viewers to the contextual essay who may be interested in learning more about each principle including it's links to the interview material, and the literature of both fields.

The website included a contextual background page designed to briefly explain the imbalance between art and psychology in the field of art therapy and to give context to my decision to examine art curating as a possible framework for art therapy. I used

images of stones on this page because it has been a metaphor in my research process. I included a description on the contextual background page about the significance of the stone images. I explained that, during the research course at Mount Mary University where I first conceptualized this study, I spent time walking by the river close to campus. Wading across the river to pick up stones from the opposite bank became a metaphor for what I sought to do in my study. I used the metaphor of collecting stones to illustrate how I intended to explore the field of art curating and bring ideas back to the field of art therapy.

The research page on the website introduced the research question and the purpose of the study. I briefly introduced grounded theory as my research methodology. In the research overview section I walked the viewer through the steps of the research study. I used a bullet pointed list to clearly explain the steps of the research process beginning with interviews with curators and ending with the creation of the website. On this list I included the semi-structured interviews, the site observation, as well as the art pieces I created prior to my meeting with each curator. I included images of these art pieces in a gallery that allowed the viewer to enlarge the image. I described that I read the transcripts of each interview and created a second series of art pieces in order to more deeply understand the material and the interview experience. These art pieces are included in the image gallery and can be enlarged. I described the coding process for the interview material as well as memo writing. I included the third and final series of images that I created to reflect the themes from each interview. I also explained that I used the most prevalent codes from the three interviews to arrive at the final five curating principles. Next I described the translation of the principles into art therapy and the

vignettes that I wrote to illustrate what the principles looked like in my art therapy practice. I included that I created videos from these vignettes using my artwork and photos. Then concluded the list with the creation of the website intended to share the five principles from the research.

The research page contains a section about the interview participants. In this section I discussed the demographics of the interview participants and provided reasoning about why I chose to interview the curators that I did. I described each curator that I interviewed, her practice setting, and a few details about the themes from the individual interview. I coupled each curator's description with the final image that I created to reflect the themes from their interview.

The blog page on the website is a platform for collaboration with other art therapists surrounding the five principles. It serves as a place to collect stories that illustrate practice examples of how the principles appear in art therapy practice. The blog page restates the five principles and explains my intention to collaborate with others to collect examples of the principles in practice. I envision my role in managing this blog will be similar to being the editor of a book project. I plan to collaborate with interested art therapists to include their stories. I will also invite art therapists to contribute examples of work that aligns with principles from my research.

The website contains a reference page that reflects the citations used specifically on the website. I also designated a page on the site that will provide access to the finished contextual essay, in the event that a visitor wants to read about the research in more detail.

Creating the website was the final phase of this research project. It served the purpose of consolidating and presenting the findings of the research study. I found that creating the website also helped me to understand the research study and the five principles more comprehensively and clearly.

CHAPTER 4: REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The overarching goal of this study was to examine current practices in art curating and identify principles that could translate into art therapy practice, with the hope of providing a new arts-based theoretical framework and lens for art therapy practitioners.

Identifying, Translating, and Illustrating the Five Principles of Art Curating

The initial phase of this project was the literature review, which helped me to survey the field of art curating in a broad way to determine if curating could provide a potential framework for art therapy practice. During my review of the literature I found myself immersed and excited about parallels I discovered between the two fields. There were so many potential avenues that I could explore in the field of curating that I found it difficult to focus.

I moved from the literature review to the development of a questionnaire with 11 questions. I then conducted semi-structured interviews with three curators. The participants I chose worked in settings that I expected could provide a framework for art therapy. The interviews and site observations were a remarkable source of information. I found that each curator had unique perspectives to offer my study.

Guided by grounded theory methodology I coded the interviews line by line (Charmaz, 2008). I coded the interviews separately and began to see patterns emerge in the data. Initially I found each interview so fascinating and unique that I wanted to keep the three curators separate and propose three models based on each place of practice—a museum, a house museum, and a teaching gallery. At this point the data, which included the interview material, my observations, and my artwork, were still vast and chaotic. In an attempt to make sense of the material I created visual figures representing the themes

from each interview that illustrated their connections with elements from the artwork I created in response to each interview.

I realized that I hadn't completed my analysis and I went back to the original interviews and began coding and grouping the themes from the interviews as a whole. This process of distilling meant that I had to make sacrifices, cutting out some interview data and codes that I liked but were not repeated elsewhere in the data. I had created nine pieces of art during my data analysis, three that corresponded to each interview. I was invested in using these art pieces in some way in the final research results. I created figures and diagrams of the interview data and my artwork in an attempt to package the data neatly. I was able to recognize finally that I wasn't done with data analysis. I pressed further, finally combining the data from the three interviews into one lump sum. This choice to combine the interviews meant my artwork corresponding to the interviews had contributed to my tacit understanding of the curating process but would not be part of the final dissemination of the research. Although the artwork supported my understanding and helped me to discern the data, I felt the pieces no longer needed representation in the synthesis of the project. I was also able to recognize that the art was an integral part of coding the interview data and getting to know these data deeply.

At first I thought that I had found 14 principles of curating. I sensed I wasn't finished because there were intersections between the 14 principles that I hadn't sorted out. I worked to connect themes until finally I arrived at the five principles reported on herein. This grounded theory process was much more difficult that I imagined. It required my willingness to let go of my desire to include pieces of artwork, keep each interview separate, and discern codes that were interesting but not essential. The five principles of

curating that resulted are representative of the data, but there were many interesting aspects of the data that had to fall away in the process. Art curating is a rich potential area of resources for art therapists. This early study is a glimpse of what is possible.

After consolidating my data into the five principles of curating my next task was to translate the principles into art therapy. I translated the principles by first linking the ideas back to examples in the art therapy literature. After locating examples that were similar in the art therapy literature I wrote an art therapy description of each curating principle. I was surprised that these principles from interviews with curators had well-defined associations to art therapy through the literature. I also found clear connections to the principles of curating with my work as an art therapist.

I wrote vignettes from my own art therapy practice that illustrated examples of the five translated principles. Then I created a video to accompany each story. In order to create the videos I read and recorded the stories and then I used my artwork and photos to illustrate the stories in iMovie. These stories and videos were created specifically for this project. However, the ideas within them and the accompanying artwork are from my past practice as an art therapist and have been shared in presentations throughout my career. I obtained prior written consent (Appendix C, D, & E) to share the artwork, photos, and stories that I used to create the videos and publish them on the website. The names of the children in the stories have been changed in order to protect their identities.

The need to re-tell these stories surfaced from the translation of the five principles. When I began my research I had no way of knowing where the process would lead to with respect to principles that would connect to my past art therapy practice. What was surprising to me was the discovery that I had already been practicing these principles

in some form. It was an epiphany for me to realize that the art based framework that I had been searching for in my research already existed in the work I was doing and in the work of other art therapists. I realized that the shift was in the lens not in the practices that already existed. Sharing stories of important children, families, and experiences as part of my final doctoral research feels very important. The individuals I have been privileged to work with throughout my career deserve to be at the heart of this work. The final stories and videos place the spotlight where it should be, they highlight people and experiences that made me the art therapist that I am.

Implications for Further Research

This preliminary study is an initial look into a potential place of renewed arts-based learning and inspiration for art therapists. Further studies could be conducted to confirm the validity of, or expand, the principles discovered in this study. Replicating this study and comparing the results to the five original principles that I located through the research could accomplish this goal.

This grounded theory research study included three art curators who have different roles and work in diverse settings. The three participants were chosen because I anticipated that each one's area of expertise and work setting could provide information about what kind of curator and what setting could provide the most useful information for art therapists. The three curators were all Caucasian women between the ages of 35 and 65 who work in the Midwest. Further studies could also be conducted with curators who practice in different geographical areas and who are different in age or cultural background than the curators who participated in the initial study.

This study explores a sample of the potential information that could be gleaned from the practices of art curators. Further research into the vast practice of curating and its many practice settings is needed to create a comprehensive survey of parallel practices between the two fields and identify further places to draw inspiration and collaborate. The practice of curating is wide ranging and the principles of art curating in this study could also be confirmed or expanded by including curators who practice in different settings and have different philosophical approaches to curating.

This research study focused on my personal practice examples to illustrate the principles from the research. Additional studies could be conducted by art therapists to refute or confirm the existence of the five principles in art therapy theory and practice and to offer additional practice examples from a variety of settings.

The practice examples used to illustrate the principles are largely from my experience in a residential treatment center that provided clinically based treatment to children, youth, and their families. Further studies are needed that span the spectrum of art therapy practice to determine the application and usefulness of this art-based framework for the field. There are many areas of art therapy mentioned in the translation portion of this research study including: Art therapy in museums, exhibition of client work, community studios, disability artist's studios, and many other practice settings. Further research could apply the concepts and practices proposed in this research in a variety of settings to determine their applicability.

Conclusions

This study generated five principals of art curating—curating creates multiple

points of access, curating locates the time of significance in the present, curating invites

people to experience objects in context, curating emphasizes trust in the nonlinear

process of art, and curating serves as a collaborative orienting resource—and translated

them into art therapy practice. I hope that art therapists find these principles useful in

conceptualizing their practice in an arts-based way. An unexpected outcome of the study

was that my own art therapy practice fit so seamlessly into this framework. I realized that

despite the fact that I was practicing within a clinical setting my work already

exemplified these curating principles. Maybe art therapists are more arts-based than they

think. Perhaps we have not strayed so far from the art world. These principles may help

art therapists change our lens and frame and the choices we make in practice in a way

that brings the art to the forefront.

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APPENDIX A

Curating Questionnaire

Introduction:

The intention of this interview is to deepen my understanding of practices in the field of curating in order to potentially apply those understandings to the practice of art therapy. The field of art therapy is rooted both in psychology and art. Art therapy has kept pace with contemporary trends in psychology for a number of logical and necessary reasons, but has failed to keep pace with contemporary art movements. Modernist perspectives have often significantly influenced art therapy practice and theory in relation to art. I am interested in exploring contemporary curating because it is a field that must keep pace with contemporary artists and the current art world. I've come prepared with a few questions to begin our interview but I am hoping to learn from your expertise organically as well.

Sample interview questions:

1. Describe your curating practice and your philosophy about what you do?

2. How does your personal philosophy or theory show up in your work?

3. Do you see any potential parallels between curating and art therapy?

4. Do you see any areas of contemporary art where curators and art therapists might work together?

5. Are there areas or practices within contemporary art that art therapists should focus on to realign themselves with contemporary art practices?

6. Therapists often help their clients to construct narratives. Do you have theory, guidelines, or techniques that you employ when constructing narratives with art?

7. Can you describe the process or theory of re-curating existing collections?

8. Curators can serve as translators between art and audience… can you give examples of this important curatorial function?

9. Therapists and curators are not objective presences in their work can you talk about how you make your influence explicit in your work?

10. The art world notion of the "white cube" seems parallel to critiques about power, influence, and objectivity within the art therapy field. Can you talk about the critique of the "neutral" gallery space in your field and how you navigate (or challenge) this notion in your own work?

11. In many ways curators choose what is disseminated to the public. Can you talk about your role in this process and how this role might become personal or political?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Letter

Dear Interview participant,   October 1, 2016

        The interview you are agreeing to participate in is part of a doctoral research

study that seeks to translate practices from contemporary curating to the field of art

therapy. The field of art therapy is rooted both in psychology and art. Art therapy has

kept pace with contemporary trends in psychology for a number of logical and necessary

reasons, but has failed to keep pace with contemporary art movements. Modernist

perspectives have often significantly influenced art therapy practice and theory in relation

to art. I am interested in exploring contemporary curating because it is a field that must

keep pace with contemporary artists and the current art world. I have reviewed curating

literature and have formed questions to begin our interview process. However I want to

acknowledge you, the curator, as the expert in your field.

        The initial semi-structured interview will be approximately one hour; the audio of

the interview will be recorded and transcribed. The researcher will employ grounded

theory techniques which are emergent. If the initial data suggests that additional

clarification or interviews are needed you may be contacted for additional information.

Each participant will be offered copies of the transcripts of the interview, data gleaned

from the interview material, and the results of the research.

        There are no potential harms to participants of this study. The benefits of

participation in this research study include a discussion aimed at drawing parallels

between the practice of art curating and the practice of art therapy. The research may

identify parallels that benefit both curators and art therapists and deepen the personal

work experience and professional literature in both fields.

This research will involve interviews with three contemporary art curators. Each research participant will be given a choice to remain anonymous or to be identified. The nature of an art curator's job is very public because they create exhibitions that are displayed publicly and viewed by the public. If a participant requests that their responses be kept anonymous care will be taken by the researcher to protect their identity and any identifiers that might link them to their responses or institutions of practice. If a participant withdraws from the study the collected data will be destroyed.

If you have questions about this research study, Lesley Reagan is the principal investigator for this research study. She can be contacted by phone at (000) 000-0000 and by email at [email address] Dr. Bruce Moon is the supervising Mt. Mary University faculty member overseeing the research and can be contacted by phone at (000) 000-0000 and by email at [email address] If there are concerns about the participant's privacy and rights you may contact the Mount Mary University IRB Chair, Maureen Leonard at [email address] or (000) 000-0000.

I am very grateful for your willingness to participate in this research study by sharing your expertise with me.

Respectfully,

Lesley Hawley Reagan ATR, LCPC

Signature of participant _____

date _____

APPENDIX C

Consent To Share Artwork

I, _____, authorize Lesley Hawley, ATR, LCPC to share artwork (and/or music) created by me made during art therapy, as well as information about my involvement in art therapy for educational, presentation, and publication purposes.

I understand that my art, music, and information will be shared in professional presentations and/or publications for educational purposes. When my information, art, or music is shared I would like Lesley Hawley ATR, LCPC to leave out the following details:

_____

(If no restrictions are requested, write "None.")

I would like to be identified by the following name (pseudonym) when Lesley Hawley ATR, LCPC presents my work to others:

_____

I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

I understand that I can refuse to sign this consent form and I will still be able to access art therapy services with Lesley Hawley ATR, LCPC.

_____   _____

(Artist/Participant)   (Date)

_____   _____

(Guardian,   if other than the Artist/Participant)

APPENDIX D

Consent to Share Artwork, Photographs, and Interview Material:

The Red Tent Project

I, _____, authorize Lesley Hawley, ATR, LCPC to share my artwork contributions to the red tent project as well as photographs taken documenting my involvement in the red tent project for educational, presentation, and publication purposes.

I understand that my art, photographs, and information may be shared in professional presentations and/or publications for educational purposes.

I would like to be identified by the following name (pseudonym) when Lesley Hawley ATR, LCPC presents this collaborative tapestry project to others:

_____

_____ _____

(Artist/Participant)   (Date)

_____ _____

(Guardian,   if other than the Artist/Participant)

APPENDIX E

Consent to Share Artwork, Music, and Interview Material

I, _____, authorize Lesley Hawley, ATR, LPC to share artwork and/or music created by me made during art therapy, interview material, as well as information about my involvement in art therapy for educational, presentation, and publication purposes.

I understand that my art, music, and information will be shared in professional presentations and/or publications for educational purposes. When my information, art, or music is shared I would like Lesley Hawley to leave out the following details:

_____

(If no restrictions are requested, write "None.")

I would like to be identified by the following name (pseudonym) when Lesley Hawley ATR, LPC presents my work to others:

_____

I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

I understand that I can refuse to sign this consent form and I will still be able to access art therapy services with Lesley Hawley ATR, LPC.

_____   _____

(Artist/Participant)   (Date)

_____   _____

(Guardian,   if other than the Artist/Participant)