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PORTRAITURE OF RACIAL/ETHNIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY AMONG
STUDENTS OF COLOR AT AN INSTITUTE OF ART AND DESIGN: A POST-
COLONIAL AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY STUDY

A Dissertation Presented

by

Lyssa Palu-ay

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2016

Higher Education Administration Program

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ABSTRACT

PORTRAITURE OF RACIAL/ETHNIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY AMONG STUDENTS OF COLOR AT AN INSTITUTE OF ART AND DESIGN: A POST- COLONIAL AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY STUDY

May 2016

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Directed by Associate Professor Tara L. Parker

Despite increasing racial and ethnic diversity within the United States, people of color remain poorly represented in fields of art (Council of Arts Accrediting Associations, 2004). Some scholars have argued privileging of a Eurocentric focus is perpetuated and sustained in the curriculum and pedagogy of higher education institutes of art and design (Behague, 2006; Garfias, 1991) which may explain the underrepresentation of artists of color at institutes of art and design.

We need to understand when the curriculum and pedagogy at institutes of art and design disseminate knowledge, values and behaviors of White culture at the expense of students of color. Students of color may foreclose on their racial or ethnic identity, censor their artistic responses to conform to expectations of their artistic disciplines and experience negative self-concepts (Bernal, 2002; Stinesspring & Kennedy, 1995).

Students of color may also be at a particular disadvantage and at risk academically if their own racial/ethnic and cultural knowledge is left out of their education (Agbo, 2001; Harris, 1990). The purpose of this study seeks to understand how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy shape experiences for students of color (SOC) related to the development of racial/ethnic and cultural identity and behaviors in the classroom such as participation, learning and academic and artistic responses.

This study used the methodology of Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) to create three portraits of students from one institute of art and design from the Northeast. Four themes surfaced around the experiences of these students within a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. Students experienced an unwelcoming environment in studio and liberal arts courses, faculty who were out of touch and enacted micro-aggressions and racism and their identity whether it be racial/ethnic or cultural on the margins of the classroom and their learning. The last theme acknowledged that liberal arts courses offered space through culturally responsive curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy for students to express their identity and personal voices. This study has profound implications for curriculum, faculty, departments at institutes of art and design and higher education in general addressing the needs of underrepresented students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Ana, Lilly and Yukiko for so generously welcoming me into their lives. I feel so privileged now after having met all three of you. Our time in conversation was so meaningful and profound on so many levels. Our journey to your experiences gave substance to my questions. I am so grateful you took a chance and accepted the invitation to meet.

Maureen Kelly, you are the one who planted a seed in me to pursue a doctoral degree. You recognized something that took awhile for me to see in myself and am so grateful for your unwavering encouragement, support, guidance and friendship along this path. I can honestly say I would not be here today if it weren't for your gentle prodding my dear friend.

Maureen would say the cohort will keep me going and I'll miss going to class on Fridays. This seemed like such an abstract idea until I met Asabe, Ladonna, Liza, Lori and Tammy and I began to understand what she meant. My cohort sisters-you have been my "lovelies" on this journey. You recognized something in me a confidence, a sense of self, a drive and passion to pursue learn and grow. You taught me how to embrace these qualities in a way that allowed me to fully realize who I am and what I have to offer. It has been an empowering experience to be part of a sisterhood who also happen to be mothers, scholars, practitioners and amazing human beings. Without you-cohort sisters I would have never made it. Thank you for knowing my heart and letting me know yours.

I have been so honored to have Dr. Tara Parker, Dr. Glenn Gabbard and Dr. Gerardo Blanco Ramirez as my committee members. Thinking about all of you fills me

with such a sense of pride and thankfulness. I have such great respect for each of you for your work, unique perspectives, honesty, rigorous feedback and support. Because of the support I felt from each of you I felt bolstered in my pursuit of Portraiture as a methodology and guided by your encouragement every step of the way. Dr. Parker thank you for always setting high expectations, allowing me to grow and encouraging my creative self from the very beginning. Your guidance invited my whole self into this work. Gerardo, in such a short time I feel like you have helped me add layers of understanding to my work, always providing encouragement, honesty and giving space for big ideas to take root. Glenn, your guidance from the very first summer set the tone for my future work and I am so privileged you have seen me through to the end of this journey. Thank each of you for being who you are and fostering my truest self in my dissertation.

I became ready to do this work through courses I took with Dr. Jay Dee, Dr. Dwight Giles, Dr. Kati Szelenyi, Dr. John Saltmarsh and Chancellor Keith Motley. I came to know my writing self in Dr. Dee's class began to till the soil with questions of my dissertation work in Dr. Gile's class and so inspired by Dr. Szelenyi's history class looking into the past continued to fuel my work. Chancellor Motley and Dr. Saltmarsh thank you for your generous spirits and showing how important my seat at the table is. The care and concern all of you have for students in the program created such genuine sense of community I always felt like I belonged. I felt so fortunate to have been guided by each of you.

I owe a very special thank you to my colleague and friend Dr. Adriana Katzew, who introduced me to Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot and the method of Portraiture. Adriana, your constant encouragement and generous feedback were so incredibly helpful. You were my Portraiture angel and I am so thankful for your insights. I feel like this work would have not come to be in the way that it did without you.

I also want to thank my colleague, Sharon Dunn who holds a special place in this work and in my heart. Her commitment, passion and life's work as an artist to pursuits related to justice and inclusivity has inspired me over the years. You have modeled the best example of a life filled with spirit and humanity. Thank you Sharon for your friendship, encouragement and always believing in me.

I want to thank my family, Dr. Pedro Palu-ay, Edith Palu-ay, Belita Palu-ay, Leonard Kelley, Patricia Kelly, Dr. Margot Kelley, Dr. Lorenzo Habacon, Raida Habacon, Dr. Lydia Habacon, Dr. Olivia Habacon, Cristeta Palabrica and Juan Habacon. You remind me daily of who I am, where I came from and the potential of who I can become. I am grateful for your love and encouragement. I also want to say a special thank you to Corazon Habacon, my Tita, mentor and friend who has given me constant loving guidance since I began to have memories. Tita Azon you always have my heart.

Larry and Alex Kelley, you are my life and my loves. Thank you for loving me, feeding me, letting me sleep or understanding when I had to stay up late. Your ever present and unwavering support made all the difference. You are as much a part of this work as I am and words do not truly express how thankful and blessed I am to have you in my life. You are my reasons for so many things.

PREFACE

My work is about the question if you can take something that's full and solid and whole and smash it, break it and shatter it into pieces and pick up those pieces and put them back together, and then in putting them back together make a whole that is actually more beautiful, stronger and more interesting than it was before.

This is a quote from a Kenyan born artist Wangechi Mutu (lecture, March 3, 2015) who described her work in collage as an exercise and reflection on her own post-colonial existence being an immigrant to the United States. I also think this quote expressed the experience for me of writing this dissertation. I witnessed varying stages of being shattered not just with the participants in my study but with myself as well through this process. The portraits I created were my efforts to coalesce the fragments like a collage artist in the words of Wangechi Mutu (lecture, March 3, 2015) “not hiding or defying the trauma of their post-colonial existence...(but rather) putting something back together again”.

This dissertation is also a convergence of my life as an artist, educator and researcher. I called on these different aspects of myself to truly understand what was in front of me. My experience as an educator was the ground that I walked. My research exploration allowed the landscape of context in my study to take shape and have form. My sensibility as an artist allowed me to give atmosphere to the environment and digest, mediate and become sensitive to the nuance of experience that emerged with the participants, surroundings and myself. This was a creative as well as a critical process

that called on me to be engaged and open continually. This process also gave substance, hope and guidance to my questions that unveiled a world still vulnerable to possibility.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Changing national demographics have created a new landscape in higher education calling for pluralism in cultural and educational institutions. Despite increasing racial and ethnic diversity within the United States, people of color remain poorly represented in fields of art (Council of Arts Accrediting Associations, 2004). A National Endowment for the Arts report indicates that of 2.1 million artists identified between 2005-2009, only 20.4% were from a racial/ethnic minority group compared to 31.7% of the total work force. This same report found, in three different employment categories, that only 17.3% of fine artists, art directors and animators are people of color, compared to 32% of the total workforce (National Endowment for the Arts, 2011).

The limited number of professional artists of color may be attributed in part to a Eurocentric bias in cultural and educational institutions, which provide few opportunities to include a diversity of expression for artists of color (Garfias, 1991). A Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy still permeate much of art education today where schools and faculty meet art from non-White cultures with tokenism, exclusion, and suspicion (Chalmers, 2002; Hughes, 1998). As a consequence, in many cultural and educational institutions, high art derived from European traditions may be the only forms of artistic

expression that are valued, acknowledged and supported in the classroom (Behague, 2006; Garfias, 1991). Where European traditions are prioritized, cultural difference may be seen as a liability rather than an asset, and artists who approach the entrance of the art world may be asked to leave their culture at the door (Garfias, 1991).

Some scholars have also argued the privileging of a Eurocentric focus is perpetuated and sustained in the curriculum and pedagogy of higher education institutes of art and design (Behague, 2006; Garfias, 1991) which may explain the underrepresentation of artists of color at institutes of art and design. The lack of attention to recruitment and retention in higher education of racial/ethnic minority groups also exacerbates the low percentages of students earning degrees in art related fields.

Thirty-nine independent art and design institutes in the United States (Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design, 2013) offer studio curriculum that may include but not limited to two-dimensional fine arts, such as painting and photography and design related fields such as architecture and graphic design with liberal arts and science requirements. Unfortunately, at some of these institutes, courses that focus on diverse traditions, such as art from Asia, Africa or Latin America are relegated to alternate or elective courses and remain on the boundaries of the general curriculum (Garfias, 1991; Hart 1991). Students at these institutions are not required to study art from non-Western cultures unless they elected to do so on their own.

The seemingly immovable barriers of curricular and pedagogical focus in educational institutes of art and design seldom recognize non-European art traditions as components of genuine degree programs (Behague, 2006). Chalmers (1992) traces this

phenomenon to eighteenth and nineteenth century ethnocentric beliefs that positioned Eurocentric art as the standard for which all other art is measured. The ethnocentric position in art education merely mirrored elitist and racist beliefs in science and religion that claimed superiority of certain groups over others (Chalmers, 1992). Zerffi (1876), for example, wrote a seminal text on training British art history teachers and claimed that “Negros” had limited intellectual capacity and imagination and could not create beauty; whereas the White man surpassed all other groups to create faultless works of art in painting and sculpture. This ethnocentric position is mirrored in the United States art curriculum where African American art cultures are positioned as primitive and inferior (Bennett, 1999). Hall (1997) traced a history of stereotypes and racist representations of Blacks by those in the West. These representations illustrate how difference is perceived from a racialized Eurocentric perspective (Parks, 2004).

Hawthorne (1967) spoke about the experiences of Native American students but the quote below may pertain to students of color today in a system that focuses on a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. He wrote, “It is difficult to imagine how an Indian child attending an ordinary public school could develop anything but a negative self-image. First there is nothing from his culture represented in the school or valued by it” (p. 142). This educational environment is hostile through its structure, context and personnel as it actively distorts or ignores the cultures of students of color (Hampton, 1995). The pressure to assimilate is the only messages often times student of color receive from educational settings (Agbo, 2001; Hampton, 1995; Paquette, 1986). Educators who perpetuate a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy admit they “have a lot

to lose by admitting the validity of other points of view...in this powerful system to people who have different cultures” (Paquette, 1989, p. 441).

Scholars observe that Eurocentric art traditions are exemplified as the standard of excellence and focus of curriculum development in visual art education (Chalmers, 2002; Garber, 1995; Hughes, 1998; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). A Eurocentric art curriculum may emphasize painting, observational drawing and activities that are constrained to repetitive exercises such as making contour drawings of shoes (Hughes, 1998; May 1994).

European art from classical, medieval, renaissance and post-renaissance time periods is often held up as the conventional examples of great art (Hughes, 1998). Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy have limitations when the focus is on 19th century formalist approaches to art where compositional elements such as color, line and texture are emphasized rather than considering historical, political, cultural or societal contexts. (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Feldman, 1992; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Hughes, 1998; Quinn, 2006). Ignoring even one of these contexts negates the rich, complicated and varied lives artists of color have experienced. Disallowing these conversations also wipes clean the stains of history and provides only a superficial understanding of art.

Chalmers (2002) argues when cross-cultural references are included, examples of art from non-European traditions merely serve the purpose of helping to explain their influence on European artists. West African masks and Japanese prints for example, may be studied only in relation to their inspiration on Picasso and Van Gogh respectively (Chalmers, 2002). Garber (1995) brings up another scenario where Frida Kahlo will be introduced for her art but a discussion of her cultural heritage might be neglected.

Therefore, cross-cultural art in a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy is sometimes only assessed from a Eurocentric perspective or omitted altogether (Chalmers, 1992; Chalmers, 2002; Garber, 1995; Hughes, 1998).

Statement of problem

A troubling situation may emerge for students of color in a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy when their cross-cultural position may be viewed by faculty as a deficit, setting them outside the community of learning (Garfias, 1991). A Caribbean student for example, may have a vibrant color aesthetic but this may not reconcile with a graphic design faculty that values a warm muted New England color palette. Dash (2006) underscores that Caribbean students also lack access to appropriate resources such as textbooks related to their particular region. Students of color may then make the choice to reject or hide their racial or ethnic identity and aesthetic in order to succeed (Tierney, 1999; Collins & Sandell, 1992) or they may depart from the institution, feeling that price is too high to pay for admission (Hanson, 1998).

Students of color who are denied equal educational opportunities to learn about and represent their own cultures may experience marginalization, low academic achievement and alienation (Collins & Sandell, 1992). Lewis, Chesler and Forman (2000) found that an absence of racial and cultural diversity in the curriculum excluded students of color and devalued their potential contributions in the classroom. There is, for example, a long history of difficulties Native American students have faced in a Eurocentric education system when: “educators have attempted to insert culture into the education, instead of inserting education into the culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.

159). Students of color who are unfamiliar with the Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy also may suffer from isolation when they encounter one due to a perceived lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that is necessary to succeed and are therefore at a disadvantage in the classroom (Tierney, 1999).

We need to understand when the curriculum and pedagogy at educational institutions that disseminate knowledge, values and behaviors of White culture may do so at the expense of students of color. My study focuses on when students of color may foreclose on their racial or ethnic identity, censor their artistic responses to conform to expectations of their artistic disciplines and experience negative self-concepts (Bernal, 2002; Stinesspring & Kennedy, 1995). Students of color may be at a particular disadvantage and at risk academically if their own cultural knowledge is left out of their education (Agbo, 2001; Harris, 1990).

Alternatives to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy have emerged such as social justice art education (SJAIE) that includes multicultural art education, visual culture and critical pedagogy. These approaches are rooted in the idea asserted by Dewey (1934) that art should play a central role in education, for the “imaginative vision” has the ability to reflect on areas of inequity and conceive of possibilities (p. 345-346). Current scholarship compliments Dewey’s assertion that the very nature of art disrupts complacency, stimulates thought and can become a transformative vehicle for social change (Gablik, 1991; Holloway & Krensky, 2001; Quinn, 2006).

Dismantling a Eurocentric hierarchy of art permits the introduction of different aesthetic sensibilities and beliefs systems (Hart, 1991). Boughton (1983) observes that an

acknowledgement of a multicultural perspective allows for a holistic understanding of student's sensibilities, beliefs and preferences. In the example about the Caribbean student offered above, alternatives to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy that are inclusive to cultural difference in the classroom may have invited the student into the circle of dialogue and learning rather than left her on the margins of a Eurocentric focused art curriculum and pedagogy.

Purpose and research questions

In my study, I sought to understand how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy shaped experiences related to the development of students' racial or ethnic identity. I was also interested in understanding behaviors in the classroom such as participation, learning and academic and artistic expression of students of color. Racial or ethnic identity may be a firm continuous source of reference and meaning or one that is not fixed but rather in a constant relationship with culture, history and power (Hall, 1990) or something else entirely.

The following questions guide my study:

- In what ways do students of color experience a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy? Understanding this experience will reveal the nuance of how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy affects these students.
- In what ways do students of color perceive a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy? The perception by students may reveal congruencies or incongruences that add another layer of understanding to the student experience.

- How is the development of racial/ethnic and cultural identity for students of color in academic and studio courses supported or hindered in a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy?
- How do students of color learn, participate and respond to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy in academic and studio art courses?

Significance of the research problem

An examination of Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy at educational institutes of art and design is significant as it hopes to give a more complete understanding of the issues that surround the experiences of students of color at institutes of art and design. The Association of Colleges of Art and Design (ACAD) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), as well as administration, faculty, and staff of institutes of art and design who are concerned with the impact of curriculum and pedagogy on the experiences of students of color, could benefit from this line of inquiry by hearing from student voices. Educators at university and K-12 institutions can also benefit from a fuller understanding of the effects of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy on students of color and the contrasting benefits of culturally responsive/ relevant curriculum and pedagogy. Fields of art education, psychology, and sociology could also benefit from this research, as its analysis straddles cultural, personal, social and educational issues. Examining how students of color experience and are shaped by curriculum and pedagogy gives educators a sense of how well we have measured up to the task of truly educating our students and not debilitating them.

My study is also significant as those working in educational fields face a sense of urgency to address the glaring underrepresentation of students of color at their institutions. Racial/ethnic minority groups earned bachelors degrees in visual and performing arts at lower percentages than White students: White 76.75%, African American 5.83%, American Indian 0.73%, Asian American 6.47% and Hispanic/Latino 6.65% (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).¹ Factors such as under preparation, recruitment and retention have been attributed to these low percentages. Students of color are also disproportionately impacted by the precarious status of arts education in public schools (Council of Arts Accrediting Associations, 2004). Charland (2010) attributes underrepresentation of African American students studying art to a lack of opportunity for arts education. As a consequence, the experiences students of color have with art occur in more informal settings such as community centers or churches (Council of Arts Accrediting Associations, 2004). The effectiveness of arts high school to prepare minority students for higher education is also a concern since often these programs are undocumented and understudied (Council of Arts Accrediting Associations, 2004).

The lack of attention to recruitment and retention in higher education of racial/ethnic minority groups also exacerbates the low percentages of students earning degrees in art related fields. A study of higher education art programs surfaced that many programs do not recruit racial/ethnic minority groups based on policy decisions to recruit for talent only, focused on safeguarding non-discrimination (Council of Arts Accrediting Associations, 2004). The retention of these students is also aggravated when an anti-

¹ Percentages exclude non-U.S. citizens or those without resident status.

other Eurocentric aesthetic and racist attitudes of professors dominate the classroom (Charland, 2010; Garfias, 1991). The experiences of students of color in a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy at institutes of art and design necessitate serious exploration as students may suffer from its debilitating impact.

The challenges of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy are not a unique experience for students of color at institutes of art and design. Students of color at many predominately white institutions (PWIs) also experience similar tension and difficulty in the classroom. Rankin and Reason (2005) observe that students of color do not see people from racial/ethnic minority groups reflected in the curriculum of many PWIs. Students of color also confront practices in the classroom that negate or penalize their cultural identity and as a consequence they may carry out cultural suicide and reject their former sensibilities to assimilate into the college classroom (Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Whal & McBride, 2013; Tierney, 1999). A Filipina writer admits that as a college student: “Even when I started writing, it wasn’t until late in college that I realized my characters didn’t have to be white” (Talusán, 2013). Despite the potential marginalizing effects in curriculum and pedagogical practices at PWIs for students of color, it is an understudied area in higher education research. This gap in research is even more prominent when looking for the experiences of students of color at institutes of art and design related to curriculum and pedagogy. My study hopes to fill this research gap and broaden the discussion to include students of color at institutes of art and design.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AREAS

This chapter provides a review of the literature to help illuminate an understanding of how the experiences of students of color may be shaped by a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. In my review of the literature, I found many gaps in empirical studies related to institutes of art and design, curriculum and pedagogy in higher education and a general absence of studies concerning Eurocentrism in curriculum and pedagogy. I did find conceptual studies that acknowledged concerns with a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. These concerns expressed that often non-European art traditions were seldom part of degree programs and art from these cultures were limited to alternative or elective courses. Within a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy Eurocentric art traditions are exemplified as the standard from which all art is measured (Behague, 2006; Chalmers, 2002; Garfias, 1991; Hughes, 1998).

Two theories, post-colonial and Critical Race Theory (CRT) will also be considered to explain the origins of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy and frame an understanding of this issue. Smith (2012) challenges researchers to situate their work within a: “larger historical, political and cultural context and then examine its critical nature within those dynamics” (p. 6). From Smith’s framework research, separating curriculum from pedagogy could be interpreted as a legacy of colonialism. The post-

colonial and CRT framework applied to this study was my gesture to address the larger critical contexts where Smith encourages examination.

Most of the research I reviewed separates what is taught from how it is taught. Though a few studies I examined admitted pedagogical practice cannot be separated from implementation of curriculum particularly education that valued cultural responsive approaches (Agbo, 2001; Aleman & Salkever, 2003; Maher & Tetreault, 1998; Palmer, 1987). Smith (2012) also identified indigenous participatory action research and other methods that begin to dismantle old research frameworks. My study recognized the sometimes false distinctions between curriculum and pedagogy but simultaneously I believe it is important to critically examine the literature on these terms to understand the current state of the research landscape. Smith (2012) underscored: “*Coming to know the past* has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization” (p. 36).

Successively, the first literature area revealed obstacles students of color faced with curriculum and pedagogy at PWIs and how a hidden curriculum also created significant challenges. This research demonstrated how education modeled after Eurocentric approaches have affected students of color. The next two literature areas highlight what was known about alternatives to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. These research areas were included in my study to provide a counter-point and dialogue to the negative experiences students of color have faced in the classroom. Within these research areas photo voice, spoken word poetry and participatory action emerge as counter stories to more accurately convey the experiences of students of color. From a CRT perspective, these counter-stories give voice to people who have historically been

silenced. These studies also provide evidence that it was possible for research situated within traditional Western research discourses to authentically give voice to marginalized groups. I will also include an introduction to post-colonial theory, critical race theory (CRT) and identity development models that provide the foundation for my conceptual framework.

Theories

Post-colonial theory and critical race theory (CRT) together offer a historical as well as a contemporary context from which to understand how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy was created, perpetuated and still manifests in educational systems today. My study is best understood squarely situated in these theories. Post-colonial theory and CRT also form the foundation of my conceptual framework, which will be explored in a later section.

Post-colonial theory.

Post-colonial theory is a useful framework to understand the term Eurocentric and to consider how imperialism left colonized people with an inheritance of disadvantage and exploitation in politics as well as how it may have influenced the educational institution in my study (Parks, 2004). Eurocentric is defined as the notion of European distinctiveness as superior to all others who are not European (Said, 2003). This master narrative emerged from mostly unchallenged dominance of Europe after the Enlightenment (Said, 2003). In the context of art, Eurocentric is used to describe art that concentrates on classical, medieval, renaissance and post-renaissance time periods. In a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy, the focus is on formalist approaches to art making

at the same time neglecting historical, political, cultural or societal contexts of art (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Feldman, 1992; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Hughes, 1998; Quinn, 2006). Historical amnesia to the subjugation and terrorization colonized people endured at the hands of imperialism was where post-colonial theory takes issue.

European rule treated the cultural and intellectual traditions of colonized people as a dead history (Chakrabarty, 1992). Cultural value and difference of individuals in communities were abandoned and replaced by narrow and sweeping generalizations of colonized people (Mills, 2004). These generalizations allowed colonized people to be assigned subhuman characteristics compared to animals and “denied a history and possibility for change” (Mills, 2004, p. 98). Post-colonial theory critiques this rhetoric and examines how Eurocentrism in education and learning created conditions where the history and culture of colonized people were ostracized tarnished and fixed to a fate of marginalization (Hickling-Hudson, 2003). This marginalization is what my study hopes to examine.

A Eurocentric perspective continues to play out where the residue of a hegemonic power structure is evident (Said, 2003) such as in curatorial decision making of art exhibitions. A 1987 exhibition in New York City on African art co-curated by artists, art historians and art buyers illustrates this point (Appiah, 1991). In the catalog for the exhibition, the lead curator explained that an African artist, who was meant to be a co-curator, was given a limited pool of submissions that only included work from his own culture justified by the belief that he would have a narrow response to aesthetics from other racial/ethnic groups. On the other hand, David Rockefeller, a White American art

buyer was permitted to view and judge all of the submissions, including submissions from different African racial/ethnic groups. (Appiah, 1991). In the catalog, there was no mention that his cultural aesthetic may influence his response: “ I own somewhat similar things to this, and I have always liked them. This is a rather more sophisticated version than the ones that I’ve seen, and thought it quite beautiful...the total composition has a very contemporary Western look to it...I think that goes very well with contemporary Western things” (Appiah, 1991, p. 337). This example illustrates how a Eurocentric belief system privileges White culture and positions all other cultures as marginal (Appiah, 1991; Spivak, 1988). It also unapologetically described how aesthetic value is intertwined with market value, another bi-product of a Eurocentric perspective (Appiah, 1991).

Post-colonial theory implicates White societies of the European Diaspora such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.S. in the practice of emphasizing European knowledge and deemphasizing knowledge from all other cultures (Hickling-Hudson, 2003). Similar to its international counterparts, the racist character of the U.S. education system stems from this Eurocentric notion in its repulsion and eradication of Indigenous cultures in the curriculum (Bennett, 1999; Hickling-Hudson, 2003). The legacy of colonialism in the U.S. continues to perpetuate a curriculum that focuses on classical roots such as Anglo centered studies leaving little room on racial/ethnic or women’s studies (Hicking-Hudson, 2007). Education in the U.S. seldom interrogates how European-based cultures have shaped notions of identity and relationships between racial

groups (Parks, 2004). My study directly confronts this pretermission and explores specifically how Eurocentrism has shaped issues of identity in education.

Critical race theory (CRT).

CRT offers a contemporary context from which to understand educational institution in my study. CRT originated from an analysis of critical legal studies that acknowledged the role of a hegemonic White supremacist system and the role it plays in perpetuating race and racism in American society (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, Yosso, Solórzano & Parker, 2002). Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) applied CRT to educational settings and confronted racist policies and practices that exacerbate the marginalization of students of color in the classroom by adopting a White supremacist curriculum and pedagogy. Social change and comprehensive solutions to racist practices are embedded in CRT though scholars argue that the field of education is slow to dismantle dominant discourse and power structures that would bring about change (DeCuir and Dixson; 2004; Ladson-Billing, 1998). Nevertheless, alternatives to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy use CRT as a tool to address racist practices and policy within the field of education.

CRT has offered a pathway for social justice art education (SJAE) to emerge that guides students “to live and act as part of the community...as critical citizens” through multicultural art education, critical pedagogy and visual culture (Garber, 2004, p. 6). Culturally responsive curriculum, culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy also introduces cultural knowledge valued by students into the traditional curriculum (Agbo, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). An examination of empirical studies

examining alternatives to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy will be explored later in my study.

Post-colonial theory lays bare how a Eurocentric bias has been permitted to exist as a legacy of colonial and imperial racist beliefs (Said, 2003). CRT compliments this theory by critiquing how a Eurocentric perspective perpetuates racist policies and practices at the expense of non-European cultures in the classroom (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Implications of a Eurocentric lens continues to shape culture, education and commerce in ways that are often times condoned and justified (Appiah, 1991). Post-colonial theory and CRT help explain a global, local and interconnected view of a Eurocentric perspective in society as well as educational settings. These theories also help create an understanding of how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy originated and informs how I look at educational institutions that shape the experiences of students of color in my study.

Identity development models

My study explores how racial and ethnic identity is shaped within a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy and so attention to a few identity development models will ground an understanding of this subject. I will focus on Asian identity in particular since two of the students in my study are Asian-American. Race is a social construction that has been used to categorize groups of people who share similar heritage within a racial group (Helms, 1993). Ethnic identity is focused on an awareness of specific traditions, values, culture and behaviors (Chavez & Debrito, 2001). Racial and ethnic identity will be perceived differently by different groups depending on their individual experiences as

part of a minority within the U.S. (Chavez & Debritto, 2001; Jackson, 2001). For example, Latino identity is less focused on race and more focused on group or intergroup relationships (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001). Latinos may identify themselves more closely with their Mexican culture rather than within a larger context of the Latino population. On the other hand, Asian American identity development may be situated racially rather than ethnically. Chan and Hune (1995) submit that all Asian groups have been subjected to the same racial stereotypes and prejudices regardless of their ethnicity. This is similar to how Black Americans are perceived and treated first in terms of the color of their skin (Kim, 2001). Therefor racial affiliation rather than ethnic affiliation may have shaped Asian American identity development in the U.S. (Kim, 2012). Identity development models have emerged keeping in mind the nuances and difference of experiences with racial and ethnic identity. I will give a brief review of identity development models to frame a sense of the identity development of students of color in my study and how they may be shaped by curriculum and pedagogy.

The examination of racial identity development began in the 1960s during the civil rights era where questions emerged about how African Americans understand their experience in the U.S. (Chavez & Debritto, 2001). Cross (1971) developed a model, nigrescence that considered how healthy Black identity development would transition from non-Afrocentric to Afrocentric and ultimately multicultural identity. This model recognized the dynamic process of identity development and how it was influenced by fluidity between one's own group, those outside of the group and multiculturalism. (Chavez & Debritto, 2001). Often these processes are not linear and for the most part take

into account the nuances of experience such as individuals could remain in one stage and not progress for some time. Black Identity Development (BID) (Cross, 1971; Jackson, 1976) also influenced other models of identity development where transitions between different stages describe how identity is formed. Asian American identity development (Kim, 2012) and Minority Identity development models have both influenced by Black Identity Development.

Ethnic identity development explored by Phinney (1990), involved an identity development model that could be applied to all ethnic groups. Phinney (1990) recognized that ethnic identity correlated with a crises or realization that leads an individual to examination, questioning and ultimately a strong presence of one's ethnic identity. The three stages of this model include, stage 1 unexamined ethnic identity, stage 2 ethnic identity search moratorium and stage 3 ethnic identity achievement. Two conflicts also had to be resolved in order for ethnic identity to be achieved (Chavez & Debritto, 2001). The first conflict surrounded prejudice and stereotypes that individuals experienced at the hands of the dominant group. Coming to terms with these difficult experiences would protect them against negative self-concepts. The second conflict included the mismatch of values between the dominant group and their own. The ability to recognize and reconcile these differences would lead to a healthy ethnic identity. Adjustments to the model are also flexible to take into account different experiences. In a study by Phinney and Alipuria (1990) of college students, ethnic identity was evaluated in terms of commitment and search rather than in stages.

Asian American Identity Development (AAID) as mentioned earlier is situated squarely in racial identity rather than ethnic identity to account for how Asian Americans have been affected by prejudice from the perspective of their race rather than ethnicity (Kim, 2012). Kim (2012) acknowledges that Asian Americans experience a conflict with their racial identity when they “perceive aspects or attributes of themselves which they simultaneously reject” (p. 70). This may be attributed to the dominant White majority messages and cultural norms that devalue Asians Americans. AAID includes five stages: 1 Ethnic Awareness, 2 White identification (passive or active), 3 Awakening to Social Political Consciousness 4 Redirection to Asian American Consciousness 5 Incorporation (Kim, 2001). AAID is highly influenced by a social environment and external factors rather than internal ones. For example, Asian Americans are more sensitive to group and family expectations in contrast to individualistic orientation of White populations. The experience of being a racial minority in the context of U.S. society is also a highly motivating factor in AAID.

These identity development models are a helpful reference as I examine specifically how curriculum and pedagogy influences students of color racial and/or ethnic identity. There are no studies to date that explore how individual racial or ethnic identities are reflected and welcomed or not in the classroom and curriculum. My study will be the first one of this kind.

Influence of a Eurocentric Curriculum and Pedagogy

Predominately White institutions (PWIs) are most often the sites where a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy is enacted and engaging research in this area is

meaningful for my study. Because Eurocentrism is so thoroughly embedded in all aspects of educational institutions, sometimes it is difficult to identify (Bernal, 2002). Though empirical research finds that curriculum and pedagogy at PWIs plays a significant role in the experiences of students of color. More often than not students of color face alienation, hostility, racial discrimination and lack of integration into the college environment (Allen, 1992; Jones, Catellanos & Cole, 2002; Cobham & Parker, 2007; Harper, 2009; Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Whal & McBride, 2013). The literature concerning the experiences of students of color at PWIs related to curriculum and pedagogy are explained in many respects by the literature on the hidden curriculum. Apple and King (1977) attest to the ways curriculum has been used to maintain “social privilege, interests and knowledge which were maintained by one part of the population at the expense of less powerful groups” (p. 345). Giroux and Pena (1979) echo this assessment that the relationship between educational institutions and larger societal forces are interrelated and the hidden curriculum often times perpetuates positions of power. The research on students of color at PWIs warrants a consideration of how a hidden curriculum may impact their experiences.

Marginalization students of color experience as a result of a hidden curriculum, points to inconsistencies between an institution’s explicit curriculum and the implicit hidden curriculum that has potential negative impacts academically, socially and personally (Giroux & Pena, 1979). These inconsistencies need to be identified and curriculum and pedagogy should be developed to expose a hidden curriculum (Giroux & Pena, 1979). Martin (1976) cautions that discovering a hidden curriculum necessitates

consciousness-raising, to prevent the implicit curriculum from remaining hidden. Jones et al. (2005) also encourages faculty at PWIs to interrogate pedagogy as well as curriculum to improve the experiences of students of color.

Experiences of students of color at PWIs.

There is a lack of research on how students of color are impacted by a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy specifically at institutes of art and design. We can, however look to the experiences of students of color with curriculum and pedagogy at predominately White institutions (PWIs) to inform the research, since the majority of institutes of art and design are PWIs. Among the 39 U.S. members of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), all but 9 are predominately White institutions where the student body is more than 50% White (New American Foundation, 2013).

Historically PWIs did not provide a welcoming educational experience for students of color (Anderson, 2002; Cobham & Parker, 2007). Research confirms that students of color at PWIs experience hostility, alienation, racial discrimination and lack of integration into the college environment (Allen, 1992; Jones, Catellanos & Cole, 2002; Cobham & Parker, 2007; Harper, 2009; Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Whal & McBride, 2013). Lewis, Chesler and Forman (2000) observe that at PWIs, students of color felt courses and curriculum did little to support understanding of cultural and racial diversity. Likewise, African American students who attend PWIs report lower academic achievement, less supportive relationships with professors and discomfort in being the only student of color in the classroom (Allen, 1992; Simmons et al., 2013). African-

American students also experienced tension between wanting to share experiences of Black culture and feeling hesitant to do so in the dominant White culture of the classroom, where they may be set apart and scrutinized by faculty (Jones et al., 2002; Simmons et al., 2013). In this setting, African American students may want to contribute to discussions but find little support to do so in an unwelcoming classroom environment.

Some studies that focused on campus climate at PWIs have also revealed the ways curriculum and pedagogy can be significant factors in the experiences of students of color (Jones et al., 2002; Mayhew, Grunwald & Dey, 2005; Smedley, 1993). Mayhew et al. (2005) conducted a quantitative study of 544 students at a PWI university in the Midwest that included students of color to determine what institutional factors contributed to a positive climate for diversity. The study utilized the diversity climate survey developed by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA. Students answered questions related to their perceptions of curricular diversity and their participation in a curricular-based diversity course.

This study found that students who felt that diversity content was reflected in the curriculum perceived that the institution was successful in creating a positive climate for diversity (Mayhew et al., 2005). The effect of this response was stronger for students of color. The opposite belief was also salient where students of color who felt that diversity content was not reflected in the curriculum also perceived that the institution had a less positive climate for diversity (Mayhew et al., 2005). Mayhew et al. (2005) concluded that curriculum and faculty practices could either reinforce or undermine diversity initiatives related to campus climate, particularly for students of color. If institutions are

serious about creating a community that is positive and welcoming for all students, it is essential that curriculum and pedagogy also integrate diversity in the curriculum (Mayhew et al., 2005).

In a similar vein, Jones et al. (2002) examined the experiences of students of color in terms of campus climate, school resources and quality of student services at a public four-year PWI in the Northwest. This qualitative study utilized the student involvement framework to understand the experiences of 35 students of color who participated in activities and support from a campus cultural center. Like the Mayhew et al. (2005) study students perceived that a small presence of students, faculty and staff of color reflected a lack of institutional support for diversity on campus in the Jones study. A Native American student reported how non-welcoming environments were perpetuated in the classroom when faculty made racist comments such as: “How many of you played Indian this week?” (Jones et al., 2002, p. 31). The study also found students of color felt isolated and experienced tokenism when they were asked to always translate the minority perspective on an issue or assumed to be experts in their culture (Jones et al., 2005). Jones et al. (2002) echoed Mayhew et al.’s (2005) study that curriculum and pedagogy play a salient role in creating or challenging a climate open to diversity for ALANA students. Jones et al. (2002) not only proposed that diversity be included in the curriculum but furthered the conversation by recognizing that it is essential for faculty to interrogate their pedagogy and be evaluated not only on their area of knowledge but also areas of multicultural competence and cultural sensitivity.

Smedley (1993) contributes to the literature on campus climate with a quantitative study of 161 freshmen of color at a large PWI university by exploring a student's perspective of whether multicultural content was present in the curriculum, faculty of color representation and if students felt excluded in the campus community. The Minority Student College Adjustment model was the conceptual framework used to analyze how (1) individual attributes that enhance or moderate student's vulnerability to academic failure (2) psychological and sociocultural stresses students face (during college, academic preparation and self confidence) (3) strategies students use to cope with stress (individual and group appraisals of stress) and how to cope (Smedley, 1993). In addition to this model, Smedley (1993) proposed that to determine if minority status stresses such as perceived right to be on campus and experiences of racism need to be examined as factors that contribute to putting students of color more at risk of successfully integrating into the university. Smedley (1993) confirmed the hypothesis that minority status did indeed add an enhanced stress that decreased students of color positive outcomes. A minority status stress of negative expectations from White faculty confirms the finding by Jones et al. (2005) that faculty can have a significant negative impact on students' experiences in the classroom (Smedley, 1993). Smedley (1993) also found that minority status stresses impact African American students to a greater degree than white students.

Other investigations on intergroup relations between peers and academic achievement of students of color also revealed the impact of curriculum and pedagogy at PWIs (Allen, 1992; Harper, 2009; Lewis, et al., 2000). Lewis et al. (2000) conducted a qualitative study of 75 undergraduates at a research university in the Midwest. In order

to understand the classroom dynamic, students were asked to respond to questions such as: “Have you felt uncomfortable by assumptions or comments in class related to race and/or ethnicity? “Has an instructor ever done something constructive about race relations in or out of class?” (Lewis et al., 2000, p.74). This study did uncover instances where students felt marginalized when content dealing with women and Asians were cut out of the curriculum (Lewis et al., 2000). A Native American female student was also troubled when she saw a lack of response by faculty to racism in the classroom: “ I don’t see why professors don’t say anything about racist comments” (Lewis et al., 2000, p. 84). Students of color in this study also perceived that faculty and White students have low expectations of them in the classroom.

Allen (1992) and Harper (2009) considered students of color at PWIs by looking at academic achievement. These studies explored how curriculum and pedagogy contributed to the experiences of students of color experiences in the classroom particularly with faculty. Allen (1992) engaged Black undergraduates from six PWIs in a qualitative study to understand student outcomes of academic achievement. Allen (1992) found that Black students at PWIs have less favorable relations with faculty and have lower grades overall. This study also confirmed that Black students experienced a lack of integration, alienation and sensed hostility in the college community.

Harper’s (2009) qualitative analysis of 143 Black males at 30 PWIs confirms Allen’s (1992) finding that Black males experience racism while also experiencing academic success at PWIs. In other words, despite the unwelcoming environment of PWIs for Black Males, some are still able to succeed in the classroom. Harper’s (2009)

study corresponds with Lewis, Chesler and Forman's research (2000) that Black males repeatedly confront racist beliefs from faculty as well as students about their intellectual inferiority in the classroom. Harper (2009) concluded that Black males' academic achievement would improve if they did not have to deal with these types of racist experiences in the classroom. A curriculum that narrows understanding of diverse cultures and pedagogical practice at PWIs perpetuates and reflects racist beliefs and may be the source of tension and difficulty students of color face in the classroom (Harper, 2009; Smedley, 1993).

Hidden curriculum.

A more complete picture of how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy impacts the experiences of students of color at institutes of art and design surfaces in a review of the literature regarding the hidden curriculum. A hidden curriculum has been defined in a number of ways. Bergenhenegouwen (1987) defines it within a university setting and describes it as: "implicit education, everything that is learned beyond the official curriculum" (p. 536). Bergenhenegouwen also includes structures of organizations and methods and messages of communication in this implicit education. Kentli (2009) defines the hidden curriculum broadly as a: "...socialization of schooling that can be identified by the social interactions within an environment" (p. 88). Within this environment the hidden curriculum is an ongoing process to communicate "values, attitudes and principles" (Kentli, 2009, p. 88). This review will consider the definition of Apple (1982) who defines the hidden curriculum as influenced by the hegemony that defines the school. This definition takes into account how schools are simultaneously

producers as well as sources of culture. Apple (1982) links the hidden curriculum to capitalist goals and ideology. Hidden curriculum research has been known primarily in elementary school settings though some research examined its existence in higher education (Bergenhengouwen, 1987; Margolis & Romero, 1998; Sambell & McDowell, 1998). A brief history of the hidden curriculum will help shed light on its emergence in education.

The hidden curriculum finds roots in the work of Durkheim (1961) who viewed that schooling allows for socialization in discipline through rules and obligations such as doing homework, not disrupting and coming to class. These behaviors were reinforced through discipline and a common set of values necessary to maintain homogeneity for a vital society (Durkheim, 1961). Consensus theories established by Jackson (1968), Dreeben (1967) and Parsons (1959) and researched in public schools support Durkheim's work by understanding that the hidden curriculum is important for a student's progression through school and contributes to skills such as independence and achievement that are helpful in adult life. Consensus theories reinforce that socialization in schools are necessary to maintain a productive and orderly society.

Apple (1982) Giroux (2001) and Lynch (1989) created a space for resistance theories to emerge by differing from the perspective that students need to be submissive in their roles towards socialization within the hidden curriculum. Giroux (2001) recognizes that schools are political institutions that reinforce how the dominant society asserts power. Through the hidden curriculum's values and priorities schools perpetuate, mediate and legitimize race, gender and class relationships. Resistance theories have a

two-fold focus, (1) to identify the hidden curriculum that perpetuates power structures and (2) to develop forward thinking curricula and pedagogy that interrogates, dismantles and offers new possibilities (Giroux & Pena, 1979).

While there is scant research on the hidden curriculum at the undergraduate level, one study by Margolis and Romero (1998) brings to light the nuance of the hidden curriculum of graduate programs in sociology. This study highlights the experience graduate students of color have with a hidden curriculum. The researchers interview twenty-six female graduate students of color enrolled in Ph.D. programs across the United States. This empirical study uncovered two forms of the hidden curriculum that included a strong form that reinforces inequality in the educational setting and a weak form that was focused on training sociologists (Margolis & Romero, 1998). Themes were identified that related to an implicit hidden curriculum that marginalized women students of color. One of these themes was identified as “stereotyping” where students felt the curriculum delegitimized, devalued and distorted Latino culture particularly (Margolis & Romero, 1998, p. 17). Another theme, “Deafening Silence” occurred when students experienced no courses on gender or race and research from scholars of color was not included in any course material (Margolis & Romero, 1998, p. 19). The authors concluded that a strong form of the hidden curriculum created unequal social relations as well as a hierarchy of knowledge where work from scholars of color were not incorporated into the curriculum. Margolis and Romero (1988) suggested that a key to gaining equity in higher education was to understand the barriers to dismantling the hidden curriculum.

Studies at the elementary school level will also illuminate the experiences students of color have with a hidden curriculum. One qualitative study of one female White teacher and 21 students in a working class elementary school examined how academic disengagement is enabled by a hidden curriculum (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). The hidden curriculum manifested in the school disciplinary system with a goal to increase academic engagement but it had the opposite effect (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). Race, class and gender emerged as intervening factors in this study where students in the class were 50% White and 50% Black and/or Latino. This study found that implicitly learning and academic achievement were less emphasized than learning the rules of the classroom and the school (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). Students who did not conform to the rules of the classroom were penalized despite their desire to learn.

The experiences of two students of color illustrate this point:

Jose' and Kevin were on task and enthusiastic, had grasped the concepts and were excited to give their answers. But because they did not follow the rules, which were designed to increase academic engagement, they were either removed from the activity or became despondent (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008, p. 604).

This also highlights the fact that Black and Latino boys had the hardest time with the teacher and were disciplined more often than any other group. Even though the boys got the answer right it was dismissed because they did not follow the rules and raise their hand (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). Their enthusiasm for learning turned to academic disengagement as their voices were silenced in the classroom and school policy sent the message that this place is not for them (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008).

Another examples involved a White girl, Crystal, and the same Latino boy, José. They both had a similar reaction to a pin the teacher was wearing on her sweater but were met with very different responses. Both students expressed excitement and wanted to comment on the pin. Crystal was acknowledged but Jose was not because he again did not raise his hand and abide by the rules. In these two examples José is getting the message that his academic and personal efforts are misplaced in school and not supported (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008). The authors conclude that these incidences were not isolated in one classroom and instead it was a larger system wide problem. Teachers need opportunities and training to interrogate how their own curriculum and pedagogy might reinforce the hidden curriculum and have institutional support to make adjustments (Langhout & Mitchell, 2008).

Alternatives to a Eurocentric curriculum

As a counterpoint to hidden curriculums, alternatives have emerged that focus on questioning, openness, and broadened thinking of diverse cultural perspectives while at the same time refocuses the curriculum toward a critical evaluation of Eurocentric perspectives (Banks, 1993; Hart, 1991; Dilger, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2004). These alternatives include SJAЕ, multicultural art education, visual culture and culturally responsive curriculum. From a CRT perspective counter-stories emerge to create new paths for teaching and learning. An examination of the alternatives also allows a fuller understanding of a Eurocentric curriculum by replacing an absence of engagement with cultural content with a presence and shows how integrated cultural content can create robust educational experiences for students of color. These curriculum alternatives

directly address the repressive conditions of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy for students of color by creating conditions to empower students and transform schools (Marquez-Zenkov, 2007). It is from these alternatives that we begin to see cracks within a Eurocentric curriculum where it is possible for students to engage critically, assert their voices and provide solutions to community problems.

Empirical research related to visual culture and culturally responsive curriculum exposes how the presence of new knowledge in the classroom such as rap lyrics, visual culture or Native language broadens understanding but also poses pedagogical and curricular challenges for faculty in the classroom (Freedman & Wood, 1999; Low, 2009; McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006; Pauly, 2003; Stovall, 2006). Freedman and Wood's (1999) study of students reflect findings that a lack of understanding exists about the complexities, meaning making and cultural importance of visual culture. Agbo's (2001) study confirms the need for ethnic content integration into the curriculum to connect student experiences of culture and language into the classroom. Alternatives to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy have the potential to empower students to think morally and intellectually about their connections to wider communities (Garber, 2004) and how there own beliefs and experiences can play a larger role in the curriculum.

Social justice art education (SJAE).

SJAE becomes a platform and a powerful vehicle for students to interrogate society through expression and imagination (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Garber, 2004; Lanier, 1969). SJAE as an outgrowth of CRT forefronts critical consciousness and creates environments that support and nurture students who have been historically

sidelined in the classroom (Garber, 2004; Hanley, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Desai and Chalmers (2007) underscore the obligation of students to consider the meaning they are making with their artwork and the implications of visual work they choose to create. The study of culture and the arts infused with a social justice lens reorients thinking to create dialogue among communities, reclaim voices normally silenced and actively disrupts situations of injustice (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Garber, 2004; Lanier, 1969). SJAЕ scholars admit that socially engaged art may not foster change but this reorientation heightens the potential of art to explore social relationships and stimulate critical thinking about political, economic and cultural issues (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Lanier, 1969).

Curiously, many socially engaged art projects take place in community-based programs and not in the public schools (Desai & Chalmers, 2007). Desai and Chalmers (2007) recognize schools do not immediately embrace new ways of knowing and as a consequence art becomes a contested environment. Rather than realizing the potential of socially engaged art to transform thinking, the status quo usually prevails in public school art programs (Desai & Chalmers, 2007). The following section will discuss empirical studies from two community-based programs to examine how SJAЕ is enacted.

Marquez-Zenkov's (2007) study highlights its engagement of SJAЕ by stating: "This project and report are both attempts at sharing students' perspectives on schooling with an eye towards transforming the oppressive nature of current schooling practices" (p. 140). The study was conducted of 30 middle and high school urban students in the Midwest who participated in the Through Students' Eyes' (TSE) project to understand

how students perceive school purposes, support and impediments. Data were analyzed from photographs students took over a year as well as responses to project questions: “What are the purposes of school? What gets in the way of school success? What helps you succeed in school?” (p. 143). Results of the study asserted the use of visually based methods as a perceptive tool that accesses information not normally garnered from language-focused techniques (Marquez-Zenkov, 2007).

In response to the first question, students reported the purpose of school should be to honor them for who they are and not stereotype them by race, class, gender or previous academic records. School should also support and appreciate their interests and include content that is relevant to them in the curriculum. One student’s caption of a photograph of a football game described his beliefs: “A Chance to Succeed. Some people are born with natural talent. It might be athletic or academic ability. School gives them a chance to succeed...Athletics gives a kid with a 2.0 GPA a chance to get out of poverty and into college” (Marquez-Zenkov, 2007, p. 142). Students responded to the second question about obstacles to their school success by recognizing how violence and lack of safety in their communities make it difficult to have school as a priority. A student described a photograph he took:

The Alley Behind My House. The little girl lives two doors down from my house. Drug dealers live in the neighborhood, and the alley is where they sell drugs. One time my brother saw prostitution going on there...Its dangerous for her to be playing there (Marquez-Zenkov, 2007, p. 145).

The boy describes the alley behind his house as a location of violence, danger and fear. This explains in part the obstacles to school success for this student. The last question

primarily acknowledged teachers as the best support for school success. A student photographed another student break dancing and described how supportive a teacher was to this young man:

Teachers Who Trust You. This is Juan. He breaks with friends of mine, as much as a couple of times a week in the summer. My friend Antonio, who goes to our school, breaks with him. He is also into drama club at school. The drama teachers let him do breakdancing and plan all the dancing in school plays, even in the Christmas Carol play. Some teachers may not trust you enough to do that. That's what keeps guys like him in school (Marquez-Zenkov, 2007, p. 147).

Marquez-Zenkov (2007) concluded that photographs and written responses illustrated the multiple literacies and knowledge that urban students possess. The data revealed how well students understand “social networks, relationships, cultures, differences and biases” (Marquez-Zenkov, 2007, p. 149). The study recognized how pedagogical strategies could transform and have more relevance in students’ lives by incorporating their multiple literacies into the classroom. Marquez-Zenkov (2007) reiterated other SJAЕ scholars (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Lanier, 1969) that the ideals of the project were to heighten awareness and stimulate critical thinking, in this case concerning the goals of the school and how to disrupt student academic disengagement. The accompanying exhibition and publication of photographs also had the hope of enabling a wider audience to engage in ideas and begin a dialogue about the relationship urban students have with their schools.

Similar to the previous study, Miller (2006) engaged undergraduate students with the wider community specifically, homeless adults to explore how photographs can be vehicles to communicate experiences, identities and create a sense of belonging.

Students from a course titled, Local Action/Global Change at Emerson College worked together with Neighborhood Action, Inc. to recruit six unsheltered homeless adults to conceive, photograph and mount an exhibition, “Images from the Streets” (Miller, 2006, p. 122).

The projects were guided by asset-based theory development, which supports the idea that communities can guide development and change through a focus on capacities and strengths rather than needs and deficiencies (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

Participants categorized and provided commentary to all of the photographs. Under the category of affiliation, many of the photographs were portraits of people the homeless adults had close relationships with or shared space. Miller (2006) states: “The emphasis of the photographs, however, was not that they were homeless, but that they were people” (p. 129). Education was a category participants identified to help others understand their circumstance. A photograph of a long line of legs and feet waiting for a soup kitchen to open was accompanied by a caption: “ The nameless and faceless of waiting for the basics.” (Miller, 2006, p. 130). Photographs categorized as affirmation were uninhibited images with nuanced attention to light, flowers, sunsets and other scenes of beauty. Miller (2006) concluded that the success of “Images from the Streets” is evident by institutional recognition and financial support. The exhibition also increased interest and participation in service related projects at the college related to the homeless. Most importantly, participants were asked to speak at community groups and classes and sustained the project on their own, mentoring new participants to photograph and share their experiences (Miller, 2006). It would be interesting to see this study replicated at a

higher education institute of art in design and examine how this environment might realize even more creative responses from the participants in the community as well as the students.

Multicultural curriculum and multicultural art education.

The aim of a multicultural curriculum is to create environments within educational institutions where all students from diverse cultural, ethnic and social groups are given the same educational opportunities as all students through curricular components of content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture and social structure (Banks, 1993). Content integration occurs when curriculum incorporates examples from a diversity of groups and cultures to demonstrate philosophies and concepts particular to an area of study. Knowledge construction within a multicultural curriculum engages students in understanding how ethnic, racial and social positions impact the creation of knowledge. Prejudice reduction is focused on confronting racial attitude and offering methods to foster more democratic racial values. Empowering school culture and social structure is the dimension where school climate, stereotypes that influence student achievement, and labeling practices are deconstructed to create a more supportive environment for students from racial/ethnic minority groups (Banks, 1993).

Approaches of a multicultural curriculum offered by Banks (1993) are supported and advanced in multicultural art education scholarship. Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001) advocate for a multicultural art curriculum to be taught within an integrated curriculum that gives a context of art in relation to historical, political, and social issues.

Dilger (1994) supports the idea of content integration by observing that multicultural content must not be additive but integral to the art curriculum. Stinespring and Kennedy (1995) recognize the importance of inviting those perspectives outside the European standard into full dialogue with the art curriculum. This analysis allows for assumptions about the privileged position of Western art to be dismantled and falsehoods about diverse cultures to be challenged. Adopting a multicultural perspective requires questioning of current definitions of art and art making (Hart, 1991) where the intention, values and functions from diverse traditions are enfolded into curriculum and pedagogy.

From a CRT perspective, there are areas of concern regarding, practice and policy and how the marginalization of certain groups is maintained under a multicultural curriculum (Chalmers, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sharma, 2004). Multicultural curriculum that is complicit to the dominant Eurocentric curriculum fail to focus on social structure and school climate that may perpetuate exclusion of diverse cultures and perspectives in the classroom (Chalmers, 2002; Jay, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Ladson-Billings (1998) observes: "...multicultural education is but a shadow of its conceptual self. Rather than engage students in provocative thinking about contradictions of US ideas and lived realities teachers have students sing ethnic songs...multicultural education becomes a superficial celebration of diversity" (p. 22). This also plays out in "ideological safe harbors" such a Black history month, where the reforming aspects of a multicultural curriculum are defused (Jay, 2003, p. 6). The critique of a multicultural curriculum in the art and non-arts under the CRT framework holds teachers, administrators and institutions accountable to the goals of a multicultural curriculum that

hopes to dismantle the historical legacy of exclusion and upend traditional power structures by including a diversity of voices, languages, perspectives and knowledge authority in the classroom.

Significantly, empirical studies also reveal that both multicultural curricula and multicultural art education have similar problems and challenges with implementation and difficulty in creating positive experiences for students of color (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003; Maher & Tetrault, 1998; Palmer, 1987). Bigler (1999) conducted a review of literature and how multicultural materials were used to combat racist literature. He concluded that multicultural curriculum was ineffective in decreasing children's ethnic and racial stereotyping in elementary school. Instead exposure to peace education embedded in multicultural curriculum could awaken critical consciousness and potentially counteract ethnic and racial stereotypes (Bigler, 1999).

Similarly, Martinez Aleman and Salkever's (2003) study found problems with implementation of multiculturalism at the college level. Their qualitative study of faculty, staff and students proposed to understand how the mission of liberal education reconciles with the mission of multiculturalism. Two themes emerged from this study. The first theme is difference communicated, which describes how faculty understand difference in an educational setting. Faculty asserted difference is not an epistemological or academic topic; it is "not the business of the academic curriculum" (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003, p. 577). Rather, difference is addressed through extra-curricular activities and one on one interaction with students (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003). Additionally, faculty felt liberal investigation was a "means to learning about and with difference not

through difference” (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003, p. 578).

The second theme is breadth that will help illuminate the student and faculty experience with multiculturalism (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003). The theme of breadth also relates to how the institution expands multiculturalism into the curriculum by responding to student’s interests in curriculum and pedagogy, expanding curriculum to introduce non-traditional subjects and broadening co-curricular activities. The study found only one instance when a department revised its curriculum to include content outside of a European-American tradition and these revisions did not include critical scholarship on race and ethnicity (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003). The concentration of courses related to multicultural content was primarily covered by, visiting faculty of color, interdisciplinary minors and study abroad programs (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003). A student responded to this lack of integration of multicultural content: “...curriculum needs to be updated to reflect commitment to multiculturalism or diversity. The classes are usually one time course offerings taught by visiting minority scholars, So that’s not addressing the problem” (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003, p. 583). Martinez Aleman and Salkever’s (2003) study highlights the problem of liberal education when difference is seen as an object of study rather than a means of thinking and learning. Multiculturalism needs to be considered within the curriculum as well as through pedagogical practices in order for a true multicultural community to emerge (Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003).

The question of how pedagogical practices specifically influence implementation of a multicultural art curriculum is addressed in one study. Smith (2010) conducted a

qualitative case study of five art departments in secondary schools in New Zealand to determine how student artwork may be an artifact of a teacher's understanding of multicultural curriculum. Schools were chosen if at least 20% or more of the student body represented two different ethnic groups. Another purpose of the study examined how teacher's attitudes and beliefs are shaped. This study was framed by Hodder's (2003) viewpoint that "...material traces, artifacts and cultural text..." can be translated to understand social experience and provide evidence of teaching and learning (p. 65). Photographs of ten students' artwork were analyzed together with interviews of teachers to determine if cultural and ethnic diversity of the students were reflected in pedagogical practices.

Even though teachers had varying pedagogical strategies to enact a multicultural curriculum, similarities emerged in the student artwork that illustrated technical competence over original ideas of expression, an omission of ethnic diversity and cultural difference and a consistent inattention to individuality (Smith, 2010). In isolated cases students were able to express their ethnicity but merely from a narrow understanding that illustrated cultural stereotypes of their ethnic groups, not from a place of individual expression. Another example allowed students to respond to their own cultural identities but never in relation to other cultures (Smith, 2010). As Hodder (2003) posited, the artwork did explain the teacher's periphery understanding of multicultural curriculum or an outright hostility to it. One teacher admitted: "I prefer not to teach about the art of other cultures because I feel I know little about it and don't 'own' it to be able to teach about it. I do teach Maori and Pacific art units since it is an important part of New

Zealand culture (and required by the curriculum) but... if it wasn't 'compulsory' then I would probably avoid teaching it where possible" (Smith, 2010, p. 68). Commonly, teachers had no knowledge of multicultural pedagogy or theory and as a consequence students had no context from which to understand their culture in relation to others. Rather than considering culture in relation to social structure, power dynamics and hegemonic knowledge, Smith (2010) found that multicultural curriculum was handled superficially. This approach created an incomplete understanding of multicultural curriculum and limited student's learning, understanding and exploration of their own cultural and ethnic identities. Smith's (2010) study reinforces Ladson-Billings' (1998) assertion that a multicultural curriculum that fails to critique social structure is lacking and serves to maintain marginalization of racial/ethnic minority groups.

Another empirical study by LaPorte, Speirs and Young (2008) observe K-12 art teachers and what factors influence curriculum content and if theory in teacher education programs influence classroom practice. This research adds another layer of understanding to how multicultural curriculum is applied in art education. A large sample of 436 teachers from 42 states participated in a survey that asked what they practiced in the classroom, how their educational experience influenced their practice and what factors prevent them from moving past traditional frameworks of curriculum and teaching (LaPorte, Speirs & Young, 2008). Results of the study were mixed showing multicultural and post-modern content, critical theories and cultural theories being moderately used whereas a decline was evident in multicultural content in middle and high school teachers. Overall the Modernist canon is still emphasized which places more

emphasis on formal issues in art rather than examining the intersections of art culture, politics and society. The investigation of world politics, the body, Latino art and ecological issues was also rare (LaPorte, Speirs & Young, 2008). Teachers responded that they were influenced by what they were taught in their teacher education programs and even though there was an acknowledgement that addressing cultural difference of students requires a broad curriculum, this practice was stymied by over-riding students needs such as behavioral issues, student motivation, Advanced Placement/college portfolio expectations and students with special needs. (LaPorte, Speirs & Young, 2008). The study concluded that teacher education courses needed to find a better balance between theory and practice. These findings mirror the work by Smith (2010) that K-12 teachers lack pedagogical guidance and direction to steer their work towards multicultural content and as a result students from diverse racial/ethnic minority groups are displaced in the classroom.

Visual culture.

The study of visual culture is revolutionary as it upends traditional practices of art education that reinforce the art history canon of European art by acknowledging a cultural environment inclusive of popular culture such as hip-hop, cartoons, television, books, films, the internet as well as fine art, advertising, design, folk art and other visual objects in society (Duncum, 2001; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Morrell, 2002; Stovall, 2006). Visual culture considers how visualized subjects are created within this system guided by an ever-changing structure, process and practice (Tavin, 2003). The democratic nature of visual culture that allows for possibilities in education also leaves it open to

criticism by those hoping to preserve narrow views of art, art making and analysis (Mitchell, 2002).

Lanier (1969) called for the abandonment of the standard art curriculum for one that responds to visual culture particularly film and television during the late sixties. Scholars today echo Lanier's recognition of the potential of visual culture to be relevant to the interests and experiences of students and stir explorations of social issues (Darts, 2004; Garber, 2004). Similarly, Desai and Chalmers (2007) contend that visual culture can "produce both new knowledge as well as new modes of knowing" to question societal concerns (p.8). The inclusion of popular culture in the curriculum opens gateways of learning, teaching and community building for a diversity of students (Lanier, 1969; Tavin, 2003). The inclusion and examination of visual culture in education also potentially enables students to have a critical view of their visual experience and examine how the visual arts plays a role in constructing society and culture (Darts, 2004).

Visual culture signals to areas of potential for improving outcomes and experiences for students of color (Darts, 2004). But there are areas of concern in critical thinking and analysis where students are not fully grasping the meanings and relevance of visual culture from a broader perspective. Freedman and Wood (1999) conducted a mixed methods study focused on how high school students at a suburban school district in the Midwest respond to fine art exhibited in museums and galleries and visual culture such as cartoons, propaganda posters and advertising. Students were asked to respond to

three themes: purpose of imagery, interpretation of images and relationships between images (Freedman & Wood, 1999).

Similar to the study regarding multicultural art curriculum (Smith, 2010) students interpreted images from a highly personal perspective and focused on formal qualities rather than making connections to any social or cultural contexts (Freedman & Wood, 1999). Even though students were asked to respond to fine art images that included cultural, religious and socio-economic content, students did not reference this subject matter in their answers. Students did grasp the concept that popular culture images could influence and persuade for specific reasons. Freedman & Wood (1999) concluded that students have more experience with popular culture than fine art and are more familiar with its content. This study deduced there is an opportunity in the curriculum to increase understanding of complexities of visual culture as well as fine art by illustrating relationships, meanings and dialogue between these two areas. Students would gain an understanding of how to read, make meaning and reconcile complex ideas about how fine art and visual culture can influence knowledge and society (Freedman & Wood, 1999).

Another study on visual culture illuminates how pre-service teachers respond to visual culture. Pauly's (2003) study involves 71 teachers from a Midwestern research university and how they interpret visual culture content in teacher education programs (Pauly, 2003). The participants in the study were asked to select one image and write an essay on the cultural interpretation of art and popular culture (p. 267). The researchers interpreted essays in relation to strategies that defined learned approaches for interpreting

visual culture (Pauly, 2002) such as interpreting images through “lived anatomy” and “cultural-historical contextualization” (Pauly, 2003, p. 268).

Two teachers essays illustrate the experiences students have with visual culture. Kim, a Korean American responded to the DVD cover of the Disney movie, *The Little Mermaid*. She interpreted the image through a lived anatomy approach where she learned about her body through cultural texts of representation (Pauly, 2003). Kim writes in her essay:

As a child, I took a bathe [sic] everyday and scrubbed my skin because I thought beauty was associated with fair skin color...I have had to learn and constantly struggle with issues of beauty that is diverse and less Westernized... (Pauly, 2003, p. 274).

Kim also researched Disney’s cultural and historical context to examine Disney’s economic model and far reaching distribution though she did not reflect on the broad implications such as Disney’s monopoly and the potential racialized and gendered meanings behind the story (Pauly, 2003).

Mike, a White male responded to images and content of a GI Joe website². He also responded to the cultural and historical content of GI Joe by making connections to GI Joe and military rhetoric of the Reagan administration in the 1980s (Pauly, 2003). Though like Kim, he did not make connections to his experience and broader network of meanings or messages about power:

...I have to say that being exposed to these things and many other similar images as I grew up, I still turned out alright [sic]...I think it’s an awful travesty that we choose to blame defenseless toys for our societal shortcoming (Pauly, 2003, p. 277-278).

² www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/9746/Joepage/imagegallery/glossy2.jpg

Similarly, Mike and Kim did not acknowledge the relationships between knowledge, power and visual culture. Pauly (2003) concluded that although participants were able to describe how they learned and made meanings about the images, the cultural importance of these images was inconsequential and often neglected. This particular study failed to find the potential of visual culture to contribute to critical thinking and broaden knowledge in the classroom. If anything, it exposed the lack of understanding of how visual culture creates knowledge and reinforces power relationships. Pauly (2003) suggested that students and teachers create strategies to analyze visual culture from a more in depth approach that focuses attention on culturally learned meanings of visual culture their significance and broader societal implications.

Culturally responsive curriculum.

Culturally responsive curriculum is ideologically connected to beliefs and practices of visual culture that dismantles a Eurocentric curriculum by replacing it with one that is more compatible with a student's own experiences, language and cultural understanding (Bergeron, 2008). Culturally responsive curriculum works to create new worlds of understanding, broadened thinking and establishes multiple perspectives in the classroom (Bergeron, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995). A culturally responsive curriculum also decenters Western examples in textbooks to make room for a diversity of cultural perspectives to emerge (Bergeron, 2008) in the same way that visual culture does (Tavin, 2003). These perspectives move meaning-making away from a Eurocentric male position to one that identifies one's own beliefs, experiences and everyday life as well as other perspectives not normally acknowledged in the classroom (Curtis, 1998; Smith-Maddox,

1998). A student's home culture defined by the familial racial/ethnic traditions and practices plays a larger role, native languages are encouraged and multi-literacies are valued in a culturally responsive curriculum (Bergeron, 2008; Phuntsog, 1999). In this new paradigm, cultural and personal knowledge is given a platform alongside traditional knowledge to create new opportunities of learning and achievement for students of color (Smith-Maddox, 1998).

Since a culturally responsive curriculum shares values with visual culture both interrogating and upending traditional curriculum for content such as popular culture or students' home culture both will be examined in this section. Empirical research on culturally responsive curriculum and visual culture show improvement in positive academic outcomes for students of color from multicultural curriculum research though some issues with implementation still arise (Agbo, 2001; Hemmings, 1994; Lee, 1999; Smith-Maddox, 1998). Smith-Maddox (1998) conducted a quantitative study on 599, 8th graders from 1052 schools to understand how the explicit teaching of culture in the curriculum impacted students of color. Findings illustrated the ways cultural content in the curriculum impress themselves on students of color and influence academic achievement. Student aspirations, homework habits and extracurricular activities all had a positive impact on students' of color academic achievement. Cultural content in the curriculum had the strongest effect for American Indians and the weakest for African Americans (Smith-Maddox; 1998). African Americans were also more likely to have lower academic performance than European Americans. Findings also revealed that some students of color still experienced a lack of cultural congruence, personal and

cultural knowledge that was oppositional to school culture and marginalization in the curriculum. This study determined the importance of culturally responsive teaching for the learning of students of color (Smith-Maddox, 1998).

A study on culturally responsive curriculum at the high school level reveals some shortcomings and positive learning outcomes such as reading and analysis across varied texts for students of color (Hemmings, 1994). African American students objected to the inclusion by their White teacher of a multicultural English curriculum that included authors of color and women because they felt it did not align with their aspirations to go to college or prepare them for the dominant discourse in higher education. An African American leader of the class explained why students opposed the multicultural curriculum: “ I know who they (students who opposed the curriculum) are and why they’re so mad. They think they should be reading Hemmingway and instead they are getting these weird books” (Hemmings, 1994, p. 18). This teacher neglected a key component of culturally responsive curriculum by not going far enough in connecting the curriculum with students’ goals, aspirations and experiences (Hemmings, 1994). On the other hand, an African American teacher had better results by including Western literary texts alongside African American authors. This scenario was in an effort to encourage students to read, think and analyze across multiple contexts. The curriculum created a deliberate dialogue between the Western and African American material and learning became more meaningful for students as they were asked to reflect on their own experiences and perspectives in relation to the texts (Hemmings, 1994).

Agbo's (2001) participatory action research (PAR) expands Hemmings (1994) and Smith-Maddox (1998) studies by involving the Mohawk people in the development of culturally responsive standards-based curriculum for their pre-K-12 schools. In this study, Agbo (2001) used the term culturally relevant curriculum though to maintain consistency, the term culturally responsive curriculum will be used in this examination of his work. Agbo's (2001) study examined collaboration between State University of New York (SUNY) Postdam and the Salmon River Central School District to improve education for students from the St. Regis Mohawk reservation. The PAR research team collaborated with community members, Mohawk language (American Indian) teachers, an American Indian graduate student and a SUNY Postdam faculty member (Agbo; 2001). PAR research has the potential to increase understanding of social problems and create solutions defined by historically marginalized groups (Agbo, 2001; Hall, 1981). The results of the PAR study revealed two important findings that confirm Hemmings' study (1994). One is the importance of ethnic content integration that connects student Mohawk culture, language and experiences into the curriculum. Another finding is defined as bi-cultural curriculum that enables students to: "obtain skills in conventional schooling such as reading, writing, math and science at the same time emphasizing Mohawk cultural identity" (Agbo, 2001, p. 26). Agbo (2001) emphasized the importance of students gaining knowledge and competency in both cultures to successfully navigate American society.

Agbo (2001) concluded that culturally responsive curriculum efforts are meaningless without the validation from teachers in other disciplines such as language

and culture teachers. An interdisciplinary investment by teachers across the school is needed to address the goals of a more inclusive curriculum. A community member who participated in the study stated:

If teachers respect our way of life, then our children will also begin to identify themselves with our traditions and customs. It is necessary that all teachers who come here to work should know our lifestyle and should be prepared to accept, and respect the way we do things (Agbo, 2001, p. 24).

Agbo's research (2001) also confirmed that an examination of pedagogical practice is an essential component in successful implementation of culturally responsive curriculum (Aleman & Salkever, 2003; Maher & Tetreault, 1998; Palmer, 1987).

Alternatives to a Eurocentric pedagogy

The importance of examining pedagogy emerges as a through-line in empirical research concerning implementation of multicultural curriculum, multicultural art education and culturally responsive curriculum (Agbo, 2001; Maher & Tetreault, 1998; Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003; Smith, 2010). Culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy and critical pedagogy allows for an examination that repositions and invigorates teaching and learning (Race and Pedagogy Conference, 2014) and where knowledge is created multi-directionally in the classroom. These pedagogical alternatives support the transactional relationship between teacher and students. It also creates space for previously silenced minorities such as students of color to be heard (Maher & Tereault, 1998) and knowledge to be co-created by students and faculty. This reorientation allows students and teachers to become aware of "pedagogies of positionality" where characteristics of Whiteness assume an advantaged position within the classroom (Maher and Tetreault, 1998, p. 141). The following empirical studies

illustrate the possibilities of broadened learning and teaching in pedagogies that upend dominant discourse and offer ways for student voices to be heard.

Culturally relevant pedagogy.

Empirical studies surface the terms culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy interchangeably where culture is cultivated within teaching strategies. My study will use the term culturally relevant pedagogy to describe this teaching practice. Ladson-Billings (1995) argued a culturally relevant pedagogy will foster the development of students academically, support and nurture cultural competence and develop within themselves critical consciousness. A key component of culturally relevant pedagogy is the removal of deficit-based thinking by the faculty member directed at students of color and low-income students to one that supports the potential of learning and success for all of these students (Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally relevant pedagogy also offers a platform for counter-storytelling to occur and gives voice to those who have been marginalized by racist practices and policies (Agbo, 2001; Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yossi, 2002). African-centered education that focuses on learning about African culture and traditions has simultaneously enabled students to achieve academically and maintain cultural competence (Ladson-Billings; 1995).

Studies exist primarily in elementary and high schools and are relevant for this study since they focus on how students of color are impacted by alternative pedagogies. Howard (2001) demonstrated the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy in a qualitative study of 17 students across four urban elementary schools to understand

students of color perspectives and interpretations of teaching practices. Culturally relevant teaching was identified by students through their acknowledgement of teachers who instilled academic excellence in the classroom, created a family and community type environment, exhibited care and concern and demonstrated overall cultural knowledge (Howard, 2001). Howard (2001) found more evidence that since teachers welcomed student's cultural background students experienced culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. One student reported, "school seems like home" (Howard, 2001, p.145). Howard (2001) concluded a teacher's unwavering belief in student's potential to succeed academically and a commitment to creating classroom environments where instruction, structure, content and assessment all work to support this potential is integral to culturally relevant pedagogy.

A qualitative study by Lee (1999) proposed to understand urban schools from a student perspective and reveal ways to combat school failure such as through culturally relevant pedagogy. Four students who were trained as collaborative researchers in this ethnographic study interviewed, collected data and analyzed interviews from 40 students (Lee, 1999). Students identified dimensions of effective teaching that mirror culturally relevant pedagogy: closer relationships of teachers with students, challenging curriculum, high expectations and interactive learning (Lee, 1999). Lee (1999) found that students identified and responded to teachers who encouraged students to find their voices by grounding their understanding of ideas and concepts in their own personal experiences and opinions. Students also responded to teachers who exhibited a great amount of care and concern for student's academic as well as personal well-being. One student reported:

He always worries about me. He wants me to graduate on stage. He wants me to go to college. He wants me to get a good education, so he's always caring for me. He always calls my parents to see how I am doing at my house, and he's really into my life, trying to know...if I'm doing bad or good in school (Lee, 1999, p. 235).

Uniquely, this study asked students to make recommendations to improve teacher instruction which offered a way for students to participate that gave them agency and voice. Students proposed less teacher-centered instruction and more group work, classroom dynamics that allow for freedom of expression and inclusion of culturally responsive curriculum.

Critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy is another alternative most associated with visual culture curriculum that was examined in the previous section. Critical pedagogy uses critical consciousness as a framework to guide a study of visual culture in art education (Garber, 2004). Popular culture is the terrain shared both by critical pedagogy and visual culture where there is an acknowledgement that profound and meaningful experience occurs for students in this environment (Tavin, 2003). If visual culture redefines what is studied in art education, critical pedagogy critiques how we understand “relationships between images and power, subjectivity and cultural forms, and politics and identity, gender and community relations and art and communication” (Heiss, 2004, p. 43). Critical pedagogy like visual culture also deconstructs hegemonic dynamics in art education that maintain inequalities and dominant paradigms (Tavin, 2003). Students who are challenged by

critical pedagogy may acknowledge the complexities that inhabit cultural, political, aesthetic and historical relationships in visual culture (Heiss, 2004; Darts, 2004).

The following studies examined how hip-hop rap music may be used to upend traditional curriculum (Tavin, 2003) and lay the groundwork for critical pedagogy in the classroom (Low, 2009). Alim (2007) maintained that incorporating the use of Black Language (BL) in a student's exploration of hip-hop music acknowledges the "cultural linguistic reality" of Black students and allows them to experiment with spoken language, interpret and analyze text (p. 13). BL refers to a variety of English associated with African American speech. Stovall (2006) examined how hip-hop culture that includes MCing, DJing, graffiti writing and break dancing can be a useful tool to develop critical pedagogy in the classroom and engage students who are often marginalized in the classroom. The importance of considering hip-hop content was cited in this study for two reasons. One reason was as a relevant feature in student lives and the other as an opening to introduce critical thinking and ideas (Stovall, 2006).

Stovall (2006) conducted an ethnographic study of 19 African American and Latino/a students from a public high school in Chicago. Schor's (1980) framework of critical learning was used as a conceptual framework since it encourages students to envision their lives in an environment where they are supported in realizing their full potential (Stovall, 2006). Stovall (2006) found students were able to make connections between the writer James Baldwin who encouraged authentic teaching of African American students and the hip-hop artist Mos Def who critiques the music industry for pigeon-holing artists into commodifiable products. Following Schor's (1980)

framework students were then asked to write about their visions of a just society and how these ideas could translate into their daily lives (Stovall, 2006). Students did admit to only responding to the beat of Mos Def's song initially without fully appreciating the message regarding the exploitative nature of the music industry. Students also deconstructed rap artist Reflection Eternal's song, "Four Women" that related experiences of four women in slavery. This exercise prompted a discussion about the relevance of history and connections to the writing of Howard Zinn who engages U.S. history from multiple viewpoints. Again students were asked to take these ideas and apply them by creating a curriculum that would provide a more authentic view of history and their own lives (Stovall, 2006). The author concluded that a more thorough analysis is needed in classroom study of hip-hop content related to political, social, legal and economic dynamics (Stovall, 2006). The potential of hip-hop to improve writing, critical thinking and change student lives is beginning to see results (Stovall, 2006).

Low (2009) examined another aspect of hip-hop culture seldom explored and that is the incongruence between hip-hop, schooling, administrators, teachers and African American youth. Low (2009) asserted that a focus on popular culture such as hip-hop shifts the dynamic of authority in the classroom from the teacher to the students. Teachers however, are reluctant to give up this control. This two-year longitudinal qualitative study followed an urban male-only high school classroom in the Northeast utilizing a spoken-word curriculum. These students were called: "survivors" by their teacher because they managed to make it to senior year even though historically they did not do well in English classes (Low, 2009, p. 201). Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

was used for its acknowledgement that social relationships, identities, belief systems and knowledge are constructed through language. CDA also allows researchers to recognize that language is a contested terrain yet offers potential for liberation and growth (Low, 2009).

Low (2009) analyzed data from interviews with students and teachers and transcripts of class discussions concerning a specific talent night rap event that was pulled from the program in the middle of the performance. Low (2009) uncovered many different interpretations as to why the event was disrupted. Teachers and the principle were suspicious of the student, Gerard, whose performance might glorify violence and gangs even though his script was approved by organizers. A teacher described his interaction with the student:

Gerard also told me that he gave the organizers an additional sheet in which he describes why he wrote this piece and that he had sat down with each organizer and told them, in his words, “where he was coming from” and why he picked this topic. (Low, 2009, p. 205).

A teacher commented that they were unsure if Gerard was true to the script because she did not understand what he was saying. Another confusion arose since the principle thought Gerard was doing freestyle rap, which may cause chaos and unruliness and he did not want a “riot” to break out (Low, 2009, p. 203). Gerard attributes the event to another example of racial profiling he experiences everyday: “I kind of get devastated sometimes, the way I dress, where I live, I get labeled as one of the people on the corner” (Low, 2009, p. 209). Another layer of complexity added to the event is that when students in the class saw Gerard’s script they realized he had purposefully given definitions that were misrepresentative. Low (2009) recognized that Gerard took the

opportunity in the mistranslations of the script to reorient his position in a culture that perceives him as a threat. In his actions, Gerard also acknowledged the power of language: "...language is the most powerful tool you own, more powerful than a gun" (Low, 2009, p. 214).

Rap creates a foundation for critical pedagogy, expression and engagement to exist in a curriculum that historically has marginalized African American youth (Low, 2009). Low's study concluded that disregarding the power and meaning of rap for African American youth misses an opportunity to build bridges with these students. Administrators and teachers need to know the language of African American youth before formulating preconceived notions that could damage communication and trust (Low, 2009). Though including rap music into the classroom may exaggerate the disconnection between mainstream schooling and what African American youth value in their culture. Low (2009) sees this disconnection as an opportunity to explore: "habits of language, style, theme, meaning and behavior" from the perspective of the school and the African American youth (p. 215). These moments of tension offer African American youth and schools, a way to build bridges of awareness and understanding through analysis of language rather than suspicion of it.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy is a unique strand of ideas that confronts the mono-cultural tendencies of the American educational system and submitting tenants of cultural pluralism and equality as alternatives. Sustained language literacy, preservation and development are essential components of a culturally sustaining pedagogy where

multilingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural perspectives are included in the classroom (Paris, 2012). Paris (2012) critiques culturally responsive curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy by stating that it does not go far enough in: “sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities...while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (p. 95). Culturally sustaining pedagogy proposes to combat the loss of heritage and culture and preserve the essence of these identities within the students’ lives and educational settings.

Some K-12 studies found that culturally sustaining pedagogy yields encouraging findings with language literacy, preservation and development in the forefront of its theory and practice (Paris, 2012). Studies involving native American students resulted in promising outcomes of culturally sustaining pedagogy for students of color not only to promote student academic success but it may also have the added benefit of instilling cultural pride, critical literacy and reinforcing indigenous languages (Holm & Holm, 1995; Kamana & Wilson, 1996; McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006).

McCarty, Romero & Zepeda (2006) examined the impact of American Indian language loss on the lives of American Indian educators, parents, elders and youth. This qualitative study used narrative data from 190 ethnographic interviews from a five- year Native Language Shift and Retention project. American Indian co-researchers, youth, elders, parents and educators were a key element of this study designing and validating research protocols and coordinating participation with schools and tribal councils. One question connected school performance with language loss: “ How do language loss and revitalization influence how well American Indian youth perform in school (McCarty,

Romero & Zepeda, 2006, p. 30). One student commented: “Navaho language is very important because I get the best of both worlds. I mean I want to be a doctor. And to do that, I have to know how to communicate with patients in Navaho. You have to know your own language to succeed” (McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006).

The study also illustrated that the Navaho language and identity elicit pride as well as shame for students. A student described the importance of his Navaho culture in his life even though his Navaho elementary teacher reprimanded him for his poor English skills and his Navaho accent. Another student responded: “ Well... a lot of (youth) tend to hide their (American Indian language ability)...they put a façade on and they... try to make teachers believe that they speak primarily (English) and weren’t exposed to Navaho” (McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006, p. 38). Students expressed a need for teachers and others in the community to instill and nurture pride in the Navaho language. Similar to Low’s (2009) study of hip-hop, students and teachers in Navaho schools missed opportunities to stand on common ground in terms of language education because of misunderstandings, distrust and lack of communication (McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006). A student responds to this situation: “Elders say we are lost youth. No. We’re only lost because (adults) won’t take the time...to try to encourage us...There’s always hope” (McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006p. 42). McCarty, Romero and Zepeda (2006) reiterate that youth crave opportunities to preserve Navaho culture and are profoundly concerned with the loss of the Navaho language. The authors concluded that the voices of the Navaho youth should encourage and inform strategies to counteract the favoring of English at the expense of American Indian languages through reeducation that prioritizes

and values cultural knowledge creates positive images of American Indian culture and improves communication across generational communities (McCarty, Romero & Zepeda, 2006).

As a final point, the alternatives to a Eurocentric pedagogy illustrate an intertwined relationship of enlightened ideas and concepts. It is important, however, to simultaneously implement these alternatives where pedagogy is linked to epistemology (Abgo, 2001; Martinez Aleman & Salkever, 2003; Maher & Tetreault, 1998; Palmer, 1987). Maher and Tetreault (1998) offer the idea of pedagogies of positionality where teachers inhabit a new authority in the classroom and are equally knowers and learners developing with their students. Positionality advanced by feminist scholars, asserts that: “knowledge is valid only when it includes attention to the knower’s position in any specific context” (Maher & Tetreault, 1998). This modification in the classroom dynamic may anticipate and readjust practice so that concerns of perpetuating exclusion of diverse cultures in multicultural classrooms can be prevented (Chalmers, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sharma, 2004). Alternative pedagogies reinforce, support and bolster each other across disciplines and offer a broadened understanding of how they provide possibilities for students of color hoping for a well-rounded and grounded curriculum that is enacted because of them and not despite them or at their expense. Research of the alternatives has revealed that students and teachers are potentially freed from the restrictive environment of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy and open new areas for educational development and growth.

Conceptual framework

In order to more fully understand how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy shape the racial/ethnic and cultural identity of students of color, a conceptual framework viewed through the metaphor of a bi-focal lens will be used. Post-colonial theory and CRT provide the strength of focus to realize a broader view of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. Like the lenses of binoculars these theories will allow an expansive and at the same time a more focused view on the landscape. Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) allows for a closer more detailed look at a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. Like the perspective from microscope portraiture allows us to see things we would not normally see at first glance. It penetrates beneath the surface layer and discovers new and intriguing perspectives.

Post-colonial theory offers a context to understand how and why a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy emerged in educational systems of the United States. It underscores a pervasive hierarchy of beliefs that placed Eurocentrism at the top of a pyramid of knowledge (Said, 2003). Post-colonial theory confronts this belief system and calls out the injustice inflicted on people of color that devalued their culture and marginalized them within educational systems (Hickling-Hudson, 2003).

CRT, like post-colonial theory, acknowledges from a global perspective that racist policies and practices in educational settings have marginalized students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). A legacy of a White supremacist system is that students of color experience deficiencies in their educational settings when curriculum is solely focused on a Eurocentric perspective and does not invite alternatives to this perspective

in the classroom (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, Yosso, Solórzano & Parker, 2002). Racist policies and practices have been operationalized through a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy and individual experiences in this system illustrate broader racialized issues in society when seen through a CRT lens. (Chapman, 2007).

Post-colonial theory and CRT together recognize the endemic nature of race and racism in American educational settings. They offer a comprehensive historical, social and cultural perspective from which to understand an educational system that evolved from a legacy of colonial rule. CRT contends that even though racism is endemic and part of the ordinary fabric of life, for that very nature often times it is invisible (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Post-colonial theory and CRT also similarly challenge the dominant ideology of White privilege by confronting how this privilege has been at the expense of people of color. CRT may take this even further by critiquing meritocracy, race neutrality and colorblind policies specific to educational settings (Savas, 2013). CRT also furthers the conversation by offering an element of activism where scholars work to eliminate racism and other ways people are oppressed such as sexism and classism (Savas, 2013). Post-colonial theory and CRT compliment each other in an interrogation of educational policies and practices that perpetuate Eurocentrism and racism.

Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) like post-colonial theory and CRT relies on multiple contexts to gain an understanding of an individual and therefore becomes another vehicle to understand the experiences of students of color. Portraiture, also like psychological anthropology reinforces the idea that structures within society

shape the experiences of individuals. An individual is understood from different events and societal contexts in portraiture (Chapman, 2007). This approach will guide a comprehensive reflection that includes a global as well as a local perspective on the experiences of students of color at institutes of art and design. Because of the context driven nature of portraiture it has been selected as the methodology for this study. The conceptual framework, constructed from the “near-sighted” perspective of CRT and post-colonial theory and the “far-sighted” perspective of portraiture, offers the potential for a broad, yet deep and thorough analysis for this study.

Institutes of art and design provide an interesting environment to consider how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy shape the experiences of students of color since there is a lack of empirical research in this area. Within institutes of art and design, it is unclear how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy influences attitudes and behaviors in the classroom, cultural identity and academic and personal strategies to cope with this environment for students of color. My study that involves a way for experiences with a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy to emerge is a long overdue opportunity for students of color.

My study fills a gaping hole in educational research that has overlooked curriculum and pedagogy related to Eurocentrism particular to institutes of art and design. Even though students spend the most time in schools, they are given little voice in education research (Howard, 2001). My study hopes to create opportunities for student voices not just to be heard but also acknowledged as agents of change.

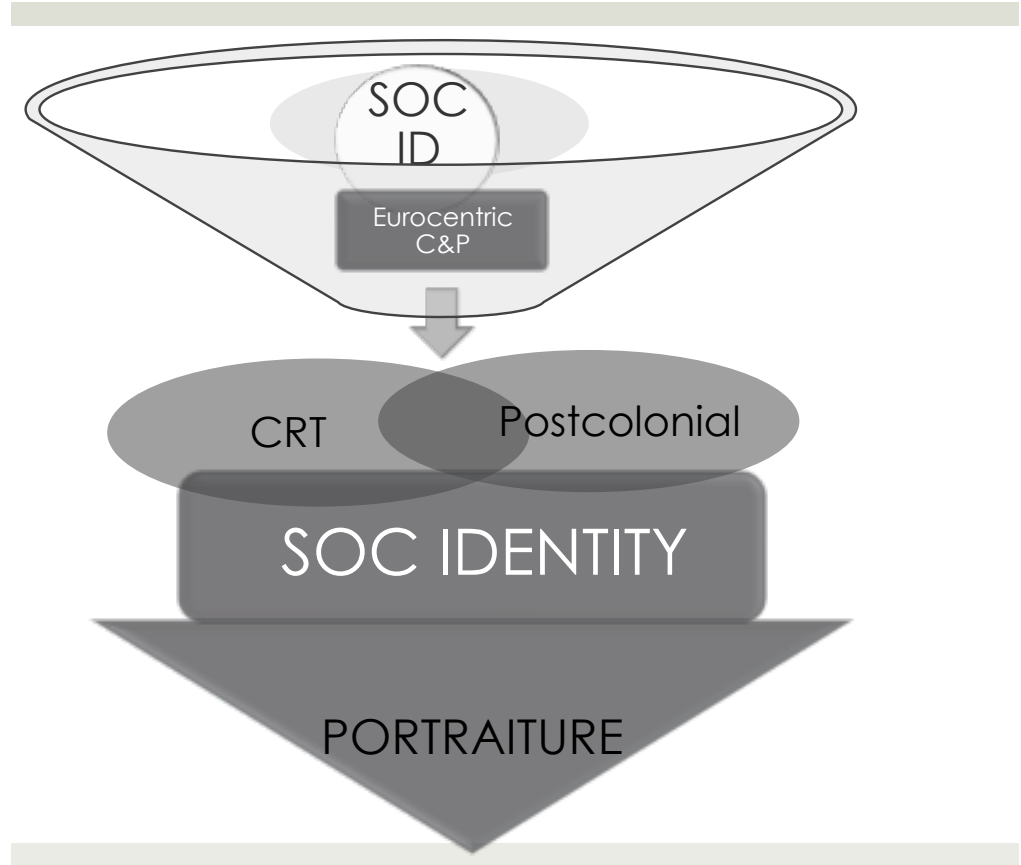


Chart 1. Conceptual framework. This chart maps the course of racial/ethnic and cultural identity for students of color funneled through the phenomena of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe: (1) my role as researcher; (2) rationale for methodology; (3) discussion of portraiture; (4) research design (5) data collection; (6) data analysis and (7) authenticity and trustworthiness.

My role as researcher

It is important for me to reflect on my Pilipino American background and my experiences as an artist as I think about how I relate to students of color in my role as researcher in this study. My family immigrated to the United States just before I was born and I have confronted difficult questions about identity, acculturation and assimilation throughout my life.

In all my years of schooling, not once was my cultural or ethnic heritage studied or acknowledged in a formal classroom setting. My education was comprised of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy and learning about other non-European cultures and ways of thinking did not exist. My sister and I were one of the only minority students in the Catholic school we attended from first through eighth grade. In first grade, Mrs. Giraldi assigned dolls from different parts of the world to learn about our families. The closest doll she had that resembled me was an “Eskimo” doll. She seemed

conflicted about it and apologized but there were no other options. I did not think it was a big deal and innocently took my doll home. There was no outrage from my parents at the fact that I was the only one who did not have a doll that accurately represented our culture. I have no memory of how I represented my Pilipino culture with an “Eskimo” doll. If it did not happen to me, I would think this sounds like an absurd joke. As a six-year old, I was comfortable with this oversight but years later the memory still leaves me with a profound sense of loss for not being acknowledged for a fundamental aspect of who I am.

My identity is shaped by these indifferent cues to my Pilipino heritage. I got the message very early in my schooling and at home that I was American first and foremost. Foreclosing on my cultural heritage was not an option but a necessity in order to be accepted into school and community. I had no idea how to respond when my classmates asked why I was tan in the wintertime. It was just another reminder that I was different. There was a vital part of whom I was that remained silent. Years of accumulated living in an environment that was indifferent left me with an uneasiness I could never really name. This personal history is a painful and dislocating experience together with the fact that often times I was alone in this experience being the only student of color in the classroom.

I have done a lot of exploration of my cultural identity on my own time outside the confines of school or even family structure. Hall (1990) defines cultural identity as either a firm continuous source of reference and meaning or one that is not fixed but rather in constant relationship to culture, history and power. I relate to this idea of my

cultural identity as a fluid and dynamic aspect of myself that I am constantly re-evaluating. Constantino (1970) a Pilipino historian describes how the Philippines has been shaped by colonialization also mirror's my own family's relationship with the past: "We see our present with as little understanding as we view our past because aspects of our past, which could illuminate the present have been concealed from us." Because I was kept from understanding whom I was, when I did travel to the Philippines I experienced it as a foreigner, an American yet somehow simultaneously, feeling like an adopted child returning to a place I once knew.

My culture and family history inform my identity and art making practice but it does not necessarily define it. As an artist, I feel liberated in my studio to interpret, reinvent and express culture and history on my own terms without the burden of tradition and expectations of family. Art making has given power to a voice that has waited patiently to be known. I speak boldly and without hesitation through my camera and paintbrush. I listen to the landscape for the stories I longed to hear from my family. In these places, I am reacquainted with an ancestor eager to pass on a history for the next generation. In an artist statement I wrote: "I am a traveler to these silent worlds, I hear echoes of silence from the past like waves of nothing sounds constantly in motion. The marks upon the land are vibrations of a physical history that continues to resonate. I engage the landscape to discover a spiritual as well as a literal geography. I find these dark places intriguing as if I have been there in a time I do not know or a place I cannot name. These photographs are traces of that journey. My work is to retell the story of a lost place and time."



Photo 1. Untitled #16, 1998 Palawan, Philippines, Lyssa Palu-ay.

Another essential aspect to consider for this study is my experience of being an art maker. The creative process has asked me to consider differing perspectives simultaneously, challenged me to be authentic and look carefully for the nuances of intention and meaning in my work. It requires me to follow my instincts, take a chance

on a hunch and pursue an idea without clear direction or evidence of its value. The photograph I took in Palawan, Untitled #16 was one where I followed my instincts and had no idea why I was taking it in the first place. It turned out to be the photograph that defined my body of work. I always make it a point to tell my students that I have the most sincere respect for them as young adults deciding to take the risk of being an artist. I was 29 years old before I took the leap to engage in a serious study of photography. Fear of the unknown held me back and still grips me sometimes when I see a blank page or an unexposed roll of film. But I have discovered that in those moments where I have the least understanding often times leads to my greatest insights and discoveries.

Rationale for methodology

The methodology of portraiture is chosen to gain an understanding of how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy shape experiences for students of color. As an artist, I was impressed with the qualitative methodology because it combined a creative and scientific approach to undergoing research. In the fall of 2012, I was fortunate to be invited to a talk by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, who developed the method of portraiture, about her most recent work *Exits the Endings that Set us Free* at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I was most taken by how portraiture conveyed a story that gave prominence to the larger narrative as well as the subtle details to reflect an individual's life. This simultaneous perspective is familiar territory that I have recognized in the art classroom as well as my own studio.

My study, exploring the experiences of students of color at institutes of art and design and my own experience as an artist of color lends itself to the method of

portraiture on a number of levels. First, portraiture empowers individuals in the study to co-construct their identities with the researcher through context, relationships and meaning making. The dialogue between “two active meaning makers” crafts the evolving image of the individual (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 29). This transactional relationship creates space for both voices to be equally heard. Secondly, the continuous reflective role of the researcher is also a unique voice in this methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). My experience as an artist of color would make the best use of portraiture to provide a unique insight and broaden understanding of the experience of students of color in my study.

Portraiture

Research portraits contain five essential elements: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes and construction of the aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). I will describe each of them in the following section.

1) Context

A research portrait is framed by context from a physical, personal, historical, and metaphoric perspective. These combined features create a point of reference from which to grasp an understanding of an individual. Portraitists must also take into account not only how the context shapes the individual but also how the individual shapes the context (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Context is a dynamic force that influences how individuals perceive and experience their environment. Careful observation of how context changes and positions the individual in a different way helps to illuminate a truer more holistic picture of the individual.

2) Voice

At first glance, I assumed “voice” in portraiture was the voice of the participant but in fact it is in reference to the voice of the researcher. This mistake on my part actually illustrates the interconnected nature of the researcher and the individual. Portraiture permits the voice of the researcher to be everywhere present in the inquiry: “overarching and undergirding the text, framing the piece, naming the metaphors, and echoing through the central themes” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 85). The strong presence of the researcher’s voice however does not eclipse the individual’s story. Voice in portraiture is an exercise of paradoxes where on the one hand the researcher is exposed and as vulnerable as the individual but at the same time is restrained, subdued and disciplined (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The researcher’s voice is positioned from several different standpoints: as a witness at a distance from the action, as an interpreter making sense of the data, as a listener paying attention “for a story” rather than to a story of how cadence and tone shape messages and meaning (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 99). The theoretical lens the researcher brings such as her disciplinary background and intellectual pursuits as well as her own autobiographical background that includes history, family, culture and ideology also informs the researcher’s voice.

3) Relationship

Portraitists hope to co-construct relationships with individuals that are reciprocal and meaningful rather than just the means to gather data. Portraiture relies on fluidity, genuineness and mutuality of relationship between the researcher and the individual. The

complexity of intimacy, trust and negotiation in our daily relationship lives are integral elements in portraiture as well. Portraitists are also positioned to understand individuals from a strength-based perspective. There is presupposition that the individual possess “goodness” and their knowledge, experience and perspectives are valid and have authority (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 141). In this search for goodness, the portraitist is concerned with what it would be like to live as the individual. This “empathetic regard” allows for a deep understanding of an individual’s perspective (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 146). The last area of relationships portraitists need to consider is the “responsibility to define boundaries and protect the vulnerability and exposure of the individual” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 152).

4) Emergent themes

The portraitist has the task of using the data as source material to construct “a coherence out of themes that the actors might experience as unrelated or incoherent” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 185). This process is a disciplined and empirical exercise where evaluation, interpretation and synthesis form the narrative framework (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

5) Aesthetic whole

Context, voice, relationship and emergent themes are elements that comprise the aesthetic whole in portraiture similar to the way elements of line, shape, texture and color combine to create the aesthetics of a visual composition. There is more parallel in research portraits to the visual creative process in that similar questions emerge: “How do we construct the whole? How do we make judgments about the composition? What

should be included and excluded” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 243). Creating an aesthetic whole in portraiture blurs boundaries and creates bridges between formally opposing disciplines and methods such as “art and science” and “analysis and narrative” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 243).

The development of a research portrait like a work of art is a delicate balance of skill, observation and intuition to create an expression of an individual rather than merely a document (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture also creates a space where the resulting portrait is a shared effort by both the individual and the portraitist. Through dialogue and collaboration both participants engage in personal reflection, writing and art making in the process of creating a portrait that reproduces an honest portrayal of that individual.

Research Design

The research design is guided by the methodology of portraiture throughout the process where a deep, broad and thorough engagement with the individual is possible. Within this approach portraiture reinforces how site selection, participant selection, data collection and analysis and authenticity and trustworthiness is done. A small sampling of three individuals of color from one institution is chosen to allow for more time for relationship building. This small sample size is also chosen to maximize time spent with individuals and allow for in depth conversations, thick descriptions and deep researcher reflection necessary for research portraits. Data analysis is an iterative process that occurs throughout study that is also informed by portraiture. The architecture of the

research design is constructed and framed with the methodology of portraiture in mind from the studs to the bolts.

Site selection.

The site selection is informed by the literature review that revealed how curriculum and pedagogy at PWIs significantly shapes the experiences of students of color as well as the literature on alternatives of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy such as social justice art education (SJAЕ) and culturally responsive/relevant curriculum and pedagogy. Multiple studies support findings that students of color face a host of challenges such as racial discrimination, hostility and alienation in educational institutions (Allen, 1992; Jones, Catellanos & Cole, 2002; Cobham & Parker, 2007; Harper, 2009; Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Whal & McBride, 2013). This extensive research, however, overlooks experiences of students of color at PWI institutes of art and design who could have similar challenges. Among 39 U.S. members of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), 30 are predominately White institutions.

My study turns its attention to one PWI four-year bachelor granting accredited independent institute of art and design in the Northeast. The decision to choose one institute of art and design allowed for a focused analysis of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. The PWI institute of art and design was selected from an examination of its public documents that reflects evidence of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy in its required academic and studio courses. The founding of the institute on Eurocentric values in its curriculum and pedagogy was also of interest. I was also interested in this

institute where survey courses primarily focus on Eurocentric course material and studio courses are not explicitly requiring any study of cross-cultural material.

Demographically, this PWI's student body was at least 15% students of color to give me a large enough population with which to explore the environment, context and experiences of students of color within curriculum and pedagogy.

Participant selection.

I selected three individuals from one institute of art and design to create research portraits. This small sample is in alignment with portraiture methods that require more sustained time with individuals to thoroughly explore and create research portraits. This is also consistent with narrative based qualitative research studies that generally have small sample populations of one or two people (Creswell, 2013). A homogenous sampling of individuals is desired to reduce variability and understand the depth of experience of students of color from similar backgrounds and circumstances (Mertens, 2010). Students who identify with a racial/ethnic minority group between the ages of 19-29 were eligible for participation in this study since that is the general age range of college going students. Students who have also completed a least two-years of academic and studio course work will be eligible for the study which is a typical course of study at institutes of art and design. I used two recruitment strategies: email flyers distributed through Academic Affairs office and snowball sampling to ask interview participants to refer others to the study.

Data collection.

Context is an essential element when creating research portraits particularly through a post-colonial theory/CRT lens and a variety of data such as interviews, documents/artistic materials and products and observations will be collected. A portraitist listens for a story in an interview to guide an understanding of an individual (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Careful listening to the nuances of how something is said or understood is important. Creating a research portrait is an involved process that takes time and space. Open-ended interviews with individuals over three separate occasions developed and strengthened relationships and helped me become familiar with the multiple perspectives of contexts necessary in portraiture. I met individuals at locations of their choice for between one and one and half hours for each interview. I took notes as well as audio taped the interviews. I also followed a semi-structured interview protocol and I used the following questions to prompt conversation (See Appendix A for Interview Protocol): 1) How do you define your racial/ethnic and cultural identity? How did you develop this idea about your identity?; 2) When faculty interact with you, how much do they acknowledge your racial/ethnic and cultural identity? And if they do, how do you feel when they acknowledge your racial/ethnic and cultural identity?; 3) How is your racial/ethnic and cultural identity reflected in the curriculum? If it is reflected i.e., assignments, examples and course material?; 4) How do you feel when your racial/ethnic and culture is reflected in the curriculum?

Documents and artistic materials and products are also important particularly in the setting of an institute of art and design with participants who are artists. Documents

were reviewed such as course descriptions in academic and studio courses and syllabi from these courses to obtain an understanding of what the courses focus on and what are expected of students. Artistic materials and products may include past artwork in a variety of traditional and digital mediums, work in progress and sketches.

The last sources of data were observations of individuals in class, interacting with faculty and peers or at work in their studio. I used an observation protocol to help me experience the individual's environment and find one aspect of my research voice, consistent with portraiture as witness to events at a distance from the action (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The observation protocol consisted of descriptive notes that included dialogue, description of the physical setting, accounts of events or activities (See Appendix B). Reflective notes from my personal thoughts, impressions or ideas are also included (Creswell, 2013). Observations also enabled a holistic picture of the individual to emerge together with the other data. For example, observations helped give me a frame of reference to better understand the individual and recognize contradictions, discrepancies and/or resonances with their interviews.

Data analysis.

In portraiture, the data analysis process begins immediately after the first interview when data is collected. I took notes during interviews and observations to capture and evaluate first impressions as well as larger themes that might emerge. These data are kept in an "Impressionist Record" that may also include subtle details, gestures of the person and their physical presence and any other noteworthy information that would help describe the individual (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 188).

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis describes this process: “In these Impressionistic Records we see the interplay between relevant dimensions and emergent themes, between our anticipatory schema and our developing insights drawn from our interpretive descriptions in the field” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 188). In portraiture, data analysis is an iterative process of data gathering and reflection and analysis and reflection throughout all stages of the study (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Analysis of data also included listening to audiotapes of each interview and observations and transcribing them. Once all the data was gathered, I read, reread and coded transcripts, impressionistic records, observations, documents, artwork and field notes. All data were coded according to emergent themes that were identified through repetitive refrains and/or resonant metaphors (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). I also used triangulation to examine if themes that emerge as a through line through all the data sources resonant or are dissonant to the individuals (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). This information gave me a better understanding of how individuals understood their experiences and cultural identities related to curriculum and pedagogy.

Presentation of data.

I will spend time illustrating the historical and contemporary context of the institute of art in design through a CRT lens. This framework gives a deep and comprehensive understanding of the historical roots of curriculum and pedagogy at the institute and how this may influence the current educational environment. This backdrop will also provide a context from which to view the portraits of three students.

Authenticity and trustworthiness.

Portraiture redefines validity with a standard of authenticity: “In constructing the aesthetic whole, the portraitist seeks a portrayal that is believable, that makes sense, that causes that “click of recognition”. We refer to this “yes of course” experience as resonance, and we see the standard as one of authenticity” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 247). Authenticity was achieved by examining interviews, artist materials and products and observations. Having multiple ways to understand the individual such as through classroom observations may reveal nuances of experience not readily understood from other documents such as writing or artwork. This triangulation of data also allows the portraitist to recognize moments of convergence and divergence and resonances and discrepancies (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

CHAPTER 4

PORTRAITS

This chapter provides a portrait of the institute of art and design through a historical and contemporary context. The portraits of three students will follow the portrait of the institute.

An institute of art and design: A dialogue with its history

Having grown up in the Mid-West, I still experienced traveling to cities in New England as harrowing and my drive to the Institute of Contemporary Art and Design (ICAD) was no exception. I allowed my GPS to guide the four-hour trip from my home in Massachusetts even though I began to know the route over a 6-month period where I saw the season change from spring to fall. As I got closer to the city, the speed limit decreased and the three-lane highway would suddenly curves to the right and to the left but drivers do not heed the warning. I tried to keep up with traffic and felt relief once my navigation system announced my exit was approaching. A stately building that reminded me of the Jefferson monument just off in the distance signaled I am approaching the city center. Once I got off of the highway, the streets suddenly widened and traffic slowed to twenty-five miles an hour. It was an abrupt shift from highway driving but allowed me time to admire the quaint yet at times modern feel of the city. A small river bisected the center of the city. Unlike big cities on the east coast where you

might feel overwhelmed by the buildings, this city felt like a small urban valley where the river anchored smaller less imposing buildings with a mix of modern and New England eighteenth and nineteenth century architecture on either side.

I was less than half a mile from my destination but there was no sign like at many colleges announcing the boundaries of the campus. This seemed to pay reverence to an understated New England sensibility not to call attention to one self. Though being a first time visitor it was a bit confusing to distinguish if I was at the right place. Looking at a campus map of ICAD seemed like the center of the city but at the same time not at all. A little more than half of ICAD's buildings were situated on a hill nearer each other amidst other non-institute buildings. The other institute buildings were about two miles away that was frequented by shuttle service. On an admissions tour I learned the campus was discreetly nestled on cobblestoned streets comprising many buildings with historical significance that the institute had lovingly renovated over the years. Architects took into account local concern when designing or renovating institute buildings. As a result, the institute was fully integrated into the city and co-existed with other businesses and residents in its small neighborhood.

Walking up and down the hills of cobblestoned streets was a challenge and it was not until after my third visit did I accidentally discover a short cut through an academic building that offered a long modern concrete walkway as an option up the hills. Rather than the usual ache I feel in my legs climbing the cobblestones, I gently rose to the top of the hill with each concrete step realizing what a welcome relief this contemporary design offered. Consistently, ICAD's modern architecture inhabited but does not impose itself

on the landscape. This walkway neighbored the cafeteria that featured the only big ICAD sign that indicated we were on a college campus. Its modern architecture also neatly fits into the nineteenth century brown stones around it. This conversation between the past and the present in the architecture will be mirrored in other areas of the institute as I got to know the place better.

History and crt.

ICAD was founded at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of a confluence of economic, societal and educational interests. The founding of this institute in some ways was in direct response to the expectations of a growing industrial revolution that demanded a creative work force and yet at the same time was in direct reaction to it. Institutional records indicated that the first head master of the institute focused his attention on its hybrid approach of practical technical trades such as draftsmanship as well as fine art studies such as painting. He also described the curriculum offerings that range from courses in Art History, Applied Design, Color, Botanical Analysis and Anatomy of the Human Figure. The founders like many U.S. institutes of the time relied heavily on teaching, traditions and methods from European art academies (Efland, 1990; Stankiewicz, 2001). This head master created the curriculum and pedagogy modeled after these European methods. This context was important to understand as we considered the curriculum and pedagogy of ICAD from a CRT perspective.

The CRT tenant that racism was endemic can be seen in the curriculum and pedagogy of this institute where European artistic traditions were seen as the ideal and other cultures were inferior and tokenized (Chalmers, 1996). For example, from historic

institutional records a life drawing class includes a description of one of the subjects for study that was an “elderly negro” with distinctive features. The “elderly negro” was seen as an object, like a specimen for the art students to study. No other information was provided about the drawing lesson. In fact, the mention of the “elderly negro” was the only time a description of a subject in art class was identified. ICAD may be trying to set itself apart from other schools at the time and having an “elderly negro” as subject matter may have been seen as exotic and foreign.

Two important texts, *Art Anatomy* (1877) by William Rimmer and *Gate Beautiful* (1903) by John Ward Stimson existed at the time of ICAD’s founding and may have influenced and reinforced the focus of European superiority in society and in arts education. The two courses of study technical and fine art at ICAD included anatomy of the human figure, which leads us to imagine Rimmer, and Stimson’s texts were influential. Historic institutional reports and other institutes of art and design also emphasized the study of human anatomy.

Recapitulation theory and its influence.

It is important to understand the context from which Rimmer and Stimson’s texts existed. Recapitulation theory embedded itself and guided education policy in Europe and the United States in the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This theory was: “inherently ethnocentric and racist because it depicted people of color as inferior and inchoate” (Fallace, 2015, p. 3). There were four beliefs that guided recapitulation theory: 1) All global societies exist on a scale of development from savagery, barbarianism and civilization 2) All global people travel on the same stage of

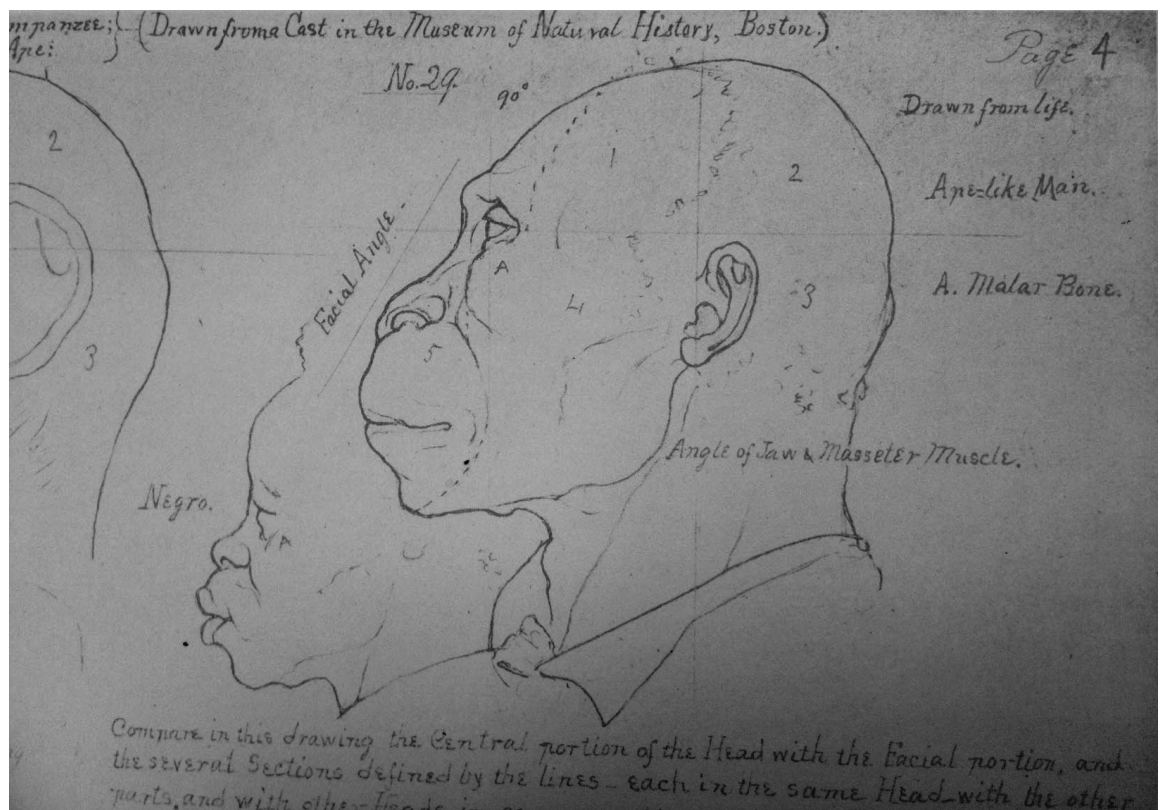
psychological development 3) Sociological stages of development align with psychological development 4) Non-White people are stunted in an earlier stage of sociological and psychological development (Fallace, 2015). Zeffi (1876), a leading English author and teacher wrote the most influential text on art history training in the 19th century and revealed ideas consistent with recapitulationsist thinking:

The Negro fixes our attention only as a savage; the yellow man has a line of his own, and has remained stationary in his artistic development; the white man has surpassed through the savage stages...the white man exclusively we owe art in its highest sense (p. 27-28).

Zeffi illustrated a belief that particular groups of people enter linear stages of development such as barbarianism, savagery and civilization. White races were assigned to the civilized category, Red or Yellow races are half-civilized and Black or Brown races are barbaric (Fallace, 2015; Stimson, 1903; Rimmer, 1877). Another revelation from this quote was the superiority of the “white man” who solely possessed the ability to create art in its best form. This language reflected a common understanding of the time and reinforced a hierarchy of a Eurocentric curriculum that was taught in art schools in England. The European models of art education were the standard to emulate and Zeffi remained influential as schools of art are soon to be established in North America (Chalmers, 1996).

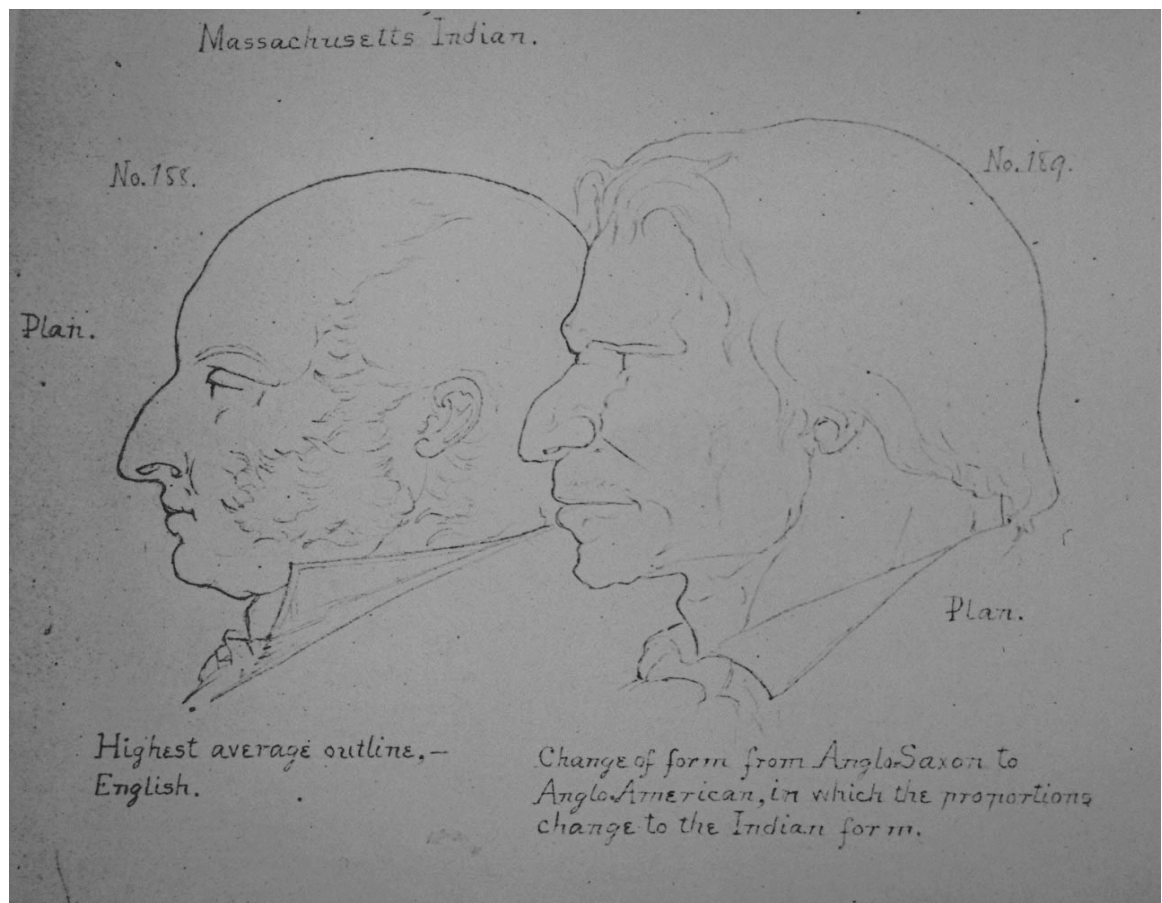
William Rimmer postulated ideas about art that directly connected to recapitulation theory. His text, *Art Anatomy* (1877) was filled with visual examples that emphasized the hierarchy and ideal of European culture. This text also may have

influenced the movement to establish mandatory drawing in Northeast U.S. schools since it was released during the height of the movement (Davis, 2002). Rimmer's approach to drawing anatomy was influenced by two approaches. One was comparative anatomy and the other was the pseudo science of physiognomy that used physical features to analyze personality types (Davis, 2002). Rimmer borrowed the technique of comparative anatomy from Pieter Camper (1794) who compared the facial angles of animals to different races of man (Davis, 2002). For example, Rimmer illustrated "negros" in his book in comparison to apes. This comparison suggests that "negros" have features more apelike than manlike.



Drawing 1. *Art Anatomy* by William Rimmer published in 1877.

Rimmer further emphasized features that set apart the English male in comparison to an Anglo-Saxon male from America. Features of the English male were described as “highest average outline” in comparison to an Anglo-Saxon male in America whose form begins to be more Indian like. Seen through a CRT lens, the technical descriptions of the drawings take on a new meaning and the drawings themselves further illustrated the endemic nature of racism in his text.



Drawing 2. *Art Anatomy* by William Rimmer published in 1877.

John Ward Stimson was another notable art educator and his influential text *Gate Beautiful* (1903) had drawings similar to Rimmer's that also illustrated the ideas of

recapitulation theory. This chart illustrated the chief types of man progressing in form and color to the ideal White.

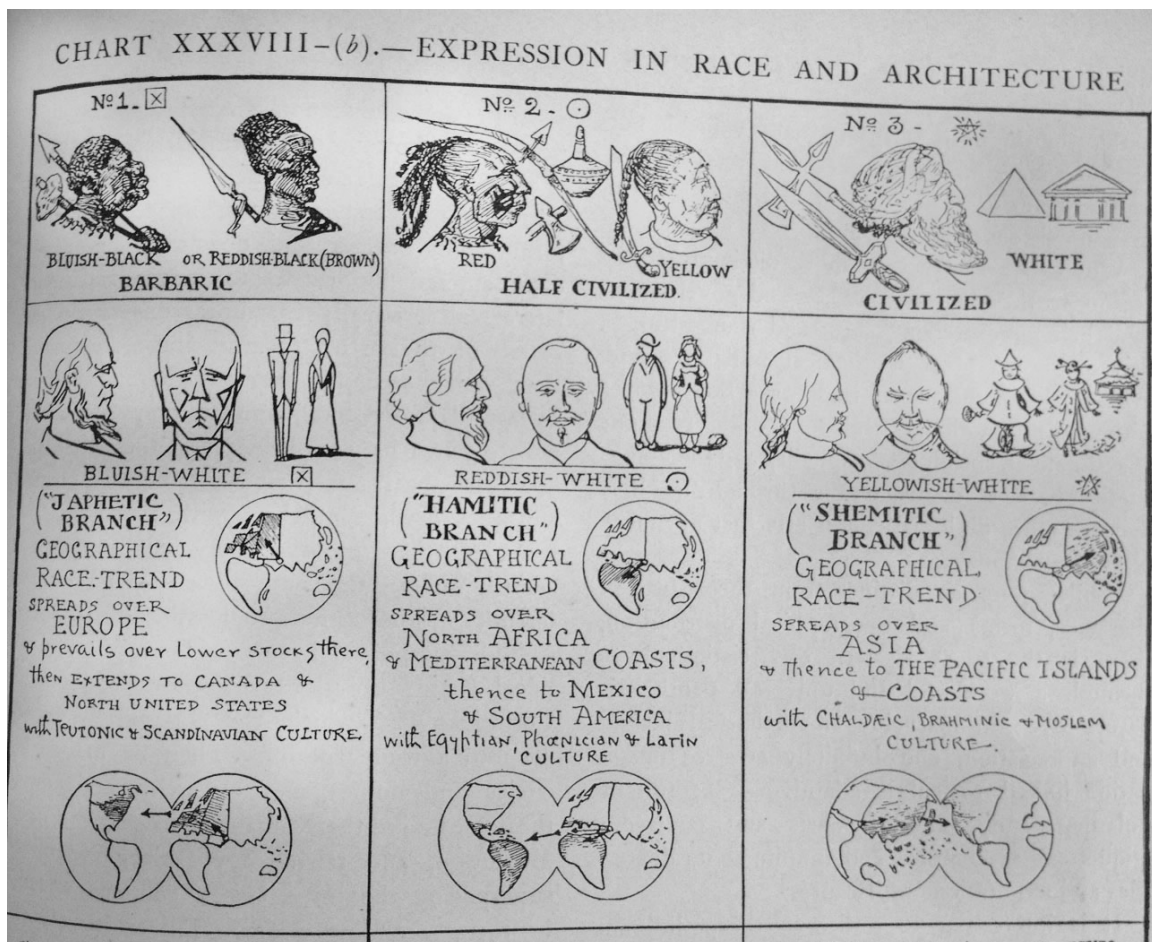


Chart 2. *Gate Beautiful* by John Ward Stimson published in 1903.

Like Rimmer, Stimson (1903) was influenced by physiognomy where he assigned physical characteristics to understand the difference between the barbaric and the civilized:

We may see these same characteristics of evolving Form and triple Style extend over three stages of Barbaric, Half-Civilized and Civilized man and directly reflected in his arms and arts. Even among those later and higher

race migrations, which whiter and more civilized man pursued under the pressure of a higher ambition and ideality, we can still remark distinct tendencies to broadly classify under Three Main Types of social disposition and temperament, based on similar prime relations in force and form (p. 396).

Stimson goes on to describe specific physical characteristics:

The more rigorous and scientific Northerner, with more bony frame and angular exterior, and with strong prejudice for mechanical forms and material wealth, inhabits congenially a colder climate, and seeks expression in mechanical distributions of force and what he deems more “practical” evidences of power (p. 396).

Stimson made a direct correlation between how an “angular exterior” of the Northerner was valued for preoccupation with science, wealth and activities related to gaining power. These examples reinforced the superiority of European art as civilized and the ideal of beauty at the same time tokenizing and classifying art from all other cultures as inferior. Rimmer and Stimson influenced the exercise and training of life drawing in the 19th century (Davis, 2002) and most likely shaped the curriculum and pedagogy of this institute.

The curriculum and pedagogy at ICAD focused on studio as well as studies in art history that emphasized a Eurocentric curriculum. Historic institutional documents show lectures on the history of sculpture and painting throughout its history. However, evidence of this racist bend in the curriculum and pedagogy was not isolated and extra-

curricular activities also revealed evidence of racism. Historic institutional documents revealed minstrel shows put on by students as a benefit for the school. Minstrel shows were typically performed by White performers in black face and display a caricature of a Black person. The content sanitized and made comedy of the experience of slavery for a Northern audience. Like the drawings of Rimmer and Stimson, the minstrel shows similarly disgraced and defined African American life through the eyes of White society (Hughes, 2006). Students chose a popular entertainment platform that was inherently racist reinforcing how deeply systemic racism's values are engrained in the school.

From a CRT perspective, racist ideals are historically central and fundamental to the curriculum and pedagogy of ICAD. The texts by Rimmer and Stimson provided a context that maintained an ethnocentric belief in the hierarchy of European ideals of art and degraded art and people from non-European origins. "Elderly Negros" as models in studio classes and minstrel shows for entertainment was common occurrences at the institute. This institute was in many ways a reflection of a Victorian era where race and racism are discussed haphazardly or inconsistently (Chalmers, 1996) but nevertheless practiced thoroughly in curriculum, pedagogy and extra-curricular activities.

Contemporary image.

The current public image of ICAD at every turn reflected on its traditions and legacy of the past. Racist ideals no longer visibly pervade the curriculum and pedagogy though vestiges of it remained as reflected in some of the portraits of students we will see later. The early focus to educate both fine and applied artists was echoed by the opening speaker during this past year's graduation ceremony. A Dean reiterated that none of the

original impulse of those early days has been lost and ICAD's legacy was to be a leader in creative problem solving. Along with this nod to the past, there was a tone of optimism, exploration, growth and transformation. The President of the college also reiterated the past and emphasized critical thinking in an interview in a city newspaper. He reminded readers of past traditions and the institute's responsibility to continue reinventing their creative path.

Current thinking about what will make a student successful was peppered throughout the college publications from admissions brochures, institute website and alumni magazines. In reviewing this material, a strict adherence to European models of discipline-based instruction was still intact. The Dean of the Fine Arts College was clear in her assertion that the institute was committed to discipline-based work. This was in contrast to the approach and vision of other institutes today who hope to dismantle silos of disciplines and interact with these areas in a more interdisciplinary way. The institute continued to gesture and uphold ideas from the past but they do innovate in other ways. The Liberal Arts Department had a freshmen course that approached History of Art from a global rather than a European perspective that was quite different from many freshmen art history courses at other institutes. This shifted focus may have something to do with the fact that 25% of the student body identified as students of color and another 10% are international students. When I first walked onto the institute's campus one of the first things I noticed was the many Asian students I saw just crossing the street or in line for a coffee. I wondered to myself: do so many Asian students impact the curriculum?

Perhaps this course, the History of Art was a gesture to acknowledge the significant number of non-White students.

A description of curriculum and pedagogy was articulated throughout institutional documents. From these texts, I learned students could expect six-hours studios with a community of peers who will challenge and support them. Faculty also expressed their hope that students will learn to be flexible and move nimbly exploring new areas of communication using traditional and digital tools. A Dean also boasted that faculty will help them explore and expand critical thinking and make connections between their studio and academic work. Current faculty demographics were quite stunning in comparison to the student demographics. From the most recent institutional documents, 99% of faculty is White, and 1% identify with a minority racial/ethnic group. Despite the significant racial/ethnic and international diversity of the institute it had not impacted faculty hiring.

ICAD had a particular preoccupation with its past and this context was important to keep in mind as I unveiled the portraits of three students. As much as this institute highlighted the past, the contemporary image also looked to the future and how students were contributing to it from their unique talents, skills and vision. One new explicit hope was the cultivation of identity. There were many student quotes in the admissions brochure and towards the end was one from an illustration student with a South East Asian sounding last name. She said she came to the institute and felt celebrated for who she was. At graduation a Dean stressed the importance of continually exploring one's own understanding of identity. Her hope was that this practice was a central byproduct of

being educated at the institute. This was another important context to consider as I got a better understanding of how students experienced their ethnic/racial and cultural identity vis-à-vis the curriculum and pedagogy at ICAD.

The portraits of three students revealed how the context of curriculum and pedagogy began to matter to these students. Ana was the first student I met at ICAD and the first portrait I will introduce. She was a senior who participated in a special program where she earned two degrees. She will have one degree in architecture from ICAD and another in Political Science from Tucker University, a neighboring liberal arts college. The next portrait will be of Lilly who I first met at the end of her sophomore year as a major in Industrial Design. The last time we met was during her first semester as a junior. She also has a concentration in a program called Self and Society. The last portrait was of Yukiko who I spent a month in conversation with during her first semester junior year in the Graphic Design department at ICAD.

Ana

Adaptation: A philosophy and a lived experience

I arrived early to meet Ana at the end of April on a really cold day. The New England air was so bone chilling perhaps an after effect of our brutal winter. I was so cold I felt like I could barely speak. I am also taken aback as I observed some students in shorts. I bought a cup of tea to warm up and take my mind off of the cold.

The Babcock café was student run and shared the first floor of an institute building with the Student Union. The building had a Victorian feeling to it with turn of the century molding and big bay windows framed by Christmas lights in the two main

rooms of the cafe. The windows overlooked a wooded area and brought in plenty of natural light. It had a cozy comfortable feeling especially on a cold day. Doors to the café have empty bulletin boards on them and are propped open. I found a free table where I thought we would be comfortable. The walls were gray anchored by the remnants of an old fireplace with the mantel still intact and a large abstract painting above it. Five small abstract watercolor paintings also lined the wall hung with simple black clips on a string. On the opposite wall facing the window, three mandala-like paintings overlook the room. The tables were white linoleum in a 1950s style with red and white dining chairs and booths. Stacks of turquoise colored portfolio review cards were on the table dated from two weeks ago on the table.

I got up from the table to warm up my tea and noticed a young woman with brown curly hair look at me with a wide-open questioning face. “Are you Lyssa?” Ana was wearing a winter jacket appropriate for the temperature and a black sweater. On each of the three times I meet with Ana she was always dressed in understated neutral colors like tan or black. She never wore makeup but was always put together, graceful in her movements. It wasn’t until our third meeting that I learned she was an avid hiker, trekking through China with her siblings for two months and last summer on a solo trip for two and half weeks on a pilgrimage walk on the west coast of Spain. Perhaps this comfort in the outdoors translates to a presence that she was comfortable in her own skin. She greeted me warmly with a smile that came easily to her face and we made ourselves comfortable in the booth. She mentioned she had the same thermos that I do and we bonded over the fact at how efficient they are in keeping our beverages warm.

Loyalty to family and Colombian culture.

Ana was an easy conversationalist and we begun right away. She was animated, confident and spoke quickly. I had to remind myself that she was a senior in college since she had a way about her much older than her years. She reminded me of Tabatha, one of my advisees, who was also a student of color incredibly ambitious and engaging. Ana like Tabatha was driven by passion and sometimes self-righteousness that might bring on conflict that I learn about later but that does not seem to bother her. Because Ana liked to talk, I find myself not interjecting too much but would ask questions when something needed clarifying. She was open and more than willing to comply though always steered the conversation.

Ana was a five-year Bachelor of Architecture program student with a concentration in Political Science from Tucker University. At graduation she received two degrees one from ICAD and one from Tucker University. She explained her interest and why she chose this approach to her education:

With my Political Science classes, for my concentration I am studying architecture but by having another degree I'm doing something that's not specifically artistic. Let's say I wanted to have a job in business, I could have a job in many things. If I had a job in business, (it) can give me a reason why I can enter into that field besides just architecture. So, I'm...its also trying to understand how I can use my

situation that's in the best interest of the employer. For the best interest of that environment, but still I have my degree the way that I wanted it. I asked Ana if this decision was in some way a compromise and she got a little defensive in her response. She insisted the motivation to get two degrees satisfied her interests rather than doing it for practical reasons. I believed her but her quick protest to my question made me wonder if somehow her dual degree was in reaction to something other than pure interest in politics. Perhaps, her dual degree satisfied an unspoken family expectation.

Ana was the eldest of three children. I could relate to the pressure and expectations of being the eldest born of an immigrant family. The pressure I felt landed me for a semester in pre-med my freshmen year but I did not have the stomach for it. My intentions to attempt a pre-med track were motivated by my family whereas I do sense Ana's dual degree was her idea. But it did give her something to fall back on if Architecture did not pan out she admitted. She was high achieving always reaching for the next challenge, moving through her world with something to prove. I think about research that finds second-generation immigrant children lose a sense of urgency, ties to culture and language as they assimilate more into the dominant culture. However, Ana consciously created a life in opposition to this inevitability as I later learn from her background.

Before asking Ana about her experiences with curriculum and pedagogy at ICAD, I think it was important to hear about how she understood herself ethnically, racially and culturally. The way she understood herself will give me a sense of how she positioned

herself in the world and also the classroom. Ana identified as Latino but first and foremost a Colombian. During our first meeting, she described herself in this way:

I was born in Brooklyn and my family is all Colombian. My first language is Spanish and I grew up in that kind of environment. So even though I was born in the states it was very much Colombian culture...I originate from here but I don't have the culture from here.

I nod in agreement and how I can relate coming from a Pilipino background. Ana was clear that the culture from “here” in the U.S. was different from hers. She got even more specific and described what she meant:

We're very much a self independent country and its more about what can you accomplish as an individual rather than South America for example its more about what I am proud of where I am from. Colombia is what I have to give back to whereas in the United States it's all based on the individual.

These realizations seemed to guide Ana through life and school. She was clear about her identity and generalized that all Colombian's feel the same way: “And when you ask a Colombian where are you from. They will say Colombian, Period”. She was unapologetic and has unabashed pride in this aspect of herself. Ana drew a line in the sand. Colombians existed in a specific physical and psychic space and then there was everyone else.

Ana's family and culture were equally integrated in her identity. We joked about the twenty plus people who attended her graduation she said: "I'm Spanish, there are always people around." Her family had always been a central focus in her life:

Spanish was my first language and I did have to learn English in kindergarten. But I would say absolutely family has shaped everything. And even to this day friends are not as important as family is. But I also believe that is cultural as well...from the Spanish side because they do look at family as being your backbone instead of your friends which is different.

Ana spoke about her family a lot in our conversations. She did not mention any friends at the institute who can relate to her. She actually had a very difficult experience this semester with a boyfriend cheating on her with a good friend. In light of this hard experience she may have relied on her family even more. There was one graduate student who had become a mentor to her but other than she did not mention any close friends.

Ana also spoke admiringly of her father. She saw him as unafraid to take risks and moved his family to China even though it did not offer a lot of stability. It seemed he operated from a sense of value rather than reaching for monetary goals. He also demonstrated his support of Ana by attending her final critique with an aunt as a surprise. Some students may see this as intrusive but Ana seemed flattered and proud. She was also protective and fiercely loyal of her family and they have an overriding priority in her life as illustrated in a recent job offer she received in Paris. She turned it down because

she felt she needed to be there for her family after they moved back from China after a difficult time there. She especially wanted to be there for her sister who was still in high school.

It was interesting that she did not express any resentment about her father's choices even though it was difficult for her sister. Her father sounds like a dreamer and a big thinker, like my father so I am familiar with this type of personality. Ana on the other hand willingly stepped in to help and took her role as the eldest sibling to heart. She saved enough money to take her two younger siblings back packing through China the summer before her senior year. Apparently, they shared the same affection for her when her brother screamed out at graduation after her name was called in the silence of the auditorium: "That's my sister!"

Ana was as loyal to her family as she was to her Colombian culture. She explained that when she was fourteen she realized she was starting to lose her Spanish accent and maybe also losing her culture. To avoid this, she comes up with a plan to study in Colombia her freshmen year in high school. I don't know any fourteen year olds who would willingly move to another country by themselves on the cusp of their high school years to study abroad. She demonstrated a single mindedness, drive and ambition at a very young age and I saw it play out in aspects of her life now. I am sure her family in Colombia abroad made the year easier. But she did not mention them and instead stayed with a host family she did not know. Nonetheless, her parents were supportive of this idea. She described it in this way:

I've just always been that way. I wanted to learn Spanish a lot better. I was losing my accent. And I was not happy about it. I made a whole presentation to my family to go abroad by myself so I could learn Spanish and be in the high school there...I don't know it was super important for me to learn about my culture by living it. But also just getting language up to par the way I wanted it to be. I went abroad. It was good to know the culture.

Many students of color I know struggle with the cultural differences and have a hard time articulating this difficulty but this was not the case with Ana. She seemed eager to share her experience even if it had been tense at times such as her transition back to the U.S. after her time in Colombia. It felt as if she has spent a lot of time thinking about these differences and how to navigate through them. How she learned to handle this type of difficulty had carried itself over into many areas of her life. This first exercise in adaptability Ana described sets the tone for how she dealt with work, personal issues and art making.

Learning adaptation.

Ana was a storyteller and would often explain an idea or experience through metaphor. In our conversation about cultural differences between Colombia and the U.S. she described South American soccer playing style. She explained:

...if you look at the way the South American play. They are very quick paced. They are very fast. The way that worked out is because they were only able to play soccer in alleys and in corridors where its very very

quick and you have to do quick footwork. They did not have fields like they did in Spain. So it was a more of a community building game rather than a power hungry struggle game. So you see it in the way that they play.

In this description of South American soccer play Ana spoke for a long time. I told her it I now wanted to see a game and see how her ideas played out. The metaphor of soccer can also describe how she learned to adapt, become nimble and adjust her relationships with people. She talked about how difficult it was coming back after her time in Colombia. She talked about being bullied, being taken advantaged of and feeling uncomfortable with her peers. There were often situations where social expectations were miscommunicated and led to confusion and marginalization. After Ana came back from Colombia her family moved from Brooklyn where there were many Spanish people to Long Island that was a predominately White upper class community. She described a particularly difficult time with friends:

It was very strange. I never used to not get along with people from the area. In Brooklyn yeah, there was a lot of Spanish population but I was in an extremely White bred community in Long Island and it was very upper White class. I don't know when I came back. I realized just a lot more that everything is just not about the next pop song by...something like that at the time. I was just ...very very hard to get along with friends. Cause a lot of people thought when I got back I would be a party person

but I was just a lot more studious. I was just...that was my personality. I was always more focused on school. I liked doing that more.

The transition back to the United States was difficult for her especially to a place where she may be the only Latino among her friends. The differences between Colombia becomes even more stark when she tried to integrate back into the school:

When I came back the way I adjusted was that, since I was young I realized how people acted in different ways. I was still very honest and very naive and I would give a lot of myself to my friends. I would do anything for my friends that they would want and I would expect the same thing from my friends. But there were very selfish personalities in my school so every time I would give or do them a favor it would not be something they would return or they would just start ignoring me. Oh she's being super nice, I'm going to take advantage of that. It's not like when I went to Colombia where it's very open. When I give, I just give and people just do the exact same thing. Because they're nice. So I came back and I had to adjust and had to be extremely more observant.

I was beginning to see how Ana navigated these difficult experiences. From the statement above she sees “how people act in different ways” and how she “had to be extremely more observant”. Even though these experiences are from high school, she admitted sometimes these situations come up now in college where her gestures of kindness or warmth may be misconstrued as needy or over bearing. Ana related these very painful situations with an almost clinical distance. She did not seem to harbor any

ill will or grudges against these people who have done her harm. She mentioned she recently created a scholarship at the institute for a program that worked with needy children after a bad experience with a friend. I asked her if she did not mind me asking what happened. And she admitted the work she did on the scholarship was her way of working out the cheating boyfriend. We laughed about it and I remarked how you never know what motivated people and I'm glad that there was a silver lining to the situation. In this instance, Ana demonstrated her ability to adjust, reposition and change course quickly such as the soccer players she described.

She also made reference to how she learned these things from her family: "Like when my parents came to this country it was not easy for them to do it. I think I learned from them. You gotta do what you gotta do. And you move on and just do it". She also added: "I learned the hard way you can't do everything on your own. You always have help on the way". Ana's way of adapting in her personal relationships, interestingly influenced her work in architecture. The way she spoke about her projects directly mirrored how she had learned to navigate being from two different cultures. The exercise of observation, paying attention to the environment and coming to terms with herself within that environment had given her tools and skills to negotiate situations in her personal life and also in architecture as well, as I later learned in our conversations about her education.

Enacting adaptation.

ICAD's catalog described the Architecture program as one that stressed the importance of honing technical skills, understanding one's place in the world, the creative

process and teaching a practice of the profession. Ana was driven by her questions, eager to learn and in many ways the perfect student to thrive in the program. Her experiences were often of struggle though with little or no guidance from faculty or her peers. She described her thesis advisor as being uninterested, not involved and in over his head with too much on this plate:

My advisor was not super helpful. There was a lot of lack of communication....a lot of lack of communication. I wish I had had an advisor that would support me more. And that would excite me a little but more about what I was doing. My advisor was not involved and did not care much and that kind of upset me. So I just wish that would change. I wish I had more support.

From Ana's perspective she often hit roadblocks when she directly asked for help. She insinuated the school was not doing its job properly: "But it's still a school and it should be supporting its students. So it should have been more involved since I asked for it".

Her thesis class did not have a formal syllabus and she felt it was really disorganized: "Its just very disorganized. And that's why it was hard to reach out. I reached out in other places and they helped me out more in other schools". Ana sought out resources for her research from a school in a neighboring city though it seemed she created these connections with some help from faculty but mostly on her own. She described her education in Architecture as "very individual" and the culture of the department was "very much to yourself". Ana also described it as a highly competitive major. She started with forty students in her sophomore year and she graduated with

twenty students. She did not talk about bonding with many students in her program. I have another flash back to my advisee Tabatha who shared the same complaints with me as Ana does that faculty and her department were unresponsive to her needs. Similarly, despite their struggles both students admitted to still being able to do what they wanted. I wondered how much their determination, stubbornness and sheer will propelled both of these students to surpass obstacles no matter the odds.

Lastly, Ana described the culture of Architecture as being about the culture of the profession. She described in this way:

You have to know a little bit about everything. You have to have the perspective of an engineer. You have to know your client. You have to know what it takes to be a designer. You also have to know what a construction worker has to complete within a certain project. There are a lot of rules that you have to take part in.

I asked her if this was something that architecture program focused on or was it her own personal philosophy. She told me she came to this understanding on her own. She did not speak about dialogue in class with faculty or peers where the “culture of the profession” was discussed. She comes up with this philosophy from a solitary exercise. She described a sink or swim mentality. Ana chose to swim and becomes an autonomous thinker but was isolated and alone often during her four years in the program.

Ana invited me to her final critique but she was so overwhelmed that she forgot to contact me. When she finally did get in touch it does catch me off guard since at this point, it has been five months since I had seen her. She graduated, spent the summer in

Paris, moved back in with her family but still made the effort to take the four-hour train ride and met me. She was very apologetic still, of forgetting to contact me about the critique and says she felt badly because she let others down too. I wondered if her Herculean effort to meet stemmed from being the one who had been stood up or left out often in her past. I felt like she did feel badly not being in contact for so long though also hoping to reconcile a mistake. I told her not to worry and that I am appreciative to see her. Even in our last meeting Ana continued to surprise me. Ana asked to meet at The Café down the street from where we met last time.

It was a bright beautiful, sunny day with not a cloud in the sky at the end of October. The Café where we met makes French inspired sandwiches and pastries. It had bright orange colored walls, green plants in every corner, a warm feeling with an open kitchen and small tchotchkes in homage to French culture. At one point during our conversation, Ana described the interior of the café in great detail to illustrate the sensibility of an architect. We met each other in line and greeted with a hug. I bought her a coffee and we shared a pastry during our conversation. This was the first time I saw her wearing black-rimmed glasses. She wore a black coat and a light colored shirt. She seemed tired but again generous in conversation.

Ana sent me a video of her critique I viewed the night before our meeting. We began our conversation discussing it, my impressions and her response to the critics. The panel of outside critics who attended was diverse in race and ethnicity. Ana's thesis advisor made it a point to note that the panel was almost all non-American with people representing many different places: Serbia, Portugal, Kenya, Peru and Denmark. Three

women and two men comprised the panel. Ana wore a white shirt, red pants and her hair swept to one side. She put together a professional and elegant presentation with many large drawings, small prototypes, a video of a computer-simulated program demonstrating her design on a tablet and a full size example of an actual piece. She stood in the front of the room with a small notebook in hand and the critics were set up in chairs in front of her in two rows as if they were viewing a piano recital. She was gracious, clear in her explanation but seemed subdued. She told me she was exhausted. I cannot sense any tension between her and her thesis advisor with whom she has such difficulty.

The critics were very engaged in her work, asking many questions, gave her good feedback and offered possibilities for next steps. Generally, in critique these are signs that the work being discussed was strong. There was an interesting dynamic that occurred when things go well in critique, a shift happens. It was as if the person who created the work was not even there and the conversation had a life of its own. Critique becomes less focused on the person and more about the ideas. This happened in Ana's critique. A final affirmation occurred when the Dean of the Architecture program was so impressed by her project, they invited her to submit it in an upcoming public art competition.

She was the most animated I have seen her when she described her thesis project. She said her project was "very technology oriented...it is not really having to do with culture". Though midway through Ana's description, she stopped and says: "It's really funny...like your minority...investigations. It's like looking how people adapt". I made

note of this comment and reminded myself to bring it up again. Ana's thesis project focused on a material exploration of wood. She introduced her project by stating a series of questions:

How can you manipulate grain? How can you manipulate, for example, if you're putting this out in the sun? Would weather be the factor in its movement? If you put it out in the sun it's going to warp. So if you already embed a cut in it and move the grain in a certain way its gets worn it will bend at the specific angle. How can that bend be used for specific enclosures or facades? So that was my proposal where I was showing that I can bend wood in multiple ways.

Ana elaborated on adaptability in the wood and her process of thinking in relation to her project. Her exploration of wood was a perfect illustration for her personal adaptability. The wood allowed her to test the material in certain conditions, understand its weaknesses and strengths. Ana had an analytical mind and her investigations were scientific. At one point during the critique I had to rewind this section of the recording several times to digest her ideas. She also had beautifully rendered illustrations of trees that could have been in a science book. She spoke about her passion for wood:

So with wood I am fascinated by it, because it's a material that adapts to its environment, the way it purposely tries to create a relationship with it. The bark of the tree tries to create a hardening surface against the erosion that's happening from the water. The rough parts of the tree, helps that. So if tree is able to move like that and has certain weak spots, it has to deal

with in the environment, how can I utilize those in order to be something that is not just the surface but a structure in itself that create a communication with that erosion with that climate its acting upon.

Her description of the material was interestingly similar to how you might hear someone speak about a relationship. If I did not know she was speaking about a material I could imagine these caring words were from a mother to a child or a teacher to a student. Often artists have a relationship and sensibility with their material that can be quite intimate.

This was what she said:

I was looking at how deficiencies are not weaknesses. They are actual opportunities. So when people think wood can only bend in one way well it cannot be used for all these things. But if you understand the actual materials itself and then how you would like to bend it, then you have to respect those properties...So you're using the weakness as opportunities to see what else you can create. Because if you go against it, its never going to work whatsoever. The material is going to break on you but if you somehow work with it, respect it....it will be really good with you. I think that's with a lot of things in life too. And material can be a really nice example of that.

Ana's exploration with wood can be seen in a project she made freshmen year for a Form Study course. In this small piece, I can see her testing and questioning ideas. It felt like a sketch to understand how wood might exist in vertical space and the relationship the

material had with movement and angles. This little elegant sculpture felt like the beginning of her exploration in wood.

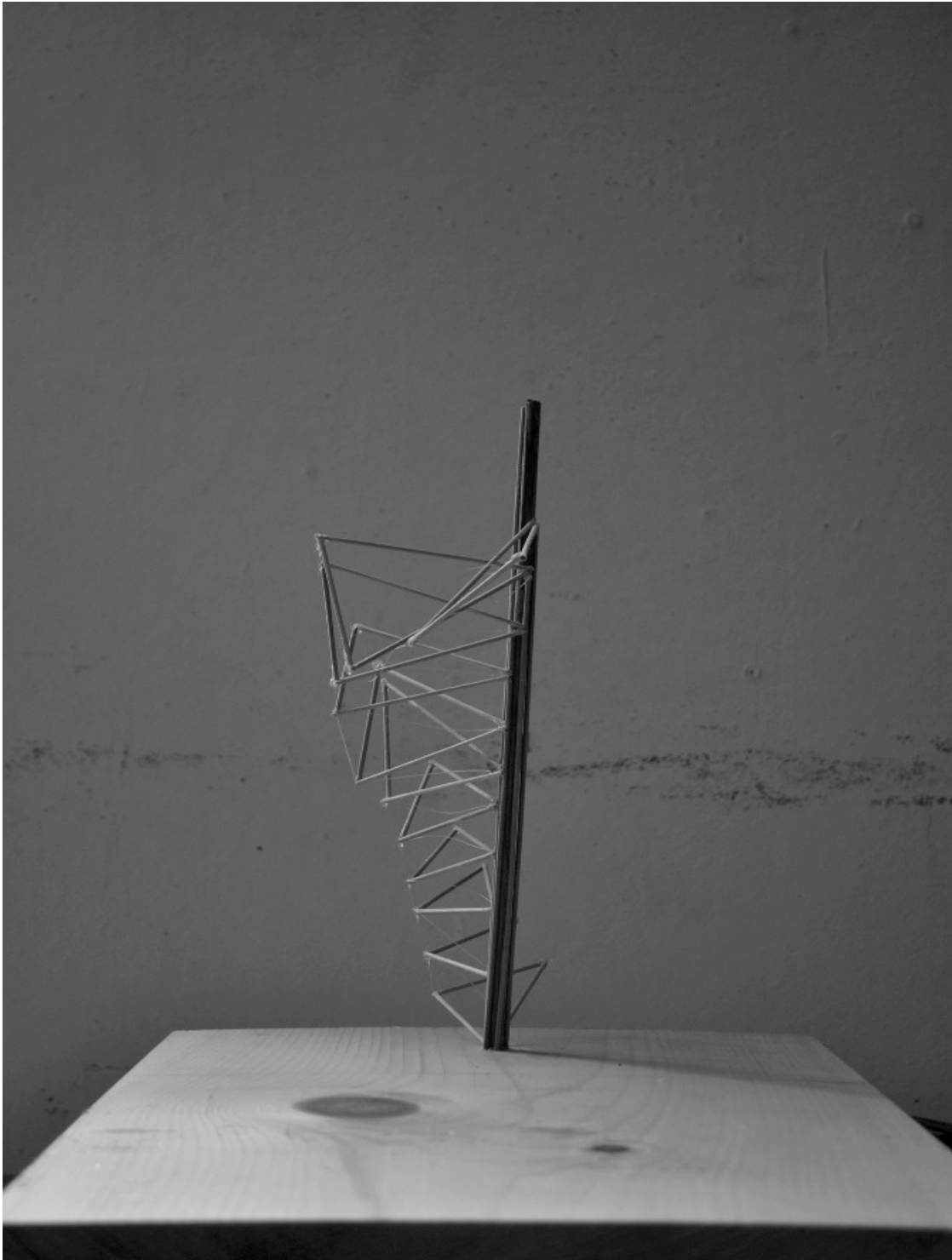


Photo 2. Ana made this project for her Form Study course freshmen year.

She also described her work as an “adaptable transition...movement. Nothing was static.” I made a comment about the analogy of the wood’s adaptability to her adaptability and how these similarities were interesting. Essentially I wondered if she like her material had gotten better at adapting. Ana stopped, took a deep breath and rather than answering right away she said: “I’m so tired.” I think I touched on something that was difficult for her to speak about. It was the one moment when I felt like she let her guard down. For this short moment of pause said a lot to me. Perhaps this pause gave away the reality for Ana that adapting may be a function of how she navigated the world but it still was not an easy process. She did go on to say:

I just think that as you grow up you can see the transitions between those stages. I think people are people, I think its fascinating to see in this mixed environment, its not just culture, its multiples. So it’s looking at people at the individual level and look at the environment. You look at the certain stress.

Ana’s words were less coherent here and a bit confusing. It seemed for once she was at a loss for words to describe her response. I think I caught her off balance. Ana’s work in Architecture explored a material’s adaptation mirrored her own experience of personal adaptation to relationships navigating United States culture from a Colombian perspective. She made the connection on her own in our conversation and it seemed to affect her when we spoke about it but I wondered was she able to truly digest it yet. Ana was moving so quickly through the world it seemed difficult for her to catch her breath.

Ana's personal work in photography also considered the environment, adaptation and human interaction. Her website dedicated a space to Adaptive Spaces in different cultures. These photographs demonstrated how people use existing features of the environment to improve their way of drying clothes in China or created dwellings out of the rock to protect them from a harsh environment in Mesa Verde, Colorado. It was fascinating to see how else Ana was developing her sensitivity to adaptation through the camera lens as well. I had also been to these two locations capturing them through my camera in a different way. I can imagine Ana stumbling onto these scenes being inspired as they suggested to her how adaptation was a universal human preoccupation wherever she traveled. Perhaps it made her feel like she was not alone.



Photo 3. Adaptive Spaces, China. This photograph is from Ana's website.

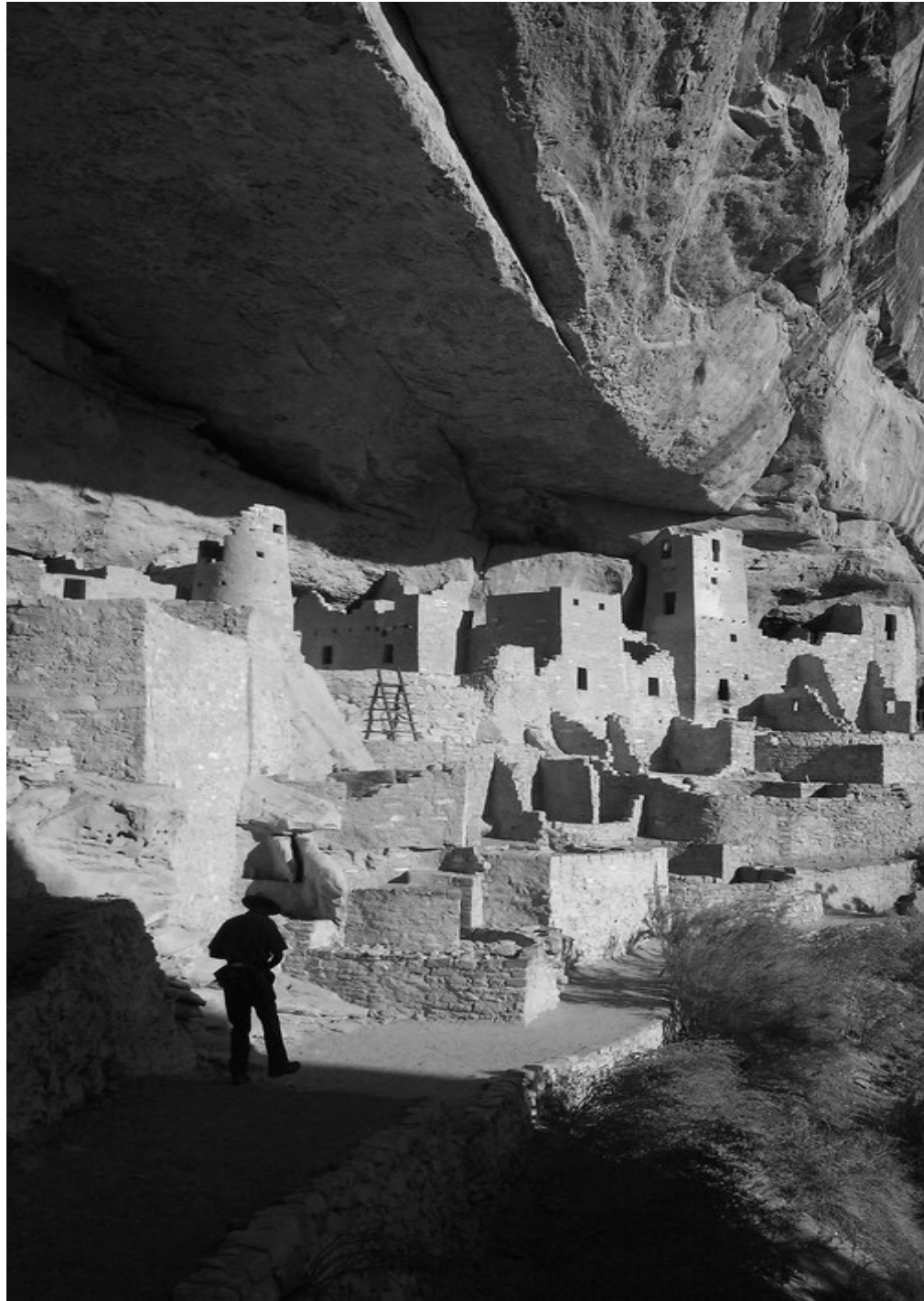


Photo 4. Adaptive Spaces, Mesa Verde. This photograph is from Ana's website.

Possibilities and movement.

There were other areas in her education at ICAD where Ana did feel like she was able to express ideas, get feedback and experience meaningful dialogue with faculty and peers. She mentioned a liberal arts advisor who cared about her education and was a sounding board even about her difficulties in architecture. This advisor was “very on top of my schedule whether I was going to things and seeing if I was struggling or not...She was definitely more supportive”. She was impressed with the professors in the liberal arts department at the institute. They were flexible and understood the commitments in their major departments. As an example, she stated: “If I wanted to do an independent study on top of five classes, they would let me do it”. Ana also connected with courses where she was able to gain a broader understanding of the world around her. She described her philosophy and why she chose certain courses: “You have to understand history and also current events. It’s not just about art. Its also about what’s going on around you.” Two courses in particular allowed Ana to become aware of the context she described and considered different ideas, learn from her peers and share something of herself.

The course People in Diaspora was one that Ana spoke about on several occasions. She mentioned really responding to the discussion-based class. A review of the syllabus explained a modified seminar, where students were expected to lead weekly discussions, participate in classroom debates and hand in written responses to each week’s reading. The professor emphasized involvement in discussions and student engagement as a priority. Ana also explained, “There is a lot of diversity within the

class... And everyone has a very different opinion depending on their background...”

She goes into detail about what she liked about the course:

It’s a discussion-based class and I loved that. We would be defending a lot of the time what we thought. And it was interesting to me because most of the people in the class were minorities or they were mixed and bi-racial. I really appreciated that because it was really radical what some people thought. But if they come from a certain background....for example, there was a girl who was half Haitian and half White...She was looking at how Haitians were treated in their home country but also how Blacks because she was Black within the U.S. and the unfairness both cultures faced.

She said she gained a lot from hearing about the diversity of perspectives and experiences this particular class encouraged. Some of their situations were eye opening to her and she credited the course for also bringing her into contact with a diverse range of students she might not have had the opportunity to know.

During our last meeting, Ana mentioned it might be helpful for me to sit in on the course. Even though Ana was no longer there, I imagined it can give me a sense of the type of environment she experienced since the course was still being taught by the same professor. I contacted the professor who was welcoming and I attended one of last classes of the semester when students presented their final paper topics. The professor told me that this course had become somewhat of a haven for immigrant students since so much of the experience of People in the Diaspora was similar to the immigrant

experience. This confirmed Ana's comment about the types of students in the course. The day I attended seven out of the eleven students were students of color.

When class began, the professor made it a point to tell me they usually sit in a circle but since they are having presentations today the set up was more traditional. The professor solicited opinions from students in a calm and thoughtful manner. She was an older White woman maybe close to retirement age. She was gentle in her delivery, response and critique. The students willingly participated in this safe space and a few presentations involved personal examinations of their own ethnical, racial and cultural identity. A student from Mexico and one from the Dominican Republic both explored the history of colonialism and racism in their respective countries. The student from the Dominican Republic was visibly moved by her topic: the repatriation of Haitian people from the Dominican Republic. I could easily see Ana in this class challenging and engaging her classmates and the subject matter. The professor was also relaxed yet present and I think her non-threatening manner was something Ana was also responsive to.

During our last meeting Ana told me about another course she took last spring through Tucker University, where Artists and Scientists collaborated with Dance for Parkinson's. Ana was extremely passionate and proud of her mid-term project and had an opportunity to present to the president of Tucker University as an example of what was accomplished in the course. I am surprised to hear about yet another avenue from which she was examining her ideas. It seemed like she had her hand in everything. I had this picture of a humming bird like Ana moving rapidly from flower to flower pollinating

and effecting the environment around her. Unlike, a humming bird though, I sensed Ana does get tired but she does not let it show often. If anything the recounting of this course seemed to give her more energy.

She explained that the Dance for Parkinson's project focused on improving movement and quality of life for Parkinson's patients. She used the knowledge from that research to respond in personal way as a dancer herself. This course also enabled Ana to use her skills and vision as an artist in a practical application in the medical field. The one interesting take away for me was the potential renewing relationship between the doctor and patient. She smiled a lot when speaking about the project. It seemed to offer her a great deal of personal fulfillment. She spoke about the overall hope of her project:

It also de-medicalizes the data. It's showing more of a personal understanding of their condition... can data be used to make the doctor patient relationship more humane and demedicalized. And when you have something tangible in hand it creates.... it's important especially with doctors....How can you be more personal with your patients? And if you can cut a piece of wood and see it immediately its for visual communication.

This course also allowed Ana to continue her material exploration of wood in another context. She was so pleased that the wood could easily model the before and after affects of dance on the spine. In our conversation about the class, she further recounted the importance of research and that architecture was just one way she explored ideas:

I love research and design and that might go to architecture and it might not. Though I do care how that affects people. And how that creates the environment for people and I guess that's architectural. But my interests have not been just solely architecture. It's been about making, a little bit of other things other than architecture.

Both of these courses allowed Ana to stretch intellectually and have a response that was beyond architecture. She was still in conversation and working with Tucker University about how to make this pilot course more of a permanent offering. I was impressed with Ana's insatiable appetite for learning and knowledge. The image of the humming bird comes back to me. And with that image I also have an unexplained desire to see it stop moving even for one moment, to suspend time and appreciate what was in front of me. Stillness does not seem to be in Ana's nature. Though it seems a reflective period was something that will allow her to digest her experiences and plan next steps. She did not get into graduate school this fall and rather than being disappointed she seemed sincerely thankful for the time to follow up on projects like Dance for Parkinson's. Even humming birds need rest and maybe Ana was giving into this necessity now.

Lilly

Sitting on the sidelines

Lilly suggested we meet in the Arches Library. I arrived early and took some time to look around. The Arches Library best illustrated ICAD's relationship with the past and the present. The library existed on the National Registry of Historic places and its reputation lives up to the experience. The entrance was non-descript with an

unassuming green institute sign with white lettering marking the library entrance. I entered through the glass doors to the main section of the library. My feet landed on shiny light colored marble floors, stately columns and a vast open space above me. In its day it was a former train station and the feeling was as dramatic as entering Grand Central station in New York with a gothic styled clock hanging in the center of the room. But this time, the hush of a library and the stacks of books lining the walls replaced the bustle of commuters. Like everything I encountered at ICAD from the brochures to the website, this space was highly designed. Meaning every area was taken into consideration. The open floor plan in the middle of the library illustrated this approach that consisted of small seating areas for people to sit in modern sling back chairs and small end tables. Large contemporary glass display cases also exhibited student work near the back of the library and areas for study, ones where wooden tables were beneath majestic stained glass windows and quieter spaces near stacks of books can be found in every area. No space was wasted.

The most remarkable feature of this library was a multiuse structure nested into the space integrating the past with the present. Interestingly, the modern structure made of dark wooden material does not feel like an imposition but rather like a respectful addition. It was as if a dinner guest came unannounced but brought her own chair. The clean minimalist structure was a modernist design where stadium stairs ascended up into the space and were as long and wide as one half of the library. I explored this modern structure and realized there were rooms underneath the stairs used for group study areas and meetings. I met Lilly in one of these modern nooks for all three of our conversations.

It felt like a little cave with no windows and sound that echoed off of the walls.

Occasionally, we could hear people walking on the stairs above us but often it was very quiet. The Arches Library was an elegant accommodation of the old and the new mirroring ICAD's values and beliefs.

What am I?

Lilly was a few minutes late. In an email to me she described herself as Korean American. I am just about to text her when she approached me unassuming with an easy smile. She apologized because she was waiting outside while I was waiting inside. I hoped this miscommunication was not a sign of things to come. After a short awkward moment without a word she led me through the library to the small nook where we can talk. She was petite. I think we were about the same height with long brown hair and subtle blond highlights. She wore a red flannel shirt with cut off shorts on a pleasant day in the beginning of May with spring in full bloom.

Lilly seemed initially shy but was open in our conversation. She was a sophomore in the Industrial Design department at the institute. She also had a concentration in courses about Self and Society to help her explore her identity. One question seemed important for Lilly in our conversation. She simply stated: "What am I?" Our conversation gradually revealed the reasons why she experienced such confusion about her identity related to her ethnicity. She was the middle child who grew up in Arizona with her parents and two sisters. This was how she described her background and relationship with her parents:

Some Korean parents are very strict in their values but I think my parents are accustomed to American life and Korean culture and never pressured me to learn the language but I know when I was younger, we went to Korea. I know the language. They watched Korean videos so I would watch with them. Later on we went to a Korean school and learned about culture and language there. But they never said this is Korean culture. They would tell us if we asked but not... lets learn Korean culture. I went to Korean school for 3-5 years but after awhile it wasn't Korean language school it was more like let's go meet Korean friends and hang out.

They spend many years in a small town with very few other minority families. She was not really aware of her Korean identity until she moved away in high school where there was a larger Korean community. I think about my own upbringing with very few minority families in my elementary school though like Lilly when I go to high school I am exposed to other students from immigrant families from India, China, Greece, Mexico and Vietnam. Having more friends who can relate to the reality of a bi-cultural experience was of great comfort to me. And I did begin to appreciate my Pilipino background as I see my friends express pride in their own cultures.

Despite the fact that Lilly was going to high school with more Korean students this seemed to make an unexpected impression on her identity. Rather than it being a positive or negative thing, she was quite indifferent about her Korean identity. On the one hand, she can make jokes in Korean with the other students but at the same time she felt like an outsider because she had an accent when she spoke. She saw other

differences with Korean students who were from Korea and those born in the United States. She elaborated on these differences later in our conversation. Lilly had exposure to Korean culture and language from home, summers in South Korea and attending Korean school. Though this contact did not necessarily leave Lilly with a great sense of reassurance about her identity. Instead brought up more questions for her.

Lilly told me being a Korean American gave her a different mindset and way of thinking and it becomes clearer to her when she went back to South Korea for visits. She described seeing the differences in “some morals or values are ...different”. I asked her to elaborate. She explained:

Maybe this is just me...I know in Korea. Physical appearance is really big and when you go into the subway stations there are a bunch of posters on the wall that like promoting plastic surgery....look before and after of both men and women. So its like really really prominent and a lot of people have done it. Even after high school graduation, it's considered a present. So...the most common is double eye-lid surgery. But there is also jaw surgery to get a V shaped face. And there is also like chin reduction something like that...there's a whole bunch of different ones. And my mom grew up in Korea and would say: my friend's daughter got this. Or my cousin also got it. She got this so why don't you too when we go to Korea. And I say: I'm ok.

During a three-week trip back to Korea this past summer she got some pressure from her mom to do some surgery but surprisingly, she did not linger on their differences and

seemed appreciative of the connection either way. Rather she was more disturbed by the societal values that aggressively market physical alterations as a sign of status. Lilly found an opportunity to write about her opinion in a course last semester, Women's Role in Asian Society. This is how she approached the assignment:

I remember the whole thing about Korean appearance was superficial. I don't think it should be promoted in cafes and everywhere, especially to kids. My mom said it changes so much. In Korea it can change things, because some employers look at the picture you submit (and see if you have Western features and (that) can have a difference in your job. In Korea, it can make a difference but here its not. I can't quite connect why that should be important. I wrote about that.

Not only did Lilly realize a difference in thinking with what she perceived of Korean culture, she also had the experience that when she visited Korea people there can tell by the way she dressed or her accent that she was American. Sometimes this translated into negative experiences: "Some people can tell that I'm not Korean. So they sometimes take advantage of that...I don't know...something culturally is different and I think they can sense that. It's both there and you don't necessarily feel comfortable. I guess you know there's something different."

Throughout our conversations Lilly made it clear that there was a distinction between herself, who grows up in the Unites States and others who were born in Korea. She identified in a very specific way:

I guess racially I would be considered Korean. My parents are from South Korea, in a sense I am Korean American. So, I am not fully 100% Korean Korean. But... since I grew up in American its a totally different type of Korean.

I related to her story because I also have this experience when I travel to the Philippines. I get one look from a stranger and I can feel them say, “No, you’re not one of us”. In college, I become friends with a group of international students from the Philippines but after a few weeks one leader of the group admits they actually don’t like me because I am a Brown American. A Pilipino born in American was not a true Pilipino according to those students. This may be similar to the sentiment Lilly was relating that she was not “Korean Korean”. At one point, she considered studying in Korea to learn more about the culture but because she had such negative experiences she did not want to anymore. She expressed an analysis of maybe why: “I didn’t really feel comfortable as much. I know we share the same ethnicity but it is a different mentality culture wise...because I was born in America”.

Compared to other Korean parents, Lilly felt her parents were easy going in comparison to other Korean parents and it made me wonder how restricting other Korean parents might be. Other than the value being placed on physical appearance Lilly had a hard time accepting other values as well. During one of our conversations, she also realized her father had recently focused attention and expressed pride of her with family and friends more than he ever had before since she had been enrolled at ICAD. The institute holds a lot of prestige for her father and she explained the outward appearance of

success was important in Korean culture. Lilly seemed uneasy about her father's newfound interest in her. She did not admit it but I do wonder if she felt he was disingenuous since his behavior had only been since she attended ICAD. Lilly was concerned that with this attention comes family expectations such as going back to Arizona to work in the local university which she has no interest in doing. My parents also placed an expectation on me at one point during my college years to manage some business properties as a family legacy. I interpreted this gesture not as well meaning but rather as an indication that my parents don't really know me and I reacted with rebelliousness and protest. I saw Lilly begin to plan her exit strategy and wondered how she would break free from her father's expectations.

Lilly was also concerned with stereotypes of Korean culture she did not want to perpetuate in anything she says or does. This response comes after I ask Lilly if she felt comfortable speaking about Korean culture in her course work. She explained her approach:

I don't think I can represent the community as a whole. For one, I am not fully Korean. I can't speak to the international students who come from Korea. There are things that I've taken from growing up and learning from Korea that may not be fact checked true. It just might be that my experience is different. There are also people who have different viewpoints. My parents may have taught me in a way, that goes along with their view and not necessarily others. Whether that is correct or right...I don't want to be the person representing all that. Because Koreans are very

strong about their opinions or most of them seem to be. So if I'm wrong...I don't want to be in the crossfire.

I also get the sense that Lilly was adverse to conflict. Perhaps as a middle child she had learned to go along with whatever was going on and it seemed she had taken this approach to other areas of her life. I wondered if her reluctance to express an opinion was also a sign of immaturity. She was concerned with not perpetuating a stereotype in her work but at the same time also felt constrained by stereotypes. She sounded exasperated when she described a classmate telling her that her doodles looked Korean. She said: "But I think, what does that mean? How do I draw Korean? I'm just doodling...I don't know how to take that". I think about my first critique in graduate school when a professor stated my black and white photographs looked like a White male photographer took them. Like Lilly, I am not sure how to take that comment. We both encountered limiting ideas about who we are and even how we can express ourselves as artists. I shared Lilly's exasperation and now worked hard to dismantle preconceived notions and stereotypes in the classroom as a faculty member. Ultimately, Lilly felt like the space where she existed between two cultures, Korean American and Korean was quite confusing.

I don't know where I stand.

The Self and Society concentration led Lilly to take some courses that stimulated questions about identity. One course, Women's Role in Asian Society specifically focused on Asian women and explored how female identity throughout Asia had changed through the generations. She learned about Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Taiwan

culture and really liked learning more about Korean culture. She was especially surprised to learn how traditional Korean ideas of marriage clash with the homosexual community. Rather than explicitly rebelling some people in these communities pretend to be straight and have arranged marriages to please their families. She hoped this course would allow her to explore more of her own identity but the classroom dynamic really prevented a meaningful exchange of ideas with her peers and the professor. She described the difficulties:

It was different than I thought it would be. The larger portion of class was female and a few males and so it was uncomfortable at times. The teacher was not an Asian female and a lot of times the class would hold that against her that she was not Asian and she did not know the experience...or what we were thinking or feeling. Taking away her ethnicity she as trying to relate our reading and video we had to watch. It was an anthropology class and sociology of different aspects of Asian culture.

She also described some problems with the organization of the course and the lack of connection the professor has with her students.

The course description was vague and general. But there was not as much discussion because the students and teacher barrier...that she was not Asian and did not know. Class participation was low. She was trying to engage conversation but students would not engage. It was not as meaningful as I thought it would be but it was an interesting course.

Lilly did feel badly for the professor but trust was not established with students from the beginning and they were suspicious. She did feel the course helped her understand things: “It was interesting to find out about cultural identity...where I stood. I think the classes do help in some way in general (help me)...to know culturally where I stand”. At one point, Lilly mentioned some students in the class felt like this professor was racist because of her comments and how she treated Asian students. Lilly was quick to tell me she did not think the professor was racist at all. I wondered if this was another example of Lilly not wanting to engage in conflict.

Lilly mentioned it was not easy to reference her cultural identity in her academic work. She was given an opportunity in an Anthropology courses to address it yet she was reluctant to do so. I asked Lilly to help me understand that even though the prompt of the assignment was to reference her cultural experience why did she not feel comfortable. She explained it in this way:

Sometimes I have an idea but then I worry about it...and so I don't want to do that idea... I remember I was going to write about Korean culture and I can't remember if I wrote about it or not. I was hesitant to just because...this is my opinion and it could be totally wrong and some people might feel strongly against it and I didn't want to put that on my teacher and she would use that as a reference and assume that of everybody. And so I wanted to be careful.

Lilly's excuses felt more like she was copping out. Though I do wonder if there was an underlying lack of trust with the professor that made her resist this assignment. Maybe

like the Women's Role in Asian Society professor she did not feel safe to explore these issues that were potentially very vulnerable. Given her interest in identity it just does not add up. Lilly seemed to stand on the sidelines of her Korean identity. She was so disturbed by the value on physical and social appearances and she does not want to claim or take part in it. But at the same time she was unwillingly to engage in self-reflection that may help her reconcile some of these issues.

The Industrial Design department encouraged innovation and creative thinking beyond merely designing and developing projects. The ICAD catalog described projects students might work on that create better relationships with people and their environment such as water filters for people in developing countries or soccer balls that generate energy. Another important feature of the department emphasized guidance by faculty to realize student's passion and design goals. Despite this assertion, Lilly spoke specifically about the lack of guidance she experienced in the department. She also reported that often the department was very chaotic because it had a large sophomore class and there was not enough space in the shops for everyone. This manifested in a competitive environment where students in the same class did not talk with each other. Lilly felt a lot of pressure from her professors who were also very demanding and she did not want to disappoint them. She explained her mindset:

I am still intimidated by professors with assignments and try to make a good job...I think last year in general everyone was ego driven. It was very competitive in ID. I can't believe what others are making. I start to feel the pressure. But I just need to focus.

Lilly reiterated that the structure in her department was not what it could be. And she did not know where she stood. She was taking a sophomore class called Design Principles where she was often felt isolated and working without a sense of direction. Lilly invited me to the final critique of this class.

I arrived on a rainy misty day to the Industrial Design department that was housed in an old brown brick building. I waited in the lobby since Lilly was late. But it gave me time to look at glass display cases built into the wall filled with a few small clay models of three-dimensional objects. As I walk further into the building, an old sewing machine was mounted horizontally on the exposed red brick wall just near the entrance. I watched students filter into the building, shaking off umbrellas and rain jackets, trying to get warm and dry. I hold the door for an older man who had a rolling cart with food items and he also carried a bag of groceries. He retrieved things from his car a few times so I asked if he was Lilly's professor. He remembered I was sitting in on the class. He playfully commented: "I think she forgot you." We laughed and took the elevator upstairs.

I entered the room and found Lilly sitting at a table near the front. She looked tired and greeted me shyly. I took a seat off to the side of the classroom making sure not to block anyone's view. The room was crowded with wood grained desks piled on top of each other on one side of the room. Drills and other tools were haphazardly strewn on top of the desks. A life size model made of cardboard and wood take up a lot of the space near where I am sitting. There were three or four normal height tables in the front where students are seated with laptops. There were also three tall tables in the back. Thirteen students comprise this class. Nine were Asian students and six of those students

all sat in the back row at the tall tables. The Asian American student population at the institute was high but there were also an even higher number of Asian international students. I do not know the difference in this class. There was an industrial disordered feel to the space with exposed steel beams, red brick walls and extension chords and other wires hung from a round base from the ceiling. A low vibrating sound comes from the floor every half hour or so during the four hours I am there.

The professor was warm and welcoming when we begin class. He had an endearing charm and his jokes were self-deprecating at moments. He might be someone a casting agency would typically pick out to play an aging professor in a movie. He seemed absent minded at times but his comments demonstrated that he was really paying attention. Students seemed pleased that there was food and thanked him for breakfast. He made me feel comfortable inviting me into the space and made sure I was in a spot where I could see easily. He introduced the prompt of the final assignment in this way: “Design a product that could exist in the future. The purpose of this assignment is to prod those in the field to move thinking forward. Be far out in the world as you can be.” Lilly added her understanding of the project to me when we met afterwards:

In our final project, our teacher wants us to do something more conceptual. The technology does not necessarily have to exist. It has to be a model of what it can do and what user group its for. And there is that conceptual aspect to it where you bring your own meaning.

Lilly elaborated in our meeting after the critique that the project was inspired by her grandfather who passed away because of diabetes. The product she made was a non-

invasive way to detect blood sugar. The focus of her project hoped to eradicate the physical and psychological affects of prick testing of blood by creating a non-invasive way to do it.



Photo 5. Lilly's Final Project, Design Principles.

During critique, Lilly was soft spoken but clear and succinct in her presentation. She wore black round rimmed glasses, her hair was pulled back and she wore a blue button down shirt. She brought her Mac laptop with a turquoise case up to the front of the room with her to present. She presented a PowerPoint that highlighted her ideas and introduced a product that was like a standard watch frame but easier to read. She hoped this product was something one could carry around everyday and not forget. Her project

was well received by the professor and students. The professor was impressed with the thoroughness of details in her project. He seemed especially pleased with her work since he disclosed that he too has diabetes. He also mentioned there are other possibilities for the project and it was okay not to have everything figured out. He encouraged her to expand and think big. Two White students sitting in the front were in dialogue about her work but no one else spoke.

I witnessed nine other critiques in class and many are innovative and thought provoking. The same two or three students consistently spoke while the section of Asian students in the back of the room never commented. The professor was quick to correct rambling talk or PowerPoints that were incoherent. The assignment and his approach seemed to leave room for student's personal vision to emerge. He emphasized professionalism through clear presentations and confidence in delivery of ideas. Overall, he urged students not to apologize or make excuses and hoped students engaged in wide expansive thinking. I met with Lilly a few days after the critique to debrief.

It seemed that Lilly had a good response from critique and was doing solid work but she still felt she had no idea where she stood in the department. I asked her if the critique I saw was typical and she said it was actually a little better. She said: "It seemed like a good day because people were responding to other people's work". Previous critiques were not helpful because people weren't comfortable with each other and so did not give feedback. Lilly also had a lot to say about the professor. Even though he seemed to me like he allowed for personal vision to unfold and encouraged

expansive thinking, it lacked guidance and direction Lilly hoped for. She explained it in this way:

I don't know his strategy. Some people liked it because they had their own ideas and direction. But some people didn't know what to do about this, what should I do? He would say some things but that wouldn't really help me go to which direction I wanted to go to.

Even though I felt like the professor was direct in the critique I saw, Lilly had a different perception with his approach overall. I had the same feeling when she described the Anthropology course where she failed to recognize that intellectual and creative freedom was a true gift a professor can give. Instead she focused on what did not occur:

He doesn't say much in the critiques. Which was a frustration with the students. He's very knowledgeable and he's been in the business for a long time but when students would ask for feedback you wouldn't really get much out of it. We wish you could get a more direct response. And he could be blunt which is good because you could get honest feedback. But sometimes he doesn't give helpful information...like what should I do with this concept. And he says: it really up to you and that doesn't really help us decide. That would be ok if we were more knowledgeable and knew about the business more but most of us don't know very much, that's why we are in school to learn more. So sometimes it can be a little frustrating.

Her response also reminded me of Ana's complaint about her architecture faculty. They both commented on how they think being in school will offer more direction than they received. I wondered if this is also a symptom of the millennial generation and their need to have responses right away. Interestingly, this hands-off approach taught Ana and Lilly to think on their feet and rely on themselves. The lessons may be lost on them but I see them both make solid thought provoking work.

Lilly also felt like opportunities were lost when group projects were eliminated. The professor managed the class by not doing group projects perhaps after a failed attempt. Rather than trying to improve the experience he gets rid of it all together. She described what she lost:

I think that would have been helpful for time management. And getting to work together on a concept or idea would have been interesting. We did some group projects during class but one of them didn't go so well. And now he steers away from group projects in general because he thinks we won't like them. But especially since this is the way we are going to work outside (in the field) they could have been helpful. We have to work with people. But he didn't seem to like it.

Lilly also felt group projects can give her more chances to dialogue with her peers, help her with time management and allow for gradual feedback throughout the semester. Rather she felt the community was isolated. She did not have any other students she felt she could talk to in her department. I commented on the fact that one other student also

had a similar idea to hers in the class but she had no idea they had commonalities in their projects until that final critique. She seemed surprised and frustrated when she said:

And I didn't know she was working on that. And so that would have been helpful. I know she does not tell people what she's working on. But that would have been nice to hear about her project. We didn't even know she was working on that.

She welcomed a space to share ideas, research and feedback. She explained what she means:

Outside influences would have been helpful. There were not direct connections from different projects. It would have been helpful to get different feedback...(For example) I'm working on a project, there's some research out there. Maybe you can look into that.

She also lamented: "I wish there were critiques before the critique so I would get different viewpoints from the members". I have ongoing small critiques in my courses for the reasons Lilly mentions. It was a good way to keep students accountable not just to me but to their small group as well. I do witness students share resources, research and maybe most importantly offer support. It was not a hard thing to do but it does shift the hierarchical dynamic in the classroom. Lilly's professor who operates a more traditional classroom may not be comfortable with that shifted structure.

Instead, the professor asked for updates individually and she got feedback just from him. She stated: "Sometimes it is helpful. A broader class critique would have been more helpful also time management wise. It seemed a little hectic". On one occasion

when they met about her final project, she asked him specifically about the design of her object since he is diabetic. She said his response was not helpful: “He would really say its up to you. After that he left, so I didn’t know what to do. That doesn’t really answer anything.”

I asked Lilly what she thinks the Industrial Design department was trying to teach students. She responded: “I think its general....You need to know this in order to prosper in the design world. This is what you need to know. What you are interested in...you can concentrate on that and take studio according to that”. This also reminded me of Ana’s description of Architecture where she felt like she learned the “culture of the profession”. I asked her if there were opportunities to explore ethnic or cultural identity in Industrial Design. She mentioned that even though the current head of the department was a Korean man there was no conversation about cultural dimensions. This was her response:

The head of our department is Korean. He has worked with Korean companies and there are some companies that associate with Asian culture and there are some people are geared towards the Asian aesthetic. And there are one or two classes geared towards that but other than that, no.

I wondered if there are other Asian professors in the department and she mentioned there are more part-time Asian faculty. I remember how low the faculty of color demographics are at this institute at 1% and imagine Lilly will probably not encounter many Asian

professors. Though she does get excited when she sees a Korean name in the course offerings and was eager to take a class from one if it was offered.

Hoping to find my voice.

Towards the end of our conversation Lilly seemed to be more aspirational. She recognized she needed to work on herself and not rely so much on what others think.

This was what she said:

I think junior year I need to focus on what I want to do, not necessarily what my teacher wants me to do. Of course fit with the curriculum not swaying....but not changing my mind because the teacher wants me to or care what others think of me but doing what I want to do...And starting to find the design identity. And then hopefully that will help me find what my cultural identity.

She was searching for guidance but at the same time she knew she needed to grow up. Lilly had yet to find course work that stimulated her thinking and inspired her the way she hoped to be. Lilly also expressed interest in wanting to integrate her identity exploration into Industrial Design and wondered how she can do it. She admitted she needed to learn more about Korean culture but the Korean student groups seemed to focus more on festival activities rather than learning about history or contemporary life. “There was one history lecture I couldn’t attend that was about Korean women after the war who were physically assaulted. It was depressing but I wish there was more of that”. This lecture was an example of the type of learning and research she hoped to do.

She also admired the work of a filmmaker, Wes Anderson. Her analysis of what she liked was revealing:

I like Wes Anderson. In his films, he creates his own worlds and creates a culture and meaning behind it and incorporates it to his film...I am drawn not necessarily to culture associated with reality but ones that have their own world that have their own history and world of their own.

I read in the Grand Budapest Hotel, he (Wes Anderson) made up a whole history tied to real history, using real history for a new history...Each character stems from whatever background they come from.

I sensed Lilly relax. As she described Wes Anderson's work, she seemed more at ease since we were not talking about Industrial Design or her academic courses. I see many visual and conceptual exercises in her description of "a made up history tied to a whole history". If she were my student I would encourage her to pursue these ideas.

I hoped to sit in on one of her academic courses but she was reluctant to have me there. She did text and said one academic course was difficult because students do not talk during discussion. She stated: ... "it is uncomfortable to sit through". And in the other course, the faculty was new and it seemed she does not feel it was the right time to invite a guest. I wondered about her hesitancy to invite me into these particular courses. One was a Japanese Aesthetics course and one was Contemporary Narrative. Nothing in either syllabus led me to believe there was controversial material. She was quick to reply to my requests to sit in on her studio course but interestingly not the academic ones. If anything, studio courses put her on the spot more as her own work was scrutinized. So

this resistance was difficult to interpret. Perhaps her discomfort was too revealing for her if I saw it. Like her Industrial Design professor she eliminated the possibility for dialogue with me about it. I like Lilly felt like an opportunity was lost by not sitting in on a class.

As much as Lilly blamed the environment around her for not giving her what she needed, she did admit some responsibility to develop her own unique way of expressing herself. I asked her what she hoped for the next year. She replied: "... being more independent. Finding my own voice. Everybody has their own style and voice and I hope the summer will give me time to have a jump a start on that". Lilly also expressed a need for more guidance in her education that so far she had not been able to get in any of her courses. She spoke about her learning style and the need for direction in her learning:

I did learn some things from my teachers both semesters. They were great teachers. But for me I need a more different teaching style. I learn a certain way. I really need help with direction. Maybe its like middle child syndrome. I don't really like to do stuff on my own. If I need help, I don't really ask for it and I usually wander a little bit. I need that direction and help...maybe you should do this, this is the direction you should go. That would have been helpful for me. I am a little more dependent on what the teacher says. I need a little more guidance.

I am teaching a Time based media course next semester and the driving question I ask my students is: "Who are you and why?" During many points in my conversation with Lilly I resisted the urge to treat her as one of my students. It seemed she would fit in well with

my course where I want to introduce students to artists who explore the idea of identity and illustrate how there are many vehicles from which to express their experiences. The student would be center of the curriculum and ground investigations of self-exploration throughout the semester. Lilly admitted she needs encouragement and I hoped she ultimately finds a professor who understands her need for structure and guidance. Again I resisted the urge to treat her as one my students but it was a hard impulse to fight when I know sometimes all students needs was a gentle nudge in the right direction.

Yukiko

Emerging critical consciousness

We met at the Babcock café, the same place where I met Ana, on an extremely windy fall night. We were bracing for a bad storm and the scream of the wind felt as its announcement. All of the doors of institute buildings were accessible only with card access and so I texted Yukiko when I arrived at the entrance. She greeted me after a few minutes. She had on dark black rimmed glasses and a bob hair cut that framed her wide-open face. She wore a light brown jacket and skirt with black platform shoes. She swayed a little as she walked me to a table in the main room of the café. She had a sweet smile and was very friendly easily engaged in conversation from the beginning. Unlike the times I met with Ana before, the café was very quiet tonight with music playing softly in the background and only one other student was in the room.

Happy having both cultures.

We met three times over the course of a month in conversation and she also invited me to sit in on a Typography course as well as World Textiles liberal arts course.

Because Yukiko looked very young, she comes across as innocent and naïve at first but I would later learn the twinkle in her eye actually signaled a keen sense of awareness. She was always positive and hopeful in our conversation even when speaking about difficult experiences.

Yukiko was a junior in the Graphic Design department, but we focused on her background during this initial conversation. She described her upbringing in this way:

I was born in America and I went to Japan every summer for a really long time until I came to college just to meet with my grandparents and family members. I definitely identify more as American just growing up here like culturally. I'm more Americanized. But then at home, my parents are more Japanese.

The statement gave me a sense of how she positioned herself as an American with a Japanese background. She grew up in a suburban town outside of Detroit, MI with her parents and one older sister. She described it as a predominately White community. She seemed to have a positive feeling about being Japanese since she felt her parents instilled an understanding of Japanese culture but were not dogmatic about it. She described it in this way:

I think my parents are proud of their cultural identity. They did not really teach us anything specifically, like this is the ABC of Japan. But by going to Japan over the summers and the way they talked about Japan was always in a positive light. I was always...I never felt negativity towards my culture.

I mentioned I also grew up in the Midwest and we shared some laughs about being the only Asian students in our classes. I felt a sense of envy that Yukiko was able to maintain a connection to her Japanese culture. Unlike Yukiko, I visited the Philippines only one summer during my high school years. It was difficult for me to keep up with the language and identify with the culture. In contrast, Yukiko was fluent in Japanese and spoke a mix of English and Japanese in the house. She believed the summers in Japan allowed her to remain fluent in the language and also gave her a sense of pride for the culture.

This winter Yukiko was looking forward to going to Japan to partake in a traditional ceremony that commemorated her entering adulthood. When a young woman in Japan turns twenty, she wears a kimono that has been in the family for generations as a symbol of the moment. She nervously laughed but her face lit up when she spoke about it and seemed genuinely happy for the event especially since she would be able to spend time with her aging grandparents:

We're not having a formal ceremony. It's more of a fun family thing, like an excuse to get together. I feel like the tradition doesn't happen as often anymore probably because I don't really see it in pop culture. I only find out about it because my sister did it. I didn't know it was a thing. I think you do go to the Shinto shrine and things like that... We just took a lot of family pictures and made it a family fun event.

Even though Yukiko had a positive feeling about her Japanese culture there were times in her childhood when it was difficult but it had to do more with social difficulty

with her peers rather than confusion about her Japanese identity. She initially claimed her parents were not rigid about Japanese culture but they did send she and her sister to a rigorous Japanese school on the weekends. This school was created to serve the children of the large Japanese community who worked in the nearby Honda factory. It was difficult for Yukiko socially because once she made friends they would leave. These students were only in the school for one or two years, the duration of their parent's work commitments. For the most part, Yukiko was very soft spoken but there were a few times when she raised her voice to make a point. And this happened when she described the Japanese school:

There was a Japanese school in Columbus that my parents sent me to but I hated it! Mostly because all of the kids were only there temporarily. And learning Kanji and all the Japanese things were really difficult for me because I did not see a need.

Since most of the students were going there temporarily the school focused on making sure students were keeping up with the Japanese curriculum. It was a lot of pressure on Yukiko: "So a whole week's worth of studying was condensed into one day. And I didn't want to do this on top of American school". Though Yukiko made it clear to me that it was not Japanese culture she resisted rather the demands of two schools and having friends leave was difficult. In contrast to how she felt, she described one friend who had a much harder time in high school: "Yes, I have one friend here who is Chinese American who came from a mostly White suburb. And she remembers doing and trying to be more White". Yukiko did not respond in that way. Rather she said: "I did not hate

being Japanese. I was happy having both cultures. It was just socially identifying with people was difficult”. She also mentioned now looking back on it she regretted not embracing the Japanese school because she sees the value of learning to read and write in Kanji. She took a Japanese Aesthetics class last semester and it made her feel excited about learning these aspects of the culture.

Micro-aggressions: Theory and experiences.

Yukiko seemed to thrive in the environment at ICAD and one course had such a great impression on her, she referenced it at certain points during all three of our meetings. The course, Marginalized Existence she took during a winter intersession her freshman year was where Yukiko attributed her awareness of micro-aggressions. In elementary and high school, Yukiko was the only non-White and only Asian person in her class. This course allowed her to digest her past experiences and make sense of the marginalization she felt. Yukiko was animated and moved her hands a lot when she spoke about what she learned in this course. It enabled her to gain better understandings of her experience as a person of color by becoming aware of the historical context from which certain groups of people have been oppressed. It also challenged her to interrogate her own belief systems. It reminded me of a Faith, Peace and Justice course I took in college that exposed me to ideas about societal injustices, social responsibility and my position within these larger contexts. I felt I had walked through the looking glass and a whole new world had been revealed to me. Her enthusiasm for this course reminds me of how I felt about the course I took in college. She described it in this way:

That changed my life! It was amazing. We were talking historically about freak shows, Black face a lot of racial issues, discrimination everything. And that brought light....I thought I knew everything about racism in high school and then after this class I learned about micro-aggressions, the more subtle things. And then there were a lot of color in class who I learned a lot from. At my high school, there were very few Black people or Latino and I didn't really think a lot about that sort of thing. So hearing that was also life changing.

She also described her own realization and responsibility to confront her own behavior:

I think racism is something you are born into societally. And I think high school, living in a mostly White suburban. I had minor aggression within me too. Towards Black people and Latino and I thought I'm not racist. But taking that class, I realized there are things that I need to fix myself that I didn't even realize.

The course also gave her a greater awareness of when micro-aggressions may have been enacted on her. Yukiko admitted to being more sensitive about it now:

The whole time we were looking at the history of people discrimination against physical disabilities, race and everything, gender and the last assignment was looking at our own lives and seeing when we felt like we were freaks. And that was mainly when I started to notice the micro-aggressions, when did I feel like I was marginalized.

Yukiko can also think back to elementary and high school when her peers and teachers brought attention to her difference as a negative thing and in a way that made her feel uneasy. Her experience illustrated the implicitness of micro-aggression. She described the moment in class:

I feel like at the time I was growing up, people already knew about racism and teachers would never be overtly racist. I think there was one time when some student in my class was talking about Asian people eating dogs. And student was directly asking me about it and I was like...hum... The teacher, she was upset about him but her response was also weird. She said that's super weird don't ask about it. But it was awkward for me because some people do eat dogs. But the fact that she thought that was something to be upset about... for her it was something you shouldn't talk about. I was like, I don't eat dogs but people do eat dogs and the student was just curious. I thought the teacher had a weird way of addressing the situation.

I saw her teacher's response as missing out on an opportunity to talk about difference in a meaningful way. I think it may have done more harm than good and made a negative lasting impact on Yukiko. She described how she felt particularly about her teacher:

I felt really awkward. I didn't feel like she was coming to my defense. And it was felt like it was put aside. And nothing felt resolved. And then when he said that, the other students were like: "... that is so terrible. People eat

dogs?” I thought I wonder if they see me in a different way, now that this happened.

Other moments surfaced when she remembered hearing Asian jokes when she was growing up. They made her feel uncomfortable but she rationalized that she was being overly sensitive and she did not say anything in order to fit in. Now she had a different feeling about those situations: “And then coming here and talking about race I would realize...oh that was messed up”. There was another time she remembered when her friends would describe her mom as cute. She realized that where she grew up people were unfamiliar with Asian people and but now these situations really offend her. She described her friend’s response to her mom:

I remember when I would have my friends over and they would call my mom cute. I thought it was weird because she was an authority figure and they didn't call other mothers cute. I feel like they saw her accent as not authoritative. Cute felt (like a) demeaning term for parents. I knew they didn't mean it in a mean way. But it was probably just the accent.

Micro-aggressions were still unfortunately a part of her current experience at ICAD. She told me about a time when a Black student presented work with a Black person in his video. The professor made it a point call attention to the “Blackness” of the person in the video even though the work had nothing to do with race. Yukiko felt this reaction was often typical and limiting. She described it in this way:

There is an assumption that feels more like micro-aggression when for example, if it’s a Black author an assumption would be the book has to be

about race. No it doesn't. Our work is our work. My Asian identity does define my point of view but it does not define my whole being.

She also added this observation:

If you picked a White person we wouldn't be having the same conversation you know? The teacher brought up the Black Lives Matter, the movement. And they were trying to be all sensitive and knowledgeable but then the work was not about that. It was just really weird. It's like the thing when it's a colored person it has to be about race.

Yukiko's sensitivity to micro-aggression had enabled her to have a broader understanding of her own experience as well as those around her and maybe even more importantly how she may have been complicit in micro-aggression without having known it before. I told her she's lucky to have had this course her freshman year as a way to set the tone of her education at the institute.

Even though Yukiko had positive experiences with Graphic Design faculty during our last meeting she mentioned a situation that took her by surprise with one Graphic Design professor who identified as a feminist. Yukiko had the assumption that a professor who was grounded in feminist thinking would also be sensitive to social or cultural issues. This professor had been able to engage in conversations in the past having to do with issues about race or culture. But this instance required a deeper understanding of Asian culture specifically to respond in a meaningful way to a Chinese student. The professor was unable to do that and instead revealed her bias and lack of understanding about Asian cultures. The Chinese student who was coming from a more

traditional background was just starting to question the role of women in homes. Rather than seeing the moment as a learning opportunity and taking into account the developmental stage of the student, the professor expressed shock that the student was still questioning. Yukiko described it in this way:

My teacher, I don't think she understood where the student was coming from. She understood that...but then she was making these broad generalizations about Asia and Asian culture. And it was interesting because I know that Asian cultures are generally more traditional but having a professor say it in such a broad stroke was really weird.

And it also felt like, she didn't know much about Asian culture.

This situation was revealing for Yukiko since she had an expectation that her professor had a deeper understanding of Asian cultures since there were so many Asian students in her class. Yet, this professor exposed a blind side to cultural understanding or sensitivity. Yukiko felt like it made the Chinese student even more confused. Yukiko did not expect to experience this in Graphic Design and seemed disappointed to tell me about it:

This was a studio class. I was really surprised because this like whole time I assumed. But then this came up. I just assumed that the teachers knew more when it was slightly brought up it felt like they knew. But then when we talked about it deeper, I thought maybe not.

All of the incidents of micro-aggressions Yukiko spoke about at ICAD involved White faculty. There are three or four situations she mentioned about micro-aggressions either she experienced or she hears about from a friend. I asked her if these professors

are older since at my institution I heard similar complaints from students about older White faculty who lacked cultural understanding or sensitivity. In every case Yukiko mentioned all the faculty were older and White. I observed that it seemed like a pattern and we wondered together if this is a symptom of a generational gap. In her retelling of the story Yukiko seemed exasperated and in disbelief about the narrow mindset of the Graphic Design professor. The last time we met for an hour and a half and she was full of stories continuing to reinforce her experience of micro-aggressions. She did not seem defeated by them in some ways I felt as if she was digesting the experiences, learning and getting a better sense of the landscape around her. Yukiko's keen sense of awareness had been awakened.

There was one last situation that sums up Yukiko's growing awareness and perhaps transformation in light of experiencing micro-aggressions. She described a workshop last semester where her professor presented her own work to the class. This White professor used very old Japanese calligraphic books as a medium for her work. She cut up and manipulated Kanji text from Japanese books to create her own art books. Yukiko found this very disturbing and was not sure what to do:

I felt really weird because it felt like it was really old and something that I thought should be like in a museum or preserved. And she was using it like a medium for her work. She was cutting them into letters. And she was talking about...I don't quite remember her concept but she wanted to do the whole alphabet. The whole book was one letter. I was

really weirded out. Because I thought why would you put Latin alphabet on a Japanese book and cut it up and everything?

Yukiko felt like this woman had performed a gesture of disrespect to the Kanji text. I asked her if she questioned the professor's concept but she said she didn't want to be rude because the project was well underway. Even though the professor may have offended Yukiko, the professor was still the ultimate authority in her eyes. Yukiko did not feel like it was her place to confront the professor. She did say if this were a critique of student work she would have said something. We were both quite moved and sat back in silence for a few seconds to process our conversation. I asked her if she was upset in the moment and she says she was upset but she wasn't going to cry. She expressed more disbelief: "I was just like why would you do that?" As a faculty member, I felt regret that Yukiko had such a disempowering experience in the classroom. I wondered how else this had affected her. A week later, I got an email from Yukiko somehow answering my question. She wrote: "Also, for Type class I'm doing a project on cultural appropriation (specifically Japanese culture) in home decor! I will be posting it on my portfolio website as soon as I finish and will send it to you! :)" I could imagine a twinkle in Yukiko's eyes as she typed the email to me. Yukiko has not lost any of her enthusiasm in light of these new revelations but I do feel she was becoming more grounded by reality having to deal with micro-aggressions from narrow-minded thinking and insensitivity of some professors.

Space for critical thinking.

I had an opportunity to attend a Graphic Design exhibit opening after Yukiko's Typography class. I arrived early where the grand main entrance announced the opening of a Graphic Design exhibit with signs near the door. It was the beginning of October but the temperature still felt like summer. I took a moment to admire the beautiful orange light of the setting sun visible off in the distance. Outside of the building there was an open bar and food table abundant with bread, cheese, olives and hummus was a nice welcome. I had been to many art openings before but this one felt more formal than I am used to. Like other events I have attended at the institute, this one was well planned and orchestrated. The old grandeur of the building created a nice juxtaposition and backdrop for the current work it exhibited. I see Yukiko there with two other friends from class. We greeted each other but she seemed distracted so I excused myself and took in the work. Even though Yukiko's work was not in the exhibit, I got a good context from which to understand the type of work supported in the department and it was also helpful to see what type of work students do who are further along in their development.

The work I saw in this exhibit also represented a wide variety of student interests and experience. The artist's voices were clearly present in the actual work and in the artist statements. The exhibit was organized into four main themes and each artist's work and statement was printed in the exhibit catalogue. The statement about Graphic Design in the ICAD catalog listed a number of practical applications for the study of Graphic Design such as traditional books, apps, magazines, street signs, package labels, websites and digital media. The most revealing feature of the description was how the department

would expect a level of critical thinking and rigor to most succinctly communicate complex ideas. Yukiko's experience was one where she has begun to critically engage in her studio as well as liberal arts courses. I wonder how one has influenced the other.

I lingered in one particular gallery where the theme of the work was named, "Designer Voices". There are a number of examples where students respond to a prompt in the world that may reference history, personal experience or an idea. Either way students were expected to find themselves in their work. I am pleasantly surprised, impressed and encouraged with much of the work I see. It was refreshing to hear and see the presence of the artist voice so explicitly. One student used the Vietnam War memorial as a way to engage the idea of interaction between public space and personal memory. Another student created a book focusing on two cultural figures in Iran, the government and women. A student from Korea expressed his/her disorientation existing in two cultures, Korea and the U.S. through the use of a mirror. The mirror was constructed with a ninety-degree edge mounted in a corner, so when I viewed it I only see my fragmented self. This physical object created an experience of displacement and dislocation. Another interesting feature of work in this gallery was that the work was not squarely in design. The work here feels so grounded in personal expression it could be considered fine art rather than design that can traditionally focus on commercial aspects. Yukiko confirmed for me this feeling when she also shared that she believed design at ICAD leaned more towards the fine arts. The work in this show illustrated this point well.

The critique was a good way to understand curriculum and pedagogy in any art and design course. Typically, students present their work to the professor and their peers for discussion, analysis and feedback. Yukiko invited me to her Typography course and I attended a class where critique happened for thirteen students over the course of three hours. The professor was a middle aged White woman who began the first twenty minutes of class asking students how they felt about their experience in Graphic Design in general and in her course. She was soft spoken and at times during the critique would speak even softer to emphasize a point. I had to lean in to really hear her. She showed genuine interest in what students had to say. Yukiko told me it was typical for her to ask for feedback though students seemed very appreciative and thanked her for asking their opinion. They reported to her that not all professors were so open. She also took the time to encourage them to understand who they were and how that reflects in their work. Upon reviewing the syllabus there were no real cues to the pedagogy of the course. The syllabus was merely a weekly schedule of assignments due. Yukiko also told me in Graphic Design there was a lot of freedom within the course and she really appreciated this approach. For example:

Assignment wise they are so open. There is a general prompt and anyone can go anywhere to whatever they are interested in. My teachers really emphasize, try to find something that you are personally interested in, like something personal. Especially in GD some people distance themselves, try to make it objective but then the teachers especially in Design Studio

say you are making this work so you should put yourself into it. That's awesome!

Yukiko also told me that for her Graphic Design was a personal experience. It was not just about the visuals she was also encouraged to be thoughtful about what she wanted to say. I saw this play out in critique where the professor and students were responsive to how well students were using the medium of Typography to communicate their ideas. Simultaneously, though the professor was quick to pressure students if their voice was not clear. The critique was equally focused on the craft of Typography as well as personal expression. At one point during the critique, the professor invited me into the circle and asked me to view one of the books. We were in critique at this point for two hours so I think she wanted a fresh response. Yukiko and I spoke about it later and she was also surprised but pleased I was invited. Yukiko reported that some students viewed her professor's approach as difficult and even mean. She had a different opinion: "It's not like she was being mean. It's very straightforward and direct. But that means she cares".

Yukiko described another project in a Typography course last semester that gave her space to explore a topic that confronted ideas about Orientalism. She described the project in this way:

Last semester, for Typography class. We had this assignment, take a work of writing and take another work of writing and put them together in one book in a way that sends a message in your own voice. And say something about it. It was assigned text but the second text could be something else. The first one was: The Lovers. It was about French colonialism in Viet

Nam. The narrator was a White girl who was really young. And she has a love affair with this Chinese man and the book was not about race or anything but when I was reading it, it felt really weird like Orientalism. And it was written a long time ago and she probably was not thinking about that stuff. But I decided to do a critique on the writing. So I took the essay Orientalism and it started off with her writing, and then gradually putting in the Orientalism essay....intervening in her work and eventually it becomes...the Orientalism text colonizes her writing and overpowers it.

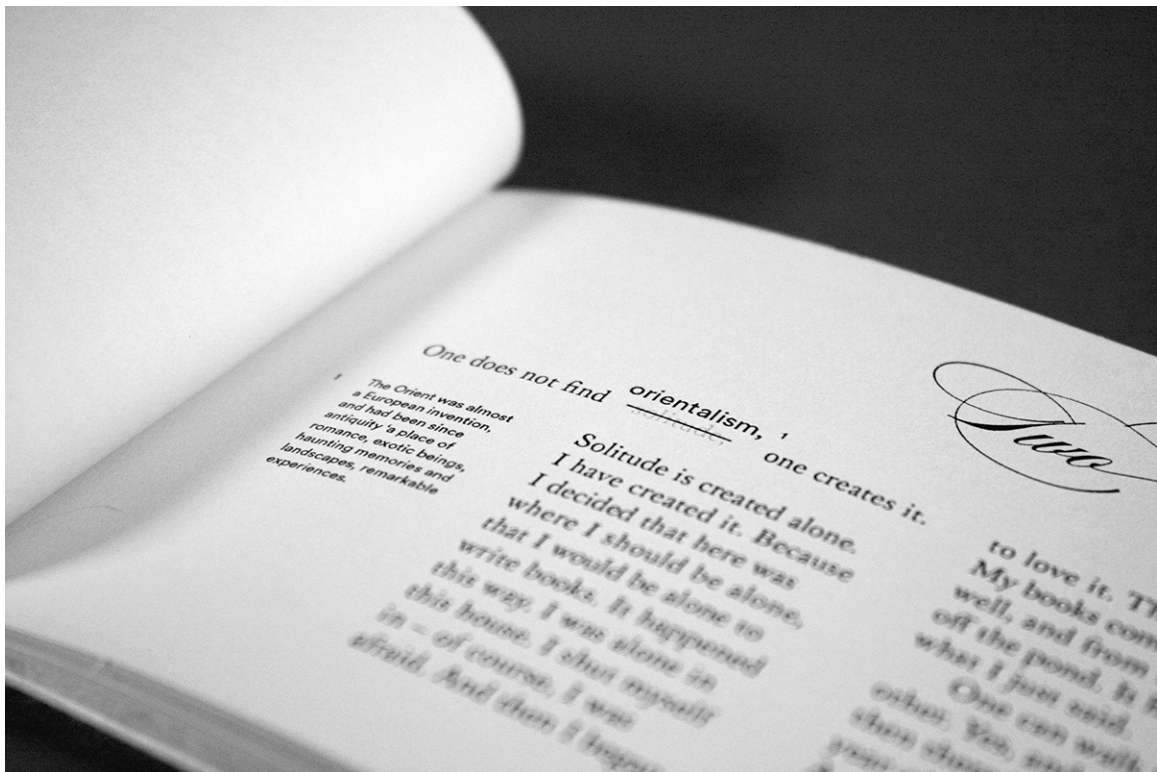


Photo 6. This is a detail from Yukiko's book titled, A European Invention: A Critique of Orientalism.

I commented that this project was a big leap from high school where conversations about race or experiences of difference were few to now at the institute where she was allowed to explore these ideas. I am pleased to see the connections Yukiko was making and I commented on being impressed by the project. Yukiko agreed but also mentioned she had always been interested in social justice type issues.

During our last meeting I described how interesting I find the work in the Graphic Design exhibit since it seemed students' uniqueness and personalities come out. I wondered if she could describe an assignment or project that reflected who she is. This was her response:

I think I'm getting ready to do projects that reflect more of who I am. I think it's a gradual process. And I think I've noticed its getting slowly implemented in my work. I don't think that there is anything so far that I can show this to someone and this can stand for who I am. I think its slowly getting there.

She also commented on the struggle exploring Japanese culture but she also expressed a desire to critique ideas about cultural appropriation:

I have not done anything explicitly about Japanese culture. As someone who has grown up in American mostly, I don't want to speak for Japanese culture. I think I can speak for Japanese American culture. I don't do it in my work. Sometimes I talk with my friends. And sometimes I have issues with cultural appropriation. There is a lot of that with Japanese culture. Maybe that would be interesting to talk about.

Yukiko's experience at ICAD and in Graphic Design had been positive for the most part. She also mentioned other Liberal Arts courses that have made an impact on her. One was History of Art, a required freshman course as one that helped her understand art history from a more global perspective. She reported the course did not really focus on Europe at all. Yukiko found this shifted focus refreshing and eye opening. Interestingly, neither Ana nor Lilly initially mentioned this course even though they both took it as a freshmen requirement. I actually brought it up with Ana to see if her experience of the course was similar but she does not reference it; she described a studio course that she found more helpful. At first glance, a required freshmen course that was from a global rather than a European perspective was encouraging considering the Eurocentric roots of ICAD. But somehow the objective to learn from a global focus in this course was lost on Ana and Lilly but not Yukiko. Perhaps the professors changed year to year and this impacted the delivery of the course. For Yukiko she was able to appreciate the broader perspective it hoped to offer.

Yukiko also mentioned a Global Textiles course that had given her space to explore, learn and grow intellectually. She was eager to learn from this perspective and was also delighted to see how passionate her professor was for the material.

She was also emphasizing we need to talk about all cultures. I'm really excited to learn about all of it. She was talking about how modern textiles are influenced from different cultures. And we don't really talk about it. We don't really know where the history is. So in the future, we

will have a project where you will have a piece of textile and identify the culture it is from.

I visited this class to gain insight into Yukiko's experience, and the topic of discussion that day was: China's Broad and Deep Histories in Textiles. The professor an older White woman with short gray hair admitted she was dressed very casually in flop flops and jeans because she was preparing for a traveling exhibit. Unlike the descriptions of older White faculty at the institute this professor seemed to be refreshingly different. Her rapport with students was evident right away and they all clapped when she mentioned her exhibit. She easily engaged in small talk with students as well as managing a large class of thirty students. She welcomed me with a warm smile and a firm handshake. Not knowing much about textiles myself, I found her lecture fascinating. The history of people in the Ming Dynasty was particularly compelling since they maintain their horse culture identity through court costumes. Even if the royalty never rode horses, they retained associations of culture through symbols on the fabric tailoring that reference riding clothes. I thought about Yukiko absorbing this material and what impression it might make on her. The course lived up to Yukiko's description and I realized that many elements aligned such as a professor who was engaging and critical content of this course made it one she appreciated.

The professor set a comfortable tone and fun way to engage the material and at the same time encouraged rigorous research and thinking. The professor asked students to write down on a piece of paper that circulated the room what the topic of their research will be. I saw from the interesting variety of research topics that the course stimulated

critical thinking. Yukiko's topic continued her exploration of colonialism and post-colonialism. Her topic was: British Colonialism in India and its Impact on Indian Textiles. Many of the topics focused on ideas from Asia such as Taoism and its interplay of balance and Shintoism's spiritual emphasis on nature. This may have to do with the fact that of the thirty students in attendance, fourteen are Asian. This may be another context from which Yukiko was enjoying the course so much. She felt at ease, comfortable with her peers in a community of learning. It was refreshing to hear Yukiko's experience and our meetings always left me feeling encouraged by the possibilities for students of color at ICAD.

Yes, I feel comfortable.

Unlike high school, Yukiko was no longer the only Asian person in class. Of the thirteen students in Yukiko's Typography course, half of them are Asian students. She expressed excitement and wonder when she told me about this feeling being at ICAD for the first time:

Seeing more Asian Americans, I had no idea there were so many in America. I know in California there is a lot but when I got here I was like, what! Where are all these people coming from? So that was exciting for me freshman year.

I had a similar feeling when I step foot on the ICAD campus. Though when I spoke to the Typography professor after class, she told me the majority of the Asian students are not students from the U.S. at ICAD but rather international students. This was confirmed in ICAD's data that separated international students out from U.S. students who identify

with a minority racial/ethnic group. Either way, Yukiko was energized by the presence of seeing so many Asian students perhaps after being educated in the Midwest where she was often the only Asian person in the classroom. Yukiko found herself in a different place and I wondered if it felt like I did the first time I went to China. Traveling to Asia in general gave me a sense of comfort and familiarity. I may not share the same ethnic heritage with those in China but there was an undeniable understanding that was difficult to describe. I wonder if this was how Yukiko felt.

There was another element of Yukiko's experience that I felt was important to highlight. She often mentioned her friends. They seemed to be a gentle yet guiding presence in her life at the institute and in our conversations. Her responses to my questions always referenced a conversation she has already had with a friend or ways she was processing an experience with her close-knit group. When she led me through a hallway to one of her classes she greeted five or six people along the short corridor by name or a knowing glance. She did feel comfortable here with many friends and acquaintances. When I saw her interact with her friends in class and at the art opening, it confirmed Yukiko thrived on being social. Her friends both male and female interacted with each other teasing and laughing with affection. Yukiko existed in a wide circle of people and I felt as if I became part of it in when she recommended one of her friends to my study. Being in a community with many Asian people had made her reflect on her own experience. She described it in this way:

I did notice that most of my friends are Asian Americans or are not White.

I did notice a lot of our conversation is focused on identity and what our

high schools were like. I find that really interesting. I feel identity is such a big part of my experience. I wonder what other people talk about. Maybe it's just my group of friends. Its a lot about that and then if we're talking about something else. It will always end up talking about that (identity).

She also found people who were questioning the world as well as challenging each other. Along with the courses that opened her mind to new concepts her friendships were doing that simultaneously as well. She told me about how she has changed:

I had two friends and they would always talk about it...one person was more about gender issues and the other person was more about racial issues. And just talking with them and hearing the conversations, I would realize things that I would have never thought of before.

Yukiko had a community of friends who she can confide in and she trusted to understand the experience of being Asian in the United States. Yukiko seemed amazed to find her “people” and realized that, even though they may have come from different parts of the country and the world and had different experiences ultimately their connections were real.

Yukiko mentioned her Chinese, Indian and Korean friends in Graphic Design, Illustration and Industrial Design. She sought out relationships and situations that were expansive rather than confining. She had become more sensitive to instances of micro-aggressions and racism and was beginning to confront these things in her academic and studio work. I observed Yukiko in two classes and saw her participate easily in critique, responding and questioning her professor and her classmates. I asked her if she felt

comfortable in the environment and she responded: “Yes, I feel comfortable. And I think that was something that happened after I came to college. In high school, I was more quiet and coming here I am able to express myself more because art is my passion”. Yukiko’s voice was strong and clear buoyed by her friendships and gaining knowledge and experience through her studio and academic work.

There was also a level of self-reflection, critical consciousness and willingness to interrogate her self and others to come to a better understanding of the world. Yukiko could clearly articulate her relationships to her identity. I thought about the layers of Yukiko’s experience and realized how much the relationship with her friends had allowed her to thrive. Yukiko admitted acknowledging the stereotypical mold of the shy submissive Asian woman and worked actively to shatter it. As she learned more through courses, personal relationships and experience Yukiko was emerging as a confident critical thinker in her art and writing. As conversation unfolded, there did not seem to be any underlying tension about her identity rather the tension arose more from how she was beginning to understand and position herself within the wider context of U.S. culture fraught with embedded elements of racism.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter offers a summary of the study, discussion and interpretation of the portraits, a challenge to institutes of art and design and higher education, enlightened educational practices, limitations and directions for future research and final thoughts.

Summary

The purpose of my study was to understand how a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy shaped experiences related to the development of students' racial/ethnic and cultural identity. I was also interested in understanding how student behaviors in the classroom such as participation, learning and academic and artistic expression manifested within this Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. The following questions guided my study:

- In what ways do students of color experience a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy?
- In ways do students of color perceive a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy?
- How is the development of racial/ethnic or cultural identity supported or hindered in a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy?
- How do students of color, learn, participate and respond to a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy in academic and studio courses?

My conceptual framework combined post-colonial theory and CRT to realize a broad and deep perspective of how students experienced a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. This framework also allowed for a historical and contemporary context from which to situate my study. I chose the qualitative method of Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) to give an approach that includes environmental, social, cultural and personal contexts from which to understand the institution and students in my study.

My findings revealed some similarities and differences in the portraits of Ana, Lilly and Yukiko. Ana and Lilly in Architecture and Industrial Design respectively both found their experiences in their departments to be lacking guidance. They often found themselves frustrated that their needs for more direction were never fully met by faculty. These majors are highly competitive and both students admitted doing their work under this immense pressure. Also, neither of them found support amongst their peers. Both students described their experience in their departments as a solitary exercise. Ana learned to adapt her way of working to satisfy the department expectations yet at the same time being true to her personal vision. Lilly was also meeting expectations of the department but did not assert her identity in any way in her studio work. Ana and Lilly also agreed there was little room in their departments for acknowledgement of their racial/ethnic or cultural identity. Ana's assessment of the department described the approach where they are focused on the "culture of the profession" as a priority over any other course of study.

Yukiko's experience diverged from Ana and Lilly where she experienced the curriculum and pedagogy in Graphic Design as one that was welcoming of her. Faculty offered critical engagement of the material where she had room to express her personal voice. Yukiko and Ana were similar in their experience of liberal arts courses that offered dialogue, critical thinking and opportunities to relate themselves into the curriculum. These courses made a big impact on their experiences and sense of belonging within the classroom. On the other hand, Lilly did not engage her racial or ethnic identity even when it was asked for specifically in a liberal arts course assignment. In contrast, Yukiko's understanding and awareness about racism and micro-aggressions came from her experience in a liberal arts course. For the most part, Yukiko had positive experiences with faculty though her emerging critical consciousness empowered her to acknowledge and name racism and micro-aggression in and out of the classroom when they did occur. Yukiko's experience differed from Ana and Lilly since she was given room in her Graphic Design and liberal arts courses to relate her identity and personal voice into her work.

ECHOES echo

This section will discuss the findings from the portraits in my study. Throughout my dissertation, I had been preoccupied by the sense that there may be other ways to express the concepts and themes I am exploring in my study. I saw a multidisciplinary dance performance called ECHO at the Multicultural Arts Center in Cambridge, MA created by Brigitte Dunn-Korpela (2015) that examined race, identity and the systematic erasure of Black narratives that confirmed my feeling. Through the dancers bodies I saw

their interpretation of years of trauma related to African American displacement through the Middle Passage as well as the ramifications of that violent history. ECHO was so aptly named and I saw moments in the three portraits of Ana, Lilly and Yukiko as well as my own experience play out on stage. The portraits of Ana, Lilly and Yukiko also revealed that the curriculum and pedagogy at ICAD imposed a type of mask that estranged them from their identities.

The theatre where the performance took place was small adding to the intimacy of the experience seating sixty people at the most. The particular scene I describe was after the audience had been submerged by a cacophony of drums, sounds, lights and dancers bodies simulating the violence and trauma of the “Voyage” of the Middle Passage from West Africa to the West Indies to fulfill the Atlantic slave trade. Suddenly, everything stopped and the theatre was now assaulted with silence. I only heard the dancers breathing. Three dancers stood at attention on the perimeter of an oval white and purple light that bathed the stage. A male dancer signifying a slave captor approached the dancers wearing a tricorn hat and long frock coat. He placed a white mask on all three dancers. Any distinguishing features of face paint, eyes or expression were concealed. After the mask was placed on one male dancer, he took his own hand as if in slow motion grabbed his neck and pushed his head down and to the side and then his whole body bent down as if in pain. A female dancer after she was masked immediately gestured her head down with her own hand. The second female dancer after the mask was placed on her moved her head down without any other gesture as if she was spent.

This was the moment in ECHO when history was implicated by post-colonial theory and the terrorization of colonized people began. My experience was not as dramatic but in my mind similarly traumatic when the “Eskimo” doll was given to me in first grade like the mask it erased my story. The mask muffled my voice and made it difficult to speak. I was aware of what was going on around me but I had limited ability to react because my mask was firmly positioned. CRT also pointed to my early experience as evidence of systemic racism in educational systems. My young son attended the performance and his question stopped me in my tracks. He said: “Why did they not fight”? This question struck to the heart of my dissertation in the portraits of Ana, Lilly and Yukiko. Their portraits helped me understand how they have been affected by a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. The portraits also revealed what messages were being communicated to students through the classroom, faculty and college wide communications.

Racial/ethnic and cultural identities.

There are overlapping relationships with post-colonial theory and CRT as well as CRT and portraiture. These relationships only help to compliment and support a better understanding of the experiences of Ana, Lilly and Yukiko and how they have developed their racial/ethnic and cultural identities. CRT uses the individual to highlight broader societal issues related to race and racism in the institute. Portraiture on the other hand uses societal contexts to build a composite of the individual. Together CRT and portraiture offered a deep and thorough contextual understanding to their experiences. All three portraits share this particular framework but revealed different realities.

Ana identified strongly with being Colombian and resisted any type of encroachment on this identity. Though she understood that the mask was part of her reality another gesture of adaptation, an exhausting exercise but she deferred to it. Ana was troubled by the imposition of curriculum and pedagogy that left her little room to examine herself but she did not name racism as the difficulty she faced.

Lilly was indifferent to her Korean identity. She made no movement to take off the mask and in some ways had no understanding that she had one on. It was as if the straps of her mask had been so firmly positioned by her past experience and schooling and only tightened at the institute. Lilly was impervious to potentially positive influences in her academic courses to adjust the straps and reflect on her cultural identity.

Yukiko on the other hand had been steered in her identity development through some academic courses at the institute that also guided her personal reflection. She recognized the systemic racism she has experienced and was beginning to enact defiant gestures expressing her difficulty with racism and micro-aggressions. She was proud of being Asian and hoped to find more ways to express her Japanese culture. Yukiko was in a transformative moment peeking from behind her mask encouraged by her courses ready to loosen the straps to see the world from an unencumbered perspective. Yukiko's portrait acknowledged CRT but offered a response that was not an echo of the past but rather a hopeful song for the future. Yukiko represented a dancer who was not on stage but perhaps the one my son hoped to see.

Like Yukiko, I brought a deep internal dialogue to the conversation about my identity over the years and to this study. I found myself being driven by questions from a

position of a person who grew up from an immigrant family as an outsider in a historically White community. A conversation with Lilly triggered a memory of telling my mom in fourth grade that I didn't think any foreigners should be allowed to enter the United States. I parroted what I heard in school from other kids not knowing at the time an aunt living with us was undocumented and also negating the experience of my immigrant parents. My mom didn't correct me but asked why I felt that way. I recognized this moment as one where my mask was securely placed. I was indicting myself, fully enacting the project of contemporary colonialization and not knowing it. The words of the artist Wangechi Mutu rung in my ears: "Once you teach people how to hate themselves, the colonizer doesn't need to do it anymore. They'll do it themselves" (lecture, March 3, 2015). This is also how I understood the gesture of the dancers pushing their own heads down. This was also where post-colonial theory and CRT more fully allowed us to see how historical racism in education was just an extension of colonialism where the dominant culture can often times so thoroughly dominate identity, humanity and spirit without awareness by those most affected. Perhaps this was also an answer to my son's question about why the dancers did not fight.

Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy.

The history of ICAD steeped in the narrow values of Eurocentrism and its continued legacy did little to improve the experiences of students of color in this environment. These beliefs were so thoroughly embedded in the curriculum and pedagogy despite outward markers such as marketing campaigns, catalog language and public events that hoped to communicate an inclusive environment. Eurocentrism was

strong in the present day curriculum enacted through the discipline based majors and the over-riding reliance on learning the “culture of the profession”. Attempts to reorient approaches in freshmen History of Art course to a global perspective was lost on Ana and Lilly but not Yukiko. If a transformed perspective were truly actualized it would seem that a more inclusive curriculum would make an impact on all of the students. Despite efforts to shift perspectives in this course Ana and Lilly were unimpressed with the curriculum. This also related to the literature review area of the hidden curriculum that described a hidden curriculum as one that preserved hegemonic authority (Apple, 1982). The History of Art course looked like mere window dressing still framing a Eurocentric view of the curriculum.

Unwelcoming experiences in studio courses.

The perceptions and experiences of studio courses were unwelcoming and narrow particularly for Ana and Lilly. From Ana’s experience it seemed the Architecture program focused students on the “culture of the profession” to the detriment of cultivating or nourishing those other essential nutrients such as relationships, dialogue and community. There was also seldom room for personal expression or exploration of race/ethnic or cultural identity. This type of exploration may be a distraction for students to being steeped in the disciplines’ industry standards. This was also my interpretation of Lilly’s experience in Industrial Design. Her experience was one where she had to contort to expectations of the department to find her “designer” identity at the expense of her own personal identity. Lilly spoke about being more preoccupied with the demands and expectations of her professors than about ideas she hoped to express. Ana and Lilly also

both expressed a highly competitive, chaotic and isolating environment in their departments. Ana never mentioned bonding with peers or faculty. It seems the department culture was fiercely independent and she became that way too. Lilly also mentioned being intimidated by professors and students were driven by ego.

Faculty out of touch.

Ana and Lilly also perceived and experienced their faculty to be distant and out of touch in relation to advising, critique and cultural insensitivity. In terms of advising, Ana described her professor as one who was: “with too much on his plate” and unresponsive to her need for more direction in her work. She also described her faculty advisor as aloof, not motivating and their relationship consisted of many instances of “A LOT of lack of communication”.

Ana and Lilly also both describe the experience in their studio courses as isolating in relation to critique. Critique both left them feeling unsure of where they stood in their departments because faculty gave little feedback. Lilly felt particularly lost because this indirect approach by faculty left her feeling more confused about her work. The experiences of Ana and Lilly were similar to experiences of students of color in my literature review at PWIs who were alienated, experienced racism and had a hard time fitting into the college environment (Allen, 1992; Jones, Catellanos & Cole, 2002; Cobham & Parker, 2007; Harper, 2009; Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Whal & McBride, 2013).

Even though Yukiko had the most positive experience at the institute she still recognized moments and experiences of racism and micro-aggression in the classroom

that translated to cultural insensitivity. The experience Yukiko related about the professor who appropriated Japanese text, as a backdrop in her own personal work was a startling example of a visual micro-aggression. Yukiko believed this work signaled a profound gesture of disrespect and lack of cultural understanding. I think this experience also became a stark reminder for Yukiko of the responsibility of a designer to create visual communication that is clear and considerate of a diversity of audiences. Yukiko's experience was also reinforced the study by Jones et al. (2002) and Lewis, Chesler and Forman (2000) that courses have done little to support understanding of cultural diversity and that it was essential for faculty to interrogate their pedagogy and demonstrate a level of cultural competency not just their own area of knowledge. Yukiko gave me three examples of this type of cultural insensitivity in the classroom by faculty. Another example of this was Yukiko's Graphic Design faculty who identified as a feminist but did not have a clear understanding of Asian culture and was culturally insensitive to a Chinese student. Lilly also expressed disappointment in the lack of Asian faculty in her department. The percentage of faculty of color at 1% does little to demonstrate institutional commitment for a diverse professoriate instead shows lack of support for students of color. A study in my literature review also found that a lack of demonstrated institutional support for diverse faculty and staff was also problematic for students of color (Mayhew et al. 2005).

Identity on the margins.

Because Ana and Lilly found few opportunities in their studio majors to explore anything other than discipline-based exercises, their identities in these courses were on

the margins of their work. In Ana's portrait her response to this was adaptation and she immersed herself so thoroughly into a material exploration for her thesis project.

Because Ana had such a strong sense of herself, she was able to deflect off encroachment on it by the curriculum and pedagogy. Her response was to channel her energies and take her identity out of the equation of her work. In other words, her identity did not become a part of the conversation because her work was a material exploration of wood and "very technical" in her words. Lilly on the other hand was still questioning her identity and the intrusion of the Industrial Design curriculum left her feeling confused and directionless. Lilly did a solid final project for her Design Process class inspired by her grandfather who had diabetes. Despite having one of the better projects in the class she admitted to me she still did not know where she stood in the department. Lilly was left with an uneasy feeling because faculty never met her need for reassurance. Lilly included her grandfather's experience to inspire her work but she still felt on the margins of her learning.

Lilly also expressed such discomfort with her racial/ethnic identity in a liberal arts course that when she was specifically asked to explore her cultural identity she resisted. Lilly told me she was so anxious about not wanting to perpetuate stereotypes concerning Korean people that it paralyzed her response. It seemed that Lilly enacted another side of the study I found by Margolis and Romero (1998) where a hidden curriculum delegitimized diverse cultures and perpetuated stereotypes. Lilly sensed the possibility for stereotypes in the classroom so sensitively that her only response was a non-response. She could have done so much to counter-act stereotypes through her work but it seemed

the risk was far too great for her to take. In some ways, her non-assertive response may have done more to actualize a stereotype of Asian women she was hoping to avoid.

Yukiko was most critically aware of the three and poised to make work related to identity but still she felt: “I don’t think there is anything (work) so far that I can show to someone and (say) this can stand for who I am”. The Graphic Design department encouraged critical thinking and student voices to be expressed in their work. But Yukiko admitted her identity was a “gradual process” and was “slowly getting implemented” in her work. But for now her identity was on the margins like Ana and Lilly.

Liberal arts courses offered space.

A few examples in the portraits of Ana and Yukiko point to areas that illustrated how a culturally responsive curriculum invites and was compatible with student’s own personal experiences. This reinforced studies in my literature review that confirmed the benefits of culturally responsive classrooms (Bergeron, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Tavin, 2003). Culturally responsive curriculum includes multiple perspectives and de-centers a male dominated Western view of knowledge that broadens thinking to legitimize multiple perspectives in the classroom. The portraits of Ana and Yukiko also demonstrated how Social Justice Art Education (SJAE) fosters imagination and expression for students to question societal norms that perpetuate inequality (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Garber, 2004; Lanier, 1969).

Ana expressed excitement about an example where she used something from her cultural background that pertained to the curriculum. In the Dance for Parkinson’s class,

she demonstrated a modified salsa dancing exercise to Parkinson's patients. The course Yukiko took, *Marginalized Existence* was a good example of SJAIE identified in my literature review that did give voice to people on the fringes of society and disrupted the cycle of injustice by stimulating critical thinking and bringing awareness (Desai & Chalmers, 2007; Garber, 2004 & Lanier, 1969). Yukiko's interest in social justice issues led her to this course and it made a profound impact on her transformation intellectually and personally. Some assignments in her Graphic Design courses also gave her similar space to invite her personal viewpoints and identity into conversation with the curriculum. I witnessed this myself in the exhibit of Graphic Design students where personal voice and expression were clear and strong in the work presented. Yukiko's experience also reinforced the study in my literature review by Smith and Maddox (1998) that found courses with cultural content had positive impressions on students of color.

Ana also had a positive experience with the course *People in Diaspora* that emphasized the experience of people in context to their political, social and economic situations. She responded to many aspects of the course from it being discussion based where students were encouraged to express themselves to the fact that students sat in a circle during class. This course was a refuge from the rigid Architecture program. The content focused on a non-European diaspora and the decentering of the Western experience allowed for student's own experience to take center stage in their learning. This approach of decentering Western knowledge was also something identified with culturally responsive curriculum in my literature review (Agbo, 2001; Bergeron, 2008; Hemmings, 1994; Lee, 1999; Smith-Maddox, 1998).

I also observed four student presentations and two of them were informed by their ethnic backgrounds of Mexican and Dominican and the other was inspired by their cultural immersion experience in India. These examples also reinforced the Smith-Maddox (1998) study in my literature review where cultural and personal knowledge was presented alongside the traditional curriculum that offered new ways of learning and knowledge for students of color. The professor recognized this course was offering something different for students of color who seldom had opportunities to feel welcomed in the curriculum. Ana was as equally enthusiastic about this course and the professor as she was disenchanted with her faculty and curriculum in the Architecture program. These experiences could not be any starker. It was such a lost opportunity to think about the other possible areas of learning and development related to Ana and Lilly's identity particularly in their studio courses that remained untapped and sealed in their education. Studies in my literature review also recognized the positive consequence of culturally responsive curriculum for students of color (Bergeron, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Smith & Maddox, 1998).

Potential for sustained language literacy.

From the three portraits, I also reflect on the research related to culturally sustaining pedagogy in my literature review that encouraged sustained language literacy, preservation, development and cultural pluralism (Paris, 2012) in light of the experiences with language of all three students in my study. Ana, Lilly and Yukiko were fluent in their native languages, Ana in Spanish, Lilly in Korean and Yukiko in Japanese. During the time that I met them all of them had just returned or were planning a trip to their

countries of ethnic origin. A study by McCarty, Romero and Zepeda (2006) promoted approaches that counteract the favoring of the dominant language at the expense of students' native languages. This same study also found that a reinforcement of native language instills cultural pride and critical literacy. A focus on language could satisfy Yukiko's regret about losing her language skills and a more thorough comprehension of language for Lilly could add a layer of understanding about her Korean culture. Ana had already demonstrated how important maintaining the Spanish language was in her life. It is yet to be determined the limitless possibilities of including sustained language and cultural development within the curriculum of art and design but these portraits signal an opportunity.

The inheritance of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy like the seams of a dress, can be sewn firmly and tucked in tight but will eventually wear down and fray. As much as this institute has tried to hem in the outward appearances of Eurocentrism and be more inclusive, Ana and Lilly's experience in the traditional discipline based fields of Architecture and Industrial Design respectively point to a different story. Fixing disciplines to their separate places as practiced at the institute was another vestige of a Eurocentric approach to curriculum and pedagogy. Yukiko was poised to emerge from behind the mask of a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy only to realize the landscape was stained with its trace.

A challenge to institutes of art and design and higher education

I am left to question how the broader field of higher education can be more inclusive and support an exploration of identity development for all students. If

educational institutes, K-12 and higher education systematically stifles one's ability to understand and develop their own identity then it is no wonder so few artists of color can be counted in the fields of art and design in the United States. Many artists have said it in different ways but one of my earliest mentors, Ruth Bernhard a photographer would often say: "Photography is not separated from life. It is about the development of the whole person" (1996). Institutes of art and design and higher education in general need to do a better job of considering a holistic approach to education; rather than suppressing one's identity for another one to rise (radio broadcast, Alexander, 2016). The best possible scenario for students of color is when the art/work of that person is indivisible from their identity. My study challenges traditional practices and offers a way to see new perspectives where we protect and keep intact identities of students of color throughout their education.

Enlightened educational practices

The role of higher education is a weighty one because we are responsible for educating students on the threshold of becoming vital members of society. Higher education institutions, administrators, scholars, faculty and students can all play a role in improving the experiences for students of color. The key to enlightened educational practices is when all of these key stakeholders are equally invested in the project of improving the experiences for students of color. Recent examples across higher education point to new ways of encouraging inclusiveness, confronting racism and creating bridges of dialogue to these important conversations. Implications of my research are also included in these examples.

History and new voices in scholarship.

My CRT examination of ICAD gave a context to understand the legacy from which it was founded and interrogate the consequences such as student's estrangement from identity, lack of cultural understanding from faculty and institution's perpetuation of racism. I believe my study revealed the benefit of using CRT as a research framework not just at institutes of art and design but also at institutions of higher education in general. Scholars of history and higher education also recommend for the use of this type of framework.

Recently, I heard Brian Balogh a history professor at the University of Virginia and Peter Onuf a senior research fellow at Monticello interviewed on the NPR program about the call for a name change to the Woodrow Wilson building at the University of Virginia. Wilson was a contradictory figure, the father of modern liberalism as well as an active proponent and participant of segregationist policy. This legacy had been the guiding force behind student demands to remove Wilson's name from a building. The historians argue that it was important to leave his name as a reminder of the legacy we are trying to dismantle. Onuf states: "...when something disturbs us in history it is not to turn away from it but rather engage it. The answer is more history, not the denial of history" (Neary, 2015). It was not just the name on a building we need to confront rather honest dialogue grounded in a thorough grasp of history as part of our curriculum could begin to dismantle misconceptions and add layers of truth to our collective understanding.

An innovative educational approach that combines an examination of higher education history with an expanded landscape of learning and invites many voices into the conversation that have been historically excluded is needed. The voices of women, students and faculty of color, LGTBQ individuals are part of the important perspectives we not only seek but also require in order to create a truly integrated community. Research and scholarship that also opens up these perspectives is imperative as we maneuver through our complicated legacy in the United States.

Student movements.

I have begun to see changes in how students are reacting to Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. On my campus, the Black Artists Union (BAU) has actively inserted conversations through art events, dialogue with administration and workshops with their peers about the necessity of more inclusive curriculum in academic and studio courses. The Black Lives Matter movement is an ongoing conversation for these students. The “I Too Am” campaign is another national movement that broadcasts the experiences of African Americans and other marginalized students on college campuses. Similarly, the actions of the football players at the University of Missouri to oust the University president for his inadequacy to deal with racism on campus opened a floodgate of other student movements across the country. Students of color most affected by the oppressive environments of historically White institutions are not taking their experiences lightly. It is important that all institutional members but most importantly senior administrators take these student movements seriously. Their voices are worthy of notice in their hopes for more inclusive educational spaces and dismantling of policies that perpetuate racism.

Rather than seeing their demands as a nuisance I think senior administration should take a hard look at if and how their institutions could be implicated in these concerns.

Faculty, department and administrative movements.

Student movements have disrupted business as usual on college campuses yet faculty can do more to increase the critical consciousness in their classrooms, with their colleagues and administration as well. Recently one African American professor at my institute was racially profiled and detained by police as a suspect in a robbery. There was an outpouring of support for this faculty member and within hours a grass roots faculty and student led initiative for a teach-in surrounding Black Lives Matter issues was born. This unfortunate event galvanized our community with the recognition that the ongoing trauma and experience of people of color is not a theoretical exercise but a lived experience for students and faculty in and out of the classroom. This is the type of enlightened thinking we need to move the conversation forward to enact policies and practices that make a difference around issues of race. The challenge now is to be proactive rather than reactive in planning and support of programs and curriculum.

A few implications from my study could inform a proactive approach to curriculum and pedagogy. These efforts are situated in a coordinated effort between academic and studio departments, faculty and administration. Departments need to ask themselves how advising and critique addresses the needs of students of color. And how can departments create a more collegial community for students of color. It would also be helpful for faculty to interrogate their pedagogical philosophy around education, equity and cultural inclusivity. A new approach could disrupt the traditional hierarchy

in the classroom and give space to invite all students to be considered sources of knowledge and equal participants in their learning. Institutional administrations must reinforce, create incentives and foster a campus culture where departments, faculty and students are free to pursue strategies to support educational equity issues.

Identity in the curriculum.

Another pro-active way to galvanize enlightened thinking is through more consideration of the curriculum. For example, there are a growing number of higher education programs re-oriented to a social justice focus but I argue that these programs need to be grounded in courses that consider identity development from a diversity of perspectives. As we have seen in my research curriculum and pedagogy disassociated from the identities of students of color continues a legacy of omission that relegates these students to the margins of their learning. A curriculum where identity exploration is infused in studio and liberal arts courses offers an experience where one's own identity is more meaningfully aligned with their academic and studio work. My study unveiled examples where a culturally responsive curriculum enabled students to find their voices. Critical pedagogy was also highlighted in a few of the courses where students in my study were able to digest and understand the larger context of issues of historical racism and oppression. I take it a step further and say that a curriculum approach that includes identity development is beneficial in any context because this process has the potential for students of color to become more confident, aware and grounded in whom they are. This transforms students who have been historically alienated to ones who are in positions to develop the full capacities of their education and learning.

Limitations and future research

There are a few limitations to my study that also point to areas for future research. My study was situated at only one private institute of art and design. A study of two institutes of art and designs both private or both publics could offer interesting comparisons. I created three portraits of women who were all from design fields for my study. Having men from design and fine art fields and women from the fine arts fields could also offer a wider perspective to future study.

One other area for future research that stood out glaringly was the experience of international Asian students within a Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. I observed four classes at the institute and in all four classes more than half were Asian students. All three students mentioned international Asian students had an influence on their own classroom experience. Three of the faculty I met made it a point to mention that the high numbers of international students did impact their classroom. At many times during my study I wondered about the international Asian student experience in this historically Eurocentric institute of art and design.

Final thoughts

I realize my path to this work began when I entered school in first grade and realized for the first time I was different from my classmates. This happened again and again and the accumulated experience of being on the margins of my education in small and large parts informed this dissertation. Meeting Ana, Lily and Yukiko validated my experience as well as taught me how students of color have had to navigate a very similar terrain that I did in their own unique ways. These stories reveal a common experience of

navigating an educational landscape that is not always welcoming of them. These portraits play a small role in demystifying what it is like to maneuver classrooms where we were never meant to belong. The injustices of racism and the vestiges of post-colonialism are interwoven in the educational system in the U.S. Rather than shrink in the face of these challenges I find hope in the words of a historian George Frederickson: “The responsibility of the historian or sociologist who studies racism is not to moralize and condemn but to understand this malignancy so that it can be more effectively treated, just as a medical researcher studying cancer does not moralize about it but searches for knowledge that might point the way to a cure” (Frederickson, 2009, p. 158). His words remove judgment and blame not to make the task feel any less daunting but rather to infuse a sense of urgency to combat racism since like cancer has been an equally devastating disease of our educational culture.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Restatement of introduction and study prior to the interview:

Some institutes of art and design feel a sense of urgency to embrace inclusivity in the curriculum to respond to the changing cultural realities of their students (Chalmers, 2002; Hughes, 1998). This study hopes to give a more complete understanding of how curriculum and pedagogy shape the experiences of students of color at institutes of art and design.

Interviewer:

I am interested in how curriculum content and teaching methods shape your experiences in the classroom such as your cultural identity and artistic and academic work. Your insights and experiences are valuable for a better understanding of how to improve the experiences of students of color with the curriculum and teaching methods in academic and studio courses. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

I am interested in the details of your experience, something that made a difference and will help me understand what this experience has meant to you.

Interview protocol

These questions may help students understand the significance of the experience for them.

- How do you define your cultural identity? How did you develop this idea about your cultural identity?
- When faculty interacts with you, how much do they acknowledge your cultural identity? And if they do, how do you feel when they acknowledge your cultural identity?
- How is your cultural identity reflected in the curriculum? If it is, how specifically is it reflected i.e., assignments, examples, and course material? How do you feel when your culture is reflected in the curriculum?
- How much of your cultural identity is part of your artistic practice?
- How much of your cultural identity is part of your academic work?
- Can you show me an art piece that symbolizes/represents your cultural identity?
- How does this work illustrate questions and challenges about or pride in your cultural identity?
- How is your academic and studio work influenced by what you're learning in class or how the content of the course is taught?

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APPENDIX B
OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Date:

Time:

Location:

Class or Event:

Topics Discussed:

Number and gender of students; number of students of color/number of White students

Descriptive Notes:

Reflective Notes:

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