ABSTRACT

NEWVILLE, SANDRA. Intersection of Art and Emancipation: The Road to Rebellious Subjectivity. (Under the direction of Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner and John M. Pettit.)

This study describes the framework that artists use to create works of art that foster emancipatory responses in viewers. Then it relates that framework to adult educators creating emancipatory learning experiences for their students. It uses phenomenological methods, involving participants as co-researchers in in-depth interviews, prolonged engagement and frequent member checks, to explore the artists’ direct experience with the phenomenon.

The conceptual framework for this study is found in John Dewey’s (1934) *Art and Experience* with his definition of experience as the interaction of the self and the world, and Herbert Marcuse’s (1978) *Aesthetic Dimension* and his concept of rebellious subjectivity. The theoretical framework rests on critical adult education theory, specifically, critical pragmatism.

The study analyzes the philosophical framework, practice, and process of six artists whose paintings promoted an emancipatory response in the researcher. Three themes emerged as significant: 1) thinking and painting; 2) knowing yourself; and 3) trusting the process. “Thinking and painting” describes the complexity of artistic thinking. It involves the dynamics of feeling, seeing beyond the surface and thinking in a way that is open-ended, open to possibilities rather than being pre-planned. “Knowing yourself” is where emancipation happens. It involves knowing why we feel the way we do, the need to keep evolving and growing, being true to the heart and desire to be original, to create something new. “Trusting the process” explores imaginative power. It involves having intentions but not outlining outcomes, problem-solving in context of the whole, and staying spontaneous, allowing things to happen.
The study relates the artists’ themes to adult educators in an analysis of the connections between art and emancipation, consideration of emancipatory values, learning how to act from what we feel, and how to use the artists’ process in our own experiences. It adds to an understanding in the discourse of why and how art is emancipatory and lays a foundation for further research in educators’ self reflection, applications to emancipatory practice, methodology, curriculum, evaluation and the development of new ways of teaching and learning.
INTERSECTION OF ART AND EMANCIPATION:
THE ROAD TO REBELLIOUS SUBJECTIVITY

by

SANDRA NEWVILLE

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BIOGRAPHY

As an undergraduate at Michigan State University I started out as an art major with the expectation that art would play a role in my future. My enthusiasm was soon dampened by impersonal critiques on the teachers’ part and unfocused career goals on my part. I then decided to pursue my interest in art by studying other peoples’ art through a bachelor’s degree in art history.

During the eleven years I spent as editorial business manager of The Christian Science Monitor, I saw the impact visual elements had in drawing readers in and communicating the message of the stories. Although much of my time was spent dealing with numbers, I could see the significance of the visual in the achievement of our goals.

As an outgrowth of this insight, I decided, once again, to pursue my interest in art through a master’s degree in Graphic Design at North Carolina State University. At that time, the graphic design field was being transformed by the computer. I saw the potential of multimedia as a communication tool, for business as well as for education.

After graduation, I got involved with the early distance education activity at NC State. I did a study on the students’ experience in learning online and found that many of the problems they were encountering could be addressed through visual solutions. As principal investigator of a three-year international distance education grant project with two Russian universities, I had the opportunity to explore further the connections between learning and art.

These experiences led me to my first course in adult education, The Adult Learner. Through this course, and this approach to education, I experienced my own emancipation as a learner, and knew that I wanted to become an adult educator in order to help other people
experience the same freedom. I also realized the significant impact my background in art had on that emancipatory experience. Since then, I have focused my research on understanding the nature of the power of art in the emancipation of learners. By becoming an emancipatory adult educator, I am finally putting my art into practice as an “artist educator.”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was a labor of love. It is the outcome of the dedicated effort of a team of educators and artists who are committed to the promotion of the emancipation of teachers and learners.

My own emancipation began in 1998 as a result of The Adult Learner course, my first course in adult education. It was strengthened and broadened over the next six years by the teacher of that course, the co-chair of my committee and my friend, Dr. John Pettitt. Through his example, I had the privilege of experiencing the transformative power of the “artist educator” I was researching. Without his support and encouragement, this dissertation could not have been written.

When it came time to give form to these ideas, co-chair Dr. Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner, provided guidance in the development of my research methods and thoughtful critique to its presentation. She encouraged the creative expression of my findings, “using words and feeling the way the artists use paint.” This allowed the dissertation to take form in an organic wholeness the way a painting takes form through the artist’s authentic experience.

With her trained quantitative eye, Dr. Diane Chapman provided a critical sounding board against which I could analyze my qualitative assumptions. Her critique of the participant selection criteria and process added significantly to the validity of this project.

Through his practice in technology education and creativity, Dr. Richard Peterson moves regularly along the art and reason continuum. He provided a practical perspective on how to present the material in a format that would be most accessible to educators, enabling them to find application for its ideas in their own practice.
As “expert reviewer,” Kathleen Rieder, painter and educator in art and design at NC State University’s College of Design, critiqued my methods, meanings and interpretations as they related to art throughout the project. She helped me navigate the culture of the local art scene and provided valuable perspective on connections between art and education.

And a heartfelt thank you goes to each of my artist co-researchers, Jason Craighead, Richard Garrison, Philip Levine, Gayle Stott Lowry, Gerry Lynch and Anthony Ulinski, for their dedication and desire to help educators see the value of artistic thinking in their teaching. We journeyed together, exploring, discovering, and trying to find the words for the questions as well as the answers. My life, as well as this project, has been greatly enriched by their contribution.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................... xii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ..................... 1

Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1

Reason and Art ..................................................................................................................... 2

Oppression of Everyday Experience ................................................................................. 3

Contrasting the Rational and the Artistic in Emancipatory Education ............................. 5

Theoretical framework ........................................................................................................ 7

The Power of Art in Emancipation ..................................................................................... 7

The Power of Artistic Thinking in Emancipatory Education ............................................ 8

Research Questions and Statement of Purpose ................................................................. 9

The Researcher ................................................................................................................... 10

Background to the Problem ............................................................................................... 10

Significance of the Study ................................................................................................... 17

To the Practice of Adult Education .................................................................................... 17

To Research on Adult Learning ........................................................................................ 18

To Adult Education Literature ........................................................................................ 18

Definitions ......................................................................................................................... 19

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................................... 22

Adult Education and Emancipatory Experience ................................................................. 23

Goals of Emancipatory Learning ...................................................................................... 23

Emancipation and Experience ......................................................................................... 26

Emancipatory Ways of Knowing ...................................................................................... 28

Summary ............................................................................................................................ 30
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epoche</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontalizing</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textural Description</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Differentiation through Imaginative Variation</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Display</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Finding</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR: PORTRAITS OF THE ARTISTS</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Levine</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayle Stott Lowry</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Garrison</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Craighead</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Ulinski</td>
<td>Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerry Lynch</td>
<td>Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE: THEMES FROM THE PORTRAITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking and Painting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of Feeling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the Surface</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing Yourself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Aware</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Be Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Released from Rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting the Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Stages of Experience and Related Ways of Knowing.................................20
Figure 2. Ian Fairweather, 1969...................................................................................37
Figure 3. Jackson Pollock, Autumn Rhythm, 1950.........................................................39
Figure 4. Vincent Van Gogh, Shoes, 1886. .................................................................42
Figure 5. Philip Levine, The Godding of the Soul, Oil on Canvas, 2006.......................78
Figure 6. Philip Levine, Homeless Man, Oil on Canvas, 2004.....................................83
Figure 7. Philip Levine, Portrait of the Researcher, Oil on Canvas, 2006.....................86
Figure 8. Gayle Stott Lowry, Was It Real or in a Dream, Oil on Canvas, 2006.............87
Figure 9. Gayle Stott Lowry, Endurance Exhibit, 2006..............................................91
Figure 10. Gayle Stott Lowry, Sustenance, Oil on Canvas, 2006.................................92
Figure 11. Richard Garrison, Improvisation One, Oil on Canvas, 2007.......................96
Figure 12. Richard Garrison, Man with Mathematics, Oil on Panel, 2006...............101
Figure 13. Richard Garrison, The Return, Oil on Panel, 2006..................................103
Figure 14. Jason Craighead, Untitled Blue, Oil on Canvas, 2007...............................106
Figure 15. Jason Craighead, Structure with Green, Oil on Canvas 2006....................111
Figure 16. Jason Craighead, Structure 61, Oil on Canvas, 2006.................................113
Figure 17. Anthony Ulinski, Still Life with Striped Cloth, Oil on Canvas, 2005........115
Figure 18. Anthony Ulinski, Two Women, Oil on Canvas, 2006.................................120
Figure 19, Anthony Ulinski, Two Yellow Tea Cups, 2006........................................123
Figure 20. Gerry Lynch, Black Gold, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2006.......125
Figure 21. Gerry Lynch, Necklace, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2005........127
Figure 22. Gerry Lynch, Sky Cam, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2006.........130
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Emancipatory learning “frees people from personal, institutional, or environmental forces that prevent them from seeing new directions, from gaining control of their lives, their society and their world” (Apps, 1985, p. 151). This liberation begins with uncovering and throwing off oppressive influences and learning to think for ourselves, constructing our own realities rather than living out the realities imposed by others (Peca, 2000). Emancipatory adult educators draw from critical theory, feminist pedagogy, and post-structuralist theories, among others, to develop pedagogical practices that foster emancipatory learning. Although they may use “practices based on these theories, they do not always result in emancipatory learning” (Imel, 1999, p. 3).

Within the last decade, a connection between art and emancipation of learners has been made in the discourse. Loughlin found, in her study of professional women change agents, that “the introduction of the arts into the educational encounter can sensitize and broaden understanding of others’ realities through exercising imagination and choice” (1994, p. 9). Brookfield (2002) added that “Marcuse believed that individual artistic experiences could induce a revolutionary estrangement from everyday life, a distancing from normality that nurtured the tendency to political critique. According to this logic, a truly critical adult education would be concerned not just with locating itself within existing social movements but also with creating intense aesthetic experiences that trigger a rupture with present-day reality” (p. 266). Although the connection between art and emancipation of learners has been made (Brookfield 2002; Loughlin, 1992; Greene, 1995; Marcuse, 1978), there is a gap in exploring what that connection means to emancipatory adult educators reflecting on their practice.
This study is designed to capture experiences of artists and their frameworks for developing emancipatory works of art in order to provide insight for adult educators who lack familiarity with the language or reflective processes operative in artistic thinking. If teachers can reflect on themselves as artists, they can reflect on how their own emancipatory learning environments are created and be better able to design learning experiences that foster the emancipation of students.

Grounded in critical adult education theory, this study draws on a range of authors from a variety of disciplines including art and aesthetics, science, philosophy and psychology. It examines theories of experience and ways of knowing that go beyond the traditional frameworks of adult education, particularly Dewey’s (1934) approach to everyday experience and the emancipation of the whole person through the experience of art that integrates knowledge and experience.

*Reason and Art*

Contemporary attitudes regarding the value of science and art derive from Plato’s theory of ideas that define the conditions of knowledge as dependent upon the abstract reason of science rather than the sensory experience of art (Arnhem, 1969; Eisner, 2003). From a psychological perspective, Heron (1992) says that the pattern for Western culture set by ancient Greece hails reason or intellectual competence as the supreme achievement of humankind. This tradition, instead of integrating reason in proper relation to other aspects of consciousness and experience, denigrates the affective dimensions and removes reason from the critique of direct experience. From an educational perspective, Eisner and Powell (2002) explain that the Enlightenment produced the positivists of the Vienna Circle, whose theories are so influential in education today, and whose goal was to “advance a conception of
scientific rationality free from forms of feeling that they believed had little or nothing to do with matters of truth” (p. 132).

According to Dewey (1934), art, with its emphasis on wholeness, provides the ground for a link between reason and experience, between thinking and feeling. Functionally, art is the fundamental means of orientation to the world in which we live, born of the biological and psychological need to understand one’s self (Arnheim, 1969; Dissanayake, 1981). In its broadest sense, it is the dynamic and developing experiential activity expressed in perception and creation (Shusterman, 1997). In this meaning, the import of art extends to the whole phenomenon of felt life, from the simplest function of everyday existence to the furthest reaches of the mind (Langer, 1964). From an individual perspective, art is “a realm where every imposed boundary could be transgressed” (hooks, 1995).

Dewey (1934) explains that art, like reason, is a form of intelligent thinking; but art’s realm of influence is the whole of conscious experience, which includes reason. According to Marcuse (1978), thinking fostered by artistic intelligence functions to break open dimensions of thought inaccessible to reason, and to consider new possibilities that inspire a systematic discernment of alienating social forces and to cultivate the liberation from the false consciousness of everyday experience.

Oppression of Everyday Experience

In the practice of reasoning in ordinary life, Dewey (1934) describes thought as being impelled by outside necessity instead of inner impulsion. Observation and action move in the line of least resistance. Individuals become accustomed to certain ways of seeing and thinking. They like to be reminded of what is familiar. They defer responsibility for the construction of their reality to experts and are satisfied to be told what is real rather than to
determine it for themselves. The use of language is especially subject to this tendency towards automatism. A book or idea can gain popularity merely because the meanings it expresses are so familiar as not to demand thought. In this mindset, what people accept as reality is someone else’s construction, not their own, leaving them susceptible to external manipulation and control.

Brookfield (2005) says that according to critical theory, individual conduct must always be understood as shaped by dominant ideology. Even when we think we are exercising our freedom as individuals, we are living our ideological battles and contradictions. He reports that, “one of its crucial dynamics, according to Marcuse, is the separation of adults from dominant values, commonsense opinions, and all the pressures that guide our thoughts and aesthetic responses into predetermined channels” (p. 54). Cervero and Wilson (2001) claim that in order to confront and change this world of inequity, “we need to understand the way it is, have a vision for what it should be and have strategies for achieving our vision of what society should be” (p. 279).

In relation to education, Brookfield (1995) describes the oppression of everyday experience as the result of “unchecked common sense” that educators accept as true without testing its accuracy and validity against their own experiences and values. Decisions for practice are made without an awareness of how the classroom reflects the “forces, contradictions, and structures of the wider society” (p. 7). He cautions that educators need to probe this commonsense reading of experience. In order to gain their own emancipation, as well as their students’ emancipation, they need to “understand how considerations of power undergird, frame and distort educational processes and interactions” and to “question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work
against our long term interest” (p. 8). Through emancipatory knowledge, Cranton (2006) says that “the learner is freed from the constraints of unquestioned or inflexible ways of knowing; the learner is empowered or perhaps enfranchised” (p. 118).

*Contrasting the Rational and the Artistic in Emancipatory Education*

**Limitations of a rational approach.** The rational approach to emancipatory education formulated by Mezirow (1981) in his transformative learning theory is grounded in abstract thinking and involves the analysis of premises rather than experience. Mezirow and Associates (1990) describe this approach as the assessment of the validity of ideas through reflective discourse in an attempt to understand what is valid in assertions made by others, and to achieve validation of our own assertions. The goal is to increase individuals’ ability to intellectually negotiate meanings and purposes instead of passively accepting the social realities defined by others.

In his review of the first twenty-five years of transformative learning theory, Taylor (1998) reports on a growing body of empirical research that recognizes the importance of factors that go beyond reason. These factors include emotions, a variety of ways of knowing and unconscious learning in perspective transformation as significant to the experience of emancipation (Cranton & Roy, 2003; Dirkx, 2003; Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). Research in transformation through arts-based methodologies has also yielded emancipatory results (Armstrong, 2005; Childs, 2003; J. Clark, 2000; Donoho, 2005; Flannery & Widoff, 2003; Lawrence, 2005; Pyle & Weissner, 2000; Sullivan, 2005; Wiessner & Newville, 2005).

**Artistic intelligence and direct experience.** Artistic thinking includes reason, reflection, understanding, insight, the entire process of inquiry, and brings this thinking to
bear on direct, unmediated experience (Johnston, 2002). Painter Hans Hoffman (1968) says all of our experiences “culminate in the perception of the universe as a whole with man at its center (p. 539). Its result is an integrated or authentic knowing in which the individual takes authorship of the knowledge created (Loughlin, 1992).

Dewey (1934) describes the operation of artistic intelligence as guided by the process of creating connections and apprehending relationships between what has already been done and what is to be done next. Attention addresses the whole in the development of each part. It requires a deepened understanding of the relationship between the self and world, and a mind that is imaginative and open to the development of new forms of reality.

Greene (1995) describes the emancipatory goal of artistic intelligence as cultivating a consciousness that exposes false appearances, and frees from compliance with oppressive systems. This thinking leads to self-government by a felt conviction achieved through an individual sense of agency.

_Educator’s role in rational and artistic approaches._ Mezirow and Associates (1990) describe the role of the educator in the rational approach as serving as a role model for critical reflection, a committed co-learner and occasional guide. The educator’s task is to encourage multiple readings of texts, to broaden the range of meaning perspectives available to learners, and to create opportunities for dialog in which learners are free to challenge assumptions and perspectives, to break through the one-dimensionality of uncritically assimilated learning.

Pike (2004), on the other hand, describes the role of the educator as an artist who has been commissioned to create a painting for a certain space, within a specific timeframe or for a particular purpose. The teacher’s task is to empower learners to perceive critically, to
engage the student’s attention in an intense personal involvement with the subject matter that is achieved through feelings of personal wholeness, a sense of discovery, human connectedness and liberation (Cranton, 2006; Eisner, 2003; Greene, 1995; Yorks & Kasl, 2002).

**Theoretical Framework**

*The Power of Art in Emancipation*

In 2002, Herbert Marcuse’s views on art and emancipation were introduced into the discourse of critical adult education theory (Brookfield, 2002). Marcuse (1978) claims that individual artistic experiences can induce a revolutionary estrangement from everyday life, a distancing from normality that nurtures a liberating subjectivity and the tendency to political critique. His aim is to liberate individuals from oppressive social relations. In this context, he sees that art induces a transcendence of immediate reality that shatters established social relations and opens a new dimension of experience. “Art is committed to that perception of the world that alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in society – it is committed to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity” (p.9).

Greene (1995) says that the flight into inwardness that art inspires can serve as a bulwark against a society that attempts to administer all dimensions of human existence. Painter Mark Rothko (2004) describes the history of art as “the history of men who, for the most part, have preferred hunger to compliance” (p. 3). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) add that emancipation from false consciousness imposed by alienating social forces is the raison d’etre for the existence of works of art. The most valuable contribution of the
experience of art to the progress of mankind is in enabling the individual to free herself from
the repression of social systems and exposing the causes of that repression.

*The Power of Artistic Thinking in Emancipatory Education*

Adult education researchers are finding that the affective dimensions of thought such
as feeling, imagination and intuition that are prominent in the experience of art, have a
significant role in the experience of emancipation (Childs, 2003; J. Clark, 2000; Eisner,
2003; Flannery & Widoff, 2003; Greene, 1995; Heron, 1992; Lawrence, 2005; Loughlin,
1992; Wiessner & Newville, 2005). In a 1992 study of women change agents undertaken to
gain insight into the nature of the emancipatory process, Loughlin (1992; 1994) reported that
the primary transformative activity for these women was learning to center their knowing
process within their own direct experience.

Through the development of empathic relations with other women, Loughlin (1994)
reports that they came to understand and trust their own experiences more than they ever did
before. This sense of agency in constructing their own knowledge became an emerging
characteristic of understanding themselves as learners. It resulted in each woman centering
knowing in her own unique experiences, based on an awareness of the possibility of
authorship in relation to the known. This realization made possible a knowing centered in
authenticity where she could experience things in their true relation to herself instead of in a
manipulative, exploitative, or dependent fashion.

According to Loughlin (1994), this centered and authentic knowing led to an
envisioning process that enabled the women to transcend passivity and commit to act for
social change. By connecting their centered knowing to public issues in a critique of societal
norms and structures, they were able to identify the underlying structural causes of societal
oppression. Through this newly achieved sense of inner freedom they were able to imagine openings beyond the oppression, and that could lead to a transformed society. This was followed by a commitment to realizing a vision of inclusiveness in addressing the social inequities of all that motivated their actions.

Loughlin (1994) concluded that emancipatory education involves the primacy of direct experience and a diversity of knowing that exercises imagination and individual choice. She states that the introduction of the arts into the educational encounter can support this emancipatory process by sensitizing and broadening an understanding of others’ realities.

**Research Questions and Statement of Purpose**

Both art and adult education claim that emancipation can or should be part of their purposes. However, current assumptions about art that underlie the practice of emancipatory adult education, such as the role of subjectivity, and the value of creative, artistic expression, are contradictory and the desired results are not always achieved. An understanding of the artistic process of the artist in creating intentionally emancipatory works of art may provide a model for emancipatory educators to reflect on their practice.

The purpose of this study is to explore the framework that artists use to create works of art that foster emancipatory responses in viewers, and what that framework might reveal about how adult educators create emancipatory learning experiences for their students. The questions I propose to study are: 1) “What is the experience of artists in creating works of art that are emancipatory?” and 2) “How does this experience relate to adult educators in creating emancipatory learning experiences?”
The Researcher

My lifelong interest in art has provided me a unique insight into these emerging concepts. Through undergraduate study in art and art history I learned early to look at life through a critical lens, like I would look at a painting, searching for underlying meanings and influences. I learned to analyze experiences like I would subjects of works of art in order to come to my own sense of the truth they represented. Many times I have felt the transforming power of the experience of art when deep, complex meanings and understanding became apparent in a moment, in a way that was beyond the reach of reason. The experience of art provided me a pattern for moving toward emancipation in all areas of my life.

This perspective has enabled me to bridge the theoretical gaps fundamental to the multidisciplinary nature of this subject, to look at art through the eyes of the emancipatory adult educator as well as the art historian, and to a degree, of the artist. It has given me a deeper understanding of the central role of direct experience in learning, and the importance of feeling, of the individual physical and emotional response to that experience in making meaning authentic, and an awareness of the requirements of the educator in creating learning experiences that cultivate the emancipation of learners.

Background to the Problem

The purpose of this section is to give the reader some background on the nature of artistic thinking in contrast with the more predominant rational thinking in education. To understand the dimensions of artistic thinking requires a shift in worldview of the educator from the commonsense rationality of everyday thinking to the internal wholeness of art that integrates the objective and subjective. Eisner (2003) notes that the quantitative intelligences of rational thinking involve reliance on words and the capacity to analyze problems logically,
defining and differentiating things in terms of generalization, laws and theories; whereas the qualitative intelligences of artistic thinking involve the use of imagery and immediate comprehensive knowing through an intuitive grasp, holistic cognition, totalistic comprehension, and metaphorical insight into the wholeness of experience.

In order to provide a context for consideration of educator as artist, I have conceptualized the creation of a painting as an illustration of the artistic approach to emancipation and the construction of a diagram as an illustration of the rational approach.

A researcher produces a diagram as a representation of a rational process. She formulates a statement with all excess information stripped away to reveal some objective truth. The diagram leaves no room for interpretation but requires the admission of truth of the viewer.

In comprehending the diagram, the goal of the viewer is to come to the same conclusion as the researcher. He follows the logical, step-by-step process represented in the diagram as an intellectual exercise designed to support the designated conclusion. His context is other knowledge gained through the same intellectual process. He sets aside any thoughts or feelings or personal inclinations that would interfere with his observation of the truth presented, analyzing and critiquing the intellectual structures that support the conclusion.

In contrast, an artist produces a painting as a visual representation of an idea that has emerged from her experience and imagination as a result of her interaction in the world. It is a complex expression of many levels of individual thought and feeling and it encourages the individual interpretation of the viewer.
In apprehending the painting, the goal of the viewer is to discover new meanings in response to the image presented by the artist. The viewer is self-directed in exploring the work, letting personal discovery and imagination open the opportunity for many interpretations of meaning. His context is his truth wrought through meaning derived from his own direct experience. He reflects on the relationships emerging from among the parts while critiquing and testing his assumptions and conclusions against his own experience and feelings, making more connections that inspire new meanings.

The following paragraphs discuss aspects of consciousness and concepts that are fundamental to the operation of artistic thinking but are often untapped in everyday experience. These aspects include perception and ways of seeing, feelings and emotion, imagination and creativity, images and words, and tacit and abstract knowledge.

Perception and ways of seeing. In his discussion of paradigm shifts, Kuhn (1996) says that what one sees depends both upon “what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see” (p. 113). Human progress depends on a “transformation of vision” wherein we see things differently from the way they had been seen before.

Arnheim (1969) describes two divergent ways of seeing that depend on the kind of thinking that is making the meaning. Rational thinking, characterized by the scientist with his microscope, isolates its object for examination. It seeks to separate the influence of the subjective in order to consider the object in its pure, unimpaired objective state. It often relies on the testimony of experts for interpretation of meaning. This approach is most useful for the purpose of definition and classification and is the commonsense approach to thinking in everyday life. An example of this “way of seeing” in the classroom would be the study of a
text or concept without regard for the social, political or cultural context or purpose from which the text emerged or the context of the individual learners making meaning of the text.

According to Arnheim (1969), artistic thinking, characterized by a painter and his canvas, beholds its object in context as a reconciliation of subjective and objective perspectives. It acknowledges the distinction between context and object by appreciating the infinite and often profound changes the object undergoes as it moves within its context. This way of seeing results in a gradual shaping of the object that evolves through a complex play of both object and context as they are restructured through the discovery of a more comprehensive whole. Painter Paul Klee (1945) says that in artistic thinking, “one learns to look behind the façade, to grasp the root of things. One learns to recognize the undercurrents, the antecedents of the visible. One learns to dig down, to uncover, to find the cause, to analyze” (p. 444). An example of this “way of seeing” in the classroom would be the consideration of a text or concept from the perspective of the individual students and letting meaning emerge through discussion and interaction.

Whitehead’s (1927) theory of perception promotes the need for harmonious interaction of both rational and artistic ways of seeing and thinking in his discussion of the role of symbolism in civilization. Rational perception, which he calls the theoretic intellect, risks pushing aside the artistic as “mere make-believers, veiling and distorting that inner sanctuary of simple truth that reason claims as its own” (p. 60). Artistic perception, or the symbolism constituted of the meaning made from “sense-presentations,” can have a tendency to run wild. A continuous process of “pruning, and of adaptation to a future ever requiring new forms of expression” (p. 61), however, is necessary to a healthy society. “Those societies which cannot combine reverence to their symbols with freedom of revision, must
ultimately decay either from anarchy, or from the slow atrophy of a life stifled by useless shadows” (p. 88).

Feelings and emotion. Heron (1999) says that feeling or the affective dimension of consciousness is fundamental to any action of understanding. He describes feeling as being aware of and sensitive to our own thoughts and experience as well as those of others in our interaction with the world. Rather than being inconsequential to the intellect, feeling is a distinct capacity of being and permeates all living processes, embracing within it all other mental capacities in latent or potential form.

Feeling grounds the dynamic relationship of the interaction of the direct experience of human consciousness and the rational analysis of objective reality (Heron, 1999). It always deals with the totality of the system and its underlying pattern. Deep within feeling art finds its logic (Langer (1964).

Imagination and creativity. Imagination is the fundamental capacity for insight and choice and is the source of all cognition and of all new meaning and knowledge (D. Sloan, 1983). May (1975) describes the creative process as the “expression of the normal people in the act of actualizing themselves” (p. 40).

The myth of the artist as unthinking and emotional is promoted by the belief in the irrational quality of inspiration and imagination. As painter Mark Rothko (2004) sees it, “Although science, with scales and yardsticks, daily threatens to rend mystery from the imagination, the persistence of this myth is the inadvertent homage which man pays to the penetration of his inner being as it is differentiated from his reasonable experience” (p. 1).

Dewey (1934) explains that consciousness always has an imaginative phase, which is not reserved just for artists. This phase, more than any other capacity, serves to break through
the “inertia of habit.” It bridges the gap between subject and object, integrating contexts of meaning. The aims and ideals that imagination generates are not imaginary (D. Sloan, 1983). They are made out of the interactions of the self and its physical and political environment called experience. It is the “only gateway” through which meanings derived from experience can interact with the flow of daily life (Dewey, 1934).

Freire (1990) says, “There is no creativity without ruptura, without a break from the old, without conflict in which you have to make a decision. I would say there is no human existence without ruptura” (p. 38). Greene (1995) describes imaginative capacity as the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise, to visualize alternatives and to choose among them. Its emancipatory role is in the power to awaken, to disclose the unseen, the unexpected. Without the seamless interplay between what seems to be and what could be, rational thinking is vulnerable to external control by those who would use knowledge not for enlightenment but for consolidation of their own privileged positions. By the cultivation of imagination in artistic thinking we find our way out of oppression by looking through our own eyes, to allow our feelings to inform and illuminate what is there to be realized.

Images and words. Psycholinguistics shows evidence that concepts are created in the mind non-verbally before they are “mapped out” in linguistic form (E. Clark, 1977). Einstein says “the words or the language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought… Conventional words or other signs have to be sought for laboriously only in a secondary stage” (Hadamard, 1945, p. XX). Arnheim (1969) claims that the visual image, rather than language, plays a central role in cognition. Words serve only as pointers “that single out significant peaks from the unbroken contour line of a mountain range on the horizon. The peaks are not the pointers…but the pointers fortify the observer’s
urge to discriminate them” (p. 232). Langer (1964) points out that verbal forms of thought are supported by conventions and are easier to hold and organize; but they also claim easy victory over any other process of conception or expression that competes with them.

Through the skilled use of imagination, of the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise (Greene, 1995), artists create new images that precede abstract ideas and the language of everyday experience. In the history of art, emerging styles and themes reflect the changes that take place at deeper levels of human experience. These changes occur “in that system of relations between man and the world, heaven and earth, which constitutes temporal existence and determines our attitudes to reality” (Haftmann, 1965). Shlain (1991) refers to the “erosion” of images by words and claims that significant works of art introduce images that prepare the thought patterns of the future. May (1975) describes artists as “the frontier scouts” with the capacity to see original visions, who explore the future ahead of the rest of us.

**Tacit and abstract knowledge.** Bohm (1981) makes a distinction between abstract knowledge as passive and tacit knowledge as active. Abstract knowledge is knowledge in its common meaning, such as information that is stored in books, waiting passively to be used. Tacit knowledge is not always consciously distinguishable but is continually drawn upon in everyday experience. It includes beliefs that are based upon individual presuppositions that provide a point of departure for dealing with the world. Both kinds of knowledge are part of one total living process.

Johnston (2002) compares tacit or artistic thinking with rational thinking. While rational thinking involves the specialized separation of components that are channeled into inference, causation and judgment in the formation of hypotheses, the components of artistic
thinking merge seamlessly in an organic wholeness. Data drawn from artistic experience is beheld in terms of images, colors, tones, and shades of feeling, while experiential data or reason is formed into statements of words. Artistic reflection takes place in the immediacy of experience, and through imagination produces results that are used to stimulate more thought. Rational reflection takes place in the realm of statement that must use language as an intermediary to formulate thought. While the rational thinker proceeds by the rule of the scientific method, the artistic thinker proceeds, neither blindly nor by rule, but by the meanings that become apparent in the immediacy of unfolding experience. The descriptions of these artistic dimensions of thinking begin to map out the richness and complexity of direct experience and ways of knowing that operate beyond the rational, the everyday.

Significance of the Study

To the Practice of Adult Education

Although emancipation of learners was the foundation of adult education, Imel (1999) reports that emancipatory learning is not now embraced by adult education as a major purpose. She proposes that one reason is divergent approaches to learning, individual and contextual, that characterize the field’s development. Caffarella and Merriam (1999) describe the more traditional and more rational individual perspective as an internal activity that can be guided by a set of principles that assist all learners, regardless of their background. The contextual and more artistic approach takes into account both “the interactive nature of learning and the structural aspects of learning grounded in a sociological framework” (p. 5). Many of the adult educators aligned with emancipatory learning are identified with this second perspective.
Although both perspectives are important, more work needs to be done to link the individual and contextual (Imel, 1999). This perspective would combine an awareness of individual learners and how they learn with an understanding of the impact of context on the learning experience as it relates to the learner, the instructor, and their interaction (Caffarella & Merriam, 1999). The linking of the two perspectives in a subjective and objective wholeness is a focus of this dissertation.

To Research on Adult Learning

Wagner and Foley (1986) define tacit knowledge as knowledge that is usually not openly expressed or stated. Polyani (1967) describes it as that which is implied, but not expressed in words. Much of the empirical work done on this topic has been limited to workplace performance and the development of professional expertise. Tennant and Pogson (1995) say that tacit knowledge requires greater attention by adult educators since a significant portion of adult learning takes place at an implicit level. A major theme of this dissertation is the examination of the nature of tacit knowledge expressed in artistic thinking.

To Adult Education Literature

A conversation has begun in adult education literature regarding the part art has to play in the emancipation of the adult learner (Brookfield, 2002; Cranton, 2006; Greene, 1995; Lawrence, 2005; Marcuse, 1978; Wiessner & Newville, 2005). New voices, ideas and concepts need to be added to the discourse in order to inform a practice that will be able to achieve its goals. This will require a deeper understanding of the conditions that cause the emancipatory experience of learners; an understanding of the nature of art that raises awareness of the aesthetic or perceptual dimensions of experience that have been neglected in education; and an exposure to the personal experience and theory of artists who develop
works of art that foster emancipatory responses in viewers. This paper explores these three areas of understanding with the objective of adding to the literature of adult education on designing liberating learning experiences for the adult learner.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided to clarify sometimes unfamiliar distinctions in meanings of the terms in the context of this proposal. While the terms will be discussed in more detail in the following pages, it is hoped that a preview of these concepts here will be helpful to the reader.

**Experience**

Dewey (1934) defined experience as the interaction of self and world. Whether that interaction is oppressive or emancipatory depends on the worldview of the self and the ways of knowing that the self applies. A discussion of this interaction from the standpoint of the (1) rational, (2) emancipatory and (3) art shows a progression from isolation to interaction to integration of self and world. The chart below illustrates the three types of experience as progressive stages of the interaction of self and world. The topics of rational or “everyday” experience, emancipatory experience, and the experience of art were explored in the literature and reported on in this proposal. Artistic experience, and its relationship to each phase are the focus of the research design (see Figure 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Emancipation</th>
<th>Art</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mediated by external influences</td>
<td>Authentic, unmediated relationship with world</td>
<td>Unity of individual and world</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isolation of self and world through indirect experience</td>
<td>Interaction of self and world through direct experience</td>
<td>Integration of self and world through direct experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>[that oppresses]</td>
<td>[that liberates]</td>
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Literature:

“Everyday” Experience

Rational ways of knowing

Emancipatory Experience

Authentic ways of knowing

Experience of Art

Unified ways of knowing

Proposal:

Artistic Experience

Artistic ways of knowing

Figure 1. Stages of Experience and Related Ways of Knowing.

Ways of Knowing Heron (1992) describes four ways of knowing that he calls experiential, presentational, propositional and practical. These ways of knowing span the continuum from rational to affective. The “whole
person” brings all four ways of knowing into congruence through critical subjectivity. Like Dewey’s (1934), this integrated theory treats experience as an on-going process, a direct encounter with the world.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

This literature review examines the nature and characteristics of emancipatory learning and explores artistic methodologies for designing emancipatory learning experiences for students. It also explores the nature of artistic thinking and how it can provide a model for adult educators to reflect on their practice of emancipatory education.

As discussed in the Introduction, from a rational “everyday” perspective, the self is conceived as a consciousness isolated from the world. The ways of knowing are abstract and independent of the direct experience of the self. The interaction of self and world is fragmented, mediated by external, social, political and cultural forces leaving the self vulnerable to external control.

As discussed in section one of this Literature Review, in emancipatory experience, the self is conceived as authentic, the constructor of its own reality (Loughlin, 1992, 1994). Ways of knowing involve thinking and feeling, reason and affect in a whole person knowing centered in direct experience (Heron, 1992). The interaction of self and world is the very process of living and thinking (Dewey, 1934). This interaction is unmediated, where things are experienced in their true relation to the self and not manipulated or exploited by outside influences (Loughlin, 1992).

As discussed in section two of the Literature Review, in the experience of art, the self is conceived as unified in an organic wholeness with the world. Ways of knowing involve the seamless integration of all modes of consciousness and the interaction of self and world is consummatory and transcendent. The experience of art breaks open new dimensions of being (Marcuse, 1978) and introduces images that prepare the thought patterns of the future (Shlain, 1991).
Section three looks at the world as a work of art that is new and renewing and our interaction with it is individual. It looks at the work of education as the creation of emancipatory, aesthetic experiences in the classroom; it discusses transcendence as transcending a dependence on the rational and making the connection with wholeness; and it suggests that an understanding of artists’ reflections can provide a model for adult educators to reflect on themselves as artists.

**Adult Education and Emancipatory Experience**

This section reviews current literature regarding the practice of emancipatory education and analyzes three theoretical perspectives. It explores the complexity of the concept of experience in adult education and discusses the importance of direct, unmediated experience and the need to integrate thinking and feeling in our ways of knowing.

**Goals of Emancipatory Learning**

The central purpose of critical theory is the liberation of creativity from the demands of capitalism (Brookfield, 2005). The goal of emancipatory learning in adult education is to free learners from forces that limit options and control lives, and move them to take action that will bring about personal, social and political change (Peca, 2000). It involves an understanding of knowledge and reality that is achieved through the critical reflection of the learner.

According to Cranton (2006), “We promote learner empowerment in at least four ways: by becoming conscious of power relations in our practice; by exercising power in responsible and meaningful ways; by helping learners exercise power through and in discourse; and by encouraging learner decision-making” (p. 120). Imel (1999) reports in her summary of current practices in emancipatory education a focus on the power relationship
between instructor and student in the classroom (Brookfield, 2005; Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Cranton, 2006; Durie, 1996; Ellsworth, 1989; Tisdell, 1998). These relationships in the classroom are seen as complex, not understood through universal theories about the structure of power and oppression (Ellsworth, 1989). The world views of the instructor and learner impact emancipatory learning and reveal the effect of positionality of the student (Tisdell, 1998). The positionality of the instructor also comes into play in the authority exercised in the differentiation made between the experiences that learners bring into the classrooms and who gets listened to in the class. This differentiation impacts the student voice – who speaks, who does not, who does not feel heard (Durie, 1996).

Brookfield (1995) describes these worldviews as taken-for-granted beliefs or assumptions about the world and our place in it. Becoming aware of these assumptions that frame how we think and act, he says, is one of the greatest intellectual challenges we face in our lives, but is essential to the emancipation of educator as well as student. “An awareness of how the dynamics of power permeate all education processes helps us realize that forces present in the wider society always intrude into the classroom” (p. 2).

Current theoretical discourse on emancipatory learning is represented in three perspectives that incorporate varying worldviews on the role of direct experience and related cognitive processes in the emancipation of learners.

The first is concerned with individual control and focuses on rational discourse as the vehicle for emancipation (Mezirow & Associates, 1990). Its goal is to help the individual become a more autonomous thinker by learning to negotiate her own values, meanings, and purpose rather than uncritically acting on those of others. Its practice is based on creating and resolving disorienting dilemmas that result in perspective transformation (Taylor, 1998).
According to this perspective, experience is conceived of as being mediated through discourse and meaning is socially constructed. Driven by objectivity, it involves instrumental learning, communicative learning, and transformational learning through which experience is filtered and given meaning.

The second perspective focuses on social and political liberation and freedom from oppression (Freire, 1970). Its goal is to foster a process of critical consciousness or conscientization among individuals and groups while also teaching them how to analyze, pose questions, and take action on the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives. Its practice is based on dialog and problem-solving where learners develop awareness of structures within their society that may be contributing to inequality and oppression (Dirkx, 1998). From this perspective, experience is conceived of as being comprised of concrete practices that constitute the “terrains” on which individual lives are lived out (Freire, 1970). These experiences must be critically analyzed through debate and confirmation in order to reveal both their strengths and weaknesses.

The third perspective is concerned with individual liberation and encourages an estrangement with everyday life (Marcuse, 1978). Its goal is to expose the personal, situational, and historical forces that limit individuals’ options and control their lives. Its practice is based on breaking through the inertia of habit to open new dimensions of thought that lead to the liberation from false consciousness (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995). Experience, from this perspective, is conceived of as encompassing the whole of the interactions of the individual and her environment and is the very process of living and thinking. This perspective is the focus of this dissertation.
Emancipation and Experience

In order to understand emancipation of the learner as well as the educator we need to understand the role of experience, since emancipation is experienced. Dewey (1934) defines experience as the interaction of individual and environment, self and world. It is the medium of individual consciousness, the context of being or living. Horton (1990) described the evolution of his understanding of experience and its role in education at the Highlander Folk Center. “I would analyze experiences I had and try to learn form those experiences, try to figure out what they meant…” (p. 40). What he finally decided was that “the way to do something was to start doing it and learn from it…you don’t have to look for a model, you don’t get answers from a book. You look for a process through which you can learn, read, and learn” (p. 40.) He said he had to “move over and start with experience, letting book knowledge throw whatever light it could on that” (p. 42).

The concept of experience in adult education is complex, multidimensional, and is explored in the discourse along several continuua. Fundamental to all the discussions of emancipatory education, however, should be an examination of the degree to which experience is indirect or direct, mediated or unmediated.

Marton and Booth (1997) describe two approaches to learning, external and internal, that occur along a continuum of experience that ranges from indirect or mediated experience to direct or unmediated experience. External learning is derived from indirect experience, and involves experience that is designed by the educator to produce knowledge for the learner (Kolb, 1984). Through methodological processes such as observation and reflection the learner abstracts knowledge, with the experience itself providing the text for the learning.
Internal learning involves the study of the direct experience that the learner brings to the learning situation. This direct experience is unmediated. It is experience that takes place in the life world of everyday contexts of the learner (Usher & Soloman, 1999) and encompasses the sum of prior experiences. Learning from direct experience addresses the learner’s direct relationship to ideas that are affected by his understanding of the nature of knowledge, relevant emotional, cultural and social influences (Freire, 1970). An adult educator’s instructional design for learning and practice in the classroom may take into account both approaches to learning and draw from the full range of the continuum of indirect and direct experience.

Yorks and Kasl (2002) discuss a continuum encompassing the pragmatist and phenomenological perspectives on experience. According to their thesis, the pragmatist perspective views experience as indirect, a resource for learning. The phenomenological perspective views experience as direct, as the state of being in “felt encounter.” They further differentiate the two poles by defining pragmatic experience as a “noun” and phenomenological experience as a “verb.”

Jarvis (2005) discusses a continuum he calls secondary and primary experience in which knowledge created ranges from interpreted to authentic. Secondary experience is indirect experience. It is filtered or mediated experience about which the learner develops knowledge through interpretation. Primary experience is direct, unmediated experience where learning involves the whole person in making meaning of her interaction with her environment.

As secondary or indirect, experience is a resource for learning that takes on meaning when it is made the object of reflection (Jarvis, 2005). It encompasses all that is known from
observing, undergoing and encountering during the experience. The concept of mind is rational, providing an explanatory basis for behavior. Meaning is created and comprehended through discourse (Mezirow & Associates, 1990).

Primary or direct experience is regarded as being in a state of felt encounter (Jarvis, 2005). In this experience, the concept of mind is the whole of conscious experience embracing both thinking and feeling, reason and affect. Its meaning is phenomenologically based and apprehended through a process of observing, undergoing, and encountering, involving multiple ways of knowing (Dewey, 1934; Marcuse, 1978). Emancipation rests on direct experience ((Brookfield, 2002; Dewey, 1934; Loughlin, 1992; Marcuse, 1978).

Emancipatory Ways of Knowing

The emancipatory knowing that supports direct experience involves a shift from the mediated isolation of everyday rational experience to an authentic interaction with the world (Dewey, 1934). According to Loughlin (1992), through this interaction the self learns to trust his own direct experience, to cultivate a sense of agency in regard to the construction of knowledge, and to realize a freedom from seemingly natural constraints in his knowing. She describes three ways of knowing that are fundamental to the emancipatory experience: relational, authentic, and integrated.

Loughlin (1994) describes relational knowing as knowing through making connections, both with other individuals and with issues. Through building trusting relationships, learners develop the necessary confidence and openness to deal with learning on an affective level. By centering knowing in individual experience, the action of understanding, being aware of, sensitive to and vicariously experiencing the feelings and thoughts of others create an awareness that is rationally incomprehensible.
Gardner (1999) describes interpersonal intelligence as the capacity to understand intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It requires awareness of one’s own feeling life, one’s range of affects and emotions. In a highly developed state it can detect and symbolize complex and finely differentiated sets of feelings.

By connecting this centered, interpersonal knowing to public issues, learners develop the ability to identify underlying structural causes of societal oppression through an authentic critique of societal norms and structures both in the classroom and outside (Loughlin, 1994). According to Gardner (1999), intrapersonal intelligence is the capacity to understand oneself, one’s fears, desires and capacities, and to use this information effectively in regulating one’s life. It requires awareness of distinctions among other individuals, among their moods, temperaments, motivations and interactions. In a highly developed state this intelligence permits skilled adults to read the intentions and desires, even if hidden, of many other individuals, and to act on this knowledge.

Loughlin (1992) goes a step further to describe authentic knowing as the integration of the voice of the authentic self with the voice of reason. It represents authorship of the knowledge it creates, acts in accord with internalized norms, is insightful enough to know one’s own impulses and is aware of the influences of one’s past (Greene, 1988). Cranton (2005) identifies five themes that comprise authenticity in the practice of university faculty. These themes include self-awareness, awareness of the characteristics of learners, relationships with learners, awareness of the influence of context, and critical reflection of all these aspects of practice.

Integrated knowing makes the commitment to realizing the vision of emancipation (Loughlin, 1994). From a psychological perspective, Heron (1992) describes his “whole
person” knowing in terms of a hierarchical layering of four interacting ways of knowing with each layer grounded in the layer below. These layers include experiential, presentational, propositional and practical ways of knowing. These layers are not standalone. They are operations of thought and feeling interacting appropriately to the needs of the individual experiences through a critical subjectivity, a disciplined and skillful meta-awareness of whole person knowing.

Summary

Whole person knowing integrates thinking and feeling and centers our knowing in direct experience. This knowing creates an awareness that goes beyond the rational and cultivates a sense of agency that is liberating.

Art and the Aesthetic Experience

This section introduces concepts of art and aesthetic theory and analyzes the current debate between analytic aesthetics based on indirect experience and phenomenological aesthetics based on direct experience. Analytic aesthetics emphasizes the interpretation of value of works of art, and phenomenological aesthetics emphasizes the direct experience of the encounter with a work of art. This section draws parallels from the discussion of experience in emancipatory education and explores in detail the unity or wholeness of aesthetic ways of knowing that produce the emancipatory effect of the aesthetic experience. It also includes first-person accounts of three adult educators and their encounters with works of art.

Goals of Encounters with Works of Art

The goal of an encounter with a work of art is the awakening of new perceptions and meanings of reality (Arnheim, 1969). For Whitehead (1925), art is “any selection by which
the concrete facts are so arranged as to elicit attention to particular values which are realizable by them” (p. 200). It involves the self-directed devotion of honed perceptual and intellectual skills to the exploration of a created visual (or audio) stimuli for the purpose of apprehending connections and relations incomprehensible in “everyday” experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990).

Shusterman (1997) explains that current aesthetic theoretical discourse centers on two divergent approaches to the purpose or significance of an encounter with a work of art in its debate over the role of affect in the encounter. Analytic aesthetics emphasizes the importance of the interpretation of the work while phenomenological aesthetics focuses on the immediate experience of the encounter.

Analytic aesthetics, like the rational approach to emancipatory education, claims that interpretation rather than direct experience constitutes the value in works of art and is the only means for distinguishing art from other human domains (Danto, 1986; Goodman, 1968). “Felt” experience is subordinated to semantic theories of artistic symbolization and interpretation since there can be no appreciation without interpretation.

Phenomenological aesthetics, like the artistic approach to emancipatory education, holds that it is the directly fulfilling experience of the encounter with art that is significant, rather than scholarly criticism (Beardsley, 1982; Dewey, 1934). Instead of separating art from the rest of life, this view aims at recovering the continuity of the aesthetic experience with the normal process of living in all realms, in science and philosophy as well as art. This aesthetic unity creates coherence and meaning in all domains of life by engaging all human faculties, rational and affective, in a unified whole. According to Shusterman (1997), the critical discourse of interpretive aesthetics is needed but it is the power of the direct
experience, through its felt value, that creates meaning and impels individuals to engage in the discourse. Gadamer (1982) proposes that the work of art has its true value in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person experiencing it, not through the subjectivity of the person, but through the work itself, the same way a game plays its players.

Current research in adult education mirrors this divergence of interpretation and felt experience in two studies of adults’ encounters with works of art. The first looks at art as an object to be studied and interpreted (Lachapelle, Murray, & Neim, 2003). The second looks at art as a transcendent experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Lachapelle et al (2003) developed an educational model of a two-stage self-directed art appreciation learning process that adult learners go through in understanding a work of art through interpretation. In the first stage the learners encounter the work of art and form an initial interpretation, their existing or personalized body of knowledge interacting with the information presented in the work of art in order to create the interpretation. In the second stage the learners compare their first interpretation with external sources of knowledge to further inform their interpretation and deepen their appreciation.

In a study of adult museum professionals, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) found that their interaction with a work of art focused on their direct experience. It showed that they were attracted first by the visual impact of the formal qualities of the object, second by its biographical references and emotional content, and later by the intellectual challenges they discovered in the work. They reported that, as they became confident in their intellectual skills, they found they could seamlessly integrate the intellectual dimensions of interpretation with the perceptual and emotional dimensions of their felt response without becoming distracted and disrupting the flow of the experience. For them, development of expertise in
art consisted in leaving open the possibility of experiencing new dimensions of thinking and feeling.

*Art and Experience*

Just as emancipation is experienced, art is experienced. While the experience of emancipation involves the interaction of individual and environment, the experience of art involves the integration of individual and environment (Dewey, 1934). For Whitehead (1925), art justifies itself both by its “immediate enjoyment” as well as by its “discipline of the inmost being” (p. 202). In its secondary or mediated states, the experience of art culminates in individual isolation and interpretive referential analyses (Danto, 1986; Goodman, 1968; Lachapelle et al., 2003). In its primary unmediated states, the experience of art culminates in a wholeness that transcends (Beardsley, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990; Dewey, 1934; Marcuse, 1978).

As mediated experience, Goodman (1968) describes the experience of art as centered on non-subjective accounts of meaning. In his “symptoms of the aesthetic” he identifies the criteria of an object’s functioning in order for it to be considered a work of art. These symptoms include syntactic density, semantic density, relative repleteness, exemplification, and multiple and complex reference. This complex taxonomy represents an attempt to define aesthetic experience independently of individual mental states or immediate feelings and meanings and renders direct or felt experience as invalid.

As unmediated experience, Dewey (1934) describes the experience of art as differentiated from ordinary experience by the integration of all the elements of ordinary experience into an absorbing, developing whole. It is consummatory and transcendent. It completes itself. Partial realization or inadequate levels of inquiry, awareness or emotion of
ordinary experience, is inadequate to sustain such an experience. It requires the interaction of all the functions of consciousness, of thinking and feeling, to come together to attain an organic whole. In its wholeness it is the epitome of a complete and ideal experience (Johnston, 2002).

In contrast to Goodman’s (1968) interpretive criteria for evaluating a work of art, Beardsley’s (1982) “criteria of the aesthetic character of experience” evaluates the work of art by the quality of experience it creates for a discerning viewer. His intention was that his criteria need not be limited to the pursuit of art, but could be applied to science or philosophy or virtually any domain of action since all meaningful experience requires the quality of aesthetic unity and development.

The first criterion is “object directness” where the viewer’s attention is focused on his perception of the work of art and guided by the investigation of its visual properties, qualities and relations that reveal themselves in the viewer’s interaction with the work of art. This attention includes an intuitive sense of the unfolding wholeness of the work, including the work of art itself and the experience the work of art is creating.

Beardsley’s (1982) second criterion is “felt freedom” achieved through the viewer’s intentional release from intrusive internal preconceptions as well as any imposition from external influences. This freedom discerns the harmony of what is visually presented in the work and semantically invoked or implicitly promised, so that what unfolds through the experience emerges in its integrity, without restriction or compromise.

Third, through “detached affect,” the viewer distances himself emotionally from the experience so that when confronted with objects that are emotionally moving or disturbing, he is able to rise above them undistracted. Fourth, in “active discovery” the viewer
intellectually resolves the challenges of potentially conflicting stimuli arising from the work in order to maintain the coherence of the whole. This involves uncovering connections among elements and making new meanings. Beardsley’s (1982) final criterion of aesthetic experience is “wholeness,” a sense of integration of the individual and the work of art. It is a result of overcoming of distracting or disrupting influences to reach contentment, resolution, involving self-acceptance and self-expansion.

_Aesthetic Ways of Knowing_

The experience of art or aesthetic experience presents a way of apprehending reality that does not follow the set of rules laid down by reason (Dewey, 1934). It is a way in which the mind follows specific steps to arrive at universally acceptable conclusions (Beardsley, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Aesthetic ways of knowing are comprised in the interaction of information from the work of art with information stored in the viewer’s mind. According to Johnston (2002), this interaction causes an expansion, recombination or reordering of previously accumulated information, and produces a range of emotions such as delight, joy or awe as well as fear and despair. The fusion of these two sources of information is the structure of the aesthetic experience and involves concentration, a sense of freedom, clarity, control, wholeness, and the transcendence of ego boundaries. This structure seems to be the same regardless of the specific cognitive and emotional content of the work of art (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990).

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) identify four functions of the aesthetic experience: perceptual, emotional, cognitive and transcendental. These ways of knowing interact in the encounter with a work of art. The operation of these functions within the structure of an aesthetic experience provides a way of apprehending reality other than that
offered by reason. It is a way of seeing the world, sometimes with blinding intuition or an intense and prolonged “aha” moment that produces a sense of certainty and completeness as convincing as reason provides.

In parallel with Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson’s (1990) four functions is Heron’s (1992) psychological theory of human psyche, comprised of the affective, imaginal, conceptual and practical modes of consciousness, with its emphasis on the role of affect and direct experience in living and learning. Yorks and Kasl point out three factors that theoretically frame Heron’s (2002) theory, “(1) the nature of experience as felt encounter… (2) the perception that multiple ways of knowing must be balanced…, and (3) a theoretical distinction between feeling and emotion” (p. 182). Through “critical subjectivity,” the individual becomes aware of the four modes and their changing relations as exercised in unfolding experience. It is not a subjectivity that entertains a misguided preoccupation with self or a skewed view of life that leaves one asleep to the oppression of broader social realities (Brookfield, 2002). It is rather a “rebellious subjectivity” that can trigger a rupture of the seeming reality of everyday experience (Marcuse, 1978).

According to Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson’s (1990), the perceptual function of the aesthetic experience involves the sensory stimulation produced by the work of art such as balance, form and harmony, and the interactive power of the form and the surface of the work (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Certain physiological responses to patterns of stimuli and perceptual information in a work of art can “shortcut” linear thinking and produce the blinding intuition mentioned above because the mind is already predisposed to recognize them (Arnheim, 1969; Dissanayake, 1981; Kepes, 1944).
Heron (1992) describes the imaginal mode of his theory as involving an intuitive grasp, a holistic cognition and totalistic comprehension that is perceived through metaphorical insight. It represents a continuum between imaging and intuiting that includes the ability to generate an individual viewpoint and leads to immediate comprehensive knowing whereby the mind grasps a whole field, system, or patterned unity. Newman’s (1999) description of his encounter with a painting by Australian painter Ian Fairweather when he was twenty years old illustrates the perceptual function of an aesthetic experience and Heron’s (1992) imaginal mode of consciousness (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Ian Fairweather, 1969.

Before this experience, he rarely went to galleries, but he read a review claiming that Fairweather was the best Australian painter alive and decided to take a look. The painting shown above is representative of the painter’s work but is not the specific painting Newman (1999) was describing.
The painting was reasonably large and I was standing back from it. At first it seemed completely without form, a striking mass of lines and hues. Then I began to see the lines as shapes arranged in rows, one row above the other. Now these shapes assumed the outlines of people, and the whole painting began to give off the impression of a medieval frieze. For a while the impression held firm, then other lines, which had been without clear significance, began assuming shapes and I had the impression not just of rows of figures in tiers, but of more rows of figures behind as well. The painting had been two-dimensional but now took on an indeterminate depth. After a while the sense of a medieval frieze began to slip away. The painting as a whole suggested the untidiness of Australian bush, and I began to sense another kind of movement. The rows of figures seemed to come forward out of the painting, out of the bush…I, in my turn, stood entranced, knowing for the first time how a painting can grow before the eyes, occupy its own time, create its own space, continually renew itself and, in a mysterious way, develop an essence of its own. (p. 90)

Newman (1999) notes that this experience at the art gallery might give the impression that this essential aspect of learning occurs accidentally; but he points out that this kind of learning has been formalized into various kinds of aesthetic study such as literary and dramatic criticism, film and media studies, and the study of the fine arts. In these types of studies, “the learner’s sense of discovery is expanded, further ways of understanding works of art are developed, intellectual tools to assist in analysis are offered, and the act of appreciation is placed within larger, aesthetic, social and philosophical contexts” (p. 93).

The emotional function of the aesthetic experience emphasizes reactions to the emotional content of the work and personal associations (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson,
In this function, emotional harmony is sought often through catharsis, reliving hidden impulses so they can be sorted out and brought into conscious aspects of life. This involves empathy, participation, presence, and resonance. Here, impersonal rules of reason are of limited value. Art provides an alternative approach to aspects of consciousness that reason ignores, a communication that concepts cannot convey.

From a psychological perspective, Heron’s (1992) affective mode of consciousness spans the continuum between emotion and feeling, from the intense localized affect that arises from individual needs to the capacity of the psyche to participate in wider unities of being. It is related to the interplay of affective and intellectual responses to the work.

Slattery’s (1996) account of his own experience with Jackson Pollack’s Autumn Rhythm illustrates the emotional function of an aesthetic experience (see Figure 3). He first saw the painting as a high school student on a field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

*Figure 3. Jackson Pollock, Autumn Rhythm, 1950.*
I walked alone and stood face to face with myself before Jackson Pollock’s Autumn Rhythm. The intensity of the emotions of this artist touched a nerve in my adolescent confusion. I sensed the pain of the artist’s struggles and suffering which seemed to parallel my own inner turmoil. Pollock’s frustration with social structures reverberated with my own indignation about the Vietnam War, racism, and social injustice. Jackson Pollack’s battle with alcoholism leaped from the canvas and caused me to reflect on my own father’s struggle with this disease. I did not ‘know’ Jackson Pollack at the time, but I came to experience his emotions as I encountered Autumn Rhythm. Just as ‘knowing’ in Biblical literature refers to intercourse, there was a bond of intimacy that intensified as I stood with Pollock’s painting. (p. 42)

Slattery (1996) was not a painter. He had never formally studied art, nor had he ever heard of Jackson Pollack before this experience, but he “became the artist through his painting as his journey and my journey were united in a synthetical moment” (p. 42).

The cognitive function of an aesthetic experience involves the satisfaction of an intellectual need to grasp what is real, a generalized human need for knowledge and understanding of what the arts provide (Arnheim, 1969). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) reported that the cognitive processes came into play for the participants of their study only after the work had made a perceptual and emotional impact. Some participants employed the intellect in seeking closure, while others used cognitive means to open the works to new interpretations. This function represents the union of intuition and understanding leading to something that had been hidden to logical understanding, and draws parallels between the stages of development of aesthetic judgment and the states and the stages of development of cognitive abilities. Sophisticated members of the realms of art and
science tend to recognize the broad overlap between the two disciplines and to acknowledge that the two human capacities through which these disciplines have been created, emotion and intellect, are not only compatible but in certain respects indistinguishable (Dewey, 1934; Eisner & Powell, 2002).

Heron (1992) describes the conceptual mode of consciousness as a continuum between discrimination and reflection. It involves the ability to think about things in categories and classes and leads to the ability to think about experience in general terms using concepts to deal with the relations between classes and classes of classes. In this mode, the intellect seeks to formulate a conceptual model that is inclusive and comprehensive.

Finally, the transcendental function of the aesthetic experience indicates ways in which humans have been able to acquire new skills and new sensibilities (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Communication with a work of art is often a multidimensional experience, one that integrates the visual with the emotional and intellectual. Instantaneous reactions to specific aspects of a work are comprised in the continual exchange of thoughts and feelings that occur over time upon exposure to the work. With the help of information, imagination and empathy the viewer can share the dreams, emotions and ideas that artists of different times and places have encoded in their works. This function relates to Heron’s (1992) practical mode of consciousness and runs the continuum between action and intention where the purposes a person has in performing an action are related to a wider context through a plan, design or purpose.

For Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990), the aesthetic experience is emancipatory in that it breaks through the bonds that tie people to existing systems by enabling them to acquire new skills and new sensibilities (Brookfield, 2002; Marcuse, 1978). Emancipation
from false consciousness or the understanding of alienating social forces is the raison d’être for the existence of works of art. “The most valuable contribution of the aesthetic experience for the progress of mankind consists in bringing to the fore those human potentialities that the social system has repressed and in showing the causes of repression” (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990, p. 16). In Amsterdam in 1930, Heidegger saw one of Vincent Van Gogh’s paintings of shoes. The text of his encounter guides the reader through an aesthetic experience (see Figure 4). In this first quote, Heidegger perceives the subject in its context, exploring, discovering, considering intents, as he takes in the whole.

*Figure 4. Vincent Van Gogh, Shoes, 1886.*

From Van Gogh’s painting we cannot even tell where these shoes stand. There is nothing surrounding this pair of peasant shoes in or to which they might belong – only an undefined space. There are not even clods of soil from the field or the field-
path sticking to them which would at least hint at their use. A pair of peasant shoes
and nothing more. And yet… (Krell, 1993, p.159)

Next, Heidegger’s interaction with the painting represents Dewey’s (1934) definition of experience, when the interaction between the self and the world, affect and reason, brings meaning. New connections are made, visual stimulations open new dimensions of meaning, and intellectual challenges are answered in a rhythmic interchange.

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles stretches the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls… (Krell, 1993, p.159)

In concluding this consummatory aesthetic experience, Heidegger describes the “truth” he came to know, that he had experienced through the work. It did not come from an art historical analysis or from an empirical measurement of parts, or even as a message from the artist to the viewer.

Not by a description and explanation of a pair of shoes actually present; not by a report about the process of making shoes; and also not by the observation of the actual use of shoes occurring here and there; but only by bringing ourselves before Van Gogh’s painting. This painting spoke… The artwork lets us know what shoes are in truth. (Krell, 1993, p.161)

It was, as Marcuse (1978) described, a result of Heidegger’s encounter with the truth that art makes visible that which is not yet perceived in everyday life.
Summary

An understanding of the emancipatory power of the experience of art can provide adult educators with insight into creating learning experiences that liberate learners.

Artist and the Education of Experience

Brookfield (1995) describes critically reflective teaching as standing outside ourselves and viewing what we do through four lenses: our autobiographies of ourselves as teachers and learners, our students’ eyes, our colleagues’ experiences and the theoretical literature. This reflective perspective embraces the wholeness of being, the 360-degree view natural to the critical consciousness of artistic thinking. The goal of this section is to explore how an understanding of artists’ reflections can show emancipatory adult educators how to reflect on themselves as artists.

This section compares the work of art to the work of education and contrasts the current technical approaches with artistic approaches to teaching. It analyzes the aesthetic experience as a model for emancipatory teaching and looks at six major adult education concepts discussed in this review through the eyes of the artist: Lindeman’s (1926) organic perspective, Loughlin’s (1992) centered knowing, Heron’s (1992) whole person knowing, Marcuse’s (1978) rebellious subjectivity, Freire’s (1985) critical consciousness, and Brookfield’s (2002) connection of art and emancipatory adult education.

Emancipation and Transcendence

According to the literature cited in this review, the world can be seen as a work of art that is new and renewing and our interaction with it is individual (Dewey, 1934; Marcuse, 1978). For individuals who are teachers, their professional work of art is the classroom. Looking at life as a work of art is critical to looking at the classroom as a work of art.
From the standpoint of emancipation, learning about artistic thinking will help educators reflect on their work and life as an artist. They may have difficulty grasping the reality of teaching because they are told what that reality is in fragmented ways. Assumptions about their teaching need to be connected with their worldview and life, their direct life experience. Otherwise they are just doing things according to what others say and accepting it uncritically. Unless they can make that connection between their teaching and their direct experience, these assumptions will drive them to create a fragmented environment and stimulate fragmented learning.

Through artistic transcendence, educators are able to look at their classroom as a work of art and think about it critically, holistically in both a separate and connected way. They have to achieve some degree of transcendence in order to understand that their worldview represents their real assumptions as teachers, that they are not just acting out someone else’s model. Their understanding of the “work” of the artist can contribute to their understanding of their “work” as educators by providing them with a model to think critically about and to perform their work. Transcendence is the transcending from dependence on the rational and making the connection with wholeness. It is an approach and a process. It requires skill and has a practical purpose. It teaches educators how to be good at emancipation. Through transcendence they can be continually renewed through their own ongoing emancipatory experiences.

*The Work of Art and the Work of Education*

The real work of art is the building of an integral experience for the viewer out of the artist’s experience (Dewey, 1934). The act of expression that constitutes a work of art is constructed in time, and issues from the artist through a medium that constitutes the work of
art. The painter places paint on the canvas according to how his ideas and feelings are ordered through a progressive organization of internal and external influences in organic connection with each other.

The real work of emancipatory education is the creation of a learning experience out of the educator’s experience and knowledge that liberates the learner. According to Pike (2004), the act of expression that constitutes teaching involves leading the way to learning where personal growth and freedom are fostered. As Brookfield (1995) puts it, “Classrooms are not limpid, tranquil ponds, cut off from the river of social, cultural and political life. They are contested spaces – whirlpools containing the contradictory cross currents of struggles for material superiority and ideological legitimacy that exist in the outside world” (p. 9).

The classroom is the canvas on which the educator’s skill and intellect are applied in mixing and integrating the “colors” of students’ experiences in grand patterns of diversity and harmony in an effort to foresee what they can become. In the process, colors take on a life of their own, interacting with each other as they are laid on the canvas, creating shifts and new patterns as a unified whole emerges. In this sense, teaching is an activity that transcends the sum of its parts (Langer, 1942).

Goals of Artistry in Teaching

The goal of artistry in teaching is to produce a “painting” that contributes to the liberation of the learner. It is the education of the seamless integration of all modes of consciousness in a knowing process that is centered in the direct experience of the learner as a whole person (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995; Heron, 1992; Langer, 1942). Art educator John Sloan (1939) approaches his relationship with his students as not wanting “to interfere with your way of seeing, if you are seeing Things…You must find your way through your own
experience and hard work” (p. 7). He describes his class as a “laboratory where you can work out ideas and have me around to give you the benefit of my experience” (p. 8).

Eisner (2002) describes teaching as an art in which teachers, like painters, composers, actors, and dancers, make judgments based largely on qualities that unfold during the course of the action. According to Brookfield (1995), the educator’s, like the artist’s, critical rationale for practice is shaped in a context that must continually adapt to circumstances.

In his description of the purpose of an art school, or any school in the context of this discussion, Henri (1984) presents the epitome of artistic teaching. The purpose is the development of “artists of mind, philosophy, sympathy, courage, invention” (p. 224). The teacher’s relationship to the student he describes as “taking their work as a matter of vital importance to the world, considering their technique as a medium of utterance of their most personal philosophy of life, their view of the subject—one that must be important and worthy of their powers of seeing and understanding” (p. 224). That is education!

In contrast, the rational view of teaching is to produce the “diagram” that the learner must follow to the designated conclusion. Pike (2004) describes this view as a technology or even a science in which a subject is delivered in an efficient or effective manner and where the analytic approach is the method for problem solving. It is based on the assumption that the world can be known in a rational, analytical and scientific way and that teaching about such a world can be precisely planned, implemented and assessed. The teachers’ activity is dominated by prescription and routine in which the teacher is seen as a skilled technician. This approach to education promotes teaching that is informed by rigid and explicit objectives. Its goal is the transfer of skills from one lesson to another.
Eisner (2003) identifies the roots of this technically rationalized culture in the Enlightenment. “This search for order, this desire for efficiency, this need to control and predict were then and today dominant values” (p. 375). Schon (1987) describes this technological view of teaching as offering an insufficiently discriminating and entirely inadequate account of what teachers actually do.

Lindeman (1938) referred to these divergent viewpoints of the rational and artistic as “mechanistic” and “organic.” He describes the mechanistic viewpoint as “quantitative, if not static in character” (p. 49), and the organic viewpoint as “a new quality and a new dimension in education…a right, a normal expectancy, and not charity. Its purpose is to do something for adults which cannot be achieved by conventional education” (p. 49). Adult education is “a social process… not…a simple device whereby knowledge is transferred from one mind to another” (1935, p. 45). It is “not merely…a means for increasing the efficiency or the smartness of a few selected individuals,” but rather “an instrument for social change” (1938, p. 51). “Its aim is not to teach people how to make a living but rather how to live” (1929, p. 37).

Teaching and Experience

Aesthetic experience represents a new form of experience in the discourse of adult education (Marcuse, 1978). It is a form that is familiar to artists and is required for artistic creation but its usefulness and application extends beyond art (Dewey, 1934; Osborne, 1986). Aesthetic experience, as the art of living, is a skill to be learned. For Dewey (1934), aesthetic experience provides the pattern for a way of life, an artistic standard of living. It is living that consistently plunges beneath the surface of everyday events with a discipline and discernment that brings every aspect into a harmonious unity of understanding. It requires the
interaction of all modes of consciousness in thinking through, making connections and resolving contradictions and problems.

Britton (1993) claims that the relation between thinking and feeling is something we still know far too little about but that can never be ignored if teaching is to feel truly artistic to the learner. What it does for the learner may yield a more lasting influence than any critical analysis aimed at advocating an expert interpretation. Wade and Reed (1987) add that while the fact that thinking and feeling, as mutually dependent aspects of human consciousness, are especially relevant in teaching, they are not always recognized. The broad range of affective components, including moods, desires, feelings, drives, and attitudes or frames of mind, as well as emotions, needs to be assimilated in artistic teaching.

Critique of Emancipatory Learning

Research trends in the current development of universities identify the concepts of globalization, new managerialism, academic capitalism and entrepreneurialism as providing impetus to change (Deem, 2001). This perspective reflects a shift in institutional relationships from the parent to the student – from Loco Parentis (in the place of the parent) to student as consumer – less paternalism and more accountability for services rendered (Melear, 2003). Precipitated by the conception of the student as a consumer of goods and services, it is framed within the context of a mutuality of obligation between college and student.

This perspective utilizes the market model for education (Merriam & Brockett, 1997). It stresses the attainment of measurable outcomes tied to established objectives and promotes accountability by emphasizing results that can be seen. It relies on a “practitioner” faculty model wherein work experience within a specific profession is seen as more desirable than experience in teaching or research (Berg, 2005). Teaching practices include standardized
courses, students organized into teams, work experience incorporated into classes, heavy emphasis placed on learning objectives, and the on-going assessment of student learning. The market model can be seen in numerous education policies which support and foster adult education vocationalism in the demand for educational systems that produce large gains in basic skills.

This perspective utilizes vocational behaviorist philosophies of practice (Merriam & Brockett, 1997). According to the behaviorist philosophy, reality exists external to the knower and can be known through the senses, and this reality is observable and measurable. Objectivism underlies this view of learning in that knowledge exists in the external world, and learning is the learner’s attempt to represent that external reality internally (Gagne & Medsker, 1996). Human actions are the result of prior conditioning and the way in which a person’s external environment is arranged. By arranging the environment to elicit desired responses, we can control human behavior and thereby develop a better society (Skinner, 1974). Concepts and practices include behavioral objectives, accountability, competency-based curricula, and instructional design models.

Pratt and Associates (1998) describe this learning as the acquisition of information and procedures so they can be used or applied in practice. It is a process of acquiring such knowledge as is necessary and appropriate to practical application. It is viewed as something that can be efficiently controlled by the teacher through manipulation of variables external to learners.

In their cognitive learning theory, Gagne and Medsker (1996) define this learning as a change in behavior. The change is often an increased capability for some type of performance, an altered disposition of attitude, interest or value and is stated in a theory of
instruction. The external events used to support the conditions of learning, together with the sequence in which they are made to occur, constitute a theory of instruction based on information processing. Here learning is conceived as a set of internal processes that transform stimulation from the environment into a number of forms of information. These processes lead progressively to the establishment of long-term memory states.

This cognitive theory claims that authentic tasks should be provided within complex, real-world learning environments. It uses a computer as a metaphor for human thought. The behaviorist’s “stimulus” is the cognitivist’s “input,” the behavior or response is “output,” and what happens internally is thought of as an “information-processing system” in which information is transformed or processed as it moves through the system. Goals and objectives are tied to an external referent, such as a job or life task and teaching strategies are based on empirical evidence of effectiveness.

Artistic Forms of Thought

While emancipatory experience is the result of the direct unmediated interaction of individual and environment, the experience of art is the result of the integration of individual and environment. It is an integration that transcends the rational, the everyday, and is experienced through unified ways of knowing (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990; Dewey, 1934; Marcuse, 1978). In this section I will consider some of the previously discussed concepts of emancipatory experience from an artistic perspective, through the eyes of the artist, in order to further explore the connection between emancipation and art, between educator and artist.

Lindeman’s organic perspective. Lindeman’s (1926) use of the term “organic” refers to “an evolving whole of mutually interacting parts” (p. 84). He applies the concept to
experience as the interrelationship of life as action and life as reflection. “When the distance between life as action and life as reflection becomes so great that experience loses its organic wholeness societies begin to disintegrate” (1937, p. 75).

According to painter Wassily Kandinsky (1977), “the need for coherence is the essential of harmony, whether founded on conventional discord or concord” (1977, p. 49). The inner value of a painting must maintain its organic wholeness regardless of the variations of its outward form and color. Rothko (2004) describes the relationship of form and content in works of art as not only constituting “an inseparable unity,” but actually expressing “one and the same thing in two different ways” (p. 69).

Eisner (2003) explains, from an artist’s perspective, that artistic form is the outcome of an organic construction wherein the parts are inextricably arranged in the whole. In artistic construction there is no substitutability of parts, no one-size-fits-all. Form and content are inextricable. If content changes, form changes to fit it. The goal of artistic thinking is the achievement of that “just right” or organic form for the specific purpose. For example, in conversation, how something is said adds specific meaning to what is said, just as in the classroom, the way a subject is presented impacts the meaning students take from it.

Loughlin’s centered knowing. Loughlin (1994) describes centered knowing as knowing that is centered in one’s unique direct experiences. This centered knowing “transformed the relationship between the knower and the known to one in which the woman became ‘author’ and the knowledge created reflected her authenticity” (p. 6). Baumeister (1986) describes centered knowing as a knowing where one can “experience things in the ‘true’ relation to oneself instead of in a manipulative, exploitative, or dependent fashion” (p. 93).
Centered knowing, from an artistic perspective, is knowing in terms of qualitative relationships. According to painter Pablo Picasso (1968), “a picture is not thought out and settled beforehand. While it is being done it changes as one’s thoughts change. And when it is finished, it still goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it” (p. 268). From the viewer’s perspective, a picture “lives a life like a living creature, undergoing the changes imposed on us by our life from day to day. This is natural enough, as the picture lives only through the man who is looking at it” (p. 268). Painters Gottlieb and Rothko (1968) add that “no possible set of notes can explain our paintings” (p. 545). Meaning of paintings must come from within the viewer, from the “consummated experience between experience and onlooker” (p. 545).

According to Eisner (2003), this knowing is rationally intangible. It does not conform to quantitative formulas, abide by universal laws or postulates, nor is it the outcome of syllogistic processes. This thinking produces structures of thought that are discerned in the subjects and objects of direct experience rather than in intellectual analysis and contemplation. This way of knowing integrates feeling and thinking and consistently critiques the formation of images (concepts) against an authentic feeling of rightness. This thinking guides the brush on the canvas just as it guides the unfoldment of new concepts emerging in the classroom.

Heron’s whole person knowing. According to Heron (1990), “the person is a seamless whole, an interacting system which in simplified form has four psychological modes of being….The four psychological modes converge upon enterprise and endeavor. From our felt participation in the world, we open intuitively to grasp a total situation, then discriminate thoughtfully in order to act within it” (p. 17). The four modes of psyche are the affective,
imaginal, conceptual and practical. What Heron and Reason (1997) called critical subjectivity “involves an awareness of the four ways of knowing, of how they are currently interacting, and of ways of changing the relations between them so that they articulate a reality that is unclouded by a restrictive and ill-disciplined subjectivity” (p. 281).

Painter and art educator Hans Hoffman (1968) says that “the intuitive faculty of sensing the inherent qualities of things” dominates the artist’s creative instinct. Whether the artist “works directly from nature, from memory, or from fantasy” (p. 536), this whole person knowing is always the source of his creative impulses. The artist must be “well equipped with conscious feeling, memory, and balanced sensibilities” in order to produce a work of art that is “a world in itself reflecting senses and emotions of the artist’s world” (p. 539).

Arnheim (1969) describes the interacting system of whole person knowing of artistic thinking as an interaction between the rational and perceptual, between the intellectual and intuitive. It involves the interaction of intuitive cognition taking place in a continuous perceptual field of freely interacting forces on the one hand, and on the other hand the intellectual cognition that makes connections between fixed entities in processes that follow each other in linear succession. These divergent operations converge in creative exploration, in selection, grasping of essentials, simplification, abstraction, analysis and synthesis, completion, correction, comparison, problem solving, as well as combining, separating, and putting in context.

Artistic thinking, as critical subjectivity, does not suppress differences but keeps them present in an all-embracing comprehension. It organizes the variety of possible manifestations in concepts typical of any field. It is not limited to the view it receives at a
given moment, but is able to see the momentary as an integral part of a larger whole that unfolds in sequence.

Marcuse’s rebellious subjectivity. “Art breaks open a dimension inaccessible to other experience, a dimension in which human beings, nature, and things no longer stand under the law of the established reality principle. Subjects and objects encounter the appearance of that autonomy which is denied them in their society. The encounter with the truth of art happens in the estranging language and images which make perceptible, visible, and audible that which is no longer, or not yet, perceived, said, and heard in everyday life” (Marcuse, 1978, p. 72). For Marcuse, subjectivity does not lead to a “misguided preoccupation with self or to a falsely skewed vision of life that leaves one unable to see broader oppressive realities” (Brookfield, 2002, p. 266). According to Marcuse, “The transcendence of immediate reality shatters the reified objectivity of established social relations and opens a new dimension of experience: rebirth of the rebellious subjectivity” (p. 7).

Painter Henri Matisse (1945) states he cannot just copy nature. He “must interpret nature and submit it to the spirit of the picture” (p. 411). He says he is “forced to transpose” through “successive modifications” until he finds in the relationship of all the tones “a living harmony of tones, a harmony not unlike that of a musical composition” (p. 411).

Rather than rigid adherence to a plan, the artistic process is fluid, intuitive and often inspired. Rather than prediction and control, it cultivates subjective exploration and discovery. Rather than preserving a comfort zone of familiarity and certainty, it exploits surprise and pushes the artist to work at the edge of incompetence (Eisner, 2003). Artistic thought follows the pattern where ends may shift as the means are experienced (Demetrion, 2000). Each step in the process provides new perspectives of the end and opens new vistas,
new opportunities for consideration. Dewey (1934) calls this artistic process “flexible repurposing” in which emerging features appear in a field of relationships presenting the end in a light that could not have been anticipated without the experience of the process.

Freire’s critical consciousness. For Freire (1985), critical consciousness is forged of the dialectical unity of theoretical and concrete contexts. “Engagement and objective distance, understanding reality as object, understanding the significance of men’s action upon objective reality, creative communication about the object by means of language, plurality of responses to a single challenge – these varied dimensions testify to the existence of critical reflection in men’s relationships with the world. Consciousness is constituted in the dialectic of man’s objectification of and action upon the world” (p. 69).

Beardsley (1982) draws on the same characteristics of critical consciousness in his criteria for aesthetic experience as Freire does in his criteria for emancipatory experience. Both writers require an intentional detachment of affect toward the object of consideration, a felt freedom or release from the dominance of traditional or cultural concerns, active discovery or creative communication about the object, and finally a sense of integration of the person, a restoration to wholeness from distracting and oppressive influences.

Artistic thinking that comprises both art and nonart experience is the outcome of such a structured, critical attitude, which is distinguished from the unstructured, uncritical and inarticulate thinking of everyday life (Arnheim, 1969; Dewey, 1934; Marcuse, 1978). Rothko (2004) claims that “in the conscience of the artist, the Truth of Art is foremost… This artistic conscience, which is composed of present reason and memory, this morality intrinsic to the generic logic itself, is inescapable” (p. 4).
Artistic thinking is not simply an emotional, socially constructed response to experience formed by cultural traditions. It is a consummatory felt response, a successful adaptation of direct experience, the construction of an organic whole that is controlled by need. Petts (2000) explains the significance of this kind of thinking as “particularly telling in consideration of cultures that neglect the experiential basis of value, undermining in various ways (for example through political propaganda or aggressive advertising) the role of personal experience and public debate in its determination” (p. 70).

*Brookfield’s connection of art and emancipatory adult education.* Marcuse (1978) summarizes the relationship between art and emancipation in his statement that “art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in society—it is committed to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity” (p. 9). Brookfield (2002) continues, “If we take seriously Marcuse’s argument that aesthetic immersion has the power to trigger a revolutionary estrangement from everyday existence, then we need to acknowledge the possibility that adult education that concerns itself with liberating the senses through creative, artistic expression is potentially revolutionary. This is a switch for many critical adult educators who may be tempted to regard this kind of adult education as elitist dilettantism” (p. 268).

Far from “elitist dilettantism,” the role of art in adult education is beginning to be seen as fundamental to the experience of emancipation of students as well as teachers. In order to get beyond the exploitation and abuse of the affective base of consciousness, which according to Heron (1992) is embraced by the traditional educational model of intellectual supremacy, art cannot continue to be ignored (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995; Heron, 1992).
Greene (1995) says that “forms of art can enable us to see more in our experience, to hear more on normally unheard frequencies, to become conscious of what daily routines have obscured, what habit and convention have suppressed” (p. 123). According to Sartre (1949), the final goal of art is “to recover this world by giving it to be seen as it is, but as if it had its source in human freedom” (p. 132).

**Summary**

The critical consciousness cultivated by artistic thinking holds out the promise of emancipatory learning currently sought in adult education practice (Brookfield, 2002; Loughlin, 1994). Foucault (1984) says, “it is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning” that gives one the capacity to break with the immersion of the habitual in everyday life. Rather “it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meanings, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem” (p. 388).

Pike (2004) says that George Eliot’s assertion that the highest of all teaching deals with life in its highest complexity is essentially aesthetic in character. Eisner (2003) describes artistry in teaching as involving judgment in the absence of rule, shifting aims in the process of teaching and learning, recognition of the unity of form and content, and the importance of aesthetic satisfactions as motives for work. As Loughlin (1994) puts it, it is the ability to design opportunities to explore the diverse ways of knowing that individuals use to make meaning of their life experiences. “The introduction of the arts into the educational encounter can sensitize and broaden understanding of others’ realities through exercising choice and
imagination” (p. 9). Such experiences can lead to an empathic understanding of the differences between individuals that hold them in bondage, as well as the similarities that unite them.
CHAPTER THREE: Methods

It is Husserl’s view that essential structures of consciousness create our lived experiences (Polkinghorne, 1983). These structures give order and form to experience. They cannot be explained by learned generalizations about experience (noun). They are the essence of direct experience (verb) itself. The structures of consciousness exercised by artists in creating works of art that emancipate viewers are the focus of this research.

Qualitative Study

This study required a qualitative rather than quantitative research design. Rather than predetermining, limiting, and isolating variables to be studied, especially since these variables were not yet known, the qualitative methods used in this research design drew on the participants’ account of their direct experience with the phenomenon. From these accounts, according to Creswell (1994), the researcher “builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15).

Through a rigorous process of inquiry, analysis and synthesis, the researcher proceeded “without firm guidelines or specific procedures” (Creswell, 1994). I looked at every aspect of my contact with the participants as data, documenting impressions, photographing paintings, recording reactions at gallery exhibits and teasing out unseen connections and meaning through spontaneous stream-of-consciousness word paintings.

The science of phenomenology, as Husserl describes it, is the investigation of the organizing structures of consciousness. It involves the study of a phenomenon the way a case study involves the study of a case. It is an examination of the meaning of experiences for individuals (Creswell, 1994). How the artists made meaning of their experience was a focus
for this study. The seamless integration of their experience with their work was a significant finding and is recommended as a subject for further research.

Phenomenology is concerned with wholeness of description, achieved through examining a phenomenon from many sides until a unified vision emerges (Moustakas, 1994). This document is a holistic presentation, sculpted from my lived experience with the data. Any intention to follow a preplanned outline was frustrated by the greater necessity to respect the organic interconnections of parts which often only became apparent in the process of writing. It is hoped that the reader will feel the authentic wholeness of this presentation as well as follow the logic of its argument.

Participant Selection

The primary criteria for participants in this study was their ability to create art that is emancipatory, that engages the viewer in an interchange that causes a break with everyday experience (Brookfield, 2002). Marcuse (1978) explains how art causes emancipation. He said the inner logic of the work cultivates the emergence of another kind of reason, a sensibility that defies “rationality and sensibility incorporated in the dominant social institutions” (p. 7).

Sample

There were two main requirements for the selection of artist participants. The first requirement was that there was evidence of a deep commitment to art, that painting was not just a hobby. This commitment would be evidenced in being represented at galleries and having created a substantial body of work. All of the participants are now full-time artists. Four are self-supporting. The second requirement was that their works meet the criteria I developed for identifying paintings that were emancipatory.
I compiled a list of all the art galleries in Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill and the names of the artists they represented. Then I looked at their web sites to see what kind of art they carried to get an overview of the kind of work that was going on in this area. Then I worked out a schedule to visit each gallery. Although I visited all of the major galleries and studios in the tri-city area, all of the selected participants are from Raleigh.

**Selection Criteria**

At that point I did not have the criteria. I knew from my literature review that the power of emancipatory art was that it causes a rupture of everyday thinking for the viewer. So I thought I would just go into a gallery and look at the paintings one by one and test my own response to them in a way that I could determine if it caused that rupture in my thinking. Then I could analyze how it did that. Through this process I identified five criteria.

My background in art history was very helpful in the selection process. I was accustomed to looking at paintings. I knew how to analyze paintings in order to get something from them. I was familiar with a lot of different art. But this was a new experience for me. My task in this project was to look at all art from a level playing field, not from popularity, most famous painter, or represented at the best gallery.

1. **The painting engaged the attention of the researcher.** The first test was to see which paintings would hold my attention for more than three minutes. At this point I was looking at colors, shapes, painting style and subject matter. I was aware of my bias for colorful abstract paintings painted with thick paint so I made a specific effort to look more carefully at all the others. Some had immediate appeal for me but could not hold me for three minutes. This requirement test narrowed the sample by at least half.
I saw the work of one artist online and knew immediately it would meet the criteria even though I had not yet identified those criteria. The works were figure paintings. The colors and composition were very appealing and they were beautifully painted. The subjects of the pieces I saw were baseball players and jazz musicians, but they were painted with such a depth of feeling that I felt like I was seeing poetry.

2. The painting instigated a rupture with the rhythms of everyday thinking. This test took me beyond immediate response to another level of clarity and objectivity. There was something about these paintings that surprised me, something unexpected. With some it was an immediate delight that wore off. But some drew me in and made me think more deeply.

When I got to this point I could see that the criteria were not genre specific. I saw some still life paintings with recognizable subject matter, painted by participant Anthony Ulinski, and some abstract paintings with drips and pencil marks and layers of underpainting peeking through, painted by participant Jason Craighead, that startled me and drew me in in the same way.

3. The painting created an emotional connection with the researcher. I realized that the paintings I wanted to stay with connected with me emotionally, like there was something that the artist was saying to me, something that the artist had put into the painting that was speaking to me. Sometimes the message was obvious and sometimes I did not know what it was until much later.

When I saw the paintings by participant Philip Levine I would look at the figures in his paintings and see through to their hearts. They reminded me of the way I saw into the hearts of the subjects in Rembrandt’s paintings. There was something so direct about the artist’s presentation that the connection was immediate.
4. The painting contradicted the researcher’s expectations and disrupted her assumptions. At this level of analysis I realized that some of these paintings challenged me in some way, caused me to question something. My response to these paintings was unsettling in an excited kind of way.

I saw a large abstract painting that was painted on paper participant Gerry Lynch. There was so much activity in it that there was not focal point. The colors were black and brown with some splatter of gold on a white background. I wanted to turn away from it to go on to something I felt more comfortable with, but I could not leave it. This painting was painted by one of my participants and it was not until the second interview that I could understand what it was that moved me so much.

5. Involved the researcher in the consideration of new ideas. I felt that the first four criteria revealed the emancipatory power of the work. But the last one carried the viewer to liberation, to a commitment to change, to feel or see something in a new way, to consider new possibilities.

Participant Gayle Lowry’s work was the most “realistic” of the six. On the surface viewers see familiar objects and settings. If they let themselves go deeper they experience emotions that change their lives. She told me of people who come to her after shows and confide in her because they know she has felt the challenges that they are going through.

There were two incidents that occurred during the selection process that were significant to me. The first was that when I began to contact the selected artists, I learned that most of knew each other and were good friends. Three of them even regularly critiqued each other’s work. The second occurred when I went to a gallery that was one of the most prominent in the area and noticed a painting that I had not seen there before. I asked the
gallery owner who painted it. She looked at me with surprise and told me I had a good eye. He was a new artist, and the gallery was excited about representing him.

A third incident occurred recently. I talked to another gallery owner who founded a gallery focusing on spirituality and art. I told her about the purpose of this project and told her who the participants were. She knew all of them and represented the work of many of them in her gallery. She said that these artists paint from their hearts, from deep within themselves. She could see why I selected them.

Participants

The six participants include Jason Craighead, Richard Garrison, Philip Levine, Gayle Stott Lowry, Gerry Lynch and Anthony Ulinski, all of Raleigh, North Carolina. All chose to allow me to use their real names and to include samples of their work in this document. They were very interested in being involved in research that would be helpful to educators.

Data Collection

Allison (2005) states that collecting the data in a phenomenological study is about getting to firsthand experiences. It is constituted of “blow-by-blow” accounts of what participants are seeing and feeling as well as probing for sensory rather than cultural data. Data for this study was gathered from twenty in-depth interviews, a researcher’s journal, research notes regarding interviews, artifact analyses of participants’ paintings, reviews of participants’ lives and works written by themselves and by others, and attendance at sixteen participant exhibit openings.

A series of three interviews was held with each participant. One participant had two extra interviews because he had more to say than what we covered in the three. Most
interviews were held in the artists’ studios. One interview was held at a gallery where one participant was setting up her show.

I had never met any of the artists before I contacted them to participate in the study. The ideas we talked about were new for all of us, things that we felt or did intuitively but had not articulated before, even to ourselves. The structure of three interviews was very helpful to the data gathering because it gave each of us the opportunity to grow in our understanding of our topic and of each other.

In the first interview I was learning the terminology and trying to understand the creative thought structures as well as learning the techniques for doing productive qualitative interviews. By the second interview I was beginning to get some idea of the meaning behind what they were telling me. I was very grateful to have the third interview to build on the relationship we had developed in the first two and to tie everything together.

First Interview

In the first interview the focus was on the painter. We covered issues such as what they have experienced and how art has affected them. We also explored the dimensions of artistic thinking. Discussion points included:

Why did you become an artist?

What is like to be an artist?

What do you strive for in your art?

Think about a particular painting, a breakthrough, a personal favorite and tell me about your experience painting it.
Second Interview

The second interview focused on the work and their preparation and processes in creating it, and was intended to explore artistic thinking in action. For this interview the artists chose paintings that they wanted to talk about. One participant painted while I watched and explained what he was doing and why. Discussion points included:

How did you learn to paint?

What is your vision for your work?

How do you practice painting?

How do you choose what to paint?

What do you think about before you paint?

What do you think about when you are painting?

Third Interview

The third interview was focused on the question, “How can I get to where you are as an artist?” I tried out this question on one of the artists to see how he might answer it, what he would talk about. He thought it was a good question. I wanted to find some way to tie the stories of their lives and work together in order to go deeper into their personal philosophies to find the connections with educators, to get to the heart of their passion. Because of my background in art history and my experience in painting, and because of the rapport we had built up through the first two interviews, they could talk to me as an artist, give me guidance from their own experiences using their own language, and know that I would understand what they were telling me. One participant invited me to paint with him some time and another offered to give me lessons.
Exhibit Openings

The exhibit openings were important events for the artists. It was the opportunity for them to get their work in front of the public and particularly their collectors. Each show was organized around a theme and often included new work that the artists’ had painted specifically for the show. The effort required to schedule and put on these events comprises a major aspect of the artists’ practice. Attending the shows provided me the opportunity to see how the artists prepared for and organized them, what paintings they chose and why, to see firsthand the viewers’ response to the work, and to see the work and enjoy it myself. The experience of attending the shows often helped me to understand better different topics we had discussed in the interviews.

Data Analysis

The aim of phenomenological reduction is to identify and describe the structural essences of experience. It is phenomenological because it transforms the world into phenomena. It is reduction because it leads back to the source of the meaning and existence of the experienced world (Schmitt, 1968).

Epoche

Moustakas (1994) describes epoche as the first step in the process of data analysis in which the researcher sets aside as far as possible all preconceptions in order to best understand the experiences of the participants. He refrains from judgment and stays away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things. He does this by bracketing or setting aside all but the topic and question of the study.

I found that writing stream of consciousness pages that I called “word paintings” was helpful to me in processing new information as I went along. I wrote word paintings after
interviews and shows and when there was an idea or concept the participants talked about that I did not understand. Through writing these pages I was able to make connections in the data that I had not seen from just talking with the painters. The text of these pages has provided valuable content for many parts of this document.

**Horizontalizing**

Horizons are the specific “textural meanings and invariant constraints of the phenomena” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97). Horizontalizing is a process of elimination of statements irrelevant to the topic, leaving only the invariant constituents. The test for the invariant constituents is that each is necessary to understanding the phenomena and that each can be abstracted and labeled. The horizons become the coded data.

I went through the first two interviews gathering data and looking for the threads that would weave their individual accounts into some overarching patterns. As the artists talked I could discern common feelings and motivations in their attitudes and voices, but their words were providing few clues to underlying themes. I felt like I was trying to peel layers off of the interview content, to expose the more objective aspects of life details and outward attitudes toward art, and to peek into the structures of consciousness that the experience of art involves for these painters.

I added subheadings to the text of the interviews, organized them into categories, and created spreadsheets of the subheadings and categories. I analyzed, organized, and categorized the data from several perspectives, but it seemed to remain a maze of separate pieces.

**Textural Description**

The textural description is a synthesis of the invariant constituents into a description.
As I was struggling with how to identify the invariant constituents and to structure the description. I had an opportunity to give my sister a two-hour lesson in how to use perspective in drawing. She was taking her first drawing class as part of a second undergraduate degree in interior design. She was struggling with a concern about having the ability to meet the artistic requirements of the program. The object of the assignment was to produce a still life drawing that showed the successful application of the concepts the teacher discussed in class. I had some experience in perspective drawing and understood the teacher’s instruction, and felt able to help her complete this assignment. By the end of the two hours she had a beautiful drawing and felt more confident about her abilities. Her teacher told her she had made a breakthrough.

I reflected on my role in this emancipatory learning experience and realized that it had unfolded in three parts. The first drew from my framework as an adult educator. The second drew from my professional practice, and the third from the teaching process, what actually took place in the classroom (see Appendix G).

Through the whole time things the artists told me were coming to mind. These things were not about how to draw, but how to think about making something new, something that had never been seen before or thought of before, and how to make myself ready to create. I found that these ideas were providing me guidance in teaching my sister, causing me to consider new ideas and approaches in helping her to learn what she needed.

I began my preparation for the lesson by thinking about my framework. What did I want to accomplish? What could I bring of my experience to this particular purpose? Would I be satisfied in helping her just complete this assignment, or did I want to help her achieve a victory, to gain confidence in herself and her ability to produce many drawings and feel free
to be successful in her program? The artists had told me that what they felt about art guided their practice and what they did when they stood at the canvas. I determined I had to be true to my vision of education and I chose to help her fight for her freedom.

Then I thought about my practice and about what I have learned over the years in terms of technique and experience that I could bring to bear on this particular lesson. What skills can I use to bring out the results I want? Do I just use familiar techniques that worked in the past in similar situations? Or, if I follow the example of the artists, do I draw on my experience and growing understanding to come up with a “just right” solution for this particular case?

When it came to process, I had to decide what I should do in the classroom, what role I should take. Should I take the lead and draw with her to provide an example for her to follow? Or should she do the drawing and I provide assistance and guidance by talking things out with her, helping her to make her own decisions about how to get the drawing to look the way she wanted it to so she would be able to go on and do many drawings herself in the future? By choosing to follow her lead I had to yield up control and be ready to respond to whatever arose without the security of having a plan to carry out. Each of the artists had said that when they step up to the canvas they need to be able to release control and be ready to go where the painting took them. When they first told me that, I did not understand what they meant. Now I understand it.

This experience provided me with the organizing structure I needed to move forward in my analysis of the data (see Appendix F). I realized that I had come to understand the artists through the lens of an educator and that my practice as an educator, which led to the transforming learning experience of my sister, came through the lens of the artist. I felt this
was an early validation of the research. This organizing structure of framework, practice and process is reflected in the presentation of the following findings and discussion (see Appendix H).

*Structural Differentiation through Imaginative Variation*

Structural differentiation is the systematic varying of the possible structural meanings that underlie the textural meanings (Moustakas, 1994). It is the uncovering of the underlying themes that account for the emergence of the phenomena. Descartes (1977) says, “The intellect ought to use every assistance of the imagination, sense, and memory: to intuit distinctly…and to correctly unite what is sought after with what is known in order that the former may be distinguished” (p. 57).

Alexander (2003) describes two processes for interpreting experience, exegesis or “drawing out” the meanings of experiences and eisegesis or “reading into” an experience new meanings. The process of drawing out and reading into was a complex, cyclical exercise for this researcher. From the start, I found no easy access into the data since the words and symbols used by the participants in the interviews were so disparate. By adding subheads to the interview transcripts I began to see hints of patterns across the data. Then I looked deeper to find further evidence that might support the occurrence of the patterns. A thorough analysis required many iterations of this process and months of digesting what I was learning before the themes emerged.

*Data Display*

*Synthesis*

The synthesis “is the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). After a lengthy period of
immersion with the data, significant statements and ideas began to emerge revealing the underlying structures of consciousness I had been seeking. From there, the document began to take shape in the creation of very rough drafts of the major sections in an attempt to “just get some paint on the canvas,” as the artists had taught me. Then I was able to react to the relationships and let the document tell me what to do next. The result is an organic whole, achieved through the artists’ process.

Presentation of Findings

In phenomenological studies the researcher brings personal experiences into the study, records significant statements and meanings, and develops descriptions to arrive at the essences of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994). I have lived my way through this study. All attempts to plot out my path ahead of time or to draw every idea to a nice tidy conclusion failed. It was only when I let go, as the artists taught me to do, and let the data talk to me and I respond to it, was I able to write my way to authentic conclusions.

The white page was my canvas and words my brushstrokes in presenting the findings of my research. Most apparent in the artists’ portraits in Chapter Four and the sketches of adult educators in Chapter Six, the presentation of findings was designed to reflect the individuality of the voices and ideas in order to speak to the reader directly.

By their example they taught me that I needed to let the ideas come out of me, filter through my experience, and not try to force them into place. I learned I needed to take risks, to make mistakes, as they do in their paintings, in order to capture and preserve the organic wholeness of the work where each part relates to the other and no piece can be taken away. I learned that the only way it is going to have any power is if it is authentic.
Trustworthiness

Creswell (1994) describes verification as “a process that occurs throughout the data collection, analysis and report writing” (p. 194). The following methods of verification will be used in this study.

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation—For more than three decades, I have cultivated and practiced artistic thinking in my daily life. As a student of art history, I have a wide-ranging awareness of all types of works of art, and have experienced their emancipatory power firsthand. As a graphic designer, I learned the fundamental principles of design and the communicative power of visual organization. As an amateur painter, I have a familiarity with the decisions, considerations and motivations of an artist in creating a painting. As an adult educator, I recognize the many creative parallels between the work of the artist and the work of the educator and the power and opportunity of both to liberate.

Contact with participants included my initial exposure to their paintings and background, and preliminary discussion(s) about their work and their interest in being involved in this study. Interviews included up to five hours of focused face time and attendance at gallery exhibit openings up to seven hours per artist. Through participation in two dissertation discussion groups over a three-year period, each step of the research was reviewed, critiqued and reflected upon with adult education doctoral peers.

Triangulation—Triangulation was achieved in this study through multiple data sources. A discussion of each participant’s approach to her work in the first interview was corroborated with a critique of the work itself by the artist and researcher in the second interview. Also, analysis of published literature on the work and life of each participant provided an additional perspective for examination and verification.
Expert reviewer—An expert reviewer, Kathleen Rieder, faculty in the Department of Art and Design in the College of Design at NC State University, served as a “devil’s advocate” or debriefer who challenged my methods, meanings and interpretations throughout the project.

Clarifying researcher bias—This researcher’s bias is a deeply felt enthusiasm for the subject and a hope that this study may open the thought of teachers to artistic teaching. My own early educational experiences were largely shaped by the rational approach and left me frustrated, feeling a lack in intelligence and a dislike of learning. Adult education opened a new world of learning for me.

Member checks—All participants in this study were required to review and revise as necessary transcripts for the first two interviews. They also reviewed and critiqued the Artist Portraits in Chapter Four and Themes in Chapter Five.

Rich, thick description—The descriptions were written for broad use, extending beyond the focused analysis of this study. This is for the benefit of the readers and other researchers, as well as this researcher, who is eager to go further down the many roads that this study has opened up.

Limitations

The nature of this phenomenological study is to compile rich descriptions of the experiences of a specific group of artists with the phenomenon of the experience creating works of art that foster emancipatory responses in viewers. There is no attempt to explain findings or to prove or disprove hypotheses.

Although the subject refers to all art, this study will focus on the visual arts, specifically painting, because of the researcher’s familiarity with this art form.
The sample of participants will be confined to the Triangle area of North Carolina in order to assure easy access for interviews.
CHAPTER FOUR: Portraits of the Artists

Chapters Four and Five present the findings from the research. Chapter Four presents word portraits of each of the participants. Chapter Five presents descriptive underlying themes.

Finding and getting to know the artist participants for this study has been a most rewarding experience, both personally and academically. Their sincerity, passion and willingness to devote hours of their time and thought to this project with the understanding that “it will be helpful to educators” have enabled me to accomplish my purpose for this project. They chose to allow me to use their real names and to include examples of their work as illustrations of their words.

As the interviews progressed, it became apparent to me that my selection criteria had been effective. I was seeing and hearing how rebellious subjectivity was lived in the lives of these artists, beginning to understand the kind of thinking that produced those emancipatory paintings and making exciting connections to my own thinking and creative processes as an emancipatory adult educator.

Each of the following portraits includes a section on: 1) Framework, the artists’ approach to their art; 2) Practice, the artists’ professional development; and 3) Process, what happens when the artists step up to the canvas. Each portrait includes Education and Genre subheadings under Framework; Viewer and Marketplace subheadings under Practice; and Getting Started under Process. All other subheadings are specific to the artist.

The portraits were written to capture the character and voice of the individual artists as well as their meanings. They illustrate the complexity of their thought structures and their skillfulness in negotiating the processes of thinking and feeling. They represent six dedicated
individuals, totally committed to their art, driven by a sense of purpose and striving to make a difference in their world.

Philip Levine

I first saw Philip’s work at a “Spirituality in Art” exhibit. I had been thinking about the role of racial and ethnic diversity in the project when I saw a large painting of an African American gospel singer and her fellow worshippers. I felt the inspiration, the joy, and the spiritual energy of the music in that painting and decided that it met my selection criteria. He told me he wanted to represent the feeling of soul in a painting for this spirituality exhibit and chose African American gospel singing as the best way to do it. He thought the painting was successful. He was aiming for a thing and he “caught it.” He got the feeling of them being in church and he also got the “feeling of their soul.” I was eager to understand how Philip was able to put such authentic feeling into his work.
Framework

Art was me. When he was growing up in New York, Philip was the little kid that always got picked on. “I didn’t get the ‘hey you did a good job’ type of thing.” Through painting, he got, “hey, Phil’s a pretty good guy.” Art gave him a sense of purpose and confidence.

He never made a career choice. “Art was just me. I mean, I didn’t actually know I was going to be an artist. I was an artist.” He said he just became “an artist in general.” After a hard day’s work he would come home and paint. “That’s when I breathed.” When I met him he was working an eight-hour day job and about to retire. He would paint in the morning before he went to work. Sometimes he would wake up at two o’clock in the morning and paint and then go back to bed.

Closer to my humanity. “Now I’m Jewish, but I wasn’t raised in terms of going to church.” Painting is his religion. He is most comfortable and closer to his humanity when he paints.

He also thinks his art has to do with his being what he calls a humanitarian. He is not prejudiced. He is not a bigot. He sees color but he does not see race. He does not see religion. He says we are all in the same boat and we all have to sink or swim. “If you let society drag you down, then you’ll sink.” That is what his painting is about. It is about society, not political things, but about everything around him.

For Philip, painting is a religious act. Most people cannot paint somebody who is decrepit. He says you have to feel their decrepitude. You have to feel their suffering. That is what religion is about. You have to feel their suffering as well as their happiness.
He has been to churches and to synagogues but does not “feel” that much in them, however he still considers himself to be religious. “It’s a spirituality.” He thinks there is a spirituality in painting that makes him closer to the world. When he paints, there is a quietness, like being a monk in a room. It is just the artist and the canvas. “I get lost into it. That’s what I’m talking about religion… I’m talking to God in my own way.”

Education. According to Philip, no one can teach you to be an artist. He went to the School of the Visual Arts in New York after graduating from high school. He went for one year full-time and then got a job during the day and went to school at night.

He said you can go to art school and you can learn to paint, but you cannot be taught to be an artist. You can learn all the technique in the world, but that does not make you an artist. You either are an artist or you are not an artist. If the talent is there and the passion is there, “the artist will come out of you.” Some of his fellow students who had great skill never became artists because they could not do it after they left school and were on their own.

It is not something that you can go to school and learn in a book. It cannot be taught “in the sense of from lesson to lesson, that you learn to stretch a canvas, then you learn to put the paint on here and then you learn to do the flower this way.” You have to feel it and everyone has his own level. It is about letting your heart and soul come out in your work for others to see. It is about “catching” the character of your subjects. It is more than the sum of its parts. “It’s pure emotion plus my knowledge that I’ve learned from observing and from when I was in art school and my teacher and there was a dialog.”

His teacher recognized Philip’s talent. He said that Philip was able to do automatically what others have to learn to do. His job was to help Philip know why he is doing what he does. He “taught drawing that is art, not just copying the model, but analyzing
the model and making it an artistic thing. You construct reality, you don’t copy it and that’s
where art comes in.” His teacher brought it out in Philip, but it was there all along. “You
cannot always learn these things.”

You always learn form looking at other artwork. But Philip learns more from the act
of painting, from just doing it.

Genre. He has always loved painting figures. He can “do” landscape paintings but it
is not natural for him. He likes how he can “bring a head out, bring the figure to life. Most
people can’t really bring a figure to life. They make it realistic but the figure doesn’t have
any life.” He said to make the figure have life you have to have life in you. You have to feel
what you paint. It has to move you.

I went to a church and the guy was talking about how an artist feels the sensibility of
a flower more than the average person. And I got up from the audience and said
“Well I’m an artist and I never felt the sensibility about a flower. I think a person who
loves gardening feels more about the sensibility of a flower than I do.” I like looking
at flowers but I can’t say I love them as much as a person who’s a gardener. I look at
it as a visual element. Beautiful flowers are beautiful. My mother loved gardening. I
can’t stand gardening. I can’t stand digging in the earth and planting things. It’s just
not my way of thinking. I can admire the beauty of a flower, but I cannot maybe feel
the beauty of the flower like she does. I may be an artist, but I may not be able to feel
that particular thing.

His brother asked him why he did not paint bugs. He said he had thought of it,
because bugs have interesting angles, but it has to move him enough for him to paint bugs.
He wants to get a certain amount of life in what he paints. He cannot paint something just as it is.

You want to feel the sense of the different things. I mean it could be a child on a swing. If a child is swinging on a swing, you don’t just want a picture of a child. You want to feel that swing swinging. That’s what I’m talking about feeling…You want to feel the light behind the child as he’s going back and forth, and his joy of swinging in the swing.

Practice

Catching the feeling. Philip did a painting of his mother. He felt he “caught” her as an older person. She did not like the painting but Philip loved it. “I think I got the feeling of her…of age in it…her struggling with her disabilities as [she got] older…I established her strength and her personality at her age.”

The emotion that is in the artist is what brings the painting alive. He did a painting of a homeless man (see Figure 6). He felt he got the feeling of homelessness in the painting, the way he felt it. “You always paint who you are. If you’re a cold person with no feelings, it’s going to come out in the painting.” He likes old people. He thinks they are more interesting than young people because they have more character. This emotional attachment he feels is what comes out in the painting.
What each painting teaches. A painting is just the process of working. It is not a matter of getting any place. For Philip, each canvas is its own struggle, its own separate endeavor, its own self-contained learning experience, its own world unconnected with the challenges of other paintings, its own separate set of problems to solve. He begins anew every time he steps up to a new canvas.

He says, you just keep painting and each painting teaches you something else. Each painting presents a new problem. “Can you solve that painting in that space? You’re playing God. Do you solve it? Do you not solve it? I do think it’s a way of playing God. But it’s your way of doing it. You’re in your own little world.”

He said you grow in life. You learn more about yourself. You learn more about dealing with people and the rules by which you conduct yourself. In painting you learn to pick and choose. You learn not to put something in and not to leave something out.

Art is a constant battle between you and what you are painting. No painting comes easily. He says you may get better at solving the painting but “you still have to go through
the same agonizing stuff that you did when you were younger.” It is still agonizing. You
could do a good painting in two minutes or it may take two years. There is no time limit. It
either works or it does not. It is the moment. One moment you can make a painting that
works and the next moment you can destroy it. It is just the process of painting.

**Viewer.** If people like his work, they will like it, but they do not have to like it. He
just paints. He thinks the thing with the viewer has to do with title more than what the
painting looks like. People that look at paintings look at the title first, before they look at the
painting. The title seems to draw people in. He notices that when people go to museums they
always have to read the label to understand the picture, when the picture should sell itself.
They may like the picture, but they still have to look at the title.

**Marketplace.** His purpose in art is to be able to paint to make himself happy. Painting
makes him happy. It is not necessary to be famous, because he is one of those artists you just
have to push out of the studio. People say to him, “Come on Phil, you’ve got great talent.”
He joined a gallery when he was showing in New York. His friend got him into the gallery.
He told him he needed to make more slides, to get his work out there so he can get into other
galleries, too. “I’m just lazy about that. I don’t like the whole business of it. I’m a painter.
I’m not a business man.”

**Process**

**Getting started.** Philip does not always know what he wants to paint. He just starts
painting and it comes. He puts a brushstroke down and it suggests something. He puts
something else down and that suggests something else. It is like the painting paints itself.
Most of the time he works things out as he paints. He never knows exactly where it is going.
He starts with one object and then it evolves into other things. He could take a photograph and that could start him off. Or he could start with a drawing. He does lots of sketches. It is an emotional outlet and a way of tuning himself. He said you can see more in a sketch than in the painting sometimes. It is the soul. The soul of the painter is in the sketch.

*It’s organic.* The painting is constantly changing. Nothing ever stays the same. If he puts an apple in one place, it may not be there an hour later. He does not just render a form and leave it. Where other painters would render a form realistically and just leave it there, Philip would change it a million times until he gets it. “It’s organic with me.”

He paints organically, constantly changing things until everything holds together as a unit. He will put a form in the background and relate it to a form in the figure. He paints both the background and the figure at the same time, until they work together. That is the most exciting for him. That is collaging. “When you learn to collage you learn to think of things in terms of units. When you collage, you are basically creating stage sets. You are moving forms around. You put a form down, look at it, and it tells you what to do next. It evolves as you go.”

The whole painting should be designed like a puzzle. If you pull out one little thing, the painting will not work.

*Sculpting the form.* Painting is a way of pushing and pulling forms. It is a constant redrawing of shapes. If you are afraid to destroy the form, you will never be successful. You have to be able to destroy what you do. It is like sculpting the form.

To demonstrate what he meant, he told me he would paint me (see Figure 7). “Turn your face. See how I’m breaking up the space…Got a shape, make it dark…Here’s your eye…See, look, it’s a head. How long did it take me, two minutes?” He got this far and then
wiped it out and redrew it. He told me everything is a correction. He destroyed the mouth.

“You see I’m not afraid.” Then he redrew again.

Figure 7. Philip Levine, Portrait of the Researcher, Oil on Canvas, 2006.

He said painting is not copying the model. Rather it is designing the form as you go along. It is not so much what he sees on the canvas as what he sees in me. He is painting what he sees, but he is not painting realism. He is painting shapes. He is just thinking of shapes and that is what he keeps correcting; and “eventually I catch your character.”

And he did catch my character! I started to recognize myself as I watched him paint, my character as he saw it behind my appearance. I recognized my hair, my nose. There was an intensity in the eyes. I could see that was the way he must have seen me during the interviews. I watched the form come out like he was sculpting it. “That’s exactly it. I sculpt. I sculpt the form.” And he continued painting and wiping out.

“You feel it by seeing. You’re feeling it, you know, in the mind. When I say feeling, it’s mind, too.” He keeps redrawing everything to get more of a sense of his subject and relationships, and that is how he gets to “feel it.”
He worked on the painting for about a half hour. He was not satisfied with the design. He said the head was too big. But he caught me and now I understand how he did it.

*Gayle Stott Lowry*

*Figure 8. Gayle Stott Lowry, Was It Real or in a Dream, Oil on Canvas, 2006.*

I first learned about Gayle from the Lucy Daniels Foundation web site. The foundation is a source of information about psychoanalysis and creativity and their roles in our lives. There was a page about Gayle’s experience in a class on Dreams and Creativity when she realized that changes in her painting were paralleling changes in her personal life. I appreciated the clarity and depth of her self-awareness, and thought she would be a great participant. I was eager to see her paintings to determine if they met the selection criteria.

A couple of days later I was in a gallery. A painting of a porch caught my eye as I was walking by it. I backed up and took a closer look. It was painted by Gayle. There was nothing unusual about the porch. I think it was a façade of a house in Italy. There was great attention to detail, like everything in the picture needed to be there, had some purpose. But there was more to it, another dimension that I was responding to. I felt like it was a house
that had a story, like it was telling me something about the living that had gone on there. It
was also a beautifully painted. I wanted to find out more about that other dimension.

Framework

When Gayle was eight years old her father died of cancer. Her parents had kept his
illness a secret from Gayle and her brother. He died after two weeks in the hospital. "There
was no closure. We didn’t tell him goodbye. We didn’t go to the funeral. It left this big
wound in me that I think has very much affected my need to be vigilant, to pay attention.”
She never wanted to be caught off guard like that again.

Staying vigilant. Seeking healing of that emotional wound has given both her life and
her art direction. During the process of growing up and making her way through life, she was
painting and drawing. Observing and making paintings became her way of being vigilant to
what was going on around her. Art was a way for her to make a record.

She left college after two years of studying primary education and art, got married,
had a family and started painting very calm, “pleasant” landscapes. She realized through
therapy that these paintings were like a denial of what was going on inside her. “I think what
I was doing was to try to calm myself down.”

By the time her third marriage was breaking up she began an eighteen week seminar
with the Lucy Daniels Foundation that helped her use her art in her healing. She learned that
“all of the emotionality and wounding had to come out of me,” and it started coming out in
dark paintings and scribbling and slashing. The Foundation helped her in recognizing that
these deep things would be sublimated in the work and that was okay. “It was a healthy way
to get this out of you and not have it just eat away at you inside.”
She learned to honor the process of letting whatever she felt an urge to do come out without trying to analyze it too much, but just going with it and knowing that it is coming from some deep place.

Before making a major change, people have to get to the bottom of the pit. When you get to the bottom, you touch down and you realize this is it. This is as far as I have to go. Then you can look up and see this tiny little pinpoint of light and know that the only way to go is back up. You can work your way back up. So part of my working my way back up through the darkness to a place where there was more light was through art.

She said the process required her to know herself, to know all parts of herself, the nasty and dark, as well as the kind and generous. Everyone has the dark and the light within them. This process enabled her to have emotional freedom that translates to more freedom of expression. “Until you can feel the whole range of emotions, you can’t put them in your work.”

She told me that at a recent gallery talk, a woman whom she had never met came up to her and told her she had been wanting to meet her for years. She had been depressed, suicidal, and was out driving around when she saw one of Gayle’s paintings in a gallery window. It was a nighttime exterior of a house with a porch that had a bright light shining through the window. The woman screeched on the brakes went inside and bought the painting. When she got it home and saw that the title of the painting was “Hope,” she cried. She hung the painting in her bedroom so that when she woke up in the morning it was the first thing she saw. It is still there. Gayle said that the light in the darkness in the piece was
the resurrection Gayle had experienced, “the little glimmer of hope that was still inside of me
keeping me going.”

She said there are a lot of creative people out there who might be in denial of the
things about themselves that they do not want to acknowledge, so their work stays stuck.
They can keep going along on that same plateau where the work does not deepen, does not
delve beyond the surface. It is like placebo art that is like candy, candy art. “I don’t respect
that.”

_Needing things concrete._ “My painting is so integrated with who I am and how I live
and think… how I look at things. It’s all intertwined.” She said she does not paint things just
out of her head. They are all things she is familiar with, part of her daily life and not
something that she is trying to force into some kind of context. Everything she paints has
some reference point.

She said she is a realist, not an abstract thinker. She cannot think and experience
things in abstract ways because of the way she lives her life, because of her need to be
vigilant. Total obscurity is not good for her. It is frightening, an unknown territory. She has
to get herself to a place where she can see what she wants to paint. She cannot just make it
up. Seeing it gives her the visual language she needs to express whatever thoughts or
emotions she is experiencing at the particular time in her life.

In 2004 she went to Scotland, the northwestern tip of the Hebrides, to see where her
father’s family came from (see Figure 9). It was a remote area where there were no stores or
gas stations, but just a few scattered houses, with cliffs and water everywhere. She went from
a place of protection to total vulnerability. “I don’t know why I subjected myself to that other
than it would make the experience of this wide open space even more powerful, having been
in these protected interior spaces for so long. I wanted that feeling of vulnerability and exposure to be in the work.”

![Endurance Exhibit](image)

*Figure 9. Gayle Stott Lowry, Endurance Exhibit, 2006.*

There were things that happened on the trip that were translated in the work. The narrow paths were translated into narrow roads leading upward over blind hills where you do not know if anybody is coming and the road is not wide enough for two. The frequent weather changes, leaving things in transition all of the time, are in some of the paintings.

*Education.* After she left college, thirty years ago, she took painting and drawing lessons from a local artist. And she has been painting ever since. A lot of her learning has been self-taught. In the late 1980s she had a class with an artist she said was a wonderful teacher. He helped her more than anyone else because of his liberating attitude about breaking the rules. “I felt like he was handing me this whole set of keys and saying open any door you want.” Just go and explore, nothing is forbidden. He helped her to look at things in a whole new way, the more daring the better. “It was very liberating.” This was during the
time she was painting the pleasant landscapes, when she was learning to take risks, allowing things to come out and not going after what was tried and true. “I was so hungry for it. I was just like a sponge.”

**Genre.** Gayle started off painting landscapes but her focus shifted to buildings as her healing progressed. As she went from painting the pleasant landscapes to dark nocturnal scenes with trees, houses began to appear in the distance with lights inside. Then she started getting closer to the houses, up on the porch and then inside. It was a progression that took years to evolve.

She felt that the building represented the self (see Figures 8 and 10). Our bodies are structures, with an interior and an exterior. “You can board up the exterior so nobody can get in. Or you can have ways to enter, to get inside. The interiors have places that are shut off, places you disavow, parts you acknowledge and are comfortable in. “This symbolized life progressions, how we move from stage to stage in our life. Thresholds mark the place of transition between two stages.

*Figure 10. Gayle Stott Lowry, Sustenance, 2006.*
Now, with the large landscapes and growing interest in the issue of global warming, she says she is getting beyond her self into issues that are universal, moving on to a different kind of loss on a much larger scale. “I want to keep moving forward…I just want to get stronger and more powerful.”

**Practice**

*Continuity.* It is important in creative work to have continuity, to be aware of how one idea leads to the next. A lot of it is just working for a very long time and keeping your hand in it. You know from day to day what you are going to paint. You know where you are going. It takes the fear out of the blank canvas. You are always mulling over your ideas in your head.

She said she thinks in series. She does not want to do a lot of random paintings that do not relate to each other. She wants to create paintings that have connections with each other, a thread that runs through them, that expresses how she is thinking about herself and her life, coming from within her, and showing what she wants to explore.

She gets into something that she is exploring, visually or psychologically, and stays with it through numerous paintings until she has said what she wants to say. During the process she figures out where she wants to go each step. It is like a continuum. Series keep her going creatively and propel her work forward.

*Authenticity.* It is important to pay attention to the little voices inside your head and honor them. You need to allow yourself to step out of the norm and be curious and explore whatever it is that is calling to you, appealing to you and do not question it too much. Let yourself live that way and go with things that interest you. Take risks and go off the beaten
path and see what happens, see where it takes you. You find your own voice only when you work for a long time, stay at it and honor all the things that are coming up in yourself.

Viewer. She wants her paintings to have mood, to stir something in the viewer, connect with them in a way that they can relate it to their lives, impose their own needs and thoughts on the work and merge with it. Some of her work has a narrative quality that allows the viewer to get in to the painting and get involved with it, to place themselves in the scene. She likes to pose questions or choices to the person who is looking at it.

She likes for people to think about things in a deep way and not be so much on the surface. She watches people relate to her work at shows. They will see a piece and come and tell her something private about themselves, like what they saw in the painting that made them feel they could trust her.

She told me there is something that transcends her work. “I think it is souls speaking to each other. I think part of my soul has been expressed in the work that transcends the actual physical painting and speaks to someone who’s receptive.”

Marketplace. Gayle is a self-supporting artist. She says it is challenging because you want to stay true to yourself with your work and not have commercial gain corrupt what you are doing. She tries to avoid taking commission work. She would rather go with her heart and paint whatever she feels compelled to paint and hope that connects with someone. “It’s much purer” that way.

Process

Getting started. She often looks at photographs as a starting point but does not want to copy them. It is important to think not so much in a descriptive way but in a way that is more spiritual, more open-ended. She does not want to make a chair look like a chair but
rather suggest a chair. It is about relinquishing control, looking for possibilities, seizing them and going with them instead of having everything preconceived in her head. She wants to express more than that.

It is a blank page every time. There can be a lot of fear in looking at it too long. Gayle wants to dive in and get something on the surface to cover up the whiteness. She says she tries not to get hung up with anything too small when she is getting started on a new painting. She gets a little messy, sort of plays around and does not get too anxious about anything as she starts to get into the flow of it. She gets a conversation going, a dialogue, and the painting starts speaking to her, guiding her as she makes changes. She cautions not to let any area get too precious or you can destroy the whole rest of the painting trying to preserve that one precious area.

Releasing control. Gayle says she just lets go and does whatever occurs to her to do and tries not to analyze it too much. The paintings she likes least are the ones that are more controlled looking. If you can release control, the painting will take on a life of its own. Things will start happening so that it evolves to a higher level than you originally thought of. Let the painting communicate with you.

There is a certain level of trust that is established in the process of the painting. You go with it, allow the painting take on a life of its own and go where it needs to go rather than restrict it to a likeness of a photo or a preconception of what it needs to be. “If you stay with that, it’s never going to be any better than that. If you release it, it has the potential to go beyond your first intention and be something better.”

It is coming from within, unconscious things, intuitive things that you have to trust. It is really about not staying in the lines, not doing it like teachers taught, but going down a
different path to reach a slightly different conclusion. “It’s a dance. There’s this rhythm and you have to go with it.”

*Don’t kill it.* You have a lot of energy in the beginning of a painting and you kind of go with it. Over a period of time, you lose energy. She says that when you feel that happening, it is time to quit working on it. You run out of ideas of what you could do to make it better. At that point it is easy to overwork it, to kill it so that it becomes wooden, dead. Knowing when to quit is a problem, when to stop messing with it and trying to refine it. “I find myself getting tighter and tighter. So I try to quit. I try to leave it alone after a certain point.” If she sees something that is glaring at her, which is really irritating her, she will go back in and try to make a little correction. Otherwise it is better just to stop.

*Richard Garrison*

![Richard Garrison, Improvisation One, Oil on Canvas, 2007.](image)

*I saw some paintings of jazz musicians and baseball players online at a local gallery website. They were painted by Richard Garrison. I really liked the compositions, the shapes, colors, and the thick paint of the brushstrokes. In his commentary about his work he wrote*
about what the game of baseball meant to America. It was beautiful, poetic and I could see
the poetry in the paintings.

Framework

Spirituality. Richard tries to see more than just the physical. He sees the divine in
everything. He sees the God nature, the spirit that is in everybody. He has struggled most of
his life with anxiety and depression and, for the last twenty years, with arthritis. “The whole
interest in representing the spiritual side of things, maybe, that comes from just dealing with
these problems… You develop a depth of feeling in facing these challenges.”

When he paints he feels a sense of discovery, an excitement. “It’s the feeling that you
really are being… guided by the Creator, or God. Maybe it’s just all these ideas, all the
possibilities are just floating around and you allow something to come through you. It’s
almost like you’re a channel.”

Painting, for Richard, is often like a taking a leap, a jump in the dark, and not
knowing if you have a place to land. It takes a lot of faith. “When you’re in mid-air, and
you’re not quite sure, then you know something is really happening. It’s like a trust, a faith.
It’s very spiritual.” It takes skill, but also faith, believing things can just happen, and happen
for the good.

There are times when he is away from his work, on vacation or something, and he
becomes irritable and anxious. He feels a need to get back to his work, back to visual thought
processes, because it is more calming, less sense of time. He says so much of what we deal
with in the world is logical and verbal. We need an escape from that. For him to stay away
from his painting for too long would be the same as asking somebody who had a very deep
faith and prayed a lot to give up prayer for several weeks. “I’m very much aware when I’m
working and things are really going well that I’m in that [prayer-like] state. I feel closer to God, closer to the creator, when I’m creating.”

*Life and art.* He feels that every part of his life, everything that he does outside the studio, is connected to what he does in the studio, and vice versa. He used to feel guilty when he was not in the studio working. “Then it dawned on me gradually over time that even if I’m not in the studio, I’m experiencing life and that’s going to be part of what I do in the studio. So it’s all part of it.”

He has always been a very sensitive person. Being in school as a child, with bells ringing and having to go from one thing to another at a pace set by someone else, he found challenging. Fitting into some kind of pattern or channel with everyone else was difficult for him. “I’ve tried to sort of live my life as much as I can with what feels comfortable. Instead of trying to dig this channel, I just let the water flow where it’s going to go, because I think I’m happier that way.”

Probably the most important thing for an artist is to know yourself. He says it is good to be aware of your uniqueness and what your own motivations are, what makes you happy, or gets your excited, and to never falter from that, to be true to that. If he puts himself into anything, then it is going to be authentic. Knowing himself has helped him to figure out what direction is best for his work. He tries to see what causes him anxiety if he does not do it. Then he is more aware of what would stand in the way of his being able to do what he knows is the right thing for him.

He says it is also important to forget every other possible motivation about what someone else might want you to do, or expect you to do, and just focus on what is going to
make you happy. Whether or not someone else can appreciate it, “at least you were true to
yourself. It’s going to have more value, more meaning if it comes from you.”

_Education._ After working as a carpenter and cabinet maker for several years, Richard
went back to college at age thirty to study art. At that point he had not done any painting,
only some sketching on his own.

One of his first classes was art history where he learned about what other painters had
done, what motivated them and what the possibilities were. It got him thinking about the
world in his own terms, how he responded to things. For example, he looked at the paintings
of landscape artists to see how they responded to the world, to their environment. Then he
tried to look at his environment in order to represent it in a way that portrayed how he
responded to it.

This was not just a history course to Richard. He said you really cannot be taught how
art relates to you. You have to experience it for yourself, in your own way. He started
painting constantly. He painted everything he could think of to paint. One of his teachers
told him that he was working his way through every period in art, impressionism, post-
impressionism, expressionism, abstraction. He was just looking at things and trying to
emulate and learn what he could from each genre. “I was just getting an idea and being in
that atmosphere that was encouraging me to try ideas. So I was open to that, open to trying
new things.”

His last class was an independent study. He said he disappeared for the semester to
paint, had no contact with the teacher, and showed up at the end of the semester to show him
what he had done. Although the teacher was disappointed that Richard had not been checking
in, he was pleased with the work. He had started painting figures. In that semester, he really found what interested him most about painting.

*Genre.* For 22 years Richard has been painting figures. He has gone through many different periods painting figures, a lot of changes from fairly realistic figures to highly abstracted figures, and everything in between. There is an inherent expressiveness in the human figure that he thinks every person can respond to. A landscape can be very meaningful, but put a figure in there and it adds a whole new psychological dimension. That is what interested him.

Now he is aware that he tries to see the divine in everything. He sees more than just the physical. He wants to get beyond just the surface features and what the figures are doing in his paintings in order to emphasize their being, their existing in nature, how they are tied to all of nature. Most of his figures appear in strong light because, for him, light symbolizes the divine. “Expressing that spiritual nature in people is to lose as much of the surface image as possible. They’re kind of dissolving a little bit into all the surrounding area, like it’s all one.”

In some of his most recent paintings, his figures are more monochromatic, which represents a sense of spirituality permeating through everything (see Figure 12). That makes them even more anonymous, more tied in with the environment, the surrounding areas, and the light keeps glowing in everything.
Practice

*Right brain/left brain.* Richard told me about how he had learned to exercise his brain for the different tasks he had to do. For art and creativity it is the right brain thinking that is predominant. For analytical, verbal thinking it is the left brain that is predominant. So he says it is good to do things that get you accustomed to how it feels to be thinking or working in the appropriate way.

In creative work, he does exercises that allow the left brain to relinquish control. He presents it with tasks that confuse it, cause it to give up control so he can work without knowing exactly where it is going to lead. That is where he needs to be for anything to happen. He told me he does a lot of blind contour drawing, which is when you look at something while you are drawing it and do not look at your drawing as you are making it.

He does not want too much control in his work. Instead of following a linear path, he sets up the conditions so that he can go at it from an unplanned, unplotted direction.
That enables him to yield control and to take the leap.

He described how a painter can observe himself as he paints. You use your right brain to do your visual thinking and your left brain to observe. He says you have something you want to accomplish in each painting. You think about what you want to do ahead of time. Then you get the color you want, the amount of paint you want, the shape you want and go ahead and start painting in a non-thinking way because you have already thought about what you want to do. While you are painting you observe how the painting is progressing so you know when to stop.

It just takes practice. Just practice, making lots of mistakes. It’s working very right-brain. Sometimes I feel almost like an observer. I’m watching myself paint…think about what you’re doing but at the same time watch what’s happening as you’re trying to do that and see how the paint is being put on. Let the brush or knife do a lot of the work in terms of getting the look you want. You have to be aware to know when to stop. That’s very important to the way I work.

*Painterliness.* Painterliness is when you can see the brushstrokes, you get a sense of how the paint was put on and that it is just enough. Any more would be unnecessary. It is an inexactness. He thinks people can appreciate the fact that he could just stop, and know that was enough. For him, any more and it would not be as fresh. It would be overworked and struggled over.

It is important not to overwork the paint. He said you need to get it right the first time. You need to work fast, make a mistake if you have to, scrape it out and do it over. “If you have the mark of the artist’s hand at work, you want it to appear to be sure, confident. If it’s not, it’s going to detract. It’s going to look struggled over, incompetent.”
He told me about painting the hand of a seated woman in one of his paintings (see Figure 13). He just sort of brushed it in, indicating the hand, figuring he would go back and fix it later. He never would have consciously painted the hand that way. Then he realized it did not need fixing. It was just enough the way it was, even though it was blue, her fingers were blue. Somehow it just fit. He told me that, according to the painter Francis Bacon, the perfect painting would be one that was created by the artist throwing the paint at the canvas and everything landing just in the right place.

![Figure 13](image)  
*Figure 13. Richard Garrison, The Return, Oil on Panel, 2006.*
Viewer. He would like his viewers to think that he feels things deeply. He is really interested in having an image that just sort of stops people and puts them in the state that he was in when he created it. In that state, they do not really analyze it verbally. They just feel a natural immediate response, an emotional response, a sense of the spiritual.

Richard uses mainly just one figure in his new paintings. If he paints a group of people, the painting becomes about what is going on between the figures themselves. If there is only one figure, there is more direct interaction between the viewer and the painting.

Marketplace. He is working toward the point where he is doing what he loves, and where what he loves is also successful commercially. He has been selling work for a number of years and enjoying something about everything he does. But he has always felt that there was some sort of compromise, that maybe he would not be making a particular painting if he did not think about whether it would sell. He said he thinks about that too much sometimes. It would be great not to have to think about that at all.

Now he is focusing on just doing what he wants to do at a particular time. He does not know if his new paintings are going to sell. He feels pretty confident that they will, but he tries not to think about it and just do what he wants to do.

Process

Getting started. Richard said you have intentions but you do not visualize. Accidents of direction can lead you to a better piece than what you could have visualized in the beginning. He has to have some intention to get started. “Even if you’re going to try to make a piece, and you leave it totally up to your subconscious, unconscious thinking to develop this idea, you still intentionally allow that to happen.” You set up the conditions for that
process to take place by just doing it, getting started, just going in some direction, but being open to where that can lead.

*Nudging things along.* The whole process cannot be forced. He says it has to just happen, to a great extent, when you are applying the small nudges, making small changes. You need to be able to see as objectively as possible what is going on. It starts out with an intuitive feeling, just a visual pleasure. Then you get involved with one part of a painting and it is really working well. You do not want to lose that, so you bring the rest of the painting up to that level, [so that it works] with that one area. It requires intuition and practice to develop the skill.

He says there are a lot of artists and galleries that like consistency in the work. They want the work to look similar so that three years from now people will be able to identify the artists because their work has not changed. Richard is wants to experiment, to change, to keep fresh, try new things, to just try to get better.

*Just be open.* For Richard, continuity is good, but it is also important to be open-minded to new things, constantly seeking out new ideas. He watches that he does not close his mind to something just because it is different from what he is used to. He explores it and finds out about it and appreciates whatever it is on some level, whatever level he can. If he has never heard Ethiopian rock and roll, he checks it out, just to see what it is like. He wants to be open to it, to find out what those musicians are up to and try to appreciate it, to translate it for his life.

He feels that viewers will be attracted to work that is done with this open-mindedness. It may present some new idea to them because it was new to him. This open-minded work calls their attention to itself. Once it has their attention and it is painted well, it
can express an idea to them that they had not considered before and cause them to feel a little
bit of what he felt when he created it. For example, if you have some idea about religion or
contemporary politics you want to get across, you may be able to persuade somebody to see
your way and to appreciate your viewpoint and maybe even either question their own or
reinforce what they believe.

Jason Craighead

Figure 14. Jason Craighead, Untitled Blue, Oil on Canvas, 2007.

I met Jason at a contemporary gallery that he co-owned. It was my first visit to a
gallery in search of paintings that I considered emancipatory. I had not even worked out the
criteria at the time. He walked me around the gallery telling me about the works and the
artists. Then he told me he was a painter. So I thought I would test out some of my interview
questions on him to see how he would answer them.

I was interested in learning more about artistic thinking, to understand the role of
reason in the artist’s process. He told me he thinks mathematically when he creates his
paintings, that he applies math to his compositions. Then he took me to a small room where his paintings were stored. They were beautiful, large abstract paintings, mostly white with black lines and blocks of color breaking through. They met my selection criteria on many levels.

Framework

The dynamics of feeling. For Jason, feeling is an ability, a honed skill that is central to his life and to his art. It is a matter of constantly being open to new possibilities. He is always thirsty to know something else, to follow a feeling where it leads until it has done what it needs to do, until he has learned what he needs to learn from it and understands it as a whole thing.

For him, this is the artistic process. It is the commitment to feel without fear, to be passionate for life. It is to be fully committed to “feeling, whatever that is, whatever that feeling is that seems to be indescribable, like we almost can’t get to it.” It is the excitement that artists are after, that they only “begin to recognize when you begin to think for yourself.”

At the very core of life, what makes being human important, is that we love each other and we care. The ability to feel and be emotional is what artists are tapped into more than society in general. It is the concept of structure that separates us, where “we think like this and you do not…and we are this and you are that.” We all grow up thinking that we have to be a certain way, like there’s a right and a wrong. There are things that you do and things that you do not do.

Say an eight year old is walking along and there’s a squished bug on the sidewalk. He’s fascinated with it. Why? Is it because it’s a squished bug? Is he contemplating death? Is he contemplating life? Is he contemplating murder? Did somebody step on
the bug? Did the bug just die? Does he think it’s interesting? Why does he think it’s interesting? That’s his perception. The mom or the dad may be like, “Come on, we’ve got to go! That’s dirty! That’s bad!” That goes in his head. “That’s dirty and bad so I shouldn’t think about that.”

He says the artist sees life as wholeness, where feeling is the most important thing. Everyone feels. Everyone has the ability to feel great and to feel bad according to how they apply their emotions. Some people who have no remorse or regret use their ability to feel to cultivate a dark feeling of power. The artist feels power from the good side, from knowing themselves, knowing the power of the creative process, and trusting that process to enable them to achieve their goals.

*Going beyond what’s in front of you.* There is always something to know behind everything. The vision that goes beyond what is in front of you is what the artists share. Why is that in front of you and where did it come from?

Going beyond is not a linear process. He says you need to “flow and go around” things. Linear is expected. If your process is linear you did not challenge anything. You did not challenge yourself. You did not challenge your ability to think. You simply executed. It is finite. It is done.

He says artists are the ones who bring incredible things into existence. They take the time to create from the heart. It is different from sitting down at a desk and running numbers. You cannot go and buy half a painting and finish it yourself. It is as pure as it gets, to create a painting. “Maybe they’re prayers, little things you put out. I think it is a human need of some sort to create something… It’s instinctual in some capacity.”
Education. When people started asking Jason what he was going to do when he grew up, he never had an answer. He liked to draw but he did not know that drawing, art, could be a career for him. Through high school he particularly enjoyed the art classes with his friends where “the rules of the class did not necessarily apply to us all the time… and we were set free to do more of what we might desire.”

In college, he began to study art and to see himself as an artist. At that point a particular teacher was directing him to tell a story in his work, which conflicted with what Jason felt compelled to do. When he started to realize what that conflict was doing to him, physically and emotionally, he decided that he really did not need a degree to be a painter, so he dropped out of school almost immediately.

I’m paying these people to tell me what they think about MY work. This is MY work that I’m making. It’s not their work. How can someone give me a grade on art? How can you grade art? Can you grade my soul? Can you grade my heart? Can you grade my passion? Can you grade what it’s like to be me?

He decided he did not need to be taught anything else. The rest was for him to learn. And to learn, he just had to do it.

Now he thinks he may like to teach painting in ten or fifteen years. He wants to offer students a sense of freedom and a sense of self, where they do not have to feel like they have to please somebody. “You don’t have to please anybody with this. All you have to do is make something beautiful, and enjoy it and appreciate it.”

Genre. Jason said that the work that he makes right now is the same thing that he is right now. It tells the story of his artistic process, not of himself as a human being. He does not feel he needs to offer personal information. He says he is just making something
powerful, using color and composition. It is all about evolution of process, moving and changing all the time. The process is what makes this kind of painting so important.

For the viewer, his work looks non-objective. For Jason, his work is totally objective. Each drip, each mark is important to him. “What I’ve finally gotten to in art is knowing that I’m not going to paint a thing. I’m more interested in what ‘what is’ can become through just brain.” He told me in an interview that he could sit there and render me “to the hair.” But he would rather look at me, find out what he likes about what he sees, and then play with that in a different way, and then call it me.

*Practice*

*Thinking without boundaries.* Thinking without boundaries is thinking without concern. It is more feeling than thinking. It happens when the artist sees himself as a catalyst, a clear channel tapped into the huge flow of creativity that has existed since people thought about anything. “You paint the thing and you bring it into existence. It’s the process of bringing something into existence, whether it be physically or just thought about.”

Jason said that it involved “learning to want to like not knowing what to do next, like wanting not to know. Maybe another way of putting this is leaving your ego at the door. The painting is not about you, it’s about the painting.” As a channel, he needs to be open and not controlling to the creative flow and be expressive. It gets filtered through his emotional drive. Some artists feel the process differently than others. There are technical artists and there are lustful artists.

Its own little life. Each painting is like its own little life. “When you think about it, you’re birthing this thing from a moment.” His paintings consist of layers on layers, with
each layer representing a moment of effort, each day, each time he gets to it. They are not physical layers of paint, but the record of a “moment of perfect decision” (see Figure 15).

He sees echoes, depth, and time in his work. He can feel with what aggression he applied the paint and know why he did it. “If I let the paintings do what the paintings are going to do, and I’m just the catalyst, that’s the best I could ever be. Because then something is taking over and doing its own thing.”

He feels a connection with all of his paintings. Some are a negative connection because he remembered how he felt during and around painting them. He was rushing two paintings to have them ready for a show, “and I didn’t put in the love. I just let it slip away. I didn’t give them the attention that was needed.” He had to push too hard to finish them and spoke with regret about the “little inklings” he saw of what they wanted to do.
Viewer. Jason wants his viewers to feel the same excitement as he did when he painted them. “If you have any emotional character whatsoever as a human being, you will be touched. I don’t care if you don’t like it. Even if you walk away, you were touched.” He hopes people walk away feeling good, feeling touched, but he says most of us do not know how to feel that because we are so oppressed “by our division and separation.”

He does not try to put his emotion in the work because his paintings are not about him. His painting is an activity, like running down the street. It is a thing that happens, something he does with or without emotion. Emotion is not for him to put in. If he tried to, they would not be the paintings that they are, the paintings he wants to paint.

Marketplace. When I met Jason, he was co-owner of a local gallery. He was also painting and selling his work. He told me that the mental load that comes with “thinking that other way,” as a businessman, “shuts down something.” At the time of our first interview, he had just quit his job at the gallery to become a fulltime artist. He said he could fall on his face in a matter of three months. He has a wife who respects and supports what he does and he owes her the same respect and support. What is going to happen? “I’m going to make this work. Somebody is going to represent the work and put it out there for me. If they don’t, I’ll be flipping burgers at McDonald’s, and guess what I’ll be spending my money on… paint to make more paintings.”

Process

Getting started. When Jason faces a blank canvas, it is like he is almost not even there. It is like putting his shoes on. He does not sketch things before he starts to work. He does not start with a preconceived idea. Sometimes the only thing he thinks of is palette. “I can see a room full of paintings. If I could project images of the paintings that are in my mind
onto the wall, I could show you 50 paintings right now that I haven’t done. What I actually paint will never be those paintings either. They’re not plans. They’re not sketches.”

Instead of thinking about it, he just starts. Then something happens and he starts reacting to it. Once he is involved with it he begins to see the next steps.

*Being in the process.* There is a difference in process among artists. Some artists, like Jason, are very comfortable in chaos, knowing that chaos can sometimes yield the next brilliant thing, while others need more order. Jason thinks that it has something to do with the confidence behind the process, behind the artist’s own personal process of feeling like “[this painting] IS the next brilliant thing.” He showed me a painting and told me that when he finished it, he sat on the floor and looked at it for two hours (see Figure 16). “It feels like I feel. The application of it feels like I feel. I’ve gotten that response off of it [from others]. It’s so bold; it’s so boom!”

*Figure 16.* Jason Craighead, Untitled I, Oil on Canvas, 2006.
He says the key is to be in the process constantly. It is like one giant goal. It is not about a number of pieces. It is not about anything changing. It is about considering those things constantly. “The zip is like, THAT’s just done! I can do it again now.” To always have THAT in the mind is the thing, whatever THAT is. He feels it constantly, even when he is not painting, just being in that state of mind, that creative thing. He said he knows what it is like to be miserable and not do these things.

Layering. He thinks layering is one of the most important things in painting. A layer represents a physical moment and effort. For him it is not literally physical layers of paint. Each layer represents a moment. “I can’t sit here and say I’m painting nothing. I’m recording something. What am I recording? Time, I guess. Each day, each moment, each time I get to it.” It is that moment of perfect decision. He says life is loaded with layers. The more life you live, the more layers you have got, the more you are bound to create more mature things.

He does not rework because “how else would I know what I did?” If something in him said it was done, then he is not going to question that. It is done. He said you have to keep yourself in check. Not every piece is a masterpiece. He is satisfied with the information that he has “buried” so there is no reason for him to try to bring new information in. It has got the body that it needs. It has life, because it has been dealt with.

He likes to knock big things back into space with big areas of nothing in his paintings, and then give them subtle bits of information which will bring those knocked back areas forward. Then he lets the “buried information” come through. Where it “leaks” through is what tells him why the marks on top are more important. It is only because of “the very subtle, teeny tiny things that go on around it.” Everything is reliant on what is happening around it. He thinks of life the same way. Everything is because of something. Everything
relates to something. And the little things around certain things are what make those things bigger.

*Anthony Ulinski*

*Figure 17. Anthony Ulinski, Still Life with Striped Cloth, Oil on Canvas, 2003.*

Anthony has his own website that is an archive of his still life paintings that go back several years. It is an art history student’s dream to see a chronology of a body of work. I did not have any still life painters in my sample. And there was something about his paintings that drew me in. The compositions, colors and objects were very appealing. The settings seemed familiar, like I recognized them, like I had experienced them myself. They were comforting, quiet, made me feel safe.

**Framework**

*Observing life.* It is important for Anthony to live a life that is contemplative and outside the church. For him, art is about observing life. It is a low impact, very quiet existence. What he is trying to do for himself is to learn to look at things, to really see them and to capture some of their beauty on the canvas. His hope is that some viewers will find
some quietness in them, some solitude, some peace. Many people who buy his small still lifes relate to the quietness of the composition. They are like little prayers.

He says when you have “painter’s eyes,” the world is quite a beautiful place. It is not really so much about the world, but about potential paintings. He looks at things in terms of color forms and shapes rather than objects.

If you stare at still life objects all day long, then get in your car to drive home, it’s hard not to look at the buildings and the cars in front of you on the roads, and the street signs as compositional objects of a larger painting. You don’t see a stop sign as a demand, some kind of a restriction. What you see is a block of red.

Initially his paintings were about trying to capture a likeness that would be interesting. Then the idea of looking for and finding beauty everywhere is a major focus for him. He came to realize that beautiful still lifes occur all the time, not only in the studio. He started to notice accidental or found still lifes, particularly in restaurants, and to use these in his work.

Painting what you’re looking at. For the first six of his fifteen years of painting, he learned to paint what he was looking at, not what he thought it should be. He found he needed to set aside intellect, any preconceived notions, and just focus on what was in front of him. In order for a painting to really be the experience he had the day he looked at it, his work took on a seasonal component. “Like painting tomatoes in the winter, they would taste like those tomatoes, too. If you buy a tomato in January, it’s not really a tomato. It looks like a tomato, but it’s powdery and tasteless. If you bought a summer tomato and painted that, that painting is going to look like a real one.” The whole concept of “being here and now”
and painting what he sees tied together for him in this approach. He said it was a matter of being straightforward.

He also told me about breakthroughs that happened as his painting progressed. One was when he accidentally painted an abstract painting when he thought he was painting a representational painting. The more he painted a group of objects, the more abstract they became. It was a big revelation to him that abstraction was so close to where he had been, and that abstraction and representation can be blended so they work together in the same painting.

For one painting he had spent a long time developing a preparatory drawing. The drawing was highly rendered, very precise, and the perspective correct, but it did not look very interesting. When he started to paint he decided not to worry about the original drawing and to just paint around it. The rectangular table turned out to look like a parallelogram with legs turned out and tabletop tipped.

He realized that a completely accurate representation of what he is looking at does not always make a very interesting painting. Something happens in the interpretation, something that shifts, that allows him to go outside the lines and skew things. He recognized “that there is the reality that you’re looking at, and then there is the painting.” He decided he did not really need to worry so much about perspective. He can paint things with multiple perspectives...because it is a painting! If the painting would be better by shifting a line, even if that would make the perspective ambiguous, he was going to go with the painting rather than the perspective.

Education. Anthony studied economics in college and started his career in woodworking. It never really was a conscious decision for him to become an artist. When
illness required that he do something less strenuous than woodworking, he thought he would try painting.

He signed up for a class in still life painting at a local university and continued taking classes for eight years. They were not very restrictive. They were much more of a playful kind of thing. “A gang of us [students] would get together and paint these objects that [the instructor] would set up.”

One instructor finally recommended that Anthony step away from the classroom and get a studio and really figure out where he wanted to go. So he got a studio and did not paint for a year. “I just could never seem to come up with any ideas about what I should paint next.”

At that time, a friend of his found a good studio space that was too big for the two of them, so they set up an artist cooperative where there were initially five painters. So there was a dialogue, critiques and feedback. That is what he was missing when he was on his own. It helped him to have something pushing him along, beyond the painting process itself.

That sort of camaraderie continued until about three years ago when they closed the cooperative and Anthony committed the first third of this woodworking warehouse to a painting studio. By that time he was showing regularly. He was getting reviewed and making sales. He found he was getting feedback in all kinds of different ways.

Genre. Anthony originally thought he wanted to paint landscapes even though his training had been in still life painting. When he went out and tried to paint a landscape, however, he was so daunted by the scale of the subject matter that he went back to his studio to paint still life objects. “The word still is really, for me, just quiet.”
He sees beauty in each of the objects he paints and wants to make people notice them in a different way. He has an inventory of still life objects that he keeps going back to, cups and saucers and teapots. “The idea of trying to get that image… there’s something possessive even. You become very attached to this thing and you want other people to see it. Or you want other people to feel what it is that you are (feeling).”

There is always a story he is trying to tell. He showed me a painting of a cup and vase and flower. “So daffodils, we know it’s springtime. Full cup of coffee, we know that there’s somebody present. Something is happening involving somebody with a cup of coffee. Probably somebody is going to drink that cup of coffee.”

**Practice**

*Workman-like attitude.* In answer to my question regarding how I could learn to be a painter, he told me there is first the study, the focus on the thing, and then there is going in to the studio to work day after day, year after year. He has only a few dozen objects, and he paints every one of them a lot. “There’s a real workman-like attitude to being an artist that does not have much to do with any kind of great insights.” It just takes discipline. He says once you are there, things can happen. But they will not happen if you are not there.

He told me there are a lot of days when he does not want to be there, and he sits in front of the painting, and then goes home. He does not do anything to it. He just stares at it for several hours. Then, when he comes back something happens. “You have seen things in it, so that the next day you come in and you know the painting that much better.”

*Teaism series.* The last series he did was developed from photographs taken at a teahouse in Washington, DC (see Figure 18). The idea for the paintings was that he was looking at found still lifes where he had no control over the light or the composition. He took
the photos surreptitiously, over his shoulder, around his back, and ended up shooting parts of
the people sitting at the tables as well as the objects. The parts of the bodies were difficult to
crop out without compromising the whole composition, so he painted them in.

![Image](image.jpg)

_Figure 18. Anthony Ulinski, Two Women, Oil and Wax on Canvas, 2006._

He started to realize that including the people was a powerful addition to his still lifes.

“Even the tiniest portion of a human figure changes the whole nature of this. It’s no longer
really a still life painting. I kind of got seduced by the story and by the expression and by the
power of that story, the potential there.” While he was not really thinking about the narrative
potential when he started the series, it became apparent when he was painting. It became a
narrative about the person in the painting and her relationship to the room, the objects, what
they were doing, and the other people at the table. By the third painting, the central focus was
no longer the still life objects, although they are still in there. It was more about the man
writing at the table.
He told me that these paintings were not really about the bodies or the objects. These paintings transcended that and became something else. They became something about the restaurant itself, the setting, the quietness in the space, the narrative that was happening between the figures in the painting. This was the first time he had tried to create an environment instead of concrete objects. “That becomes an experiential thing. I think that series has been successful in that way.”

**Viewer.** Anthony said he is not really painting the piece for the viewer. He is painting it for himself. A painter may offer some catalyst that releases something or changes it from the subconscious to conscious thought, but that is not his goal. If he can take the viewer to a contemplative place, that would be okay with him.

He is making the painting for people to look at, to respond to, but he is not trying to direct their point of view to some attitude that he may or may not have had while he was painting it. His paintings serve to validate the viewers’ feelings, if they connect with those feelings. They can know that the feeling they connected with exists outside themselves, and that it is shared by the artist because the artist saw the same thing and reacted the same way when he painted the piece.

He told me about when he visited a natural history museum twenty years ago. It had a lot of totem poles in one room. Children would run noisily through the other exhibits. But when they ran into the room with the totem poles, they would “be absolutely stunned, and silenced. And they would slink out of there looking for their parents.” Anthony knew that was what the totem poles were intended to do, to instill a sense of awe or fear in anyone who saw them. He said he felt the same response to them himself, and remarked that it would be a great to get a response like that to his paintings.
Marketplace. Making furniture is his primary means for making money. He said he never wants to rely on painting to support himself, although he would like that to happen. He does not want to get into a position where his paintings would become market-driven. He does not want anyone to tell him what his next subject matter needs to be.

Process

Getting started. When he starts a painting he has an image in his head of what he wants the painting to look like. He has the still life in front of him and he has the paint. Usually there is a moment when he has the complete vision of what he wants to accomplish. Before he actually starts painting, however, he draws the still life over and over until he understands where things are so that by the time he is ready to paint, he understands where things are in relation to each other. For every painting he does probably twenty drawings.

As he starts to paint he realizes that there is some specific thing within each painting that he is working on. Sometimes it is a color, a compositional twist or a split perspective. It is some “one thing that’s different about the painting, and different about that view that made you stop and think, ‘Oh, that might be an interesting painting.’ Then you just try to get that.”

Once he makes the first mark on the canvas, everything starts to relate to everything else. When he makes one change, everything else around it needs to change. Often the whole painting is painted over by the end of the day. “It’s subtle shifts here and there. That’s the way I work.”

He likes to paint the whole canvas rather work in just one area, so he can see all of the relationships. Accidents can happen where a little blue on the edge of the brush gets into the painting where it was not intended. That can inform the direction of the painting in a way that
makes it more interesting. Sometimes an accidental mark is so successful he tries to reproduce it. But it usually looks reproduced, and that does not work.

*Thinking and painting.* According to Anthony, the thinking part and the painting part of the painting process are really separate. The thinking part happens before he gets to the canvas. “If you’re thinking too much while you’re painting, you’re not really painting, you’re doing something else. You’re thinking about painting. It really has to be about the mark you’re making right now.”

He told me that when he is thinking, the left-brain carries on a dialogue which is often very critical, but it is also the part that dreams up the conversations between the people at the tables in the paintings (see Figure 19). Thinking does not actually have that much to do with putting down the paint or mixing the colors. Knowing the feel and look and colors that he wants is more of a right brain, intuitive process. “You do not really think about that.”

*Figure 19.* Anthony Ulinski, Two Yellow Cups, Oil on Canvas, 2006.
**Being in the place.** Doing the sketching and drawings for a piece in preparation for painting is where the most expression comes in. It is so quick that he says he can keep trying over and over again. It is very exciting.

You do go to a place during that process that is outside of regular time. Time doesn’t really seem to happen there. That’s a wonderful place to be. It’s the same kind of place you’d get to in a deep meditation where you have blocked out everything else. The only thing that exists is your pen, the paper, and that object or those images. That’s a pretty magical place and a pretty seductive place. If you can get to that place every day, you would go there. It’s a good drug.

If all the conditions are right you can be there for a long time. Anthony has been there, sometimes for five minutes, another time for fourteen hours straight. He stayed there the whole time and never left. His large Teaism paintings were pushed far along in that “place.”

If thinking is happening in that place, he says it is so integrated into the painting process and making the marks that it is not, “oh, I need to make this mark” and then you make the mark. He just makes the mark. “I don’t know if there’s a thought process...It feels to me like, for me, when I’m painting a painting that I’m not really thinking. I think that I’m just really painting.”

When he has a problem, like with color or perspective, he needs to stop and think, but the left brain critic needs to be silenced. After staring at the painting for so long it is hard to see beyond the problem. He needs to step back and make sure the composition, the overall painting, is working. He closes his eyes and tries to see the painting through one of his critic’s eyes. At that point, he does not want to paint. He wants to makes notes about the
weak areas like, “Change the shadow in the background. Bump up the right corner of this painting to darken that.” Then he can go back and make the changes.

_Gerry Lynch_

*Figure 20.* Gerry Lynch, Black Gold, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2006. (Left) Painting 72x42, (Right) Close-up.

I visited Gerry’s studio during a neighborhood art walk just before Christmas 2005. She was out of town but her son was showing her work to visitors. They were large three foot by eight foot paintings on heavy paper tacked to foam core and they lined the walls of her studio. He was constantly shuffling new paintings to the front creating kind of a slide show for the viewers.

I have always particularly enjoyed abstract art, but these were very unusual. Standing back, I was struck by the energy and intricacy of the pieces. There was no focal point to direct my gaze as I tried to take in the whole. But as I stepped closer, a new world of lines and shapes opened up before my eyes, a microcosm of delicate layers and marks that took my breath away.
It’s not a fraud. At age thirty, after the birth of her fourth child, Gerry’s husband gave her some paints. She had been involved in art as she was growing up, drawing in grammar school, art editor of the high school yearbook. She also did some painting, realistic still lifes, because she was good at copying. The still lifes were not challenging for her because she could do them so easily.

One day she painted some flowers and made the flowers fuzzy. She thought they looked like abstract art. She did another painting of fuzzy flowers and put some lines in it and found it very interesting. At the time, 1967, abstract expressionism was finding enthusiastic audiences at galleries and museums. Painters like Pollock, De Kooning, Motherwell, and Kline were dripping paint on canvases in broad gestures. Gerry thought it was a fraud, a hoax. She did not pay much attention to it because she did not see its validity.

One day “I was driving and I turned a corner and what came into my head was (a) Franz Kline (painting). And I said, ‘It’s real. It’s not a hoax. It’s real. I know.’” She knew at that time, when she saw the painting in her mind, that it was not a fraud, but that it was a sincere way to communicate.

That experience validated her fuzzy flowers with lines. She did not know why they gave her more satisfaction than the still lifes. But she thought she would continue with the fuzzy flowers, and has been painting some variation of them ever since.

Accumulation of past knowledge. Gerry told me she has had “almost 40 years of painting, of taking from the best, taking from Pollock and De Kooning and Gorky and all of the best.” She does not look specifically at any of their paintings when she is making a painting. For her it is just the accumulation of past knowledge of looking at something. It is
the accumulation of past feelings. “I think we are just an accumulation of our past experiences. I can’t seem to get away from myself…I have to do what I’m feeling.”

She says you cannot escape who you are. When she was a child she loved fashion, not to wear it but to look at it (see Figure 21). She still gets fancy fashion magazines from Europe. Recently she was working on a metal sculpture, using mesh and puffing up the mesh. Later, as she was looking at the magazines she thought, “My goodness, this is Christian Dior. This looks like I’m ripping off Christian Dior with the metal!”

*Figure 21. Gerry Lynch, Necklace, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2005.*

Another time, she had just finished one painting, wanted to go farther with the next one and wondered how she would do it. She was looking at some old Art in America or Art News magazines and was struck by the work of Frank Stella.

This guy, he started off minimally when he was in his 20s, when he was at Yale, and he was doing black paintings with a white stripe, or silver stripe. Now what he’s doing is something so completely different. I notice all his stages of every ten years or so. He does something completely different.
She was looking specifically at a seventy or eighty inch lithograph print he had done recently and all the different things he put into it.

“Why can’t I put that into my drawings? Why can’t I think like that, to do something, not just what I’ve been doing for these 50 or 60 previous ones?” She thought about how she could approach her next painting after having looked at Stella’s huge graphic. Of course it would not look like Stella’s, but she wanted to be as unafraid as Stella that she could pull off doing something new.

Music is important to her. She asked me why I thought they play so much Beethoven and Mozart on the radio. “Is it because it’s the best? Is it because most everything else bores people?” She said she thinks it is because it is the best and it is the most exciting to listen to. “When you listen to something that’s really exciting, it comes out, while you’re working. It comes out in the way you put the paint on the canvas.”

She always wants her next painting to be the best painting she ever did. She wants it to be like a Mozart piano concerto. Speaking as though she was conducting an orchestra, she told me, “I’m going to take a chance. I’m going to use this. I’m going to use the lines. I’m going to put some collage here. I’m going to do this. I’m going to use some spray paint here. I want to try to do a print on that. I’ll borrow this person’s method or whatever.” She wants her paintings to be “the best thing that ever came from the human spirit.”

*Education.* Gerry did not have much formal training in art until she decided to get a master degree in art after her children were grown. Her experience in teaching art better illustrates her attitude and approach to education.

She had been holding classes for groups of two or three people who were already artists. It was for artists who really wanted to change, who wanted to experiment. “It wasn’t
like you set up a still life” and have people paint it. The students were there because they wanted to go beyond where they were.

She told them she would show them. “I don’t know if it’s right or wrong. It’s what I would do. But I can’t judge because there’s no right or wrong with art.” She had them use her method. First, she blindfolded them. Then she tied one hand behind their back, the right hand if they were right-handed and the left if they were left-handed. Then she told them to think of the most wonderful thing, and then draw it.

She said they worked hard and were exhausted but they were very happy with the results. “They did the most amazing things.” One of them used the new method and won a prize. But now, she said, some are not using the method “because this type of work doesn’t sell.”

**Genre.** Gerry told me that being an abstract expressionist, “it’s not a big deal to interpret an epoch with a line.” It is not about painting a thing. Most people still think, like she did when she was young, that abstract art is a fraud.

She said abstract expressionism is a very selfish form of art because you are referencing yourself all the time. Therefore you care about yourself, and you care about what you like. “You’re not doing a portrait of someone and you want to get paid so you’d better make him thin!” Instead, it is completely about you, the artist. You are pleasing yourself. “And if you’re lucky, you’ll sell it because somebody else will be on your wavelength.”

**Practice**

*I’m feeling squiggles.* She tried to do a painting recently with just lines, no curves at all and found it very difficult to do. A couple of her friends looked at it and told her it was
dead (see Figure 22). “So I have to do what I’m feeling, I guess, right? And I’m feeling curves and squiggles…”

![Image of a painting with curves and squiggles]

*Figure 22. Gerry Lynch, Sky Cam, Oil on Canvas, 2005. (Left) Painting 34x46, (Right) Close-up.*

She wants her painting to look free. She does not want it to be tight. It is free when there’s not a straight line in the whole thing. “To me, straight lines…mean a tightness.”

In one painting she wanted to force herself to use lines so she started it drawing without squiggles, using a ruler. She said her process was mostly, “Oooh, lets get some straight lines and stop doing these squiggles.” She thought she could force herself to do a minimal painting. “Of course, this is not minimal at all, but my idea was.”

A friend of hers told her that she paints all the calligraphy because she is not verbally articulate. It is her way of explaining herself. “When he said that, it sort of gave validity to the scratches.”

*Media.* She moved into a new, bigger studio last year because she wanted to do bigger work. She intended to work with steel. When she first started painting, she painted on
canvas and then on wood. Then she added metal to the wood. Gradually it became all metal. It was her idea to paint calligraphy on the metal with acid, but the expense was prohibitive.

She does a lot of her painting right now on paper. Paper is more flexible and “it isn’t as precious.” She usually starts with watercolor, then a watercolor pencil, then acrylic, then oil stick, then oil paint. That is how her layering goes. She paints with oil sometimes, half oil and half cold wax medium. It is a substance that mattes the paint. She puts it on and lets it dry for about an hour. Then she puts a piece of paper on it and pulls it up. That gives her texture.

Painting on paper fits her right now but she is thinking of changing. She wants to learn how to cast glass. She would like to combine metal and glass “because maybe it would be something more interesting than (what she has done), something more exciting.”

Then she told me about a woman who makes metal sculptures out of airplane parts. “They must be as big as tractors. I’d really like to do that.”

*Viewer.* Gerry wants her paintings to communicate a feeling of, “By jove, she’s got it!” She wants the people that like her work to have the same flutter in their heart that she had when she made it, that excitement and sudden feeling of “That’s it!”

She told me with a smile that she cares about what people think, but if they do not get it, she does not love them any less. “I’m crazy about my husband, and he doesn’t get it most of the time. But he’s an engineer. He has an engineering mind, a different way of looking at life.”

*Marketplace.* Gerry’s main interaction with the marketplace is covering the cost of all the different materials she needs to do her art. “If you do something long enough, and you
care about it long enough, and you are focused, I think [with] time and persistence, you’re willing not to stay in the same place [just] to sell the work.”

**Process**

*Getting started.* Gerry approaches each piece by wanting to make it the best piece of art she has ever made. The next one has to be better than the previous one or “it would be stupid” to try.

She has to know ahead of time something to start with, even if all she wants to do is paint one stripe. Every night she walks for three miles and thinks about what she is going to paint the next day. “It isn’t a haphazard thing.” She gets an idea in her head and just paints it. The idea can be no more than wanting to paint large black forms in an arc.

She likes minimal art very much, which she describes as “severe and uncomplicated and not a lot of fru fru.” She told me she has some minimal ideas in her head that she would like to do. As I looked around her studio at all of the beautiful complex works filled with gorgeous “fru fru,” she told me, “well, in my head [it seems minimal]. I have to… produce it and see.”

There was one piece she said she has had in her mind for four years, and it has not changed. Another idea for a whole show “just came like lightning, or however things come.” She wanted to make a statement about the Iraq war but did not want to focus on the gruesomeness of it. Then it struck her. She could do the show in a theme of Babylon, Tigress, Euphrates, the same place, the same culture, just 2000 B.C.

*An innate sense.* Making things balance is automatic with Gerry. “If I make a vertical line, I can’t leave it. I have to make a horizontal one.” It is an innate sense of balance. Too
much balance can be boring, too. So you have to have empty spaces, but the empty spaces have to balance the other spaces, too.

She feels a restlessness, a real physical uneasiness when something is not right. Then she fixes it and it is right. She describes it as just an innate sense of balance that “probably anybody that tried it would get it, too.” Then, after everything balances, in order to make the thing cohesive, she will draw a little bit on one shape and make it go into the other and pull it all together that way.

Harmony may have something to do with the way a painting flows, and the color. She explained to me how she built up a beautiful collage on a paper canvas. “I juxtapositioned these forms in different places,” putting them up with scotch tape before she glued them in place. As she moved the pieces she thought, “That doesn’t work there, so put that down there.” She said there was a gray form next to that little red kind of spire. She “toyed a long time with thinking. Should I paint that black?” She said one would think that with the flow of the piece that she should paint that black, when she looks at the way the forms, the black forms, are flowing from one to the other. But there was something in her that was saying “leave it, leave it, it’s overkill or something.” So it is an internal voice. It is a voice inside her, “like it’s not myself. It’s somebody else.”

Exactly the opposite. What she wants to do in the next painting is exactly the opposite of what she did in the last painting. She does not want repetition.

Repetition is a waste of energy, waste of materials. It pollutes the environment. If you did a painting with three red apples and then you did another with three red apples with a green plate, who cares? You did the three red apples that were good and the others are meaningless to me. You have to add something or change.
If she does something very dark and somber she would say, “I wonder if I’m a fraud, if this is just a front. Can I do pink? I wouldn’t wear pink but can I do pink?” Then she would paint something just the opposite of what she did before just to see if she could do it. If one is a little baroque, then the next will be more minimal. That gives her leeway to “go overboard with the next one…making it even more intense.”

Summary

My exposure to the lives of these artists has opened exciting new dimensions to my own life, and I hope, through this research project, to many others. It has validated my selection of them as emancipatory artists. Their words consistently ring in my thought as I go about my daily activities, lifting me to the consideration of higher goals and greater possibilities. I set out to understand how art could be revolutionary, and feel I am living out the answers.

Chapter Five identifies the threads that were woven through the artists’ portraits, and takes a closer look at the structures of consciousness that provide the basis for artistic thinking.
CHAPTER FIVE: Themes from the Portraits

Each of the portraits in Chapter Four illustrates the creative potential of an emancipatory perspective. They document individual experiences and thought processes in bringing forth something that has no model, follows no tested procedure, but is truly original, an authentic outcome of an emancipated life.

Chapter Five looks at the structures of consciousness underlying these emancipated lives. It includes three sections: 1) Thinking and Painting, which focuses on the emotional subjective elements of consciousness, 2) Knowing Yourself, which explores the emancipatory elements of consciousness and 3) Trusting the Process, which looks at the elements of consciousness behind imaginative power.

Thinking and Painting

This section explores subjective aspects of consciousness, specifically aspects of thinking beyond reason. It reveals the complexity of artistic thinking and how skillful feeling is a fundamental prerequisite. Anthony told me that thinking and painting are really separate. When he gets to the canvas, he is just painting and not thinking. “If you are thinking too much while you are painting, you are doing something else. You are thinking about painting.” Themes include: 1) Dynamics of Feeling, about the importance of the ability to feel; 2) Beyond the Surface, the ability to go beyond the objective; 3) Open-Ended, thinking without knowing where it will lead.

Dynamics of Feeling

Artist participant Jason Craighead says artists know how to use the dynamics of feeling. The artists were all very aware of what they feel and how to use what they feel in their work. It is not unthinking, erratic emotion that they feel, but an analytical, honed ability
to access understanding and awareness beyond the object world of reason. It is the intelligence of the internal or subjective aspects of consciousness. Jason talked about the math of composition in terms of rhythm, movement, and proportions. Gerry Lynch talked about balance that she measures with physical and emotional precision. Gayle Lowry uses geometry and perspective in her paintings of interiors to communicate the harmony or disharmony she intends for the experience of the viewer.

Fundamental to their feeling is their love for their work, their desire to share that love, and their gratitude for being able to do what they love to do. As Richard Garrison puts it, “Don’t attempt to transmit feeling, an idea, or knowledge without a love of that feeling, idea or knowledge, or at least, a love of the act of transmitting, or you’ll fail.” Their goal is not technical achievement. It is the ability to bring into existence an image that sounds the depths and heights of individual souls and communicates the disappointments and victories of individual lives.

The painters’ lives document a wide range of human experiences and emotions, from dealing with loss, to working with physical disabilities, to trying to attain peace and spiritual insight. They analyze, explore and respond to what they feel and think; and they bring this holistic consciousness to bear on everything they do. For Gayle, the ultimate artistic freedom is the freedom to express all aspects of your nature in your work.

They all share a personal commitment to feel without inhibition, to think without boundaries, to share the truth they have come to see with honesty and compassion, and to do whatever it takes to be able to continue their work. Jason commented that people who do not have remorse or regret use their ability to feel for exploring the dark side of power. He wants
to apply his emotion to feeling the good side of power, from a sense of self worth, honesty and confidence.

The artists all talked about connecting with their viewers on many different levels, emotional as well as intellectual. The difference in the nature of the desired connection reflects the difference in each artist’s attitude toward art, but they were all very interested in sharing the experience they had when they painted the piece.

Philip, Gerry and Jason want an immediate, emotional response to their work. Philip described the reaction he was looking for, as when one walks into a room and stands in awe, feeling, “Wow!” Gerry wants the viewer to feel the same flutter she felt in her heart when she painted it, the excitement or sudden feeling of, “That’s it!” Jason wants the viewer to be touched by his paintings, even if she did not like them, and to walk away saying, “That feels so good.”

Anthony wants his paintings to connect with viewers as a validation of their own feelings. He wants them to know that he has seen the same thing as they have and responded in the same way. That way they can know that he shares their feelings and that those feelings exist outside of themselves. He sees his paintings as little prayers that make viewers see something that is quite ordinary in a way that is not really deified, but is set on a pedestal and calls attention to itself in a quiet way.

Gayle wants to pose questions, to present choices to her viewers. She wants them to not only think about the work itself, but to relate it back to their lives. The narrative quality in many of her paintings allows the viewer to get into it and become involved with it. She said there is a certain indulgence in making paintings that people are not responding to, and that they are not buying. Painting like that would bother her because she would feel that she was
not connecting with viewers, and not touching them deeply enough that they would want to have the paintings in their presence.

Beyond the Surface

One thing that all the artists share is a vision that goes beyond the surface of things, and not just taking things at face value. It is a vision that looks at and considers the meaning that is behind what they see. Gayle says art “shows some reality, some truth other than [that] life is beautiful. We can look at a rose blooming and know that [life is beautiful].”

This vision includes what artists see beyond the surface image, such as color or shape. It also includes what they understand, what they feel, and how they make sense of what is before them. The vision makes them ask: Why is it there? Where did it come from? Why does it look like that? This vision involves a continuous examination, analysis and reshaping of their world.

The artist participants experience this vision in both visual and emotional terms. Anthony, whose work is representational, sees the world broken down into color fields and compositional forms. On his drive home after a day of painting, he does not see stop signs as a demand or some kind of restriction, but as blocks of red. At the same time, he sees the beauty behind the visual things, the beauty that the things represent such as the quietness and peace of conversations at a tearoom, or the harsh winter light that rakes across the landscape.

When Richard first started studying art it was like he saw a whole world, a hidden world that he was not previously aware of, open up before him. He had wondered why painters painted trees blue. So he started to really look at trees and found that in a certain light they were blue. He looks beyond surface features to see humankind existing in nature and tied to all of nature.
Jason, whose work is non-representational, talks about this vision in terms of how his brain goes beyond what he sees with his eyes in order to understand it. He says this kind of thinking is not linear. It is abstract thinking where “you can flow and go around it,” where he challenges assumptions rather than goes along with them. It is the process of understanding the “logic” behind what he sees and feels that enables him to be in touch with something and relay it through his art. To do this, he says he has to “go beyond all this and look back at it and then pick it apart and then figure out where it all landed.”

By seeing beyond the surface, artists bring into existence works that are the embodiment of their heart and soul. These works are the culmination of a desire to capture the truth they come to know through this process and express it in a form for others to share.

Open-Ended

Richard describes right-brain thinking as looking for the possibilities, seizing them, and going with them, rather than having everything worked out in your head in advance. It is thinking not so much in a descriptive way, but thinking in a way that is more open-ended, more spiritual.

He says it is good to do things that get you accustomed to how it feels to be thinking right-brain, and to work as much as you can without knowing exactly where it is going to lead. This allows the logical side of the brain to relinquish control. Instead of following a linear path, you set up the conditions that present your left brain with tasks that confuse it. For example, he said you could set an object upside down and draw it that way, instead of the usual way. It is a matter of looking at something differently in the process of recording what you see.
It is not about staying within the lines. It is about solving it differently than the way you did before. It is about going down a different path in order to reach a different conclusion. As Richard says, it is the idea of taking a leap and not knowing for sure if you have a solid place to land. That is where you need to be for anything to happen. It is only when you are in that position that you are going to do valuable creative work.

According to Anthony, the left brain has a dialogue that can often be very critical. At that point, the left brain needs to be silenced and the artist needs to step back to see if the composition is working as a whole. He guesses that half of the time you are making a painting you have the brush in your hand. The other half you are just staring at it. If you are thinking with your left brain about every mark, and criticizing every mark, nothing would happen, or the style would be draftsmenlike and staid. If you have your painting all figured out ahead of time, there is no point in painting it. It would be just formula.

Gerry said that painting was ninety percent feeling and ten percent intellectual. Then she told me how she would teach me to paint. She did not go through a list of steps, things that I needed to remember. She would have me concentrate on something that is important to me, along with all the things I have learned in the past about art, the things that I have admired and studied. Then she would blindfold me and have me paint with my left hand. That way, she told me, the painting would become automatic because I would not be thinking about anything else.

For Philip, painting is almost a religious act. It is like being a monk. When you paint it is quiet. Philip said he is talking to God in his own way. Anthony said that the idea of going into a studio and working all day by himself in a quiet place where he controls the volume, he controls all the activities, appeals to him. It is a very quiet and beautiful life.
According to Gerry, it is a happiness, an inner happiness, and time flies by so fast. You feel you are making something worthwhile and not wasting your life or your time or your resources. Richard wrote in a painting, “To truly see is to lose your sense as individual in the totality of consciousness.” It is how he feels when he is painting and it is really going well. It can be very exciting. It is a high, a natural high, a sense of discovery and the feeling that you are being guided by the Creator.

They all said they go to a place during the painting process that is outside regular time. It is a wonderful place to be. It is the same kind of place you would go to in deep meditation where you have blocked out everything else. The only thing that exists in that place is your brush and your canvas. Anthony says, “It is a magical place. In the moment it is happening, you do not even know if it happened because the process is the magic part. It is the activity, being in the zone.” If you could get to that place, you would go there. If all the conditions are right, you can stay there for a long time.

**Knowing Yourself**

This section looks at the structures of consciousness that are specific to emancipation. It presents the thinking behind the rebellious attitudes and the actions that create the conditions for emancipatory living and working. Themes include: 1) Self-Aware, being aware of why they feel what they do; 2) Never Be Satisfied, wanting to keep growing; 3) Honesty, having the courage to follow the heart, and 4) Released from the Rules, going beyond standards.
**Self-Aware**

Being self-aware for these painters is knowing why they feel the way they do about their work. They know what they want to make and what it will take, intellectually and emotionally, for them to make it, as well as what would prevent them from making it.

Gayle knows that she is a realist, not an abstract thinker and that she cannot make things up and paint them. She has to physically go to a place, experience it firsthand, before she can paint it. The self-knowledge she has gained through years of therapy has given her emotional freedom which translates into more freedom of expression as evidenced by the comfort and safety of her interiors and courageousness and power of her landscapes. The turbulence she has experienced in her life has given her a bigger visual vocabulary to work with, more choices, a broader range, more depth, more layers and deeper feelings than just surface. She told me she is drawn to certain scenes and elements as though they speak to her when she sees them. She pays attention to them and goes with those feelings knowing there is something there, even if she does not know what it is yet.

Anthony knows himself more on the level of his preferences, of what makes him feel what he wants to feel. He knows he is not totally aware of his subconscious motivations. He studied economics in college and still finds the subject fascinating. His interest in the economic concept of “small is beautiful” is translated in his paintings of still lifes. His desire is to observe life, to have a quiet, low-impact existence and to celebrate beauty in what he sees. He enjoys repetition and can look at the same object day after day and find new beauty in it each time he comes to it.

In contrast, if Gerry painted three apples once, she would leave them and go on to something else. She wants each new painting to be totally different from the previous one.
She also likes to work in a variety of media, to keep trying different things. She does not want to be bored. So her whole process allows her to be responsive to the feeling of the moment, to be free to take new paths, to explore new dimensions, and to be surprised.

Through many years of physical illness, Richard is very sensitive to the physical and emotional conditions that promote and sustain his well-being. He is very analytical and knows the best route to get from here to there. He lives his life with what feels comfortable. He sees the divine in people and develops his figures to where they are the most accessible to his viewers.

Philip has found a sense of self-worth through his art. He has connected with art on a religious or spiritual level, identifying his work with his being a humanitarian. He has a lot of technical ability, and knows how to “catch” the feeling that he has for his subjects in his paintings through his process. Releasing himself from rules and doing things his own way are keynotes of Jason’s art. He knows his heart and makes everything conform to its truth.

Never Be Satisfied

For all of the artists, their next painting is going to be the best one they ever did. They are most excited about what they are working on at the moment. Once they are finished with it they go on to the next without looking back. As Jason puts it, the goal is to never be satisfied. They do not want to stagnate. They do not want to be bored. They are looking out from where they have been to see what else they can explore in a natural progression, where one thing emerges from another. Richard wants to keep evolving, “to let the water flow where it’s going to go” instead of trying to dig a channel and forcing his work and his life into it.
Gayle said she thinks in terms of series. She does not want to do a lot of random paintings that do not relate to each other. She wants to see a thread that runs through them and have that lead to another body of work, maybe in a slightly different direction. When you are working on a series you know what you are going to paint. You know where you are going. It takes away the fear of that blank canvas.

For Anthony, there is usually something in each painting that he gets either right or wrong, that he wants to correct in the next one. When Anthony works on a series, he is not concerned about making corrections to the first painting, like changing the color of the background. He will have an opportunity to include that correction in the next painting.

The continuity in Gerry’s work is that she wants each painting to be the opposite of the previous one. If she does a painting that is very somber, black and minimal, can she do one that is pink? She tries to do the opposite just to see if she can. She also challenges herself to take each one a little bit farther. If one is more baroque, more complicated, the next one will be more minimal.

**Honesty**

Practicing their art has involved deep struggles and adversity at many levels, emotional, financial, and physical. Yet these artists are unflagging in their commitment to be honest in their work and in their lives. When artists paint to say something, not just to sell their work, but to have it widely appreciated, in addition to being successful and satisfying for themselves, they need to put themselves into it. They need to find their own voice and say something that means something to them. This is not a matter of skill level or technical ability, but it is a matter of honesty—an honest desire to capture or interpret a scene or idea.
Gayle said that it felt like such a relief to stop doing “placebo art that’s like candy, candy art.”

There are people who paint very well technically, but there is no feeling in the work, no voice. Philip told me about classmates at art school who had great skill but they were not able to keep up their art outside of school. The technique does not make the artist. If the talent is there and the passion is there, the artist will come out.

Gayle’s was an inner struggle. Her work evolved from pleasant landscapes to complex interiors to powerful visual records of the forces of nature and time as she was plumbing the depths of emotional turmoil. An important part of working her way back up from the darkness to more light was through her art. She knows artists who have been through all kinds of personal struggles, and yet their work never changes. It stays the same. I saw work like that but it did not meet the selection criteria.

Jason’s work at the art gallery involved doing paintings on commission. He watched some of his paintings fail because he did not have the time to give them what they needed. He knows what it is like to be miserable, not to be able to do his art the way he wants to, and says he will do whatever it takes to be able to keep doing it his own way, even if that means flipping burgers. He got to a point in his career where it was painful for him to have to do the commissions from the gallery rather than pursue his own work. The first five paintings he did after quitting his job at the gallery meant more to him than anything he had done in years because they were honest. He wants an honest life, to be able to be honest about what he is doing, or he says he is not growing.

Richard’s struggle was physical—anxiety and depression. He said that in dealing with these problems, he developed a depth of feeling. So he is interested in more than just painting
a nice landscape. He wants to do something deeper. He talked about outsider art, work by artists who are untrained, unschooled. They just have a desire to make something, to express something, and they do it. It often has great value because it has soul. It comes from a place inside, the sub-conscious. It is good to learn the basics, but it is not absolutely necessary. You have to learn how to pull it out of yourself, no matter what your skills are.

Gerry was preparing for a show recently about Babylon Today and realized she already had a lot of pieces that would work for it. She told me if she were young she probably would not be paying much attention to the war, that she would be focusing on and painting babies. Now she is thinking a lot about the war and it just had to come out in her paintings, in her own voice. Her work over the last few years has been referencing her life because the way she thinks in life is the same as the way she paints.

Released From Rules

Art is basically about breaking rules and doing something original, something that is authentic. Jason describes it as having the courage to value and respect your own perception of things. It is about knowing that your perception is valid. If you perceive a painting to be finished, beautiful, and the greatest thing you have ever seen, that is your perception and that is true. What matters is how you perceive it, what you believe to be true, that makes things important. Everyday we are told things that are not true. The ability to perceive what is true, to understand it through our own sense of truth, is something that is inside everyone. It just needs to be tapped into and understood.

In a one-week seminar Gayle had years ago, an artist helped her more than anybody else through his very liberating attitude toward breaking the rules. She felt like he handed her a whole new set of keys, telling her to open any door she wanted to. Just go and explore. It is
okay, nothing is forbidden. It helped her to look at things in a whole new way, the more daring the better.

Gayle said there is a danger in working with someone else that the students will become clones of the teacher. They need to find their own voice and that is only done by working for a long period of time, staying at it and honoring all the things that are coming up in themselves in their work.

They all said that art cannot be learned through bookwork. You can go to school and learn to put paint on a canvas, but you cannot be taught to be an artist. They learned from looking at the history of art to see what others have done before them, what motivated them and what the possibilities are. They all said they learn most by just doing it, by just painting.

According to Philip, you either are an artist or you are not an artist. It is within you. It cannot be learned. Being an artist has to do with feeling and understanding your emotion and letting it come out on the canvas. You can only do what you can do. Everybody has her own level. Without the emotion, it is only a technical exercise. Philip taught a man how to paint the only way he thinks art can be taught, by showing him how he paints, explaining his process and letting the student take from that what he will. Gerry had a similar experience.

**Trusting the Process**

This section provides insight into the process of art-making, of creating something new and original, with particular emphasis on the necessity to release control. It explores the aspect of individual wholeness, seamless being as the source of imaginative power. Themes include: 1) Intentions, starting without visualizing a finished product; 2) Organic Fit, the integrated relationship of parts; and 3) Releasing Control, staying spontaneous and reactive.
Intentions

None of the artists visualize a finished piece, but all of them have some idea to start with. You have intentions, but you also have to have a lot of freedom to change your mind as you go along. You have to have some intention, even if you want to make a piece and leave it totally up to your subconscious to develop the idea. You have to start with something in order to allow that to happen.

Gerry has to have some idea, even if it is just to do one stripe. Sometimes she gets an idea for a whole piece that she wants to try, but she never knows what it will end up looking like until she actually makes it. Anthony has an image in mind of what he wants the painting to look like. He knows the object he wants to paint, the feel that he wants, the look that he wants, the colors that he wants, but it is not until he starts working that he hits on something and things start to happen. Jason does not start with any preconceived idea. The first thing he usually does is to squirt black ink on the canvas and let it run. Then he sees a concentration of activity where the drips are close together, feels something is going to happen, and goes from there.

Richard tries not to prepare himself because that is a left-brain activity and he is not going to make a successful painting if he is thinking that way. Oftentimes he puts on some music and just sits down and meditates, blocks out everything else and is just open to the work. When he has something in mind that he wants to do and gets the color that he wants and the amount of paint he wants, he goes ahead and does it in an almost non-thinking way because he has already thought about it. At that point he just does it. He just needs to watch what is happening in order to know when to stop.
In the beginning, Gayle may have an idea of what she wants it to be, about what it should feel like, but when she actually gets involved with that rectangular surface with the paint strokes, she just starts responding to that. She tries not to get too hung up with anything small. There can be a lot of fear when you look at a white surface for too long. She wants to dive in, get the white covered, and play around a little bit before getting too anxious about anything. She wants to just get things going, get into a flow and begin to have a dialogue with the painting.

Organic Fit

Everything evolves. Philip starts with one object and then it evolves into other things. He works on the background and foreground at the same time. He does not just render a form and leave it. He may change it several times before he gets it the way he wants it. It is not enough to just make a painting look like something. It should be designed like a puzzle. It should be organic, hold together as a unit. He said when you are painting organically, “you learn not to put something in and not to leave something out.” If you pull out one little thing, one area, the painting will not work.

Anthony likes to paint the whole canvas, rather than one area, so he can see where the relationships are. As soon as he makes one change, everything else needs to change. Very likely, the whole painting is painted over by the end of the day.

Gayle wants to get a lot of paint on the surface so that the paint can react with itself and have accidents that she can respond to. It is not so much a matter of having to make the curtains look real, but a matter of getting a lot of paint on there and having those mushy parts start bumping up against each other, and the colors playing off of each other, and Gayle just responding to that. The colors start having a relationship. She gets a conversation going with
the work. There are times when the painting might get really tired, overworked. Then she might have to do something drastic, or out of character, to jolt it, to take it in another direction.

Richard looks for parts in his paintings that he really gets excited about, that make him literally physically tingle with excitement, which he has a hard time taking his eyes off of, and then he builds out from there. He tries to pull everything else up to that level. The process cannot be forced. It just has to happen by applying small nudges, making small changes over the whole canvas which he watches as objectively as possible to see what is going on. It is like the conversation or dialogue that Gayle was talking about. At some point the painting starts to take on a life of its own and forces itself, dictates to him that it should be a certain thing. It is important, then, not to be too in love with some part until he is sure the painting is finished. You have to be willing at all times during the process to question the validity of what you are looking at, to see it as objectively as possible until you are satisfied with leaving it alone.

With abstract art, Jason says you are not trying to make the painting look like anything. You are just trying to solve the problem that you have created for it. The problem is compositional rather than representational. For him abstract painting is more interesting than trying to render something. In representational painting the solution is already right in front of you. With abstract art, the problem is non-existent until you create it yourself. You put some paint on the canvas. There it is. Now you have a problem to solve compositionally. Jason wants to create problems so he can find solutions. That is what keeps the painting alive and makes it challenging.
Gerry says every painting for her is like an experiment, and ninety percent of the time her problem solving is automatic. She just knows what to do, like “bang, this should be here or that should be there. It is not calculated, it just comes into my head that way.”

In his still lifes, Anthony deals with a lot of technical problems, just the mechanics of painting. The hardest thing for him continues to be perspective. He stares at a painting so long that when he closes his eyes, it is not hard to still see the painting.

Richard says the potential is there with paint more than any other medium to be expressive, to have the mark of the artist at work, struggling to bring some order out of chaos. A big thing with him is allowing for the accident. He makes mistakes as he goes along, trying to proceed with some caution but going ahead and doing it the best way he can see to do it. If it is not right he can fix it. He says that if you work this way, you may make mistakes in the sense of not doing something the way you intended. But you may also do something that was better than you intended. “There really are no mistakes. Unintended consequences may be a more accurate description.” Not being afraid to fail can lead to a more creatively rewarding end. Failure, in itself, can be a good thing, a positive thing. It can be a good teaching tool that helps you learn what does not work, and by process of elimination you can figure out what does.

Releasing Control

It is important to stay spontaneous, not get too fussy, and to release control. Gayle tries to let go and do whatever occurs to her and not try to analyze it too much. If you can release control, the painting will take on a life of its own and things will start happening that take it to a higher level than you originally thought of. You just go with what needs to happen next. That requires a certain level of trust.
Philip says that when the talent is there and the passion is there it will come out. But very few painters have been strong that when their personalities came out, they actually made art. With the artists, it is their inner being that comes out. They are letting themselves out. They are putting their whole soul into their work. They are not intimidated by failure.

Gerry always starts her paintings blindfolded and with her brush in her left hand. The line is more interesting and unpredictable when she makes it with her left hand. She said, however, that her left hand is beginning to get predictable so she is going to have to use her toes!

Gayle says that it is your vision, it is your experience, things deep within you that are sublimated into this other dimension and that come out in your work. It may not be literal. It may be symbolic, but if you have self-understanding and can really look at it, you are able to see yourself. She has had many experiences of recognizing the significance of some of her paintings long after she painted them.

Jason wants to let the paintings do what they are going to do because then something is taking over. That way he is just the catalyst, and that is the best he can ever be. He said it is great to not know what is going to happen. There were times when he did want to know, when ego was involved. He had to learn to want to not know what to do next. Now he sees that the painting is not about him. It is about the painting, the activity of painting. It is about the drips and the layers. For Jason, the painting is about thinking without boundaries, thinking without concern, and even not thinking. It is like being a clear channel. It is like the artist is a catalyst, a channel tapped into the huge flow of creativity that has existed since a human thought about anything. You need to be open if you want to flow and be expressive. It is getting filtered through your emotional drive.
Richard says you have to be open to letting something happen, at the canvas and in life. Realizing the whole process of not planning out what he is going to paint ahead of time was a breakthrough for him. But you have to set up the conditions so that you can go at it from an unplanned, unplotted approach. You can carry a painting to a deeper level by doing something to it that will lead you in a different direction, but it cannot be forced. You need to get into the right brain mode so the unhindered creative process can take place. For Richard it is just all of these ideas, all the possibilities floating around, and then allowing something to come through him.

Summary

This chapter took us deeper into an understanding of the structures of consciousness beyond reason, thinking artistically, in answer to Research Question 1. Chapter Six will start to make connections between artistic thinking and the practice of emancipatory adult education in answer to Research Question 2.
CHAPTER SIX: Discussion of Findings

Chapters Four and Five presented the findings from the artists’ interviews in answer to Research Question 1: “What is the experience of artists in creating works of art that are emancipatory?” Chapter Six discusses the meaning of these findings for the emancipatory adult educator in answer to Research Question 2: “How does this experience relate to adult educators in creating emancipatory learning experiences?”

This chapter brings together the portraits and themes of the artist participants, the adult education literature and my analysis of the two in conversation with each other. It is comprised of three sections. In section one, Sketches of four emancipatory adult educators were drawn from four books selected from the literature review. In section two, themes were developed from the sketches. In section three, a collage of concepts and perspectives were designed to provide an artistic view of the Landscape of Emancipatory Adult Education.

Sketches of Emancipatory Adult Educators

To begin to make the connection between artists and adult educators, I have created sketches of four emancipatory adult educators. The sketches follow the format of the artist portraits in Chapter Four of “Framework, Practice, and Process.”

Selection of the adult educators for these sketches followed the same process as the selection of the artist participants and was based on the educators’ written works, books and articles. I chose four books from the literature review that met the selection criteria used for the artists’ paintings:

1. Engages the attention of the researcher.
2. Instigates a rupture with the rhythms of everyday thinking.
3. Creates an emotional connection with the researcher.
4. Contradicts the researcher’s expectations and disrupts her assumptions.

5. Involves the researcher in the consideration of new ideas.

The four books include, *The Meaning of Adult Education* (Lindeman, 1961), *We Make the Road by Walking* (Horton & Freire, 1990), *Teaching from the Heart* (Apps, 1996), and *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (Brookfield, 1995). Each of these books has made a significant contribution to this project. Together they represent a cross section of perspectives, experiences and genre from the emancipatory adult education literature.

The sketches of the authors that follow highlight dimensions of their intentions and motivations in creating these particular works. They were written through an aesthetic lens and were designed to draw parallels with the artists in their framework, practice and process.

*Eduard C. Lindeman—The Meaning of Adult Education*

Lindeman (1961) wrote this book in 1926. He called it an essay whose purpose was to challenge rather than explain or convince. Six years earlier, he had traveled to Denmark where he came into contact with a form of adult education that was being practiced on a national level as the victorious nations of World War I were redrawing the borders. Instead of seeking a solution through politics, they sought a solution through adult education in an attempt to regain what was taken by force from without, by education from within.

He noted the connection between education and life values in the Danish example. In considering whether adult education can do as much for us in the U.S., he concludes that we will discover our meanings when we are engaged in the process ourselves, and not in advance.

*Framework.* For Lindeman (1961), adult education is a process through which learners discern meaning in their experiences. Being educated is not merely being informed,
but finding meaning in informed living. Traditional education prepares learners for life, but adult education provides learners with the tools for changing their lives.

His own formal education began when he was twenty-one years old. He already had considerable life experience having worked since he was nine. None of what he was being taught had any relationship to his experience. “My initiation to formal education was, next to the unsuccessful attempt to adjust myself to automatic machines, the most perplexing and baffling experience of my existence” (Lindeman, 1961, p. xi).

He tells us that learners need to become aware of what education does to us. We need to become actively involved in the process. We are too often willing to become the objects of specialists’ attention. We take the first step toward liberation when we begin to understand ourselves, what inhibits, frustrates, and subjugates us. We learn to be free when we understand why we want to be free and what stands in our way.

*Practice.* Traditionally, academic achievement is a quantitative measurement. Lindeman (1961) says, however, that adult education should be discovering new methods and creating new incentives for learning and measuring its results qualitatively, not quantitatively. “The purpose of adult education is to give meaning to the categories of experiences, not to classifications of knowledge” (p. 123).

*Process.* An intelligent person sees facts in relation to herself, as well as in relation to each other, and not simply as discreet, objective, external units of existence. For Lindeman (1961), growth is achieved by integrating emotions with thought, a capacity for feeling more deeply and thinking more clearly. From this perspective, reason has not been dethroned but democratized. Rational conduct is conduct in which reason plays a proper part. It is not necessarily intellectual.
Emphasis in teaching needs to involve method over content if educators are going to produce a difference in quality of use of intelligence in their learners. They need to present their subjects in the context of their whole life and learning. Freedom is the result when learners become sufficiently intelligent to see their lives and their environment critically, since nothing has meaning except in relation to something else. Freedom from bondage is only preliminary. The function of freedom is to create.

*Paulo Freire*—*We Make the Road by Walking*

Freire (1990) had known Horton for twenty years when he asked him to consider doing a “speaking book.” That was a method Freire had used in the past to get his own ideas into print. He felt it was time for them to explore ideas together, get to know each other and to let the world in on what they had to say to each other. Also, he wanted North American audiences to recognize that his ideas were applicable to First World countries and not only to Third World. He felt that Horton’s Highlander Center, which shared his views, was proof of this.

Freire (1990) saw two main themes emerge from their collaboration. The first was the importance of the freedom of people everywhere, and the second was the democratic belief in the capacity and right of all people to achieve that freedom through self-emancipation. Their ideas converged through their individual interactions within the social context, and their involvement with popular struggles for participation and freedom, not through theoretical deductions. Their work posed a major threat to long-entrenched power structures and led to repercussions in both of their lives.

*Framework.* When Freire (1990) entered secondary school, he like, Lindeman (1961), was much older than the average student. Although at first he thought he was stupid because
of the difficulty he had with his standardized lessons, he always believed it should be possible to learn. As he continued his education, he had some good experiences with teachers who challenged him. Little by little he came to a kind of discovery of what education should be.

He describes the etymology of education as “a movement that goes from outside to inside and comes from inside to outside” (Freire, 1990, p. 187). This movement is the relationship between authority and freedom as experienced between teacher and student. The teacher needs to demonstrate her own stability and security from both an emotional and intellectual point of view in fighting for her own freedom in her life, so she can be able to fight for the freedom of the learners in her classroom.

Freire (1990) was sure that “one of the most tragic illnesses of our societies is the bureaucratization of the mind” (p. 38). He lamented that in society, you lose credibility if you go beyond previously established patterns. Yet, reading and writing involve creation and recreation, creative moments by minds that do not accept bureaucratization. In order to reach a point of creativity you have to break from the old, you have to have “ruptura” or moment of conflict in which a decision is made for creativity.

*Practice.* Freire (1990) said that what is important to know is how to know. The process of teaching is the act of knowing by the teacher. She has to know the content, and also to know why the student learns from the teacher what the teacher knows.

Educators need to first gain knowledge of how learners know and then create ways for them to go *beyond* their state of thinking. They have to create in themselves, through the critical analysis of their practice, an understanding of how to go with them beyond where they are without just transferring the knowledge.
They need to become more open to feel the feelings of others, to become sensitive to what their learners are thinking at any moment in order to keep from misreading their interests and needs and just going with their own reading of the world. This ability cannot be taught as content. It needs to be learned through the example of a good teacher.

Process. For Freire (1990), this knowing is not a neutral act, but is full of feelings and emotions that are connected to values, power and oppression. He discovered that reading must be a loving event. It is an act of beauty, an “aesthetical event” because it has to do with the reader rewriting the text in his desire to understand it and connect with it. He is fascinated by the moment when a book enables him to establish a relationship between reading the book and reading the world.

One of the tasks of the educator is to provoke the discovery of the need to know in learners. She must not forget to start with a respect for learners, to start from the levels at which they perceive themselves and their relationship with reality and never impose knowledge before they perceive the need for it. A good teacher is one who never stops being surprised.

Jerold W. Apps—Teaching from the Heart

Apps (1996) opens and closes his book with lessons learned from an unexpected thunderstorm during a two-week workshop for educational leaders as they took shelter in tents along the Missouri River. He saw the storm as a metaphor for the storms of our times and our lives, our organizations, and our institutions. The learning the participants experienced was much more than an intellectual exercise. They were totally engaged. They felt the joy of a connected wholeness. They navigated a range of emotions including the loss
of control. Apps calls this kind of learning, learning from the heart. It is learning for a world in continuous change.

_Framework_. Apps (1996) sees education as a series of relationships: learners relating to their own intellectual and emotional selves; teachers relating to learners; learners relating to each other; learners relating to knowledge; and teachers and learners relating to contexts and communities. It is education of the whole person and involves the heart as well as the mind.

Teaching and learning from the heart goes beneath the surface of things, beyond the accumulation of information, the development of skills and change of behavior. It is discovering what it is to be human and exploring the relationship between _doing_ and _being_. It is being fully alive, attending to each dimension of our being and realizing that every dimension interacts with the other.

_Practice_. Much of our training is linear but we do not teach or learn in straight lines. To teach from the heart we must know ourselves, explore the depths of our own being to touch our own hearts. Only then are we ready to develop strategies to assist others to learn from their heart, to become comfortable with their own learning and the power of it.

Apps (1996) uses the metaphor of an inexperienced canoeist to illustrate the challenges and insecurities educators face when they begin to teach from the heart. It requires courage to let go of the riverbank, not knowing what challenges lurk around the bend. Though scary and unpredictable, there is gratification and fulfillment in going with the rush of the current rather than sitting on the shore and watching.
Process. Rather than replacing traditional teaching approaches, teaching from the heart builds on them, adds to them, and takes them deeper to help learners integrate all components of their lives. Its aim is to help learners to consider what it means to be human.

Teachers need to know and trust their feelings, and not attempt to push them aside, cover them up or act as if they did not have them. Teaching from the heart is an authentic experience, coming from the depths of the teacher as a person. It is not only about what the teacher knows, but who she is. She strives to connect with the learners, to touch their hearts, and encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning. She knows that the unexpected, rather than getting in the way of learning, can be a source for it, and that powerful learning can occur when she gets out of the way and lets learning happen.

*Stephen D. Brookfield—Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*

Brookfield (1995) wrote this book for all teachers who think about their practice. The core process of critically reflective teaching is seeing how we think and work through different lenses. This happens when we examine the assumptions that undergird our practice. He wanted the book to “have passion, to ring with the voice of truth, to inspire action, to be a source of renewal, and to grant legitimacy to teachers’ privately experienced episodes of critical reflection” (1995, p. xvi).

*Framework.* Brookfield (1995) describes the practice of teaching as a dialogue among equals. Through this dialogue, learners are helped to understand, value and evaluate their own experiences using criteria that they have evolved themselves rather than having criteria externally imposed on them. This approach adds the element of critical analysis to the purpose of adult education to help people learn from their life experience. It enables learners to develop a situational reasoning that goes beyond the rules of formal logic. It is a
contextualized reasoning that interprets experiences through individually evolving theories of action that change according to time and place.

During his research for a previous book, Brookfield (1995) began to realize the uncritical stance of many of his own assumptions about teaching and learning. “It was shot through with unacknowledged agendas, unpredictable consequences, and unrealized dimensions” (p. xi). He had been surprised and alarmed by conversations he had with his students about their experiences in his classes. The students misread his intentions. He could see that how his teaching was perceived was far from being the straightforward matter he thought it was; instead of creating an environment of freedom and trust in the classroom, it had become of place of misinterpretation and confusion.

In critical pedagogy, the educator analyzes education as a process through which dominant groups impose their values and beliefs. Her role is to penetrate false consciousness and help learners to break out of the habit of oppressive ways of thinking and acting. She helps to create in them forms of thinking and living that are democratic and true to their own experiences.

Practicing critical reflection means honestly examining our own practices and assumptions and making sure that we do not get caught up in an uncritical commitment to the many models drawn from critical theory. We need to get back to our own deeply held assumptions, honor the expression of our own authentic voice, and speak out against teaching as a standardized production process. We need to realize that critical reflection is itself an ideology constructed of the interests of people who seek to change the world in ways that they regard as desirable, and to remember that this construction is always partial and evolving and requires constant critical scrutiny.
Trying to see situations through the eyes of students illuminates how the dynamics of power permeate and structure the interactions in the classroom. Knowing how students experience learning builds connections between what we, as educators, want them to do and their own concerns and desires. Researching students’ perceptions alerts us to problems our behavior is causing and enables us to make more appropriate decisions about how and what to teach. If we have a grasp on the sources of apathy or anger in the students, we are better able to develop activities and exercises that address the problems and move us beyond them.

Process. Our experiences as learners are felt at a level deeper than that of reason. Gaining new perspectives on our practice and questioning assumptions always involves emotional experiences. Drawn from this deeper level, our insights and meanings for teaching are likely to have a deeper and more lasting influence. They affect us more powerfully than methods that we learn in textbooks or hear from superiors. In this way our practice becomes the object of systematic inquiry.

Teachers have a choice. We can either work in ways that legitimize the status quo, or we can work in ways that liberate and transform learners’ lives. By reflecting on our teaching, we can create the conditions under which we and our students become aware of our power of agency. Critically reflective teaching can lead to the creation of “classrooms and staffrooms that are crucibles for the learning of democratic habits” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 217).

In a democratic classroom, students and teachers become co-designers of the learning process. It requires a leap of faith by the teacher that the learners will make informed choices and trust that if they do not make the choices we think are the best ones, they will learn from the experience of being in control and make better choices the next time. It is the nature of
the reflective process to be always evolving. We can never become fully finished critical products. Our ideas and practice require the continuous and critical study of our thinking processes and pedagogic actions.

*Themes from the Sketches*

Chapter Five looked at the structures of consciousness underlying the authentic lives of the artists. This section follows the same format from the perspective of the adult educators and includes three sections: 1) Thinking and Painting, which focuses on the emotional subjective elements of consciousness; 2) Knowing Yourself, which explores the emancipatory elements of consciousness; and 3) Trusting the Process, which looks at the elements of consciousness behind imaginative power.

*Thinking and Education*

For all four of these emancipatory adult educators, education is not contained within the confines of objective consciousness. It breaks through rigid structures and standardized thought patterns to address the whole consciousness of the learner: the interaction and interrelationship of objective and subjective, and her being in the world. Its content is the direct experience of learners. Its practice is the teaching of rational conduct and democratic habits. This education requires taking the learner beyond surface considerations to a deeper level of insights and meanings. It does not mean the abandonment of reason but the cultivation of a deeper level of thinking that can go beyond reason to the skillful navigation and application of feelings and emotions.

Lindeman (1961) defines intelligence, not in terms of intellectual ability, but in terms of the ability of the learner to connect with her world. The purpose of education is to help learners to make meaning from their experiences. He does not discount reason, but discusses
how we have to go beyond it to a point of deeper understanding where reason plays only a part.

For Freire (1990), productive, emancipatory thinking is full of feelings and emotions. He describes reading as a “loving event.” He even referred to reading aesthetically as “an act of beauty” when the reader interacts with the text, when she measures it against her own experience in her desire to understand it and connect with it.

Brookfield (1995) describes this practice of whole consciousness teaching as the “object of systematic inquiry.” Rather than a shallow indulgence of personal opinions and unquestioned tastes, it implies the rigorous inquiry of both thinking and feeling, the skillful navigation of both the objective and subjective realms of individual direct experience.

Knowing Yourself

Apps (1996) says that teachers need to trust their feelings. Their teaching is not about what they know but who they are as a person. Each of these educators mentioned the need to go beyond the uncritical acceptance of the authority of textbooks or superiors in the educational process, and they all talked about the need for understanding ourselves, to realize our own emancipation, in order to be able to create the conditions for students to experience their freedom.

Gaining new perspectives, questioning assumptions and respecting your own tested perspectives, are at the heart of individual emancipation. They reflect a rebellious subjectivity, an unwillingness to honor an external truth that is untested by individual direct experience. Lindeman (1961) names three prerequisites to liberation which are all based in self-knowledge: 1) understand ourselves, what inhibits, frustrates and subjugates us; 2) understand why we want to be free; and 3) understand what stands in our way.
Freire (1990) believed in the capacity as well as the right of all people to achieve this freedom. The educator starts with a respect for the learners, at the level at which they perceive themselves, and is sensitive to what they are thinking in order to keep from misreading their needs and interests. She must learn how to know herself intellectually and emotionally and be invested in the fight for her own freedom before she can create ways for them to learn to gain their freedom. She must understand the relationship between authority and freedom herself in order to avoid unwittingly oppressing the learner in her classroom.

Brookfield (1995) says the educator has a choice to either legitimize the status quo or work to transform people’s lives through democratic classrooms. He talks about honestly examining our own practice and cultivating and honoring our authentic voice as the means to our own emancipation as well as a safeguard against the development of undemocratic practices in our classrooms. Only through this can she fulfill her role to penetrate false consciousness, her own as well as the learner’s.

_Trusting the Process_

Teaching is not a linear activity. It is more than an intellectual exercise. For Apps (1996), it requires strategies that come from the heart, that involve the whole person of learners. It is responding to being fully alive, attending to all dimensions of being which are continually shifting and evolving in an unpredictable world. Teaching from the heart, as an emancipatory educator, requires courage to let go of the safety and security of familiar practices and processes of the traditional classroom and strike out into unknown and untried territory of authority and power issues of the democratic classroom. Brookfield (1995) describes it as a leap of faith by the teacher to allow students to become co-designers of their learning.
Lindeman (1961) says that it is the function of freedom to create. The sense of freedom arrives as a result of knowing ourselves and our environments objectively, subjectively, and critically. This whole consciousness promotes freedom from bondage. But it is the dynamic sense of freedom that stirs us to radical, causative, originative activity and imaginative power. Freire (1990) says in order to reach a point of creativity you have to break from the old, you have to have ruptura, a moment of conflict in which you decide for creativity—you decide for the new.

*Painting the Landscape of Emancipatory Adult Education*

This section looks at key concepts drawn from the research and presents them from the perspectives of both the artists and educators. It explores the subjective dimensions of emancipation which are the realm of art, and it seeks to expose the common ground, places of opportunity for exchange, interchange and integration. Topics covered in this section include: 1) Art and Emancipation, art as the power to know, to feel and to create; 2) Thinking Beyond Reason, coming to truth; 3) Emancipatory Values, what it means to be good human beings; 4) Cultivating Rebellious Subjectivity, acting out from what we feel; 5) Creating an Environment, the process of making something new; 6) Using the Artists’ Process, the outgrowth of our own experiences; 7) Following Our Individual Paths—Four Examples.

*Art and Emancipation*

Brookfield (2005), Dewey (1934) and Marcuse (1978) lay the theoretical foundation for this study. Critical pragmatism, as visualized by Brookfield, describes a concept of criticality that blends the elements of pragmatism as the “flexible pursuit of beautiful consequences” (p.16) with traditions of critical theory. It is committed to serving the whole community of humankind and reshaping society as a site for the exercise of human creativity.
It is engaged in a struggle to create a world in which race, class, and gender do not define or limit the freedom with which life is experienced and emphasizes the importance of continuous experimentation.

Through an aesthetic lens Dewey (1934) sees the world as a place of mystery and uncertainty, where reason, uninformed by feelings and stripped of emotions, must fail. Consciousness, instead of being merely cognitive, penetrates the whole being of the soul. Here critical pragmatism responds to intuitive impulses and appeals to artistic imagination as powerful means for breaking the routines of experience and generating fresh insights into deeply rooted social issues.

For Marcuse (1978), art is the grand vista within which critical pragmatism carries out its struggle for liberation. It is committed to the emancipation of sensibility, imagination and reason in all spheres of consciousness. It presents an indictment of the established reality and invokes the beautiful image of liberation. Commitment to the need for radical change must be rooted in the subjectivity of individuals, in their intelligence, their passions, their drives and their goals.

Art adds soul to the struggle for emancipation. By refuting the devaluation of subjectivity and feeling, art puts back the heart. It opens wide the door to feeling and emotions.

In this sense art is the power to know, to feel, to create and to liberate. It is thinking that goes beyond reason, beyond the mere intellectual consideration of the object world. It is the practice of continuous reflection, reflection forward as well as backward. It is grounded in authenticity since its value is constantly measured against individual truth. It is being open to finding new, organic, just-right solutions that go beyond what we started with. It is freeing
ourselves from limitations and restrictions and learning how to think of our lives in terms of potential, discovery, expectation and resolution. It is thinking of our lives in terms of creating works of art (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995).

From the perspective of the artists, art provides the means to their personal emancipation, and their emancipation feeds their art. They live their emancipation every day. For Gayle, art is a tool for healing and for self-understanding. She trusts the whole creative process to lead her and knows that she will learn things about herself from what she is doing, about relationships and about life.

Richard lives his life with what feels comfortable, what feels right for him. Instead of trying to dig a channel and force his life into it, he goes where his art leads him. Asking him to give up art would be like asking someone who had a very deep faith to give up prayer.

Jason quit his job at the art gallery to become a fulltime painter three weeks before our first interview. He would no longer be able to count on a steady paycheck, but he was happier than he has been in years because he was free to paint what he needed to paint. Doing commission work at the gallery, he was obligated to paint what people asked for. Now he can be honest about his work, be honest about his life. He said he could fall on his face in a matter of months. If he did, he would get a job flipping burgers and take his paycheck and buy more paint.

From the perspective of emancipatory adult educators, a critical understanding of art is opening a door to aspects of consciousness and experience that have been hidden to the traditional view of adult education. We are finding the way to our own emancipation which will guide us in helping our students learn theirs.
Thinking Beyond Reason

Approaching our experiences with painter’s eyes means being vigilant, looking for meaning that we can react to with our hearts as well as our heads (Apps, 1996; Brookfield, 1995; Dewey, 1934; Dirxk, 1998; Horton & Freire, 1990; Tisdell, 2000). We search with feeling, rather than reason, to understand why something makes us feel the way it does, why it strikes us and urges us to examine and to evaluate its meaning against our own sense of truth. Reason, negotiating a surface perspective, helps to determine if something is worthy of consideration, but feeling takes it deep to get to the core of its value and meaning.

Our experiences as learners are felt at a level that goes much deeper than reason (Dirkx, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Tisdell, 2000; Cervero & Wilson, 2001). The meaning we draw from these experiences is likely to have a long lasting effect and to be more powerful than what we learn from textbooks. Anthony told me about visiting a museum with a room full of totem poles. He said that they were designed to instill a sense of awe and fear in anyone who looked at them. He felt that awe and wanted to figure out how to get that response from his paintings.

To reach emancipation requires thinking beyond reason. It involves discovery, expectation, consideration of potentialities and courage (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995; Loughlin, 1992). It starts with self-awareness, with knowing ourselves intellectually and emotionally and what we need to let go of to rise. It is the exploration of authentic being which is grounded in feeling beyond reason. Loughlin (1994) describes this as relational knowing. It is knowing through making connections in authentic experience. It is learning to build trusting relationships and developing the confidence to operate on an affective level. She describes this knowing as rationally incomprehensible.
Gayle said there is something that transcends a physical work of art. She described it as a level of communication where souls speak to each other. Her soul has been expressed in her work and it speaks to those who are receptive. She told me of many instances of people thanking her for her work because they felt she understood their struggles and her paintings gave them hope.

*Emancipatory Values*

We learn from the artists that emancipation is an individual experience. Each of us is challenging something in order to bring out what we feel is truth, an unstained reality. It is learning our own freedom so we can trust the process and help others to be free, and it requires the skillful navigation of the emotions as well as the intellect (Brookfield, 1995; Dirkx, 1998; Loughlin, 1992; Tisdell, 1998). What they feel drives their art and their lives. Jason has gotten down to the core issues of living, the need to be able to think and do what he feels he needs to do, what is honest and true to him.

It is the desire of each of the emancipatory artists in this study to be a good human being. They are all striving to be honest and whole and to bring out a basic goodness in their lives and work, an individual freedom that society has obscured.

Emancipatory educators as well as painters have a high purpose. We want to reach the souls of our students, because that is where the liberation happens (Apps, 1996; Brookfield, 1995; Dirkx, 1998; Horton & Freire, 1990; Taylor, 1998; Tisdell, 2000). It comes from deep within them, from a feeling, however faint, of personal worth and a willingness to strive and sacrifice to bring it out. It is the struggle to get to the core, to the beauty, harmony, and nobility of individual being where every individual is confident, sure and free.
Artists use paint and educators use words but it is our liberated hearts that do the communicating. We want to share the joy of our freedom and not just keep it to ourselves. We want to share not just our images and ideas but what we feel about the ideas, what the ideas mean to us, because we have fought to be free to have these ideas.

These ideas, these feelings, have been fought for and won and we want to help others win (Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Brookfield, 1995). They were won by stepping out of the crowd, stepping away from the “models” with the hope there was something else, something better, and we had the vision and courage to reach for it, to pursue it.

*Cultivating Rebellious Subjectivity*

Rebellious subjectivity comes in at the point where we are no longer letting outside influences shape our words, our attitudes, our goals and our world (Brookfield, 2002; Marcuse, 1978). It is when we are each looking through our own lens at our ideal being, and documenting and acting out from what we feel, and how we got there. It is when we are not just making things up, just painting pretty pictures or designing courses according to generic standards.

It is when we are doing our own thinking. We do not just take in what others say is true. Like the artists, we test it. We perceive it using our “painter’s eyes” that see beyond the surface to catch the essence, the truth. We listen. We run everything through the filter of our own experiences. What is left, what we keep and use, is ours, our truth. We go through whatever we have to, to make ourselves ready to receive this truth.

It is letting go of a false, limited sense of ourselves and going forward wide open to the possibilities. It’s the joy of discovery, of making our own rules, getting stronger and
learning how to keep our trajectory upward. It is living by letting, letting things take form rather than trying to shape them.

Educators can run political and professional risks, at the organizational, institutional and social levels (Brookfield, 1995; Cervero & Wilson, 2001). To manage them, we need to become aware of what risks we are likely to encounter so we can figure out how to negotiate them effectively.

Great risks for the artists lie in the marketplace. Richard, a fulltime painter, tries to keep an eye on the commercial aspects of his practice without compromising his work. Jason wonders if he can really make a living at painting. He knows he is not going to alter his work. He will only do commission work now if the buyers agree to tell him if they do not like the work. It will not hurt his feelings. He will sell it to somebody else. He will make them a piece they will be happy with, but they have to give him total creative license to paint what he wants.

All the artists talked about painters they know who have been through personal struggles but their work does not change. They have no respect for that because the work should be authentic.

Creating an Environment

It is the fundamental purpose of creating to make something unique, to make something that was not there before, that no one has ever seen before, or experienced the same way before, whether it is making a painting or designing an emancipatory learning experience (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995; Sloan, 1983). For the one who creates, there are no rules to follow, no models to copy, since each painting, each class, each experience is unique, the just-right solution for particular circumstances. We have had the experience of making
other new things, and have learned through that experience ways and approaches that enable us to make better decisions, to be more skillful during the process. But we each have to find our own way through the process of creating a particular thing each time.

According to the artists, we have to be able to let it come out of ourselves just as it needs to, and allow it to be molded or shaped by the artistic process. In order to get it out, we need to be free of the rules, self-imposed or externally imposed, that would limit our consideration of alternatives, of possibilities. When it is finished, we know if it is right by the way it makes us feel.

This process of making something new is the outcome of freedom, the product of an emancipated, liberated effort (Greene, 1995; Marcuse, 1978). It is the result of the exploration and discovery of our selves, the recognition and acknowledgement of the substance and purpose of our lives, that we manifest outwardly to share with each other. It is communication that reaches beyond the head to the heart. If we get it right, others will feel it, too, because it is heart speaking to heart, communication at the purest level (Dewey, 1934). Our experience in making each thing and presenting it to viewers or students provides us input that informs the process for the next thing we make. Its value is measured by truth, by authentic effort, and it is achieved through the crucible of an individual life honestly lived.

Creating does not take place under conditions where the criteria is right or wrong, black or white, or where feeling is left out of the process because things have to get done according to plan and on schedule. The rigid requirements would be to get something done on deadline. Make it good, something that is adequate but do not take time to analyze it too much, consider too many alternatives, or look at too many possible impacts or long-term opportunities. Just get this done and move on to the next.
Using the Artists’ Process

By living honestly and productively we have all we need to make what we feel is important for us to make. It is a matter of learning how to trust the artistic process, how to feel confident that what we need to know is already within us and we just have to learn how to let it out.

Art enables us to connect our everyday experience with our values and life purpose (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1995). The artists show us that we can tap into all the things that are important to us, a way that we can give expression to those things that make our hearts burn, that are meaningful to us, important to us.

The artists recognize and respect the uniqueness of their own vision, that it comes out of their lives and how they live them. If their work is going to have power, it has to be authentic. It has to show something beyond the surface, some reality or truth other than: Life is beautiful. It needs to be the outgrowth of their own experiences, their values.

It is the authenticity of our daily lives, our everyday thinking and being, that tells us the truth if we purify our hearts and devote ourselves to recognizing it (Dirkx, 1998; Taylor, 1998; Tisdell, 1998). Through the examples of the way they live their lives, they provide us with tools, exercises and examples, but they do not tell us how to use them. We each need to find our own way.

Horton (1990) learned from analyzing his own experiences. What he found was that the way to do something new was just to do it and then see what he could learn from it as he went along. He concluded that we do not have to look to models or get answers from books. Instead we can develop a process through which we can turn our lives into learning experiences. You don’t have to know it in advance because “If you know it in advance you
kill it by clamping this down on the people you’re dealing with” (p. 40). The artists talk about killing their paintings if they try to control them, if they overwork them.

A critically reflective practice is a process that is always evolving (Brookfield, 1995). We are never really “fully finished critical products” (p. 43). We recognize the need for continual investigation.

Trust comes in when we stand for the process, when we take responsibility for the outcome because we trust the process. Trusting the process requires humility. It is coming to a sense of freedom that we learn by letting go of the idea that we can do anything through reason alone. We believe in the process because it guides us to do what feels right, because it gives us a sense of peace, of assurance. With the conviction of this trust, we deny the fear, the confusion, and the anxiety inherent in creating because we know that our process is valid.

The artists tell us that when we are trusting that what we are doing is right, we can let go and not try to force things into predetermined channels or to fit them into it what we did before. We can be confident that each thing, each aspect of our work, will have its own just-right resolution. Richard said we cannot be afraid to delete cherished parts, to destroy them if they do not contribute to the integrity of the whole work because we know that its success, its power, rests in its organic wholeness. We know that through the process mistakes cannot remain, that they will be exposed in problem-solving, and we will fix them and learn from them. It is living a constant state of alertness, of freedom, of revision, of expectation, of dominion.

Philip was not intimidated by failure or feeling that he was not able to be successful once he learned his worth in art school. It is a matter of not compromising what we really feel. First we need to know what we really feel and then we need to stand for it, express it
though our media. We need to have the fire inside. That is really the test for whether or not we are on the right track.

*Following Our Individual Paths—Four Examples*

The artists and educators have to feel the freedom themselves before they can represent it in their work. They cannot just do it the way someone else does it, or the way someone else tells them to do it. So much of art cannot be taught. They have to experience it. They have to come to it themselves.

When Philip paints he reacts to how he feels about his subject. He does not tie his painting to his life experiences. He responds to what he sees. He likes doing figures because he responds emotionally to people. They make him feel something that he wants to put into his paintings.

Each painting, for Philip, is a different problem. He does not work in series. He just starts painting each time. He does not know what it is going to be until he starts drawing and redrawing forms, moving things around. The painting takes shape in the designing process.

Apps (1996) teaches by feeling, engaging the whole person learner in his teaching from the heart. He helps people learn what it is to be human, how to relate to their emotional and intellectual selves, exploring the depths of their being to touch their own hearts.

He says teachers need to know and trust their feelings. He teaches from his own authentic experience and knows that when he gets himself out of the way, powerful learning can happen. The unexpected can be a powerful source for that learning.

Gayle paints from her life. She looks inside herself for direction. She wants to bring out her life, to represent her experience on the canvas in a way that other people can feel what she feels. That is her way of letting unconsciousness come out.
She works in series to maintain continuity throughout her work. When she is at the canvas she tunes everything out and gets absorbed in what she is working on, starts dealing with relationships between colors and shapes, and she problem-solves on the canvas. She wants to release control so the painting will take on a life of its own. She lets the painting communicate with her. By releasing control, she allows the painting to evolve to a higher level than what she originally thought.

Through critical reflection, Brookfield (1995) uses an analytical approach to his teaching to help people to question their assumptions, to penetrate false consciousness and break out of oppressive ways of thinking. This type of teaching, drawn from deep insights, is more powerful than textbook learning.

He says teachers either work in ways that legitimize the status quo or they work in ways that liberate. He wants to create the conditions in his classroom for students to learn their own power of agency. Learning to teach this way requires constant experimentation, and an evolving process; but the outcome is a democratic practice.

Summary

This chapter discussed how the artists’ experience relates to adult educators. It looked at ways their experience can relate to adult educators, how it already does for some and lays out a pathway for an artistic practice for all of us. Many of these concepts are not new to adult education. They are a different way of describing what adult educators already know, using artistic language.
CHAPTER SEVEN: Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion

Implications

This dissertation is a direct outcome of my own emancipatory learning experience in 1998 in my first adult education class, The Adult Educator. I had studied painting and art history as an undergraduate and graphic design as a master’s student. I knew that artistic thinking had deepened and enriched my life, but it was not until I connected it with education that I really realized its power.

Adult education discourse has already recognized that artistic thinking is not exclusive to artists. This kind of thinking is what Dewey (1934) described when he linked feeling and thinking in the experience of art. This kind of thinking cultivates the rebellious subjectivity that Marcuse (1978) wrote about regarding the revolutionary power of art. This kind of thinking creates the intense aesthetic experiences that Brookfield (2002) said a truly critical adult education would be concerned with. It requires continual reflection and constant critique of experience. It challenges everything that appears to be, in order to get at the meaning behind it.

Most of us have not been taught to think this way, but we all have the ability to learn. It is thinking that goes beyond the surface, that probes, analyzes, imagines, reveals, waits, reacts, cherishes, nurtures, critiques, all at the same time. It is the kind of thinking that is involved in creating something new. Artists use it to create paintings. Educators can use it to create learning experiences.

Throughout this project, connections between the artists and educators have become apparent giving me new ways of looking at myself, my teaching and my purpose. Talking with the artists, I discovered new contexts and language to understand familiar as well as
emerging shared concepts in my practice as an adult educator; and my experience in adult education gave the artists new perspectives on the potential impact of their work.

*Artists’ Interviews*

The interview questions were designed to probe the artists’ motivations and sense of purpose that give direction to their practice and process. They were put to the emancipatory artists to reflect on their experiences with art. They are also relevant for emancipatory educators to reflect on their experience with education, and may begin to yield connections between themselves and the artists.

The first set of questions focused on the artists’ approach to art: Why did you become an artist [educator]? What is like to be an artist [educator]? How does being an artist [educator] impact your life? What do you strive for in your painting [teaching]?

The second set of questions focused on the artists’ works: How did you learn to paint [teach]? What is your vision for your work? How do you develop your skills? How did you decide what to paint [teach]? What do you think about before you approach the canvas [classroom]? What do you think about while you are painting [teaching]?

The last question probed the artists’ philosophy and framework: How would you tell me how to get where you are as an artist [educator]?

*Organizing Structure for the Data*

At a point when I was struggling with analysis of the data from the first two interviews, I had an opportunity to help my sister learn how to do a perspective drawing as an assignment for a course she was taking. She was discouraged and lacked confidence in her ability to meet the artistic requirements of her program. By the end of our two-hour session,
she had produced a beautiful drawing and had new confidence in her ability. When her instructor saw the drawing she called it a breakthrough.

In reviewing my participation in this teaching experience, I could see that it had involved three phases. The first phase was my consideration of my framework as an adult educator, my perspective on the role of education and my commitment to the liberation of learners. The second phase involved my practice, my previous teaching experiences and my skills and strategies for creating learning environments. The third phase involved my process, the classroom activity, and my interaction with learners in a way that was most appropriate for each particular learning experience.

This organizing structure of 1) Framework, 2) Practice, and 3) Process, which was derived from my education background, became a critical element in the analysis of the data from the artists’ interviews (see Appendices F, G, and H).

*The Experience of the Artists*

In answer to Research Question 1—What is the experience of artists in creating works of art that are emancipatory?—three themes emerged from my analysis of the data. They include: 1) Thinking and Painting; 2) Knowing Yourself; and 3) Trusting the Process. The following is a summary of these themes as discussed in Chapter Five.

*Thinking and painting.* The first theme, Thinking and Painting, illustrates the complexity of artistic thinking. It explores the feeling and thinking aspects of consciousness. Sub-themes include:

Dynamics of feeling—For the artists, feeling is an ability they use to access understanding and awareness beyond thinking. It is a skill they develop, an intelligence of the
internal or subjective aspect of consciousness and it is what they use to measure of the success of their work.

Questions for educators: How does what you feel impact your teaching, how you teach as well as how you relate to your students? How does it affect your self-evaluation?

Seeing beyond the surface—The artists all share a vision that goes beyond the surface of things. It is experienced on both visual and emotional levels and involves a continuous examination, analysis and reshaping of their world.

Questions for educators: When teaching, how does your experience and world view help you see beyond the surface of the words and actions going on in the classroom? How deeply do you want your learners to be engaged with the teaching? Do you think the deep engagement of learners means the same thing to you as the deep engagement of viewers means to an artist?

Thinking that is open-ended—Their work involves doing a different painting each time and requires thinking that is always open to possibilities, to going down different paths to reach different conclusions. It involves the readiness to take a leap without being sure you have a solid place to land.

Questions for educators: In order to get the results you are looking for, how do you prepare to teach a class? Do you feel like you take risky leaps when engaging students and wonder why you do? Are you able to rationally plan for each and every dynamic that occurs in your classroom? Do you feel ready for those dynamics? What prepares you for those leaps?
Knowing Yourself. The second theme, Knowing Yourself, is where emancipation happens. It presents the thinking behind the rebellious attitudes and actions that create the conditions for emancipatory living and working. It includes the following sub-themes:

Self-awareness—The artists know why they feel the way they do and how their feelings impacts their art. Artist Anthony Ulinski wants to live a quiet, low impact existence and finds beauty in repetition in his work; while Gerry Lynch wants to be free to take new paths and explore new dimensions, and wants each painting to be totally different than the one she painted before.

Questions for educators: How does your whole being connect with your teaching? Is it important to you that it does?

Never satisfied—Each artist wants to keep evolving. They are always experimenting and excited about their next painting. They look out from where they have been to see what else they can explore in a natural progression, where one thing emerges from another.

Questions for educators: How do you keep growing in your practice? How do you build on your teaching experiences so that your time in the classroom becomes more productive and meaningful? Are all your new approaches to teaching the result of a rational process of changing specific actions or are some the result of holistic growth that affects your entire approach, making each teaching/learning experience a new creation?

Honesty—Their work comes out of their lives, out of their deep struggles and adversity. They feel the need to put themselves into it, to find their own voice and say what has meaning to them. Beyond technical achievement, their work embodies their honest desire to capture and interpret what they see and feel.
Questions for educators: Is being honest about yourself important to you in regard to your interactions with students and colleagues? Why? What are the conditions you have found that inhibit honest exchanges? In your “painting,” do the dynamic colors of your learner’s experiences require the participation your authentic self? If so, why is your participation a necessary part of the wholeness of the learner’s learning experience?

Released from the rules—For the artists, art is about breaking the rules in order to do something original, something that is authentic to them. They said it was being aware of what others have done before them, but also having the courage to value and respect their own perception and way of doing things.

Questions for educators: How do you decide whether or not to do something in a prescribed way? Does doing what you think is right in the classroom require you to “break any rules?” What does “breaking the rules” mean to you and your work as an educator?

Trusting the process. The third theme is Trusting the Process. It provides insight into the process of art-making, of creating something new, original, and explores the aspect of individual wholeness, of seamless being as the source of imaginative power. It includes the following sub-themes:

Intentions—None of the artists visualize a finished piece. All of them have some idea to start with but know they have the freedom, when they start painting, to change their mind as they go along, to let the painting show them what it needs.

Questions for educators: Do you feel you need to rigidly adherence to covering certain topics? Or do you open yourself to the unplanned using a design and
preparation that encourages freedom and creativity? Does emancipatory teaching and learning require unplanned responses?

Organic fit—For these artists, their paintings evolve through a process of problem solving, of putting things in and leaving things out until the whole painting holds together as a unit.

Questions for educators: What types of thought processes guide your actions in the classroom? Does your process change shape and form as the colors of your students’ experiences are revealed? Do these new shapes and forms change the outcomes in ways that go beyond rational course objectives?

Release control—Rather than follow a plan, the artists allow things to happen as they paint, and do not analyze too much. In this way their paintings take on a life of their own and reach a deeper level by doing something to it that can lead them in a different direction.

Questions for educators: How do you view control in your classroom? How much control over yourself do you feel you have, or want, when you are teaching? Do your reactions to students come from rationally carrying out the objectives of the course or do they come out of your whole being?

Relating the Artists’ Experience to Adult Learners

In answer to Research Question 2—How does the artists’ experience relate to adult educators in creating emancipatory learning experiences?—I identified seven topics in order to begin the dialogue with the discourse. They represent the perspectives of both the artists and adult educators. These topics include: 1) Art and Emancipation, 2) Thinking Beyond Reason, 3) Emancipatory Values, 4) Cultivating Rebellious Subjectivity, 5) Creating
Learning Experiences, 6) Using the Artists’ Process, and 7) Following Our Individual Paths. The following is a summary of these topics as discussed in Chapter Six.

*Art and emancipation.* Art adds soul to the struggle for emancipation. It goes beyond intellectual analysis and puts back the heart. It opens doors to aspects of consciousness hidden from traditional views of adult education freeing us from limitations and restrictions and helping us learn how to think of our lives in terms of potential, discovery, expectation and resolution; thinking of our lives in terms of works of art.

*Thinking beyond reason.* Art teaches us to look for meaning that we can react to with our hearts as well as our heads. Reason, negotiating a surface perspective, helps to determine if something is worthy of consideration, but feeling goes deep to get at the core of its value and meaning through an exploration of authentic being.

*Emancipatory values.* Emancipation is an individual experience where each of us is challenging something in order to bring out what we feel is truth, an unstained reality. We want to share the joy of our freedom with others in order to help them to be free. Artists use paint and we use words but it is our hearts that do the communicating.

*Cultivating rebellious subjectivity.* When we are no longer letting outside influences shape our words, our attitudes, our goals and our world we are beginning to do out own thinking. We let go of a limited sense of ourselves and go forward open to possibilities, being willing to take risks learning how to negotiate them productively.

*Creating learning experiences.* Creating anything is the product of an emancipated effort. For one who creates, there are no rules to follow and no models to copy since each painting, each class, is unique, the just-right solution for particular circumstances. The
experience we gain in creating each painting or learning experience provides us with input that informs the way we create the next.

*Using the artists’ process.* Art enables us to connect our everyday experience with our values and life purpose. The artists show us that we can tap into the things that are important to us, feel confident that what we need to know is already within us, and give expression to those things in our work.

*Following our individual paths.* We all have to experience emancipation ourselves, before we can demonstrate it in our work; and we have to follow our own pathways in our practice. We cannot just do it the way someone else tells them to do it. We have to come to it ourselves.

*Recommendations*

From the discussion of the Themes from the artists’ interviews in Chapter Five and Landscape of Adult Education topics in Chapter Six, all the members of my committee were able to envision ways how this study was relevant to their work. These were five people who were present throughout the whole research process and described five very different ways it could be used.

*Dr. John Pettitt*

John’s practice centers on the teaching and learning of adults. His further research interests in this project include:

- helping educators to reflect on themselves as artists;
- developing the artist educator metaphor, that that the educator’s teaching is her painting;
- interviewing emancipatory adult educators using the same process as the artists;
• exploring connections between an artist doing a series of paintings with an educator designing a course.

Dr. Colleen Aalsburg Wiessner

Colleen’s primary research interests are in developing effective ways of teaching and learning that contribute to collaborative knowledge construction and social change. Her interest in this research includes:

• what it can add to what is known about the process of arts-based inquiry;
• the use of co-researchers in terms of having to develop a shared language and the mutual benefit aspect of the research process;
• how it can be used in reflective practice of students.

Dr. Diane Chapman

Diane’s research interests are quantitative and in the areas of the affect in on-line learning, preparation and design for on-line instruction, and evaluation of training and e-learning programs. She would like to see the development of methods to measure:

• emancipatory qualities in education;
• emancipatory learning experiences using the themes from this research;
• learner assessment methods where learners can assess their own emancipation gained in their learning, or gained from a teaching experience.

Dr. Richard Peterson

Dick’s research areas include technology education curriculum, problem solving and creativity. He was interested in further research in terms of:
• looking at ranges of emancipation among different populations including age groups of students, and different types of teachers such as math teachers and English teachers, and diversity and multicultural groups;
• applications to practice;
• developing the methodology;
• developing the curriculum;
• collecting data on the results of putting the findings into practice.

*Kathleen Rieder*

Kathleen is a painter and art and design educator at the College of Design at NC State University. As an artist, and in her role as *expert reviewer* for this project, she recognized how the research methods used actually helped to emancipate the artist participants further. Her recommendations for further research include:

• helping educators learn how to emancipate themselves by using the same methods and questions used in the artist interviews;
• interviewing other types of artists;
• exploring the designer’s process the same way as the artist’s process;
• looking at different cultural paradigms of art and design, other than those of Western influence, to see what and whose rules artists are released from.

My own immediate interests in further research include:

• interviewing emancipatory educators using the same methodology;
• expanding the framework, practice, process approach to knowing ourselves as educators;
• exploring the spiritual implications in the artists’ practice of releasing control; and
• putting these ideas into practice in my own classroom and learning from the learners’ emancipatory experiences.

Conclusion

Now, from my own emancipation in The Adult Learner course, and as I go forward in my career as an adult educator, I am eager to put into my practice what I have learned from this research.

Getting Some Paint on the Canvas

Using the organizing structure of framework, practice and process, the following points lay a foundation for further exploration.

1. Needing to share our emancipatory experiences. I remember feeling such a strong conviction that I could not keep this victory to myself. I needed to share it with others. Through the interviews with the artists, I could see that the need to share the experience they had when they painted was a driving force for them. It is the ability to see the individual potential in everyone that the artists and adult educators share. It is not accepting the limitations of IQ or test scores as the measurement of ability or intelligence, but knowing that with the right presentation, the right support, everyone can come to an understanding of their own potential.

2. Letting it take form. The artists do not try to visualize their paintings before they paint them, because there is no way to know what they should look like until they get into the process and let the paintings take form. It is also difficult for us to know ahead of time what will or should happen in our classrooms in order for learning to take place. We can think through possible scenarios like the artists do in their preparatory drawings. If we do not try to
force the activities into strict pre-determined channels it frees us to be creative as we interact with the students.

3. The educator as catalyst. Regarding their practice, the artists described themselves as a catalyst, a channel for what needed to come out for the benefit of their viewers as well as themselves. Being a channel requires great humility, setting aside personal agendas in order to be poised and ready to do what is needed for each circumstance, each course, each meeting with each student. It means always being open to the “just right” way for presenting each learning experiences.

We become a clear channel, not so much through book-learning new methods, but through experimenting, getting ourselves and our personal agendas out of the way. We do it by learning to discern the students’ needs beyond the surface and being flexible and original and creative in addressing them.

4. Pushing and pulling. One of the artists described a process of pushing and pulling forms to capture his emotion in his paintings. For educators, we are constantly stating and restating ideas and concepts, pushing and pulling them as we sculpt our classroom learning experience, reacting to our palette of the individual perspectives of our students. In this process we learn to be willing to take risks, to put something out there, and not be afraid to have to change it or destroy it and paint over it. There really is no risk to authentic effort, which is continuously evolving, striving for greater clarity and truth.

5. How to release control. In their process, the artists told me how thinking and painting are two different phases. They do all the thinking, considering, and identifying their intentions before they step up to the canvas, so that when they take up the brush they can release control and just paint. When we become so clear about the purpose of our lessons,
what we feel needs to come across to the students, and what it means to us and to our experience, we can release control of how it is expressed.

During the teaching we can respond creatively and confidently to what occurs since we have the overarching issues clearly worked out in mind. Just as artists have a dialogue with the painting, where they do something and then the painting tells them what to do next, we can do the same thing in our classrooms with our students in a progressive, organic, holistic development of our topic.

Another artist said he has learned to be aware of and set up the conditions that would allow him to release control, like preparing a place, an environment that is for the sole purpose of his painting, that he can go to and focus his attention on his work without distraction. In the same way we can learn to set up the conditions for our mental as well physical teaching environment that will enable us to release control.

6. How to let it come out. We know from our own experiences that emancipation comes when our hearts rather than our heads are touched, when we feel something real, see some truth that transforms us. As educators, we want to let that “something real” come out of ourselves for our students to see and feel and use to gain their own liberation. This something real is the authentic knowing and being which each of the emancipatory artists let come out in their paintings and which I responded to.

We, too, can feel things deeply, go beyond the surface and find the deeper meaning of things in our lives. When we understand at this level, students will respond to our teaching the way I did to the artists’ paintings. When our knowing is authentic we can be confident that it will find its right expression in our teaching, the right presentation, and it will communicate the truth that we have found in it.
**Importance of Feeling**

Feeling is fundamental to the artists’ work and lives, and to emancipation. Humankind needs to understand the role of feelings beyond reason. We need to be able to skillfully cultivate, navigate and manage our feelings, both good and bad, rather than devalue them or ignore them.

We need to understand the meaning of our experiences in terms of feeling and its relation to how we live our lives. We need to know what we feel is important and why. We need to move beyond a purely personal reference point to an awareness of what is the highest good for the many derived from our sense of morality and authentic values and integrate them holistically in our lives.

Effective management of our feelings requires knowing how to deal with bad feelings, feelings that are derived from more self centered, narrow interests that argue for their own acceptance. These feelings do not arise from a respect for and consideration of the broader meanings of a universal perspective. It requires overcoming reactions based on will and selfish motives in order to be free to recognize the best way.

Feeling adds dimension and perspective and broadens the horizons of our lives to embrace the world. By learning how to manage our feelings we operate at a higher level of experience and living. We move seamlessly through shades of light and dark, through the wide territory beyond reason’s range.

With solid footing in reason, artists have been venturing out beyond reason for millenia, learning how to manage their feelings, allowing them their proper and critical role in holistic being, and enabling them to resolve complexity into elegant solutions. They reach beyond themselves for clearer vision and measure the truth of their work against the
authenticity of the feelings they provoke. For them, the “balance” achieved in their art is just as valid and significant as the “balance” measured by the engineer. They are scientists of the soul, developing methods, honing their skills, crafting their visions in making meaning for the ages.

To accomplish our purpose, to serve and promote the emancipation of all humankind, requires thinking and feeling beyond reason. The significance of our effort is the transcendence of humankind to a fuller experience of being and life. With the artistic inner vision, inner intelligence as well as the analytical, structural outer intelligence, all aspects of our consciousness can be developed into mature discipline and usefulness. If we want to move society forward and upward we will not find the answers we need in the antiseptic world of reason alone. When we learn how to deal with feelings, how to manage them, make meaning from them, nurture them, cultivate them, be lifted to new perceptual heights by them, discipline them and cherish them, we have our freedom.

Challenge to the Reader

This study speaks to all educators, although those who want to liberate their students will hear it first. Some painters are satisfied to paint the same painting over and over. Others struggle to make each painting new.

My hope is that those who read this will gain some understanding of how to stand before the classroom—as an artist stands before the canvas—and feel empowered to feel, to create, and to liberate; to let their own emancipated selves come out in their teaching so that their students can learn their freedom.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Introductory Email

Study Title: Intersection of Art and Emancipation: The Road to Rebellious Subjectivity

Dear ______

I am a doctoral student in adult education at NC State, doing research on art and the emancipation of adult learners. For the last decade, writers and researchers in adult education have recognized the importance of art and its role in emancipation but they have not understood the kind of thinking and processes involved in producing works of art. Because of my background in art, BA in Art History and Masters in Graphic Design, I have seen connections between how artists, specifically painters, approach creating works of art and how adult educators could approach creating learning experiences for their students.

In the last two months I have visited galleries, talked to artist acquaintances and gone online to find paintings that produce in me an “emancipatory response,” engaged me in the exploration of new ideas. I saw your work at ________

Would it be possible to meet with you, to tell you more about my research and to see if you have any interest in becoming a participant in the study? Your participation would involve basically three 60-90 minute interviews about how you approach your art.

I will follow up with a phone call to you within the week to see if we can arrange a time. If you would like to contact me in the meantime, you can reach me at:

Sandy Newville
511 Springfork Drive
Cary, NC 27513
919-247-7450
email: sandy_Newville@ncsu.edu

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Sandy Newville
College of Education
NC State University
Appendix B

Informed Consent

Dear __________

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. The study is designed to make the case that an understanding of the artist’s experience in producing works of art that create an emancipatory response in viewers may provide a model for adult educators to think of themselves as artists in creating emancipatory learning experiences for their students.

As we discussed, your participation will involve three interviews lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes each. The questions in the interviews will be centered on your experience as an artist.

1. The first interview will cover how you approach your work, how and why you became an artist, what your work is about and what you perceive to be the significance of your art.
2. The second will be a discussion of specific paintings you select that you feel are significant to the on-going discussion. This interview should occur within two weeks from the first.
3. The third will be a review of themes and descriptions resulting from my analysis of all the interviews with all of the participants.

A significant benefit of this study to adult education is a better understanding of the rigor, complexity and liberating power of artistic thinking. A benefit to the participants may be the opportunity to promote this understanding.

With your permission, each interview will be audiotaped and I will take pictures of your paintings for my analysis. At your request, a pseudonym will be assigned for any discussion of your interviews. Regarding your paintings, if you desire confidentiality, no photographs will be used and any reference to your works will be in words rather than images. All information in the study records will be kept confidential. It will be held for up to three years after the conclusion of the study and will then be destroyed.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty. If you withdraw before data collection is complete your data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me at my residence, 511 Springfork Drive, Cary, NC 27513; my cell phone, 247-7450; or by email, sandy_newville@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Sandy Newville, Researcher
Appendix C

 Consent Form—4/6/06

Study Title: Intersection of Art and Emancipation: The Road to Rebellious Subjectivity

I have read and understand the information in this letter. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study, to be tape-recorded, and to have my art works photographed.

The audiotapes, photographs, and any other materials generated for the purpose of this research will remain in the researcher’s possession and will be used solely for the purposes of the research. They will be destroyed after 3 years. I understand, if I choose, my identity will be kept confidential, and nothing that can link me to the study will be included in final publications.

Participant’s name (printed) __________________________
Participant’s signature _______________________________ Date _________
Researchers’s signature ______________________________ Date _________

I agree to be audiotaped ________________________________.

I give my permission to use photographs of my paintings and to attribute them to me ________________________________.
Appendix D

Revised Consent Form—3/18/07

After reviewing the information concerning my work as an artist contained in the "portraits" chapter in the dissertation, I choose to have my real name used in this study and to have the images of my paintings attributed to me.

________________________________________   ___________
Participant’s signature       Date

I have knowledge of the audio tapes, photographs and other materials generated for the purpose of this research and I agree these materials shall remain in the researcher’s possession for as long as she finds them useful.

________________________________________   ___________
Participant’s signature       Date

________________________________________   ___________
Researcher’s signature      Date
Appendix E

IRB forms to follow
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
SUBMISSION FOR NEW STUDIES

Title of Project: Intersection of Art and Emancipation: The Road to Rebellious Subjectivity

Principal Investigator: Sandra Newville
571 Springfield Drive
Cary, NC 27512

Department: Adult & Higher Education

Source of Funding (required information): N/A
Campus Address (Box Number) 7228

Email: sandy_newville@ncsu.edu Phone: 919-513-7510 Fax: 919-515-6291

RANK: ☐ Faculty ☑ Student: ☐ Undergraduate; ☐ Masters; or ☐ PhD
☐ Other (specify): Ed.D.

If rank is other than faculty, name of faculty sponsor overseeing the research: Dr. Colleen Aalsburg Weissner
Faculty Sponsor's Email: colleen_weissner@ncsu.edu Campus Box: 30022 Phone: 919-515-6291

As the principal investigator, my signature testifies that I have read and understood the University Policy and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research. I assure the Committee that all procedures performed under this project will be conducted exactly as outlined in the Proposal Narrative and that any modification to this protocol will be submitted to the Committee in the form of an amendment for its approval prior to implementation.

Principal Investigator:

Sandra Newville
(typed/printed name) (signature) (date)

As the faculty sponsor, my signature testifies that I have reviewed this application thoroughly and will oversee the research in its entirety. I hereby acknowledge my role as the principal investigator of record.

Faculty Sponsor:

Colleen Aalsburg Weissner, Ed.D.
(typed/printed name) (signature) (date)

PLEASE COMPLETE IN DUPLICATE AND DELIVER TO:
Institutional Review Board, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (Lezner Hall Lower Level)

For IRB office use only
IRB Committee Reviewer
☐ Approve ☐ Approve pending modifications ☐ Table ☐ Disapprove

Reviewer Name: Signature: Date:

Final IRB Committee Decision
☐ Exempt Review ☐ Expedited Review ☐ Full Review ☐ Not Approved

Committee Chairperson: Date:

RECEIVED:_________ SENT TO REVIWER:_________ LETTER TO PI:_________
1) Is this a taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance study, where (i) wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture?
   □ Yes  ☒ No

2) Will the subjects remain completely anonymous (i.e., no identifiers which can link an individual subject to their data – projects using coded data sheets with a "key" linking code numbers to subjects are not anonymous)?
   □ Yes  ☒ No

3) Will anyone other than the PI or the research team have access to the data (including any completed surveys) from the moment they are collected until they are destroyed?
   ☒ Yes  □ No

4) Is your subject population going to consist of only elected or appointed public officials?
   □ Yes  ☒ No

5) Does your research involve the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior?
   ☒ Yes  □ No

6) Does your research involve the analysis of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens or diagnostic specimens?
   □ Yes  ☒ No

7) In your estimation does the study involve no more than minimal risk to the subjects (see definition of minimal risk in the Policies and Procedures page)
   ☒ Yes  □ No
In your narrative, address each of the topics outlined below. Failure to follow these directions will result in delays in reviewing/processing the protocol.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Briefly describe in lay language the purpose of the proposed research and why it is important.
   The purpose of this study is to understand artists' experiences in creating paintings that foster an emancipatory response in viewers. In the language of adult education, an emancipatory response can be described as a reaction that makes viewers think outside socially imposed boxes. The intention of the study is to make connections between artists' experiences in creating emancipatory paintings and educators' experiences in creating liberating learning experiences for students.

2. If student research, indicate whether for a course, thesis, dissertation, or independent research.
   This research will be conducted to complete my dissertation at NCSU.

B. SUBJECT POPULATION

1. How many subjects will be involved in the research? 5-6

2. Describe how subjects will be recruited. Recruitment will begin with the primary investigator viewing paintings at Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill art galleries. Artists whose paintings meet the primary investigator's requirements for emancipatory qualities will be contacted in person by the primary investigator to determine their interest in participating in the study. The first six artists who meet the criteria and commit to the study will be selected.

3. If applicable, please provide the IRB office with a copy of any advertisement to be used in recruiting subjects. This includes print ads as well as scripts for radio and television ads. If this is not applicable, please check here ☒

4. List specific eligibility requirements for subjects (or describe screening procedures), including those criteria that would exclude otherwise acceptable subjects.
   1. Participants must be artists whose paintings are deemed emancipatory according to established criteria by the primary investigator.
   2. Selected participants must represent a range of genres.

5. Explain any sampling procedure that might exclude specific populations (women, minorities, elderly).
   There are no sampling procedures that would exclude specific populations.

6. Disclose any relationship between researcher and subjects - such as, teacher/student, employer/employee.
   There are no relationships between researcher and subjects.

7. Check any vulnerable populations included in study:
   - Minors (under age 18) - if so, have you included a line on the consent form for the parent/guardian signature
   - Fetuses
   - Pregnant women
persons with mental, psychiatric or emotional disabilities
persons with physical disabilities
economically or educationally disadvantaged
prisoners
elderly
students from a class taught by the principal investigator
other vulnerable population.

If any of the above are used, state the necessity for doing so. Please indicate the approximate age range of the minors to be involved. 

C. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

1. In lay language, describe completely all procedures to be followed during the course of the experimentation. Provide sufficient detail so that the Committee is able to assess potential risks to human subjects. Participants will participate in three in-depth, audio-taped interviews from questions developed by the researcher. Interviews will be held at locations convenient and acceptable to participant and researcher, and where paintings can be reviewed and discussed.

2. What will subjects be asked to do? Participants will be asked to (1) share their experience in creating paintings, (2) discuss the meaning of paintings they select for discussion, (3) and review the themes and descriptions drawn by the primary investigator from her analysis of the interviews.

3. How much time will be required of each subject? Participants’ interviews will last from 60 to 90 minutes each. Participants will also read a completed transcript summary of their interviews to verify their intentions as recorded by the primary investigator.

D. POTENTIAL RISKS

1. State the potential risks (physical, psychological, financial, social, legal or other) connected with the proposed procedures and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks. No physical, psychological, financial, social, legal or other potential risks are connected with the proposed procedures of this research. Interviews will be scheduled at the participants’ discretion and convenience. If requested, participants’ identities will be protected by assigning pseudonyms. All interviews will be audio-taped and the tapes will be secured.

2. Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive (e.g. private behavior, economic status, sexual issues, religious beliefs, or other matters that if made public might impair their self-esteem or reputation or could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability)? If yes, please describe and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

No. There will be no request for information that involves personal behavior, economic status, sexual issues, religious beliefs, or other matters that if made public might impair their self-esteem or reputation or could reasonably place the subjects at risk.

3. Could any of the study procedures be considered as offensive, threatening, degrading, or could study procedures produce stress or anxiety? If yes, please describe why they are important and what arrangements have been made for psychological counseling.
To the best of my knowledge, there is no part of the research protocol that could be constructed as offensive, threatening, degrading or stressful.

4. Describe methods for preserving confidentiality. How will data be recorded and stored? How will identifiers be used? How will reports will be written, in aggregate terms, or will individual responses be described?
   Pseudonyms will be assigned, as requested by each participant, in any written discussion regarding the interviews. If the participant requests confidentiality regarding his or her paintings, no photographs of the paintings will be included, and any reference to those paintings will be in words rather than images. Audio tapes and photographic data will be stored in a secure location.

5. If audio or videotaping is done how will the tapes be stored and how/when will the tapes be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.
   The audio tapes and photographs will be stored in a secure file cabinet and will be destroyed within three years of the conclusion of the research study.

6. Is there any deception of the human subjects involved in this study? If yes, please describe why it is necessary and describe the debriefing procedures that have been arranged.
   There is no deception of the human subjects involved in this study.

E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS
   Please address benefits expected from the research (this does not include compensation for participation, in any form). Specifically, what, if any, direct benefit is to be gained by the subject? If no direct benefit is expected, but indirect benefit may be expected (knowledge may be gained that could help others), please explain.
   Direct benefits to participants include the opportunity to discuss their art, to gain new insights into their work, to review the analysis from all of the interviews and to contribute to the field of adult education.

F. COMPENSATION
   1. Explain compensation provisions if the subject withdraws prior to completion of the study.
      N/A
   2. If class credit will be given, list the amount and alternative ways to earn the same amount of credit.
      N/A

G. COLLABORATORS
   If you anticipate that additional investigators (other than those named on Cover Page) may be involved in this research, list them here indicating their institution, department and phone number.
   N/A

H. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
   1. If a questionnaire, survey or interview instrument is to be used, attach a copy to this proposal.
   2. Attach to this proposal a copy of the informed consent document that you will use.
   3. Please provide any additional materials or information that may aid the IRB in making its decision.
## Appendix F

### Category Codes—Artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>Anthony</th>
<th>Gayle</th>
<th>Richard</th>
<th>Phil</th>
<th>Gerry</th>
<th>Jason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why art as a career?</td>
<td>Luxury item</td>
<td>Make a record</td>
<td>It's what came naturally</td>
<td>A good guy</td>
<td>Something useful</td>
<td>Imagine things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Why fit for me?</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Communicating &amp; helping</td>
<td>Right brain thinking</td>
<td>Toughened me - made me stronger</td>
<td>Like to make things</td>
<td>Don't have to please anybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 What is art?</td>
<td>Insight (or general)</td>
<td>About observing life</td>
<td>Let stuff out, bearing witness, creative process</td>
<td>A whole world that is hidden</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Inner happiness, light art everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 What does it mean to me?</td>
<td>Meaning (to me)</td>
<td>Capture beauty</td>
<td>Form of therapy</td>
<td>What feels comfortable</td>
<td>My purpose</td>
<td>Have to do what I feel, squiggles &amp; curves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 My expression or genre</td>
<td>Full in very, very close</td>
<td>Architectural intentions/elements, landscapes</td>
<td>See the divine in everyone - more than the physical</td>
<td>I caught it, feeling, design or character</td>
<td>Abstract expressionism</td>
<td>Interested in what &quot;what it&quot; can be through the brain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PRACTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Self-knowledge</th>
<th>Awareness of my assumptions</th>
<th>Looking for and finding beauty</th>
<th>Stuff needed to come out</th>
<th>A sensitive person</th>
<th>Art toughened me</th>
<th>Life and painting</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Discovery, development of authentic voice</td>
<td>Beauty is driving me</td>
<td>I think in series</td>
<td>Beyond the surface</td>
<td>Feeling is mind too</td>
<td>Not sure?</td>
<td>For me to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of the heart/marketplace</td>
<td>Honoring my authentic voice</td>
<td>Not commercial successes</td>
<td>I hate commission work</td>
<td>I try not to think about it</td>
<td>I just paint</td>
<td>Cheaper materials</td>
<td>Commissions on MY terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of my authentic voice</td>
<td>In a different way</td>
<td>I have my agenda</td>
<td>Universality</td>
<td>Emotion or design</td>
<td>Sitting ducks</td>
<td>Pushing through</td>
<td>Rigidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>No standardized production process</td>
<td>Just keep working</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Not too much control</td>
<td>Lessons from art history</td>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>Rating things away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover</td>
<td>Always evolving</td>
<td>People come in accidentally</td>
<td>Vulnerability??</td>
<td>Time to explore more</td>
<td>Keep challenged</td>
<td>Just the opposite</td>
<td>Did not happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>I'd be great if I didn't care</td>
<td>Think about things in a deep way</td>
<td>Image that stops people</td>
<td>The title comes AFTER the painting</td>
<td>I don't love them anymore</td>
<td>Doesn't mean anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Photographs - sense of reality</td>
<td>Take from everybody else</td>
<td>I take everything they did</td>
<td>Frames??</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique/community</td>
<td>Critiques are valuable</td>
<td>Think about groups</td>
<td>Dead or keep going</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PAINTING/TEACHING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Getting started</th>
<th>General values</th>
<th>Complete vision</th>
<th>Seizing possibilities</th>
<th>Paintings in mind</th>
<th>Paint what I feel</th>
<th>I get an idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Reasoning processes</td>
<td>Left brain dialogue</td>
<td>Painting talks to me</td>
<td>Like an observer</td>
<td>The painting teaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint</td>
<td>Pedagogic actions</td>
<td>Choose painting over perspective</td>
<td>Just what happens</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Many ways to work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sales/accidents</td>
<td>Experimentation and risk</td>
<td>Either get it right or wrong</td>
<td>Using the knife</td>
<td>Painting as tactile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Learning/breakthroughs</td>
<td>Reality of the painting</td>
<td>Monochromatic</td>
<td>Learn from masters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ALIVE</td>
<td>Liberal and transform</td>
<td>Thinking and painting are separate</td>
<td>Life of its own</td>
<td>Sense of discovery</td>
<td>Painting my portrait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 DEAD</td>
<td>Legitimize and reinforce</td>
<td>Overwork</td>
<td>Wooden</td>
<td>Don't overwork</td>
<td>Know when to stop, Gerry, it's dead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Category Codes—Adult Educators

FRAMEWORK
Becoming aware of the implicit assumptions that frame how we think and act is one of the most challenging intellectual puzzles we face in our lives (Brookfield, 1995, p. 2).

Our experiences as learners/artists are felt at a visceral, emotional level that is much deeper than that of reason (Brookfield, 1995, p.31).

The insights and meaning for teaching/art that we draw from these deep experiences are likely to have a profound and long lasting influence (Brookfield, 1995, p.31).

Recalling emotionally charged dimensions of our biographies as learners/artists helps us understand why we gravitate toward certain ways of doing things and why we avoid certain others (Brookfield, 1995, p.32).

PRACTICE
Gaining new perspectives on our practice and questioning assumptions that we did not even realize we had are always emotional experiences. Any critical reflective journey involves our negotiating feelings of impostureship, lost innocence and cultural suicide along the way. Our practice becomes the object of systematic inquiry (Brookfield, 1995, p. 39).

We must then try to find a way to work back to the more deeply embedded prescriptive and paradigmatic assumptions we hold (Brookfield, 1995, p. 3).

For teachers/artists, the discovery, honoring, and expression of an authentic voice are genuinely transformative processes (Brookfield, 1995, p. 46).

We find that we are speaking out against images of teaching/art as a standardized production process (Brookfield, 1995, p. 6).

Colleagues’ perceptions help us gain a clearer perspective on the parts of our practice that need closer critical scrutiny. They also help us realize the commonality of our individual experiences (Brookfield, 1995, p. 141).
PROCESS
The realization of the power of one’s own authentic voice is a beautiful thing to experience. Speaking in our own voice imbues us with a sense of controlled rightness that is both moral and artistic: we hear our voice saying, “What I’m doing right now is creative and spontaneous, yet grounded in my examined experiences. I know it’s good for me and for my students. What’s more, I know why it’s good and if need be I can tell you why (Brookfield, 1995, p. 47).

We dance to the music of critical pragmatism, guided by clearly articulated values but responding to the needs and concerns of students/viewers (Brookfield, 1995, p. ???).

When understood as a critically reflective process, good teaching/painting becomes synonymous with a continuous and critical study of our reasoning processes and our pedagogic/artistic actions (Brookfield, 1995, p. 42).

Our dance is the dance of experimentation and risk (Brookfield, 1995, p. 43).

As we dance to this fluctuating rhythm we try to stop ourselves stumbling and falling, though we always do at some points, by making sure that whatever we do is well grounded in an accurate understanding of students’/viewers’ experiences (Brookfield, 1995, p. 43).

WHOLENESS
Reflection in and of itself is not enough. It must always be linked to how the world can be changed. We reflect on our teaching/art so that we can create the conditions under which both teachers/artists and students/viewers become aware of their own power of agency* (Brookfield, 1995, p. 217).

Critically reflective teaching/art means something only if it leads to the creation of classrooms/paintings and staffrooms that are crucibles for the learning of democratic habits (Brookfield, 1995, p. 217).

Teachers/artists have a choice either to work in ways that legitimize the status quo or in ways that liberate and transform the possibilities people see in their lives (Brookfield, 1995, p. 209).

*Agency – the capacity, condition or state of acting or exerting power; a person or thing (wholeness) through which power is exerted or an end is achieved.
Appendix H

Category Codes—Combined Artists and Adult Educators

FRAMEWORK
1 Why choose art as career
   Our experiences as learners are felt at a visceral [instinctual],

2 Why fit for me
   ...emotional [feelings] level that is much deeper than that of reason.

3 What is art
   The insights

4 What art means to me
   ...and meanings [] for teaching that we draw from these deep experiences are likely
to have a profound and long lasting influence.
   They certainly affect us more powerfully than methods or injunctions that we
   learn from textbooks or hear from superiors.

5 My expression/genre
   Recalling emotionally charged dimensions of our autobiographies as learners helps us
understand why we gravitate toward certain ways of doing things and why we avoid
others.

PRACTICE
1 Self knowledge
   We must try to find a way to work back to the more deeply embedded prescriptive
   and paradigmatic assumptions we hold.

2 Approach
   The discovery [of an authentic voice],

3 Heart/marketplace
   ...honoring [of an authentic voice]

4 Intention/genre
   ...and expression of an authentic voice are genuinely transformative process. The
moment of finding our voice leads us to withdraw our consent to our own servitude.

5 Craft
   We find that we are speaking out against images of teaching as a standardized
production process.
6 Discovery
It is the nature of the reflective process to **always be evolving**.

7 Viewer – purpose

8 References

9 Critique/community

PROCESS – Painting / teaching

1 Getting started
We dance to the music of critical pragmatism, guided by clearly articulated values but responding to the needs and concerns of students.

2 Dialogue
Good teaching becomes synonymous with a continuous and critical study of our reasoning processes.

3 Painting
…and our **pedagogic actions**.

4 Experimentation/ rules/ accidents
Our dance is the dance of **experimentation and risk**.

5 Learning
The most powerful way you can communicate what you stand for as a teacher is to make sure your **practice is what you teach**.

6 Dead / alive
Teachers have a choice either to work on ways that **legitimize and reinforce [dead]** the status quo or in ways that **liberate and transform [alive]** the possibilities people see in their lives.