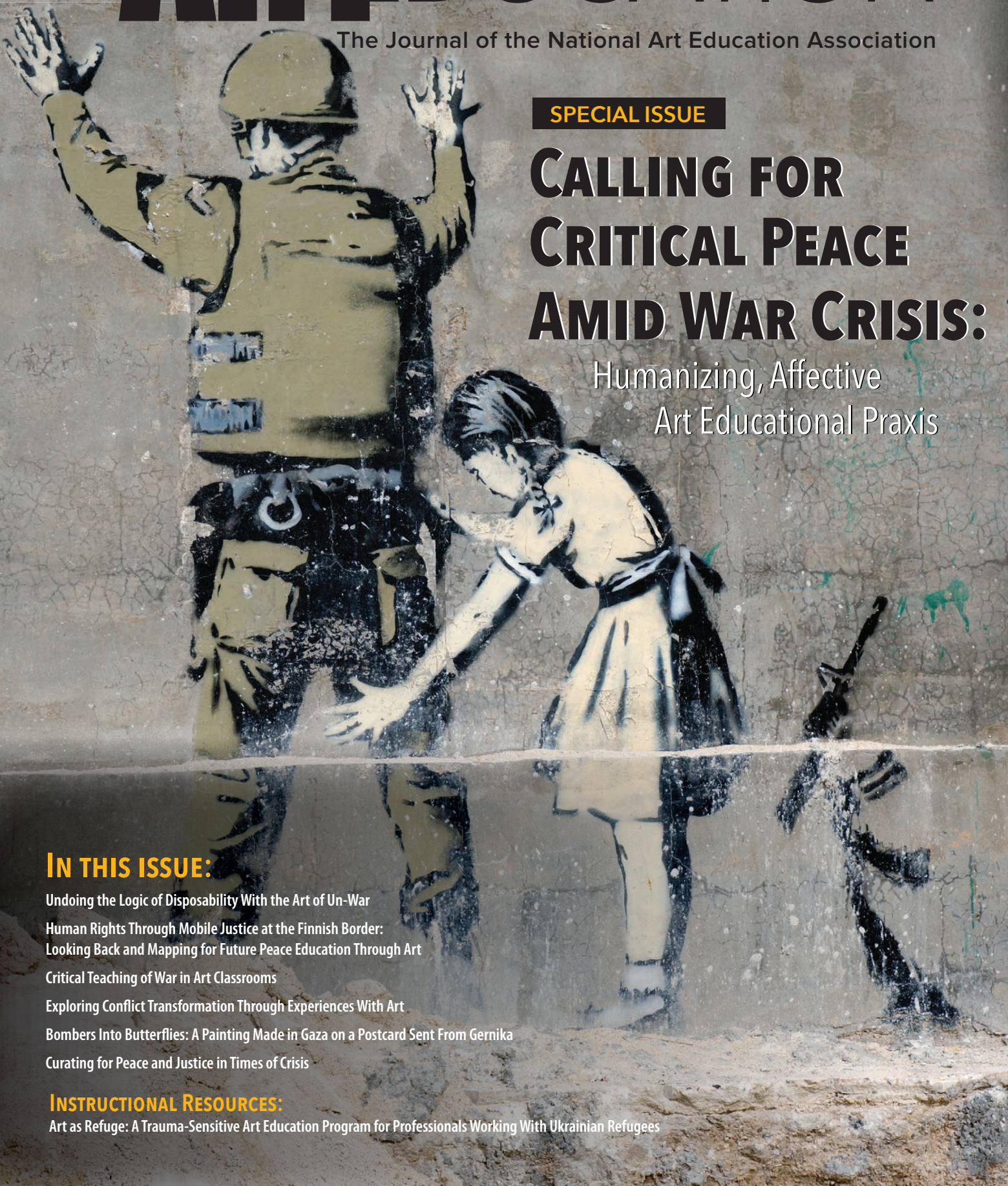
January 2025 ■ Volume 78, No. 1

ART EDUCATION

The Journal of the National Art Education Association



SPECIAL ISSUE

Calling for Critical Peace Amid War Crisis:

Humanizing, Affective Art Educational Praxis

In this issue:

Undoing the Logic of Disposability With the Art of Un-War

Human Rights Through Mobile Justice at the Finnish Border: Looking Back and Mapping for Future Peace Education Through Art

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Exploring Conflict Transformation Through Experiences With Art

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ART EDUCATION







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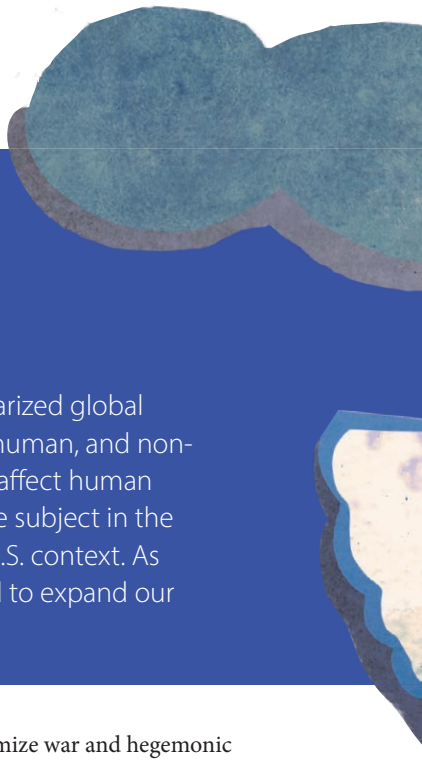
Cover: Banksy grafitti is shown on a wall in occupied Palestinian Territories. Photo credit: VanderWolf-Images.

EDITORIAL

Calling for Critical Peace Amid War Crisis:

Humanizing, Affective Art Educational Praxis

Michelle Bae-Dimitriadis



Observing the two major ongoing wars in both Ukraine and Gaza—that have been intensified by complex political ideologies, which have caused and justified the advanced technology-driven military invasion and mass genocides—I wonder how this very difficult subject of war can be addressed in the K–12 art educational conversation, curriculum, and instructions. Further, I wonder how social justice–oriented teaching practice can help students reflect on these current militarized global conflicts that cause the dreadful dehumanization and devastating destruction of social, human, and non-human environments. While these are extremely excruciating events that tremendously affect human and nonhuman lives, either directly or indirectly in the life–death situations, it is still a rare subject in the field of social justice art education, which mainly focuses on the social inequities in the U.S. context. As art educators who care about social justice, we have the ability to move our field forward to expand our horizons to global contexts.

In my first editorial of 2024 (Volume 77, Issue 1), I pondered how art curriculum can be an action to address the critical conditions of war violence and the needs of care for civilians, refugees, and other lives. I also pondered how this potential action could cultivate a critical antiwar peacemaking art practice, and how it would potentially provide a supportive space for radical empathy, as well as the care and healing of the ongoing traumas of humans, animals, land, and the environment. Building on my previous editorial, I want to briefly outline what a critical peace art education (CPAE) framework entails.

Critical Peace Art Education (CPAE) Framework

CPAE must involve radical empathy and care, which requires contextual understanding of war and its effects as necessary to expand student learning. "To build this empathy, students must first contextualize the historical events by expanding their own perspectives" (Bae-Dimitriadis, 2024, p. 6). Fostering the contextual understanding of contemporary warfare is not just to merely contest the convenient fiction of hegemonic power, but also—and more importantly—to challenge how the contexts are constructed to justify the violence and terror. This involves questioning, challenging, and disengaging the constructed narratives that legitimize war and hegemonic order of the global world. Zygmunt Bauman's (1989/2000) view adds to the contextual understanding of war in that the logic of warfare operates in a way to take ethical neutrality to justify the mass liquidation. According to him, this ethical neutrality removes empathy and compassion, thus reducing humans to disposable objects. Particularly, Western scientific and technological invention plays a major role to efficiently create physical and psychological distance to avoid the trauma of those who enact genocide while torturing civilians to death. This logic of contemporary warfare treats empathy and compassion as unnecessary.

This new knowledge can be difficult, as students will be required to step outside of their own lived experiences to explore histories and realities that might be completely different and unfamiliar to them. This can instigate feelings of fear and insecurity around educational practices as the topic is inherently politically charged and there is a possible risk of social conflicts, similar to other social and educational issues that have been contested by art education throughout the years. Because of this, the topic often



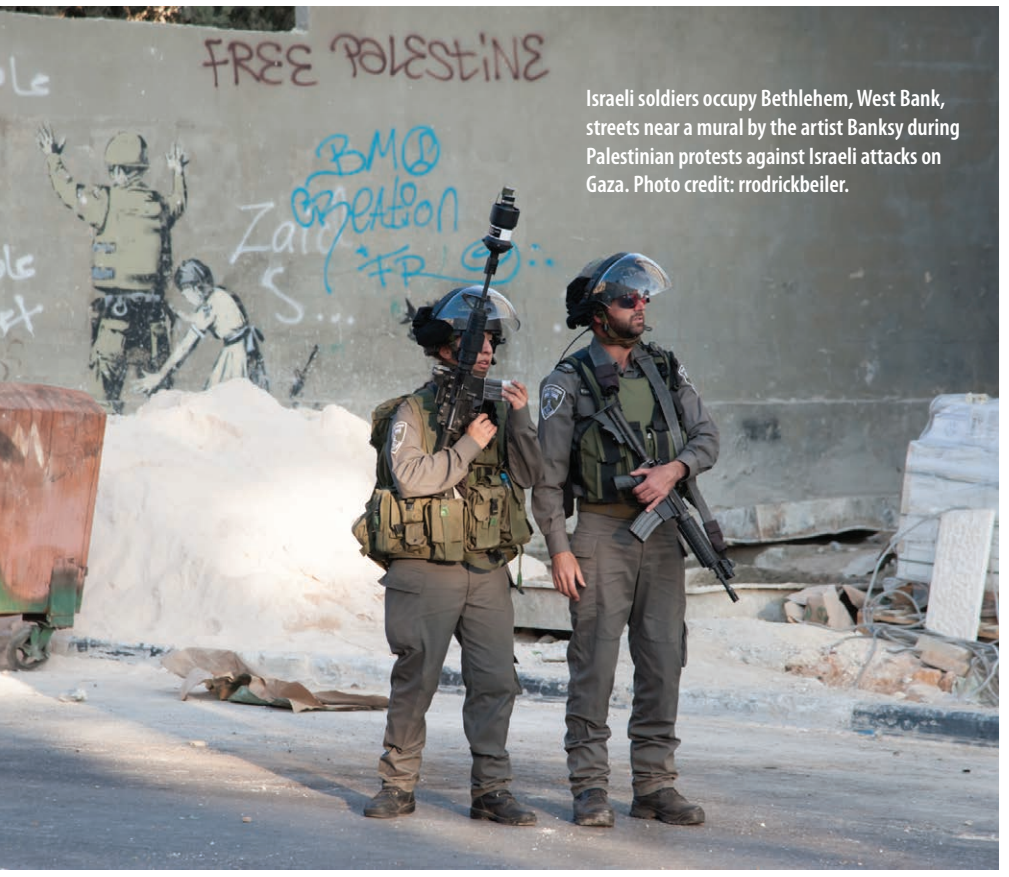
> **As art educators who care about social justice, we have the ability to move our field forward to expand our horizons to global contexts.**

becomes neutralized or avoided in teaching and learning. As a result, the avoidance of teaching this topic can silence students' opinions and views; it becomes a lost opportunity for students to engage in global awareness or developing empathy and compassion. Students also need to be allowed to express their uncomfortable and conflicting emotions in the classroom, which can help generate a desire for global social justice, peace, and safety as fundamental human rights (Bajaj, 2008). Challenging and refusing this logic of warfare dehumanization, CPAE offers such contextual understanding of wars as the point of departure of cultivating radical empathy and care.

Olga Ivashkevich's article, "Undoing the Logic of Disposability With the Art of Un-War," clearly models an art educational approach to antiwar peacemaking through examination of the documentary, *Krzysztof Wodiczko: The Art of Un-War*, which offers a dialogue of antiwar affective art praxis. Her discussion highlights the importance of critical contextual understanding of the logic of contemporary warfare and its advanced technological-driven spectacle that produces dehumanization, depersonalization, displacement, and trauma. This contextual understanding of war is the foundation of affective learning and teaching of antiwar peacemaking. **Mira Kallio-Tavin and Oona Kallio's** article, "Human Rights Through Mobile Justice at the Finnish Border: Looking Back and Mapping for Future Peace Education Through Art," introduces another important affective antiwar peace art educational approach through the creation of an art-based video collage of their Karelian refugee family's archive of displacement (including photo album and letters). The video collage renders the refugee family's generational experiences while juxtaposing media coverage of the events of political and legal conflicts caused by the border closure in Finland and Russia during both World War II and the current war. The authors adopt a human-centric mobility paradigm to bring important contextual understandings of the complex power dynamics enforced by the state law and relations that regulate and force refugee mobility while undermining their human rights. Next, "Critical Teaching of War in Art Classrooms," authored by **Kyungeun Lim and Sohyun An**, highlights the importance of critical understandings of refugee crisis and war in K–16 education to provide preservice teachers with a counternarrative art educational praxis that demystifies the rescue-oriented savior rhetoric of U.S. miliary interventions that contribute to misunderstandings of refugee crises, which cause violence and discrimination against

Students also need to be allowed to express their uncomfortable and conflicting emotions in the classroom, which can help generate a desire for global social justice, peace, and safety as fundamental human rights.

refugees. **Rebecca Shipe's** article, "Exploring Conflict Transformation Through Experiences With Art," proposes conflict transformation as a necessary method for critical peace art educational practice by recognizing conflicts as opportunities for growth as a nonviolent way of challenging oppressive power structures that maintain an unjust sense of peace, which implies controlling or avoiding conflicts, rather than engaging the difficult conversations and action. By adopting the method of conflict transformation, the author provides several art activities she utilized with her college students to generate visual responses through interpretation, creation, and presentation of visual metaphors that consider the value of encountering and transforming conflicts into opportunities to help them process violence. "Bombers Into Butterflies: A Painting Made in Gaza on a Postcard Sent From Gernika," by **Richard Finlay Fletcher, jt Eisenhauer Richardson, and Zülâl Fazlıoğlu Akın**, presents antiwar artistic interventions and curricula in two art education university courses, aiming to promote sustainable peacebuilding through a postcard project named Bombers Into Butterflies. The project, created in connection to Gazan refugee artist Dina Matter's painting that employs appropriation of Picasso's *Guernica* (1937)—one of the most powerful examples of antiwar—functions as a significant visual response to the Palestinian–Israeli conflicts. Highlights of the Gazan artist, art curriculum, and pedagogical approaches to critical peace art education are provided to address the importance of ongoing antiwar protests and visual activism to promote peacebuilding. "Curating for Peace and Justice in Times of Crisis," by **David Matteson, Keri Watson, and Gisela Carbonell**, introduces peace-oriented museum educational programming through collaborative, socially engaged, culturally relevant curatorial works of the exhibition Silent Protest: Perspectives on War and Disability with three different local institutions and communities of individuals with disabilities, veterans, immigrants, and refugees in Florida. The choice of artists and artworks include photography from Kaminsky's *Deaf Republic*, Capote's *Abstinencia* (Libertad), and Walter Richard Sickert's *The Fiddler, etc.*, which brings the themes of political conflicts, empathy, disability, and refugees to create an effective platform for the interpretation and response to war and trauma as a way to learn empathy. And serving as the instructional resource in this issue, **Alicia K. Gray's** article, "Art as Refuge: A Trauma-Sensitive Art Education Program for Professionals Working With Ukrainian Refugees," introduces Project VeLa as a collaborative trauma-sensitive art education guide for educators to use amid the ongoing Ukrainian war. The guide provides holistic art education curricula and practices to cultivate resilience through ordinary self-expressive, self-regulative, and socially connecting processes to help diminish the impact of adversity. It highlights a restorative orientation to artmaking by encouraging students to joyfully engage in creating images to help build collaborative relationships, a sense of belonging, and communities based on trust and safety while developing critical reflexive and reflective understandings to navigate and process adversity from their lived experiences to participate in their own healing and well-being. ■



Israeli soldiers occupy Bethlehem, West Bank, streets near a mural by the artist Banksy during Palestinian protests against Israeli attacks on Gaza. Photo credit: rrodrickbeiler.

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Figure 1. A Bomb Dome in Hiroshima, Japan, after the nuclear bomb explosion in 1945. Screenshot from the documentary film *The Art of Un-War*, Maria Niro, 2022.

Undoing the Logic of Disposability With the Art of Un-War

Olga Ivashkevich

We live in precarious times marked by two major militarized global conflicts with an unimaginably high human toll and complete destruction of significant civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, hospitals, schools, and power plants. Large territories have been reduced to rubble and rendered uninhabitable. In Ukraine, after the 2 years of Russian invasion since February 2022, the reported number of civilian deaths exceeded 10,000, with over 9,000 civilians killed by the air strikes and explosive weapons with wide-area effects (ReliefWeb, 2024). The death toll has been even more severe in the heavily populated Gaza strip, where Israeli air strikes killed over 30,000 civilians in just over 6 months of the Israeli–Hamas war since October 2023 (United Nations, 2024). These numbers are truly incomprehensible and indicate the extremely unsafe conditions where human lives become mere collateral damage in ideological, politically driven, and technologically advanced war conflicts (Bauman, 1989/2000, 2011). However, even the most staggering statistical data do not fully reflect the harrowing pain, loss, grief, and devastation in the war zone, nor do they convey the conditions of extreme precarity and death as a lived experience.



In this article, I unpack the logic of contemporary warfare, which employs an ethically neutral approach to mass violence that renders entire human populations disposable (Bauman, 1989/2000, 2011; Butler, 2016; Evans & Giroux, 2015). I then discuss a recent documentary project, *Krzysztof Wodiczko: The Art of Un-War*, directed and produced by Maria Niro (2022), which features a series of public projections and media instrumentations by the Polish-born artist Krzysztof Wodiczko, as critical interventions into the dehumanizing and ethically neutral machine of war. Wodiczko's thought-provoking art interrogations can help generate a dialogue on compassionate antiwar art education for global social justice in K–16 classrooms.

An Ethically Neutral Logic of Contemporary Warfare

Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1989/2000, 2011) wrote extensively on the logic of mass violence in modern times. He noted that the advancement of sciences, technologies, and bureaucratic institutions by industrialized Western societies constructed human life as an abstract category where ethical and emotional responses to an act of violence could be completely removed or neutralized. For example, the idea of the complete extermination of Jewish people emerged in a highly rational, efficient, and science-driven 20th-century German society, which gradually segregated, isolated, and murdered Jews as an ethnic group by reducing them to "quality-free measurements" (Bauman, 1989/2000, p. 103) devoid of any human distinctiveness. Bauman (1989/2000) argued that the Holocaust was an act of "scientific racism" (p. 71) grounded in the bureaucratic management of German society aimed to eradicate the "pathogenic" group of people as "the source of disease and contamination" through "its complete spatial separation or physical destruction" (p. 76). The creation of gas chambers by German scientists during World War II (WWII) was celebrated as a scientific advancement and a more efficient and painless tool of mass killing because it allowed the soldiers who executed the orders to remain physically distant and morally neutral toward their victims. Bauman (1989/2000) argued that such "killing at a distance" makes human subjects "psychologically invisible" (p. 25) and neutralizes the moral implications of such acts. In the first few weeks of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I was particularly struck by a story about a Russian pilot who bombed a region in Ukraine where his mother was living at the time (Tahir, 2022). After making this chilling discovery, the mother was completely devastated by her son's incomprehensible act of "righteous coldness" (Butler, 2016, p. xxxiv), which entails an international removal of any human attachment and ethical implications for such an act.

The technologically advanced contemporary warfare uses deadly wide-range explosive weapons, such as shelling from heavy artillery, multiple-launch rocket systems, missiles, and air strikes, which inevitably affect large populations of civilians (United Nations, 2023). The new military terms of "collateral casualty" or "collateral damage," which were recently adopted by journalists covering militarized conflicts, underscore the new lived conditions of extreme precarity in the war zone. This language denotes that while the human toll can be seen as an "unintended" and seemingly "random" consequence of military action, the possible effects were also pondered and considered "a risk worth taking" based on the military objective (Bauman, 2011,

The creation of gas chambers by German scientists during World War II (WWII) was celebrated as a scientific advancement and a more efficient and painless tool of mass killing because it allowed the soldiers who executed the orders to remain physically distant and morally neutral toward their victims.

pp. 4–5). This logic reduces civilian injury and death to an abstract category that is usually being reported in a form of statistical data that conceals human identities and erases lived experiences of suffering, while also constructing human death as morally neutral. Social theorist Judith Butler (2016) is a fierce critic of G. W. Bush's post–September 11, 2001 (9/11) War on Terror, which resulted in the U.S. invasion of Iraq and air strikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria, and which killed hundreds of thousands of civilians during the past 20 years (Lubin, 2021; Watson Institute, n.d.); she noted that the logic of warfare creates a psychological and physical distance from the subjects of killing that renders them "not quite human" and "not quite alive" (Butler, 2016, p. 42) and reduces them to mere "instruments, blockades, targets, and shields" (p. x). The extreme dehumanization of entire populations became harrowingly visible in the Israeli–Hamas war when, in retaliation of Hamas's atrocities and kidnapping of Israeli civilians on October 7, 2023, the Israeli government launched a barrage of brutal air strikes on densely populated civilian neighborhoods in Gaza that targeted Hamas soldiers while rendering Gazan civilians' lives completely disposable.

The critical issues raised by Bauman and Butler shed light on the precarious state of today's humanity, with advanced methods of contemporary warfare taking a depersonalized and technocratic form of "social engineering" (Bauman, 1989/2000, p. 18) where the need for empathy and human connection is being deliberately removed or disabled in service of ideological and political agendas like nationalist imperialism, settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and other forms of state-sanctioned mass violence (Ivashkevich, 2024). As progressive art educators, we must respond to this crisis by seeking the ways to rehumanize the lives and stories that hide beneath the rubble of destruction and death and challenge the ethically neutral warfare logic by cultivating a critical antiwar, peacemaking art praxis that generates radical empathy and compassion for global social justice.

The Art of Un-War

Wodiczko's public projections and media instrumentations address issues of warfare, trauma, loss, displacement, and public memory. For the past 4 decades, his work has involved large-scale slide and video projections on historical public buildings and war monuments around the world, including Europe, Japan, and the United States. These site-specific public art interventions serve as critical interrogations of the cultural narratives and symbols that normalize and commemorate warfare. By highlighting personal and intimate stories and testimonies by the veterans, war survivors, and displaced refugees, Wodiczko's work challenges the logic of disposability and brings these voices into public consciousness. Krzysztof Wodiczko was born in 1943 in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, Poland, near the largest Jewish ghetto in Europe. His Jewish mother miraculously escaped the deadly fate of other Polish Jews who perished in ghettos or were sent to concentration camps. Wodiczko has reflected on growing up "in the ruins of war—both moral and physical," noting that it impacted him "in the deepest way" (as cited in Becker, 2012, para. 21). This profound experience influenced his desire to interrogate and expose the mechanisms of war that are embedded in modern societies.

The documentary *Krzysztof Wodiczko: The Art of Un-War*, directed and produced by Maria Niro (2022), is a comprehensive exploration of Wodiczko's significant artistic interventions and critical design work since the 1960s. The film advocates for "un-warring" our culture, with Wodiczko's concept of "un-war" representing a framework and artistic vision designed to challenge and reimagine notions of conflict and violence through an abolitionist, peace-building art praxis (Harvard Art Museums, 2022). The film was released shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which makes it particularly timely and urgent; it also holds a deeply personal meaning for Wodiczko, as his native Poland sheltered nearly 1 million Ukrainian refugees (mostly women and children) since February 2022 (Golebiowska et al., 2024).

I discuss a public projection and a media performance that are featured in the documentary film and are particularly powerful and eloquent in challenging the logic of warfare disposability and collateral damage, showcasing a broad timeframe of Wodiczko's work: *The Hiroshima Projection* (1999) and *Loro (Them)* (2019). Wodiczko scheduled *The Hiroshima Projection*, which took place on August 7–9, 1999, to commemorate the 54th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, at the end of WWII. For this public installation, he chose the iconic Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome), also known as the A[tomic] Bomb Dome, as the location (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, n.d.-a). This architectural ruin is the only building near the explosion's epicenter that was not completely destroyed (Figure 1). The bombing, one of the most devastating war crimes in human history, reduced the city to rubble and claimed 140,000 lives. Many survivors continue to suffer lifelong radiation effects from the explosion, such as leukemia and cancer (ICAN, n.d.).

To create the projection onto the iconic structure, Wodiczko recorded 15 testimonies in the studio, with the survivors[1] recounting their memories of that somber day. In the video recording, Wodiczko emphasized the hands, moving and gesturing, as the survivors speak. When projected on the A Bomb Dome, the building becomes the survivors' body with their gesturing and sometimes motionless hands appearing at the base of the building. Simultaneously, the projection is reflected on the river below the A Bomb Dome, where so many people perished (Figures 2 and 3). One survivor said,

> The surface of the river was covered with so many bodies that you could not see the surface of the water. The flow of the river runs through from upstream in front of the dome and goes to the left you see? And years ago, people were jumping into the river and they yelled "help me"… but they never returned from the river. They sank. (Niro, 2022, 25:26)

Wodiczko's *Hiroshima Projection* is a powerful intervention that reanimates public memory of the tragic day by using the iconic architectural structure that withstood the deadly explosion and now serves as a peace memorial in the park located in the center of the city. Through this public projection, this structure comes alive with personal accounts from survivors, allowing viewers to form an emotional and intimate connection with this historically distant event. It compels the viewer to become a compassionate witness



Figure 2. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Hiroshima Projection on the A Bomb Dome*, Hiroshima, Japan, 1999. Screenshot from the documentary film *The Art of Un-War*, Maria Niro, 2022.



Figure 3. Krzysztof Wodiczko, close-up of the *Hiroshima Projection on the A Bomb Dome*, Hiroshima, Japan, 1999. Screenshot from the documentary film *The Art of Un-War*, Maria Niro, 2022.



Figure 4. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Loro (Them)*, in Parco Sempiore, Milan, Italy, 2019. Screenshot from the documentary film *The Art of Un-War*, Maria Niro, 2022.



Figure 5. Krzysztof Wodiczko, close-up of *Loro (Them)* in Parco Sempiore, Milan, Italy, 2019. Screenshot from the documentary film *The Art of Un-War*, 2022.

The small drones had embedded light-emitting diode screens with projections of the eyes of migrant refugees from Libya, Syria, and other countries who fled from civil wars and humanitarian crises in their regions, accompanied by the sound of their voices telling intimate stories of migration that were full of loss and precarity.

and creates an impossibility of maintaining an emotional and physical distance from the subject, thereby dismantling the morally neutral logic of warfare in which collateral damage of hundreds of thousands of people, caused by an atomic bombing, could be rationally justified or reduced to an abstract category.

Wodiczko's more recent media performance, titled *Loro (Them)*, took place in the historic center of Milan, Italy, on June 6–9, 2019 (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, n.d.-b). It included a swarm of drones flying over the large open area of the Parco Sempione, where visitors could sit on the grass and observe them (Figure 4). The small drones had embedded light-emitting diode screens with projections of the eyes of migrant refugees from Libya, Syria, and other countries who fled from civil wars and humanitarian crises in their regions, accompanied by the sound of their voices telling intimate stories of migration that were full of loss and precarity (Figure 5). To collect the testimonies, Wodiczko worked with the growing population of refugees in Milan amid an increasingly hostile climate toward migrants of color across Europe (Niro, 2022). The Italian word "loro" in the installation's title, which means "them," deliberately emphasizes "the feeling within marginalized people that they are not 'one of us,' but rather 'an Other'" (Harvard University Graduate School of Design, n.d.-b, para. 2). For Wodiczko, it was important for the viewer to be confronted with these very difficult personal stories by the migrants and "to look up to them rather than down at them" (Niro, 2022, 46:25), which humanized their lived experiences and erased cultural proximity and their otherness in relation to the "native" audience (Niro, 2022, 46:25).

Wodiczko's choice of using drones for this public performance added another layer of meaning to this work. Drones are often seen as the tools of contemporary warfare and have been extensively used during the U.S. War on Terror in the Middle East, causing numerous civilian deaths in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Yemen (Butler, 2016; Lubin, 2021), as well as during the war in Ukraine by Russian military forces. In a time of war, a drone is utilized, not only as a surveillance device to gather intelligence data, but also as a depersonalized instrument of killing that can be navigated from a distance, thereby allowing a physical and emotional detachment from a human target. By humanizing these war machines with the eyes and voices of war refugees, Wodiczko transformed them into symbols of "un-war"—or critical peacemaking—through an emotional engagement with the migrant stories of suffering and survival. This approach disrupts the morally neutral perspective that views migrants as disposable "others," instead fostering a deeper understanding and empathy (Niro, 2022).

Implication for Art Education

Wodiczko's thought-provoking and emotionally moving public art offers great potential for engaging students in the effective peacemaking art education praxis. Wodiczko's call to un-war our culture and to un-war ourselves (as cited in Harvard Art Museums, 2022, 15:24) can help students not only to recognize and reflect on the cultural and national symbols and narratives that commemorate and celebrate wars, but also to unpack their own response to mass violence that may involve "righteous coldness" or emotional indifference (Butler, 2016, p. xxxiv). In the collection of essays, *Frames of War*, written after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Butler (2016) critiqued the indifference and lack of empathy of the American public toward the victims of G. W. Bush's War on Terror, which caused over 432,000 civilian deaths in the Middle East as well as the illegal torture of Arab Muslim prisoners at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib (Lubin, 2021; Watson Institute, n.d.). Butler argued that we do not seem to feel "the same horror or outrage" over the loss of these lives "as we do over the loss of those lives that bear national and religious similarity to our own" (p. 42). Butler's critique suggests that the geographical distance and lack of cultural identification with people who experience mass violence and death create a significant obstacle to empathetic response (Ivashkevich, 2024).

Cultivating critical empathy and compassion toward other people's suffering, trauma, and death caused by the culturally unfamiliar or historically distant wars and humanitarian crises must constitute the foundation of teaching peace in art education (Bae-Dimitriadis, 2024). Bae-Dimitriadis (2024) argued, "To build this empathy, students must first contextualize the historical events

While his public art can help students connect with historically and geographically distant events, such as the WWII nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and recent militarized conflicts in Libya and the Middle East, these provocative art interventions also can encourage them to rethink their stance on war.

by expanding their own perspectives" (p. 6). This new knowledge can be difficult, as the students will be required to step outside of their own lived experiences and explore the histories and realities that might be completely different or unfamiliar to them. In doing so, they also need to be allowed to express their uncomfortable and conflicting emotions in the classroom, which can help generate a desire for global social justice, peace, and safety as fundamental human rights (Bajaj, 2008).

Besides being historically and culturally sensitive and site-specific, Wodiczko's art praxis of "un-war" goes beyond the critical interrogations of the particular global conflicts and challenges the institution of war itself. While his public art can help students connect with historically and geographically distant events, such as the WWII nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and recent militarized conflicts in Libya and the Middle East, these provocative art interventions also can encourage them to rethink their stance on war. By witnessing and engaging with survivors' stories that evoke profound emotions of pain, grief, and loss, students can gain a nuanced understanding of these global conflicts while also interrogating cultural and political ideologies of warfare that justify mass death and destruction. This empathetic connection helps bridge historical, cultural, and geographical divides, fostering compassionate solidarity across racial and national differences in the pursuit of global peace (Bajaj, 2019). ■

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Endnote

[1] The survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings are called hibakusha (被爆者) in Japan. This Japanese term translates to "explosion-affected people" and refers to individuals who were exposed to the radiation from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Human Rights Through Mobile Justice at the Finnish Border:

Looking Back and Mapping for Future Peace Education Through Art

Mira Kallio-Tavin and Oona Kallio

In this article, we explore both the historical and current situation of the Finnish–Russian border, which was protected by the Finns during World War II (WWII) and closed for the first time in history in November 2023. The Finnish government decided to heavily restrict refugee movement by closing the border to counter Russia's instrumentalization (e.g., targeted migration flows) of refugees. Despite international human rights obligations, this decision was also strongly supported by the political parties that form the opposition to the government. We share the findings of our interdisciplinary research on the conflict, focusing on a family member's narrations, along with the recent events of mobile individuals in the context of the Finnish border. This research project is conducted at the intersection of international law and arts-based research in art education. On the one hand, we approach this research project through arts-based research by exploring family archives and a family member's lived experiences from the Finnish border in the 1940s during wartime, when the authors' great grandmother and her family were forced to become mobile people. On the other hand, we observe how the mobility of refugees at the Finnish border in the present time has been restricted and their personal experiences bypassed in the process.



We position ourselves as descendants of Karelian evacuees who resided in Finnish territory before losing that land to the Soviet Union as a result of WWII. Finland lost nearly 10% of its territory, including its second largest city, Viipuri. Over 400,000 people were displaced as refugees. Our great grandmother Taimi's family, whose farmhouse was near Viipuri, was one of the displaced Karelian families. While Karelians were mostly welcomed, they were also viewed with suspicion and rootlessness, and longing became their new reality (Neuvonen-Seppänen, 2023). As Taimi's great grandchildren, we learned that her life was dedicated to processing wartime experiences and reminiscing about the lost home. Her roots were severed by the war, and it was evident that her true life had been in Karelia, behind the newly established border, and it was never quite the same for her in the new territory and adoptive culture. As descendants of a Karelian evacuee, we have been influenced in our perspectives by the stories that have been passed down to us. This has led us both to focus on related issues in our otherwise differing research, such as displacement, minority issues, human rights, and equity.

Our objective in this article is to bridge personal and intergenerational experiences and stories, through a lineage from great grandmother to great granddaughters, to build awareness of history and develop a better understanding of current migration issues. Those experiences not only give insight into why the border was closed in 2023 and remains closed as of the date of this publication, but also facilitate finding connections between mobile

Individuals can be brought to moments of awareness through self-reflective historiographical reviews. Teachers can bring students to explore their familial historiographies on mobility through arts-based practices such as collage making.

persons in these two distinct temporal dimensions. We observe how state-centric refugee and migration law imposes restrictions on the movement of people, and thus, we propose utilizing the concept of mobility justice for an ethical humane (human-centric) approach. We connect these ideas to arts-based research through visual collage production. In these collages, we combine images from Taimi's family archive with contemporary media imagery to contrast and blend photographs from different historical times and contexts. This amalgamation acknowledges and highlights the lived human experiences in the same geographical borderline location in different historical times.

With this article, we aim to raise awareness about the complex situations of mobile populations and explore pathways for future peace education in art education. Historiographical review might help to create and reveal shapes of consciousness when building awareness of history and gaining self-reflective understanding of current migration inequity that occurs despite states' obligations under international human rights law. Stankiewicz (2017) has written how a historiographical self-reflective stance is an essential method to build awareness and maturity in the field of art education. Similarly, individuals can be brought to moments of awareness through self-reflective historiographical reviews. Teachers can bring students to explore their familial historiographies on mobility through arts-based practices such as collage making. We find this a meaningful method in art education to relate to contemporary cultural and geopolitical issues.

Theories of a Mobile Paradigm

The concept of a "mobility paradigm," originating in social studies, forms the core focus of this study. The so-called mobility turn from the early 2000s onward recognizes the multifaceted implications of the increased mobility of humans, ideas, and products (Kmak, 2023, p. 4). The mobility of people is shaped by laws and policies that influence their rights of movement (Palander & Pellander, 2019). For example, the mobility of people within the European Union (EU) is constructed on the freedom of movement across the inner EU borders, while the mobility of third-country nationals at the EU's external borders is much more restricted. Mobility studies as a rapidly expanding discipline has been connected to migration studies (Fortier, 2014), among many others.

The concept of mobility also has been used to highlight the need to shift from a state-centric (migration) approach to a human-centric (mobility) approach within global migration law (Kmak, 2023). The perspective of "mobility justice" can help us understand the role of law in producing differential mobility within and among groups of people crossing borders as well as reveal the ways in which power relations play out in the movement of people (Kmak, 2023, pp. 2, 8, 10). In Kmak's theory, the distinction between "orderly" (e.g., tourism) and "disorderly" (e.g., irregular entry of refugees) mobility is relevant (Kmak, 2023, pp. 10–14). The latter, resulting from legal restrictions on mobility, can be illustrated by examples such as Greece closing its border with Turkey in 2020, Poland closing its border with Belarus in 2021, Finland's plans to build walls at its border with Russia in 2022, or the restrictions at the U.S.–Mexico border during the Trump administration from 2017 to 2021. These legal restrictions and limitations on human mobility are particularly common for forced migrants (Urry, 2007) and are often justified based on public order and national security (Palander & Pellander, 2019). The closure of the Finnish border also has been framed as a national security measure.

The research at hand emphasizes the need for a "human-centric approach" in the context of the closed eastern border of Finland, a need illustrated by the experiences of one of our family members who was forced to become mobile when fleeing their home during WWII. While the temporal and contextual situations are quite different between the events that took place 80 years ago and those occurring currently, Min-ha's (2011) depiction of the "in-between" and "elsewhere" are similar to lived experiences of people in exile, in the diaspora, and among those connected to nomadic lifestyles (p. 2). Similarly to immigrants, Karelian evacuees in the 1940s had to "negotiate between home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture, or more creatively speaking, between a here, a there, *and* an elsewhere" (Min-ha, 2011, p. 27). This kind of "elsewhereness" is often described by anthropologists as an in-between culture, when a person is identified with neither the host culture nor the native culture (Craith, 2012).

We have systematically followed the developed border situation and collected political sources from the media and juridical documents by the Finnish government. Legal research on mobility justice and migration law forms the theoretical (legal) framework. These sources create the material for our intergenerational and interdisciplinary arts-based research project.

Arts-Based Juridical Methodology

Moving from stories to histories and recreating contemporary sociopolitical identities and subjectivities, this inquiry informs art educational research by developing arts-based research practices (Rolling, 2013; Suominen et al., 2017, 2025). Our arts-based methodology intertwines juridical documents and political

media sources. Media images from 2023 are explored together with family archives and a family member's lived experiences from the Finnish border in the 1940s during war time. This material includes personal narrations, documentation, and speculative artistic material of a family member from WWII: two unpublished manuscripts authored by Taimi, a photo album, letters from the battlefields, 3 hours of interviews with Taimi conducted by Mira (one of the coauthors) 2 decades ago, and recently filmed footage from (the Finnish side of) Karelia from Mira's arts-based video project titled *Taimi*, including still images. These images are being processed alongside media images that appeared in Finnish news broadcasts and newspapers as a daily torrent in the winter of 2023–2024. These media images were selected due to their repetitiveness and their resonance with Taimi's photographs.

The border is represented in the images through fences, border crossings, and the act of drawing boundaries. By creating these collages, we intentionally blurred the distinction between historical and contemporary media images. Matters that may seem unrelated can thus be visually brought closer together, allowing artmaking to envision new connections, realities, and possibilities. In these collages, we visually negotiated the layering of images by juxtaposing family photographs with media images, thereby bringing the familiar closer to the foreign. While the historical photographs, media images, and other visual materials originally appear very different from each other, the process of collaging allows details within the images to emerge, opening possibilities for new interpretations.

As O'Donoghue (2015) has stated, arts-based research is a long-term project that counts on the "belief that the arts have the ability to contribute particular insights into and enhance understandings and phenomena that are of interest to educational researchers" (p. 352). Similarly to how Manning and Massumi (2014) described research creation, we trust that arts-based research as a methodology supports our project on "interrelated practices of art, theory, and research" and enables us to achieve "the necessary rigor of both artistic practice and research methods" (p. 85).

The Border Through Family Archive

During WWII, Finland waged two wars with the Soviet Union: The Winter War (November 30, 1939–March 13, 1940) and the Continuation War (June 25, 1941–September 19, 1944). The Winter War began with the Soviet invasion to secure Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), only 20 miles from the Finnish border. Stalin aimed to push the Finnish border back behind the Karelian Isthmus. Despite its small size and limited troops, Finland resisted the Soviet Union in ways no one thought possible, paralleling Ukraine's unexpected and ongoing resistance against Russia's aggression since 2022.

When the Winter War ended, about 70% of Finnish refugee families, including Taimi's, began returning to their homes in Karelia. By the summer of 1944, approximately 280,000 people had returned, only to find many homes destroyed. However, in September 1944, after losing major battles during the Continuation War, they had to leave their homes again, this time for good, as the 1940 border was reinstated (Figure 1).

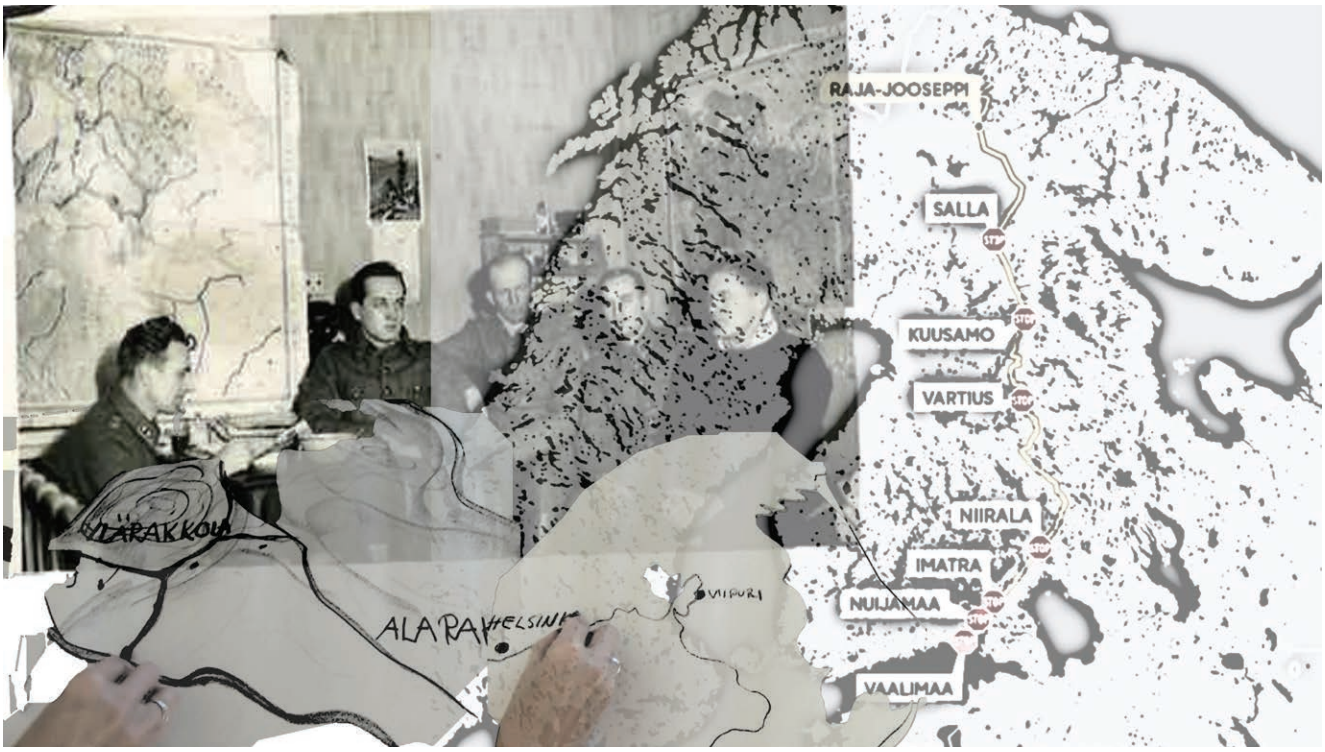


Figure 1. Photo collage by Mira Kallio-Tavin. Photo material from the family archive, still image from arts-based video production *Taimi*, and map image of the closed crossover stations by MTV News in November 2023.



Figure 2. Photo collage by Mira Kallio-Tavin. Photo material from the family archive, still images from arts-based video production *Taimi*.

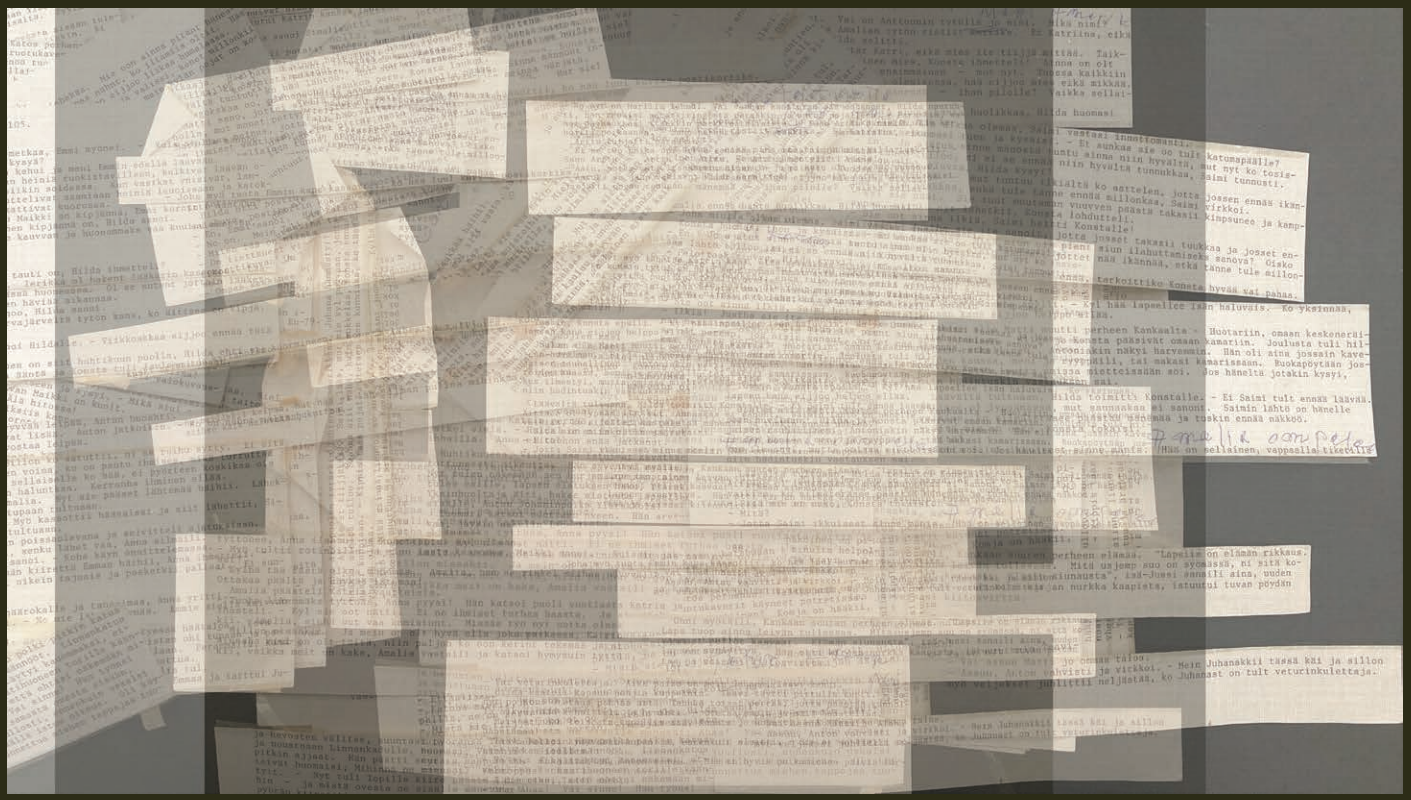


Figure 3. Photo collage by Mira Kallio-Tavin. Photo material from the family archive.

The border is represented in the images through fences, border crossings, and the act of drawing boundaries. By creating these collages, we intentionally blurred the distinction between historical and contemporary media images.

During the wars, Taimi was able to join her family only briefly due to her duties on the frontline. She served with the Lotta Svärd organization, a Finnish voluntary auxiliary paramilitary group for women, mainly supplying food to soldiers as a canteen host and performing other support tasks. Taimi's name, meaning "seedling" in Finnish, reflected her deep connection to the land, which was affective, embodied, sensorial, and emotional. This bond formed a strong, direct belonging to place and matter, transcending language, even though she wrote extensively about it. Her narration of her family house is a vivid story of multimodal experience and saturated memory, akin to how lost homes likely remain strong in the minds of many since the war in Ukraine began (Figure 2).

For Taimi, writing as an art form or cultural production was a way to contemplate and process her wartime experiences, and her relationship to the lost territory. She authored two unpublished manuscripts and several published book chapters, and also acted in theatre during the war. The family archive is disorganized and incomplete, reflecting her dementia-induced memory layering. She processed and reorganized her texts by cutting words out of sentences and reorganizing them in new ways, perhaps reorganizing her memories while they were being reorganized in her mind (Figure 3).

Another incompleteness in the archive material is with the letters that she received during the war from her fiancé. Since her letters were sent and are hence missing, only his perspective on the war and their evolving relationship is remaining, leaving Taimi's voice absent (Figure 4).

Taimi's manuscript describes her struggle at the end of the war. It was time to return to civilian life, and the only shoes she was able to find were a pair of high-heeled shoes from an attic of some house in a local village. She removed the heels and started her last refugee journey in those shoes, arriving at her evacuation location on the Finnish side of the border later in the fall, when snow was already falling, still wearing those cut high-heeled shoes.

The archive of Taimi is a rich combination of material that could be processed in multiple ways. The narration of walking in snow with the cut high-heeled shoes creates a concrete image that helps convey her experience, although it ultimately remains beyond reach. The research creation by combining family archive images with media images of people on the closed borderline is an attempt to visually comprehend history, together with the current events. Winter 2023–2024 was especially cold, with plenty of snow, posing significant challenges for unprepared refugees from the Middle East (Figure 5).

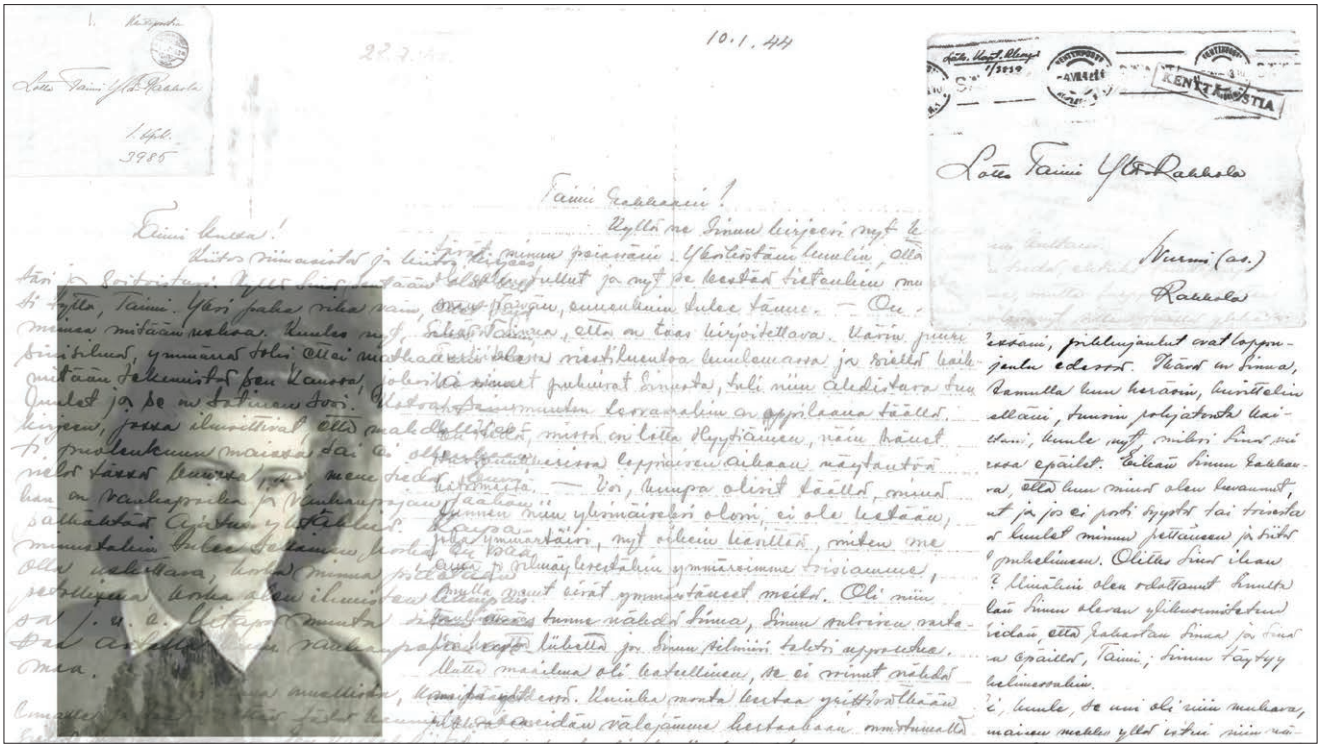


Figure 4. Photo collage by Mira Kallio-Tavin. Photo material from the family archive.



Figure 5. Photo collage by Mira Kallio-Tavin. Photo material from the family archive and media images of refugees crossing Finnish–Russian border in winter 2023–2024 by Juha Kemppainen, YLE, Jussi Nukari, Lehtikuva, and Iltalehti.

Closure of the Border

The Finnish government decided to close its eastern border in November 2023 to counter the instrumentalization of refugees by Russia. In July 2024, the government passed a new act that allows (in "exceptional circumstances") the border guards to principally and systematically refuse entry of refugees to Finland. The act, and the government's decisions to close the border that strongly restrict the mobility of refugees, have been largely criticized because of their conflict with international human rights law (e.g., the right to seek asylum, nonrefoulement, and prohibition of mass expulsion). Most of the refugees who have been allowed entry to Finland prior to the closure of the border have originally traveled from Syria, Somalia, Yemen, and Iraq (Keski-Heikkilä, 2023). Despite the closure of the border, many people have arrived in the vicinity of the border, hoping that one of the border crossing points would reopen (Nikula, 2024). The topic at hand is closely connected to the traditional means and methods of warfare under international humanitarian law and current hybrid threats, as well as the rules governing state sovereignty and borders. However, vigorous focus should remain on human rights, which are often the first to be discarded during conflict and in exceptional circumstances, which, in turn, are more easily justified in the context of hybrid threats and instrumentalization.

Exceptional law is justified through securitization: by viewing migrants and refugees as threats to national security and identity (Buzan et al., 1999). Considering the past between Finland and Russia, and more importantly, the dire experiences of mobile people like Taimi, the political attitude (and securitization of refugees) in today's Finland toward Russia is easier to decipher. Despite this inheritance, we argue that exceptional measures



should not be taken at the expense of human rights. In seeking mobility justice, it is imperative to adopt a human-centric approach, particularly because Finns have themselves experienced displacement as refugees. Regardless of the underlying reasons for mobility, recognizing how state power dynamics and laws interact with human mobility is important, especially to identify inequality (Kmak, 2023). A confrontational state's actions should be countered by adhering to international law obligations, which include allowing refugees—as individuals, humans, and mobile people—to enter the asylum procedure, have their applications processed under the rule of law (i.e., in their own language and with access to legal aid), and receive an appealable decision. By refusing entry and access altogether, these legal safeguards remain merely theoretical: The refugees' *right to rights* is denied (Sormunen, 2022). Despite existing legal frameworks, the closure of Finland's eastern border showcases how state-centric political will, combined with government power relations, affects human mobility and compromises human rights. It also demonstrates the essential role of mobility in shaping law; perhaps international law as we know it is undergoing a mobility turn.

While Taimi's and other Karelian refugees' situations differ from those who crossed the border in winter 2023–2024, and from those who are still waiting to get across, there are experiential similarities to be found. A shared objective is to reach safety and security through mobility. The ultimate destination, wherever it may lie, will invariably be embraced by the concept of "elsewhereness," as it becomes integrated into a new cultural context. In both instances, individuals serve as secondary participants in the political maneuvering (Figure 6).

Conclusions

In this research project, our objective has been to connect individual and intergenerational experiences and narratives to comprehend the current situation of a conflict, which is both instigated by and results from the border closure. In the 1940s, as well as today, the power plays between states have resulted in people becoming tokens of politics. This research highlights personal and humane perspectives of maternal lineage from great grandmother to great granddaughter in an interdisciplinary context of arts-based research in art education and international law.

Only a short period of time has passed since Taimi's experiences, which now exist within archival records. The intrinsic value of historical experiences is often diminished, and their educational potential remains largely untapped. Recollection of the past commonly ceases to reside within individual lived experiences. Conversely, education toward peaceful thinking can be rooted in explorations, such as students' familial narrations, to build awareness of history and develop a better understanding of current migrant events. Border conflicts are discussed in the daily news from a state-centric viewpoint that has the effect of students familiarizing themselves with only state-centric discussions. We recommend that art teachers explore border conflicts through a human-centered perspective using familial historiographies.

Education toward peaceful thinking can be rooted in explorations, such as students' familial narrations, to build awareness of history and develop a better understanding of current migrant events.



Figure 6. Photo collage by Mira Kallio-Tavin. Photo material from the family archive, media images of closure of the border by Kimmo Brandt, Talouselämä, and refugees crossing the Finnish–Russian border in winter 2023–2024. Timo Metsäjoki, Yleisradio.

It is imperative that archived experiences be effectively integrated into art educational curricula. To miss learning from history is shortsighted and risks fostering preoccupation with militaristic defense strategies and political maneuvering, reacting without vision. This neglects opportunities for reflection, and it is not remembered that many families were in a similar situation just two or three familial epochs ago. The foundational tenets of forthcoming peace education initiatives ought to be based on historical experiences and keeping grandparents' stories alive, without forgetting students' own mobile roots. By remembering their own roots and mobile heritage, students may be better equipped to comprehend border issues as multifaceted phenomena warranting nuanced consideration. ■

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Critical Teaching of War in Art Classrooms

Kyungeun Lim and Sohyun An

"The United States is not at war, the United States is war" (Han, 2006, as cited in Tintiangco-Cubales & Curammeng, 2018, p. 228). Born out of war against the British Empire, the United States has been in a near constant state of war since its birth (Vine, 2020). These wars are presented in the U.S. collective memory as grim but inevitable and necessary to bring peace and justice to the world. In reality, these wars have brought more violence and served the economic and political interests of elites while leaving tens of millions at home and abroad dead, devastated, and displaced with trauma and pain (Zinn, 2011).

If we are serious about preventing future wars and violence, wars need to be taught more honestly and critically. Otherwise, many students will be left with dominant messages about wars from the larger society. In U.S. rituals such as Memorial Day and Independence Day, for example, U.S. wars become honorable events that are unfortunate but necessary for national security, progress, or world peace (Nguyen, 2017). In popular movies and video games, war even becomes an amusement in which fighting is glamorized, the enemy is dehumanized, and the United States is always right and just (Nguyen, 2017). These messages do not help students make informed future decisions about whether, why, and how the United States should go to war and ultimately prevent future violence and suffering at home and abroad (Gibbs, 2020).

In teaching about U.S. wars at school, what is often missing is the U.S. role in spurring refugee crises and displacements. Regarding Asian migration to the United States, for example, many Asians have entered the United States as refugees, orphans, military brides, laborers, or immigrants, partly because the United States went to Asia for its military and imperialist gains and generated the conditions for the refugee crises and displacements (Espiritu, 2014). Indeed, a large wave of Korean migration to the United States began in the aftermath of the Korean War, in which the United States, along with the Soviet Union and other countries, intervened in the context of the Cold War. Similarly, almost 2 decades of U.S. war in Vietnam led to forced displacements of people in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Yet school textbooks tend to decouple U.S. wars in Asia from Asian migration to the United States as if they were separate events. That is, U.S. wars in Asia, such as the Korean War and the Vietnam War, are typically presented as rescue and liberation missions, while Asian migration to the United States is generally explained as these people fleeing from communism and oppression in Asian countries and finding freedom and prosperity in the United States (An, 2022).

This study focuses on art classrooms as spaces where artistic expression and visual cultural images critically reflect social justice issues, such as refugees, migration, and U.S. imperialism (Allweiss & Al-Adeimi, 2024; Mendes, 2024), aligning with

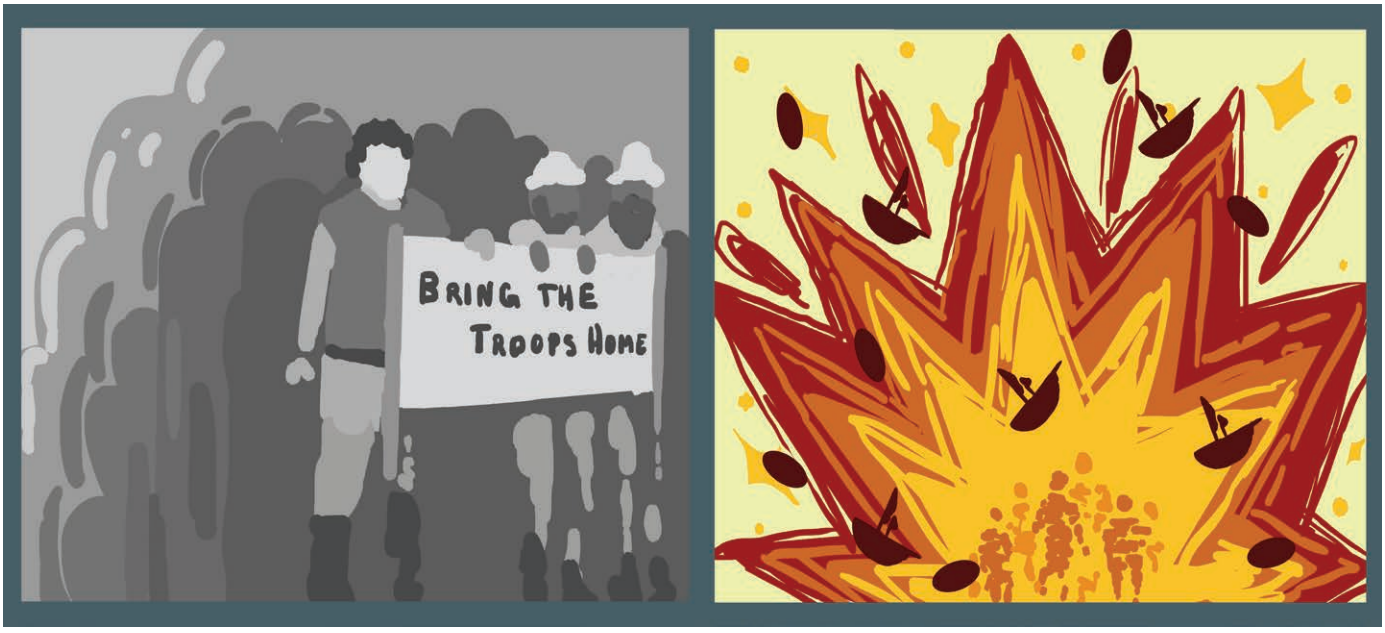


Figure 1. Student Lauren's artwork. The left image is about the dominant narrative, and the right is about the counternarrative of the U.S. war. Photo courtesy of Lauren.

If we are serious about preventing future wars and violence, wars need to be taught more honestly and critically. Otherwise, many students will be left with dominant messages about wars from the larger society.

discussions on humanizing and affective art education praxis as highlighted in this special issue of *Art Education*. In this regard, we propose critical refugee studies (CRS; Espiritu, 2014) and difficult knowledge (Pitt & Britzman, 2003) as useful theoretical lenses to teach critically about U.S. wars, and we describe an art educational praxis that is informed by these theories to promote critical peace (Bajaj, 2008, 2015). In addition, this article includes details of our practices in the art teacher education classroom as well as students' artworks and reflections. In the current unit, preservice art teachers engaged in four integrated lessons designed to explore the intersection of war and art, focusing on the Vietnam War through the frameworks of critical refugee studies and difficult knowledge.

Theoretical Lenses

According to CRS scholar Yến Lê Espiritu (2014), such decoupling of war and migration is not just inaccurate but also dangerous, as it reinforces the national myth of U.S. wars as always noble and necessary, consequently promoting the status quo of endless U.S. military interventions in the world (Vine, 2020). Further, such decoupling exacerbates a historical misunderstanding of refugee crises, which results in countless acts of violence and discrimination against refugees, ranging from verbal attacks such as "Go back to your country!" to hate crimes. To prevent future wars and forced displacement, war and migration should be critically juxtaposed and taught together (Espiritu, 2014).

Initiated by Espiritu (2014), CRS is an interdisciplinary field of research that "reconceptualizes 'the refugee' not as a dehistoricized object of rescue but as a site of social and political critiques, whose emergence, when traced, would make visible the processes of colonization, war, and displacement" (p. 174). At its core, CRS challenges mainstream discourses that (1) treat refugees as objects of study rather than as producers of knowledge, (2) frame refugees as problems or burdens for nation-states and humanitarian organizations, and (3) seek solutions to a "refugee crisis" without considering structural forces, such as war, colonization, and imperialism, that caused the displacement in the first place. Instead, CRS conceptualizes the refugee as a knowledge producer and centers humanity and the complex personhood of refugees in understanding war and refugee crises. CRS also employs "critical juxtaposing"—the deliberate bringing together of seemingly disconnected historical events or concepts—as an analytic tool to debunk the larger structural forces behind forced migration, such as imperialism, colonialism, war, and militarism (Espiritu, 2014, p. 47).

Such a critical understanding of war, however, can be easily criticized as anti-American or unpatriotic by people who view U.S. wars as nothing but honorable, just, and inevitable for world peace. According to theories of difficult knowledge, a glorified understanding of U.S. wars is "lovely knowledge" that many people find comforting and familiar (Pitt & Britzman, 2003). In contrast, CRS perspectives on war are "difficult knowledge," which refers to social or historical content that carries an emotional burden for learners because the content often involves state-sanctioned violence, refutes dominant sociohistorical narratives, and thus creates feelings of discomfort or unease (Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2014; Zembylas, 2014). Despite emotional challenges, a pedagogical value in teaching and learning difficult knowledge is realized by asking learners to radically reconsider their cherished worldviews, and, we hope, by inspiring transformative ways of seeing, feeling, and acting in response to others' suffering (Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2014).

Art Education on War and Refugees

Art educators have examined war and refugee experiences in the context of historical understanding, social justice, and therapeutic engagement (Darts et al., 2008; Kim, 2014; Wellman & Bey, 2015). Artistic creation supports refugees' identity formation and emotional release by visualizing their experiences and engaging in reflective practices through artwork (Wellman & Bey, 2015). Collaborative art projects allow refugees to connect with others and articulate their narratives (Escaño et al., 2022). Scholars have noted art classrooms as safe spaces for refugee students to share their identities, difficulties, and experiences related to wars and migration (Brown & Bousalis, 2017; Papouli, 2017). For example, Rousseau et al. (2005) explained how an integrated curriculum encompassing visual arts, language development, and emotional empowerment facilitates refugee students' internalization and externalization of migration experiences. Further, exposure to such themes through art can enhance nonrefugee students' social and racial consciousness (Papouli, 2017).

The teaching of migration issues within art classrooms also needs to consider nonrefugee students. Incorporating migration for nonrefugee students can open conversations from counternarrative perspectives, enhance educational inclusion (Svendsen & Skotnes, 2022), and develop critical-thinking skills (Allweiss & Al-Adeimi, 2024). To ensure that nonrefugee students engage deeply with migration and refugee issues, critical pre- and postdiscussions address the challenges and limitations of difficult knowledge. Additionally, creating counternarratives or visual images extending beyond refugee experiences to include various social and personal contexts can further enrich the understanding of refugees as autonomous agents (Lim & An, 2024; Reed, 2015). Researchers have also examined artwork and art history regarding U.S. wars (Darts et al., 2008; Matheny, 2012). However, studies explicitly examining counternarrative stories of U.S. wars, CRS, and difficult knowledge in art education (Heybach, 2012) are significantly limited. Heybach (2012)

suggested incorporating "difficult knowledge" into aesthetics by engaging and discussing visually challenging or uncomfortable images associated with U.S. wars. The following describes our practices of integrating CRS and difficult knowledge in the preservice art classroom.

Study Setting

We are Asian immigrants and teacher educators at a large public university in the southeastern United States. Sharing a commitment to anticolonial, antiracist education, we have collaborated on supporting preservice teachers with transformative curricula and pedagogies. As the first author is an art teacher educator and the second author is a social studies teacher educator, we have explored the pedagogical benefits of teaching arts through counternarratives of historically marginalized peoples (Lim & An, 2024). Specifically, we have employed CRS (Espiritu, 2014) and difficult knowledge (Pitt & Britzman, 2003) as theoretical lenses to design and teach a unit in the first author's art methods class. The nine preservice teachers in the class were all females in their early 20s. Three identified as Black, two as Latinx, and the rest as White. Data sources included lesson plans, class discussions, and student artworks and writings, and pattern analysis was used for data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The unit consisted of four lessons: (1) examination of the relations between wars and art through art criticism and art historical lenses, (2) exploration and prediscussions of CRS and difficult knowledge theories and their application to the Vietnam War as a case study, (3) creating two art images—one representing a popular memory of U.S. wars and the other representing counterstories of the wars based on CRS—and, (4) sharing their works and postdiscussions about teaching difficult knowledge.

Student Learning

Overall, the unit contributed to preservice art teachers' emergent critical understanding of war and teaching about war. While reflecting on her previous learning experience, Lauren noted, "Most of what I learned about U.S. wars in school focused on a nationalistic perspective. Although there was some acknowledgment of what America did wrong in some wars, the full picture was never given" (prereflection, April 2, 2024).[1] Now informed by CRS (Espiritu, 2014), Lauren created two images of the Vietnam War (Figure 1) that critically juxtaposed both sides (Espiritu, 2014; Pitt & Britzman, 2003). The image on the left visualizes a popular memory of the war that exclusively focuses on the war's effects on Americans who suffered from participating in the war. The image on the right challenges this U.S.-centric memory by centering on Southeast Asian experiences of the war, including bombings and forced displacement, and describing the boat people.

Sunshine also expressed her newfound understanding of war in her artwork (Figure 2). On the left, she visualized a dominant perspective on U.S. wars that presents the United States as a benevolent helping hand for desperate refugees. On the right, she drew an image of refugees troubled by a cold reception from U.S. Americans, who largely, although not exclusively, along with other Western powers, caused many refugee crises in the first place. Through the juxtaposition, she hoped to "challenge the dominant narrative of the United States as a good refuge and of



Figure 2. Student Sunshine's artworks. The left image is about the dominant narrative, and the right is about the counternarrative of the U.S. war. Photo courtesy of Sunshine.

Although it was challenging, the preservice teachers agreed that creating a learning environment for young learners to share their feelings, questions, and thoughts about difficult topics is "our responsibility as teachers."

the refugees as powerless and grateful ones" (postreflection, April 9, 2024). Although most of the students initially stated that they "had not thought about refugees' lives after migration" (Hazel, prereflection, April 2, 2024), their postreflections revealed a recognition of the potential of CRS. For example, Luna noted, "Now, I can see what is missing. Media and schools did not focus on the complexities of refugee experiences beyond U.S.-centric glories" (Luna, postreflection, April 9, 2024). Gabriela also emphasized the teaching of the complexity of wars and reconceptualizing the identities and positionalities of refugees (Espiritu, 2014; Pitt & Britzman, 2003): "They are not just waiting for help" (Gabriela, postreflection, April 9, 2024).

Along with CRS, difficult knowledge theory was helpful for the students in thinking about possibilities and challenges in teaching war critically (Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2014; Zembylas, 2014). Indeed, the students were well aware of Georgia's "divisive concepts" law and had heard about a local elementary school teacher who was fired under the law for reading a picture book on gender equity. Referring to the case, Nia noted, "It's chilling when you hear these cases.… To be honest, I am afraid to teach war critically" (postreflection, April 9, 2024). Learning about difficult knowledge theories helped them unpack and ease their fears, although not completely (Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2014). During class discussion, Cynthia said, "Concepts like lovely knowledge, difficult knowledge, [and the] emotional nature of learning [were] helpful to ease my worries" because they gave "me a tool to understand my own and others' fears and discomfort" in the face of difficult topics such as the United States' complicity in refugee crises and human suffering (class discussion, April 4, 2024). Although it was challenging, the preservice teachers agreed that creating a learning environment for young learners to share their feelings, questions, and thoughts about difficult topics is "our responsibility as teachers" (Nia, postreflection, April 9, 2024). They also found the possibilities in visual arts, because, as Sunshine noted, "Art can serve as a powerful medium to convey emotions, struggles, and resilience amidst conflict" (postreflection, April 9, 2024). Further, the lesson facilitated visual and verbal reflection among students in U.S. classrooms on their own migration histories, both directly and indirectly experienced as nonrefugees (Brown & Bousalis, 2017; Papouli, 2017; Svendsen & Skotnes, 2022).

The process of teaching and learning difficult knowledge, along with practicing critical pedagogical applications, is a lifelong journey for educators.

Implications and Conclusion

The unit of instruction for preservice art teachers described in this article was taught through the lens of CRS and difficult knowledge and helped guide preservice art teachers to unlearn dominant narratives on war and refugee crises and brainstorm ways to promote critical peace through critical art education (Papouli, 2017; Svendsen & Skotnes, 2022). Through the unit, students could juxtapose wars and refugee crises and consider refugees as people with complex personhood, as well as recognize missing points in teaching about U.S. wars (Espiritu, 2014). Preservice teachers also identified a critical need to integrate CRS and difficult knowledge theories into art education, particularly in states like Georgia, where teachers are punished for teaching truth and difficult knowledge (Pitt & Britzman, 2003; Simon, 2014; Zembylas, 2014). It is important to acknowledge, however, that a single lesson is insufficient to address comprehensively the complex concepts of CRS and difficult knowledge within an art teacher education program. The process of teaching and learning difficult knowledge, along with practicing critical pedagogical applications, is a lifelong journey for educators.

While this study focused on art educational settings, further research is needed to explore how visual images and art pedagogies can be integrated into social studies contexts. This integration could facilitate a critical analysis of the nuances and complexities of wars within social studies education. Future studies can also investigate how general classrooms can serve as safe spaces for both refugee and nonrefugee students to share their experiences and foster social and racial awareness by integrating art with social studies content (Papouli, 2017; Rousseau et al., 2005). Meanwhile, for K–16 art educators, we suggest incorporating CRS and difficult knowledge in the art education curriculum by integrating visual images and written narratives that depict the complexity of war and the agency and complex personhood of refugees. This approach would help broaden students' perspectives and foster empathy and critical thinking. We hope our classroom story contributes to a larger effort to teach art for critical peace. ■

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Endnote

[1] All names are pseudonyms.

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Figure 1. Caysie Gautreau, *Untitled*, 2022. Mixed media, 4 × 6 and 8 × 6 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Exploring Conflict Transformation Through Experiences With Art

Rebecca Shipe

The Relationship Between Peace and Conflict Transformation

The utopian concept of achieving world peace sounds unrealistic yet desirable. The way individuals view peace, in relationship to violence, varies widely depending on the past and present contextual circumstances in which they live. Teachers must carefully navigate their roles of maintaining respectful, safe learning environments that honor an increasingly diverse student body with a vast range of experiences that influence how they view violence in their lives and the world around them. Art teachers, in particular, will naturally encounter violence in the content of their students' artwork, the visual content that they and their students choose to discuss in class, and possibly the unanticipated violent behavior that erupts on their school campus.

Peace education scholars (Bajaj, 2018; Noddings, 2012) recognize that peace is not simply the absence of physical hostility. Unjust systems and structures do not always require acts of violence to deprive people of their human rights. In this sense, pursuing peace might involve using nonviolent strategies to actively challenge powers that compromise these basic rights. Beginning to work toward needed change involves confronting oppressive power structures and disrupting an unjust sense of peace. This requires initiating a conflict, which might seem at odds with the concept of peace. Coming from this perspective, recognizing the usefulness of engaging with conflict is essential to counteracting an unjust peace. This points to the value of activating a "conflict transformation" (Lederach, 2003, p. 14) mindset. Rather than passively avoiding conflicts, conflict transformation positions individuals to become more complex as they embrace the transformative benefits that result from working through conflicts. It is easy to simply align ourselves with those we typically agree with when encountering a conflict. However, transforming conflicts into positive human growth involves acknowledging the complex circumstances that surround the conflict; considering how past and present circumstances have influenced our own and others' biases related to the conflict; and then aiming to generate a new system, understanding, or way of coexisting that supports all human rights.

Beginning to work toward needed change involves confronting oppressive power structures and disrupting an unjust sense of peace. This requires initiating a conflict, which might seem at odds with the concept of peace.

Defining Conflict Transformation

Per the internationally recognized work of J. P. Lederach (2003), conflict transformation refers to handling opposition with optimism. Rather than trying to eliminate or control conflict, conflict transformation involves recognizing conflicts as opportunities for personal growth. Lederach (2003) stated,

> Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships. (p. 14)

Lederach (2003) emphasized that conflicts allow us to stop, assess, reflect, and adapt our behavior or perspective, which ultimately leads to becoming more complex human beings. If we never encountered disruptions to our thinking, our minds would become dull and stagnant. While differentiating between conflict *transformation* and conflict *resolution*, he points out that a resolution typically implies finding a final solution to a problem, whereas transformation implies changing an existing form into something new. Other qualities that characterize conflict transformation include embracing the innate complexity of conflicts rather than seeking simple solutions; replacing the "either/or" mentality toward seemingly paradoxical relationships with a more compatible "both/and" perspective; and honoring the cyclical, rather than linear, nature of the transformation process.

Lederach (2003) applied this concept primarily to social conflicts between individuals, communities, or nations; however, he commonly used metaphors while describing conflict transformation that highlights how this concept appears in other realms of life. His metaphorical descriptions of conflict transformation have influenced my fluid understanding of this concept and the way I introduce the term to others. In addition to social conflicts between people, I apply this concept to internal conflicts that we experience in our minds, conflicts between ourselves and our environments, and any other conflicting forces that we experience. By thinking metaphorically, or understanding or experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakeoff & Johnson, 1980), we can deepen our understanding of a concept by applying it to multiple disciplines or contexts.

Considering Different Perspectives Through Art Education

Conflict transformation holds implications for art education. For example, sharing personal interpretations of visual art with others creates an opportunity for participants to experience conflict transformation. Art education scholars (Barrett, 2008, 2010; Beck, 2009; Bresler, 2013; Costantino, 2010; Gude, 2007; Illeris, 2010; Macintyre Latta, 2013; Marshall, 2014; Rolling, 2008; Siegesmund, 2010; Walker, 2001) agree that interpreting a piece of visual art involves using metaphorical thinking to generate personal meaning that is based on visual evidence. Sharing these personal interpretations with others provides the opportunity to consider a different perspective. In this example, participants encounter different perspectives that might conflict with their own and transform this into a new understanding of the artwork. While conducting research with a group of elementary-level art students (Shipe, 2017), I also discovered that interpreting, creating, and sharing visual metaphors allowed them to generate unique solutions and witness how their peers came to different conclusions. Activating their metaphorical thinking enabled them to comprehend how different people make meaning in different ways. Learning to see one thing in terms of another encouraged an understanding that knowledge and meaning-making are individually and contextually situated. This same group of 5th graders also explored the idea of conflict transformation while participating in artmaking and art interpretation activities designed to support their working understanding of this concept (Shipe, 2017).

More recently, I have recognized the importance of addressing conflict transformation with my current college-level art education students. Researchers, both within and outside the field of art education (Burke et al., 2023; Coleman, 2021; Journell, 2019; Lee, 2018; Noddings & Brooks, 2017; Steyer, 2020; Zimmerman & Robertson, 2017), emphasize how the ever-increasing polarization in our society has resulted from individuals' tendencies to oversimplify conflicting ideas by immediately agreeing with those

This body of research suggests that counteracting polarization involves embracing the complexity of conflicts rather than quickly settling for simple solutions, acknowledging our own internal contradictions, and seeking out and considering the perspective of intelligent people who hold viewpoints that differ from our own.

who share similar values. In other words, when encountering complicated conflicts, most people look for answers from trusted voices and sources that align with their own perspective rather than considering the views from the opposing side. This scholarship asserts that individuals should critically evaluate both sides of a conflict while acknowledging their own biases and considering where these biases originated. In addition, this body of research suggests that counteracting polarization involves embracing the complexity of conflicts rather than quickly settling for simple solutions, acknowledging our own internal contradictions, and seeking out and considering the perspective of intelligent people who hold viewpoints that differ from our own. Developing the ability to listen carefully to opposing arguments and trying to understand the life circumstances that have influenced these perspectives can lead to positive, personal growth. Not only does it strengthen one's own self-control, but also, it increases our intellectual agility as we reflect on the complicated circumstances that contributed to these opposing perspectives. If individuals approach such encounters with a conflict transformation mindset, they will be more likely to seek out and appreciate learning why those with different perspectives think the way they do. Rather than avoiding opposing perspectives, applying the concept of conflict transformation would activate an individual's genuine curiosity when they encounter differing perspectives. Students can activate conflict transformation in an art classroom environment when they consider interpretations of visual art that conflict with their own and allow this to broaden their understanding of the artwork. Additionally, art students can benefit from exercising a conflict transformation mindset while receiving constructive criticism on their own artwork and using this feedback to refine their work.

Visual Responses to Conflict Transformation in the Art Education Classroom

Given the continual relevance of the concept of conflict transformation, I decided to incorporate it into an ongoing, online art exhibition that I manage for the United States Society for

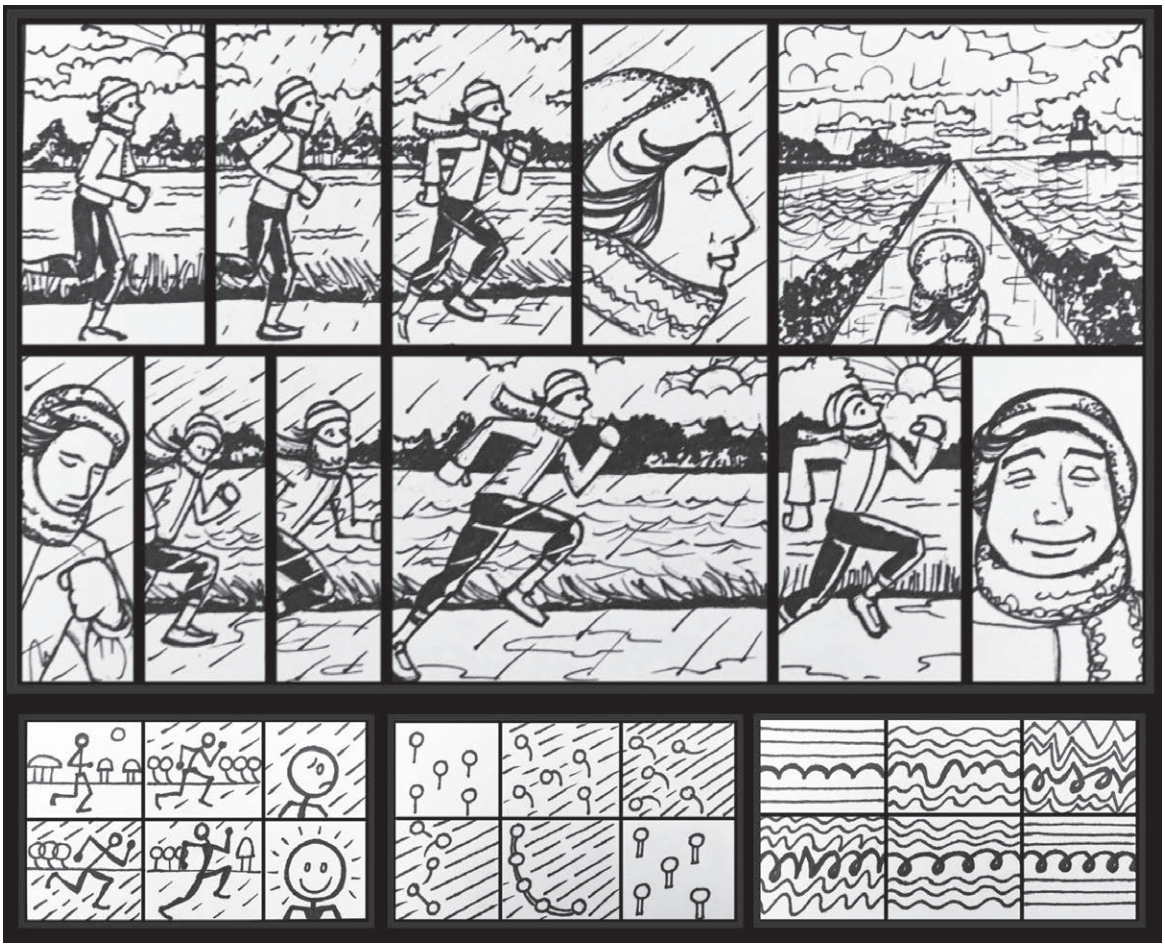


Figure 2. Rebecca Shipe, *Conflict Transformation While Jogging*, 2017. Digitally modified pencil drawings, 10 × 8 in. Courtesy of the author.

Education Through Art (USSEA) titled the USSEA Student Art Exchange and Exhibition.[1] Every year or two, USSEA members determine a theme for participants to explore and respond to by generating an image that represents their understanding of that theme. This visual response can vary from a simple sketch to a more refined piece of artwork. The point is to share one's personal interpretation of the common theme through the creation of a visual metaphor for others to view on the exhibition website. This allows the audience to generate a broader understanding of the theme by viewing others' visual contributions.

I solicited participation from K–12 art teachers and art education professors to submit their students' contributions to the online exhibition. Exploring the theme and generating a visual response does not need to be a time-consuming intrusion into a teacher's existing curriculum. For example, I have facilitated the creation of my college-level students' contributions by spending 10 minutes discussing the concept and viewing the current contributions on the exhibition website, and then another 10 minutes using various available materials to generate their visual response. Some students chose to spend more time outside of class to refine their idea, but all their visual responses, regardless of the level of development, provide a unique perspective that can inspire and influence others' understanding of the theme. Examples of my students' visual responses are shown in Figure 1 and Figures 5 through 9.

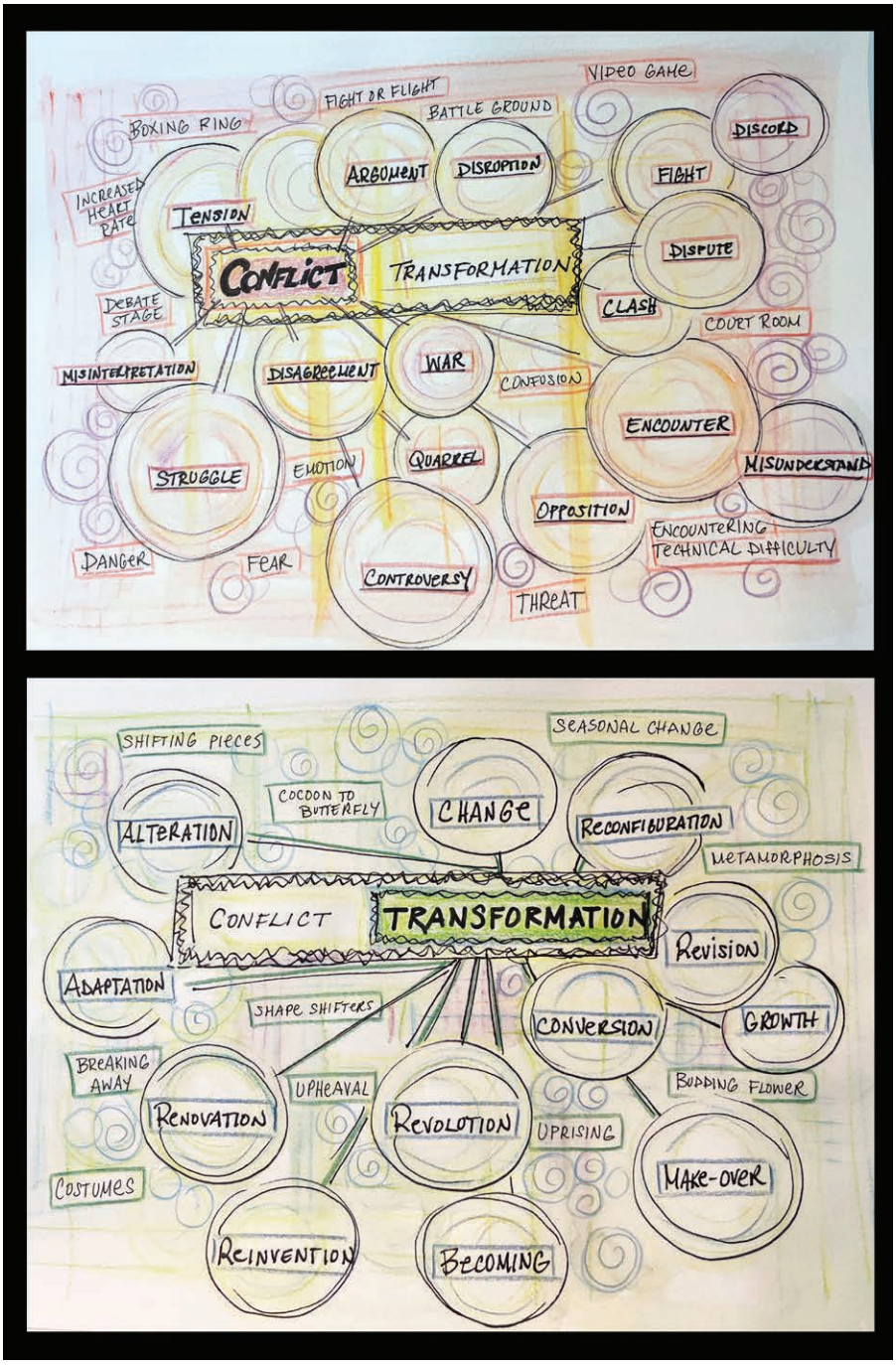


Figure 3. Rebecca Shipe, *Conflict Transformation Mind Maps*, 2023. Mixed media, 10 × 8 in. Courtesy of the author.

While facilitating this activity with my current preservice art education students, I began by introducing them to the theme "conflict transformation" while providing a series of visual examples to support their understanding. As shown in Figure 2, the first example represents how a person jogging through wind and rain activates different types of conflict transformation as they physically and mentally negotiate their present environmental conditions. The initial version resembles a storyboard composed of sequential frames containing recognizable imagery of this scenario. The proceeding examples intend to represent the same story of conflict transformation in a less literal way to demonstrate how a variety of visual metaphors can represent the same idea.

Next, I invite them to reflect on questions such as:

What is a conflict?

How do you experience internal conflicts (conflicts occurring in your head)?

How do you experience external conflicts (conflicts with other people or things)?

What conflicts have you witnessed in the world around you?

What causes these conflicts?

How might the conflict transform into something positive?

What would be lost if the conflict had been avoided?

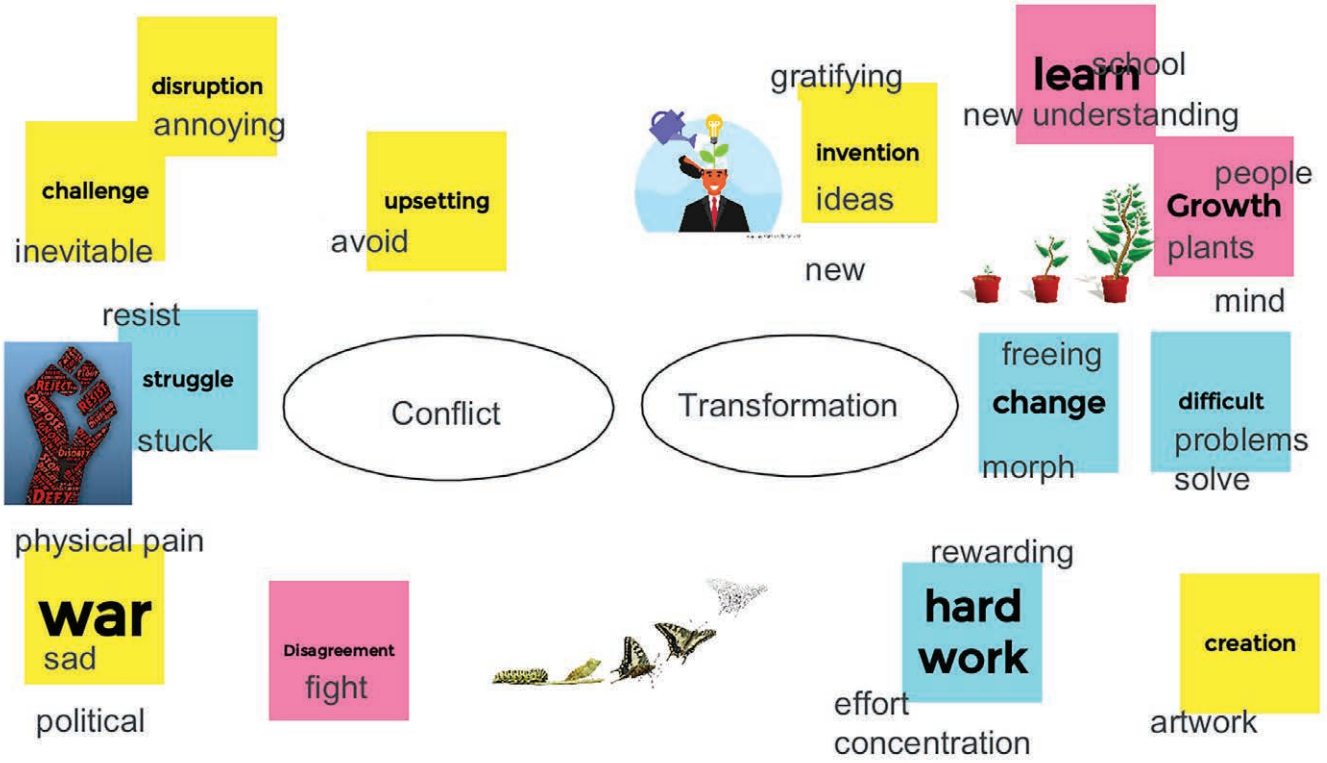


Figure 4. Rebecca Shipe, *Conflict Transformation Jamboard*, 2022. Digital media. Courtesy of the author.

To broaden our understanding of the concept, we develop visual mind maps providing both pictures and words that relate to both "conflict" and "transformation" individually. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, I created the first two mind maps; the third was collectively generated using a Google Jamboard with my students. Next, we view the current online exhibition, consisting of sketches and refined visual responses from others to broaden their understanding of the concept. Finally, I provide them with basic drawing materials and allow 10 minutes to generate a visual response. Although this seems like a short period of time, I have consistently been impressed with the variety of unique responses they have generated while working within these time restrictions.

Reflecting on Students' Engagement and Contributions

My students' visual responses and verbal descriptions of the images they created continuously reveal the benefits of this activity. These art education students can easily relate to the concept of conflict transformation and can generate visual metaphors representing their personal understanding of this idea. Sharing these images and descriptions with one another in class not only broadens their understanding of the concept, but also allows them to feel more personally connected to each other. Many art education scholars agree (Barrett, 2008, 2010; Beck, 2009; Bresler, 2013; Costantino, 2010; Gude, 2007; Illeris, 2010; Macintyre Latta, 2013; Marshall, 2014; Rolling, 2008; Siegesmund, 2010; Walker, 2001) that generating and sharing a metaphorical response to a common theme, such as conflict transformation, reveals our unique relationship to this theme with others. This allows others to make a personal connection with us as they gain insight into our perspective. Dedicating time and energy to exploring, reflecting, and generating a visual response to this topic allows participants to consider the various ways they can intentionally activate a conflict transformation mindset more frequently in their daily interactions with conflicts.

As art educators continue to adapt their teaching practices to meet their students' rapidly changing needs, developing new views on peace and violence is critical to sustaining a relevant perspective on the world that they are experiencing. Introducing the concept of conflict transformation encourages the hard work of embracing complexity and resisting the urge to simply align our perspectives with like-minded others. We should consider questions, such as: Why do we disagree? What about my life experiences causes me to think this way? What about your life experiences causes you to think this way? How can we negotiate

Dedicating time and energy to exploring, reflecting, and generating a visual response to this topic allows participants to consider the various ways they can intentionally activate a conflict transformation mindset more frequently in their daily interactions with conflicts.

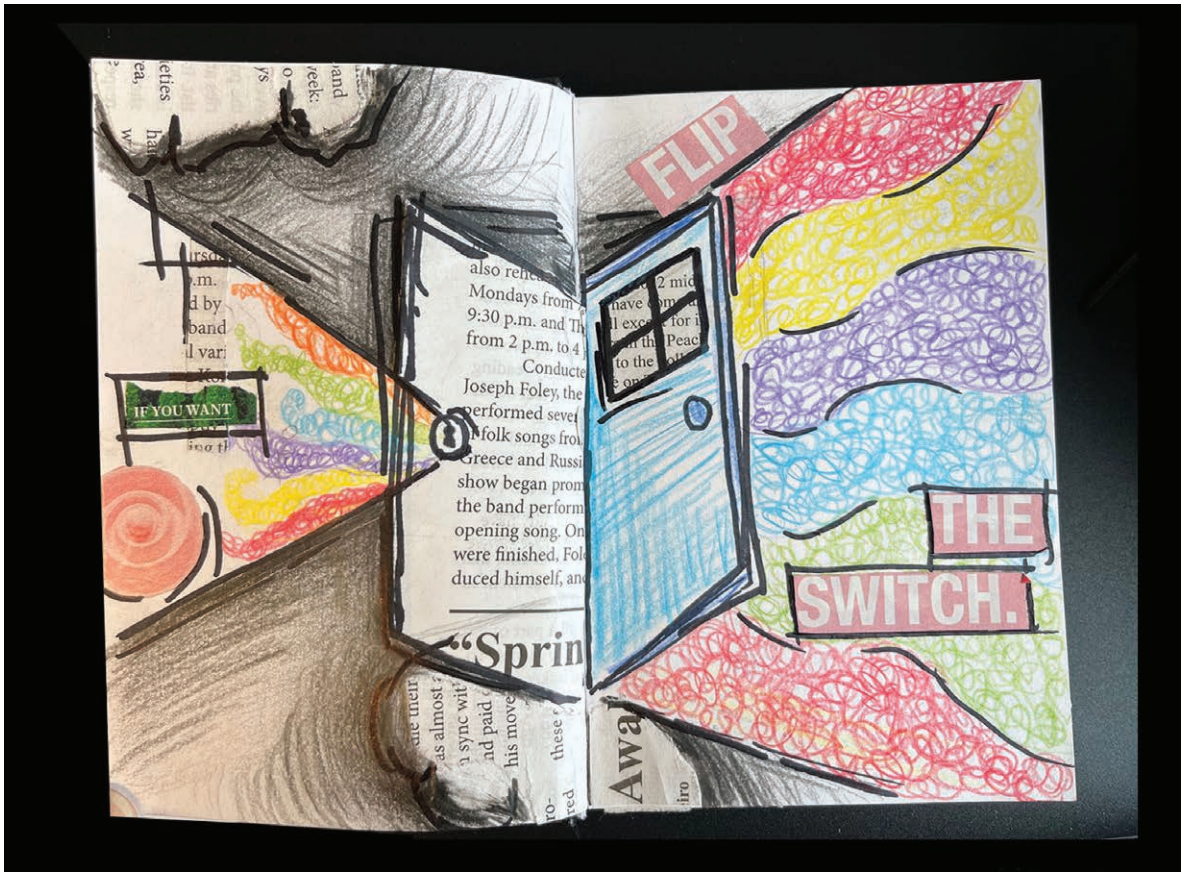


Figure 5. Hanna Starr, *Perspective*, 2022. Mixed media, 8 × 6 in. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 6. Marisol Martinez Kritikos, *Unbalanced*, 2022. Pencil and ink, 8 × 6 in. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 7. Melissa Cardillo Schwarz, *Kintsugi*, 2024. Colored pencil and marker, 8 × 8 in. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 8. Carrie Crockett, *Break Through*, 2022. Watercolor, 8 × 6 in. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 9. Christine Kim, *Untitled*, 2022. Mixed media, sketchbook 8 × 6 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 10. USSEA student art exchange QR code.

a reasonable path moving forward that honors our collective life experiences?

The concept of conflict transformation clearly applies in these social contexts; however, applying it more broadly to other lived experiences opens up opportunities to gain a greater appreciation for the concept. If readers of this article would like to contribute their own or their students' own visual responses to this theme, they are welcome to use the QR code in Figure 10 for more information. Interested participants can email a jpeg file of their visual response to the address provided and it will be added to the online exhibition website. This easily accessible online exhibition allows viewers to broaden their understanding of conflict transformation while interpreting others' visual responses. Participants can then generate and submit their own visual representation of how they experience conflict transformation. Engaging in these activities allows participants to consider the value of encountering conflict with optimism and recognize how to transform conflicts into opportunities for positive growth. Considering conflict transformation might help students generate healthier ways of processing the violence they witness in contemporary society. We can encourage students to consider how challenging oppressive power structures that maintain an unjust sense of peace can be done in a nonviolent way. Exercising a conflict transformation mindset positions students to respond more thoughtfully to circumstances that might result in violence and activate nonviolent ways of affecting positive change. ■

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Endnote

[1] https://usseastudentart.weebly.com.



Bombers Into Butterflies

A Painting Made in Gaza on a Postcard Sent From Gernika

Richard Finlay Fletcher, jt Eisenhauer Richardson, and Zülâl Fazlıoğlu Akın

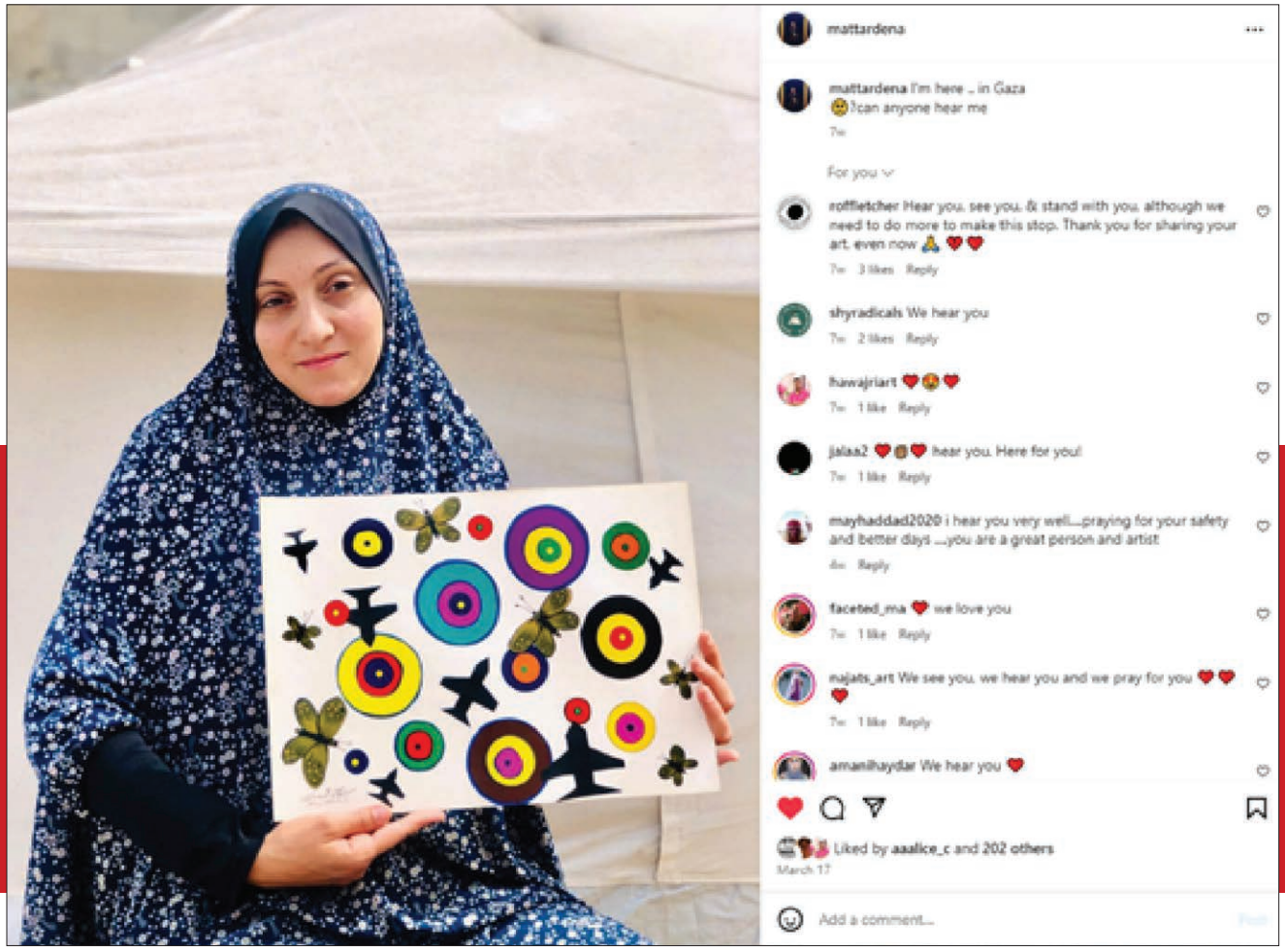


Figure 1. Screenshot of an Instagram post by artist Dina Mattar, posted on March 17, 2024 (the artist photographed in a refugee camp in Rafah, Gaza, holding a recent painting, with the caption "I'm here in Gaza. Can anyone hear me?"). Photograph courtesy of the artist.

The project *Bombers Into Butterflies* originated during my (Richard Finlay Fletcher's) sabbatical in Bilbao in the Basque Country in 2023–2024. To align with the 87th anniversary of the bombing of the Basque town of Gernika on April 26, 2024, I created a set of 50 postcards featuring a reproduction of a recent painting by the Gazan artist Dina Mattar. The painting was made in February 2024 while the artist and her family were living in a refugee camp in Rafah. I had first encountered Mattar's vibrant work depicting scenes of Palestinian life in Gaza at the documenta fifteen exhibition in Kassel, Germany; Mattar's work was part of the installation created by a Palestinian artistic collective called The Question of Funding, who brought together artworks by members of the Eltiqa Gallery in Gaza (including Mattar) and told the story of the gallery through a timeline that emphasized their struggle to get funding to support their work.

When the gallery was destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in early December 2023, Mattar, along with her husband, Mohammed Al Hawajiri, who is also a member of the gallery, moved to the camp in Rafah with some members of their family. It was there Mattar made the painting *The Dying Butterfly* (2024a), which she posted on Instagram with the caption, "I'm here in Gaza. Can anyone hear me?" (Figure 1).

I asked the artist for permission to reproduce her painting and share it to bring attention to her and her family's desperate situation and to help mobilize calls for a ceasefire. I created a website[1] and an Instagram account,[2] and I made postcards of the



Figure 2. Selection of photographs from the *Bombers Into Butterflies* postcard project taken during the visit to Gernika on April 26, 2024 (at the train station, in the Gernika Peace Museum store, at the ceremony for the Gernika Peace and Reconciliation Award, and in front of a ceramic reproduction of Picasso's *Guernica*). Photographs courtesy of the authors.

painting in Bilbao. I took them with me to Gernika on Friday, April 26, 2024 (Figure 2), and I gave them to the Gernika Peace Museum to sell in their store. Additionally, I handed out postcards to people attending the commemoration events there and to members of the group Combatants for Peace, which comprised Israelis and Palestinians who had won the museum's annual Prize for Peace and Reconciliation. I also took the postcards to the ceramic replica of *Guernica* in the town, to make a literal connection between Mattar's and Picasso's paintings.

The next day, I left the remaining postcards in a gallery at Artium, a contemporary art museum in the Basque city of Vitoria-Gasteiz (Figure 3), where there was a brief solidarity exhibition combining a single work by the British-Palestinian artist Rosalind Nashashibi, called *A Wider Kind of Love* (2021), with the screening of films from the *Tokyo Reels Project* by the Palestinian film collective Subversive Film (2021; which had also been shown at documenta fifteen in 2022).

Picasso's *Guernica* and Palestinian–Israeli Peace Activism in Gernika

The project *Bombers Into Butterflies* transformed an antiwar artistic intervention (Mattar's painting) into a situated and urgent call for social justice in a moment of violence toward, and oppression of, the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank, and



Figure 3. Selection of photographs from the *Bombers Into Butterflies* postcard project taken during the visit to Artium, Vitoria-Gasteiz, on April 27, 2024 (in front of the wall text for the exhibition and Rosalind Nashashibi's painting, *A Wider Kind of Love* [2021]). Photographs courtesy of the authors.

around the world. In doing so, the project took inspiration from a work of art that has become synonymous with both Gernika and international solidarity movements for peace: Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937). Picasso's painting is one of the most powerful examples of an antiwar artistic intervention for social justice. Less well known is its ongoing significance for arts and peace activism and education in Gernika itself, whose destruction in April 1937 inspired the artwork.

Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) has been aptly described by James Attlee (2017) as "at the center of things: a magnetic attractor of attention, discussion, eulogies and argument in equal measure" (p. 1). In discussions of social justice issues raised by conflict and war, art educators also have centered Picasso's painting (Arnold, 2005; Darts, 2004; Krug & Cohen-Evron, 2000; Milbrandt, 2002; Wilson, 1970). Further, Israeli art educator Nurit Cohen-Evron (2005) has documented her assignments with Israeli children in which they were asked to interpret *Guernica* within the framework of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, inviting her students to relate Picasso's painting to more recent photographs of Palestinians living under occupation. Palestinian and Israeli artists have also turned to Picasso's *Guernica* in their work. Gazan artist Mohammed Al Hawajiri (the husband of Dina Mattar) created a series of photocollages called *Guernica-Gaza* (2010–2014), one of which transposed found images of Palestinian suffering onto Picasso's work, while other works in the series did the same with different artworks in the Western art history canon. When it was shown at the documenta fifteen exhibition as part of The Question of Funding's installation of works by members of the Eltiqa Gallery in Gaza (including works by Mattar), Al Hawajiri's *Guernica-Gaza* series generated controversy. The reference to Picasso's painting in the title meant they became embroiled in broader forms of epistemic violence against cultural workers from Palestine within the German context (Toukan, 2024). More recently, in response to the deadly attacks of October 7, 2023, Israeli artist Zoya Cherkassky-Nnadi (2023) created the painting *Oct. 7, 2023*, which depicts a fearful family huddled beneath Picasso's menacing lamp from *Guernica*, with their eyes fixed on the Hamas militants.

However, even as artists and art educators engage with and recontextualize Picasso's *Guernica*, the original site and event that inspired the painting—the Basque town of Gernika—has not been emphasized. But Gernika has a story to tell, based on earlier moments in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict; the aftermath of the

But Gernika has a story to tell, based on earlier moments in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict; the aftermath of the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023; and the ensuing bombardment of Gaza by the Israeli military. Artists, activists, communities, and institutions in Gernika have mobilized their unique history to highlight peaceful action in response to the conflict, both referencing Picasso's painting and moving beyond it.



Figure 4. Poster for Palestine Solidarity Protest, November 7, 2024. Photograph courtesy of the authors.

Hamas attack of October 7, 2023; and the ensuing bombardment of Gaza by the Israeli military. Artists, activists, communities, and institutions in Gernika have mobilized their unique history to highlight peaceful action in response to the conflict, both referencing Picasso's painting and moving beyond it. For example, while *Guernica* has appeared on posters that have responded to the conflict before 2023, its use in this type of activism has rapidly increased since October 7, 2023, to advertise solidarity in protest rallies across the Basque Country (Figure 4).

On social media, references to *Guernica* also have been part of protest actions; an example of these are the ink drawings by Basque artist Maitane Azurmendi (2024), which she posted on Instagram (Figure 5).

These posters and artworks from December 2023 and April 2024 were a direct extension of actions of protest planned in Gernika itself, and they included the sounding of the siren that warned citizens of the aerial bombardment of 1937.

Beyond these echoes of Picasso's *Guernica*, it has been the dedicated work of the Museo de la Paz de Gernika (The Gernika Peace Museum), founded in 1998, to educate visitors in the basic ideas of the culture of peace. In carrying out its mission, the museum has engaged in art and conflict resolution, including the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, through exhibitions and activities, such as the 2009 exhibition S.T.O.P. Sobreviviendo en los Territorios Ocupados Palestinos (S.T.O.P. Surviving in the Occupied Palestinian Territories). The Gernika Peace Museum Foundation also sponsors a yearly award that is given for peace and reconciliation, and one of the two 2024 awardees were the Israeli and Palestinian group Combatants for Peace. It was within this context of artists, posters, museums, and exhibitions, all working toward peace, that the project *Bombers Into Butterflies* intervened with the work of Dina Mattar on April 26, 2024.

Bringing *Bombers Into Butterflies* Into the Classroom

On Thursday, April 25, 2024, the day before the physical postcard actions were taken, I wrote an email to my colleagues in the Department of Arts Administration, Education & Policy (AAEP) at The Ohio State University to invite them to collaborate on this article. As part of the invitation, I included a digital version of the postcard, with a reproduction of Mattar's painting on one



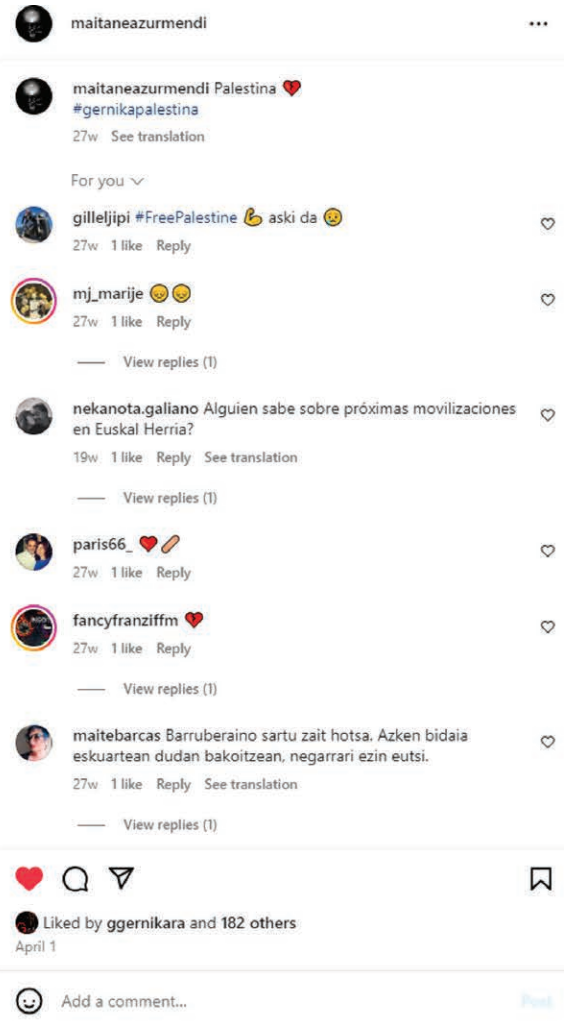


Figure 5. Screenshot of an Instagram post by artist Maitane Azurmendi, posted on April 1, 2024 (original artwork featured the caption *Palestina?*). Photograph courtesy of the artist.



Figure 6. Postcard from *Bombers Into Butterflies* project, Bilbao, April 25, 2024. Photograph courtesy of the authors.

side, and the following question on the other side: How would you teach this painting in one of your AAEP classes? (See Figure 6.)

I had already referenced Mattar's work as part of my class, ARTEDUC 2600: Visual Culture: Representing Diversity and Social Justice, and in a segment of a radio show I had produced for the students called *Radio Insistence* (Finlay Fletcher, 2024). I created *Radio Insistence*, which was inspired by the Sugpiak/Alutiiq artist Tanya Lukin Linklater and her concept and practice of insistence (Lukin Linklater, 2022). Coined to bring attention to the daily actions of resistance for Indigenous people against past and ongoing systems of colonial violence, Lukin Linklater's work offered a way for me, as a non-Indigenous settler, to engage with the settler colonial context of Palestine–Israel through the lens of art. One of the weekly segments of the *Radio Insistence* show was called News, in which I selected artworks by both Israeli and Palestinian artists who engaged with different moments within the history of the region. In the 11th episode, I discussed Al Hawajiri's and Cherkassky-Nnadi's responses to Picasso's *Guernica*; for the 12th and final episode (aired on Friday, April 19, 2024), I shared the story of Mattar's recent painting, described it to the listeners, and outlined the *Bombers Into Butterflies* project.

Rather than expanding on this past class further, the remainder of this article is dedicated to the rich and nuanced responses I received from two colleagues who answered my virtual postcard email and who join me as coauthors of this article. We share these grounded reflections on how art curricula can promote sustainable peace building with the hope that they inspire others to bring Mattar's painting into their own classrooms.

—Richard Finlay Fletcher,
Bilbao, Basque Country, May 9, 2024

A Crip-Hack for Lesson Unplanning

> **An unexpected error occurred while downloading the Voice Control language "English (United States)." Try again later.**

My (jt Eisenhauer Richardson's) response to the question "How would you teach this painting?" in ARTEDUC 7725: Re-Imagining Academic Writing Through Creative Inquiry, evolved as a "crip-hack" for an access barrier created by "an unexpected error" that impacted my ability to draft a "typed" response. A crip-hack is the process of *unplanning* a world otherwise engineered for nondisabled people. When launching Voice Control, Apple's primary voice navigation and voice dictation accessibility option, the error message above appeared on my screen and would not close. My "unplanned" response to my colleague's question became a 35-minute video installation of juxtaposed and layered search windows and screen recordings installed on the digitized Sonoma landscape of Apple's current operating system. At the intersection of butterflies and bombs, war and violence, ecology and technoscience, I encountered *Bombers Into Butterflies* as a process, a movement, and a lesson unplanning.

> Butterflies have compound eyes. What if a butterfly is the artist? Is this how a butterfly sees the world?

I experimented with using internet searches, including using the painting title as repeating search terms ("Butterflies" and "bombs") to generate an alternative narrative structure less reliant on typing. This experimentation challenges the normative expectation that a response to a question needs to be written or spoken.

By following multiple pathways and diverse content generated by search chains, I considered how students could explore the

That generative and creative process of unplanning is an important process for teachers in unpacking what we think we know, sitting with the discomfort of letting that unravel, interrogating assumptions, engaging in resistance, and more—and then observing what paths we take. This artistic practice of "navigating" paths via technology in this nonlinear, experimental way might allow us to reconsider how we plan what we teach.

complex relationships between the ecology, technoscience, and violence inherent to the painting. My "lesson unplanning" is informed by crip technoscience (Hamraie & Fritsch, 2019), antiracist technoscience (Eglash, 2019; Scannell, 2019), Jasbir Puar's (2017) concept of debility, and Legacy Russell's (2020) glitch feminism.

> "Is a search path a flight path? As the black pointer on my screen multiplies, does it become a fleet?"

The layered windows on my screen traveled from butterflies and bombs, leading me to the butterfly's compound eyes; to *bombus* (bees); to butterfly bombs in World War II; to moths; to an advertisement for Farmer's Dog Petfood that played before *The Dangers of Butterfly Bombs* (1943) on YouTube; to *Oppenheimer: The Decision to Drop the Bomb* (1965); to how a butterfly's mouth is like a straw; to an advertisement about how to get into Ivy League schools; to "Breaking News: A Bomb Threat at Hamilton Middle School"; to nuclear power and nectar; to "Live Coverage: Police Enter Columbia University's Hamilton Hall Amid Ongoing Protests"; to connections between the U.S. military and ecological research; to ecological research funded by the Department of Defense; and to the endangered St. Francis Satyr butterfly flying across bomb fields at the Fort Bragg military base.

In sharing these methods, references, and contexts within art curricula for peace building, I am not sharing a lesson plan. Rather, I am engaging in the process of "lesson unplanning" as a creative and generative space important to our pedagogies and to our teaching approaches. This particular course is also one in which there is an important reimagining of academic writing, and, by association, academia itself and the publishing field; I ask students to approach spaces of learning as a critical encounter that challenges positivism and normativism. That generative and creative process of unplanning is an important process for teachers in unpacking what we think we know, sitting with the discomfort of letting that unravel, interrogating assumptions, engaging in resistance, and more—and then observing what paths we take. This artistic practice of "navigating" paths via technology in this nonlinear, experimental way might allow us to reconsider how we plan what we teach. From this perspective, returning to Mattar's painting and the postcards of the *Bombers Into Butterflies* project, I ask:

> Might a postcard be a hack that disorients time, space, and language? What if a browser window is a postcard? Do they flutter?
>
> *—jt Eisenhauer Richardson, Columbus, Ohio, May 10, 2024*

The Pedagogies of Cultural Diplomacy and Conflict

In spring 2025, in my (Zülâl Fazlıoğlu Akın) ARTED 5675 International Cultural Relations course, we will study "Conflict and Cultural Diplomacy," focusing on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. As I prepare to teach this subject, I find myself reflecting deeply on how to foster an inclusive, safe, and critical learning environment in light of recent events, including those of October 7, 2023, and the ongoing violence in Gaza and the West Bank. The painting of Gazan artist Dina Mattar opens possibilities to explore the complexities of cultural diplomacy within this conflict.

My pedagogical approach draws on Seikaly's (2020) guiding principles that facilitate the construction of inclusive and safe learning spaces in discussions about Israel and Palestine. The first principle, "decentering the conflict" (p. 101), encourages a shift from focusing solely on the conflict itself to understanding the broader experiences, histories, and claims of the people involved. This approach does not minimize the conflict's significance; rather, it integrates discussions on art and culture "to move beyond ahistorical narratives of a supposedly two-thousand-year conflict" (p. 102). The second principle, "de-exceptionalizing Israel/Palestine" (p. 102), places the region within the broader contexts of Middle Eastern and Arab history, colonization, and decolonization, to name but a few. This aims to transcend the simplistic portrayal of the issue. The third principle, "insisting on radical empathy" (p. 102), engages the significance of Shoah and Nakba together to comprehend the catastrophes in Jewish and Palestinian histories. The fourth principle, "dismantling the 'two-sides' narrative" (p. 102), highlights the power differentials between a sovereign state and an occupied people. Finally, the fifth principle calls for "transgressing the self-evident pairings" (p. 102), such as the association of "Jewish" with "Zionist" (p. 102).

A thorough understanding of the geopolitical and historical context is essential for a nuanced comprehension of cultural diplomacy, particularly in the complex dynamics of Palestine and Israel. To provide students with a well-rounded foundation, I will invite both a historian and a political scientist to offer insights into the historical and political landscape from an impartial perspective. As part of the course, students will also engage with Bunton's (2013) introductory text on the conflict to deepen their understanding.

After establishing the contextual foundation, we will turn our attention to cultural diplomacy within the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. This shift raises various issues and questions, including:



Figure 7. Installation view of the exhibition Landscapes From Under the Rubble: Destroyed Artworks From Gaza, curated by Linda Abdullah, at the Co-Prosperity Gallery in Chicago, Illinois, October 4–12, 2024. Photograph courtesy of the gallery.

- "What hope does cultural diplomacy have if it exists purely to clear up after the less palatable aspects of foreign policy?" (Nisbett, 2016, p. 112)
- "What hope can it have of changing attitudes and perceptions when it follows a bombing campaign that led to extensive devastation involving civilian fatalities and the decimation of essential infrastructure?" (Nisbett, 2016, p. 112)
- What is the role of culture within postconflict environments? What are the cultural diplomacy instruments? How do we assess its impact? (Nisbett, 2016)
- In the Palestinian case, how shall we reconceptualize cultural diplomacy if there is only a partial sovereign state?
- After October 7, 2023, Palestinian artists have encountered censorship and restrictions in several regions worldwide. This represents an overt and systemic strategy of cultural erasure. How can we juxtapose the concepts of cultural erasure and cultural diplomacy? What is the role of cultural community? How can we reconceptualize arts activism?
- What is the role and legitimacy of international cultural institutions like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization?

Insights of various scholars will help guide our discussion on these questions and issues: reconceptualization of cultural diplomacy in postconflict environments (Nisbett, 2016); the politics of art, dissent, and cultural diplomacy in Palestine; the ideological and hegemonic nature of cultural funding (Toukan, 2021); the different forms of resistance in cultural practices (Toukan, 2017); Israel's attempts to instrumentalize cultural diplomacy in the 2019 Eurovision contest; the Palestinian cultural boycott of Israel (Kiel, 2020); and the intersection of ethics and spectatorship with images of violence and human suffering (Azoulay, 2008).

Students will complete two assignments designed to engage with the themes of conflict and cultural diplomacy through literature and visual arts, as both art forms are important cultural diplomacy instruments in understanding other cultures as well as their political, social, cultural, and economic contexts. The projects include:

- *Book review.* Considering the cancellation of Adania Shibli's award ceremony at the Frankfurt Book Fair following the events of October 7, 2023, students will write a review of her novel *Minor Detail* (2020). Students will share their reflections, exploring key themes such as language, silences, memory, cultural erasure, and borders in class.
- *Reflection on Dina Mattar's work.* Students will study Gazan artist Dina Mattar's website and gain knowledge about her artist statement, as well as her artwork. Then, based on this class, they will offer an interpretation of her artwork. They

We invite you to join us in this ongoing process of learning from and teaching with *Bombers Into Butterflies*, in the myriad ways it continues to move through the world and channel a message of peace and life in times of violence and death.

will then integrate text and visual art to compose a "message" in response to one of Mattar's paintings (2024b), addressing her captioned question: "I am here in Gaza. Can anyone hear me?" Students will be asked to write their message in the white spaces of her painting, which will then be sent to the artist. Students will also share their message and their underlying thought processes and reflections in class.

—Zülâl Fazlıoğlu Akın, Columbus, Ohio, May 10, 2024

Afterword

Now, back in Ohio, I (Richard Finlay Fletcher) am teaching classes and have been reunited with my colleagues, yet the violence in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, seems to have no end. Just yesterday (October 1, 2024), Iran launched a missile attack on Israel, and at the time of this writing we have no idea what will happen next. The good news is that Dina Mattar and Mohammed Al Hawajiri have been able to leave Gaza, although members of their family remain there and are still in danger. Our hope is that, by the time this article is published, a diplomatic solution will have been found, but we are not optimistic. Nonetheless, what does give us hope, as educators, is that through sharing Mattar's painting on a postcard with readers in the form of this article, our proposals for teaching her work within the framework of specific classes can bring an urgency to teaching lessons of peace to our students. Such lessons include taking insistent actions of attention, care, and amplification; engendering crip-hacks to make creative and generative spaces; and exploring tools for arts pedagogy and cultural diplomacy. The lessons also question the hierarchy of centering Picasso's *Guernica* through amplifying the work's appropriation and expansion by Palestinian and Israeli artists, as well as taking a more nuanced approach to the ongoing peace activism within the Basque town of Gernika itself. Finally, the *Bombers Into Butterflies* project suggests a different mode of citation within the academic field of art education, especially in moments of rapidly shifting crisis. The use of social media to share artwork and add context, not only for Dina Mattar in Gaza, but also for Maitane Azurmendi in Gernika, is mirrored in the very origins of this article, in an email sent to colleagues with a digital version of the physical postcard. Forms of citation must shift in the process to acknowledge urgent decolonial processes beyond entrenched academic art education discourse, which often comprise a claustrophobic and often obtuse archive that, as a frame of reference, is in dire need of critique and expansion (Cheng & Finlay Fletcher, in press).

Dina Mattar's painting, created in a refugee camp in Gaza, shared as an Instagram post, and distributed as a physical and digital postcard, will appear as a framed print in an exhibition titled Landscapes From Under the Rubble: Destroyed Artworks from Gaza, curated by Linda Abdullah, at the Co-Prosperity Gallery in Chicago, Illinois; this exhibition opens within a few days of the time of this writing, with the proceeds of the print sales going to support the participating artists in Gaza (Figure 7). Abdullah originally saw Mattar's painting via a reposted story of her original Instagram post at the beginning of the *Bombers Into Butterflies* project.

We invite you to join us in this ongoing process of learning from and teaching with *Bombers Into Butterflies*, in the myriad ways it continues to move through the world and channel a message of peace and life in times of violence and death. We end with the final words of "Not Just Passing," a poem by Palestinian poet, novelist, and educator Hiba Abu Nada (2023), who was killed in Israeli bomb strikes in December 2023:

O little light in me, don't die,
even if all the galaxies of the world
close in.
O little light in me, say:
Enter my heart in peace.
All of you, come in!

—Columbus, Ohio, October 2, 2024 ■

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Endnotes

[1] https://bombersintobutterflies.com.

[2] @bombersintobutterflies.



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Figure 1. Dylan Baker, installation view, Silent Protest: Perspectives on War and Disability, Rollins Museum of Art, Winter Park, Florida, 2024. Image courtesy Rollins Museum of Art.

Curating for Peace and Justice in Times of Crisis

David Matteson, Keri Watson, and Gisela Carbonell

WE LIVE IN A TIME OF INCREASING IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT, when threats to global peace—including climate change, terrorism, cyberattacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and poverty—increasingly impact the daily lives of many. This situation necessitates a turn to peace education, which encourages the development of values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that enable us to live in harmony with ourselves, others, and the natural environment (Harris, 2010; Page, 2008; Salomon & Nevo, 2002). Responding to this need, in the spring of 2024, the University of Central Florida (UCF), in partnership with Rollins College and the Seminole County Public Library system, leveraged the support of a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read grant to curate programs related to Ilya Kaminsky's 2019 book of poetry *Deaf Republic*, a rich allegory of the urgency of collective peaceful action in response to violence and oppression. An initiative of the NEA in partnership with Arts Midwest, the Big Read "broadens our understanding of ourselves and our neighbors through the power of a shared reading experience" (n.d., para. 1). The NEA Big Read asks communities to read a selected title together to build a stronger community through literature. Our local audience responded to this invitation with enthusiasm, demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary collaborations when curating for social change.



Figure 2. Yoan Capote, *Abstinencia (Libertad)* (detail), 2014. Cast bronze, engraving, and drypoint. The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art, Rollins Museum of Art. Image courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Background

UCF in Orlando is the largest public research university in Florida, with more than 70,000 students; Rollins College in Winter Park is a small liberal arts college of 2,200 students; and the Seminole County Library System is a five-branch library system serving a population of more than 470,000 citizens. Bringing together three institutions that serve distinct communities enabled us to amplify our impact and connect diverse audiences. We selected *Deaf Republic*, which follows a family of puppeteers as they struggle to resist the war that surrounds them, because of its relevance to current geopolitical events, including wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Told in two acts, *Deaf Republic* begins with the shooting of a deaf boy by soldiers occupying a fictional Soviet-esque town. Following his murder, the townspeople collectively go deaf, inventing their own sign language and using puppets to challenge their oppressors. As Will Brewbaker (2019) noted in a review of *Deaf Republic*,

> From the beginning, Kaminsky makes his intent clear: he will hold up a mirror to himself, and, if we happen to catch our own reflection, we would be wise to join him in owning our failures—political, personal, or otherwise. (para. 9)

By connecting global and local political conflicts, *Deaf Republic* conveys the importance of solidarity to the resistance of tyranny and invites important conversations across political and ideological divides.

Making complicated, global issues relevant to local audiences is an instrumental part of art educational praxis, and responding to calls for peace education was a goal of our Big Read programming (Bae-Dimitriadis, 2024). Events, which included books clubs, poetry readings, book signings, theatrical restagings of the book, a lecture series by distinguished scholars, and three art exhibitions with associated educational and outreach programming, were held at different venues across Central Florida and cross-marketed to reach a broad and diverse audience. Some participants attended multiple events, whereas others attended only one, and pre-award meetings that included the various stakeholders built trust, encouraged collaboration, and fostered team building (Listengarten & Watson, 2023). To illustrate the role of art in peace education, this article looks specifically at one art exhibition, Silent Protest: Perspectives on War and Disability (Figure 1) and its associated educational programming.[1]



Curatorial Approach

The curator of the Rollins Museum of Art (RMA) and an art historian in the School of Visual Arts and Design at UCF wrote the NEA Big Read grant together, conceptualizing how they would work across their institutions to create dynamic programming inspired by the themes of *Deaf Republic*. A key component of the grant was the art exhibition at RMA, which they cocurated following the tenets of community-informed curation. Community-informed curation was conceptualized in the 1990s and gained traction in the wake of more recent protests for social change within the context of institutions like museums (Hirzy, 1992; Rowson Love et al., 2021; Weil, 1999). It aims to democratize culture through collaborative, inclusive, and participatory practices that engage the museum's constituencies in the curatorial process (Simon, 2010; Villenueve & Love, 2017). This type of curation is especially important when presenting challenging or difficult topics, because, as both Judith Butler (2004, 2009) and Susan Sontag (2003) reminded us, images are powerful signifiers of meaning. War disproportionately impacts those experiencing disability, displacement, and poverty, and when exhibiting work about war, disability, and trauma, curators must create ethical frames of representation that do not sensationalize or exploit their subjects. Involving impacted communities is an important part of both peace education and community-informed modes of ethical curation (Hunter & Cohen, 2019), so the curators worked closely with the RMA associate curator of education and community members to ensure that appropriate artwork was selected for inclusion in the show and that programming was developed in concert with object selection.

Following the precepts of community-informed curation, we selected works that would complement one another both formally and conceptually and invite contemplation, community engagement, and empathy. Drawn from the museum's permanent collection, Silent Protest included 14 pieces by 13 artists working in a variety of media. The works, made between 1931 and 2018, were selected for their relevance to the themes found in *Deaf Republic*, which include war, trauma, and disability. Moreover, the artwork was created by artists representing diverse backgrounds and life experiences, including women, people of color, and artists with disabilities. Each piece included a didactic label that made clear how the work or the artist related to the themes of the exhibition, which was likewise framed by explanatory introductory wall text. Two booklets were published to accompany the show. One included an introductory and curatorial essay. The other featured community responses to the exhibition, a project described later in this article. In the gallery, selected artworks were paired with excerpts from *Deaf Republic*, which were printed on vinyl and hung adjacent to the works. These pairings, along with the sightlines created by the installation, connected the text to the images and encouraged viewers to think about these relationships. Complimentary copies of *Deaf Republic* were made available to visitors, and gallery copies were displayed on a bench in the exhibition space, encouraging visitors to sit, relax, and read in the gallery space while surrounded by the visual artwork.

A closer look at a selection of pieces included in the exhibition illustrates the multiplicity of meanings the installation invited. On the title wall in the entrance to the gallery, the sculpture *Abstinencia (Libertad)* by Cuban artist Yoan Capote introduces visitors to the exhibition (Figure 2). Created as part of a series that addresses social inequalities, discrimination, and the forced silence of marginalized groups, the sculpture is both figurative and literary, consisting of bronze casts of the hands of Latino immigrant workers formed into sign language to spell the word *libertad*. The piece articulates a visual metaphor that connects to the themes of *Deaf Republic*, reinforcing the notion of resistance and challenging structures of power.

Following the precepts of community-informed curation, we selected works that would complement one another both formally and conceptually and invite contemplation, community engagement, and empathy.



Figure 3. Shawn Theodore, *Portrait of Amanda S. Gorman*, 2018. Archival pigment print. Rollins Museum of Art. Image courtesy of Kahn Contemporary.

Adjacent to Capote's sculpture, a photograph by American artist Shawn Theodore presents a photographic portrait of National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda S. Gorman, who appears in profile against a neutral background (Figure 3). Widely known as the author of the poem "The Hill We Climb," which she read at the inauguration of the 46th president of the United States, Gorman has spoken openly about her speech impediment and auditory disorder: "I was writing to communicate my ideas. And then I was also struggling to do that, just on an auditory scale. So for me, I learned how to speak by writing poetry" (as cited in Bowen, 2021, 0:03). The very public delivery of her poem on inauguration day was a call to action, an invitation for citizens to embody the values that define democracy and freedom. In the exhibition, Gorman's portrait faces Capote's sculpture, forming a dialogue across people and media. It also is accompanied by a verse from Kaminsky's (2019) *Deaf Republic*: "The voice we cannot hear–is the clearest voice" (p. 32). The photograph celebrates Gorman's identity as a young Black woman whose voice has carried loud and clear beyond the events of January 2021 to become part of contemporary social and political discourse. The juxtaposition of Capote's sculpture, Theodore's photograph, and Kaminsky's verse engages viewers on multiple levels. It appeals to a sense of familiarity in the case of Gorman's portrait, draws attention to the many anonymous immigrant workers who are systematically oppressed, and reminds viewers to pay attention to those who are often ignored.

The exhibition also included paintings and photographs created in the first half of the 20th century, inviting viewers to ponder the rippling effects of historical political conflicts and the impact of social and economic instability. Walter Richard Sickert's painting *The Fiddler* (ca. 1925) was displayed on the back wall of the gallery next to other figurative and abstract works (Figure 4). Dating from the interwar period, the work depicts a solitary street musician playing the violin. The expressive brushwork and the deep purples and reds of the man's coat and hat draw attention to the figure, while the nondescript background indicates that it is a scene of everyday life. Sickert's painting visually articulates a fleeting moment in the challenging years after World War I in Europe and, as in Kaminsky's story, underscores the necessary role of art in moments of conflict, war, and trauma. This piece was hung along a wall with other works inspired by sound and music, as well as Kaminsky's (2019) verse, "And when they bombed other people's houses, we / protested / but not enough, we opposed them but not / enough" (p. 3). The pieces on this wall faced Richard Mosse's (2012) *First We Take Manhattan*, a large-scale contemporary photograph of the First War in Congo. The selected pieces worked individually and together to foster nuance, reflection, and respect for different perspectives.

Community Engagement Within the Interpretive Design

Educator-led outreach prior to the exhibition's opening proved to be an important means by which we shared curatorial authority

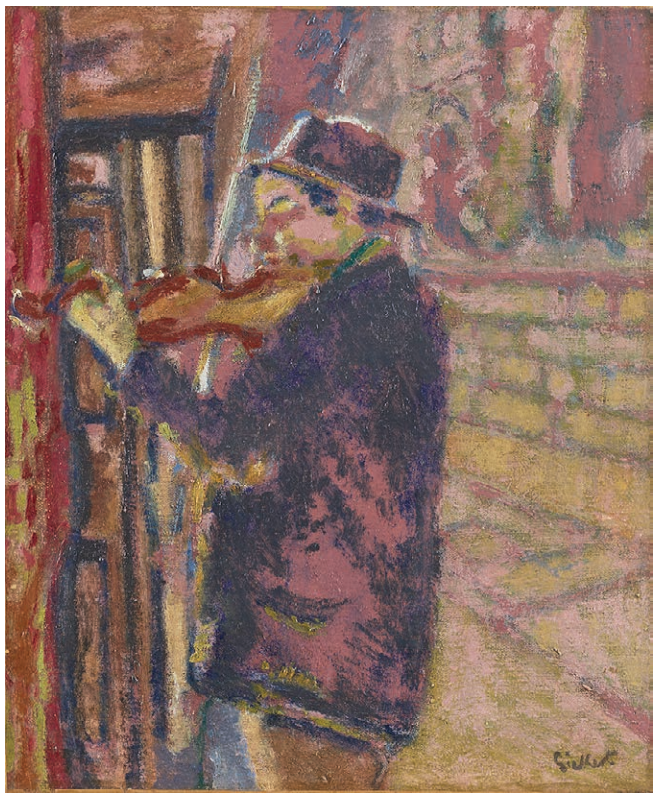


Figure 4. Walter Richard Sickert, *The Fiddler*, circa 1925. Oil on canvas. Rollins Museum of Art. Courtesy of Artists Rights Society, New York.



Figure 5. David Matteson, participant in a workshop at the Easterseals Day Break Center, holding up his self-portrait inspired by Shawn Theodore's *Portrait of Amanda S. Gorman*. Photo courtesy of Rollins Museum of Art.

and invited community response into Silent Protest's narrative framework. Reflecting on the themes present within Silent Protest, we sought community collaboration with local poets and those living with disabilities. We asked the community to contribute to the exhibition's interpretive materials, which included the development of an audio guide and *Echoes* (Matteson, 2024), a complimentary printed booklet that was available in the gallery for visitors. Our collaboration with members of the local community also aligned with peace education's commitment to collective action as a strategy for empathy building (Freire, 1971; Galtung, 1996).

Three poets were invited and compensated for their participation in the project. Both the inaugural and current City of Orlando poet laureates and a Rollins College student poet selected a work from the exhibition's checklist to inspire an ekphrastic poem. Selected works were pulled on request ahead of the exhibition for the poets to privately view. They each recorded their poetry for the museum's audio guide and their poems appeared alongside images of the artworks that inspired them in *Echoes*. Translating visual artworks into literary form engages visitors in a more expansive meaning-making process and encourages them to consider the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration (Arriba, 2024; Mullaney, 2011), which is especially valuable when representing and addressing the challenges of war, protest, and disability.

In addition to working with local poets, we offered a series of six outreach workshops, both before and during the run of Silent Protest, for 36 adults living with disabilities, many of whom were also veterans; this resulted in the inclusion of their original artworks in *Echoes*. Presented at the Easterseals Day Break Center, a local adult daycare facility in Winter Park, each 1-hour workshop included close-looking exercises focused on a facsimile of an artwork included in the exhibition, followed by an inspired art activity (Figure 5). These workshops were designed in consultation with Easterseals staff and guided by the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (Glass et al., 2013): (1) present information in multiple formats and media, (2) provide multiple pathways for learners' actions and expressions, and (3) provide multiple ways to engage learners' interests and motivations. The art projects were also informed by the resilience theory of disability, which focuses attention on a disabled individual's strengths and the identification of ways for removing barriers to promote an individual's success (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). We began each session with a verbal description of the featured artwork, which was also printed on handouts that included biographical and contextual information and a list of close-looking questions. These handouts were sent home with workshop participants with the hope of including their caregivers in the learning experience. After discussing the featured artwork, participants spent the majority of the session creating their art project. Although the Easterseals staff were prepared to assist participants at their request, we insisted that any mark making should be the participant's own, which is vital for preserving participants' agency over the artmaking process. Each session's art project featured a different medium, including drawing, painting, collage, and bookmaking. This variety encouraged repeat participants—89% participated in more than one session—to discover individual strengths working within a particular medium. For two workshops that focused on artworks with direct musical references—Henry Botkin's *Solo (Trumpet Player)* (1948) and Margaret Bourke-White's *Soviet Serenade* (1931)—we played related music during the hands-on portion of the session to create a multisensory learning environment. We closed each session with time for participants to share their finished projects voluntarily with the group. Participants' artworks were collected, documented, and returned to them at the following session. A selection of the participants' first two projects was chosen for inclusion in *Echoes*, and copies of this booklet were distributed to the participants and their caregivers with information about how to independently visit the museum. Although Silent Protest served as the catalyst for this program, it has outlasted the exhibition as an ongoing, evolving effort with many possibilities for further engaging the Easterseals community.

Campus and Public Programming

We engaged 96 students through RMA staff-led tours of Silent Protest (Figure 6). Given the exhibition's multivalence, it was appealing to professors and students from a range of disciplines, including anthropology, art history, biology, communication, and English. Although each class tour was uniquely tailored to



Figure 6. Jamie Friedman Donmoyer, students in an Introduction to Anthropology course touring the exhibition and discussing Richard Mosse's *First We Take Manhattan*. Courtesy of Rollins Museum of Art.

the professor's learning objectives, ideas encompassing activism, empathy, positionality, and resilience consistently emerged during discussions of key artworks. For example, through an inquiry-based discussion of Richard Mosse's (2012) *First We Take Manhattan*, a large-scale photograph that documents soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC; Figure 6), students frequently brought up their personal relationships to global conflicts and the media that have shaped their understandings of war. *First We Take Manhattan* is from Mosse's *Infra* series (2011–2013), for which he used a discontinued aerial reconnaissance film that renders green chlorophyll as pink to document the ongoing conflict in the DRC that has resulted in an estimated 6 million casualties. The resulting photographs present camouflaged soldiers in a lush jungle whose vivid, unnatural hues capture the viewer's attention in ways a more traditional, unaltered photograph might not. As Mosse stated,

> At the heart of my work is an attempt to bring two counter-worlds into collision: art's potential to represent narratives so painful that they exist beyond language, and photography's capacity to document specific tragedies and communicate them to the world. (as cited in Kelsey, 2013, para. 3)

Mosse's photograph inspired discussions about students' skewed perspectives of armed conflicts. As one student shared, Mosse's photograph was a reminder that the causes of wars are "never black or white." This recognition aligns with peace education's intention to contextualize war for learners and promote their compassion and empathy for the trauma and suffering of others (Bae-Dimitriadis, 2024).

In addition to programming for the campus community, we engaged 142 visitors through public programs, including tours delivered in English and Spanish, an exhibition lecture, and a presentation by a visiting scholar specializing in the history of disability in the United States. These programs enabled us to expand on key themes within the exhibition and engage new audiences. As one visitor who attended the presentation on the Disability Rights Movement shared, "I have a relative with cerebral palsy, and the lecture made me more aware of her challenges in society. This is the first time I have seen a museum highlight experiences like hers."

Implications for Practice

The NEA Big Read offers grants of up to $20,000 to support community programming related to a book. The grant requires multiple partners, which encourages collaboration. As Grant H. Kester (2011) argued, "Collaborative practices suggest a paradigm shift in contemporary art production" (p. 10). The concept of collaborative, socially engaged curatorial practice rooted in culturally responsive pedagogies guided our approach to Silent Protest and its programming. We argue that collaborative practice strengthens cross-institutional partnerships and reaches diverse participants and audiences. Silent Protest and its accompanying programming engaged multiple stakeholders—students enrolled in a variety of different classes at both Rollins College and UCF, people with disabilities, veterans, community members, immigrants and refugees, local professional organizations, and donors. By centering the community and attending to the specific ways different audiences and stakeholders engage with art and literature, our project became grounded in the here and now. Emphasizing the participation of local communities encourages intersubjectivity and engagement, pushes participants beyond passive spectatorship, and sets the stage for meaningful actions and interactions. Our current ecological epoch is marked by armed conflict, a byproduct of global capitalism and its attendant social and environmental injustices. Drawing on the power of peace education to serve as an agent for social change, this collaboration provided an effective platform for further exploration of art as an effective response to war and trauma. Socially engaged art exhibitions and their associated educational and outreach initiatives help students and communities familiarize themselves with salient political issues while also practicing deep and transformative learning. ■

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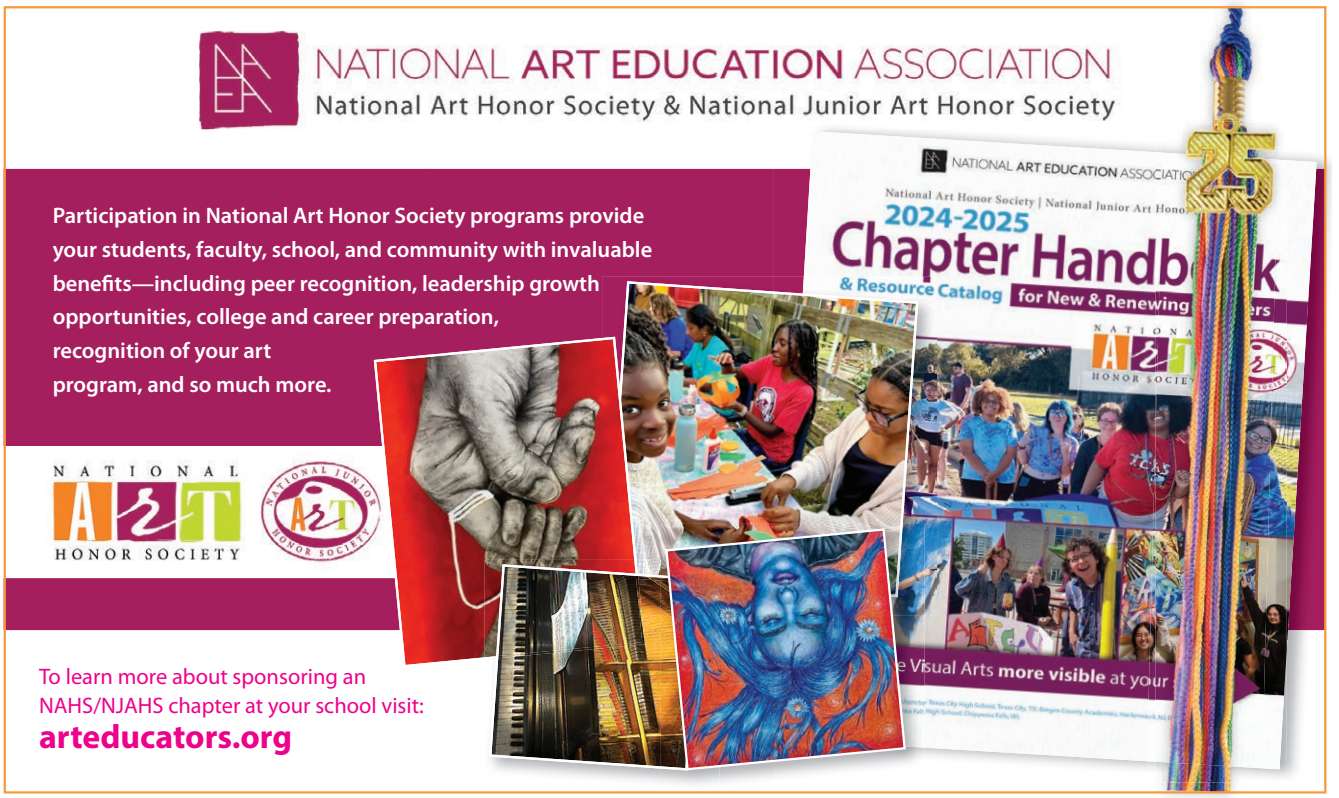
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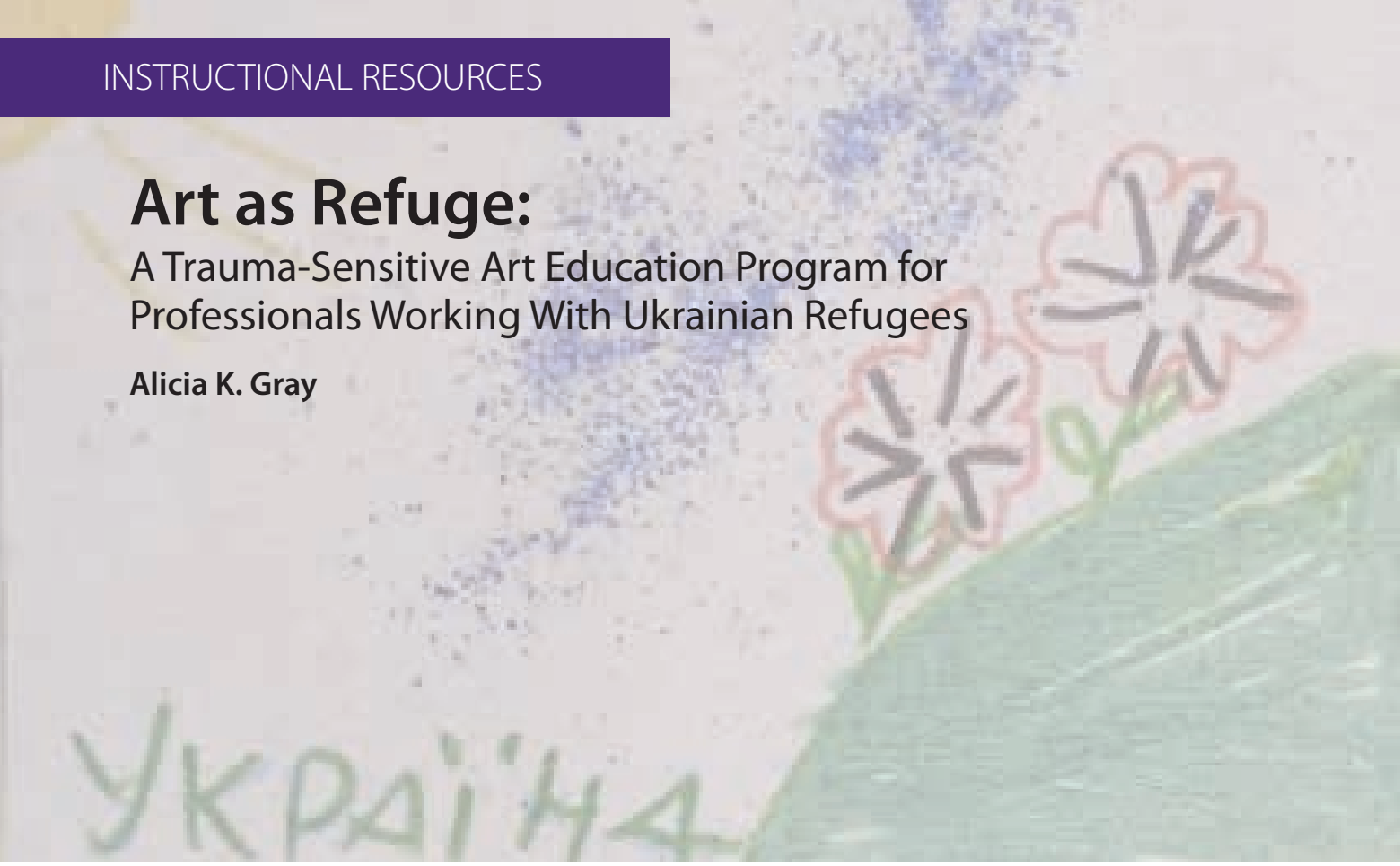
[1] To access the exhibition booklets mentioned in this article and a 3D scan of the exhibition with access to the audio guides and extended labels, see https://www.rollins.edu/rma/exhibitions/2024/silent-protest-perspectives-on-war-and-disability.html.



Art as Refuge:

A Trauma-Sensitive Art Education Program for Professionals Working With Ukrainian Refugees

Alicia K. Gray



It was early April 2022. I was sitting crisscross applesauce on an empty dance studio floor about to sign into a Zoom call. I was 20 weeks pregnant with twins, attempting to balance work and motherhood. I had spent the last decade working in trauma-sensitive public schools, teaching and researching the relationship between art education and trauma-sensitive practices. However, becoming a parent during the COVID-19 pandemic and during a time when systemic and institutional racism was becoming more publicly visible, I was feeling progressively more depressed about the state of the world and education. Feelings of powerlessness increased as I watched the newsreels of the devastating images of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Questions and worries raced through my mind. As an outsider, what role could I play in supporting the victims of war and violence?

Project VeLa

At the time, I was a doctoral student and research fellow at Lesley University. Due to our similar research interests, my advisors introduced me to fellow doctoral student Natalya Rakevich. Natalya had a counseling and education background and emigrated from Ukraine as a child. From the moment the war began, Natalya provided care and support to the people of Ukraine. She developed Project VeLa to guide Ukrainian educators in this urgent work. Project VeLa connects Ukrainian educators, therapists, and artists with trauma professionals in the United States, enabling professionals to collaboratively nurture and support the immediate needs of children living amid ongoing war. Project VeLa's model drew from Natalya's conversation with a Ukrainian psychologist, in which the psychologist stated, "Support us, and we will support the children" (N. Rakevich, personal communication, May 25, 2022).

Trauma-Sensitive Art Education

As a trauma-sensitive art educator, I utilize various tools and resources in public school classrooms to support the needs of all students, particularly those with trauma. These tools are designed based on trauma-sensitive principles (Cole et al., 2005, 2013) and



Figure 1. Community color wheel, *Navigating the Future*, 2018. Wood, plexiglass, cellophane, steel, and paint (6 ft. × 5 ft. × 5 ft.). Photo courtesy of the author.



Figure 2. Example of visually depicting one's breath. Photo courtesy of the author.

resilience theories (Heise, 2014; Masten, 2001). Resilience theory sees resilience as a fluid and dynamic process. It recognizes that ordinary processes such as self-expression, self-regulation, and social connections can help individuals develop protective factors that buffer the impact of adversity (Heise, 2014; Masten, 2001). While there are various ways to grow protective factors, artmaking is inherently healing and therapeutic (Gantt & Tinnin, 2009; Kuban, 2015; Pliske et al., 2021; Ziff et al., 2016).

Although I incorporate therapeutic practices into my curriculum and artmaking, it is essential to note that I am not an art therapist. This distinction, while not always clear, is crucial in understanding the unique role of a trauma-sensitive art educator in creating a safe and supportive environment for all students. Art therapists are licensed mental health professionals with backgrounds in psychology. Art therapists develop specific intervention plans to treat individuals or small groups of patients (Allison, 2013; Kay, 2020; Reeves, 2020). In contrast, trauma-sensitive educators embed restorative practices such as student voice, choice, and collaboration in class culture and curriculum (Cole et al., 2005, 2013). Restorative practices prioritize relationships, community, and belonging (Cole et al., 2005, 2013), challenging students to think of how their art and artmaking process impact them and their community. For example, as a public-school art educator, each year I worked with a team of students to create a community arts piece for the school. Figure 1 reflects our 2018 community color wheel, titled *Navigating the Future*. The installation prompted viewers to write their vision for themselves, the arts department, and the school on each of the movable wheels. As the wheels spin, the colors and text overlap, blend, and merge—reflecting the idea that who we are as individuals shapes who we are as an arts department, school, and community.

Years of working in public education have taught me that I will not always know students' individual stories and experiences. While background information may be critical for an art therapist to know, as an art educator, I can use my knowledge of trauma and its impact on learning to normalize therapeutic artmaking practices within art classrooms for all students. Terms like *trauma-informed* and *trauma-responsive* are predominantly used in the mental health sectors (Bath, 2008; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). However, these terms have found their way into education, resulting in ambiguity in the field (Kay, 2020). I use *trauma-sensitive* to delineate the difference between holistic educational approaches and individual mental health interventions.

Trauma-sensitive programs prioritize students' feelings of safety, trust, and transparency within schools and work to connect and build students' interpersonal skills (Cole et al.,

2005, 2013). In addition, trauma-sensitive programs teach self-regulation and focus on student voice and empowerment (Cole et al., 2005, 2013). These skills are taught holistically to all students and are embedded in classroom practices, routines, assignments, assessments, and dialogue. They are universal supports, not specific targeted inventions. Consequently, all students, regardless of their history with trauma, learn in a safe and supportive environment that encourages expression, reflection, and growth (Cole et al., 2005, 2013).

Trauma-sensitive art educators provide an open-ended curriculum that enables students to make specific choices about what they want to express and how they want to express themselves. During the artmaking process, art educators continue to support students' artistic development, including their critical thinking and reflexivity (Allison, 2013; Kay, 2020). While healing and resiliency are embedded in art therapy and trauma-sensitive art education, the settings, intentionality, and artistic outcomes differ.

Through the lens of trauma-sensitive art education, art educators can provide opportunities for students to develop artistic dispositions centered around mindfulness and therapeutic artmaking. Restorative and therapeutic art practices are embodied practices that make explicit connections between the creative process and health and wellness. Practices like visualizing one's breathing by drawing (Figure 2), repetitive mark-making, or painting sounds enable artists to connect with multiple senses, deepening an artist's connection and understanding of self through making.

In the example of Figure 2, the artist created a visual representation of their repetitive inhales and exhales in the center of the page. Around the "breath drawing," the artist added coffee stains and life drawings.

Influenced by studio habits of mind (Hetland et al., 2013; Sheridan et al., 2022), trauma-sensitive art educators can teach restorative artmaking dispositions by providing students with various therapeutic artistic skills and abilities. For instance, as highlighted in Figure 2, educators can begin class by inviting students to visualize their breathing through drawing—drawing their inhalations and exhalations while focusing on the rhythm and pace of their breath. Furthering the mind–body connection, art educators can integrate contemporary artist Ellen Mueller's (2024) artful walking practices and exercises, challenging students to "find drawings" (p. 253) or "leave a trace" (p. 264) as they participate in walking exercises. These restorative art practices focus on making holistic mind–body connections between artists and artistic processes.

A restorative artmaking disposition goes beyond teaching students restorative practices. Developing a restorative artmaking disposition requires three key elements: ability, alertness, and inclination (Hetland et al., 2013; Sheridan et al., 2022). For instance, students can be taught restorative artmaking practices, and they can critically reflect and discuss how these practices impact their health and wellness. Classroom reflection helps build students' alertness to how various artmaking practices impact their overall well-being. Students' knowledge and reflection foster their inclination to apply restorative art practices within their own

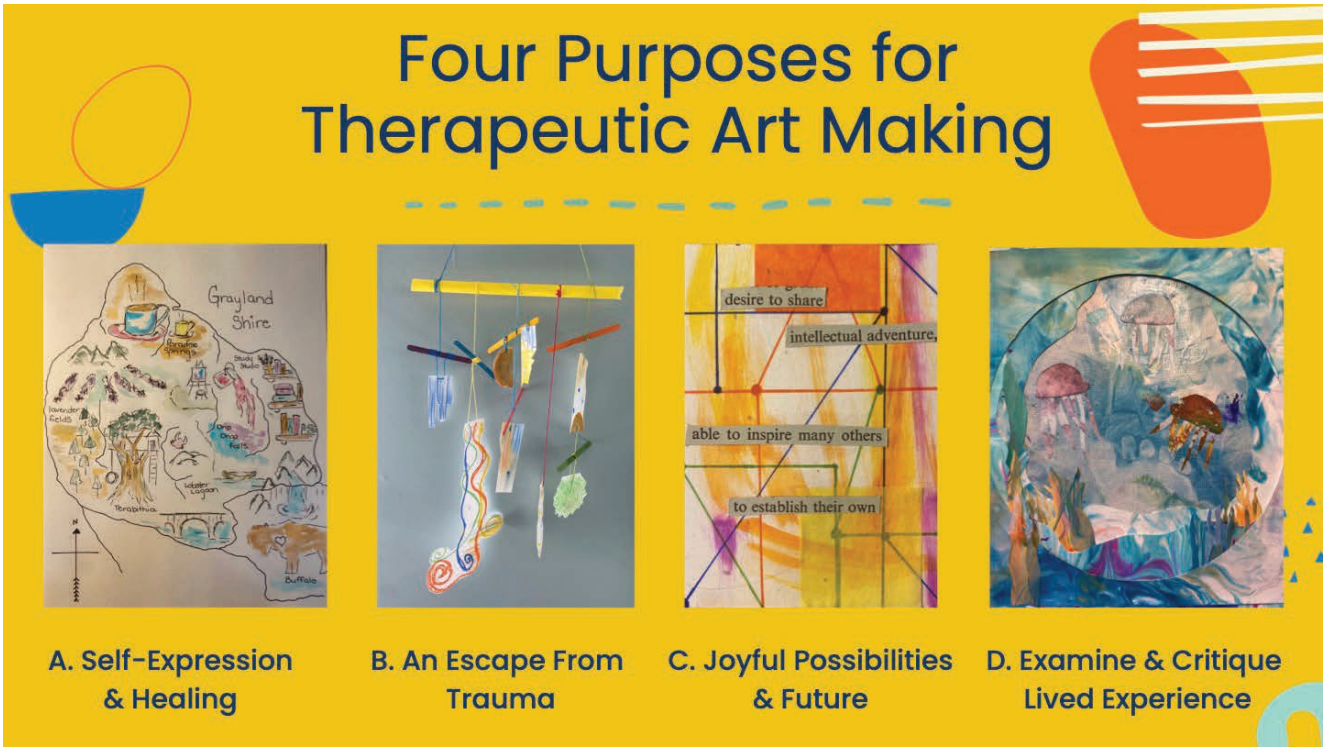


Figure 3. Introductory slide that was shared with participants at the start of each session to ground participants in each artistic purpose. Photo courtesy of the author.

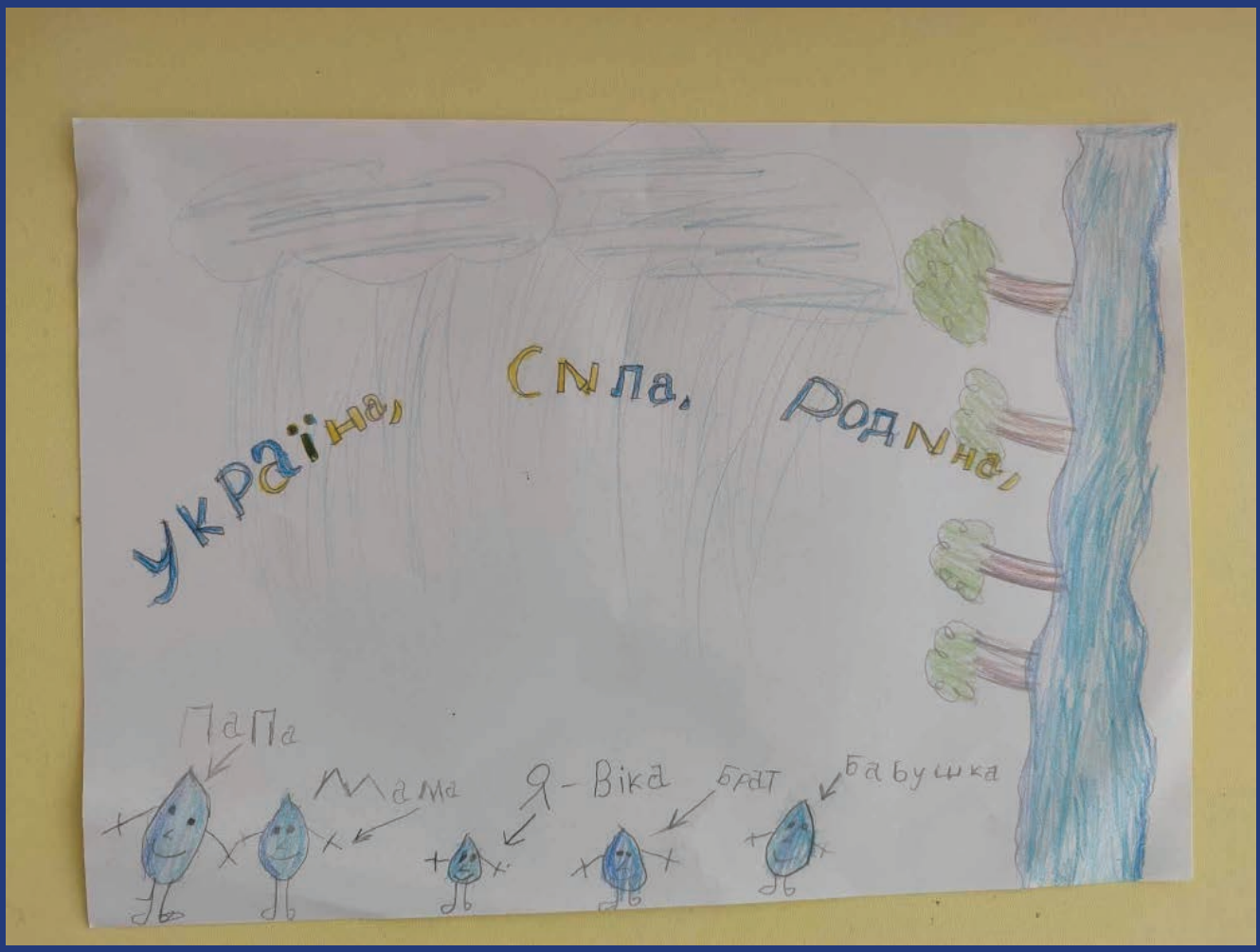


Figure 4. Elementary-aged child's drawing of a map that includes his family members. The central text translates to "Ukraine, Strength, Family," and the bottom text labels that child's family members. Photo courtesy of Project VeLa participant.

lives (Hetland et al., 2013; Sheridan et al., 2022). For example, a student with test anxiety could begin their science exam by visually depicting their breath on draft paper at the start of the exam. Outside of school, a student struggling with ruminating thoughts may take an artful walk where they focus on "finding" drawings in their neighborhood. If it is late or their neighborhood is unsafe, that same student could use their dispositional thinking to select a more appropriate therapeutic practice. Maybe instead, they decide to put on headphones and create a painting of their favorite song to escape ruminating thoughts. These examples highlight the transformative potential of trauma-sensitive art education to equip all students with artistic tools to navigate and process adversity on their own terms.

Coconstructing a Trauma-Sensitive Art Program

Due to my background in trauma-sensitive art education, Natalya invited me to collaborate with Project VeLa. The collaboration challenged me to create a series of professional development workshops to train Ukrainian educators, psychologists, and artists working with refugee children to implement and develop their own trauma-sensitive artistic toolkits. From the start, I knew that developing workshops required the participants' input. During our initial Zoom calls, I had the privilege of speaking directly with the individuals who would be facilitating the children's programming. Natalya acted as a translator, fostering community and collective purpose as the group shared their experiences and needs. The group requested art lessons that could be implemented across age and skill levels and used immediately in classrooms, after-school programs, and therapeutic settings. Materials and resources were limited as participants were inside and outside of conflict zones.

Considering the professionals' needs, I created a trauma-sensitive art education program that taught restorative artmaking practices while explicitly supporting professionals' and students' inclination and alertness to use each practice. As shown in Figure 3, I developed four sessions inspired by trauma-informed art education scholar Audrey Reeves's (2020) work. Reeves (2020) proposed that therapeutic art programs balance four different artmaking purposes within their curriculum: expression, escape, joy, and critique. I used open-ended prompts for each artmaking purpose that could be completed with accessible materials.

I met with the same group of approximately 30 professionals each week. During the sessions, I taught a specific lesson, modeling how to approach the lesson in the classroom and providing time for participants to create artwork. Participants expressed how valuable the artmaking was for their own mental wellness. Before each session, a translated presentation was shared with materials lists, step-by-step visuals, and examples. Natalya attended each session and translated. Sessions were recorded for broader distribution and accessibility.

Throughout the process, I needed to acknowledge and check my positionality as a White female American educator. At the end of each session, the group engaged in community dialogue and reflection. During this time, I spoke with participants to ensure the lessons were helpful and relevant to their needs. I also consistently recognized the various perspectives of each participant, thinking about how each participant could leverage their positionality as an educator, therapist, or artist to understand their distinct role in supporting refugee children's needs. Participants and I discussed how an art therapist might apply the artmaking technique differently than an art educator or an artist. During these discussions, I focused on my role as an educator and encouraged others to speak from their distinct professional lens. These discussions are shared in the session narratives that follow.

Session One: Art for Self-Expression and Healing

People, places, and things hold special meaning to individuals. However, when individuals are forced out of their homes and taken away from the people and things that matter to them, they can feel profoundly disconnected and isolated. The first art prompt sought to honor these critical connections. Participants were invited to create identity maps that used symbols to represent the people, places, and things that bring them peace and wholeness. Many participants traced their hands to use as the basis of their maps. Within their hands, they drew symbols of family, friends, and places they love. Throughout the session, participants spoke about the meditative qualities of the artmaking process, moving from writing to sketching to drawing and finally to painting. The step-by-step process allowed them to draw inspiration from their subconscious while refining and creating a meaningful piece of art (Figure 4).



Figure 5. Ukrainian child's artist trading cards depicting their hopes for themselves, their families, their country, and their world. Photo courtesy of Project VeLa participant.



Figure 6. Photograph of donated stuffed animals and children's cut-paper collages. Photo courtesy of Project VeLa participant.

During group reflection, educators noted that the prompt could be "stretched" to fit a variety of time frames, working for after-school artmaking or longer project-based classes. Participants discussed how the symbols, choices, and maps could enrich their understanding of the children with whom they were working. Drawing from a mental health perspective, psychologists discussed how the map could become a talking piece and a way to work with patients to identify individual struggles and points of tension. Overall, participants felt that the lesson would enable refugee children to celebrate and honor aspects of themselves that had been impacted by war and violence.

Just as different practitioners adapted the lesson to fit within their specific context, readers may consider ways to adapt this practice for their own settings. In art classrooms, identity maps could readily address National Core Art Standards by exploring Investigate, Anchor Standard 2's enduring understanding: "People create and interact with objects, places and design that define, shape, enhance and empower their lives" (State Education Agency Directors of Art Education [SEADAE], 2014, p. 2).

Session Two: Art as an Escape From Trauma

During our second session, I wanted to emphasize that the simple act of making art can be healing and therapeutic. I had the added challenge of creating an artistic prompt that could be differentiated for preschool to adults and used in educational and mental health settings. With these parameters in mind, I drew inspiration from the art my daughter and I create together, inviting participants to make mobiles inspired by their favorite songs. Continuing with the step-by-step model, participants selected a meaningful or joyful song to bring to life. Using the material of their choice, they represented important aspects of their songs and their emotional responses to the music. The front and back of their papers were filled with images of fish, seagulls, sunshine, roses, and stars. Participants cut up each element, stringing them together to create a piece of art that twisted, turned, and interacted with its environment.

While I recommended that participants select a song that allowed them to escape their emotional trauma, many selected songs of Ukrainian resistance; the key here is that individuals

“Students experience profound loss, witness unspeakable violence, and are taken away from their families and homes. My students experience systemic and institutional racism and inequity, even within their own school systems. As I shared these details with my new global colleagues, we began understanding the importance of trauma-sensitive art education as a transformative global practice.

self-selected their songs, choosing the artistic purpose that was meaningful and necessary for them. Many participants expressed deep joy and satisfaction in creating mobiles and immediately explored the mobile lesson with children. Children created mobiles inspired by the Ukrainian song “Warm Summer.” The teachers described the process as magical and a flight of creative fantasy.

Within readers’ own classrooms, the mobile activity could address national standards, such as Investigate-Plan-Make, Anchor Standard 1, related to conceptualizing work with artistic intent and innovative thinking (SEADAE, 2014). Additionally, educators can use reflective practices and class discussions to address Relate, Anchor Standard 11, which challenges students to consider ways in which society, culture, and history impact artmaking and analysis (SEADAE, 2014).

Session Three: Art for Joyful Possibilities and Future

In addition to distancing oneself from violence and war, art allows individuals to imagine joyful and peace-filled futures. The third lesson was built on the tradition of artist trading cards and the idea of a gift-giving culture (Kay, 2020; Reeves, 2020). Participants created four trading cards around 2.5 × 3.5 inches in size. The prompt asked participants to reflect on their hopes for themselves, their families, their country, and their world.

Participants’ cards were gorgeous, filled with bright blues and vibrant yellows. They envisioned so much peace and joy, viewing themselves, their families, their country, and their world as strong and resilient. Participants were asked to share at least two cards with someone else—spreading their joy and peace to others. Many of the intended recipients were far away. However, before the session ended, participants emailed and texted images of their cards to significant people. Right away, participants began implementing the prompt with their students. As shown in Figure 5, images depict individual and communal strength. Like the participants, students’ art not only reflected joy but generated it as well.

Artist trading cards are a wonderful tradition that can easily be incorporated into the classroom. Many art educators have started artist trading card projects and collaboratives across the country and world. This activity could also be adapted to help students explore and share concepts of hope in a variety of classrooms. In addition, the stage of the activity where students share their work with significant people readily addresses the National Core Art Standard Share, Anchor Standard 6, which focuses on the presentation and sharing of artistic works (SEADAE, 2014).

Session Four: Art to Examine and Critique Lived Experiences

The tone of our last session shifted a bit from the earlier prompts. After 3 weeks of building relationships and making art with the group, I established a strong enough rapport to ask participants to engage in artmaking that critiqued their lived experiences. The prompt drew inspiration from art educator and art therapist Lisa Kay (2020). Participants were asked to create a collage that reflected a significant memory or experience in their lives. While many art movements and artists have adapted collages to fit their style and needs, the ability to restructure, arrange, shape, and redefine images has frequently spoken to people during tension and unrest (Kay, 2020). As part of this process, participants were encouraged to select an experience that they wanted to reexamine or better understand. While arranging a collaged representation of their experiences, participants were encouraged to consider ways they could use their process to reshape, rearrange, and reexamine their experiences.

Some participants created collages depicting how they felt about being displaced from their homes, memories of war, or their sadness related to the ongoing conflict. Other artists focused on joyful memories, feelings of hope, or connections to others. At the end of the lesson, during our group reflection, participants and I discussed how our feelings and thoughts may have shifted or changed as we engaged in the making process. Participants shared how their initial ideas about representing their experiences shifted based on their process, and some individuals added colors or symbols to express feelings of hope and unity. Others added poems and song lyrics that resonated with their experiences.

This lesson can be readily incorporated in readers’ art classrooms and adapted to address national art standards. For example, Synthesize, Anchor Standard 10, includes the essential question, “How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their community through art-making?” (SEADAE, 2014, p. 8). This essential question is at the heart of trauma-sensitive art education programs and invites artists to

consider ways in which their artistic process impacts their overall health and wellness.

A few weeks after I taught this lesson to the Ukrainian professionals, a participant shared a photo of their students' collages surrounded by donated stuffed animals. As shown in Figure 6, the collages were bright and cheerful. They depicted students' connections to place and nature. Across the globe, students were clearly demonstrating proficiency in Anchor Standard 10. Their collages highlighted the profound ways in which art impacted and enriched their own lives. Figure 6 stays in my mind. It reminds me that art and artmaking give so much, even when so much is lost. The picture reminds me of an artist's capacity to empower and envision a more just and peaceful world.

Moving Forward: Art as Refuge

During one of our preliminary conversations, a participant asked me about my students' experiences with war and violence. The question gave me considerable pause. I did not want to conflate my students' experiences with those of the participants, but I also wanted to acknowledge the considerable adversity my students experience daily. Research consistently underscores the prevalence and pervasiveness of adverse childhood experiences in the United States (Bryant et al., 2020; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Students experience profound loss, witness unspeakable violence, and are taken away from their families and homes. My students experience systemic and institutional racism and inequity, even within their own school systems (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Dutil, 2020). As I shared these details with my new global colleagues, we began understanding the importance of trauma-sensitive art education as a transformative global practice.

The potential of trauma-sensitive art programs is not limited to Project VeLa. Education, especially trauma-sensitive education, is a transformative process. Carving out time and space to engage in joyful and reflective artmaking is an active form of resistance and a means of cultivating peace (Reeves, 2020). Art educators should consider ways to create an art curriculum that prompts resilience and joy. With a student-centered and flexible approach to lesson planning and project design, art educators can enable students to support their own healing and emotional well-being. Trauma-sensitive art education uses studio thinking frames (Hetland et al., 2013) that explicitly teach students skills, inclinations, and alertness related to resilience; its ultimate goal is to empower artists to support their own healing process by independently accessing restorative art tools and resources. ■

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Ethical Decision-Making in Art Education

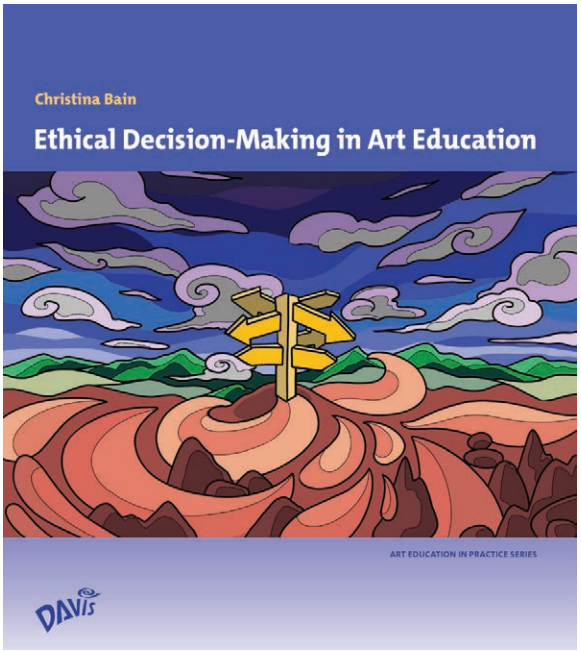
By Christina Bain, Ph.D.; Series Editor Marilyn Stewart

How do art educators learn how to make effective professional decisions, especially when teaching encompasses diverse situations, environments, and often ambiguous situations?

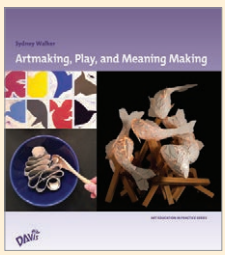
Art education training typically covers many practical facets of the job but rarely does it comprehensively address the many ethical challenges art teachers may face. This is an unfortunate oversight.

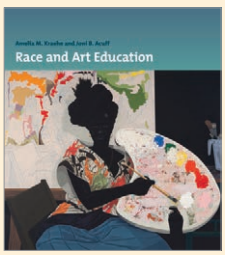
The goal of this book is to help art educators understand how beliefs, values, and morals form the cornerstone of ethical decision-making practice in art educators' professional lives. It aims to empower educators and provide tools such as:

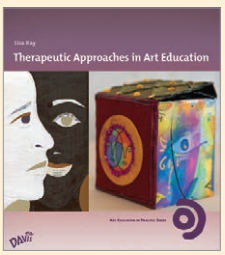
- language to help readers recognize situations and offers a strategy for addressing them.
- prompts and activities to encourage readers to reflect on their own experiences.
- resources for practicing reasoning skills and ethical decision-making.



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