



IMAG :: issue 18
THE CREATIVE PROCESS

IMAG
INSIDE

IMAG issue 18
2025. March
ISSN: 2414-3332
DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

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Cover image: Heather MOORE

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WELCOME TO IMAG #18:
THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Editorial



As artists and educators we use our imaginations, innovations, speculations, and inventiveness to create whether a work of art or a curricula unit. But is that enough? It is the process that brings life to our creativity. The recognition that any innovation or idea requires such on-going actions as reflection, revision, perseverance, and re-modification. Within our creative process there are both risks and practicality, a sense of play and the sensibility of judgment. We are child, muse, and sage. Historically we know that the creative process has led to new ways to think and react to what we value. Today, as we work in our studios, classrooms, community centers, and museums we can embrace the belief that through engagement with the creative process we address the many challenges that face our world.

In IMAG #18 the principal co-editors are delighted to showcase multiple ways that InSEA members illustrate the creative process for themselves and for others. The authors have responded to such questions as: What does the creative process mean to me? How do I nurture creativity in others? How do I create a sustainable safe environment that sparks imagination? How do I recharge my identity as an artist that contributes to my role as art educator? How does the creative process include both serendipity and narrative? In response to these questions the authors in IMAG #18 offer us the opportunity to look with fresh eyes on the creative process of others that ideally might refresh our own practice.



Colour changes at MOME (Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest, 2025 Spring)
Image by Gabriella Pataky



Inclusion is at the heart of the creative process for authors Lucy Mugambi, Yumi Shirai, Elizabeth Vargas, Marissa Robles, and Ree Lee in their contribution *Amplifying the voices of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) through scrapbooking narratives*. They highlight the steps in creating visual books to enrich person-centered planning for three individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). Through visual “scapbooking” these individuals were able to represent themselves demonstrating empowerment, self-determination, and a strong sense of belonging to a community.

Mengkai Zhang integrates a/r/tography and the philosophy of Taoism in the visual essay *Illuminating shadows: Exploring the aesthetics of nature and inner balance through Tao-a/r/tography*. To counter students’ focus on electronics, Zhang envisioned a Taoist lens while designing wisdom packs for students to first observe nature and then respond to the beauty they discover. From book arts to photography students chose medium that represented their insight of an interconnected world. Taoism with its embrace of inner balance offered a deep foundation to bridge research, teaching, learning, and art making.

In Bodies of water: Outdoor sensory learning in local places Mariana Tamayo and Gunndis Yr Finnbogadottir created workshops for primary school teachers, taking them through a day-long journey of interdisciplinary activities to discover the many sensations of water. Using all of their senses these teachers experienced various places impacted by water from trees to football fields. They sketched their observations and created visual maps. Each teacher was given an ice block (you will have to read the visual essay to find out what they did with them).

In Huesome: Visualizing transversal relationships through colours Lap Xuan Do Nguyen invites us to witness how color initiates conversation and transcends boundaries. Through a process of “intuition, play, and exploration” Do Nguyen transfers digital hues and ideologue responses to organized color palettes. These palettes influence concept of space and identity and subsequently become as she notes, “a tool for recalibrating realities and opening pathways for new knowledge-making, and a more interconnected and reflective society.” Do Nguyen’s visual essay is timely as much injustice, politics, and seeds of war are a result of perspectives on color.

Textile experimentation, cartography, color patterns, and research of natural plants are all part of Lola Cervantes’ *Mapping Mindscapes*. Cervantes creative process is embedded with the belief that the environment is part of our humanity. Raising awareness of the Arctic landscape in Rovaniemi, Finland provides an impetus for Cervantes to interpret space and, through sketches, digital images and yarn from natural materials, makes sense of the world for herself and ideally for us.

What can we learn about our creative process when experimenting in an unfamiliar medium? Heather Moore and Bradie Hansen offers insight to this question in their *Who cares how it comes out: Pinhole camera as teacher and muse*. They created a forum for skilled artisan/teachers to explore pinhole photography, a new medium for them. After instructions, ceramicists, woodworkers, and fiber artists were first sent off to “play” with a pinhole camera and then regather for reflection. Comparison to how time, choices, and process occur across craft medium, the shared vulnerability of starting something new, and importance of creating a safe and supportive environment offered perception on empathy for their students who take on a new medium.

An exhibition of Welsh-born artist Glyn Hughes sparked *ColourBEing: Young children’s creative engagement in a contemporary art centre*, a curriculum designed by Andri Savva, Valentina Irakleous, Sophia Rossidou, Evginia Achilleos, and Constantia Vasiliou, a team of art and museum educators from Cyprus. Linking the creative process to the development of identity, the authors provided prompts for students to engage with Hughe’s art work. Playfulness, somatic movement in a safe space, and connections to their own experiences were key for students to link observations, interpretations, and color creations.

We hope these visual essays as well as those from previous issues offer you new perspectives, inspirations, and a sense of wonder. We invite you to share your reactions, adaptations, and curiosities that might have been sparked by our IMAG visual essays. Your short comments, that can be general or specific to a visual essay, will be included in the beginning of what we are calling “InSEA IMAG Perceptions.” We thank you for viewing our visual essays and continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

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DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-0





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Amplifying the Voices of Individuals With Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) Through Scrapbook Narratives

Keywords: empowering, accessibility, personal narratives, person-centered planning, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD)

Abstract

This visual essay highlights the process of creating visual books to enrich person-centered planning for three individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). It underscores the successful implementation of 8-module workshops that guided the participants in constructing visual books showcasing crucial personal, health, and cultural information for community living. Specific modules covered a range of themes including communication strategies, personal relationships, roles and leadership styles, strengths and challenges, emotional states, safety measures, daily routines, and cultural traditions. The authors of this visual essay contributed in the following capacities to ensure a smooth flow of the project. Yumi Shirai, as the principal investigator and program director, oversaw the project's development, implementation, and evaluation. Elizabeth Vargas, who was the coordinator and art instructor of the program, contributed to the facilitation of the workshops and supported the artists in documenting their insights and creating scrapbook pages. Marissa Robles helped in the curriculum development, captured essential videos and photographs, and participated in teaching the scrapbook modules. Ree Lee, as a research assistant, transcribed the interviews and provided editorial feedback for the visual essay. Lucy Mugambi assisted with artists' recruitment through process, and post-workshop interviews, participated in teaching the modules, made observation notes, and is the lead author of this essay.

According to Kuipers (2013), empowerment for individuals with disabilities involves attaining self-determination and control over their own lives. This principle motivated the authors of this essay to assist three individuals in creating personalized scrapbooks in the project. The purpose of these scrapbooks was to aid the individuals in independently navigating community spaces, with minimal or no external assistance.

One objective of the scrapbook workshop was to empower participants to narrate their personal stories in detail and compile them into a tangible book format, with participants assuming the role of authors. The second objective was to utilize the scrapbook as a tool for fostering relationships and connections, while also assisting individuals in expressing their needs and preferences for managing daily life independently, without the need for a support person.

Our Participants

In this essay, we document the experiences of three artist participants - Anthony L., Brad B., and Carol L.- as we amplify their individual perspectives.

Brad

Brad, a male in his early forties, faces challenges in verbal communication and relies on gestures and drawings to express himself, valuing the support provided by his teachers.



Image 1
Brad uses gestures to explain his pictures
(photograph, 2024).



Image 2
Capturing Brad drawing important people from his community
(photograph,2024).

Anthony

Anthony, a male in his late twenties with I/DD, demonstrates a creative and whimsical approach to art, reminiscent of a young artist. His jovial personality brings joy to those around him, particularly through his humorous jokes that serve as a mechanism for building connections with others in workshop settings. Humor enables Anthony to create bonds and foster a sense of camaraderie as seen in his words in the following quote, when asked how many friends he has.

“ I have 300 friends!”
(Anthony’s words)



Image 3
Anthony in the studio
(photograph, 2024)

Carol

Carol, a participant in her 50s and in the mid stage of Alzheimer’s disease, fondly speaks of her home town and derives pleasure from engaging in leisurely activities such as watching movies and visiting malls with her sister, which she describes as “fun stuff.” Additionally, she highlights a feeling of connection with her neighbors while participating in swimming sessions at the community pool. Although Carol doesn’t talk much, her creative drawings and paintings explain her love for nature, close friends and family. This is reflected in the following quote.

“I like engaging in fun stuff”
(Carol’s words)

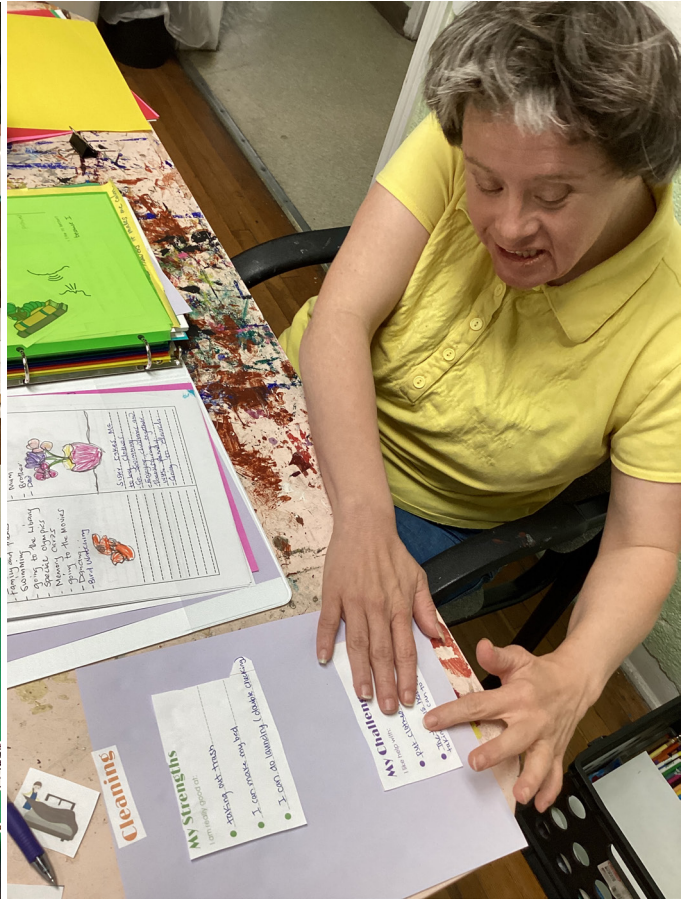


Image 4
Carol adds information to her scrapbook
(photograph, 2024)



Image 5
Dance moves by Carol
(photograph, 2024)



Image 6
Gesturing by Brad and Anthony
(photograph, 2024)

Workshop Content

The process of making the visual books was followed by covering module topics that included:

- 1)Communication and Learning-verbal, written and visual,
- 2)Communities -People, Places, and Activities in My Life,
- 3)Roles & Leadership Styles in Your Communities,
- 4)Strengths and Challenges-encompassing individual strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring assistance,
- 5)Good Days and Bad Days,
- 6)Personal Safety and Comfort Considerations,
- 7)Life and Activity Routines, and
- 8)Culture and Celebrations Exploration.

The Approach

To promote exploration and personalization of key content, the scrapbook process was structured in three steps: foundation setting, group topic exploration, and synthesis through creative personalization.

Step 1, introduced focused content through short visual presentations using plain language and visuals. In a group setting, members shared their ideas and discussed related topics.

Step 2, allowed participants to expand their conversation based on key questions provided in worksheets. Participants shared their ideas with the group and documented them through writing or drawing, with support available if needed.

Step 3 focused on the individuals creation of scrapbook pages to synthesize their key story content using open-ended and flexible choices. They incorporated a variety of visual elements, including photographs, magazine cutouts, picture stickers, and other images derived from prior group discussions, which were provided as useful resources to aid in the creation of their pages.



Image 7
Instructors in the art studio
Brad, Anthony and Carol
(Photograph, 2024)

Reflective Insights

The inclusion of visuals in research can enhance the understanding and documentation of knowledge, as suggested by Wu et al. (2019). Using visuals helped not only illuminate the participants' experiences (Barone & Eisner, 2011; Bresler, 2006) but also captured the workshop process of promoting knowledge expansion, sharing and self-expression. The frozen moments captured in the visuals disrupt and suspend the flow of time, effectively preserving and potentially revealing powerful narratives. This allows viewers to engage deeply with the messages conveyed and encourages repeated interpretation. The scrapbooks created by Anthony, Brad and Carol document personal narratives that reflect their individual journeys. These scrapbooks not only record basic information for each person but also offer a comprehensive perspective on the individual's daily

experiences, capturing both the positive and negative aspects. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of their personal life and meaningful relationships. As seen in Image 8, the scrapbooking workshops with the three-step structure served as a transformative platform for these three individuals to articulate their unique strengths, challenges, and preferences, allowing them to develop relationships in their community and navigate their daily routines. The scrapbooks also became accessible tools for the individuals to expand their independence. The act of engaging in scrapbook making not only provided an outlet for their self-expression but also enabled their individual needs to be acknowledged and met. Additionally, this communal scrapbooking activity fostered a sense of belonging and empowerment among the participants. The authors of this visual essay therefore argue for the creation of more spaces that cater to individuals with disabilities, as these environments are essential for addressing and meeting their specific needs.



Image 8
scrapbooks and arts works by the participants
(photograph, 2024)

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DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-1



Illuminating Shadows:
Exploring the Aesthetics of Nature and Inner
Balance through Tao-a/r/tography

Keywords: Tao-a/r/tography, Nature Aesthetics,
Self-discovery, Inner Balance, Digital Age and Nature

Introduction

Today, adolescents are spending an increasing amount of time on electronic world (Odgers & Jensen, 2020, p. 336). During my interactions with students, I also noticed this phenomenon. Excessive engagement with video games has been shown to gradually diminish their perception of the surroundings, potentially hindering their cognitive and emotional development (Keles et al., 2020).

As an a/r/tographer (artist-researcher-teacher), I tried to explore this issue through an innovative pedagogy that integrates Taoism with a/r/tography, which I termed Tao-a/r/tography. Taoism, as a philosophical system, advocates for connection between humans and nature (Yao et al., 2017), providing ideological guidance for my course. A/r/tography, as a practice-based methodology (Triggs et al., 2014), generates understanding through “doing” and “experiencing,” presenting the dynamic relationship of art-research-teaching in the living inquiry (Irwin, 2024), which ensures the effective implementation of course content. Therefore, they complement each other, achieving an organic integration of theory-practice. Additionally, all my students are from China. As a philosophy native to China, Taoism aligns with their cultural background, facilitating a deeper exploration.

Each process of the course was summarized into a proposition of Taoist philosophy, which served as wisdom packs, provided to students as in-class guidance. This inquiry aimed to explore whether Tao-a/r/tography can inspire students to perceive their real-world surroundings deeply and achieve an inner balance in their daily lives.



Mengkai ZHANG is an a/r/tographer and current graduate student at the University of British Columbia (UBC) studying Art Education. His interests include a/r/tography, art-based research, more-than-human, storytelling as research, Taoism, and immigration studies. He received the Jeanette Andrews Scholarship Award in 2024. ZMKzmk19940617@163.com.

Teaching Processes

Process 1. “One begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures.” (Laozi, 1963, p. 113)

I avoided using preset course content. Instead, I assigned students the task of outdoor observation and recorded the beauty of nature that touched their souls and then shared these experiences with their peers. The records and shares of each student became the foundation for us to collaboratively design subsequent teaching content. This process is not only a creation from nothing to something but also an evolution from simplicity to complexity, following Taoist teachings (Shin & Yang, 2021). At the same time, it echoes the concept of a/r/tography, which encourages students to start from personal experiences (one), research through these experiences (two), and then express inquiry into artworks and teaching-learning activities (three), ultimately leading to a series of rich and diverse academic outcomes and educational practices (all things). This pedagogy demonstrates a transition from a singular perspective to a multiplicity of perspectives (Irwin, 2013).

Process 2. “Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things are one with me.” (Zhuangzi, 1968, p. 37)

As an example, one student was deeply moved by the beauty of backlighting scenes, especially the awe-inspiring effect of sunlight filtering through clouds and trees at sunset. Encouraged to explore this phenomenon further, she explored an interdisciplinary study, blending scientific research with personal immersion in nature to analyze the allure of backlighting. She discovered the beauty stems from a combination of optical phenomena, visual psychology, and emotional responses, manifesting in light scattering, contrast effects, color saturation, and the depth and layering of the visual field. This insight aligns with the Taoist concept of unity between humans and nature (Lai, 2022). Merging personal experiences with environmental context and interdisciplinary approaches highlights the continuous interweaving of the inquiry process and daily life (Springgay et al., 2005).

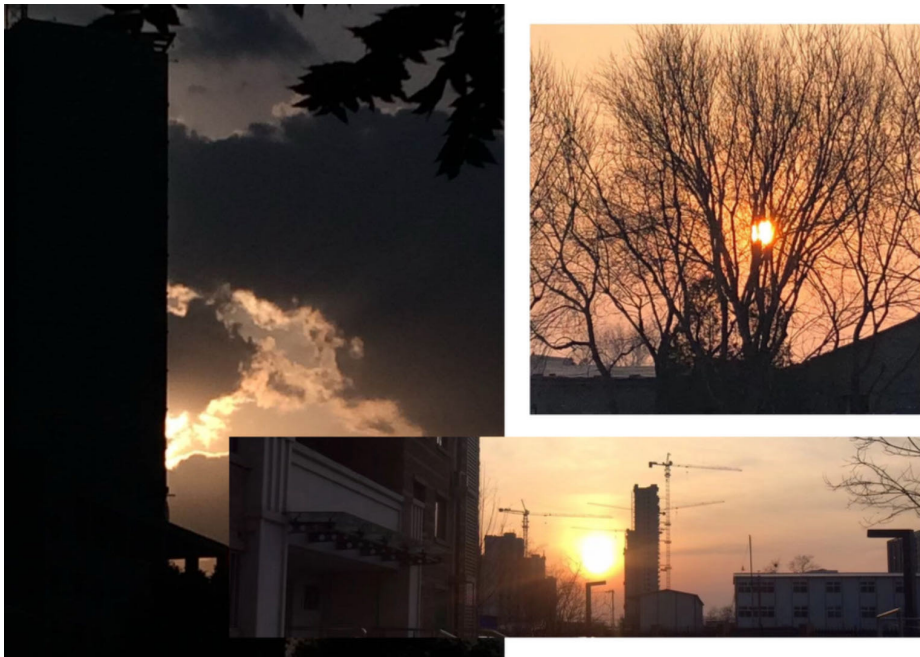
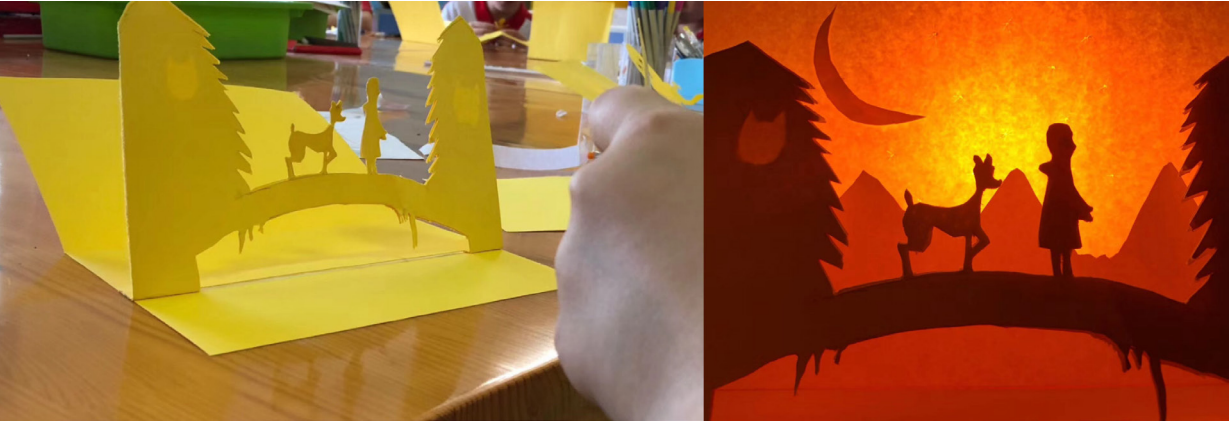


Figure 1.
Photography by this student.

Process 3. “Do that which consists in taking no action.” (Laozi, 1963, p. 5)

After this student completed her living inquiry, I encouraged her to draw inspiration from it for her artistic creation, without intervening in her choice of techniques, materials, and the final outcome. This approach adheres to the Taoistic principles of almost zero intervention and compliance with natural laws (Shin & Yang, 2021; Xiong & Ju, 2023), allowing the creative process to unfold naturally and enabling the creator to express authentically (Irwin, 2024). After experimenting with various media and forms, she chose to use yellow construction paper to make a layered scene, with a spotlight shining from behind through the paper towards the front. Combining the spotlight with the thin paper, successfully simulated a layered backlighting effect, while the yellow hue of the paper added a warm, sun-like atmosphere.

Figure 2.
Making process and
art-making by this student.



Process 4. “The Kun transforms into the Peng, its wings like clouds hanging from the sky.” (Zhuangzi, 1968)

In the “Free and Easy Wandering,” the transformation of Kun (a gigantic fish) into Peng (a gigantic bird) soaring into the sky symbolizes Taoism’s aspiration for freedom and transcending conventional restraints (Zhuangzi, 1968, p. 29; Lai, 2022). This concept is also reflected in my art classroom. Under my guidance, this student took the role of a “little lecturer” to teach her peers the course she designed on “The Beauty of Backlighting.” The course inspired students to create a variety of artworks, with some even experimenting with different colors of paper. After the course, some students further explored and created paper scene artworks that were different from the requirement of the course. This process aligns with the spirit advocated by a/r/tography, which encourages transcending traditional boundaries, pursuing innovation and valuing creativity (Springgay et al., 2005).



Figure 3.
Experiment by other students.



Figure 4.
Making process by other
students.



Figure 5.
Art-making by other students.

Reflection

In the Tao-a/r/tographic pedagogy, I encouraged students to engage with the real world without preconceived perceptions, and freely immerse themselves in the interactive experience of researching-creating-teaching-learning. As students explored light and shadow, I was reminded of Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's *In Praise of Shadows* (1933/1991). Compared to the straightforwardness of light, shadows offer a space for introspection and contemplation, which represent a form of spiritual insight. We should not only pursue brightness but also learn to find calmness and reflection within the embrace of shadows. This pursuit of balance between light and shadow echoes the yin-yang harmony in Taoism.

Lastly, while "Tao," as the origin of all things, is intangible, I argue that "Tao" can represent anything, including the students themselves in this context. The process of seeking inner balance is also a journey of seeking "Tao": A/r/tographers' self-exploration in the way of "Tao."

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DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-2



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Bodies of Water:
Outdoor Sensory Learning in Local Places

Keywords: Place-based learning, botanic garden,
teacher education, art and science, wonder



Image 1,
Photo by Patsey Bodkin.

Introduction

An important link to wellbeing is the possibility to wonder which can open our minds and bodies to complex layers of the world (Kristjánsson, 2020; Schinkel, 2020). Experiencing wonder can be a combined feeling of bafflement and awe, but also give a sense of importance deserving our attention (Schinkel 2017; 2020).

We created workshops for teachers, titled Bodies of Water, around the Reykjavík Botanic Garden, as part of *Artists and Botanical Gardens Creating and Developing Education Innovation* (ABCDE, 2022). Developing the workshops entailed becoming intimate with the space by having regular meetings at the botanic garden and the surrounding area. We took the time to share ideas and possibilities at a slow pace over many cups of coffee. The workshops centered on water by looking at connections, use, enjoyment, and water as life.

Teachers went through a day-long journey of interdisciplinary activities, including lying under trees and experimenting with water filtration. The journey allowed teachers to slow down, explore their surroundings, and find inspiration.

Process

The workshops were for groups of elementary school teachers. We learned the importance of being flexible and attending to the needs of each group. The workshop began in one of the greenhouses in the Reykjavík Botanic Garden. Participants sat in a circle and did two short introductory rounds sharing their names, how they arrived (e.g., means of transport or general mood) and professional backgrounds, followed by a mindfulness session of breathing and sensing.



Image 2,
Photo by Ísól Lilja Róbertsdóttir.

Water tasting sprouted conversations about water sensations. Participants were introduced to the idea that we are vessels of water, carrying the water we drink. The water we tasted was from three locations in Iceland; a) tap water from Keflavík, where water filters through lava; b) tap water from the capital area; and c) stream water from a rural area. These waters are connected as they recycle through Earth's water cycle, where one drop of water spends >3000 years in the ocean (Wetzel, 2001) before eventually making its way to our taps. We discussed water management in Reykjavík and water protection areas (Veitur, 2023).



Image 3,
Photo by Patsey Bodkin.

Continuing the workshop outdoors, we experienced the dynamic environment of the botanic garden, e.g., smelling and touching heaps of compost and flowering sweet peas. This was one of the most important moments of the day to keep our senses active.



Image 4 and 5,
Photos by Ísól Lilja Róbertsdóttir.

We looked at the water sculpture by Rúrí, a prominent feature in the garden since 1995 (Rúri, n.d.). The group was given an ice block (~70 cm x 50 cm x 40 cm) as a gift and we talked about the rings of Saturn and how they are made of pieces of ice and rocks (NASA, 2023). We discussed the work of Francis Alÿs from 1997 where he pushed a block of ice through Mexico City for nine hours (Francis Alÿs, n.d.). The aim was to create water relationships, followed by fun interactions with the ice block. As teachers we were surprised by each group's unique approach to the ice block. One group recreated Alÿs's piece and pushed the ice throughout the day, testing its ergonomics and the surfaces in the botanic garden. Another group made a musical intervention and explored the rhythm of the water drops from the melting ice. The third group focused on tactile discoveries following the melting of the ice and recording videos on their phones. An ice block can create space for different desires and participant preferences.



Image 6 and 7,
Photos by Ísól Lilja Róbertsdóttir.

Image 8 and 9,
Photos by Ísól Lilja Róbertsdóttir.

During the ice block activity, participants naturally collaborated and supported each other, through fun and shared care for the ice gift.



While planning the workshops, our discussions about biodiversity and nature-based solutions in urban landscapes led us to a nearby football grassfield. Groups were in awe that we could be on the football field, looking around, touching, and smelling the grass, discovering unexpected diversity of plants and learning about the field's specialized lawn care and water management. We imagined possibilities of change by looking at the work from Klaus Littmann, who planted 300 trees in a football stadium in Austria in 2019 (Littmann Kulturprojekte, 2019). Participants responded with wonder and playfulness.



Image 10 and 11,
Photos by Ísól Lilja Róbertsdóttir.

Returning to the botanic garden, we talked about Laugardalur Valley, a former wetland that makes it difficult to grow anything. The groups jumped on the grass to feel the sponginess of the area.

In the afternoon, we gathered in a conifer tree area of the botanic garden and participants chose a tree to lie underneath. Everyone was welcome to adjust to their comfort level by lying, sitting, or standing as close as possible to the trees. They placed some paper on their chest and without looking at it, took turns drawing, seeing, listening, and smelling their surroundings. This exercise was about drawing through sensing and sensing through drawing. The goal was to feel and connect with the place rather than making an accurate representation. We did this twice for 10 minutes and many reflected on details hard to notice when walking by a tree. The groups experienced the whole ecosystem.



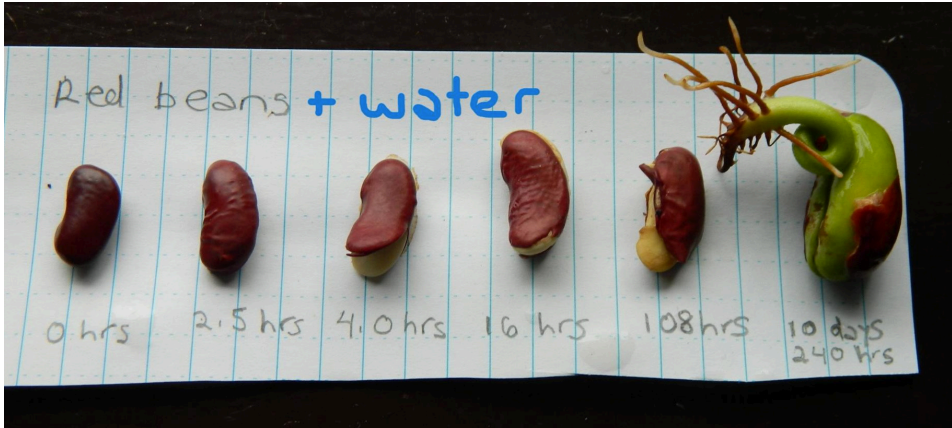
Image 12,
Photo by Patsey Bodkin.



Image 13-17,
Photos by Patsey Bodkin.



The rest of the afternoon we worked around the greenhouse and talked about nature-based solutions (Wickenberg et al., 2021). We experimented with water and substrates using asphalt, mulch, and soil. We played with filtration and created watercolor artwork. Time passing slowly, wonder, and workflow captured the atmosphere in the greenhouse.



The end of the workshop was devoted to water waking up seeds (imbibition) to germinate, plants growing in lunar soil (regolith) (Paul et al., 2022), how playing with soil can make us feel happy, and offering ways to explore this process artistically and scientifically. A final reflection with all participants reminded them of their creativity and sense of wonder as described by Kristjánsson (2020) and Schinkel (2020) as essential for wellbeing. Participants appreciated slowing down and being outdoors; some were inspired to share their experiences with their students.



Reflection

We learned the significance of interdisciplinary work for education by developing these workshops. Having regular meetings at the Reykjavík Botanic Garden, exploring our backgrounds and our relationship with water, connected us to place. We are passionate about experiential learning and learning from places, and these workshops cultivated our educational visions. This visual essay maps a path we developed for exploring the near and the far, slowly and with wonder, scientifically and artistically, and leading with our bodies of water.

Image 18 and 19,
Photos by Mariana Tamayo.

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DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-3

Visualising Transversal Relationships
through Colour Encounters:
A Case Study of Huesome

Keywords: transversal relationships, creative
process, artistic inquiry, colour manifestations,
practice-based encounters

INTRODUCTION

*'Yellow' is only yellowing or—may be yellowish
'Yellow' may be you or 'yellow' is—me,
Troubles have too many 'yellows'.*

Being born with colour, perhaps, sparked my curiosity about what colour truly signifies. Over time, I have noticed how my feelings toward the same colour shift depending on the environment, sometimes evoking entirely different reactions. This led me to question: *what meanings emerge from experiencing colour, and how can differing interpretations of the same hue help us understand one another?*

In 2019, I created *Huesome* as an inquiry into how colour facilitates conversations, invites imagination, and fosters relationality. This work examined multiple assemblages to explore how communication flows through colours, demonstrating their ability to transcend surface appearances and serve as a medium for diverse perspectives and new knowledge. In this essay, I reflect on the creative process that guided my exploration of colour manifestations as a way to visualise transversal relationships. Embracing performative experiences, the project allows various positions to collide and traverse boundaries.

PROCESS

Building on Connell's concept of encounters (2013), I initiated practice-based encounters within socially engaged art practice as a creative approach to exploring the social and epistemological shifts that emerge through artistic interactions. By framing the artistic process as a platform for these encounters, I aimed to create spaces where meaning is fluid, co-constructed,

and continuously evolving. *Huesome* project represents a series of artworks designed to visualize conversations and foster relationships. Its development involved three core explorations: learning, grouping, and reproducing colours and texts. These processes allowed me to blend intuition, play, and judgment, resulting in works that encourage participation, reflection, and relational engagement.

Learning

I began by immersing myself in the online environment of COLOURlovers.com—an open platform where individuals share their ideologies of colour by generating digital palettes. Fascinated by the vast array of colour combinations and their often-expressive meanings, I initiated a search using the keyword "marginal"—a term I associate with critical social status. To my surprise, the results defied my expectations, revealing a range of palettes in shades that varied from vivid, radiant hues to muted, earthy tones. As I encountered these diverse cultural and emotional associations, I realised these palettes represented far more than their surface appearance—they opened a window into a spectrum of perspectives. I was drawn to the aspiration of connecting with the unknown narratives embedded in these combinations and the mysterious creators behind them.

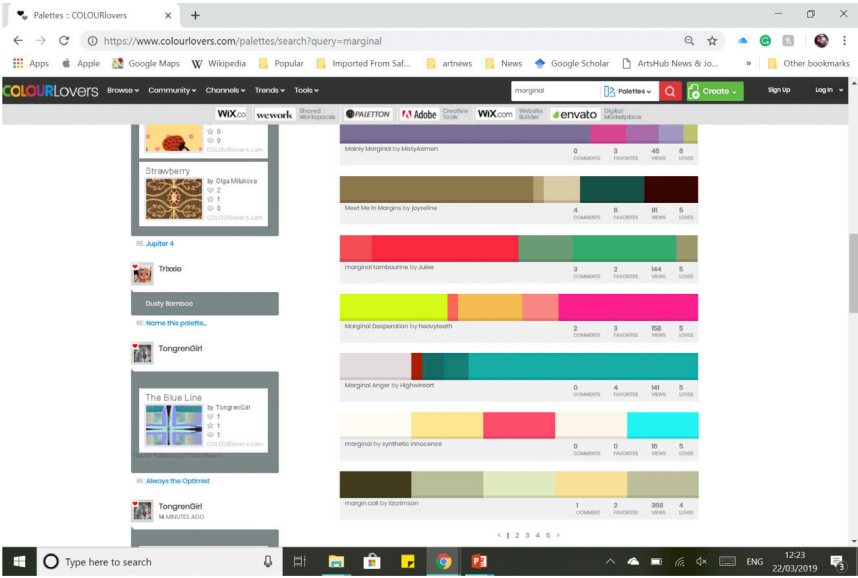


Figure 1
Screenshot taken by the author in 2019
of the first page of the search results for
"marginal" on the colourlovers.com website



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Among the many palettes I found, Meet Me in Margins by Joyseline stood out, offering profound insights. Its captivating colour combinations initially drew me in, but what left a deeper impression was the creator’s reinterpretation of RGB—from Red-Green-Blue, the familiar digital colour components, to Race-Gender-Belief. This socially significant narrative resonated deeply as I carefully translated the digital hues onto canvas, striving to replicate each tone with precision and sensitivity. Yet, the process transcended mere reproduction—it became a form of visual contemplation, merging the palette’s original intent with my perspective. From Joyseline’s and many others’ assigned meanings for their hues to my strokes, each influenced my emotions, creating a transversal connection between us—transversal, like the colours that unite us. Each recreated hue transformed in my *Variegated Palettes*, while their RGB serial numbers were painted as markers of origin. Viewed from a distance, these palettes seemed to oscillate in meaning, their communicative power shifting with each viewer’s interpretation. The process forged an invisible link between the enigmatic author and others—strangers—through colour, a shared appropriation that transcended boundaries. Each stroke added layers of learning and emotion, creating a transversal connection—the colours that bridge individual and collective experiences.

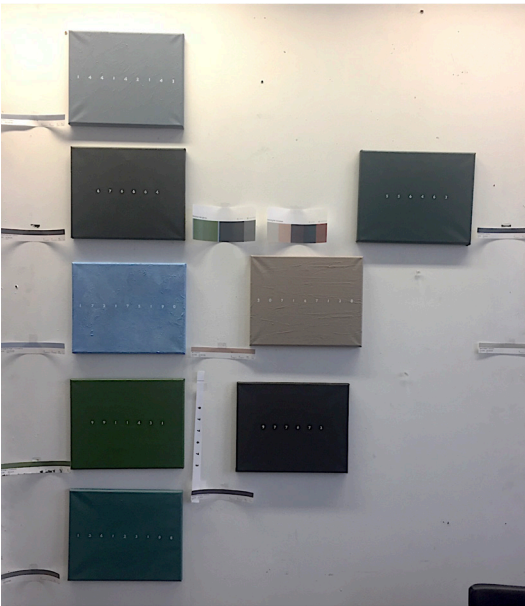


Figure 4
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2020,
Variegated palettes, painting
in progress [Photograph].
Author’s studio.

Grouping

To deepen my exploration, I examined the dynamics of grouping by organising my found palettes into categories. These data, which I referred to as the manifesting ‘voices’ of their creators, placed me in the role of decision-maker, with the authority to define their relationships and construct new meanings. By letting the colours ‘speak,’ I embodied the conversations that brought the palettes together, enabling new interpretations to emerge. Though my process was guided by intuition and emotion, the act of clustering carried subtle political implications—both positive and negative. This prompted a detailed examination of the consequences for each representation, highlighting distinctions and reflecting the broader impact. In one phase, I selected 25 palettes for closer study based on their disparities, colour similarities, and intriguing names. This grouping mirrored a statistical categorisation of shared attributes, but when viewed as distinct ‘voices,’ it revealed nuanced political undertones. As the decision-maker, I explored how consolidating or polarising these ‘voices’ unveiled the complexities of grouping and its impact on representation and meaning.

- Lexical Groupings: reflects on palettes’ names which signify shared functionalities with the word “marginal.” This linguistic approach revealed how the palettes’ names contributed to their broader conceptual narratives and interconnected meanings.

Figure 2
Screenshot taken by
the author in 2019 of
the palettes Meet Me in
Margins by Joyseline

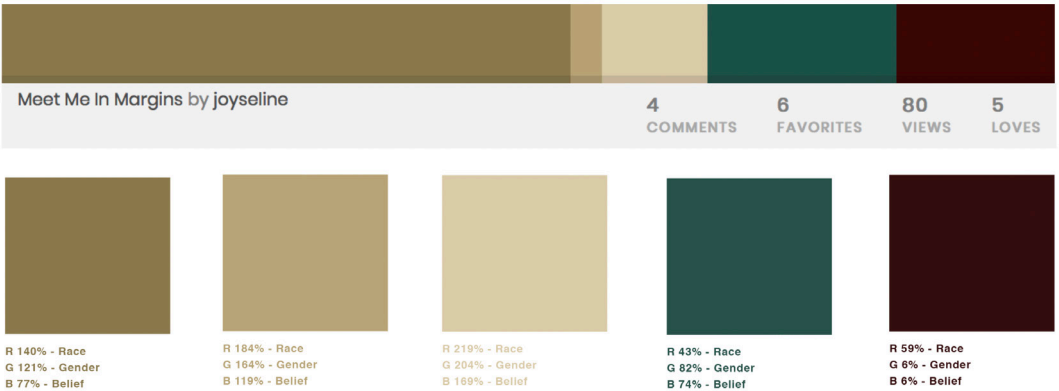


Figure 3
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan,
2020, *Variegated
palettes*, video stills





Figure 5
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2020,
Lexical Categories: *Nounification*.
Assemblage using screenshots of
found palettes.

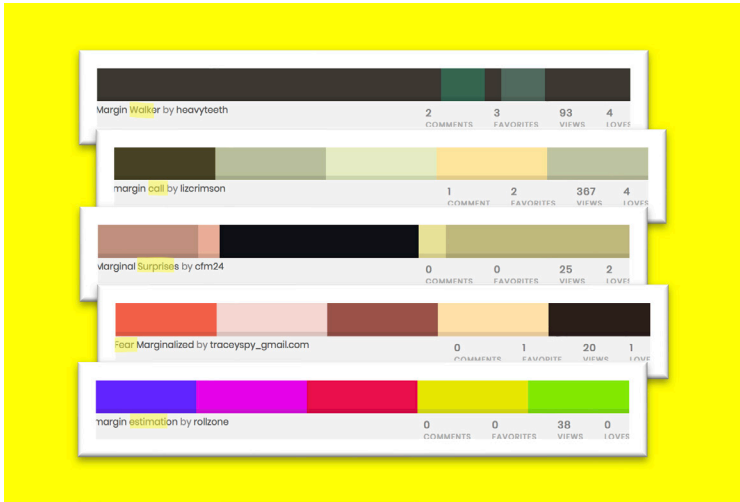


Figure 6
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2020,
Lexical Categories: *Verbification*.
Assemblage using screenshots of
found palettes

- Visual Patterns: Two distinct patterns were created by grouping the palettes to separate them from their original attachments. One focused on colour identity, perceived through visual cues, while the other emphasised textual elements complementing the visual. From the same data, I constructed two landscapes: the *Colourless Landscape* combined several “marginal” palettes to represent ambiguous terrains, evoking a sense of void and inviting viewers to fill it with their interpretations. In contrast, the *Nameless Landscape* engaged viewers with the notion of place and identity through a lack of defined hues. This approach embodied my creative cartography—a map of experimentation rather than fixed representation (Young et al., 2013, p. 58)—capturing the flow and movement of ideas as they emerge, resisting static meanings.



Figure 9
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2020,
Colourless landscape. Digital sketch.



Figure 7
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2020,
Lexical Categories: *Adjectivisation*.
Assemblage using screenshots of
found palettes.

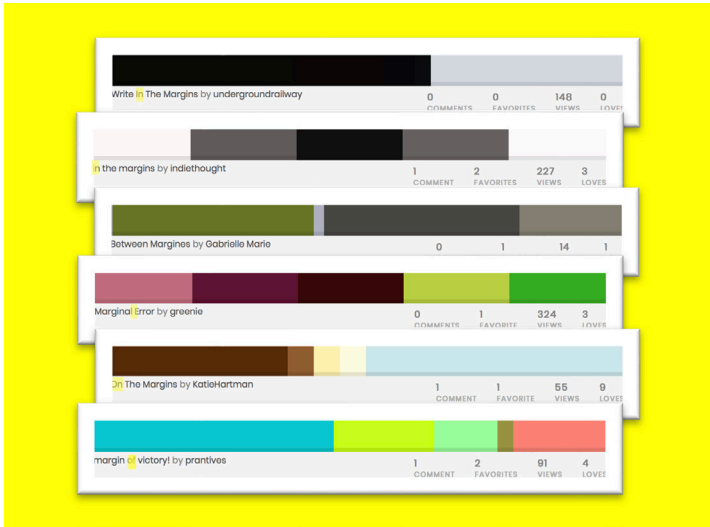


Figure 8
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2020,
Lexical Categories: *Presupposition*.
Assemblage using screenshots of
found palettes.

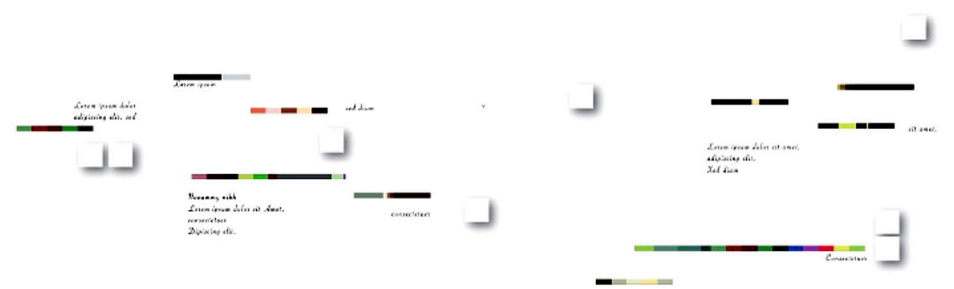


Figure 10
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2020,
Nameless landscape. Digital sketch.

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Reproducing

The project concluded with Motleys, an interactive digital experience hosted online, designed to evoke imaginative responses through perceptions of colour. Embracing reproduction not as mere duplication but as a transformative force, I selected eleven palettes from my earlier research to construct virtual rooms. Each room featured circles filled with palette colours, animated to appear and dissolve on a muddy floor, accompanied by ambient, digitally generated conversations mimicking human voices. These cryptic dialogues, constructed using the names of the colours, combined with the animations to create a dynamic, ambiguous atmosphere where relational boundaries blurred. As viewers entered a room, they encountered an environment that required no direct interaction yet invited them to witness vibrant visuals and seemingly nonsensical conversations. Through these encounters, Motleys embodied transversal relationships, where colours became a shared medium for imaginative dialogue, continually reinterpreted and expanded through the reproduction process.

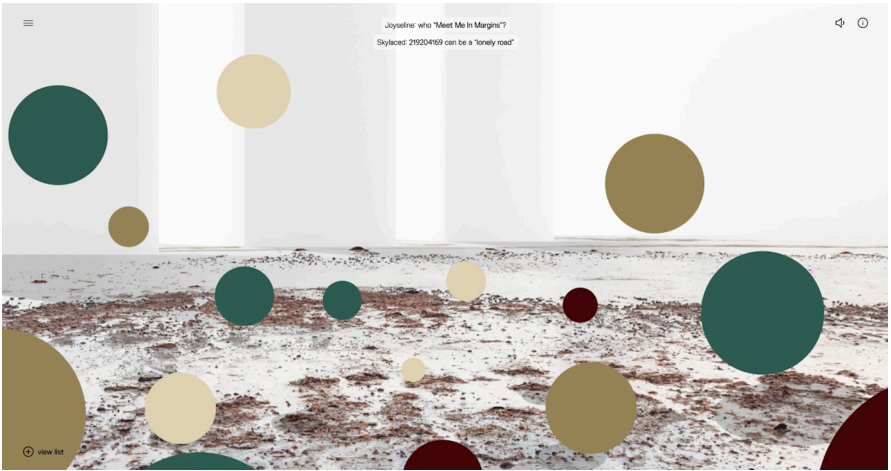


Figure 11
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2023,
Motleys: Meet Me In Margins, media stills.

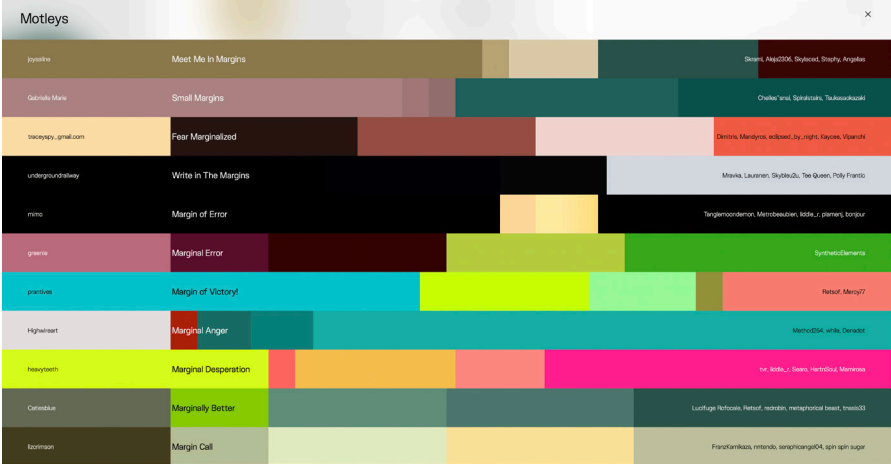


Figure 12
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2023,
Motleys Rooms List. UX/UI design.



Figure 13
Do Nguyen Lap Xuan, 2023, *Motleys: Marginally Better*, media stills.

REFLECTION

In this work, I explored communication flows through colours by selecting palettes associated with the term “marginal” from the COLOURlovers community and assembling them into Huesome—a series guided by intuition, play, and exploration that visualises transversal relationships through diverse techniques, from painting to digital media. As this work progressed, it reminded me of Goethe’s Theory of Colours (1810), which highlights the subjective and emotional significance of colour and resonated with Kobayashi’s The Theory of Color Harmony (1987), which underscores relational dynamics. However, my process diverged while engaging with Connell’s discussion of encounters (2013), as I explored how shared experiences and understandings of colour are mediated through social interactions. Through this lens, the process delves into how colour-related contexts manifest as mediums for dialogue and interaction. Aligned with my socially engaged art practice, the Huesome project imagined each colour as a ‘meeting’ in the making. These practice-based encounters revealed colour’s performative capacity to facilitate transversal relationships—spaces where identities, perspectives, and values intersect and intertwine. Each reproduced colour carried its history with different creators while simultaneously prompting viewers to reflect on what a colour means to their live experiences. This process suggested participants reimagine the possibilities within colour definitions, challenging singular worldviews. These connections demonstrate colour’s potential to transcend mere visibility, becoming a tool for recalibrating realities and opening pathways for new knowledge-making, and a more interconnected and reflective society.

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DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-4



Mapping Mindscapes

Keywords: Textile Art, Art-Based Research, Arctic, Material Exploration, Cartography

As artist, educator, and researcher my artistic exploration and creative processes are located between the territory of mental landscapes -mindscapes-, navigating the intersection of science and art, cartographic practices and textile art. My work focuses on interpreting places and embodied experiences of landscape through a material practice. This stems from the need of understanding the concept of landscape, aiming to map my surroundings, mental places and emotional landscapes, *crafting* a reflection about lived places and experiences (see fig. 1). The pieces and processes in this exposition are part of a series related to textile experimentation, mapping methods, and crafting as a method of research.

I am interested in how materials connect through craft processes, and methods that engage learning through making (Dormer, 1994), as tactile experiences are crucial to our cognitive development (Piaget, 1973), and bodily learning is the basis of human experience and perception of *being in the world* (Merleau-Ponty, 1963).

My doctoral research implements an Art-Based Action Research (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018; Jokela et al., 2019) approach in fields of art, craft and methodologies for co-design, in which revitalisation of traditional knowledge and various forms of collaboration and craftivism are developed in cycles of artistic practice and reflection (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020a, 2020b). In addition, I work on a project focused on the innovative and sustainable use of wool at the University of Lapland, *Wool Innovation* (2023–2026)

I am interested in the study of land, topography, and cartography. One of the ideas in which I have developed my artistic work, is the concept popularized by Yi-Fu Tuan, in his book *Topophilia*, describing how places

shape a person's identity (Tuan, Y. 1990). Humans can grow attached to their origin places; however, psychogeographical factors can have an effect on humans, attracting them to opposite contexts (Tuan, 1990). Coming from a semidesert in central Mexico has impacted positively the way I perceive my current life in the Arctic.

The concept of *Topophilia* is related to the strong sense of place and the affective bond between people and their environment (Tuan, Y. 1990). The desire to perceive, understand and locate ourselves within the environment is one of the main searches of humankind. Through my work I seek to interpret space that surrounds me in an attempt to make sense of the world.



Fig. 1.
Faroescape, graphite, enamel and wool yarn on wood canvas, 61x61cm, 2024, Lola Cervantes.



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Arctic Narratives and Sense of Place

Travelling has impacted on my work, exposing me to different materials that shaped my set of skills and techniques, forming bonds with different environments (Beery et al., 2015). The Arctic with its fragile, yet powerful ecosystems is a central theme in my work. The Arctic captivated me with by its nature and places that I interpret through pieces such as *Wetlands* (see fig. 2), a piece calling for a deeper appreciation of the swamp realm and a commitment to its preservation.

I try to capture the physical aspects of plants using wool yarn in different shades of green, browns and yellows, to depict mosses and lichens, aiming to raise awareness on Arctic issues inspiring action to preserve our natural world. I hope my work resonates in a sensorial and intellectual way, thus aesthetic elements are very important part of my process.

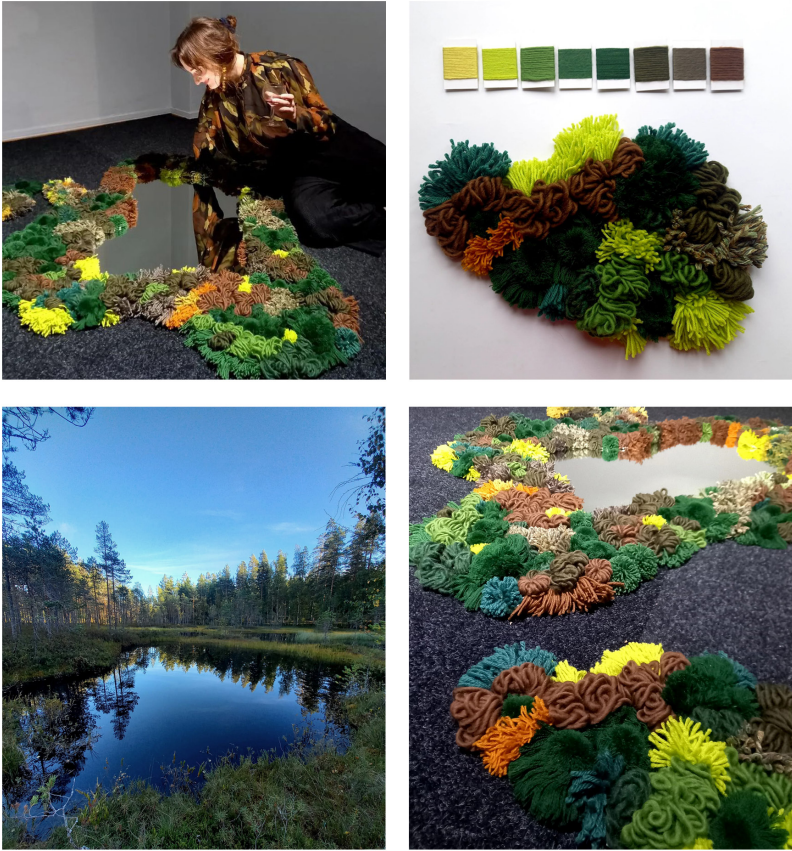


Fig. 2.
Wetlands, wool on mesh, installation, Lola
Cervantes 2023.

My work begins with exploration: wandering around the natural areas of my home in Rovaniemi, on the edge of the Arctic Circle. During these trips, I observe and document plants and mushrooms (see fig. 3), details about color, species, collecting visual impressions of these environments, and completing this with further research about the topography of the area.



Fig. 3
Cervantes at a field observation during her
artistic residence at Haihatus Art Residency,
2023

The process begins with visualizing imaginary realms, product of spatial memories, embodied experiences and processes of abstraction. Sketching is crucial and non-linear in the process. I create sketches using a drawing tablet and programs such as Photoshop, testing different palettes, shapes and concepts. These sketches (see fig. 4) contain notes with ideas evolving continuously. Digital drawing allows me to test ideas a priori.

Color plays an important role in my work, I use a variety of tones to evoke nature's palette, influenced by the aesthetics of old map illustrations. The rocky-grays portray volcanic landscapes, greens reflect arctic vegetation, and earthy browns add a sense of connection to the layers of Earth. I use wool, recycled textiles and wood with different techniques: manual tufting, embroidery, drawing and painting, latch-hooking on mesh, tassel and pompom making. The qualities of wool allow tactility, as crafting with textiles often evokes touch and intimacy (Barber & Gilson, 2023). The techniques are chosen based on the elements I want to depict. Tufted wool allows me to capture the rugged texture of volcanic rocks (see fig. 5) while hook-latch techniques to represent delicate foliage; wool is a fragile material that helps to reflect on the balance that sustains these environments.

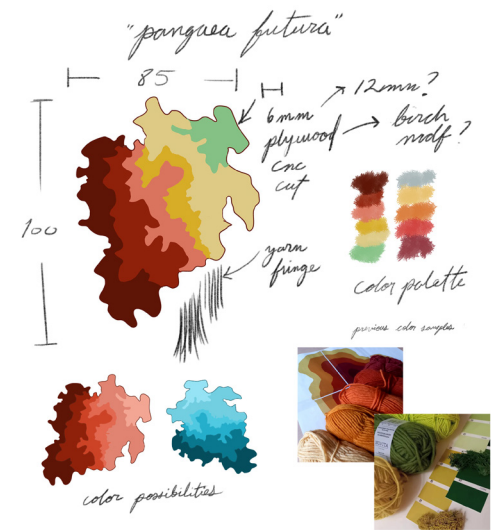


Fig. 4.
Digital sketch, creative process, 2022



Fig. 5.
Volcana Arctica, wool and recycled textiles on wood, 2022-2023, exhibited at the Shifting Ground exhibition, Rovaniemi Art Museum, 2024

Climate Change and Speculative Futures

I have studied theories about the Earth formation, and the movement of the crust (Hess, 1962). Some of my pieces speculate about the far future of our planet, for example Terra Ultima, (see fig. 6) depicts a mental landscape, a future supercontinent, where green forests are merged together with sandy deserts all seen from an aerial perspective, reflecting on the geological processes emphasizing on the Earth's everchanging nature.



Fig. 6.
Terra Ultima, 80x80, acrylic and wool on Wood canvas, Galleria Valo, Arktikum Museum and Science Center, Rovaniemi, 2024. Lola Cervantes

In 2024, two of my works were exhibited at the Rovaniemi Art Museum with the title Shifting Ground - Muutuva Maa, a collaboration between the Artists's Association of Lapland and the Canadian project Shifting Ground, supported by the Canadian Embassy in Finland and the Finnish Heritage Agency.

The piece *Pangaea Futura: Continental Drift* (see fig. 7) envisions a future in which all the continents have merged once again in a unified landmass with colors symbolizing the unity of humanity. This piece acts as a reminder of our potential to create a more interconnected and multicultural future. In 2023, my series titled *Topophilia Vol. I and II*, was exhibited at Korundi House of Culture - Artist of the Month space, and at the Gallery of the Artist's Association of Lapland, in Rovaniemi, Finland, featuring an installation with lava, water and other soundscapes.



Fig. 7.
Pangaea Futura: Continental Drift. Shifting Ground-Muutuva Maa exhibition at Rovaniemi Art Museum, 2024. Lola Cervantes

The piece *Pangaea Futura* (see fig. 8) reflects on the transformation northern landscapes, during the thaw. Icy islands resemble a Pangaea-landscape, the wool patches seek to imitate moss and lichens from the swamps. My academic work is craft-based oriented, some of my pieces address issues of Indigenous knowledge and decolonial practices (Cervantes & Huhmarniemi, 2023) through art-based methods and other topics such as natural-dyes and pigments, food sovereignty, heritage and sustainability (Cervantes, forthcoming 2024). By working with wool (see fig. 9), I am honoring ancestral techniques, wandering through the territories of material connections.



Fig. 8.
Pangaea Futura: Arcticification, Tällä Matkalla, Galleria Valo, Arktikum Museum and Science Center, Rovaniemi, 2024. Lola Cervantes



Fig. 9.
Wool yarn dyed with native corn, process, exhibition at the Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland for the Relate North exhibition, 2024. Photograph Lola Cervantes

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DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-5

Who Cares How it Comes Out?
Pinhole Camera as Teacher and Muse

Keywords: Teacher as Student, Pinhole Camera, Creative Process



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Figure 1:
painter, potter, weaver, by Bradie. Three artists that often remain siloed join together to create a pinhole image.

To explore and better understand the creative process and what it takes to nurture and care for a community of artists, Bradie (weaving teacher, co-author and participant in this workshop) and Heather (Executive Director of the Shelburne Craft School (SCS), co-author, and discussion leader in this workshop) asked teaching artists across our studios to take a workshop on the pinhole camera. Our group included a weaver, woodworker, two potters, a painter, and an interdisciplinary artist all of whom had never used a pinhole camera prior. All participants who teach their craft at SCS took part in a brief explanation of the camera, dark room, and developing process. We found notable themes and connections between creative need, letting go, and empathy for students learning a new craft. We felt the simplicity of a pinhole camera (in our case a cookie tin with a hole in it) juxtaposed with the complicated nature of light, chemical composition of developing, and mathematical calculations to be analogous to the seemingly simple yet complicated nature of teaching and taking part in the creative process.



Figure 2:
portrait by Claire, Stillness in the midst of movement. Claire's image suggests walking, yet with pinhole photography, the requirement is that the subject stays still for the amount of time needed for light to capture image. Full engagement in experimentation and playfulness is captured in light.

Our study suggests that offering free creative workshops for teachers nourishes them artistically, while building classroom empathy and a culture of creative cross pollination in an otherwise siloed environment.

Methods

Six participant artists each had one pinhole camera and were able to shoot a photograph of their choosing in our courtyard. Following this they were assisted in our darkroom developing their first photo. While waiting, participants were encouraged to journal about their thoughts, feelings and insights regarding the creative process.

Food or Tonic?

From the start of our process the hunger for access to new creative experiences was apparent. All participants were asked to join the workshop via a text message—everyone wrote back affirming their availability within 3 minutes of the text being sent. The eagerness participants had to try a new art form was strong. Perhaps for individuals who build their lives around creating, the need to explore and be creative could be likened to eating or a balm to protect against the outside world. It also demonstrates a community in which teaching artists feel safe and comfortable participating in new creative explorations. The initial enthusiasm demonstrated a desire for access to creative workshops for teaching artists.



Figure 3:
view from the woodshop, by Mike. This image is a visual representation of artists looking outward from their studios. Mike image looks out of the woodshop toward the pottery, paint, fiber, glass and metals workshops.

Light and Time

The cross pollination between teachers/studios began nearly immediately as they compared the brand-new art form to their practice. Our teacher colleague, Colin, explained the history of photography, the oldest version of which is called heliography, or “writing with light.” Multiple artists found

the use of the light to be worthy of further discussion. Bradie, co-author and weaving teacher said, “I’m stuck by the teeny tiny hole, that light just goes into it and it’s light that carries the picture... and the idea that you can look at an image from all these different directions- tapestry is like that, you can practice one little skill but that one little skill exploded into a large piece is incredible...” Light is a nice metaphor of the creative process—perhaps very little (light, idea, inspiration) is needed to ignite the fire of learning and creating. As teachers compared pinhole cameras to woodworking, clay, fiber, paint, time came up over and over as participants seemed excited and intrigued by how little time the entire process took. Bradie noted that time itself was a character in all our creative endeavors—and a character that took up different amounts of space: some months, other minutes. Our group loved the immediacy of this art form—painting, woodworking, weaving and pottery all take much longer to see results. In the resulting discussion, teachers connected through both their studio work as well as the new art form, creating a stronger community of artists who could easily feel silo-ed in their studios.



Figure 4:
portrait, by Jonathan “What will happen as I wait?” Jonathan sits behind a pile of wood, with the clay studio behind him. This image captures an artist playing with a new art form in the halo of the space where he is at home and at ease with his chosen art. Tilted, does the image capture the reality of vulnerability as one engages in a new creative effort?

Vulnerability

Our conversation shifted to feelings of vulnerability and empathy within the creative process. Interdisciplinary artist, Jonathan, wrote and expressed that he wanted to let go of the duality of outcomes viewing them as good or bad. He went on to connect this to control stating, “reflecting on control and uncontrol. In clay there’s constant interaction with the piece and with the pinhole, you have no idea [how it will come out from the moment you open the aperture]....” Participants discussed the vulnerability inherent in creating and the need to let go in all art forms: when the pot goes in the kiln, the cloth in the washing machine, the finish on the wood, artists in all studios have to find ways to let go. And with each art form letting go of the outcome is more difficult for beginners, perhaps due to a steeper learning curve. Multiple teachers expressed renewed empathy for students being cast into a new art form. Some felt unsure at the start, nervous, looking to let go of expectations. Many aligned these thoughts with how their students must feel to throw their first pot, weave their first tapestry. Once one has become proficient in their craft there is often little opportunity to feel the vulnerability of a new learner—Pinhole Camera as Teacher as a creative workshop opened the door to the emotions associated with being a beginner.



Outcomes & Epiphanies

This little workshop inspired an epiphany for our practices. After seeing how joyful and introspective this process made our educators, SCS is launching creative cohorts which will allow small groups of artists to teach each other short workshops artists will alternate through the position of teacher, so one week one may learn how to felt, the next make a stained glass piece, and the third to sculpt a pottery piece, and so on. Artists will gain insights on how others see their art form and creative process. This will invite ongoing reflection on the creative process, teaching, empathy, vulnerability and hopefully light in all its forms. The desired outcome for the craft school is inspired teachers who have tried something new, therefore staying in contact with their own creative learning edge as well as the empathy they have for their students. A prized jewel that was discovered in this effort was the web of connection supported between studios. With the ongoing stoking of the creative fire between studios, it is natural to imagine a school that is creatively robust and ever evolving. The images themselves tell the story of connection between artists and the art form, artists and learning and teaching, and artists and the space in which they work. Colin’s comment on photography captures this alchemy when he said, “photography is a form of storytelling... the learning process is an intentional process... intentionality is a very important aspect ... it’s what makes art art... we always have unintended results but that’s part of it...”

DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-6

Figure 5:
garden loom, by Heather In this image, a story is told between studios. Heather, a potter, created a pinhole image of a loom made by a teacher in the school’s wood shop, which was warped by a teaching weaver, and was woven upon by many of the school’s teachers. It stands as an image of connection and solidarity in the school’s courtyard.



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ColourBEing: Young Children's Creative Engagement in a Contemporary Art Centre

Keywords: creative process, art museum, early years

Introduction

What is "ColourBEing"?

ColourBEing is an educational programme based on a collaborative partnership between early childhood settings and teachers (Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, Cyprus), Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre (NiMAC), and researchers (University of Cyprus, Department of Education). In this visual essay we articulate the "inter- relationship of creative processes and identity "– children as colourists and as creators, aiming to create open-ended spaces for children participating in a museum educational programme. We acted as teachers – researchers – education curators designing, implementing and documenting play – based art activities to facilitate children's creative art learning in an art museum. Photographs depicting children during the creative process took into consideration ethical guidelines to ensure their privacy and safety.

The planning process

Entering a space filled with paintings and installations to guide young children through a creative learning journey can be challenging. Which artworks will engage them, and how can the space foster their creative learning? Creativity requires connecting ideas, emotions, and experiences (Jensen, 2001; Sawyer & Henriksen, 2024).

At NiMAC, the exhibition dedicated to Glyn Hughes, a Welsh-born artist deeply inspired by Cyprus, provided an ideal platform. His vibrant use of colour and thematic diversity offered rich material for engagement. Activities were designed to be inclusive and meaningful, rooted in a rationale or "skeptiko" (Savva & Irakleous, 2018), connecting Hughes's artistic concepts (soma, movement, colour) to children's identities. This framework shaped the program to nurture emotional and personal connections through art.

Creative processes: play, ways of knowing and embodiment

Play and Playfulness

Being creative requires generating and practicing ideas. During the creative process one is engaged in a continual interpretation and recreation of the cultural environment. Play and playfulness are essential components of this process (Bredikyte, 2010), and as such they share common procedures that are obvious in the world of art.



Figures 1 and 2:
The colourist lab. Photos Credits: Savva, A.

Play was evident when children were invited to make art and interact with materials and spaces in the colourist lab, a play - space, curated by the museum educators to accommodate free play with painting and constructive materials, as well as interactive play (See Figures 1 and 2). Playfulness was evident in more structured activities to initiate generation and practice of ideas through viewing and making (see Figure 3).



Figure 3:
A group of children on a colourful blanket are invited to think of colorful dreams. Photo Credits: Savva, A.

Ways of Knowing and Embodiment

Play as a method and way of thinking is valuable in creative learning when diverse ways of knowing are used to allow learners to generate and enrich ideas. We argue that creative learning is a practical and theoretical process intertwined between making and viewing. We adopt this thesis to implement various art activities in the museum setting, by using as a starting point three diverse modes of knowing based on Sullivan's (2010) theoretical framework.

Thinking in a medium

Thinking in a medium is associated with the visual properties of different media that enables artists to give form and meaning during the process of making. Children, like artists, were given opportunities to work directly with a medium.



Figure 4:
Children's collaborative process. Photos credits: Savva, A.

Activities were not random; the children engaged in making art in front of Glyn Hughes' work (see Figure 4). The museum educator chose not to talk about the artworks to the children, but simply invited them to use and feel the paint and the colour in a sequence of random prompts and then to look at their work from a distance. Some children asked question such as "We use brushes and paint like the artist, isn't it?"

Thinking through language

"In learning the visual arts meanings are constructed through art talk or discourse that is sparked by encounters with art" (Sullivan, 2010, p.137).

Figure 5:
Glyn Hughes, Figures, 1980,
244X122cm. Photo Credits:
NiMAC



When children were asked to view an artwork (see Figure 5) and connect it with their own experiences, or to think and respond through questions based on possibility thinking, it sparked brainstorming and prompted imaginative responses. Their understanding was shaped by prior knowledge or influenced by social and cultural conventions:

Museum Educator: What does it remind you of?

Child1: A banana

Child 2: A yellow cave

Child 3: An eye

Child 4: A little worm

Thinking in context

Thinking in context is described as 'situated cognition' or socio-cultural cognition whereby thinking takes place within a mediated system that includes the self, the others, the artifacts and the space/place (Sullivan, 2010). Context nurtures the essence of the creative process through meaningful connections. In this case, children described the art centre as a colourful place, a painting space or the space of the colourist. Their drawings depict human figures, the artist, themselves, and the museum educators as colourists (See Figure 6).



Figure 6:
Children's Drawings depicting the "colourist". Photo Credits: Erakleous, V.

Embodiment and somesthetic: Think in and through your body (soma)

Thinking in and through their body, engages children to a dialogue with themselves, others, and the artworks. “Soma”, meaning the body, was an influential idea in the whole process of designing and applying play-based art activities in the museum. Soma was a significant art concept connected to children’s and artist’s identity and encountered as a way of learning. Museum educators encourage, for example, observation of artworks (see Figure10) or exploration and play in the space of museum through body movement. As Shusterman (2006) articulates when analysing his thesis about somaesthetic “...our appreciation of art’s sensuous beauties has an important somatic dimension, not simply because they are grasped through our bodily senses.... but, in addition, because art’s emotional values, like all emotion, must be experienced somatically to be experienced at all” (p.16).



Figure 7:
Children play a game which was titled “colourful sculptures” and then observe through their bodies the forms on the painting. Photo Credits: Savva, A.

We believe that “ColorBEing” fosters a meaningful dialogue about young children’s creative learning in an art museum setting, with the potential to enhance creative learning methodologies by strengthening diverse ways of knowing and embodiment. It highlights the value of playful interactions between children, the space, materials, and their social environment (including adults and peers). By positioning the creative process as a fundamental aspect of human experience, “ColorBEing” recognizes young children’s individual and collective freedoms, affirming their right to actively participate in and reshape their cultural environment.

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DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-18.2025-7





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