



Burning Canoe

By Michael Campbell
Audio video installation

Technology as Material

Integrating Technology and Art Education in Public Space

By: Janice Rahn

Over the past three years, my goal has been to establish a learning community of artists and educators in Lethbridge who are committed to designing curriculum that integrates art and technology with an inquiry approach. In prior research I concluded that the school plays the largest role in influencing new teachers (Rahn, 2002). Therefore, I began to focus on structuring a mentor relationship between intern students, teachers, artists, and myself, in curriculum development and implementation especially in technology integration. The team of people working together in Lethbridge presently involves: Michael Campbell (new media artist and professor of video sketchbook and computer art in the Fine Arts department at the University of Lethbridge), Leanne Elias (multimedia instructor at the Lethbridge Community College), Karen Morden-Babik (computer technology instructor at Winston Churchill High School), Jane Munro, (the art educator at the same school), Geoff Weatherall (computer and art teacher at a junior high school), Dawn King-Hunter (teacher at an alternative High School) as well as intern students, Jackie Thibert, Rod Scott, and most recently

Amanda Payne. In this article I will unpack what I mean by *contemporary* art and *inquiry* by illustrating issues thematically and technically through projects made by artists and taught by the education student interns during their final practicum with this group of teachers in the spring of 2002. Each participant's point of view is included in this article.

Another mandate for the projects was to engage practice in public space for a general audience who may not typically attend an art exhibition. Marilyn Smith, director of the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG), has been an important link in this network. She provided funding and space for an exhibition and for student workshops. The SAAG has a long history of providing fertile ground to generate art projects both inside and outside of schools. Marilyn had sponsored prior storefront exhibitions that involved Michael and myself in pairing artists with students in a mentoring, collaborative relationship. She has allowed us complete freedom and support in negotiating the terms of including students in offsite exhibitions.¹

Contemporary Art Practice in Relation to Education.

I came to Lethbridge in 1998, after teaching in North Dakota in a Fine Arts Department along with my husband, Michael Campbell. The two of us *were the entire* faculty of Fine Arts, while I also taught two education method courses. We worked as a team, with the students concurrently studying Art Education and Fine Arts, to translate contemporary art practice into teaching methods. Contemporary art has the ability to place, playfully and critically, pop and consumer culture beside art. Modernism viewed art and other objects separately. Contemporary art is relevant in the schools because it can dissolve boundaries between the lives of students inside and outside of school and between technology and more traditional materials. Contemporary art allows students

to respond to and interpret social context, pop culture, and emerging technologies. Art methods that overemphasize modernist traditions can become entrenched in standardized curriculum rather than engage progressively with the life world of the student.

Inquiry is critical observation and playful experimentation with materials and ideas. Both as teachers and as art makers, students' need to question assumptions about multimedia. Music videos, advertising graphics and computer games tend to be slick and seductive. Rather than emulate commercial production, Michael and I collect and produce examples of other possibilities.



fig. 1

Burning Canoe

By Michael Campbell
Audio video installation

As a contemporary artist I often collaborate with Michael Campbell in staging and videotaping dramatic tableaux to combine with sculptural objects and audio (fig. 1 & 2). Both these installations embody technology with the experience of a particular place where we focus on making art. We explore video as an abstract medium where images can be reduced, layered, colored, inverted, looped at different speeds, and projected as moving paintings within sculptural objects.

As an art teacher I believe that these artistic processes can change the use of technology in schools. Art is informed by feelings and ideas that are individual and self-motivated by curiosity, not standardized through rote learning of software skills. How can the grammatical schooling of software skills become more of an arts-based inquiry into one's place in the world? Our premise is that an artist/instructor is not only a technical and philosophical advisor, but is viewed by students as a model of what an artist is or can be.

I discovered video as a way to synthesize my hybrid life as an artist and an educator. I first learned video editing to make a documentary about hip hop graffiti to present with my doctoral thesis, now published as Painting Without Permission (2002). I made several documentaries about hip hop culture for my education students to see and hear participants speaking for

themselves in the context of their practice. I began to document artists, both working in their studios and in classrooms with children for my intern education teachers to see actual examples of contemporary art and culture being linked with classroom methods. I used video as an ethnographic research tool for three reasons: (a) To document the process of inquiry. (b) To interpret how artists connect ideas with materials. (c) To present the data as an educational resource. In regard to this last issue, my premise is that video, as an image-based research tool, can also be a teaching tool, and can ultimately play a role in provoking and facilitating curriculum evolution.

Since it is sometimes not practical to take classes of education students into the school, I collaborate with pre-service teachers during their practicum. I document these projects on video and still images that are organized into units of study on a web site. My goal is to provide resources and exemplar assignments for my students. I try to expand the group of educators who will allow an environment for my students to take risks in generating curriculum with students as active agents in collaboration with practitioners of art and technology. Multimedia production as a model for teamwork works well in teaching and art making that challenges both schools and the art world which are still largely built on a pyramid model of trying to get to the top by yourself.



fig 2

"& Garden"

Stride Gallery, Calgary

Audio/video installation
by Janice Rahn and
Michael Campbell.

Eighteen speakers under glass cloches, are viewer-activated to each sound a different water sound. The video is also viewer-activated to project onto the screen stretched across the opening in the '&'.

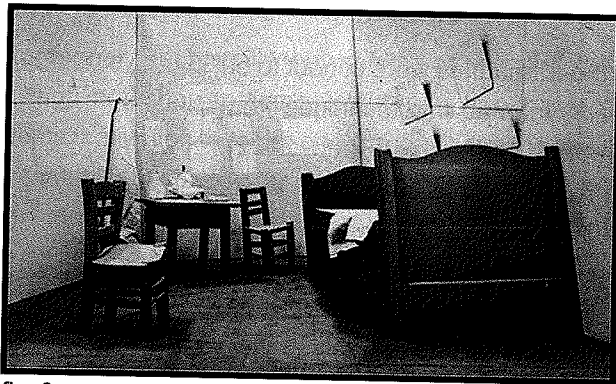


fig. 3



fig. 4

Van Gogh's Room

By: Murray Favro

1973-1974

painted wood and projected images

365.7 x 975.3 x 259.1 cm

Permanent Collection Art Gallery of Ontario

Tableau

In January, 2002, Michael and I taught a workshop to teachers which included my education students as assistants. I introduced the project by showing slides of work by the artist Murray Favro. When Favro was in Amsterdam viewing a VanGogh exhibit, he asked himself what it would be like to be standing inside one of the paintings. It was this question that motivated him to begin working with technology as a material in a series of installations. He began by projecting slides and then film projections onto cutout sculptures to create an illusory, virtual space (fig. 3 & 4). His work influenced many artists in Lethbridge such as David Hoffos, Michael Campbell, and myself to bring art into the realm of the cinematic experience and to play with the illusory.

After presenting slides of Murray Favro's three-D paintings, I showed a series of Dutch and French Romantic paintings and asked the teachers to stage a dramatic tableau based on one of the paintings. With more time in the classroom, I would have students research the artist and the historical context of the painting to improvise a dialogue between the individual characters. Jeff Wall is a contemporary Canadian artist who plays with the tableau method to create photographs based on the long history of Art appreciation. As well, performing in tableau is a technique often used in Drama as a method of improvisation. To introduce an early illusionistic technology, I show students my stereoscope and stereo cards (fig. 5) that were

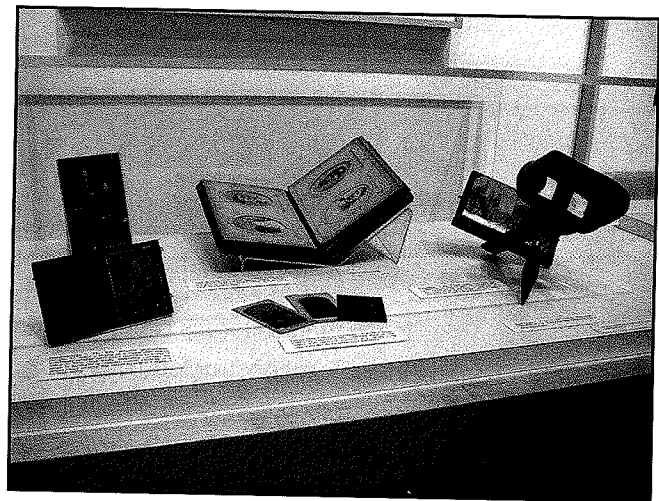


fig. 5

Extracted From an Archive:

Photographic Works From The University of Lethbridge Art Collection

Curated by: Don Gill

viewed as a type of parlour toy in the Victorian era. During this time it was also popular for actors to strike a pose in a theatrical tableau at the end of each act in the play. This desire to freeze a moment in time and the belief in the captured image as "truth" drove the many technological inventions that played a part in the rapid development of the photograph and camera.

In this workshop, the participants dressed in sheets of material and other costumes provided. After they arranged themselves into the same pose as the figures in the painting, the tableau was lit with flashlights and spotlights and then videotaped against a black backdrop (fig. 6). The next step is the addition of video, which introduces time and change into a form that is typically viewed as timeless.

The videotape was projected on sheets of Styrofoam and the silhouettes were cut out to be free standing, overlapping and spaced as figures on a stage. I learned this technique from David Hoffos when he taught as an 'artist in the school' in 1999 in Lethbridge (Rahn, 2002). David creates illusionary 3D effects by projecting video unto free-standing cutouts from plywood. Michael and I decided to combine this technique with video editing. We imported the image of the tableau into Final Cut Pro. We masked the black background and inserted a speeded up background of a dramatic sunset. This was exported back to tape and re-projected on the cutout of the tableau to create a moving 3-D painting. (fig. 6). One of the participant teachers tried the same technique in putting on a play about Harry Potter. He said people gasped at the magical illusionary effect. Time consciousness can open an awareness of the unique abstract language of film apart from telling a story. This activity allows students to experience historical references and to understand how nothing occurs in a vacuum.



fig. 6
video reprojection with
styrofoam cut-outs
S.W.A.T.L.A. workshop
Feb. 2002
Photo by: Janice Rahn

In my media literacy class I use dramatic tableau to teach how the photograph, especially in advertising, is constructed. This assignment reveals how images are not truths and encourages a sense of play in critiquing how images are staged in advertisements.

I have students work in groups to analyze examples of ads that are organized into different categories such as gender stereotypes, or the exotic in representing ethnicity. I also include images from art history that reveal the persistence of these themes throughout history. There are many books that critique advertising within an art historical context (Berger, J. 1971, Frith, K. 1998, Sturken, M. 2001). The students analyze the gestures, the relationship between figures and between the figure and product, the gaze, computer manipulation, use of text, scale, composition, color, etc. I ask them to create a theatrical tableau with their group that advertises a product. They act this out in front of the class while someone takes a digital photo. When I say "unfreeze," they bring the tableau to life with movement and dialogue. This personalizes a critique of the issues as they take on a character. We immediately project the images from the computer to show the translation of the 3-D tableau into a 2-D photo that was framed by the

photographer. Technically they see the speed of digital representation. The image is further constructed by using Photoshop software, to cut, past and manipulate with filters. This assignment depends on the students motivation to experience, and critique the social construction of an advertisement, while learning to communicate visually through formal design principles and technical skills.

In the assignment above with Amanda Payne's students the class become actively engaged in discussing and acting out the roles of characters portrayed in the ads (fig. 12). They work in groups to generate ideas and to stage the image. They work individually using photoshop software to manipulate the image and to juxtapose a product and text. Unlike traditional collage, digital layers can be easily separated to view and analyze variations of text and image. After the students finish their tableaus, they write an analysis about the original ads and the final Photoshop image. They each present their final image to the group who responds first with their interpretation before the creator of the image explains the intended meaning.

Leanne Elias was a student in this media literacy course while studying for her Master's in Education and again as my graduate assistant. She comes from an art background, with a BFA from the University of Lethbridge.



fig. 7

Random Stills from Elias' Visual Journal

By: Leanne Elias

Leanne Elias

(Multimedia Instructor at Lethbridge Community College)

My background is in photography, and while I made the transition from the darkroom to the computer fairly quickly, I was a little more reluctant to switch from a film camera to a digital one. Two experiences this past year have helped me to embrace this new format.

Visual Journals

The first was a "visual journal" (fig. 7) that I created over a 7-day period. After reading a series of biographies, I had been thinking about the notion of "diary", and wondered if an image diary would convey more or less than a written one. Not knowing how I might set rules for

recording my days, I just strapped on a wristwatch that had a timer built in, and every 30 minutes, when the alarm quietly alerted me, I shot a digital picture of whatever I was looking at when I heard the first "beep" of the watch. I did this for 7 days, from the time I woke up until the time I went to bed. Then I printed the images (over 200 of them) and assembled them into a book.

While the project became an immersion into the idea of a "diary", the project also challenged the way I had previously used a camera: carefully composing every shot, making decisions about film type, lighting, aperture and speed. Over the 7 day period, the camera became an extension of my body as I learned to pick up the camera,

take the shot and put the camera down without stopping when I heard the alarm “beep.” I learned to ignore all questions my mind was asking about the technical details, and being able to view and print the image immediately kept me ‘grounded’ in the project.

One of the most interesting aspects about this project was what the pictures *didn't* show (fig. 7,8). My cat, an elusive creature and one that I don't see very often, showed up 4 times in seven days. My children, with whom I thought I spent most of my time, hardly show up at all. I wondered what activities of my day I would consciously choose to convey in still images? When we write in our journals, we make conscious decisions about what to write about. Recording our actions in photographs at times that are pre-determined gives a very different outlook into our lives. This project is one that can be modified in many different

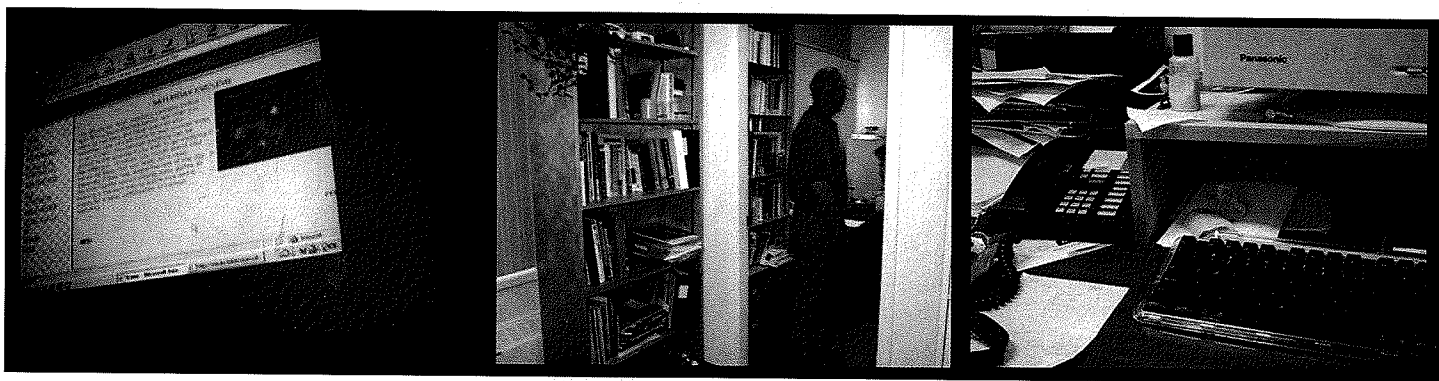


fig. 8

Photo Journal

By: Leanne Elias

ways. For instance, elementary aged children might work well in pairs, where one of them is the photographer and one is the subject. Every half hour, the child who is the subject could be photographed, and the resulting body of work could be an interesting starting point for discussion about biography. Another way it could be modified would be to have students choose one picture that they felt best represented their day and their personality. They could then write about why this is the case.

In the Multimedia Production program where I teach, students are required to take design classes as part of their larger program. While many students are interested in art and design issues, many others are not. The challenge I face is getting these students motivated to communicate visually, and to learn the tools of the trade along the way. I don't want my classes to be the place students “learn Photoshop”, but rather the place where they solve problems and change their awareness of the visual world.

In my artmaking I am motivated to learn new tools to better communicate an idea. Technology is often taught through a tutorial approach to learning software skills without considering content. In many schools, computer graphics has been co-opted by business or computer information departments, and the teaching of computer applications such as Photoshop or Flash are being taught by instructors with no formal training in visual literacy. I agreed with Janice that there was a need to develop curriculum based on artists' methods of integrating technology with traditional tools and materials.

I began working with Janice Rahn as a grad student and as an assistant in several 'artist in the school' projects. In our discussions we tried to define inquiry-based learning, by analyzing how artists problem-solve in their work. Janice introduced me to Jackie Thibert, an intern teacher who was doing an alternative practicum in three different sites from grades 7-12, plus an art camp at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery with ages 6-12. I'll describe one project that excited me about how digital technology could motivate students to become actively involved.

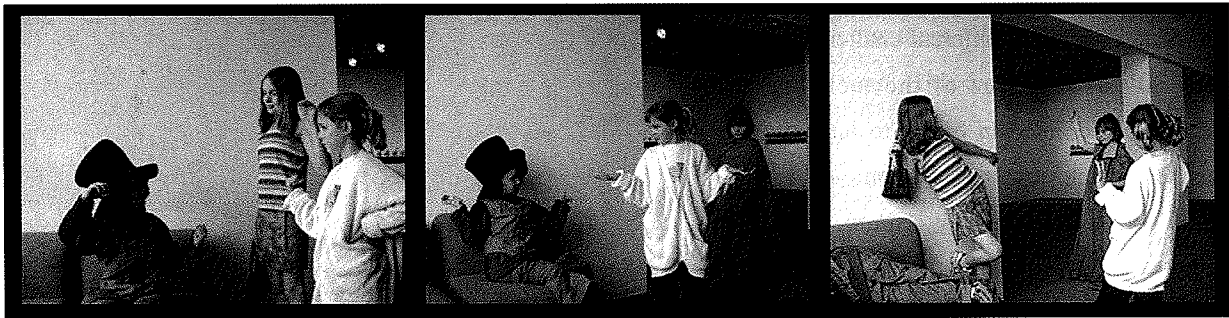


fig. 9

Excerpts From Grade 3-4 Students' Digital Storyboard

Storyboard Tableau

The students worked in groups to write a story, storyboard it, and act out dramatic tableaux that were photographed digitally by a member of the group (fig. 9). The images were immediately printed and pinned to the wall, followed by a critique where the other groups voiced their interpretation of what the story was about.

The immediacy of the technology facilitated an understanding of the process of acting, photographing, capturing and re-viewing the images. The critique gave them immediate feedback about how their images communicated to an audience. This close relationship to audience is a large motivating factor in causing students to re-think and to re-do their images with more rational intent. This project is an example of the *idea* driving the *technology*.

Janice: As software programs become more user-friendly the fluency between the intent and the actualization of the ideas can empower students to delve deeper into learning. However, like any tool, its use depends on how the assignment is framed by examples and directed by the instructor.

Geoff Weatherall is a graphic designer who teaches junior high art and computers. When I met him he was becoming disillusioned with computer art because students were not being trained as artists and they expected the computers to do everything for them. He wanted to integrate traditional artmaking to encourage students to manipulate materials, including technology.

Geoff Weatherall

(computer and art teacher at a junior high school)

In the fall of 2001, I was approached by Janice Rahn from the University of Lethbridge to take a couple of intern teachers. This was an opportune time for I was just initiating a new option in multi-media at our school. The practicum was unique in the way the interns would be shared by three different schools. The rationale for this was to compare the assignments being taught at the junior high level compared to senior high, and with an alternative site where motivation was the main problem in student learning. Each of these sites provided different challenges. I will talk about some of the technical problems presented in trying to integrate technology into my art classroom. Jackie and Rod will speak about some of the projects they tried.

I took this as an opportunity to build upon my commercial arts class where I had the most flexibility with curriculum and could benefit from the enthusiasm and knowledge the interns had for the latest in cutting edge technology. The multi-media program at the junior high level was in its infancy and was centered on learning Microsoft PowerPoint. The students by this time had outgrown the choices offered by this software and were seeking greater challenges in the possibilities to produce more involved projects with a wider variety of media. The interns managed to incorporate media awareness in the development of the student projects and this was a key component in the final outcomes (fig. 10, 11, 12).



fig. 10

Under/Over Exposure

Grade 1 through
University projects

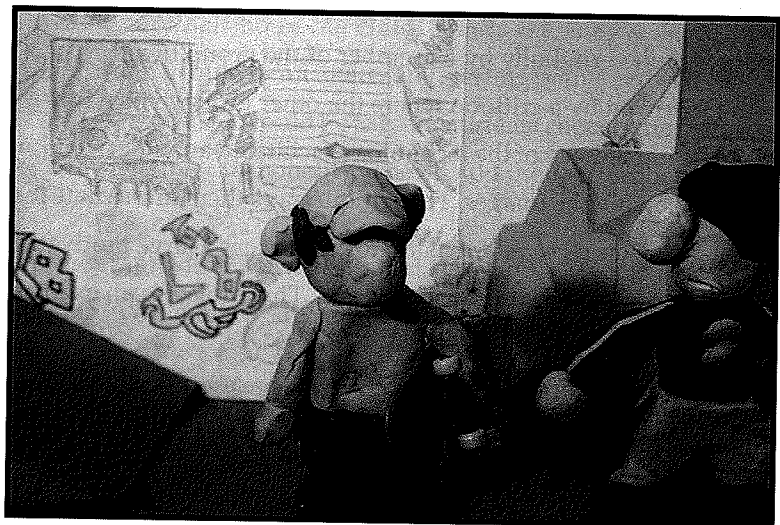


fig. 11

Animation Characters, Detail

By: James Wade
(grade 9 student)

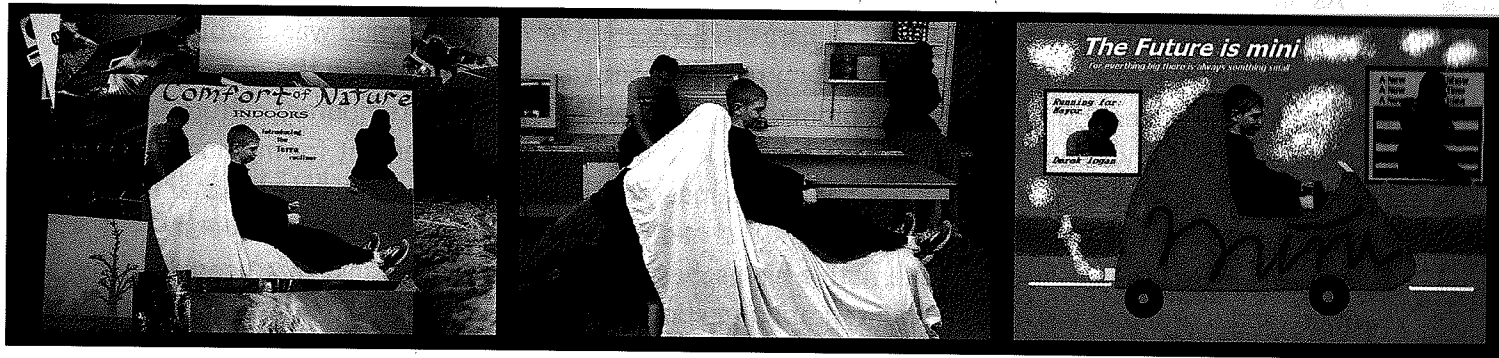


fig. 12

Advertising Tableau

By: Students of Amanda Payne

Some of the challenges that the instructors encountered were significant. The lack of technical hardware to drive any graphic software was the first area to cause the interns and students frustration. This was overcome in most instances by upgrading the speed and memory of the computers. We were disadvantaged by the number of students who required their use at the same time. This was overcome by creative timetabling of students to use equipment at different times.

The students worked in groups of three or four. They focused on three basic areas of multimedia: video production, animation and fanzines. They chose to work in their area of interest. For example, a student who did not like working three-dimensionally chose to work with the 2-D cut and paste design of fanzine construction.² All three areas involved writing and planning of rough drafts using traditional art materials, such as typography, script writing, storyboarding, clay modeling, set building, drawing, and painting. The ideas and materials were developed further through the use of technology which was seamlessly integrated in the art room. I saw a need for more computers in the art room to continue this approach.

We met the huge challenges in this first year to build a solid base for the next years' students. The work with the intern teachers caused me to purchase several more computers and software packages for the art room. I continue to build the supplies and equipment that are required for the projects. The popularity of the program has exceeded our wildest expectations and the projects have improved in quality. We currently have far more students applying for the course than we have space to accommodate. Without the help and expertise of the initial intern teacher placements, it is doubtful that any program of this quality could have been developed. Jackie and Rod will describe some of the projects we tried at the junior high level during their final practicum.

Jackie Thibert
(student intern)

As an art student at the University of Lethbridge, I focused very little on the use of technology in art. Ironically it wasn't until I had finished the art studio portion of my degree and was devoting most of my time studying teaching methods in art curriculum, that I was presented with the opportunity to learn about the increasing relevance of multimedia in the classroom and contemporary culture. I asked Dr. Janice Rahn if it was possible for me to do some kind of alternative placement for my final practicum called Professional Semester III. In this semester I teach 50% as a first year teacher under the mentorship of a teacher and a faculty member. I had already worked with Janice in my PSII practicum where I taught art at an alternative high school. Janice immediately said that I could work with her and a group of instructors on integrating multimedia into the art curriculum.

When I began PSIII, I realized that the main challenge would be motivating most of the students to take even the slightest interest in their work. I struggled through the first week thinking that if I ever survived the practicum I would have to seriously think about my long term plans as a teacher, at least at the junior high level.

Animation

I was fortunate to have a brother who was studying multimedia at the time. He showed me how to do some simple stop motion animation using clay and toys and other props lying around the house. It was amazing to me that something that seemed so complex could be so simple. Just move the object and take a picture. Easy! Of course there are many other things you must consider such as the idea, the concept, design and most of all commitment. At this point I was just amazed when it worked for me.

We began the project in the schools by watching different kinds of animation. We looked at everything from Disney cartoons to "Toy Story" to Japanese Animation. I showed them a video done by an art student, Denton Fredrickson, who was in Michael Campbell's Video Sketchbook class. His piece "Ballet Kitchen Space" demonstrated another form of stop motion that used paper cutouts. The success of the animation projects showed me how to fuse traditional methods-modeling clay figures, cutting paper cutouts, painting and drawing backdrops-with more current mediums, resources, and ideas.



Fig. 13
"The Dinner Party"
Animation characters
by Isobel Gordon Smith
and
Sierra Dakin Kuiper

After struggling through creating story boards and deciding what their animations would be about, they all finished projects that expressed their individual obsessions and preoccupations. The main bonus for me was that we all enjoyed and learned something in the process.

Rod Scott

(PSIII intern teacher)

When I was about fifteen years old, I created a short video of my family's outings. It was fun. I put music to it, I cut up various clips and reordered them to create a faster moving, more captivating video. I created this in my parent's basement using many VHS tapes, my father's hulking video camera, and an old VCR. My imagination told me what I wanted, but the technology-or lack of it, dictated how close I could come to actualize it as a final product. Nearly ten years later I was sitting in my basement at three in the morning, finding that there was no limit to how technology could allow me to create a video exactly as I envisioned it. What an extraordinary treat it was to remember my earlier frustrations in comparison to the limitless possibilities in the new tools available.

I wondered, as I worked late into the night, how I could get students to feel the sense of ownership that comes from the imagination and the desire to translate ideas into personal projects.

Identity

Jackie and I taught in three separate schools from January to April, 2002. Each had their unique elements, which allowed us to design a series of assignments that could be adjusted with a variety of teaching methods. The alternative school was unique in that students attended anywhere from a few days to months or years depending on their ability to reintegrate into the public school system. We designed a unit based on identity, deciding that the students might enjoy reinventing themselves through the use of technology. We purchased a few copies of "Cosmo" software that allowed them to create virtual makeovers of themselves with different hairstyles, makeup and piercings with the click of a button. We introduced them to fanZine culture³ by showing examples of how people self-publish their personal obsessions and circulate them within a large network of other Zine writers and illustrators. Some created a Zine about their interests with their makeover on the cover. Others created a video based on the theme "Under/Over Exposure" which was created in collaboration with Ryan Doherty (curator at the SAAG), Marilyn Smith and Michael Campbell, for a final storefront window exhibition of the projects. From the outset it was decided that a large motivating factor in making art was to exhibit to a broad audience. Too often students feel they are making work for the teacher, while they would be more motivated to make it for their peers and parents. We were told by their teacher, Dawn King-Hunter, that some of the students who were previously very unmotivated took up the project with newfound vigor. Some of the students were staying after school hours, which was a novelty. Others were going to extraordinary lengths to create a project that was their own. One young man videotaped local celebrities in a satirical look at 'Got Milk?' ads.

Some of the students continued on with their projects even after we had finished our practicum and left the school to teach at another local school. We found that the motivation levels of these students rose from the first day we arrived. Some of this was due to the novelty of the computer applications we chose to use. Mainly it was due to the project-based approach that allowed everyone to participate at their own skill level with a focus on personal identity

Janice: Adolescents are motivated to work with peers on their common obsession with personal identity. This allows a critique of how identity construction is controlled by the media. Therefore identity construction is a major theme in all my class activities that involve media and technology.

Technology as Material

Janice: Michael and I collaborate in art production and curriculum development. Since we teach in different faculties we bring different perspectives to the education of artists and art teachers. Most of Michael's students teach art at some point in their careers, so it is important for them to understand how to translate their art practice into teaching methods. The arts allow students to put theory into practice. With the integration of technology, students can critique and reinvent tactics used in movies, television and anything from popular culture.

Students who do not have the money to worry about production values are attracted to discarded materials from everyday life and technology for art projects. The main thing is to get them involved with the issues and images associated with technology. Working with technology as a material means to consider audio, moving images, and references to popular culture in relation to traditional artmaking such as painting, drawing, and sculpture.

Like discarded technology, the storefront window as an exhibition site, allows students to draw ideas from an everyday context with a do it yourself attitude to take the means of production and exhibition into their own hands. Most of the students who have exhibited in storefronts have used discarded technology to reference desire, and distraction of display culture.

Michael Campbell

(Professor in the Fine Arts department at the University of Lethbridge)

We adopted the storefront as a tactic to draw contemporary art into the everyday and to reclaim the downtown core of Lethbridge. Lethbridge, like many North American cities is experiencing a hollowing from within. Big box stores have emerged in the outskirts of city centers to draw most consumers away from the downtown. The spiritual center of a city is its downtown. Malls and factory outlets exist to serve our needs, at unbeatable low prices, but never to foster any sense of community or cultural identity. A depressing number of stores sit vacant in the Lethbridge downtown. The owners gladly gave up their spaces and supported the project. Architecturally unique, windblown, culturally diverse—the center of Lethbridge is an ideal site to wander around and accidentally cross paths with a contemporary art experience. The storefront projects attempted to infuse life in an emptied landscape by staging an event, that might stop us in our tracks, even for a brief *Pause* (title of first series of exhibitions in 2001).

The storefront created a public space where different aged students could mix with professional artists and an audience. This dialogue allowed students to take themselves seriously as artists who have a place in society.

Fig. 14

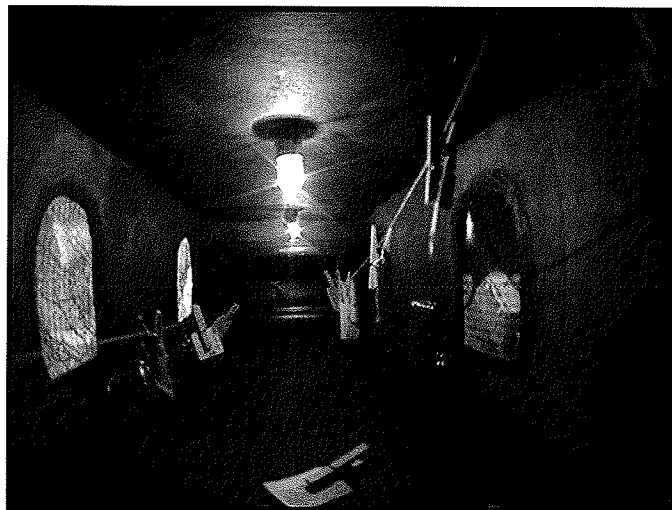
Animation Set
Mixed Media
Dana Price
2001.



Dana constructed sets inside boxes for her animations. She displayed here sets which looked like beat up cardboard boxes (18"x24") from the outside held together with duct tape. Looking through the magnified peep hole the viewer was surprised to see a magical scale model interior. The animations were displayed on a monitor next to the sets at the under/over (+-) exposure storefront window show.

Fig. 15

Animation Set
Mixed Media
Dana Price
2001.



Janice: The window exhibitions all referenced codes of display in the art objects and themes of desire. I bought nine mirrored display cases from an Eatons sell off sale. I scratched images from my garden unto the backs of the mirrors which were revealed by the light bulbs. The reflecting mirrors created an infinite, reflective space, which was magical at night.

My goal as an art educator is to "infuse" the educational system with artists' methods of working with materials and ideas. The inclusion of new media as an art material opens up possibilities to actively engage with contemporary culture and a wider audience in public space.

Notes

¹ Storefront Window Exhibitions.

Janice: Art institutions can enclose art rather than open contestable spaces that engage a larger audience. The Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG) in Lethbridge, Alberta, has a history of sponsoring off-site exhibition spaces that offer possibilities for art students to exhibit and to consider the relationship of art with the local community. Before we came to Lethbridge, Michael Campbell and I exhibited our own and student work in storefront windows. In Spring, 2000 I was involved in a series of storefront window exhibitions sponsored by the SAAG and curated by Michael Campbell, and Robyn Moody. In "I've wanted to show you this for some time now," a practicing artist was paired with a graduating student who felt ready to show their work. Pairing students with artists created a mentoring situation. For example, Mary Kavanagh produced two videos of silverware being polished. The video monitors were presented on a Victorian side table. The student exhibiting next to her, Erin Graham, grew up on a sheep farm and installed a video about carding wool. She filled the window space with wool to surround the monitor. Most of the artists and students used discarded technology and objects.

The *content* of the work was influenced by the *context* of the storefront window.

For example, Glenn McKinnon appropriated the design from the sales receipt, created by the owner. Instead of "Leo Stringer, clothing sales", he cut from plywood in the same script font: "Glen McKinnon, artist." Brian McKenna filled the space with television monitors that played radically edited, looped segments from shows such as the "Wizard of Oz". Many unassuming viewers looked curiously into the window to see if it was a new electronics store. I was paired to show in the window beside Brian. I displayed mirrors inscribed with sensuous, abstracted, organic drawings,

² Zine Culture

Michael Campbell: In 1997-98 Janice Rahn and myself constituted the entire art department and, like any teaching experience I have had so far, there was a core of committed, curious and engaged art students. There was little or no art community in Dickinson, or at least there was not one that could keep me stimulated. It was clear that whatever needs I had at the time that I was going to have to provide for myself. It was during this time that I first started writing away for zines. I spent my adolescent years addicted to comics and occasionally bought small-run photocopied comics that are zines of an illustrated type.

A zine is a small photocopied magazine, hand bound written and produced by an individual, partnership or an entire team. The enterprise tends to be altruistic: the zine produced more for a community than for profit. Typically a zine's cost is limited to return postage or at the high end a dollar or two. The author's impulse to practically give them away is based on connecting with like-minded individuals around the world. Typically the zine's content is atypical and infinite; confessional diaries of eleven year olds from Omaha zine (Muffinbones), guides to infiltrating sewer pipes and hotel swimming pools zines (Infiltration), Asian pop culture in North America zines (Giant Robot), asthma inhaler zines (Asthmazol) and collected writings of disgruntled-yet-literary temp workers (Temp Slave).

I wrote away to an address in California and struck up a correspondence with Lia, who put out her own zine called Salamander, and happened to run a zine distro (a distribution service). I ordered a bunch of zines based on short descriptions and Lila's recommendations and eventually received a bulked package in the mail. The DIY (do it yourself) punk ethic was at work behind this culture asking: Why buy a magazine from a corporation that has little to do with you and your life, when you can make your own magazine? Many of the writers were intelligent, critical, pop-cultural savvy and funny. They were able to laugh at themselves and at the world with a similar biting wit. Zines are powered by the desire to create as well as the need to connect with a larger community in a global culture.

entitled "I couldn't put it into words." The drawings and objects placed behind glass, reflecting into infinity, were meant to inspire desire.

In Robyn Moody's, "Buzz" the audience completed the work by activating a motion detector that lit up a sequence of fragmented phrases to create a random sentence from infinite possible combinations. Moody emailed me: "A cigarette burns, a drink sits effervescing ... Across the space is a perpetually changing sentence emulating either the direct or indirect messages conveyed through media 'I want more', ... 'You deserve better,' ... 'You don't need more,' ... 'We don't deserve success ... etc.'" This scene is displayed in a window space—traditionally a place for eye-catching displays intent on drawing in customers. Is it intended as a mass advertisement, or as a curiosity? "Buzz" is a representation of the products of "the Buzz" being fully embraced."

In the spring of 2001, the SAAG sponsored Michael Campbell and I to curate "Pause." The same number of art students were paired with artists but this time five different locations were used throughout the downtown area, and the exhibitions were up for a month. When the shows opened, the audience was given a map at the SAAG, for a walking tour of the exhibitions.

Storefront Window Exhibition: Under/Over Exposure

The most recent exhibition, *Under/Over Exposure (+/- exp)*, May, 2002, again sponsored by the SAAG, involved an education intern, fine arts students, and children in the schools from ages 6 to 14. Instead of using only the window, we used the entire store space. The students responded to the theme +/- exp in many different ways. Dana Price, a university art student, taught herself animation skills after watching the animated films by the brothers Quay. Dana also installed boxes with door peepholes that magnified the view of miniature surreal room interiors. The exteriors looked like everyday boxes, disguising the interior magical illusory worlds. A grade eight student made a box around a surveillance camera. When the viewer looked into the box, his/her face appeared on a video monitor displayed in the gallery.

All of the characters and sets from animations made by students in the schools, were displayed and the animations were looped on a DVD that continually played on a monitor. The content of the projects in the schools were framed by a critique of advertising and youth culture followed with a study of animation techniques. University fine art students became involved by demonstrating different stop motion techniques such as paper cutouts and set designs. The art teacher was excited because it allowed him to fuse traditional methods with contemporary mediums, resources and ideas. In all of the finished projects, students expressed their individual obsessions and preoccupations.

The teaching and exhibition of student projects could never be achieved without the collaboration of many people working together within a community of artists and educators

References

- Sturken, M., Cartwright, L. (2001), *Practices of Looking, an introduction to visual culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin.
- Frith, K.T. (1997), *Undressing the Ad, Reading Culture in Advertising*, New York: Counterpoints, Peter Lang.
- Rahn, Janice, (2002), *Painting Without Permission*, CT: Bergin and Garvey, Greenwood Press.
- Rahn, Janice, (2001), Community, collaboration, and dialogue: Multimedia curriculum and change in education, *Canadian Review of Art Education*, 28(1/2) 2001 pg 61-90.
- Rahn, Janice, (1999), An ethnographic study of hip hop graffiti culture, In *Material History Review*, Pocius, G. (Ed.). Ottawa: Museum of Science and Technology.
- Rush, Michael, (1999), *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art*, New York: Thames and Hudson.
- Solnit, Rebecca, (2003), *Rivers of Shadows*, New York: Viking.