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Defining community art: theoretical and practical reconstruction

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DEFINING COMMUNITY ART:
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL RECONSTRUCTION

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submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Visual Studies

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ABSTRACT

Defining Community Art: Theoretical and Practical Reconstruction

By

WONG Samson Kei Shun

Doctor of Philosophy

This research investigates the area of practice commonly known as community art, defined to be where a gathering of people participates in facilitated collaborative art making aimed to be increasing their autonomy in generating artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment. This definition is a result of integrating existing research, literature, interviews with practitioners and analyses of their work. It is an interdisciplinary research conducted through a grounded methodology where data from practitioners and literature mutually inform to yield insights into a seemingly unstructured practice.

Seven interviewees were chosen to represent a coherent and recognized body of practice. They are practicing visual and performing artists who specialize in facilitating people of communities in collaborative art process. Each having over 15 years of experience in committed engagement with communities, they are also trainers, educators and professionals in various tertiary, cultural and public institutions. They are either based or are/were committed to the development of community art in Hong Kong, and are all experienced overseas. Their mix of art disciplines and effectiveness across countries indicate a fundamental connection in their view of art and people that is beyond artistic media and cultural context. Thus, a Hong Kong perspective is provided that may contribute to other metropolitan settings in Asia and worldwide.

Guided by the data, this research sought theoretical support for the community artists’ operational concepts of art, people, community and participation. The literature drawn include the ethology of art (Dissanayake, Davies), the nature of the experience of art (Dewey), theories of education (Freire, Dewey), theories of community and individuals (Putnam, McKnight & Block), psychological theories on experience and motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, Ryan & Deci), and theories of social psychology on identity and social belonging (Baumeister & Leary, Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe). This interdisciplinary perspective builds a framework that explains how the artistic and social dimensions in community art, instead of being in compromise, can be synergetic. Of special interest are the untapped aspects of Freire and Dewey’s theories often overlooked by scholars of artistic engagement with communities. Requiring expertise beyond a single scholar, this research proposes only one effective integration of the above disciplines.

Interviewees currently based: 4 HK, 1 US, 2 UK.
This research conceptualizes the development of community art to be an interplay of artistic movements, to progressively seek social relevance from object, place, then to people, and at the same time to return art into the hands of the people. It is a practice distinct but in relation to the overlapping categories of the socially engaged arts, dialogical art, community cultural development, community-based art education and public art (Bishop, Cartiere, Goldbard, Kester, Thompson).

The shifting definitions have nurtured a blossoming of artist engagement in the society, but has also resulted in miscommunication of what exactly academics, artists and institutions are planning, funding, doing, evaluating and researching. In contrast to an embracive attitude that has unfortunately led to confusion, this research proposes certain defining characteristics for community art, with implications that seek to further the discourse of artistic engagement with communities.
DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

______________________________
(WONG Samson Kei Shun)
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

DEFINING COMMUNITY ART:
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL RECONSTRUCTION

By
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Doctor of Philosophy

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Introduction

This dissertation investigates the practice of community art beginning with the basic beliefs of art, people and community that inform its workings. A working definition of community art will be provided to be modified along the way, yielding insights to the uniqueness of this practice.

This dissertation is targeted at any practitioners who are serious in sharing something good about the arts with people. More generally, it is targeted at those who believe that art can and should function beyond the disciplines of art and aesthetics, affecting people and society in the blurred boundaries of everyday lives. While this dissertation is centered on community art, the author is one of countless practitioners in being questioned on their use of art that goes beyond artistic settings.

Question 1: “What is the point of just having fun?” This question is most often expressed in a derogatory way that certain community art projects are pointless in simply providing a joyful experience. Assuming that joy, most often recognized when people laugh, signifies certain internal state, this dissertation will respond to this question by investigating this internal state.

Question 2: Must artistic quality be sacrificed for social impact? The answer would be yes if the art inherently has nothing to do with everyday life. Assuming that art is not totally antithetical to values outside of the arts, this dissertation will respond to this question by identifying how art and life overlaps.

Question 3: How can the impact of art be measured? Is it duplicable? If the impact is targeted at a field outside of the arts, then one must draw on knowledge of the relevant fields. This means understanding the nature of that impact and the mechanism that enables it. Yet the following question should also be asked: is the scientific isolation of cause and effect an accurate representation of what is understood about the nature of the arts? While this challenge may sound anti-innovative to artists, a funder expressing this often implies “this is great work you are doing, can you do something similar elsewhere?” To provide an answer to this question, one must first understand what it
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was that one does in the first place. With that as a basis, one would be able to reply what is unique, and what is duplicable in such projects.

Artists who work closely with communities are often confronted with these questions. While they might be frustrated in how people may misunderstand the nature of the work, it also where communication must begin. If practitioners indeed feel that these questions are based on inaccurate notions of art or the social, then what are the ‘correct’ notions? These questions, however misinformed they seem, already demonstrate that the inquirer believes the arts to have certain impacts. The author believes that it is the responsibility of the practitioners and scholars, himself included, to establish how they understand their practice, and to communicate it.

As a precursor to this dissertation, three comments are provided to explain the author’s approach to these questions.

First, is it important that people are enjoying the experience? Since this question is often based on partial observation of people’s emotional expression, such as laughter or smile, a fuller understanding of this enjoyment must be based on more comprehensive observation that could identify the cause of their apparent ‘enjoyment’. Furthermore, if the criticism of community art is that it is ‘only’ about enjoyment, then the reversed question may also be asked: should artists be concerned if people are not enjoying the experience?

Second, under a paradigm where artistic quality is narrowly defined by curators and critics, projects are seen either as pursuing artistic quality or social impact, but rarely both. The author shares the goal of countless other artists who seek to make art part of people’s everyday lives, where both art and social can function in parallel. Everyone is an artist either if everything is art or if everyone can behave artistically. Though the author appreciates the conceptualization of Beuys who proclaims that everyone is an artist in the “TOTAL ARTWORK OF THE FUTURE SOCIAL ORDER” (Beuys, 1973; capital original), he is more interested in the theoretical and practical potential of conceptualizing how every human being might be artistic in the ‘traditional’ practices of singing (vocalization), dancing (moving), drama (dramatizing) and painting
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(visualization). If not everything in life is art, how are these ‘traditional’ practices part of everyday lives?

Third, regarding measurement and duplication, the author sees the scientific method of isolation and identification of cause and effect as a welcomed exercise in delineating the multifaceted work of artistic engagement with communities. Although this field of practice is an evolving and organic phenomenon that functions and impacts in multiple ways, there are characteristics that unify various practices. For example, the academic and practical field of public art has developed its languages to enable its unique discourses. The field interacts with architecture, urban planning, and material behaviour etc. that guide works to be created. There are relatively established ways of creating new works that to certain degrees duplicate various dimensions of previous impacts. These also form the foundation to which more innovative works are continually conceived and created.

However, what of those practices that work primarily with people? As a comparison, if material behaviour guides the construction of art pieces that will not topple over its audiences, or that certain placements of works will create physical gathering, are there similar understandings in human behaviour that can guide practices that work primarily with people?

The comment to the first challenge is applied to narrow down the range of practices that works mainly with people through ‘traditional’ art forms. This description matches that of the community arts as understood in most scholarly literature. Therefore, by reconstructing an understanding of community art, this dissertation also responds to the larger questions of whether the artistic must be sacrificed for the social, and whether the social impact of the arts can be measured and duplicated.

What is ‘community art’?
The author first became cognizant of ambiguities in the communication of artist engagement in communities during the ‘00s, a period in Hong Kong that saw a

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2 An in depth discussion is provided in chapter 1 and 2.
3 These questions will be addressed in the conclusion.
proliferation of social- and community-oriented art and art activities. In one area of growth, artists and organizations of various media take their work outside of galleries and performance halls to schools, community centres and publicly accessible locations. A second area of growth is the establishment of organizations or department/teams within social welfare and community organizations that use art as a tool towards social aims within and outside of the local welfare and education system. The third area of growth began as early as the 1990s in the use of art among contemporary artists or social activists to respond to or to affect social and political changes. It was under this local backdrop where the term ‘community art’ became loosely and widely adopted to describe any art activities that are in certain ways related to concepts of community4.

State of local practice and research

In light of the rise in practice, the academic community has also begun its scholarly inquiries. Four conferences held in Hong Kong during the course of this research provided the author with an understanding of the breadth of local practice, they are Dialogue! Publicly Engaged Art Practices5 held in December 2013, Art as Social Interaction6, held between October and December, 2014, For the Sake of the People: Forum and Workshop on Community Arts7 (Forum 2014), held in November 2014 and Forum on Community Arts and Heritage Preservation8 (Forum 2016) held in April 2016. Though the conferences involved Taiwanese and other overseas group, the author only understands local practices and focuses on local situations. These conferences

4 The author worked both freelance and fulltime in the decade prior to this research. The sustained collaboration with a similar group of artists enabled him to be a part of a developing and evolving group. This experience balances the wider but shorter exposure in his collaborations with other organizations and artists. As the coordinator of the self-acknowledged ‘community art’ organization Art for All, where ‘community art’ is defined as a “shared artistic process” where participants are facilitated to create their own artwork (Art for All, accessed 2016), the author found it challenging to communicate the team’s uniqueness with potential partners and funders in this climate of blossoming practice. In order to cooperate effectively with partners and stakeholders, it was imperative to differentiate their type of artistic engagement from others by how they work and where the value of our work lies. It was then realized that even fundamental concepts such as ‘art’, ‘people’ and ‘community’ cannot assumed to be similarly understood. This task was not only important in establishing their work, but also to understand their relationship with other community-oriented arts organizations, who should be considered as partners rather than competitors. The author and his team reflected on many questions: How do we choose our artists, partners and participants? How do we do our work? What is our picture of success? Why do we use mostly several art forms, when individually some of us use other forms in our own creative work? These questions would often lead to basic questions such as what do we mean by community? How do we see human beings in general? What is art? Why do we do what we do? 5 Dialogue! Publicly Engaged Art Practices organized by the HK Visual Arts Centre. This conference is the largest in scale of the three, involving over 60 individual or parties in the academy, small and large organizations and collectives, mostly in the visual arts. http://dialogue.hk/. 6 Art as Social Interaction co-organized by Association of the Visual Arts in Taiwan; kaitak Centre for Research and Development, Academy of Visual Arts, HK Baptist University; Bureau of Cultural Affairs Kaohsiung City Government; Graduate Institute of Interdisciplinary Art, National Kaohsiung Normal University. http://artassocialinterac.wix.com/kktw. 7 For the Sake of the People: Forum and Workshop on Community Arts co-organized by MA and BA in Cultural Management, Chinese University HK, and Centre for Cultural Studies. http://www6.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/crs/communityarts/index.html. 8 Forum on Community Arts and Heritage Preservation is the second conference co-organized by MA and BA in Cultural Management, Chinese University HK, and Centre for Cultural Studies, held between April 8 to 10, 2016. http://www6.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/communityarts2016/
represent mostly the second and third areas of growth discussed above. While there are issues surrounding the first area, it is often only treated as outreach or audience development programmes.

The variety of artistic engagement represented by the conference attendees illustrates a blossoming of the practice in the last decade as described above. Regarding the makeup of the organization presenters, at least ten organizations presented at more than one of the above conferences. Many of the projects by these organizations were led by a similar pool of artists with varying degrees of overlap, practicing a range of engagements among and within projects. This suggests that both organizers and artists are aware of the advantages of multiple forms of engagements. The frequency of collaborations among different organizations and artists also suggests that this is a field of practice with an overall shared or compatible goals or methods.

For Dialogue!, the sheer number of over 60 presenting parties and individuals certainly posed both a logistical challenge that also affected thematic groupings of speakers. While Art as Social Interaction, Forum 2014 and Forum 2016 are more modest in scale, the range of artistic engaged represented by their speakers were equally wide and varied. By valuing the breadth of artistic engagement in filling panels with cases that had multiple variables (art media, types of communities, mode of engagement, role of artists and participants) it became difficult for panels to engage in deeper discussions of their work.

The author cannot deny feeling energized by existing and newly developed projects introduced at the conferences that continues to expand the possible hybrids of media, engagements and situations addressed. Some of the good examples include EmptySCape, We Search for Keywords and Association of Tai O Environment and Development. Although this environment has nourished a polyphony of approaches of artistic engagement in the society, it sometimes also results in miscommunication of

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9 These include Art in Hospital, Art for All, Centre for Community Cultural Development, Community Cultural Concern, Community Museum Project, Make A Difference, Northeastern New Territories Style, Soundpocket, v-artist and Wooferten

10 For example, in Dialogue!, under heading "Individual. Engagement", session "Social Movement: Self-initiated Projects by Artists/Curators", 5 speakers represented differently initiated projects, engagements with different concepts of community, art forms and various roles of people as audience and participants. In Art as Social Interaction, the combination of HK and Taiwan speakers in panels facilitated comparisons instead of the consolidation of the nature of their work. In Forum and Workshop on Community Arts, similar to Dialogue, panels consisted of speakers representing a wide range of artistic engagement.
what exactly academics, artists and institutions are planning, funding, doing, evaluating and researching. This hampers the emergence and establishment of methods and criticism important to long term developments. The effort to delineate among different types of engagement is not to propose which is better, but to understand better why a certain method is more effective in certain situations. Thus, it was in the early stages of this research that the author considered focusing on more specific parameters to enable deeper analysis.

Moreover, the disciplinary perspectives often apply in the panel discussions include politics, culture, ethnography, architecture, environment and gender. However, the mechanics and theories of artistic creation and reception and human interactions are rarely addressed. A discussion revolving around some of these issues occurred in Dialogue!, but the perspectives were again quite varied that it only grazed the surface (Arts Promotion Office, 2013). The approach of connecting human survival success with artistic creation and perception is a perspective that originates from research on art and wellbeing by Professor Sophia Law\textsuperscript{11}. This was resonated in Art for All chairperson and artist Evelyna Liang’s theoretical framework for the therapeutic nature of ‘community art’ for research and funding purposes\textsuperscript{12}. It was somewhat surprising to find minimal attention from panelists and attendees of the conferences to this dimension.

This accumulation of observations has raised several questions that guide this research. First, is there ground to the author’s hypothesis that ‘community art’ is unique in being primarily concerned with human interactions, and in primarily employing ‘traditional art forms’? If the answer is “yes” to the first question, then the following question is why and on what theoretical and practical grounds? Finally, if the first two questions are satisfactorily addressed, what is the role of the practice of community art within the field of artistic engagement in communities?

Main bodies of literature

\textsuperscript{11} Much of this research’s use of psychology literatures and references to neuroscience either originated from or inspired by the research of Professor Law.

\textsuperscript{12} The author was a freelancer working part-time for Evelyna during that period in addition to leading community drama workshop and teaching guitar in high schools and community centres.
Introduction

During this research, the conference, event and exhibition attendances were accompanied by a progressing literature review. Four bodies of literatures that have been immensely resourceful in the formation of this research framework are briefly introduced here\textsuperscript{13}. They are significant in forming the foundation and background that will address the above hypotheses in a way relevant to the existing discourse on the topic.

The first body of literature was consulted to investigate the meaning of the term ‘community art’, whether it is an established term with a clear definition. Though this term is not concretely defined, there is a level of agreement among scholars and practitioners that gives it uniqueness; albeit sometimes overlapping with other forms of artistic engagement in communities such as public art and relational practice. This reflects the above situation where conference panels are filled by artists based on uncertain focus, and where the same project or artist can fill vastly different panels. It was also revealed that research on ‘community art’ has developed over the years to be strategically incorporated into the broader concept of ‘community cultural development’ (Arlene Goldbard 1993, 2006, 2009; Mulligan & Smith 2010)\textsuperscript{14}. In light of the muddled categories, this research takes a step back to understand range of practice within this field. A tentative definition will be given after reviewing relevant literature.

The second area of literature is in the area of public art, most notably the co-edited volumes by Cameron Cartiere (2008, 2016) and Knight (2008). The debate over the concept of ‘public’ provides a guide into this dissertation’s investigation of the concept of ‘community’. It is also illuminating to follow the development of public art towards new genre public art, where the emphasis on place is increasingly complemented by an emphasis on people (Suzanne Lacy, 1995). This leads into the third area of literature: relational practices.

\textsuperscript{13} Full discussions follow in literature review.
\textsuperscript{14} An additional connection is Kester’s description of preparation work for dialogical arts, where the research on the background and context of the situations rival those conducted as community cultural development. See full discussion in Literature Review.
In relational practice, the author identifies a form that focuses on human interaction (Bourriaud, 2001; Kester, 2004). In their respective works, Bourriaud and Kester engaged in depth in the issues of dialogue and social relations as form, how it is carried out and its implications to the understanding of the nature of art, artists and audience engagement. Among contemporaries with similar views, they provide more extensive critiques and proposals to position the artists away from a ‘prophetic role’ in the conventional rigid and burdensome system of art. However, whereas artists in relational practices deal with the burden of traditional art by de-emphasizing or even discarding it and embracing social relations as a new medium, community artists seem to deal with it by modifying their facilitation method to overcome such conventions.

Works by Claire Bishop (2006, 2012) and Miwon Kwon (2002) provide anchors for considering the development that connects public art and the relational practices. Common among those working with objects, sites or conceptual forms, whether motivated by social concern or artistic explorations, ‘people’ are increasingly being factored-in or becoming centre-staged. In addition to important issues posed by the two authors regarding social responsibilities and aesthetics (Bishop, 2012) and community-specificity (Kwon, 2002), both authors point, explicitly and implicitly, to the importance of examining the actual participation. Bishop (2012) demonstrates such a close examination, but analyzes her observations through political lenses. On the other hand, Kwon (2002) suggests the Marxist concept of identification of labour as one possible tool for understanding participation (p. 97). Following the concept of alienation of labour, an interesting parallel is discovered in psychology literature on optimal experiences.

This call of defining the nature of participation leads to the fourth body of literature on the assessment of the impact of art in the society. Belfiore (2002, 2006), Clements (2007), Guetzkow (2002) and Skingley et al. (2012) are among the analyses of the recent two decades’ rise in assessment of impact of arts. These scholars point out that many of these assessments and evaluations suffer from a lack of clarity on ‘art’, ‘engagement’, ‘value’ and their causal relationships.

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15 Bourriaud and Kester are combined here based on certain commonalities of the theories. The details and uniqueness of their theories will be discussed in the literature review.
In summary, these four areas of literatures have informed this research that in the broad field of artistic engagement in communities, comprising of various forms of artistic engagement with object, place and people, there is a movement towards factoring-in and centre-staging people that were previously only considered as audience. Despite this emphasis on the person, researches primarily focus on sociological, political and cultural dimensions, the personal and interpersonal experience, physical, social and psychological dimensions of artistic production and reception in a social environment receives less attention. Furthermore, there is a lack of basic understanding and agreement on the nature of art as the tool and its targeted use. In other words, what is needed is a reinvestigation of the basic elements that are in operation: art and people.

Contrary to the term being considered outdated, as will be discussed in the literature review, there are several reasons why a focus on ‘community art’ can offer unique contributions to the wider discourse. First, the unpopular (Higgins, 2012; Mulligan & Smith, 2010; Willis, 2008), imprecise yet persistent use of ‘community’ deserves attention. Just as redefining ‘public’ in ‘public art’ can yield new insights (Hewitt & Jordan, 2016), what can be learnt by revisiting this term based on how ‘community artist’ conceptualize it? Why is it that practitioners of community music, community theatre, community dance and community art primarily use the basic and hands-on forms in their respective field?

A theoretical and practical reconstruction on the concept of ‘community art’ is not only beneficial to those engaged in this form of artistic engagement. Just as this research has benefited from public art, relational practices and community cultural development, this reconstruction of community arts can also contribute in return to the wider debate on artistic engagement in society.

Terminologies
To continue this journey of reconstruction, several terminologies used in this dissertation should first be clarified. ‘Community art’ does not belong to the same class of terminology as ‘graffiti art’ or ‘baroque music’. A person can identify a painting as
Introduction

‘graffiti art’ or a song as a ‘baroque music’16. ‘Community art’ generally refers to a process of collaborative art making that can be applied to any medium (See below). Though the term ‘community art’ already implies a process that usually happens in an activity, the terms ‘community art process’ and ‘community art activity’ continue to be used commonly; a redundancy likely to be committed to emphasize the importance of the process.

‘Community art’ refers to the arts in general, comprising of a range of art forms; however, ‘community arts’ is often used as well. When the specific terms ‘community music’, ‘community dance’ and ‘community drama’ are used, the author affords them the same meaning as ‘community art’ developed in this dissertation, but referring specifically to a single medium. There will be other uses such as physical works of ‘community mural’ or places such as ‘community studio’, where clarifications will be provided if it is not already evident.

The term ‘community artist’ is also a shifting term. An artist involved in a project determined to be ‘community art’ can be considered a ‘community artist’. Some artists identify themselves as a ‘community artist’ in general, similar to those identifying themselves as an ‘art educator’. This identity is complicated by the uncertain definition of the ‘artist’. The use of ‘community artist’ or ‘artist’ in ‘community art’ activities refers to designated role, whereas declaring that participants as ‘artists’ refers to either their potentials or their execution in making art17. Another popular term for this designated role is ‘facilitator’. Titles such as ‘artist facilitator’, ‘drama facilitator’ or simply ‘facilitator’ are common names for the role of someone facilitating groups to create their own works of art, which indicate the nature of their role. The basis of this paper begins with using ‘community artist’ as the chosen term to refer to the artist in charge of facilitating ‘community art’ activities. The title of facilitator is mostly used in the interviewee profiles of the data analysis where the artists often refer to themselves as ‘facilitator’.

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16 This use of terminology identifies a certain piece of art as having the characteristic visual or musical forms or context of creation that corresponds to established criteria within their respective traditions.
17 Participants are officially recognized as ‘artists’ during performances and exhibitions as they have taken on the commitment and responsibility of creating and presenting their work.
The phrase ‘artistic engagement in communities’ is the umbrella term used to include all forms of ‘public art’, ‘community art’, ‘relational practice’, ‘social practice’ and other uncategorized works with a strong and clear dimension of social engagement. ‘Public art’ broadly refers to works of object, place and site-specificity which overlaps in certain aspects with ‘dialogical or relational practices’. The term ‘relational practice’ is used generally to refer to works using social exchange as form, and ‘dialogical practice’ in specific theories or works where dialogue is the primary mode of exchange. ‘Community cultural development’ (CCD) is used here to refer to its overall work, and not as an alternative term for ‘community art’. The educational usage of ‘community-based art education’, where art education is conducted for students in the context of the community, only provides specific contributions to this dissertation. The general use of this term referring to art education provided for people outside of the school is more applicable to this research.

Regarding ‘art’, while writings on ‘community art’ do not limit the media used, it is observed that it continues to be dominated by the ‘traditional forms’ such as the visual arts (both 2-D and 3-D) and performing arts (dance, drama and music). Please note that the use of the word ‘traditional’ is simply to differentiate it from dialogue or socializations as form or the more conceptual forms of happenings or performance. The term ‘traditional’ is chosen to emphasize its practice over longer period of time. Although, this categorization does not exclude digital media, there is something qualitatively different about creating paintings or music completely on computers compared with the physical manipulation of drawing tools and musical instruments.

A tentative definition of ‘community art’

Are there agreed definitions of ‘community art’? A tentative definition of ‘community art’ is provided here based on five points compiled from existing studies. ‘Community art’ is defined to be a meaningful gathering of people facilitated in a participatory art activity aimed at a quality process and product with long term impact (Clements, 2011; Cleveland, 2002; Coutts & Jokela, 2008; Dewhurst, 2012; Dickson, 1995; Goldbard, 1993, 2006; Higgins, 2012; Krensky & Steffen, 2009; Lowe, 2000; Mulligan & Smith, 2010; Schwarzman and deNobriga, 1999, italics added for emphasis).
Introduction

The first characteristic is that its participants are people with certain meaningful association, such as neighbours, classmates, youths in summer camp or patients of the same ward; meeting some common understanding of ‘community’. Second, its participants are involved in the creation of the artwork to various degrees, most often involving labour, going beyond the role of content providers. Third, the quality of the process is equally if not more important than its result. Fourth, it is usually facilitated. Fifth, its impact should be long lasting.

This definition, albeit tentative, opens up paths for this research. In terms of ‘community’, what constitute as ‘meaningful’, or conversely, ‘unmeaningful’ gatherings of people? Is ‘community’ the basic unit of engagements? Are artists engaging many ‘communities’, or are they engaging something more basic to communities, such as their individual members? In terms of ‘art’, without resorting to uneasy categorizes of traditional or contemporary forms and judgments of high or low, could something more be observed and reflected upon? What is meant by a ‘quality’ process? In terms of impact, what impacts are intended? How are short term and long term impacts conceived? In terms of the role of the artists, what are their roles in bringing out this process? Again, these questions cannot be coherently addressed until a basic understanding of art and people is established.

Data and Methodology

These questions will be investigated through an integration of interviews and literature. Though the dissertation is presented in linear order, the process of identifying interviewees, conducting the interviews and analyzing the data occurred over the same period as the literary research. It is typical of qualitative analysis where literary research and interviewees resembles a cyclical process (Creswell 2007, Onwuegbuzie et al. 2010, Onwuegbuzie et al. 2012, Seidman 2013, Stern & Porr 2010). Subsequent cycles – theories to consult, questions to ask and phenomena to observe – continually refine themselves as the researcher discovered new meaning and connections.

Human interaction and facilitation of traditional art form are not exclusively found in the community arts. However, literature review does confirm one hypothesis posed earlier in the chapter, that community art is unique in being primarily concerned with
human interactions and in primarily employing ‘traditional art forms’. Therefore, to better identify these two aspects, community artists are more suitable subjects than public artists or relational artists who also exhibit such awareness but probably as their secondary concern or an incidental by-product. This is a theoretical sampling approach to choosing interviewees that is part of the methodology of constant comparison employed in this research (Creswell, 2007; Newell, 2007). The goal is to form a theory that can increase the understanding of community art and the understanding of the aspects of ‘human interaction’ and ‘facilitation of traditional art form’ in the practice of artistic engagement in communities in general. The impact of the interviewees to the local practice also positions this dissertation’s contribution from a Hong Kong perspective that may be applicable with further discussions to other metropolitans in Asia and worldwide.

A pool of thirty ‘community artists’ were assessed for their suitability as interviewees. The pool consists of artists who work with people in a range of artistic engagements. For example, Ricky Yeung who began his artistic career as a visual and performance artist, facilitated on occasions activities meeting the above ‘community art’ description. He had been a full time secondary school art teacher for over 20 years and recently retired to focus on his own work. Though he engages people of many communities, both his current work and his views place him as primarily an artist doing relational works instead of a community art. Seven were finally chosen to represent a coherent and recognized body of practice.

A wider data set was determined to be unsuitable because it would affect the depth of interviews and analysis, which in turn will likely result in duplicating general understandings of ‘community art’. These interviewees are practicing visual and performing artists who specialize in facilitating in collaborative art processes where participation is essential. Each having over 15 years of experience in committed engagement with communities. They are also trainers, educators and professionals in various tertiary, cultural and public institutions. They are either based or are/were

\[18\] Denmead (2012) adopts a similar method by focusing on eight community artists.

\[19\] See chapter on methodology for details of interviewee selection. Another candidate not chosen is dancer, choreography and instructor Andy Wong. Short interviews were conducted with Ricky Yeung, Andy Wong and others to complement the main interviewees.
Introduction

committed to the development of community art in Hong Kong, and are all experienced overseas\(^2\). The choice of their mix of art disciplines and effectiveness across countries is based on the hypothesis of a fundamental connection among their views on art and people transcending artistic media and cultural context (Figure A.1 and A.2)

Figure A.1
Pete working with choir in Shenzhen, China through minimal translation assistance

Photo courtesy of More Music

Figure A.2
Evelyna facilitating craft making at Bangalore Baptist Hospital, India with minimal translation assistance

Photo courtesy of Art for All

An interdisciplinary approach is taken to provide a multilayered understanding of the community artists’ operational concepts of art, people, community and successful participation. The literature drawn upon include the ethology of art (Dissanayake, Davies), the nature of the experience of art (Dewey), theories of education (Freire, Dewey), theories of community and the individual (Putnam, McKnight & Block), psychological theories on experience and motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, Ryan & Deci), and theories of social psychology on identity and social belonging (Baumeister & Leary, Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe). This interdisciplinary perspective builds a framework that explains how the artistic and social dimensions in community art, instead of being in compromise, can be synergetic. Through a grounded methodology, data collected and

\(^2\) Interviewees currently based: 4 HK, 1 US, 2 UK.
relevant literature will be integrated to provide an understanding of the mechanics of community art.

One peculiarity of the term community art is with regards to the art forms it encapsulates. While most scholars agree that community art is an approach that is not bounded by the medium, its discussions are often limited within disciplinary boundaries. Collaborations among the media are common, but there is a lack of cross-fertilization among theories and research. This consideration prompts the author to look at fundamental aspects of human behaviours and existence, as explained in the above paragraph, that are applicable to participation in various art forms. This research draws on the theories and experiences of community music, community theatre and community art to look for aspects that these practices share.

As a doctoral dissertation, the author cannot aim to exhaust the entire field described above, but can begin by investigating how ‘art’ and ‘people’ are conceptualized from his own sphere of experience: ‘community art.’ Similar to other academic research, personal experiences no doubt plays a part in alerting the author in the concerns and specificity of his perspective. In fact, many of the literature in the field of artistic engagement in communities are written by scholars who are themselves involved in the practice. Therefore, as Seidman (2013) explains that personal perspective is a key ingredient that the research brings to the table, the author must integrate his experiences in community art without compromising his critical faculties.

The reader may begin to realize that this reconstruction is steered towards what actually happens within ‘community art.’ Not only is this dimension neglected in the conferences discussed above, but also lacking in depth in the aforementioned literature. This is in fact a highly pertinent question to the second area of growth in Hong Kong in the community arts mentioned above, of an increased use of art by social and community workers not specialized in art.

Despite the Hong Kong government’s recent attempt to redesign the education system to focus more on creativity, “arts education as a means of creative learning has yet to take roots in the system” (Bamford, A., Chan, R. & Leong, S., 2011, p. 5). A separate
study noted the majority of students felt that art education in school improved their artistic ability more than encouraged them to be actively involved in it (Leung, S., 2011). Though these findings represents teenagers and young adults at the time of this dissertation, they are consistent with the author’s observation that many social and community workers using the arts now, who would have been educated in the 80s and 90s, are not themselves involved in the arts.

It is unconvincing and risky for those not personally familiar with the impacts and mechanism of the arts to lead artistic engagement meant to be empowering. Veronica and Evelyina have both been asked by social workers during training to focus more on people skills rather than artistic skills. On his two recent visits to Hong Kong, Hiep had to request additional time in trainings to teach social workers the intricacies and impact of visual elements on people in Circle Painting. Working in school settings, Grad, Sze and Exist all described frequent instances where they had to refuse teachers’ and principles’ specific demands over performances; demands made with little understanding of the artistic and personal implications over the participants. There exists an on-going, often strained, negotiation among dedicated artistic practitioners in communities and those who dismiss the rich and demanding expertise of arts in social applications.

In light of this situation, the author has deconstructed community art into its simpler elements of art and people, to elucidate afresh how art may naturally be an integral part of human wellbeing and concern. It is suspected that this approach to researching artistic engagement in communities has not been common in North American and European literature because art and life is not as segregated as they are in Hong Kong, where lessons in music and painting are valued primarily for the certifications that populate students’ school applications, and public spending on the arts is lopsided.

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21 See article for detailed breakdown and comparisons of responses about music class and visual arts class. The above articles provide a concise yet brief overview of art education in Hong Kong. A detailed analysis of its development over the last decades is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

22 Observed during Evelyina’s training in Shanghai in August 2014. Interview with Veronica on 11 April 2015.

23 Interview with Hiep on 5 May 2015 and 7 April 2016.

towards elaborate buildings instead of nurturing people and communities\textsuperscript{25}. As a result, this dissertation may at times seem to be pointing out the obvious. Unfortunately, considering the bureaucratic culture looming over educational and cultural institutions worldwide, such an approach may one day be relevant elsewhere.

What this research aims to contribute is to identify ‘community art’ as a practice that is specialized and focused on human interaction, facilitated through art making in traditional art forms. Furthermore, once this dimension is identified, it then becomes a complementary perspective that can enrich understandings of other forms of artistic social engagement. The following example of Lily Yeh’s work is provided to illustrate this dimension which is clear in documentation but receives little scholarly attention.

**Demonstrating awareness of the artistic and social – Analysis of the literature on Lily Yeh’s work**

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Photo from Barefoot Artist Website}
\end{figure}

The following is an example that demonstrates an awareness of people as individuals in social situations and a utilization of the techniques of a medium to achieve certain goals.

\textsuperscript{25} A preliminary observation would suggest that the society in general is guided by the government to recognize mainly the objectified (building and hardware) and institutionalized (certifications) states of cultural capital (Bourdieu, P., 1986), and dismisses the organic and unexpected that are embodied in people and situated in the everyday.
Lily Yeh is the founding director of Barefoot Artists, most known for her work in the Village of Arts and Humanities in North Philadelphia which she founded in 1986. In 1998, she resigned her tenured position of 30 years at the Philadelphia University of the Arts to focus her work with communities. Her successful work in local communities and around the world has garnered numerous recognitions and positions of wide influence.26

Lily understands the multiple dimensions of the impact of her work, such as social, political, developmental and cultural (Yeh, 2011a, 2011b; Hammett & Wrigley, 2013; Scher, 2005; Whittaker, 2014). However, she does clearly expresses that her work begins with finding enjoyment in and through art:

> Even now, it’s not on my agenda to make people’s lives better, to revolutionize the system. I don’t see myself as a social activist. I am an artist. What I am about is sharing that sense of joy when I am creating with many people, with whoever wants to be a part of that process. It’s not that I came to make their life better. (Quoted in Project for Public Spaces, accessed 2016)

According to Lily, the artistic work comes first, bringing about other changes.

> Our vision for the Dandelion project was a transformed environment of beauty, creativity, and joy. We intended that the project would bring about significant and beneficial changes physically, emotionally, and mentally in the Dandelion community. (Yeh, 2011a, p. 192)

Lily anticipates goal, but she is not goal oriented. Art is the medium through which places are transformed. In her book *Awakening creativity Dandelion School Blossoms* (2011), she explains in detail how choices of media are based on both desired process, product and meaning.

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Introduction

As a medium, mosaic is tactile and enduring. Its inclusive nature allows any small pieces of materials such as glass, tiles, ceramic pieces, stones, shells, and beads to be incorporated into the design. The process of making mosaics, turning broken pieces of materials into something beautiful and whole, is a powerful symbol of transformation through creative action. (Yeh, 2011a, p. 83)

She explains that in the indirect method, tiles are placed and glued on panels according to the design, which will then be carefully fixed to the wall. In the direct method, tiles are glued directly onto the wall (Yeh, 2011, p. 100).

Indirect application is rather restrictive, but for beginners it is an easy way to learn the art of making mosaics.... Once the direct method was introduced, people at Dandelion stayed with this simpler way of making mosaics. It provided more flexibility in scheduling and demanded less space to carry out the work. It also required less planning than the indirect application method, and thus allowed people to participate more easily. (Yeh, 2011a, p. 100)

This passage demonstrates that Lily applied her expertise in mosaic making to facilitate the preferred participation. At this point in the mosaic making, it was not about a work setting where people can be more creative or contemplative. It was a setting where flexibility was valued so that people can participate between classes. Not only were the students engaged, but a local artisan, with commitment, was able to pick up enough skills to become the person facilitating the mosaic making without Lily’s supervision (Yeh, 2011a).

Similarly, theatre performance It Pulls It All Apart (Miller, 2005, p. 37) and the work on Guardian Angel Park27 were also projects where the involving artists are using the uniqueness of the media in facilitating a specific kind of experience. The visual or performing art may not always be her first and only tool, but it does play a central role in her work.

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Lily points out an important observation in her work:

“One of the most powerful things I learned,” says Lily, “is that when you learn a skill and transform your immediate environment, your whole life begins to change.” (Scher, 2005)

This statement that addresses both the transformation of people and their environment expresses that Lily’s work is as much about the place as the people. As many of the places transformed in her projects are executed by people living in the area, these projects qualify as both public art and community art.

This above statement was only partially quoted by the Project Public Space (PPS) with the words “learn a skill” omitted from the original. Although it could be proposed that “learn a skill” was omitted to emphasis “environment” and to downplay the human dimension of the transformation, PPS’ interpretation of Lily’s work in the rest of the entry does talk about the human dimension by “[u]tilizing the principles of Placemaking, Yeh launched a far-reaching project that provided the neighborhood with a new sense of possibility and purpose” (Project for Public Spaces, accessed 2016).

As will be addressed in the literature review, if the concept of placemaking indeed intimately ties people to places, why not also draw on theories that explain ties among people? PPS quotes Lily further to demonstrate the thought she puts in human relationships:

“Around us there is all this unspeakable tragedy that everybody hides: Prison. Murder. Drugs. Abandonment. Men drifting away. All the things that society says are shameful. If people hold these in themselves, eventually they destroy a person.” (Yeh quoted in Project for Public Spaces, accessed 2016)

Along the same line, Lily expresses the following in another interview on how participation changes people’s lives and how they relate to others of the community:

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28 This statement was only partially quoted by the Project Public Spaces: ““One of the most powerful things I learned;” Yeh told Yes magazine, “is that when you...transform your immediate environment, your life begins to change.” It is uncertain why the words “learn a skill and” was omitted from the original

29 See Jeff Kelley’s 1995 article “Common Work”, in Mapping the Terrain edited by Suzanne Lacy for an explanation of the concept of placemaking.
The youth theater...[t]hey literally become transformed. People who are very shy come, and often they don't write. Soon they have a presence, they speak, they write their own monologues, they perform on the stage, they look at the audience, they understand teamwork, and through that they become leaders....To begin with, I think the prejudice toward people in the inner city does not reflect the reality of the people who live there...We judge them before we understand their circumstances and their humanness. (Hammett & Wrigley, 2013, p. 83)

A study that looks at the process of participation in the Village of Arts and Humanities is Hufford & Miller’s (2006) ethnographical approach that explores “an ongoing, emergent process” of community planning. Similarly, Davis (2009) points out “that this process of citizen engagement happened, in large part, through the material practices of art, through the physical transformation of a neighbourhood” (para. 3). Despite both studies pointing out that art is the channel and tool, their disciplinary perspective did not take them to an analysis of how the art functions to enable this process.

Lily Yeh’s example demonstrates that in any project where collaboration and participation are involved, whether they are considered as public art or relational practices, the human dimension of artistic and social experiences always exist. Her decisions surrounding the art form and media implicate significantly on the participants’ artistic and social experiences in the projects. She understands her media and the people she engages.

**Chapter Overview**

Chapter 1 begins with a literature review that expands the above discussion in identifying an area of practice unique but in relation to public art and relational practice. This discussion also shapes the choice of literature and interview questions on art, community and participation. Chapter 2 explains and argues the value of an interdisciplinary methodology in addressing the complex phenomenon of community art. Chapter 3 is the data analysis. It provides a profile of each interviewee, followed by an analysis of their motivations and views of their work. The data is interpreted
through the following enquiry lenses: i) what is art? ii) what is community? iii) what is the role of art in community? and iv) what is the role of the artist?

Chapter 4 to 7 explores the literature to look for theoretical framework that can support and inform the collected data, refining the tentative definition of community along the way. Chapter 4 investigates art from an ethological perspective and art as an experience, forming an understanding of art that is part of human behaviour. Chapter 5 looks at community and its people through theories of community, psychology and social psychology. Chapter 6 builds upon the theories about motivations in art and socialization, and the nurturing of these motivations, to propose a general goal for community art understood in terms of autonomy. Chapter 7 investigates the role of the community artist based on the pedagogical writings of Freire and Dewey, integrating the theoretical framework as a guideline.

The conclusion will summarize the argument of the dissertation, and consolidate the definition that is formed along each chapter. Once the uniqueness of ‘community art’ is identified, the author will address how community art is related to other forms of artistic engagement in communities, and what community art’s uniqueness can contribute to these other practices.

This is not only an intellectual exercise performed for theoretical clarity. These are imperative questions in delineating the work and effectiveness of various practices, so that they may be further refined. As stated earlier, the overlapping collaborations among artists with different approaches to engagement suggests a level of compatibility in their goals and methods. It is only the first level for community artists to bring to the table their strength. It is of wider importance that artists practicing other forms of engagement in communities bring to their projects the strength of the community artist.
Chapter 1 – Literature Review

Literature Review

The goal of this chapter is to establish the research basis for defining community art. Four bodies of literature are addressed. First is the research on ‘community art’, the related concept of ‘community cultural development’ and their conceptual lineage. The second and third section takes a step back to understand the related practices of public art and relation practice, both to differentiate among the practices and to learn from their relevant discourses. The fourth section reviews literature that discusses the assessment of artistic participation.

Community art and community cultural development

A tentative definition for ‘community art’ is offered in chapter one, defined to be a meaningful gathering of people facilitated in a participatory art activity aimed at a quality process and product with long term impact. This definition is derived from common elements from literature on community art, community based-art education, and those that discusses these practices (Clements, 2011; Cleveland, 2002; Coutts & Jokela, 2008; Dewhurst, 2012; Dickson, 1995; Goldbard, 1993, 2006; Higgins, 2012; Krensky & Steffen, 2009; Lowe, 2000; Mulligan & Smith, 2010; Schwarzman and deNobriga, 1999). Although the scope of this research is defined within the activity of community art, the emphasis on Community Cultural Development (CCD) in the literature requires a deeper understanding of both concepts.

In Postscript to the past: Notes towards a history of community arts, a seminal text that began charting the development of community art, Goldbard (1993) explains two essentials aspects of community art. First, it is “based on the belief that cultural meaning, expression and creativity reside within a community, that the community artist's task is to assist people in freeing their imaginations and giving form to their creativity” (para. 6). Secondly, it is that “collaboration between artists and others is central and necessary to the practice of community arts” (ibid., para. 7). Then, in New Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development (Goldbard, 2006), focused on CCD, Goldbard states that the term community arts is “sometimes used to describe conventional arts activity based in a municipality” (p. 21). Higgins (2012) elaborates on Goldbard's observation, adding that the term “community music is often used in this
context also, a signifier for amateur music making, a recreational activity that does not necessarily have an emphasis on social transformation” (p. 37).

Harrell Fletcher, professor of Portland State University’s MFA programme in Art and Social Practice, comments on the naming of this programme, that

Community art is a great term, but unfortunately it was used in the 1980s to describe making bad murals with kids. The term got overused, so it is difficult to use the term any more without people automatically assuming that’s what you mean (Willis, 2008, p. 123).

As Fletcher explains this overuse was contextual, the term community art apparently does not share this baggage in Hong Kong where the term continues to be widely used.

On the other hand, Mulligan & Smith (2010) summarize the findings of Anne Dunn’s exploratory study for the Australia Council for the Arts, where she finds that the term CCD is not popular outside cities due to “lack of clarity about what ‘culture’ means’”, and that ‘community art’ is still better understood by people in general despite any negative connotations (Mulligan & Smith, 2010, p.29).

Why does Goldbard adopt the term ‘community cultural development’? Goldbard explains that the term “encapsulates the salient characteristics of the work”, where

Community acknowledges its participatory nature, which emphasizes collaboration between artists and other community members;

Cultural indicates the generous concept of culture (rather than, more narrowly, art) and the broad range of tools and forms in use in the field, from aspects of traditional visual- and performing-arts practice to oral-history approaches usually associated with historical research and social studies, to use of high-tech communications media, to elements of activism and community organizing typically seen as part of non-arts social-change campaigns; and

Development suggests the dynamic nature of cultural action, with its ambitions of conscientization...and empowerment, linking it to other
enlightened community development practices, especially those incorporating principles of self-development rather than development imposed from above. (Goldbard 2006, p.21)

Goldbard’s explanation is quoted in full to enable further discussion. Although it states that it emphasizes involvement of artists, its emphasis on culture rather than art indicates that it involves more than artists. The description of CCD describes an entire field of work that includes art, social studies, heritage and media. Mulligan & Smith explain that Goldbard’s transition from the term ‘community art’ to CCD is motivated by a drive to unify the diverse practices of community cultural work, of which community art takes part. Thus, “Goldbard attempts to allow for the diversity of practice within the field to be contained within a discussion of unifying themes and principles,” which would also coordinate “material support, infrastructure, training, and public awareness” (Mulligan & Smith 2010, p.46). The author agrees with this point and argues that in fact, the conceptual and strategic transition from community arts to CCD is indicative of the challenges inherent in the practice of community art.

The review above reveals that community artists, whether or not they adopt this title, have always had the awareness that their art activities need to be conceived and executed in the overall context of the community where it is situated. Accordingly, the various challenges standing in the way of a successful community art programme, including logistical, financial, bureaucratic, social and cultural, must be dealt with in the wider context of the community. To overcome these challenges, artists and art organizations have long forged alliances with stakeholders both in and outside of a community. As a result, artists with extra-artistic skills take on various additional roles, while non-artists contribute what skills they have in the overall work with the community. Lastly, perhaps the most important, is the realization, emerged with experience, that it is a long term commitment that is cultural-forming. Thus, the work of community art is strategically allied, and sometimes subordinated to the CCD, which frames the immediate activities within long term communal relevance. While it was

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Readers may wish to compare Goldbard’s description with CCD to Helguera’s (2011) concept of ‘socially-engaged art’ or ‘social practice’, which the author describes to be “an actual, not symbolic, practice” (2011, p. 5). Helguera’s view is demonstrated in Thompson’s (2012) discussion of Rick Lowe, who decided to transit from making art about social problems to actually tackling social problems. Yet Thompson (2012) does not see the abandoning of symbolic practice as a prerequisite for socially-engaged arts, advocating the importance of symbolism in a media dominated world.
Chapter 1 – Literature Review

roughly after 1950s when this strategic awareness and arrangement blossomed, it is basically adopted when the need arises at various times in different localities (Clements, 2011; Cleveland, 2002; Coutts & Jokela, 2008; Dewhurst, 2012; Dickson, 1995; Fleming, 1995; Goldbard, 1993, 2006; Higgins, 2012; Krensky & Steffen, 2009; Lowe, 2000; Mulligan & Smith, 2010; Schwarzman and deNobriga, 1999).

As Dewey (2005) points out, “culture is the product not of efforts of men put forth in a void or just upon themselves, but of prolonged and cumulative interaction with environment” (p. 28), one begins working with concrete aspects of daily living that accumulates into something more. Community art, similar to neighbourhood kitchens or after school tutoring, is one of many concrete aspects of daily living with its own methods and mechanics to be understood.

CCD is relevant to this study since this distinction is not clear in some of the literature. Several citations pointed out the term ‘community artist’ to be used commonly for artist in both writings and practice of community arts or CCD. This indicates that the unique role of the community artist within CCD is still generally acknowledged. Therefore, the uniqueness of community art should not be easily subsumed simply as CCD or generalized as artistic engagement in communities.

Conceptual lineage in community art

One conceptual lineage that is shared by many community artists is the Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paolo Freire (2000). Several scholars observed or propose that Freire’s idea to be instrumental in guiding artists’ work in the community (Dewhurst, 2010; Goldbard 1993, 2006; Clements, 2011; Mulligan & Smith, 2010; Higgins, 2012; Shier 2001; Merlino & Stewart 2015). Goldbard (2006) states that

[i]f asked to name the most powerful international influence on community cultural development practice, I would choose the interrelated work of Freire and Boal. Freire’s name was mentioned most often when in the course of my research, diverse groups of community artists have been asked to enumerate their own influence. Boal’s name came up with the majority of theater people and was mentioned by others involved in community organizing (p.120).
To find theoretical grounding from the pedagogy of the oppressed requires one to consider both historical and social context. Forged during the struggle against blatant oppression, the distinctions between landowners and labourers, the have and the have-nots, the oppressor and the oppressed were relatively apparent. The oppressor-oppressed dialectic is central to the pedagogy of the oppressed. Clear systems and situations of oppression continue to exist, but how does this translate to societies where these roles are no longer well demarcated? The impact of a globalized world and pervasiveness of commercialization and privatization complicates the nature of oppression where an individual or community can simultaneously be the oppressor and the oppressed. The following discussion demonstrates how Freire’s writings actually transcend a simple dichotomy:

Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it (Freire, 2000, p.44).

Dehumanization, or humanization, is the more fundamental concern that Freire addresses. After identifying this common plight, Freire returns to the immediate context for whom he wrote, “the pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practiced by the oppressors” (ibid., p. 54). In his context, the identity of the oppressor and the oppressed are more readily identifiable, thus he explains the limitation of the oppressor, that as they cease to be exploiters or indifferent spectators or simply the heirs of exploitation and move to the side of the exploited, they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations, which include a lack of confidence in the people’s ability to think, to want, and to know (ibid., p.60);

and contrarily, since “trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people” (ibid.). In the eyes of the oppressor, Freire explains,

[t]he oppressed are regarded as the pathology of the healthy society, which must therefore adjust these “incompetent and lazy” folk to its own patterns by changing their mentality. These marginals need to be
"integrated," "incorporated" into the healthy society that they have "forsaken" (ibid., p. 74)\textsuperscript{31}. And to revolutionize this way of things, there must be a “change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression; in the second stage, through the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old order” (ibid., p. 55). Freire’s discussion corresponds to the social psychology concept of prejudice, where people of out-group are labelled and flattened, and simplified myths are essentially stereotypical views held to support an illusion of out-group homogeneity (Myers, 2010).

Who are the oppressed and who are the oppressors? Numerous scholars and practitioners drawn upon in this research raise the warnings that artists must be aware of how one’s identity and practice might represent or be actual agents of oppression\textsuperscript{32}. Freire provides an acontextualized formulation that opens the door for a contemporary application of his theories where the identity of oppressor and the oppressed are more convoluted. Freire states that “[a]ny situation in which "A" objectively exploits "B" or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression.” (p. 55)

This not only applies to the possibility of oppression between artist and participants, but also among participants and relationships within their lives. There are situations where Participant A may hinder the participation of Participant B, participants may take advantage of facilitating artists\textsuperscript{33}. Since a person may at the same time be, or stand with, the oppressor and the oppressed, it is essential to understand his fundamental concept of humanization. Freire reminds the readers that the work of education is essentially working with men and women as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality...The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational


\textsuperscript{32} This issue was also raised during the author’s presentation at the Anthropology Department at Chinese University of Hong Kong.

\textsuperscript{33} Within the lives of individuals, for example, a father oppressed by a plantation owner, returns home to oppress an aging parent or a friend in his debt. An advocate for local farmers can hold prejudicial views over new immigrants. An orphanage in Mongolia may be sponsored by a pharmaceutical company that is depleting the amazon.
character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity \((\text{ibid.}, \ p. \ 84)\)

Thus, his advice intended for the oppressor becomes relevant to anyone, that “[t]hose who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly” \((\text{ibid.}, \ p. \ 60)\). Interestingly, his advice that “[t]he oppressed must see examples of the vulnerability of the oppressor so that a contrary conviction can begin to grow within them” \((\text{ibid.}, \ p. \ 64)\) then becomes an advice for both contemplating on oneself and others.

It should also be stressed that this formulation of the oppressor-oppressed identity is not to downplay the injustice of oppression. Rather, it takes seriously the complexity of the globalized and commercialized system of oppression that is hidden beneath sugary ideologies and brandings. As Goldbard (2006) explains in her assessment of the globalized commercial culture, every single individual on this earth is connected by border-crossing globalized supply and demand chain that feeds daily products, services and public utilities, and also the resulting globalized environmental degradation. By first separating the oppressor and the oppressed, Freire is able to point out clearer the nature of oppression, an insight that deepens one’s understanding of people as embodiment of both oppressor and the oppressed\(^{34}\).

Three aspects of Freire’s ideas are here highlighted. The oppressor-oppressed relationship will be addressed in terms of his more fundamental concept of hindering others in their pursuit of humanization and self-affirmation. Instead of a structural approach often employed in analyzing oppression, this conceptualization invites a perspective from social psychology in the formation of social identities. By understanding this as a social relationship, it enables a closer analysis of the artist-participant and inter-participant relationships that matches Freire’s own focus in teacher-student and inter-student relationships.

\(^{34}\) One of the ways that Freire’s view of oppression was translated for an audience under non-totalitarian rule was through Boal’s exile to Europe. Hannah Fox described Boal discovering that “unlike in Latin America, people in the West were plagued by demons, or ‘police,’ which were more internal/psychological, rather than external. Boal designed a new structure called ‘Cop in the Head’ to address this different kind of oppression. T.O. [theatre of the oppress] was moving from the political towards the psychological (2007), The Latin American experience has indeed inspired generations of socially concerned people. In addition to reading Freire, and attending workshops on \textit{theatre of the oppressed} by Boal, the researcher also attended in October 2003 in Toronto, where Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutierrez, founder of ‘Liberation Theology’ gave a full-house lecture to university students.
Secondly, the existing application of his discussion of the teacher-student relationship to the artistic engagement in communities demonstrates the potential of applying pedagogical models. This provides support for this dissertation’s usage of Dewey’s pedagogy in a similar application.\textsuperscript{35}

Lastly, how does the pedagogy of the oppress fit in terms of the current investigation of the value of process and product? While it is tempting to conclude that Freire is goal-oriented in his strong vision of the humanization of all people through dialogical education, he clearly believes that humanization does not only occur as an idea to be recognized or proclaimed, but as a way of being with people. Therefore, Freire does believe that the goal of humanization can only be achieved through a process of humanization, by behaving in ways that does not hinder others in their pursuit of humanizations and self-affirmation.

What of the nature of this educational process? The process of dialogue, as processed by Freire, will be explained further on in this chapter. That is where the pedagogy of the oppress fails to embrace the full range of artistic engagement in communities.

**Public art**

The strategic move of conceptualizing ‘community art’ and other forms of artistic engagement in communities under the umbrella of ‘community cultural development’ has complicated the understanding of the uniqueness of ‘community art’ (Mulligan & Smith 2010). This review now looks at the related practices of public art and relational practices to identify how the practices are different.

Community art is not the only practice that involves people. Public art has moved towards being increasingly community- and people-oriented. Miwon Kwon’s analysis of this transition is especially useful as she adopts the concept of ‘community specificity’ in understanding these works.

\textsuperscript{35} Jacob (2009) similarly connects both Dewey’s theories on art and education in her discussions of artistic engagements in communities.
Miwon Kwon (2002) employed the terms ‘art-in-public-places’, ‘art-as-public-spaces’ and ‘art-in-the-public-interest’ to describe the three phases of work of artists in the US. In each of these phases, she describes their development into realms that evoke deeper questions of the role of art and the society’s – including the artist – imagination and expectation of site and community. The concept of ‘community specific’ that emerged during the phase of ‘art-in-the-public-interest’ is especially relevant to the study of ‘community art’.

‘Art-in-public-places’ were predominantly artwork’s placed in public places to reach people who normally have no or do not access art. They were publicly supported through the Percent-for-Art programmes, which at the same time subjected it to issues of public accountability. Kwon (2002) points out that while highly visible, the abstraction in much public art pieces makes them indecipherable and inaccessible (p. 65). Though they were better received if public decision was involved in the planning stages, it sometimes led to poor artistic decisions (Knight, 2008, p. 14). In summarizing the general sentiment towards ‘art-in-public-places’, Kwon states somewhat harshly that

\[\text{m}any\ \text{critics},\ \text{artists},\ \text{and}\ \text{sponsors\ agreed\ that,\ at\ best,\ public\ art\ was\ a}\]
\[\text{pleasant\ visual\ contrast\ to\ the\ rationalized\ regularity\ of\ its\ surroundings,}\]
\[\text{providing\ a\ nice\ decorative\ effect.\ At\ worst,\ it\ was\ an\ empty\ trophy}\]
\[\text{commemorating\ the\ powers\ and\ riches\ of\ the\ dominant\ class-a}\]
\[\text{corporate\ bauble\ or\ architectural\ jewelry}\ (\text{ibid.,}\ p.\ 65)\]

The ‘art-as-public-spaces’ emerged in the late 1970s with artists’ increased involvement into the planning process of both public and commercial spaces and building. Kwon points out that

\[\text{the}\ \text{NEA}\ [\text{National\ Endowment\ for\ Art}]\ \text{endorsed\ a\ ‘wide\ range\ of}\]
\[\text{possibilities\ for\ art\ in\ public\ situations’-’any\ permanent\ media,}\]
\[\text{including\ earthworks,\ environmental\ art,\ and\ non-traditional\ media,}\]
\[\text{such\ as\ artificial\ lighting’(\text{ibid.,}\ p.\ 67).}\]

Aesthetic quality was balanced with functionality, and the former was sometimes even measured by the latter (\text{ibid.,}\ p. 69). This shift sparked off discussion and challenges to the nature of site-specificity, culminated in Richard Serra’s intrusive and monumental
Tilted Arc at New York, a work that Kwon suggests to be a reaction to the “definition of site specificity-one of unified and useful urban design” (ibid., p. 72) predominant at that time. Kwon uses the example of the Tilted Arc and its controversy surrounding its eventual removal to highlight the complexity of claim over public space. She argues that the outcome of the Tilted Arc incident could be “viewed as a triumphal rejection of ‘high art’ by ‘the people,’” which “also signaled an implicit validation of the community-oriented approach to public art” (ibid., p. 82).

Kwon points out that the common insight that emerged out of the ‘art-in-public-places’ and ‘art-as-public spaces’ was a concern for how local communities can be better involved. The NEA eventually required artists to “insure an informed community response to the project” (cited in Kwon, 2002, p. 81) and non-art representatives were included panels for public art. This further signaled the coming of participation in the various stages of art making beginning from its idea conception. While this is indeed a shift of from being mostly product-oriented to process-oriented, the participation in the process was not necessarily artistic in the ‘traditional’ sense.

Artists collaboration with non-artists have existed for a long time, it was in the 1990s that this mode of practice entered the wider discourse (Kwon, p. 107). In discussing his new genre of public art, Lacy (1995) identifies from developments of artworks in her time three new roles that artist may take in different situations, as Experiencer characterized by subjectivity and empathy, as Reporter in revealing information, and as Activist in building consensus. She identifies the relational aspect of these works in words that foreshadow the concept of relational practices to come36:

For some, the relationship is the artwork. This premise calls for a radically different set of skills...The skills needed for this relational work are communicative in nature, a stretch for the imaginations of artists and critics used to the monologic and studio-based model of art (p. 35).

36 Commenting on the 1995 exhibition Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art, Susanna Lacy described it as a work that “captured the moment and tilled an existing field, laying the ground for what would come next as we headed into the twenty-first century” (Lacy, 2008, 18)
Chapter 1 – Literature Review

Lacy explains that ‘new genre public art’, or NGPA, is “not only about subject matter, and not only about placement or site for art, but about the aesthetic expression of activated value systems” (ibid., p. 30). Knight (2008) explains that NGPA seeks to move beyond metaphorical investigations of social issues with the hopes of empowering often marginalized peoples. Rather than authorities imposing agendas, artists function as agents for social change, seeking democratic models to share power (p. 112).

Kwon (2002) provides an in-depth analysis of how community is conceived in Culture in Action, a NGPA exhibition where Lacy was one of the artist involved. Culture in Action was a city-wide event of a collection of 8 NGPA projects sited in Chicago in the Summer of 1993. From Culture in Action, Kwon identified four types of interaction between the artists and the communities. The first is the ‘community of mythic unity’, where individual differences “were subsumed in the end by the artist’s search for a common denominator that celebrated an abstract” unity (Kwon, 2002, p. 119). The second is the ‘sited’ communities, where detail of collaboration is largely predetermined in a process where organizations match artist proposals with an existing community (ibid., p. 123). Third is the ‘invented communities (temporary)’, where activities are designed to form temporary communities and groups (ibid., p. 126). The fourth is also an invented community, but with the intention of sustainability built-in to the planning (ibid., p. 130)\textsuperscript{37}.

Being an audience of myth and memory (Lacy, 1995, p. 178) removed from the time and location of these projects\textsuperscript{38}, the author cannot fully assess the validity of Kwon’s comments. However, she provides an example of discussing community-ness in such projects, and challenged claims of achieving empowerment, democratization and artistry that are relevant to ‘community art’ and artistic engagement in communities in general.

\textsuperscript{37}Regarding these four formats, Kwon also discusses the difference between facilitation by a local and an outsider artist.
\textsuperscript{38}Lacy describes 6 categories of audience interactivity in a radiating concentric circle, where audience may shift from one level to another. From the centre outwards, origination and responsibility, collaboration and codevelopment, volunteers and performers, immediate audience, media audience, audience of myth and memory. At the final level, “the artwork becomes, in the literature of art or in the life of the community, a commonly held possibility” (Lacy 1995, 180).
Understanding place and people

Public art has progressed to a point where people are an integral element. Kelley (1995) provides two decades ago one of the most people-oriented explanation of site and place in the practice of NGPA in the following passage:

Places are held in sites by personal and common values, and by the maintenance of those values over time, as memory. As remembered, places are thus conserved, while sites, the forgotten places, are exploited. This conservation is at root psychological, and in a social sense, memorial. But if places are held inside us, they are not solipsistic, since they can be held in common. At a given threshold, our commonly held places become communities, and communities are held together by what Wendell Berry calls "preserving knowledge." As he sees it, a community is "an order of memories" in which "the essential wisdom accumulates in communities much as fertility builds in the soil." (p. 142)

Kelley explains that it is people who give sites meaning, making them place. In the course of this research, as data began to emerge of the interviewees’ attention in how participants as individuals interact to explore their social identity, this following passage by Kaprow quoted by Lacy became highly relevant:

I think this sense of what it means to be a social persona and the fact that every social person has a private person inside is vital to the sense of community and to any meaningful sense of 'public' – of public service. The way to get to those issues sometimes is organizational and structural, but often it has to do with compassion, with play, with touching the inner self in every individual who recognizes that the next individual has a similar self. And it is that community, whether literal or metaphorical, that is in fact the real public that we as artists might address (Quoted in Lacy 1995, p. 36).

Individuals engaged as part of a community or a public all have a ‘private-self’. It is apparent that this attention to the human dimension plays an important part in Lacy’s work.
A look at two edited volumes on public art 8 years apart also demonstrates a similar shift. Cartiere & Willis’s *The Practice of Public Art* (2008) proposed the following conceptualization of public art:

Public art is art outside of museums and galleries and must fit within at least one of the following categories:

1. in a place accessible or visible to the public: *in public*
2. concerned with or affecting the community or individuals: *public interest*
3. maintained for or used by the community or individuals: *public place*
4. paid for by the public: *publicly funded* (p. 15)

Eight years later, in *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*, Cartiere (2016) discussed the apparent shift towards factoring-in and centre-staging people in public art. The term *social practice public art* was predominantly used, differentiated from stand-alone pieces placed in publicly accessible location that fits into the 2008 definition. In comparison, the audience for social practice public art is often much more immediate than that of a sited permanent work...a social practice-based work is often developed with a specific group of people, around a series of concerns or questions and in response to particular social conditions (Cartiere, 2016, p. 19)

Hewitt & Jordan (2016) contributes to the volume by arguing three ways that artworks are public, all of which are closely related to people:

a. Picturing Publics - a picturing of people as part of the artwork.

b. Educating Publics - the function of the artwork is to enable a distribution of knowledge by the artist.

c. Benefiting Publics - the artist provides a service or product for a specific community in which the result and consequences enable a practical enhancement of the users' lives. (p. 29)

This research does not imply that artworks about people are more important than those about place, nor are they really separable. The goal is to point out that the awareness of this dimension of place has become more common, and that the language made

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39 This comparison between public art and social practice-based work is similar to Knight’s comparison between conventional public art and new genre public art, where the latter engages a more specific group with a clearer agenda. (Knight 2008, 112)
available to discuss it has supported this trend. However, despite writers such as Kaprow (1974) and Kelley (1995) who are literally describing a social process of identity formation, relevant disciplines have yet to be introduced to the analysis of public art and artistic engagement in communities in general.

This can also be seen in the training of future practitioners. In the chapter discussing the training of future artists in socially practice-based work, Merlino & Stewart (2015) introduce two university level degrees which include courses on “sociology, philosophy, and politics...ethics, critical/cultural theory” (p. 89-90). Additional explanation is provided regarding the importance for student to understanding ethical issues.

Students need the opportunity to explore ethical terrain, to identify appropriate responses to power inequalities, to learn how to prioritize relationships over production and create their own ethical frameworks. Without doing this core work they will not be able to work effectively across difference, and there is every possibility they will cause harm to themselves or others (p. 92).

However, an ethical framework is but one dimension that enables one to understand differences among people. In order to work effectively across differences, one also needs to understand dynamics of people in the community and how to use all these knowledge to the benefit of all involved. This includes methods of facilitation and an understanding of group and human dynamics.

Just as Hewitt & Jordan (2016) discusses the ‘publicness’ of public art, this research seeks to understand the ‘communityness’ of community art. Going beyond the macro views presented by sociology or cultural theories, this research will consult theories of community and theories of social psychology. These are two disciplines that zoom in from the more macro and abstract view of community towards the personal and interpersonal, a perspective that echoes the above quote of Kaprow.

**Relational Practice**

As works in the manners of NGPA developed, socializations became the form of art itself. Claire Bishop (2006) identifies projects since the 1990s where this trend became apparent. She indicates two texts as defining this set of practices.
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For Nicolas Bourriaud in *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), the defining text of relational practice, "art is the place that produces a specific sociability," precisely because "it tightens the space of relations, unlike TV." For Grant H. Kester, in another key text, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (2004), art is uniquely placed to counter a world in which "we are reduced to an atomized pseudocommunity of consumers, our sensibilities dulled by spectacle and repetition" (p. 178).

Both authors reacted against the conventional and rigid system of art where artists as master of their form create masterpieces that illuminate ‘truths’ to their audiences, mediated by curators and critics. Instead, Kester (2004) suggests the readers to “understand the work of art as a process of communicative exchange rather than a physical object” (p. 90), while Bourriaud (2002) proposes relational art as being “an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space” (p. 14). Bourriaud explained that such art “points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic cultural and political goals introduced by modern art” (*ibid*).

In discussing the forms of relational art, Bourriaud states that

....the sphere of human relations have now become fully-fledged artistic "forms". Meetings, encounters, events, various types of collaboration between people, games, festivals, and places of conviviality...represent, today, aesthetic objects likely to be looked at as such, with pictures and sculptures regarded here merely as specific cases of a production of forms with something other than a simple aesthetic consumption in mind (*ibid.*, p. 28).

Artists no longer dictate the subjects of their work, but instead create situations where possibilities of socialization occur, where individuals and human groups “rid themselves of the straightjacket of the ideology of mass communications” (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 44), and are linked together in new ways. Socialization is the setting where aesthetic experiences are evoked. Such artworks are
presented as a social interstice within which these experiments and these new "life possibilities" appear to be possible. It seems more pressing to invent possible relations with our neighbours in the present than to bet on happier tomorrows (ibid., p. 45).

Significant parallels can be observed in Kester’s explanation of dialogical practices. He first outlines how “modern critics have displayed a singular hostility to artworks that solicit the viewer's interaction in a direct or accessible manner” (Kester, 2004, p. 82), and used “revolutionary theatre” as an example that leads viewers to actively question the meanings represented onstage and to extend that critical attitude to the values they encounter in daily political life. In this view the capacity for aesthetic discrimination is not an end in itself but is linked to a more expansive critical capacity focused on the broader social and political world inhabited by the viewer (ibid., p. 83)

Part of the interaction between artwork and people is a movement away from artworks providing “instantaneous, prediscursive flash of insight” (ibid., p. 84-85) to impress its value, as Kester argues. To him, the relationship between the viewer and the work of art operates

as a decentering, a movement outside self (and self-interest) through dialogue extended over time. But a commitment to dialogue, no matter how self-reflexive, signals the reliance of these projects on some common system of meaning within which the various participants can speak, listen, and respond (ibid., p. 85).

He explains that in dialogue as form, or “a dialogical aesthetic” does not claim or require the kind of universality that has both justified and bonded conventional art. The consensus required for dialogical art to operate is only local and “provisionally binding” (ibid., p. 112), established and grounded in the interaction.

Regarding the role of the artist, Kester begins in similar ways as Bourriaud, that it is “one defined in terms of openness, of listening...and of a willingness to accept a position of dependence and intersubjective vulnerability relative to the viewer or collaborator”
The task of holding dialogical works requires empathy as a necessary characteristic of the artist (ibid., p. 115).

Kester (2004) concludes his explanation with this clear statement of the function of dialogical works beyond the aesthetic:

> Dialogical works can challenge dominant representations of a given community and create a more complex understanding of, and empathy for, that community among a broader public. These three functions – solidarity creation, solidarity enhancement, and the counterhegemonic – seldom exist in isolation. Any given project will typically operate in multiple registers (p. 115-116)

Again, during the data collection process, there were much similarities between the interviewees' view of art and their role as artists with the writings of Kester and Bourriaud, with the major difference that the interviewees chose to engage or facilitate socialization through traditional art forms. Three aspects of relational arts deserve further attention.

**Shock, discomfort and frustration**

The first aspect is how and from where insights are generated. Bishop (2006) disagrees with Kester's analysis that criticizes shock and his proposal that insight from artworks can be generated through dialogue among audiences and artists.

> I would argue that such discomfort and frustration—along with absurdity, eccentricity, doubt, or sheer pleasure—can, on the contrary, be crucial elements of a work’s aesthetic impact and are essential to gaining new perspectives on our condition. (Bishop, 2006, p. 181)

Two aspects of this issue are relevant to this research. First, how are insights and inspirations generated in community art, through a path that resembles a dialogue or through shock? Second, the aesthetic impact that inspires new perspectives described

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40 Kester (2011) expands the exchanges in dialogue beyond words, describing it as a “temporally extensive form of social interaction in which modes of expression, enunciation, and reception are continuously modified and reciprocally responsive. It is also dependent on somatic, one might even say aesthetic, forms of knowledge: the exchange of gesture and expression, the complex relationship to habitus and habit, and the way in which conflict, reconciliation, and solidarity are registered in and through the body” (p. 111-112).
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by Bishops is introduced by the artist, whereas Kester proposes that insights can be generated by participants⁴¹. From observation and interviewee data collected so far, although participant generation of ideas and labour is central, it appears that it is not exclusively so; community artists sometimes use elements of surprises in their facilitation and also contribute idea.

The concepts of shocking vs. non-shocking and artist-led vs. participant-led will be retained for further discussion. If artworks are not conceived simply based on these oppositions, what are better concepts to discuss their qualities?

Relations as form
The second aspect is regarding the nature of socialization as a form. The application of social psychology proposed early in the discussion of public art can also respond to Bourriaud’s (2002) explanation that artists and their works in relational forms “are not connected together by any style, theme or iconography” (p. 43). Following his formulation that “meetings, encounters, events, various types of collaboration between people” have “now become fully-fledged artistic ‘forms’” (p. 28), where might “style, theme and iconography” be constructed and recognized? Though a full analysis is beyond the scope of this literature review, it is reasonable to suggest that it lies in human social behaviour. Described as a form, human social behaviour is certainly not a new phenomenon devoid of habits and customs that are essentially style, theme and iconography. Furthermore, whereas the clash of colours and sound may not have moral or psychological consequences, unresolved clashes in socialization often have negative consequences that are predicted in disciplines such as social psychology.

Dialogical form
The third aspect is regarding specifically the form of dialogue. This section is continued from the above discussion of Friere, and provides support for the argument that the pedagogy of the oppressed is not sufficient as the primary or sole theoretical framework for explaining the work of community art. In this discussion, the dialogical position is

⁴¹ See Kester (2011) for an in-depth discussion of the skepticism that participants can generate valuable insight. Unambiguously, Kester iterated such a perspective, “The viewer, in short, can’t be trusted. Hence the deep suspicion which both Bourriaud and Bishop hold for art practices which surrender some autonomy to collaborators and which involve the artist directly in the (implicitly compromised) machinations of political resistance” (p. 33).
based primarily on Freire’s *pedagogy of the oppressed*, a text that inspired a wide range of artists working with communities. It is chosen here as a single representative of the dialogical position for a more integral discussion instead of combining the views of different interpretations by various artists or scholars. As a pedagogy, Freire (2000) discusses dialogue between teacher and student. Substituting the relationship with artist and participant is sufficient for the current discussion unless otherwise stated.

As mentioned above in the discussion of the oppressor-oppressed relationship, trust is an essential element in the pedagogy of the oppressed, a concept that Freire expands further to explain the teacher-student relationship that engages in the dialogue. Freire explains pedagogy of the oppressed as a *co-intentional education*, where

> [t]eachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators (Freire, p. 69).

Freire (2000) gives examples of such dialogues where teachers facilitate discussion on theme suggested by participants. He explains that such generative theme are “never isolated, independent, disconnected, or static; they are always interacting dialectically with their opposites. Nor can these themes be found anywhere except in the human-world relationship” (p. 102). The dialogues are based on real-life relationships “interrelated to other problems within a total context, not as a theoretical question, ... [therefore], the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings” (p. 81). Freire (1972) calls this the process of conscientização, or conscientization. It does not begin after one learns to read and write, but is instead carried through learning words that generate dialogue and critical thinking about the world.

The dialogue of the pedagogy of the oppressed constitute an intellectual experience, a critical reflection that must lead to action, from which the “consequences [in turn]
become the object of critical reflection” (Freire, 2000, p.66). In terms of the critical reflection that occurs in the dialogue, Jackson (1998) explains from Dewey’s perspective, that intellectual experience, “are focused more on problems whose source lies elsewhere and whose solution promises to be of maximal value when put to use in future contexts” (p. 51). Though Freire (2000) believes that action is an essential part of learning, it nevertheless occurs outside of dialogue. Similarly, he expresses that conscientization is a process that “prepares men for the struggle against the obstacles to their humanization” (p. 119). The pedagogy of the oppressed is a method of facilitating an intellectual experience about real life experiences. What is needed is a method of facilitating an artistic experience, where the exchanges are not focused on spoken languages, but languages of the visual, musical or physical.

The writings of John Dewey were chosen to complement and pick up where Freire’s work does not reach. Several factors contribute to the suitability of Dewey. First, Dewey’s Art as Experience (2005) provides an in-depth understanding on what it means to experience anything and in particular doing art. Second, his overall framework of the educativeness of experience is carried through to other works, particularly in Experience and Education, which makes effective comparison and application alongside Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Through Dewey, a framework for understanding the experience in doing ‘traditional art’ forms can be formed. Jacob (2012) similarly integrates Dewey’s theories on art and education to inform the work of artistic engagement in communities. This dissertation aims to expand this perspective to propose the actual role and responsibility of the community artist.

In response to assertions that Dewey stands against Freire in his cultural stance, Betz (1992) demonstrates that Dewey actually shares many similar views. First, both

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42 This perspective is shared by “community-based art educator[sic]” Dan Baron Cohen, who’s transformance pedagogy was based heavily on the work of Freire, but at the same time added the element of sensitization. Sensitization is the nurturing of all human senses as channels of communication with oneself and others” (Baron, et al. 2011). Behind sensitization, it is the realization that the fullness of human expression requires all the senses to be expressed and to be received. Whereas conscientization is a process of deconstructing myths and re-creation of the world through an intellectual process, under the pedagogy of transformance, sensitization prepares one to engage this task through multiple processes. Dan “has dedicated his past 16 years to the development of a transformance pedagogy—artistic performance for transformation based in cultural literacy—across Brazil and in collaboration with arts education networks and universities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America and Europe” (Baron Cohen, 2015). He was President of the International Drama/Theatre Education Association (IDEA) between 2004 to 2010 and is active internationally and in Latin America on the application of art in social causes. Dan was keynote speaker at the Forum on Community Arts in 2016.

43 Deans (1999) provides an analysis that highlights certain differences, but are both useful in guiding the work of service-learning education.
recognize that “the lower class is likely to be mis-educated” (Betz, p. 123). Second, while Freire analyzes oppression in Latin America, Dewey’s analysis is more subtle in recognizing other forms of social division (*ibid.*). Third, Dewey explains more systematically and thoroughly the goal of education in developing people fully towards a democratic society (*ibid.*, p. 124). Finally, both believe in students as an active agent in learning (*ibid.*)44.

**Participation in traditional forms**

In her participatory work with refugees, Lash’s (2006) explanation of her skepticism of the ‘western art forms’ is typical of a view that is shared with Bourriaud and Kester’s criticism towards traditional forms.

> When a woman tells me about getting her kneecaps smashed off by her own government, or being left in a pit of dead bodies for days, can I seriously suggest that "our" Western art forms have anything to offer her? No, because first, there is the problem of ethnocentrism, of privileged philanthropists who are of the opinion that making art is good for people, playing out their paternalistic and naïve fantasies. And second, "our" heritage is the way of seeing, the way of being, the way of organizing human activity, which is in large part responsible for the brutal situations these people must heal from (Lash, 2006, p. 222)

Regardless of her hesitations, Lash believes that “instead of dispensing with arts practices altogether, we need to bring the utmost humility to the project of reorienting ourselves within them” (*ibid.*). Her comments reveal that even for a practitioner sensitive to cultural criticism as she is, there is something inherently effective about these ‘western art forms’. Moreover, she suggests that the artist can orient oneself to nullify these ill-effects she mentions.

Lowenfeld & Brittain (1985) and McNiff (1992) similarly criticized the system that has shackled the power of art in the fields of art education and art therapy. For artists who wish to contribute their expertise to the society, one path is to explore medium that are

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44 Finkelpearl (2013) similarly identified that “For other educators steeped in progressive pedagogical theory, participatory projects were valued because of their potential to break down hierarchical teaching practices, as espoused, for example, in the writings of Paulo Freire and John Dewey” (p. 90). See also Jacob (2012) section on Art as Society-Building on p. 5 to 6.
still relatively free of cultural baggage, the other path is to acknowledge and perhaps overcome them. However, cultural baggage is likely permeated in multiple aspects of artist-participant exchange that cannot be avoided simply by substituting forms of engagement.

Are more ‘innovative’ forms free from cultural baggage? McNiff pointed out that surrealism began as a “philosophy and method of fully engaging art with life and psyche...rather than a commercial commodity” (McNiff, 1992, p. 44). However, he argued that surrealism eventually failed this idea because “the surrealist movement were also part of the gallery traditions of Western art, which used surrealism to further their commercial aims and to generate yet another category of commodity” (ibid., p. 49). Similarly, Fleming also describes how curators and galleries aims at harnessing public art projects that challenges the gallery system.

There is nothing new about “The New Public Art” unless it is the framing that commodifies it...[t]he framing is effected by a professional-managerial class (PMC) – the critics and curators currently creating careers and fiefdoms for themselves by harnessing and bringing into the fold an artists’ activity that has been threatening the institutions that employ them. These are among the reasons why “much of the dialogue around this work has been characterized by a certain circularity” [citing Kester 1995] – simply, those who have spoken authoritatively are almost exclusively curators, advocating not artists’ activities, but their own position as “discoverers” (Fleming, 1995, para. 2)45.

Both relational practices and community art, primarily utilizing social and tradition forms respectively, are not ‘free’ from public funding, gallery or academic systems that can burden their practice. Thus, instead of avoiding what baggages might be attached to the traditional forms, it is the intention of the author to understand their effectiveness that leads community artists around the world to continue using them.

45 Fleming wrote this article in response to Kester (1995). Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art. Afterimage 22. The exchange between Kester and Fleming is referenced by numerous authors that discusses the effectiveness of community oriented projects.
Chapter 1 – Literature Review

Is “making art is good for people” an opinion held narrowly by certain cultures and elites? The author disagrees. Mandela drawing, chanting, dance and sculpting are only several examples among countless forms of art making used in religious practice for millennia for their psychological and physical effects. Seeing that participatory forms of art increasingly draw on ‘non-western forms’, from Chinese ink painting to various forms of first nation handicrafts and dance, the effectiveness of art must be explored beyond, or deeper than, the cultural level.

Advances in neuroscience in the last two decades have identified the primacy of senses such as sight, touch and smell, in the human psyche (Carter, 2010; Carter & Frith, 1998). Various scholars, especially those writing on the expressive art therapies link such findings to humans’ responsiveness to dance, painting and music (Kaplan, 2000; Talwar, 2007; Law, 2014). These findings become scientific evidence that support claims that brain development in humans were a determining factor that enabled defining characteristics of the modern human dated approximately 20,000 years ago (Alland, 1977, Dissanayake, 1995, Davies, 2012). Dissanayake argues that humans became capable of conceiving the supernatural, of differentiating between ordinary and nonordinary, and of processing memory beyond the immediate past and future because of evolution of the brain. This enabled humans to look for meanings from the past, and plan for the future. The behavior of art was the result of a biological evolution as much as a survival need. The works of Dissanayake, complemented with Davies’ criticisms and modification, will form the basis of such an ethological perspective of art. This perspective also sheds light on the use of art in group settings that is especially pertinent in community art.

A second dimension of the effectiveness of ‘traditional’ art, as observed in community art, is the process of art making. In contrast to the traditions of philosophies of art that specializes in the disinterested appreciation of objects (Greenberg, 1992; Bell, 1992; Carroll, 2008), this research draws on Dewey (2005) for an understanding that connects art with everyday experience. The goal is not to argue the superiority of Dewey’s philosophy of art; instead, the author only seeks to highlight his theory of experience connecting both art and education provides a framework that enables this research to

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46 See Dissanayake (2000, P. 147) and Davies (2012, p. 187) for a discussion of such estimates.
explain the value of facilitating people to create their own art in a group setting. A comparison of Freire and Dewey will demonstrate their strengths, and Dewey’s greater suitability in his philosophy of art.

Dewey (2005) explains the integralness of making and perceive, giving legitimacy to the value of the art making process. However, he does not elaborate on the physical and mental mechanics of the process. Kwon (2002) identifies one way of understanding this process in the actual labour of participation:

This investment of labor would seem to secure the participants' sense of identification with "the work," or at least a sense of ownership of it, so that the community sees itself in "the work" not through an iconic or mimetic identification but through the recognition of its own labor in the creation of, or becoming of, "the work." Although the concept of labor rarely appears in public art discourse...it seems crucial to note the need to consider the representative function of labor within the context of community-based art practice generally. For now, I can simply propose that the drive toward identificatory unity that propels today's form of community-based site specificity is a desire to model or enact unalienated collective labor, predicated on an idealistic assumption that artistic labor is itself a special form of unalienated labor, or at least provisionally outside of capitalism's forces (Kwon, 2002, p. 97)

She suggests that labour involvement is more concrete than “iconic or mimetic identification” (ibid., p. 96) with created works, but that covers only part of the implications. Marx’s idea of alienated labour can be summarized from Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844 into four areas of alienation of the worker: i) from the product of labour, p. ii) from the process of labour, iii) from oneself as the producer, and iv) from other workers and the receiver of one’s labour. Furthering Kwon's reference to the idea of unalienated labour, there are the psychological, physical and social dimensions of taking part in labour.

Psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1997) provides such a framework for understanding participation in labour, artistic or in general, in his theory of “flow”.
“Flow”, is a state of optimal experience where one enters in activities that is characterized as being i) sufficiently challenging, ii) providing clarity of goals and feedbacks, and iii) where action and awareness are merged in deep concentration that alters perception (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 1997). New evidence is mounting towards the claim that experiencing flow in social setting can be more effective, one aspect being that “in highly interdependent situations, people may serve as agents of flow for each other” (Walker, 2010, p. 4). Thus, through flow, one is able to understand the psychological state of the unalienated artistic labour that is an essential part of the community arts.

Bishop (2012) explores participation through the perspective of politics 47. Though it is deemed that Bishop’s collection of works assessed is too broad to be representative of the specific area of community art, she does raise an issue in the common use of Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation as a guide for assessing participatory arts 48. Arnstein’s ladder of participation is a framework for assessing levels of citizen participation. Bishop stated that

The most challenging works of art do not follow this schema, because models of democracy in art do not have an intrinsic relationship to models of democracy in society. The equation is misleading and does not recognise art’s ability to generate other, more paradoxical criteria. The works I have discussed in the preceding chapters do not offer anything like citizen control. The artist relies upon the participants’ creative exploitation of the situation that he/she offers - just as participants require the artists’ cue and direction (Bishop, 2012, p. 279).

Bishop’s (2012) skepticism of a simplistic application of assessment tool for political participation to artistic participation is sound. However, her assessment is lacking in that she does not consult modified forms of the ladder. Hart’s (1992, 2008) and Shier’s (2001) application of the ladder represents two less ambitious and more nuanced

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47 Bishop investigated in depth the value of participation from the perspective political philosophy, stating that “participatory art is not only a social activity but also symbolic one, both embedded in the world and at one remove from it”, therefore “the positivist social sciences are ultimately less useful in this regard than the abstract reflection of political philosophy” (Bishop, 2012, 7). Also, see Hewitt & Jordan (2016) for a discussion of Bishop’s (2012) claims.

assessment tools in assessing participation. As the dissertation progresses in explain the nature of art, people and community, the author will propose modified frameworks that are more suitable in assessing community art.

**Assessments of studies on social impact of the arts**

Studies and meta-studies of the social impact of the arts have also been reviewed. This collection of assessment includes various forms of art media, types of participation and settings of ‘community’. From a different perspective, these studies also point out the lack of agreement on the basic elements of art, participants, effects and their relationships. These meta-studies provide a better understand of the common protests by community artists against the quantification of their work or the inappropriateness of certain assessment methods. They can be summarized into one question: what is meant by ‘art’ and its benefits to the community? The amount of effort that artists and organizations invest to present themselves to sponsors, funders and the community in general gives the question of this research a real urgency.

Goldbard (1993) describes with optimistic language how artists and organizations struggle to stay afloat during the 1980s; an experience that is probably shared worldwide.

But clever community artists have managed to do a great deal with residency programs despite their limitations, using them to create opportunities for cultural development and community collaboration.

The groups with the most tenacity and shrewdest fundraising have carried on by adjusting their language to the times without surrendering the core values of their practice (Goldbard, 1993, para. 17).

Even though it is true that obstacles challenge individuals and organizations to become inventive, the author doubts that there is a lack of challenge within the actual work of community arts that anyone would welcome unfriendly bureaucratic or political hurdles. It is not uncommon to hear of artists who are bogged down with running an organization rather than doing the intended work of the organization. Goffman’s claim as cited below illustrates the difficulty faced by community artists and organizations:

And so individuals often find themselves with the dilemma of expression versus action. Those who have the time and talent to
perform a task well may not, because of this, have the time or talent to make it apparent that they are performing well. It may be said that some organizations resolve this dilemma by officially delegating the dramatic function to a specialist who will spend his time expressing the meaning of the task and spend no time actually doing it (Goffman, 1973, p. 33).

In critical terms, Clements (2007) points that organizations function in an environment plagued by “short-termism, lack of time, money and interest, gears techniques towards top-down bureaucratic-autocratic methods which undermine local control and too readily influence project aims and objectives” (p. 333). Though organizations might face funding hurdles creatively, Clements laments how the structures of funding have turned the evaluation of projects from an opportunity for assessment to an ambiguous process primarily to garner future funding.

The pressure to validate the practice has caused community arts organization to bend its work towards quantifiable results (Belfiore, 2008). Meta-reviews of impact studies of the arts by Guetzkow (2002), Newman et al. (2003), Belfiore (2002, 2006), Clements (2007) and Skingley et al. (2012) identify that the causation between a group-based art making and their intended results often runs thin, and large scale evidence-based evaluation have been fraught with methodological problems. The following section summarizes their arguments and suggests that before considering the macro and indirect social impacts of community arts, one must first return to its most simple form, the act of a group of people coming together to make art.

Commenting on Matarraso’s (1997) *Use or Ornament: The social impact of participation in the arts* which looked at over 60 projects and interviewed over 500 people, Clements states that

[m]ore recently doubts have appeared over social impact evaluation as the evidence is deemed stilted and unconvincing, with mass social outcomes considered unpredictable due to the remoteness between cause and effect, the complexity and individuality of response and the
methodological foundation of Matarasso’s research which has been criticised as weak and unethical (Clements, 2007, p. 326).

Two of the issues identified in *The social impacts of the arts – myth or reality* (2006) by Belfiore are chosen here for their central relevance to the planning and execution of community art.

First is the issue of artistic quality. Belfiore discussed this more thoroughly in *Art as a means of alleviating social exclusion* (2002) through a discussion of *Use or ornament*, pointing out that due to the participatory and empowering nature of community arts activities, “aesthetic considerations have often little or no room in their evaluation of the success of their art-related programmes” (Belfiore 2002, p. 15). Citing Webster (1997), Belfiore (2002) states that organizations “place more emphasis and value on the artistic process - with its empowering effects – rather than the artistic product” (p. 15). Should art be valued more for its process or its product? The redefining of art is aimed at providing an answer to this question.

At the root of this issue is the fundamental question of “What do we mean by ‘the arts’ and what is their ‘value’?”, stated by Skingley et al. (2012) as the first of four questions in reviewing methodologies in evaluating impact of participatory arts in well-being and health. In addition to the particular art form, Guetzkow discusses that the type and level of participation to be an important factor that is often overlooked. Skingley et al. (2012), citing Guetzkow (2002), also point out that “arts and health researchers rarely define ‘arts’ consistently and often include diverse activities within a single study, making comparisons across these works, as well as knowledge synthesis, problematical” (Cited in Skingley et la. 2012, p. 75).

The second issue is the problem of an assumed causality link between participation and predefined indicator. Belfiore (2006) points out that “[f]or the arts impact argument to hold, it is crucial to establish a causal relation between the transformation observed and

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49 The four questions the article raises are: What do we mean by ‘the arts’ and what is their ‘value’? What do we mean in this particular context, by health and how can it be measured? What counts as ‘evidence’, by which to judge the success of outcomes in arts and health initiatives? What are the most appropriate methods of collecting data and communicating findings within this field? (Skingley et la. 2012, 74).
the cultural project or activity being evaluated” (p. 30). Perhaps nearer to the root of this issue are people’s expectations of community arts. This is reflected upon by Clements (2007), who discusses the ‘natural’ primary intention and ‘synthetic’ secondary instrumentation of community arts project. Clements pointed out that “Participation in the arts tends to be embedded in leisure and creative education which should be the primary evaluative considerations” (p. 333). From his example of the prison art programme that illustrates an instrumental use common to community arts, Clements warned that

advocating the arts through avenues of extrinsic utility may be a self-defeating process as such ‘synthetic’ instrumentality may eventually narrow down the creative capacity of programmes due to the responsive focusing aspect of the evaluation process, which could result in the arts becoming less experimental, peripheral or stilted (ibid., p. 330).

This reminds the author of a community art intervention for delinquent youth, where he designed the poster to downplay the social agenda behind the programme. And true to Clements’ concern, the social welfare department that organized the programme focused mainly on the secondary factor. Clements warned that “to synthetically isolate the secondary factor of social impact as the primary evaluative rationale risks making delivery less effective”, and suggested that “short-term programmes need to be immersed in an exploration of the art form and creative education that may ‘naturally’ include a social impact agenda, a process I witnessed as an evaluator” (ibid.).

Does this “art form and creative education that may ‘naturally’ include a social impact agenda” exist? If it does, it is possibly a key to understanding the nature of the community arts.

Summary
The literature reviewed in this chapter indicate two trends: a definite development of the practice of artistic engagement in communities towards factoring-in and centre-staging people, and the rise of practices that employs relational forms. Regarding the
emphasis on people, though this has been the emphasis of community art all along, a suitable framework has yet to be developed to satisfactorily describe the nature and mechanics of human participation within these activities. This is not only a problem that affects scholarship and practice, but intimately related is the issue of assessment of the effectiveness of such practices. Regarding the rise of relational forms especially evident in the numbers of publications in the past years, the persistence field of community art - which this dissertation limits its scope to those using traditional art forms\(^{50}\) - demonstrates an identified effectiveness that lies in using traditional art forms.

The above discussion also demonstrates that while community art shows similarities to public art and the relational practices, is unique in seeing artistic participation as a central element of its engagement. The nature of participation in traditional art forms is the primary focus of this dissertation. Although socialization as an art form is not directly investigated as such, since socialization is an essential part of the process of collaborative forms of art such as community art, socialization in terms of individuals engaged in human interaction will be examined.

**Artistic and social impact: An interdisciplinary perspective**

Artists and scholars have argued for and against the social impact of art for millennia (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008). The assessment criteria for public art proposed by Senie (2003), Cartiere (2008) and Hewitt & Jordan (2016) all require each work to consider both artistic and extra-artistic dimensions. This dissertation proposes similarly the need to simultaneous consider both the artistic and the disciplines that explain ‘communityness’; the more intertwined this interdisciplinarity the better. Are there alternatives to the common view that artistry must be sacrificed for social values? It is believed that the ethological perspective of art, where art is natural and inevitable behaviour of human survival and flourishing, and the theory of art as experience by Dewey, will yield insights that can reconcile the separation of art from everyday life.

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\(^{50}\) There are community art projects that also use relational forms either because it is suitable, or because artists do not feel compelled to hold strict differentiation of various practices.
Chapter 1 – Literature Review

It is acknowledged that the author is not totally above his cultural or institutional backgrounds and connections. His vantage point and resulting choice of theories, though informed by the data he collects, will inevitably represent certain biases. This dissertation introduces a relatively untapped body of literature in the research of community art, seeking to broaden the awareness of their wide ranging aspects and impacts.
Methodology

This research seeks to advance the understanding and practice of ‘community art’ by re-evaluating its basic premises. An interdisciplinary approach is adopted to synthesize both scholarly writings and the views of expert practitioners to re-evaluate existing understandings of ‘community art’ and formulate a definition that can encapsulate the complexity of this practice. This chapter discusses the nature of interdisciplinarity, its strengths and its weaknesses.

Interdisciplinarity of this research

According to Repko (2012), the study of real life problems requires a comprehensive outlook, where the “interdisciplinary research process proves its analytical power and demonstrates its unmatched ability to construct a more comprehensive understanding” (p. 164). Integrating several commonly accepted definitions, Repko (2012) defines interdisciplinary studies as

a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline, and draws on the disciplines with the goal of integrating their insights to construct a more comprehensive understanding (p. 16)

Repko (2012) identifies integration as the key element of interdisciplinary studies, stressing this point by differentiating interdisciplinary research from multidisciplinary, where the latter is “merely bringing insights from different disciplines together in some way but failing to engage in the hard work of integration”(p. 17). Kessel et al. (2008) makes this differentiation, stressing the importance of the connection among the disciplines, stating that “[i]nterdisciplinary work implies that the various approaches are generally applied simultaneously over a substantial period of time rather than sequentially, which is more commonly termed multidisciplinary” (p. 4, emphasis original).

The nature and effectiveness of ‘community art’ is a complex question that requires an interdisciplinary approach. Community art is a collaborative art activity, this already
implies that it is at least artistic and social. As demonstrated in the literature review, studies of community art and similar activities all require an interdisciplinary approach.

This research also stresses the interdisciplinarity found in the art forms of ‘community art’. The analysis of the art forms in this research goes deeper than the content expressed to investigate their sensual experiences. It is observed that even among ‘community art’ activities held by individual artists, there is great reliance on other senses such as musicians using drawings and artists using body movements. Therefore, in order to understand how interdisciplinary art works in ‘community art’ works, an understanding of multiple arts discipline is essential.

Another interdisciplinary aspect of this research is the background of the author. This is an important step in acknowledging the “disciplinary habits of mind and disciplinary cultures” (Strober, 2011, p. 37) that inevitably shades the thinking of all those who participate in interdisciplinary studies.

Prior to undergraduate studies specializing in arts management and majoring in music history, the author was involved in high school and university wind ensemble, stage band and choir on three different instruments, and was also involved in both school, church and staged drama productions in sound and lighting. He was musician for various drama groups after high school. Career-wise, to enable himself to work as project coordinator with visual artists, photographers, musicians and actors in interdisciplinary community art activities, he exposes himself to other media by taking part in painting and dance activities.

One consequence of such a wide ranging artistic background is that the author lacks the mastery generally required of a professional artist. On the other hand, this record of interdisciplinary collaborations provides a basis for integrating the artistic languages of images, sound and movements. Moreover, the academic study of arts management, music history and visual studies are all interdisciplinary fields where integration is a standard affair. Therefore, in addition to the suitability of the interdisciplinary approach for this topic, it is also a cumulative and logical result of the author’s background and training.
An interdisciplinary approach by a single individual has its strengths and limitations. Being trained in the arts and humanities, the author lacks the depth of mastery in employing theories and tools of the social sciences. Such an approach also requires time beyond that available within a three-year PhD candidature. Since an exhaustive comparison of suitable social science theory is beyond the capability of a single researcher, this research is conducted to draw scholarly attention by demonstrating one effective integration. It is hoped that this demonstration will open up a dialogue with fellow scholars in other disciplines to further the understanding of this practice.

**How the disciplines were chosen**

Both the “traditional perspectival approach” and the classification approach were applied to illuminate the relevant disciplines in an interdisciplinary research of ‘community art’ (Repko, 2012, p. 138). A literature review provides the basis of the traditional perspectival approach. It identifies that existing studies were conducted through a wide range of theories including art, culture, education, economic impact, public space, personal and community empowerment. Though existing studies encompass a wide range of approaches, they do not do justice to the basic phenomenon of ‘community art’: people making art together. Not all such instances are community art, but all community art begins with this condition. The classification approach links observable phenomena to appropriate disciplines. On the artistic side, it suggests drawing on theories of art and artistic experience to explain the process of art making. As for the social side, the classification approach suggests drawing on theories of social psychology and theories of community. As further verification, meta-studies of the impact of art also suggest clearer definition of art and intended goals (Belfiore 2002, 2006; Clements, 2007; Guetzkow, 2002; Newman et al. 2003; Skingley et al., 2012).

This research will investigate ‘community art’ by looking at ‘community’ and ‘art’, areas that are themselves interdisciplinary. Law (2012, 2015), drawing on anthropology, neuroscience and psychology, demonstrates such an interdisciplinary approach to understanding human’s need for art\(^{51}\). According to Law, humans did not set out to

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\(^{51}\) Law has been teaching two courses, “Art and Well Being” and “The Origin and Functions of Art” at Lingnan University since 2008. Both courses investigate the intrinsic nature of art and its impact on the development of an individual and a community alike.
create masterpieces or cultural artefacts, but instead made images because it is in their
nature to communicate and express through images. This challenges the outdated but
still commonplace view that art should be “free from any finality or function” (Belfiore
& Bennet, 2008, p. 178). This is a demonstration of Newell’s (2007) point that
“interdisciplinarians can ferret out those assumptions by playing one discipline off
another: they can use the critique of one discipline to illuminate contrasting
assumptions of another discipline” (p. 256).

The counterpart to the question of the nature of art is the nature of community. Some
sees standard of living as the ultimate goal, while others focus on political participation.
Many scholars identify a conceptual leap between the phenomenon of ‘community art’
and its expected community-related outcomes (Guetskow, 2002; Belfiore, 2002, 2006;
Clements, 2007). Inspired by the above line of reasoning, this research steps into the
discipline of social psychology, returning to the most basic element of a community to
investigate why humans interact. Entry level texts of social psychology reveals a wealth
of discussion on interpersonal dynamics. For instance, Baumeister & Leary’s (1995) the
need to belong effectively underlines human’s need for being together.

But what is a ‘community’? As reflected in scholarly discourse, ‘community’ can refer to
people with ties or an aspiration for community (Lyon & Driskell, 2012). However, as
‘community art’ is observed to require physical presence of individuals, this dissertation
will focus on groups and communities where people are physically present. The work
of McKnight (1995) and McKnight & Block (2010) was chosen for emphasis on people
rather than place, matching the trend towards people-orientedness identified in the
practice of artistic engagement in communities earlier.

To reiterate, this research seeks to offer one possible coherent understanding of the
social dynamic of ‘community art’. Theories of social psychology such as the ‘need to
belong’ (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) explains interpersonal dynamics that forms the basis

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52 This increases specialization from introductory to specialized text follows the progression of disciplinary command discussed by Newell (2007).
53 Baumeister & Leary’s argument was built on interdisciplinary perspectives on human survival.
54 Projects not requiring physical presence, though fueled in recent years by the internet, is not a new format of connecting people, examples include working with post cards and journals. Such projects would require a different analysis.
of community involvement and sense of trust, elements that are integral to theories of community and civic participation (Putnam, 2000; McKnight & Block, 2010).

**Literary and Data Source**

As interdisciplinary sources are especially useful in addressing real life problems, voices of stakeholders beyond the academy are often used as its data sources (Repko, 2012). Within this research, the literary data sources include academic literature and journal, government reports, assessment and reports by scholars, manual style literature written by practitioners, reports and literature from the perspective of organization and NGO, newspaper articles, promotional materials and activity reports.

**Expert Interviewees as Source**

Expert views from beyond the academy are valuable resources to an interdisciplinary research. They provide real life perspectives that are not bound by disciplinary perspectives. Newell (2007) describe that disciplinary tools typically work well when relationships among variables are “orderly, simple and linear”, but that they “tend to break down, yield messy results, or become insoluble when the relationships become too nonlinear” (p. 260).

Academic language does not communicate readily with practitioners who are beyond disciplinary mind-set. Denmead (2012) explains in his phenomenological research of ‘community artists’:

> I sensed some artists felt my project was a Sisyphean task, questioning the idea that I could find words adequate in describing their pedagogies. When I first introduced my interest in doing so, several artists wished me luck in jest. And during the research, I found some artists evasive in explaining the meaning of metaphors they used.... To confront this tension, I suggest that researchers working in this emerging field dwell in presenting the density, complexity and variation of what might be called community arts pedagogies before trying to delimit the field through theorization or typologies (e.g. Jeffery 2005; Gradel 2001). If not, community artists may just spit out researchers' metaphors lest those metaphors become literal and binding. (p. 247)
Citing Moriarty (1997), Newman et al. (2003) also pointed out the divergent mind sets between artists and evaluators:

The methods and the emotional dispositions of artists and evaluators frequently lie at very different poles. Artists may resist, even revile, classification and quantification, perceiving such approaches as hostile to the creative process. (p. 318)

The above comments identify reasons why few scholarly works have drawn on how community artists say they work with people. However, the expertise of practitioners constitutes an important of source of knowledge that makes the interview an essential part of this research.

The dilemma exists that, as a past student and collaborator with most of the interviewees, the existing trust enables interviewees to be comfortable with the interview process. However, this close identification can also affect the criticality that is important to the interviewer. Fortunately, all parties were no stranger to meetings and peer evaluations where clarifications and elaborations of ideas are often sought after, thus off-setting the negative effect that a strong rapport may have. Furthermore, when possible, the author would participate as an assistant of an activity conducted by the interviewee, so that the interview can be driven by concrete examples instead of hypothetical debates void of contexts. The author, as the interviewer, will attempt to overcome the difficulties by carefully balancing a level of trust and objective distant to the best of his abilities (Seidman 2013).

**Choice of Expert Practitioners as Informants/Interviewees**

The interviewees were chosen to reflect a practice of ‘community art’ that sees participation and artistry as core elements. They specialize in facilitating collaborative art making where the mechanics of art making in traditional forms synergize with the personal and social dynamic of participation to arrive at certain artistic and social goals. The interviewees have also had a track record of working with people and communities of different age, background and culture across different countries. In addition to an active practice, the interviewees are all experienced trainers with an established view of
their practice.

While CV and official recognition can demonstrate their global or regional experiences, the modest nature of community art projects often cause or even require the work to be unnoticed. Apart from the obvious requirements of participant anonymity, it appears that community artists are not primarily concerned with documentation of their work. This is especially true in low budget projects that rather pay for more sessions than a better exhibition. This also means that awards and official recognition sometimes go to good works that are also well documented, but not necessarily what the artists considers their best work(s). Therefore, this research is looking at cases and situations that can provide insights rather than those that have received recognition. This research does not claim the interviewees to be the ‘best community artist’ in Hong Kong or in their field, if that claim is even possible or necessary.

Only seven interviewees were chosen as the expert voice for depth rather than breadth. The alternative of interviewing a larger number of practitioners is not only beyond the resource of this research, but will result in a general survey instead of a focused investigation. A general understanding of community arts can only reveal the range of existing views and practices that are already available in numerous articles and book compilations of case studies, but these cases are often presented as possibilities without deeper considerations of their wider relevance. What is needed to advance the practice of community art is a more concrete and ambitious claim to better practice, taking into account human nature in the face of shifting contexts. Goldbard (2006) handles such a scope and has been able to garner great momentum in actual cooperation, debates and further research. However, since her work is primarily concerned with connecting the community arts to the widely embracive practice of community cultural development, it does not advance the expertise of the practice of community art itself.

The current research aims to propose a framework for better practice that is applicable to all forms of community arts. Therefore, this research looks at the work of seven artists of different art forms who are recognized in their work across age, physical and mental abilities, socioeconomic and cultural background and urban/rural experience. Though it is the goal of this research for the proposed framework to be somewhat comprehensive,
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it does not seek to have the final word on community arts. Rather, this research makes its claim in order to invite useful dialogue or thoughtful disagreement, possibly leading to future research.

A body of practice integrated in HK

As mentioned in the introduction, the approach of this research to reconstruct an understanding of community art from the basic components of art and people was inspired by an artistically uninformed instrumentalization of the practice in Hong Kong’s education and social welfare system; a situation that, as the author has unfortunately learnt from fellow practitioners and researchers, possibly deserves attention in other parts of the world. As such, this dissertation seeks to explain the approach of the expert interviewees’ in meeting this challenged.

It was recognized during the course of data collection and analysis that the interviewees finally chosen were connected to Mok Chiu Yu and Evelyna Liang, both recognized as veterans and visionaries who advance community art and community cultural development in Hong Kong. Evelyna is one of the seven interviewees in this research. Her skill and preference for working personally in community art activities continues to inspire a younger generation of artists in this field. Though she primarily facilitates visual art, her understanding in human nature and art enables her to work and collaborate effectively with artists across different media.

Similarly, Mok’s background is primarily in activism and theatre, yet his influence reaches beyond his own medium and practice. Mok labours relentlessly to create connections and acquire funding for these connections to bear fruit. He has contributed to the community arts since before his position in Arts with the Disabled Hong Kong (ADAHK) through to his continuing work in the Asian People’s Theatre Festival Society and the Centre for Community Cultural Development. His work has shaped the context of this research that includes direct and indirect support of the community arts, the socially engaged arts and other related creative cultural work.

55 This research looks at Evelyna’s projects instead of Mok’s projects, because in contrast to the role of Evelyna, Mok is increasingly facilitating less of his own projects.

56 See Au Yeung (2010) for a historical account of Mok’s contribution to the community arts in Hong Kong.
Chapter 2 - Methodology

Of special relevance to this research is Mok’s introduction to Hong Kong and continued support of numerous forms of community arts including playback theatre (PT), circle painting, community music and the Hong Kong dance group *Breeze Across Us* (BAU); these are represented in this research respectively by Veronica Needa, Hiep Nguyen, Pete Moser and Ng Sze-Wan. Mok’s earlier work in ADAHK heavily influenced theatre practitioners Grad Leung, who was trained by Veronica and started one of the earliest playback theatre teams under *Well Drama Club*; Grad also regularly works with Evelyna and her team under her organization *Art for All*. Another interviewee, Exist, artistic director of *Peanuts Community Arts Workshop*, has been a key member of Evelyna’s team in *Art for All* since it started in 2001 and regularly collaborates with Mok’s projects. He was also trained by Veronica, and musically, he developed a style of community music that complements Pete Moser’s work in Hong Kong and mainland China. At the same time, members of Evelyna’s team have attended trainings and projects by Hiep, Veronica and Pete, whose forms and exercises are regularly drawn upon in her own projects. By introducing and supporting the work of these artists, Mok has introduced a body of community art practice that emphasize the ability of the artist to “enable people to participate, [and to] give rise to people’s innate creative abilities” (Mok C. Y., interview, April 14, 2015).

**Local contributions? Overseas contributions?**

The two overseas artists Hiep and Pete, and Eurasian Hong Konger Veronica provide a wider perspective for this research. In fact, the overseas training received by Evelyna and Sze, and the countless workshops attended by Grad and Exist greatly problematize how ‘purely local’ the Hong Kong-based artists are. This is part of the design to enable the probing of questions such as why are non-local artists and their methods effective in Hong Kong and in Asia? Why are local artists also effective overseas? Does this point to underlying commonalities in the practice of community art everywhere?

**Summary of interviewee data collected**

After narrowing down the interviewees to the final seven, roughly 1.5 to 2 hours of interview were conducted with each of them. Some of these interviews occurred in the same seating. Most of the interviewees have either written or given public talks on their practice, providing preliminary information which enables more focused and concise
interviews for this research. The author also took part as participant, observer or assistant in activities led by all of the interviewees except Veronica.

Methodology applied to data

This research uses the qualitative approach of constant comparison analysis to analyse and synthesize the data. According to the Onwuegbuzie et al. (2012), constant comparison analysis is effective in comparing both literature and interview transcripts with practitioners who serve as informants. The method of constant comparison is consistent with Newell’s explanation (2007) for an interdisciplinary research where, steps often overlap, re-examination of earlier steps are common, and that “interdisciplinarians tend to partially integrate as they go, reforming tentative syntheses as the insights of each additional discipline are incorporated” (p. 249).

In discussing the importance of a thorough literature review, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010) quoted Boote & Beile (2006) that “a candidate cannot judge pieces he or she does not know and cannot evaluate their relevance until the candidate understands the whole literature” (p. 34). Out of the list of 23 objectives that a thorough literature review can achieve, the followings are highlighted here in the context of the current research (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). First, this research seeks to avoid replication of a community development perspective that is insufficiently sensitive to the intricate dynamics of human interactions. Secondly, it seeks to re-evaluate the modenist notion of ‘art’, a concept that has been widely challenged by artists working with communities, and to articulate an alternate view of the theory of art. Thirdly, a review of literature on artistic engagement in communities is conducted to situate this research within a wider scholarly and historical context. Finally, through an effective demonstration of interdisciplinary approach, this research seeks to open meaningful dialogue with fields upon which the community arts also draws.

The literature review process began prior to the interviews, which then required the author to return to various aspects of the literature along the way. This recursive

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57 Unable to schedule an attendance at Veronica activities, interviews were set up with artists trained by or in collaboration with Veronica to comment on her methods. The author administered a programme in 2000-2001 where he observed trainings by Veronica. He finally received intensive training from her during the summer of 2004.
process of constant comparison analysis resembles the interdisciplinary approach described by Newell (2007):

... going back and forth between disciplinary part and complex whole; comparative evaluation of the various disciplines' strengths and weaknesses, and the narrowing and skewing that results from their respective redefinitions of the problem. (p. 255)

The background reading was essential in establishing an understanding of the research area so that a sound interview focus can be established. Seidman (2013) explains that though “researcher must come to the transcripts with an open attitude, seeking what emerges as important and of interest from the text”, the researcher must rely on his or her own experience and knowledge to judge what is important, which is “the most important ingredient the researcher brings to the study” (p. 120).

Interviews with expert practitioners were conducted at various stages of the data collection and the literature review. The interviews were semi-structured, addressing interviewee’s reasons for engaging in this practice, their views and descriptions of their practice. When relevant and available, the interviewer would ask the interviewees to comment on a situation observed, such as an incident or a decision in an activity, or on written materials such as book, blog, brochure or training manual.

The interviews were processed several times to pick out themes addressed by the interviewee. As the interviewees often answered through personal experiences that they ascribed to multiple layers of meaning, over a hundred different categories emerged before being narrowed down. The next step was to look for commonalities or discrepancies among the seven interviewees that may point to the nature and the practice of community art.

Individual profiles of the interviewees are provided to create a context for understanding their responses. The interviewees will then be quoted in later chapters in dialogue with literatures on relevant areas. The voice of interviewees, as experts in this field of practice, complements a much needed but absent voice within the academic
literature. Connections, in agreement and disagreement, were recognized between interviewees, and between interviewees and literature.
Chapter 3 - Data Analysis

Data Analysis

This chapter analyses the data gathered for this research. The first section presents the profiles of the seven artists that provide a context for understanding their comments. The second section analyses the commonalities gathered from their responses. The third section interprets these comments addressing to the basic elements of community art: what is art; what is community; what do the arts have to do with community; what is the role of the community artist. The findings are integrated to revise the preliminary definition that was compiled from existing studies of community art.

Profile of community artists

Hiep

Nguyen Cao Hiep, creator of the method of circle painting and founder of the organization, is an artist and art educator. Hiep painted throughout his childhood and teenage years. Upon arrival in the US, he also received training in theatre and was in stage production and design as a member of Club O’Noodle, the first Vietnamese theatre group in the States. He spent a few years in a nail salon painting nails to make a more stable living, a period of endless work that drained him both physically and psychologically to a point of contemplating ending his life. As an immigrant, Hiep felt severely isolated as an outsider without community and connection to the wider society, living daily only for work and rest. He eventually made the decision to get back to painting as a way of searching the missing pieces in his life.

Hiep returned to “the place of his youth”, in the cool and quiet highlands of Da Lat to begin his search. He practiced meditation every day for contemplating “what is the point of painting?” and life in general. His meditation was a breathing practice where he drew circles to record his breaths. For weeks, he practiced this daily from ten to five in meditation and came to realize a sense of isolation, “the life of an artist is always alone, you have to face your soul with no one else, so it’s very painful when you are in such isolation.”

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58 Profiles compiled from verbal comments in interview, public talk and events; direct quotes from written materials will be cited.
59 Non-textual data compiled from interviews conducted on Feb 10, 2014, May 5, 2015; public talk on April 7, 16. See Appendix – Interview Logs for details of all non-textual data.
During that time, he also connected with neighbours by attending dinner invitations and in turn inviting children to his studio. This was the beginning of Hiep’s artistic engagement with people. “They [the children] would check out what I do and I would let them paint with me”. One of circle painting’s instruction originated from those encounters, “The instruction that I give even now, was that every mark that you make you breath in and out, and every stroke that you paint you breath in and out.”

Hiep’s relationship with the families and children naturally led to the participation that is now essential elements of circle painting, “community participation in circle painting came accidentally and was not planned on purpose...at the time I had no idea what is community art, have no idea how to facilitate anything, it was just pure interaction.” Hiep described the effect of their participation, “it made the room happier, and then I started observing the game they played, and the toy that they used to trace circles.” Hiep’s brother Hung, acknowledged by Hiep to have contributed to the development of circle painting, gathered the individual works by the children by attaching them to a long carpet, which was then exhibited as ‘the cloth of heaven.’

Reflecting on this, Hiep said that it was an emotional experience. It exposed him to his “first experience of teaching, making art that connects people, and to have an element of education behind it.” It also expanded his view of the role of the artist as he said, “before that I thought artist is just painting, but never considered teaching. There is a prejudice about artist, that when you teach you are not a good artist, but that experience gave me a different perspective.”

After a few months, Hiep returned to the States to equip himself by pursuing a Masters in Art Education, where he further developed the method of circle painting in theory and in practice through various projects and teaching placements.

For nearly a decade, Hiep has held numerous circle painting programmes, trainings and events in the States and Asian countries, making several visits to Hong Kong over the last 10 years (Figure 3.1). He continues to train and develop the method of circle painting both artistic-wise and facilitation-wise to be more effective in communities of different backgrounds and cultures. He also continues to draw for enjoyment and commissions.
Ng Sze-Wan is a dancer, choreographer and dance instructor. She is the founder of the Breeze Across Us (BAU) until its dissolving in 2011. Sze began dancing at a young age, first learning ballet, Chinese dance, then modern and contemporary dance. She received formal training in Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (APA), and continued her training in the Netherlands.

Sze pondered many questions through her years of training. During her APA years, she was on a dance tour to India where she witnessed indigenous dance from other cultures. She reflected with discomfort on the dominance of western dance traditions and absence of ‘local art’ in Hong Kong. Though APA gave her a solid foundation on theories and training, she was unsatisfied that this was all there was to dance. Her training in the Netherlands opened her to dance that is more about expression than conventions and traditions. Yet her conceptions of dance were again challenged during a trip to Ghana where she witnessed the vivacious dance movements of substantial African ladies. Reluctantly, she realized her own “narrow-mindedness” as she questioned herself, “Why can’t one hit the floor? Why can’t one jiggle their bodies?” Citing turn of the 20th century revolutionary dancer Isadora Duncan, who challenged...
dance conventions, she questioned “Why must dance be like this? Why must our foot move in a certain way? Why can’t our foot make contact with the nature? Why can’t we wear loose clothing? Why can’t we express our thoughts but must follow others?”

Though the pursuit of a dance career in Europe was a viable path, she returned to Hong Kong, not primarily to dance, but to response to a religious calling that, “what I have given to you, you have to share it”. This was not out of charity nor was it a new direction for her, “I have been working with people with disability since my teens, I felt I grew up with them. At that time, I thought, if there are so many different kinds of people in this earth village, of which people with mental disability is among them, then it is a natural thing to do art together. I have always thought it is a natural thing to do art with people of different background, including highly trained dancers” (Figure 3.2).

In addition to being an instructor at various arts organizations and public schools, Sze established BAU in 2001. She was driven to explore “the things that people without sight can teach us, the ways this world could be perceived. And through being together, to discover a new dance language.”

Desiring the next stage of her journey, BAU was dissolved in 2011 after 10 years, 10 performances and numerous projects. Sze continues to hold various dance, movement and self-care workshops for various organizations, professionals and enthusiasts. She also performs on occasions and is operating a bed and breakfast with a dance studio overseas.
Grad, Leung Wai Kit, is a stage actor and drama facilitator who works with various schools and social welfare organizations. He began his acting career as an amateur attending acting workshops after 9 to 5 working days. After nine months in a puppet theatre project directed by Mok Chiu Yu and Kwong Wai Lap, Grad, along with several other participants formed the *Well Drama Club* in 1994. Over those several years, Grad worked in the day and rehearsed at night. It was very tiring, but “it was a very fun time.”

It was both a love for theatre and the satisfaction of working with people that sustained Grad’s enthusiasm. During that period, Grad also began to attend training workshops organized by Mok at the *Arts with the Disabled Hong Kong*, where he began to learn about the numerous forms and techniques in the bigger world of community theatre and arts. When not in rehearsal after work, Grad would often join as a participant or a helper. Grad described this was how he discovered his passion and skill as a drama facilitator. In his own words, this is “to work with different people, to go through a process, and together we can create something at the end, it felt good. A lot of experience was accumulated from that time...It then occurred to me that, perhaps due to my personality, it was relatively easy for me to lead workshops, and also to be satisfied from the work.”

Compared to stage acting, Grad explained that “it is a very direct interaction with people, of different social background.” Whereas the acting was using a tool himself, Grad explained that his work was “to pass this tool to people, communities. If we believe that everyone has the right to voice out, then we are giving them the tool to say their things.”

Grad attended countless training workshops in various forms of theatre and art forms over the last two decades, taking “what I have learnt and how I have learnt it into my own workshops”. His own workshop participants from the past are often surprised to find him in the same training workshop. In fact, Grad feels that he continues to learn
when he is leading his workshops. He said, “by trying to tell you what I have learnt, I am organizing it again.”

In addition to various forms of theatre, Grad also leads workshops in mask making, shadow puppetry and giant puppet (Figure 3.3). Grad explained his approach to teaching art is not to reach for depth, but in “encouraging people’s interest in things, and when they really like a certain medium…then they can go seek further.” His concern is to open up people to doing art, “to help them achieve something that satisfies themselves…achieving a goal, being satisfied about it, assurance of one’s ability, valuing one’s creation, increased confidence, the joy in collaboration, satisfaction of the process.”

Figure 3.3
Final performance of shadow puppet workshop facilitated by Grad in 2014

The forms of puppet, mask and staged theatre are all embracive of a range of skills and expressive needs, which plays to Grad’s style of catering to the individual strengths and needs of participants. Grad also takes part in Art for All’s projects, working with Evelnya and artists of other media. For example, in L’art et le Chef (2003-2004) Grad regularly worked with visual artists and dancers to prepare a staged performance with seniors; and in Creativity Engage! (2011-2013) where team of three artists led a story creation workshop from drama, painting to craftwork.
Grad is mostly active in Hong Kong and on occasion in Mainland China and South East Asian countries. Ironically, with nearly two decades of experience, he is now in pursuit of certification in drama education to appease bureaucratic requirements. Grad continues to perform and occasionally tour as a staged actor, nominated as Outstanding Actor in the 7th Hong Kong Theatre Libre for his performance in *My luxurious 50 sq ft life*. He continues to expand his horizon by joining workshops such as India Drumming and Butoh.

**Evelyna**

Evelyna Liang is currently active as chairperson and founder of *Art for All*, where she drives community art projects and has gathered and mentored teams of younger artists since 2000. Evelyna grew up surrounded by relatives in the sciences. As someone with dyslexia, she found joy in expression through art. She was trained as a visual artist in the University of British Columbia and returned to teach art at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and later the then Hong Kong Polytechnic during the 1980s and 1990s.

During the late 1980s, when the Hong Kong government instituted the closed camp policies that effectively placed Vietnamese boatpeople in Hong Kong under detention, Evelyna reflected with fellow artists and students. They asked: “What can we do as artists? We are not social or welfare workers, but we can go paint, that is what we are good at. Why don’t we all go to paint in the camps?”

Evelyna began with the simple intention of decorating the camp with art, supporting Vietnamese artists to paint mural on steel fences themselves. The success of this first programme prompted Evelyna and her team to expand their work to exploring existing and potential artistic, musical and performing talents. Among the range of artistic programming operated, the children art class was one programme that eventually received official recognition and support.

The impact of their work was wide ranging, from personal and social benefits to the generation of actual income. Evelyna explained that although many of the artworks

were not sophisticated, “the painting drew them [the refugees] together, they would chat, exchange ideas and appreciate each other. We created in the camp an artistic environment.” The result of this work challenged both the society and her team’s perception of art as primarily decorative.

Inspired by this success, Evelyna spearheaded the work and the founding of the Art in Hospital in 1993, which she later entrusted to a former student. Since 2000, her effort in community art has been channeled through Art for All. She explained how a range of partnerships were conceived as she said, “very often when reading the newspaper, a social issue draws my attention, and I would begin to explore and wait for opportunities. And keeping my ears open, I would hear something that somehow connects me to the people involved”.

An early project that saw Evelyna taking multiple trips to mainland China was with the indigenous Jiang tribe in Yunnan. She explained, “we can work on self-portrait or embroidery, but if they have to continue this creative work, they have to dig into their own traditions. I don’t know their culture, their patterns, their styles. I was only a facilitator. I told them they have the power to create their own things. They don’t need me anymore, they found their own ways” (Figure 3.4). It is a format she adopts in application to other localities in Hong Kong, the mainland and overseas.

Figure 3.4
Embroidered product by Yunnan ladies

(See also colour plate 6 and 7 on p. 246-7 for an example of using women’s existing skills with fabric in Henan villages)

(See also colour plate 7 to 12 from p. 248-253 for additional samples of collaborative works done in HK, China and India)

Photo courtesy of Evelyna Liang
Chapter 3 - Data Analysis

Evelyna often partners with artists in music, dance, fabric and theatre to provide participants with multiple forms of expressions. Commenting on these collaborations, she stated, “every artist I try to let them do what they are good at, for example I am not good at music, so I let go and depend on the musicians, similarly in drama, I know some, but not a lot, so as long as we are moving in similar directions, it is ok”.

In recent years, she has spent more time in academia, both teaching and presenting, in order to build wider understanding of art in communities. Alongside her work in AFA, Evelyna continues to create and exhibit artworks that reflect her encounters with people and places in her work as a process for self-reflection or self-healing.

Veronica

Veronica Needa is an ethnic Eurasian, currently residing in England and claims Hong Kong as her original home. Her playback theatre (PT) work takes her to communities around the world, but her ability in Cantonese skills gives her a unique connection to the PT community in Hong Kong.

Prior to her theatre training at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the early 1980s, Veronica was stage manager for Hong Kong’s Chung Ying Theatre. Upon completion of the traditional theatre training, Veronica was involved in the professional theatre world, but there was something inhibiting her drive to pursue it as a career.

She continued to perform and learn about ways of bridging theatre with her love of working with people. After exploring and finding that mainstream teaching was not suitable for her, her aspiration was finally realized when a friend introduced her to PT. She expressed this discovery in a spirited way, “When she described it to me, I knew, it was what I was here to do, it just touched me so deeply, it was like, YES! And I wept, I wept, it was like, THANK YOU, this is it, I can do the therapeutic, the healing theatre, the sacred theatre that I was always interested and wanting to be part of unfolding, and it had an educational component, it had a community, healing, I mean it was just

63 Non-textual data compiled from public talk on March 20, 2016; interview/conversation on December 12, 2014, April 11, 2015. See Appendix – Interview Logs for details of all non-textual data.
64 In PT, actors listen to the sharing of a teller from the audience, and then present a reenactment in a way that honours the story and the person that tells it.
everything, and, it demanded artistry, it demand, well it didn’t demand it, but it included, Art! Not rubbish, you know...I was wanting all these other things, oh, perfect, so I’ve been following that journey ever since.”

Complementing her trainings under the founders of PT were international conferences where Veronica met practitioners from all over the world, some of whom became friends and families to her. Establishing herself as a PT trainer, Veronica introduced PT to her original home Hong Kong in 1996 with the aid of Mok Chiu Yu.

Currently, Veronica is focused in elevating the quality of PT actors around the world. She expressed that many “people who have learnt PT actually don’t understand the key essential values, they are only using the form, the outer shape.” She further explained, “we are seeing this in the world, which is why I am so committed to creating training opportunities, trying to get people engaged, on board.”

In her capacities in the various national and international PT networks, Veronica provides training and directions for individuals and PT companies around the globe. As a stage performer, Veronica retired from the Yellow Earth Theatre in 2005, a company she founded to create works that explored the British Chinese experience and the East-West identity. She is also the founder of Trueheart Theatre, a PT group in London focusing on the Chinese integration experience in the UK.

Pete

Pete Moser is a musician, composer, producer and music educator in UK. His international connections with community music and educators take him to project and training worldwide. His project, the Long Walk, a music and multimedia show about the life and tragic death of illegal Chinese immigrants in his hometown Morecambe, refueled his concern for local minority communities and also connecting him to partners in Hong Kong and China where he has visited over a dozen times since 2007.

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66 The Long Walk is a journey in music, images and songs in response to the 2004 Morecambe Bay tragedy in which 23 Chinese cocklers lost their lives. The 23 were illegal immigrants indebted to human traffickers, doing any kind of jobs to survive.
Pete’s childhood was immersed in music. Influenced by his father’s passion and connections in the music scene, he attended open and private classical performances that were held in his living room. He received strictly classical piano lessons, sang in the choir and played the horn at school. Pete’s musical exposure was expanded in his teenage years when he discovered pop and jazz; music that he felt belonged to him. “The music that I was passionate about was the stuff that I was learning myself, and I was teaching myself and I was discovering myself,” he said. It appears that Pete’s playing and listening in his childhood enabled him to embark on relatively advance musical analysis without proper music theory training. In his words: “…harmonies, learning, working out how the song went, all aurally, using my ear, massively, nobody taught me how to do that, I just did that.”

Having decided to become a musician during his late teens, Pete returned to university to study music, but what he wanted was not a conservatoire style instrumental training, “I wanted to learn about music, what is music.” He was motivated to achieve academically as well as in music ensembles. However, looking back, he reflected on the ways that music was taught in universities and questioned “why in university did we never do any drumming? Why didn’t we ever sing fun songs? Why did we always give people pieces of music?”

Pete recounted an early experience when he joined the *Welfare State International*, a travelling theatre company that works with people of local communities. Out of necessity of the performance, he was assigned to put a choir together. He explained: “How did I learn how to run workshops? ...By doing it, and by trying to find out how to engage people and watching other people do it.” Since then Pete has mostly developed his practice through trying and working with other capable and inspirational music making facilitators.

Pete settled in Morecambe in 1993 and established *More Music*. In addition to the leadership and facilitation roles, he also enjoys performing as a member in one of *More Music*’s amateur marching band, the *Bay Beats* (Figure 3.5). He describes his work as being, “the world I like to take people in, in my community music world, musical therapy, wellbeing, all of that, is both the spiritual and the place where people have a
Chapter 3 - Data Analysis

‘spiritual’ experience and also ‘tribal’ where they have a group and community experience, and I think the two are very important and are interlinked.”

Figure 3.5
‘Catch the Wind Kite Festival’ of 2014 held by More Music

International exchanges and the Long Walk project have taken Pete to Hong Kong where he partners with Mok to hold community music projects and train local practitioners.

Exist

Exist, Ho Pak Chuen, is a music and drama facilitator, active both locally and in Mainland China, and occasionally in other Asian countries. In addition to playing in bands, he has also been performing over several years as a member of the local PT company Living Stories in monthly outdoor performances.

Exist has been active in student drama production and began learning the harmonica and guitar since primary school and high school respectively. He describes his first experience of musical engagement with people in a more unconventional setting in 1992. He said, “during those years I had a lot of free time, I played guitar in Tsim Sha Tsui [on the steps of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre], and sometimes people would sit around to listen. Total strangers would crowd around to make song requests and sing together. I think that’s my beginning to ‘community music’, it was actually very ‘communal’.”

His first music facilitation was in the *Over the Rainbow* music drama project organized by Evelyna Liang. He and the present author, both new to facilitation, brainstormed and tried methods of group composition. He recalled, “That’s how it started, seeing what you did and through trial and error, it was fun and it worked. And that’s how it started...as I tried more I slowly adjusted, oh, how can we get people to be more involved, because everyone volunteering a number to represent a note is simply random, that’s act of god right? So how do we get them to make music, that was fine-tuned slowly, to this day, I am still fine-tuning. I think it is a lifelong process, what is the best method of composing music with a group of people.”

Exist began PT as a musician, slowly learning and picking up the skills of an actor. As the skill of facilitation seems to come naturally to him, he slowly picked up the role of a playback theatre and drama trainer and facilitator, working with groups of various age and background.

Though Exist considered music to be his “mother tongue”, he could not say for sure whether the languages of music or drama are more innate to him. He explained how the connections on both a conceptual and practically level and said, “as I work more, I found that music and drama are inseparable. They are different but they are together. In my work, people are at the centre, therefore, the difference between music and drama is not significant. So it depends, if music fits a group better, then music; if drama works better, then drama. To a point that my music is often story-based and is very dramatic, and I see my drama work musically in terms of rhythm, it is a musical mindset.”

When asked why he continues learning new instruments, Exist explained the simple pleasures of his appreciation of music, and how it built up his practice, “It is fun,” he explained. “I like the sound and tone of a certain instruments, so I learn it. Doing this for fun can lead to something good. Knowing many instruments helps my music arrangement. As a music director, mentoring youths to play in a band, knowing a bit of everything makes it easier for me to arrange music, to put things together.”

After years of practice, Exist considered sensitivity towards participants as his most significant development. He explained, “I used to simply do whatever I have planned,
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now I observe more first. What does the group need? Even to the point where the centre might request songwriting to achieve team building, but I will have my own judgment when I am in the group.”

Exist has in recent years established the Peanuts Community Arts Workshop with a team of artists, facilitating multimedia projects that involve participants from creation, production to performance in music, drama, filming, set design and backstage crew (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6
Drama incorporating rock music and traditional lion dance facilitated by Exist and team

Data Analysis
Though the interviewees have different paths, there are common milestones and motivation that drive them. The following commonalities are noted among the interviewees. First, they share a dissatisfaction of and an aspiration towards conventions and traditions of art that support rather than hinder people from expression. Second, they demonstrate strong human-orientedness in their work style and their work. Third, they see a connection between the artistic and social aspects within their community arts practice. Fourth, they demonstrate a passion to deepen their facilitation skills that is connected to their overall personal artistic practice.
Dissatisfactions and aspirations of conventions and traditions of art

There are conventions in each art form. In dance, it was the rigid pursuit of technical perfection that frustrated Sze as she said, “actually I began with ballet when I was little, then Chinese, then modern dance and contemporary dance, even though contemporary dance was originally a reaction towards ballet, inevitably it returned to the same aesthetics of expression and postures”. Feeling “dance must be more than this,” she continued her pursuit of dance in the Netherlands, where she discovered the concept of postmodern dance, a form that emphasizes finding personal expression and using dance as communication.

Pete also felt confined in learning the piano in a particular way. Commenting on his piano lessons during his childhood, Pete explained that since he knew the music, he rather looked at his hands than read the music scores. However, his teacher would sometimes get the music and hold it above his hand so he could not see his fingers. Whereas traditional music training requires one to read and play according to music score, Pete teaches differently. He said, “when I teach people and when I work with people, the first place I think is to find your music, to play the piano or any instrument, to learn to listen. Learning to play the score is then another language, I am a great believer in the playfulness of music, whether its playing a drum or the piano, the first thing is just, what sound this instrument makes.” Pete chose to go to university not for a conservatoire training to play certain instruments, but instead to learn what music is and how it works. Yet, having been exposed to the wider world of music, he questions the narrow exposure that the university education provided.

The interviewees are dissatisfied of certain rigidities that exist within the conventions and traditions of art. However, they are not against techniques and theories. Sze’s experience is one such example. During a training session in 2013 titled *How to conduct dance activities with people of different abilities* organized by ADAHK, Sze introduced the Laban Movement Analysis as a way of inspiring the trainees of the possibilities of movements. She explained that “when you are teaching or choreographing, backed up with knowledge of dance analysis, there is much more you can do.”
Veronica expressed a similar sentiment for PT beginners, placing the genuineness of PT actors in the re-enactment of people’s stories as paramount above technical skills. In her words “when it’s rough, another words, not technically sophisticated but it still captured the teller’s story, definitely recognizes reference to it, even though it’s not sophisticated, and some of the actors are little bit klutzy, that’s still good PT, because the spirit is true, with more artistic training, you can have the most amazing PT that totally is in congruence with playback values.”

Grad expressed that while he appreciates technical pursuits as one artistic path, he is passing theatre as a tool to his students.” He explained, “we should minimize the aspects that can be a burden to participants.” For example, he often sets up performance requirements with low dependence on script memorizations.

People-orientedness
Related to the conventions of art form is the working arrangement typical of each practice. The interviewees show a people-orientedness in different aspects of their practice from working styles to their preference for collaboration and teaching.

Having graduated from Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Veronica naturally embarked on professional acting. She explained that though that was where her ego told her to go, she said, “somehow, something else in me wasn’t chasing it.” After 6 years, the questions became very clear to her such as “What else can I be doing that is worthwhile and meaningful? What do I like to do?” She thought, “Well I love teaching, I think I am a good teacher, I could make a good teacher, so let’s look at training as a good teacher’.” However, after a day in a public school witnessing the demoralized and overworked teachers, she decided that main stream teaching was still not the answer.

Further commenting on the life of stage actors, Veronica explained that in theatre, people generally work together for several months, whereas in PT, groups can last for years where relationships and cooperation can mature. The years of cooperation Veronica describes is also observed in the artists who have worked with Evelyna over a dozen projects since 2001, in Pete’s team of artist and logistic personnel under More Music and in Exist’s team of artists and stage production specialists.
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This is in stark contrast to the solitude of painting explained by visual artist Hiep. It was an emotional experience when Hiep first stumbled upon teaching and facilitating people to paint as a possible path. It appears that the aspiration towards a path that combines a love of art and interaction with people expressed by Hiep is also true for Veronica when she discovered playback theatre as a form that is therapeutic, educational, communal and artistic.

Sze explained that early in her life, “my first goal was not to dance, it was actually to be a teacher for students with mental disability...then I forgot about it until I attended the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (APA). Every year ADAHK would hire a dancer through APA to teach people of different abilities to dance. It then occurred to me that both my dreams can happen together.”

The artists all seem to be driven by an interest in and a compassion for people, to empower them to make their own art. Some expressed it as a motivation rooted on a spiritual level. Sze explained though she was presented with the opportunity upon graduation to be a professional dancer in Europe, she was compelled by her faith to return to Hong Kong. It was not to dance, but to response to a calling that, “what I have given to you, you have to share it.” Evelyina was also compelled by her faith to mobilize people and resources to work in the Vietnamese refugee camps. Her reflections touched her sense of identity as an artist with a religious conviction.

Veronica explained her yearning for something meaningful to her. She said, “I opened up myself for something to come into my life, to engage into something more meaningful for me, opening up myself on a spiritual level.” She explained that “you use your artistry in service of” something, and that PT is “absolutely something about making a difference.” She felt important to “bring this into spaces where there is challenge, social issues that need addressing, to take it into the shadow areas of our society where we really need to connect or enable people to connect and listen to each other”.

In the closing statement of his manual his belief, Exist stated, “the genuine voice of each person is precious, it is so precious that the world should listen closely. This belief is the
root of this method. I wish everyone would carry out the activities with love for each participant. Because love is the root of the respect, appreciation and care that are demonstrated in the activities” (Figure 3.8). More concretely, Grad explained what he wanted to offer people through art, “I use what I have learnt to help them achieve something satisfying. But there are many things in the process too, right? There is achieving a goal, being satisfied about it, assurance of one’s ability, valuing one’s creation, increased confidence, the joy in collaboration, satisfaction of the process.”

Though the word ‘service,’ which is often a one-way-giving relationship, is sometimes used by the interviewees, the process they describe in their work resembles the naturalness Sze described in sharing art with people. It is a relationship where the artists also receive through their sharing.

The interviewees see working with people to be their strength. The transition of Hiep from work and isolation in the States to an artist being a part of a neighbourhood in Vietnam illustrates how he was drawn towards communal life and working with people.
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Hiep explained that in the past, as part of the production team in theatre, he was disconnected with the audience. He said, “I realized that I want to be at the centre of the group, and that I have the power of attracting people.” He enjoys being in isolation at times, but also enjoys being with people, and discovered that “my energy feed on people’s energy” (Figure 3.9).

Sze described it in a way subtly embedded in her practice, “I wanted to explore this, the things that people without sight can teach us, the ways this world could be perceived. And through being together to discover a new dance language” (Figure 3.10). Grad described his work as “a very direct interaction with people, of different social background.” He could see many different things, so he has enjoyed it through the years.

For Evelyna, she explained what enabled her to become a successful community artist was not her skill as an artist, but her eagerness to be with people. She said, “I am not a successful artist, I don’t paint well, my brushwork is poor, my calligraphy is poor, I sing off key, when I act I can’t control my emotions, that’s who I am, I don’t ‘qualify.’ What I
‘qualify’ for is that I like people, I hope for them to be happy, so I use what I have to make people I serve happy, whether it is a child or a 106 year old adult. I always want to dance, but I have no formal training in it, poetry is even worse because of my dyslexia. I have many obstacles. But the thing is I am not shy and I can be silly and childish” (Figure 3.11).

For Exist, who is well-versed in both drama and music, catered to people’s preference rather than his own. He considered his sensitivity towards people his most important improvement over his years of facilitation work. He emphasized the significance of people in defining community and said, “A group of people is an important criterion, that’s the most basic, it might sound obvious, but it is important.”

It is important to note that the interactions described by the artists are all face-to-face interactions. Though these activities sometimes accommodate over a hundred people, the artists clearly preferred smaller groups and find ways to enable more in depth interaction while being aware of the interpersonal dimensions (Figure 3.12).
Art as a platform for personal and social development

Interviewees explained that creating art can concurrently be a platform for personal and social development. This could occur in a co-working or a collaborating relationship. Veronica explained in PT that “through the process, [participants] are really sharing, meeting each other in a deeper way, they are learning some discipline through the ritual...learning to laugh...share, appreciate themselves and each other...and they are learning about life, in ways they have no access in school...through the vehicle of PT, they are doing a lot of other stuff in terms of personal growth, social interactive learning, adjustments...PT is very flexible.”

Grad described how stages of personal growth are embedded in the artistic process. For example, behind performing a personal story in front of others, the performer must first psychologically deal with a personal experience, make sense of it by turning it into a story, and finally bring to share it with others. Therefore, the decision whether to perform it or not is not simply an artistic decision. As Grad explained, if “they are not ready to perform within the group, and you ask them to open themselves up, you are very likely to fail” (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13
Grad, center, hosting a Q & A session between performers and audience

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 3.14
Sze as choreographer and dancer in ‘Breeze Across Us IV’ performance in 2005. Breeze Across Us is a dance company of people of different sighted abilities.

Photo courtesy of Breeze Across Us
Similarly, Sze’s explanation was void of personal or social development concepts, and handled it in terms of an artistic arrangement. She says, “I have always thought it is a natural thing to do art with people of different background, including highly trained dancers. There is no need to categorize them, but it is true that there are different ways of working together” (Figure 3.14).

Art making brings people together. Evelyna described her experience in the Vietnamese refugee camps, “the painting drew them together, they can chat, exchange idea and appreciate each other, we created in the camp an artistic environment” (Figure 3.15).
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Exist explained this aspect of ‘community,’ “we are not ‘building’ a community, a lot of time my work is gather a group of loosely connected people into a community...Making people who do not realize they are a community into a community.”

The interviewees expressed that personal and social development are connected. This point is more clearly explained in some of the interviewees’ written works. More than two decades after the Vietnamese refugee Art in the Camp, Evelyina explained it in greater complexity in the manual published after the project Grandpa Grandma Silver Gala. She stated that “the process pays attention to the older adult's autonomy in the context of the group, both at the personal and group level” (Art for All, 2015, p. 21).

Exist, who was also involved in the Grandpa Grandma Silver Gala, explained earlier in his manual the working of collective songwriting, that “creating a work together and at the same time creating a collective memory that belongs to the group, is effective in building cohesiveness and mutual trust, and generating the feeling of solidarity within the group” (Ho, 2009, p. 2). Similarly, he connected personal and social development within human interaction by pointing out that collaborative music making “can open their hearts to build confidence in sharing and communicating with others” (Ho, 2009, p. 2) (Figure 3.16).

Also writing on songwriting in community music, Pete explained that he often makes the melody before looking at the harmonic feel when creating a group song because in this way “everyone can take an equal part and can feel a sense of ownership” (Moser &
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McKay, 2005, p. 147). In the chapter on group facilitation in the same book, he stated that “remember all the time you are working[,] things are going simultaneously at three different levels: individual, interpersonal and group” (Moser & McKay, 2005, p. 18).

With regards to the layers of human interaction in an activity, Hiep chose to bring this awareness to the participants through painting guidelines where he stated:

“Big Circle - the size of open arms which represents the community.
Medium Circle - the size of the face which represents the family.
Small Circle - the size of the eye which represents the self.”
(Circle Painting, 2010, p. 8)

Veronica expressed similarly that personal development alone can become introverted, and that it must occur in the wider context of the group, “it’s got to be in balance with recognizing the other and the group, what the group can learn with and from each other...is multilayered processes that’s going on.”

Fun, enjoyment and satisfaction seem to be important indicators to the impact of their work. The interviewees described a loose causal relationship where enjoyment leads to something more, or something leads to the enjoyment. They seemed to consider both enjoyment and its impact as goals that are mutually reinforcing.

Sze described that some organizations and parents also shared her view, to be “very happy simply for the students to enjoy art, and they felt that creativity was very important.” She described designing a workshop for her first time working with a visually impaired child as something new to her so she “had to device a way for it to work and be fun.”

Similarly, Exist expressed that when designing a workshop, he would ask himself “should [participants] feel satisfied by the song or by the songwriting process?” He further explained that enjoyment is one of the goals in his rapping competition and emphasizes that “the goal is not to determine who has a better argument or who has
better rhythmic sense, it is fine as long as everyone feels that it is fun to play with rhythm.”

Evelyna explained that the goal of incorporating Chinese and Western visual painting, music and body movement is to get people engaged in the playfulness and imaginativeness of artistic expression, to experience the joy and satisfaction as a result of the creativeness and out-of-the-box-ness of art (Art for All, 2015, p. 47).

Grad explained that his role is to design programmes to achieve something, “and at the same time be an enjoyable process.” He guided people to “apply themselves happily and comfortably.” In contrasts to directing elaborate high school performances, he considered his strength to be in facilitating and directing “a performance where people are happy, where they feel ownership of it,” and “the final product that comes up at least have to be acceptable among them, to be happy and somewhat satisfied about the process.”

Exist elaborated that playful music games are able to engage unmotivated people, that it “functions by creating a relax atmosphere, and to focus the participants to the group” (Figure 3.17). Evelyna explained the joy she experiences when people smile at her in workshops, “because they are alive, they are still human beings with emotions” (Figure 3.18).

It should be made clear that while enjoyment is highlighted, there is no indication that sadness, anger or other emotions are unwelcomed in the activities. Other emotions were also observed during their activities. Since this emotional dimension was not realized until after all the interviews, there were no opportunties to ask for their comments.
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Figure 3.17
Music and movement exercise facilitated by Exist

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 3.18
Evelyna, left, facilitating drumming and reflex games with other community artists

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 3.19
Project ‘Grandpa Grandma Memory Boxes’ facilitated by Evelyna and team. Older adults create and fill memory boxes with artworks about both happy and sad memories.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
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Passion to deepen facilitation skills and personal artistic practice

The interviewee profiles illustrate how their personal experience in art and their community art practice are intertwined. Two interrelated aspects are delineated for closer observation. First, it is their continuous development of their community art practice. Second, it is how their personal art practices are intertwined with their work in community art.

Two interrelated aspects of their continuous development of community art practice are observed. First, it is to improve their facilitation skills in general. Second, it is to expand and deepen the artistic knowledge that is to be facilitated.

Five of the interviewees have had systematic training in art. Evelyna and Pete studied art and music in their respective universities. Hiep painted and worked in theatre for years before finding a new path, which led him to arts education. Veronica, who was on a typical path of a traditionally trained theatre actor, felt dissatisfied and sought a new path with new training. Sze also began with the typical path of a professional dancer, but slowly integrated her training, teaching and cross-cultural experiences to develop an unconventional approach to dance.

Grad and Exist’s paths were different. Both of their artistic practices were developed amateurly through participation and attending training in ongoing ways. The lack of systematic training does affect their artistic skill. Therefore, learning from experienced and collaborating peers is all the more important. To be sure, all seven artists expressed the will and ability to continue to learn and develop their practice, which includes learning from workshops, mentors, collaborators and trial and error.

After receiving formal training in PT, Veronica continued to attend many PT conference where she met people who became “dear friends and family to her,” affecting her both as PT practitioner, trainer and also as a person. Commenting on the workshop Playback Across Language that she held, Veronica expressed that because groups around the world was facing this issue, the workshop was an idea exchange where everyone learns instead of a lecture teaching a set of method, and that she was equally “interested in the answer, to play with the challenge and see what might work.”
As for Pete, after his formative years as a student and traveler/performer, he began formal trainings followed by collaborating and mentoring with fellow artists. Pete explained that “it was when I...work[ed] for the innovative theatre company, *Welfare State International* [WSI], that my songwriting really started. ...I met and began to work with three brilliant poets- Boris Howarth, Adrian Mitchell and John Fox. Each of them created lyrics in different styles, with different rhythmic nuances, different uses of language and metaphor.” Pete stated that he continued to learn through “doing, and through working with inspirational figures, and learning through running training with people.” Exist also described learning through doing, that their work in music and theatre production requires a large skills set from playing individual instruments to recording, mastering or editing. When a certain project requires a certain skill, they would quickly learn it.

Grad described two levels of learning through attending workshops when he said, “Firstly I learn from what they teach. The other thing is looking at how they teach...You see things that don’t work, and you remind yourself not to do it....It’s like a mirror. When you see them, you can reflect on your own practice. So I have accumulated this sense of teaching and leading over the years.” Grad’s description resonates with what Veronica calls a “personal growth process,” it is not simply artistic or facilitation skills that one can learn from working with peers, but also the influence over the path that one would take.

Perhaps most importantly, the interviewees claimed or demonstrated that they learnt from their own experience.

Pete explained in the following passage something he learnt on that particular morning’s primary school workshop that affected his method in the same afternoon’s handicapped adult session, “they had done some rhythm work together, they were quite innocent rhythmically...I would expect a group of kid at that age to play rhythm better than they did...but what I learnt from that was when I came to do the afternoon session, instead of giving all the adults two sticks, I gave them all one stick, I thought, if people are slightly challenged rhythmically, they are probably going to be better if they only got one stick, so I learnt that from the morning, you know I am learning all the
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time...if I gave some of those people two sticks, they won’t probably be able to handle it, if I give them one stick, they would focus better and that was something I only did having had that unsuccessful rhythmic session in the morning”.

Exist used a similar exercise with sticks in his workshops. The exercise was carried out with participants standing behind their own chairs in a circle. They are each given a pair of foot-long sticks to use as drum sticks. The musician led participants through a set of rhythmic exercises which included follow-the-leader, taking turn as the leader or free jam which may or may not lead to more complex music making. Compared to Exist’s earlier usage, it was observed in a 2011 session that in addition to using sticks musically, he has incorporated a synchronized dance component where participants tap each other’s drumsticks in a complex rotating double circle. On more than one occasions both Exist and Pete expressed boredom from repeatedly using the same games and exercises. In this example, Exist broaden the range of activities based on the same materials and set up. Exist’s development of this exercise illustrates a statement in his manual that “Music can be used in different stages of activities in many ways, discover more for yourselves while you use it.”

Another example of an evolving practice of art facilita- tion can be observed in circle painting. Hiep agreed with the author’s assessment of completed circle painting works facilitated by himself that his work has evolved over the last eight years. Hiep expressed that while the core values of circle painting remained the same, his facilitation did adapt to the setting. He explained, “working with different population, you have to find different approaches, different techniques, and then working with different venues, from festival to school to conference to training, so for each of the population how do you find exercise, practice that can be implement, people can easily access, it keeps changing.” This is certainly true since Hiep has facilitated numerous projects in the States and different parts of Asia across different background and languages.

As discussed above, Veronica hosted the training Playback Across Language for practitioners from around the world to exchange ideas on holding performances and workshops with groups that use more than one language. As a multilingual facilitator, her own training around the world and her PT company True Heart Theatre which opened its doors to a multiethnic audience, motivated her to prepare. She explained,
“because I also want to make good theatre and when you got 2 or 3 languages to translate, it can be very dull, and it can lengthen the whole process, but it doesn’t have to be…it might give you complete insight into a language you had no idea, if you actually practice the multilingual process.”

While language and border may seem to require significant adaptation of facilitation, there can also be significant differences among populations within a single city. For example, Evelyna, before officially starting the project Grandpa Grandma Memory Box (2011-2012) in a senior home for sight-impaired older adults, some of whom also faces dementia, worked with the group unofficially on a smaller scale for over a year to establish her method. Though her early project L’art et le Chef (2003-2004) with older adults received wide support and praise, the difference in physical condition that in turn affecting psychological and social states demanded a modified understanding and approach.

Sze’s experience also illustrates gradual experimentation in the conception of facilitation method. Having taught dance to people of different abilities during her high school and university days, her own concept of dance was transformed by her overseas training and exchanges. Commenting on the conception of her dance company Breeze Across Us (BAU), she described the experience, “working with a child who was totally blind. It was new to me so I had to device a way for it to work and be fun. It was very enjoyable to generate many ideas and methods.” The experience affected her deeply to “contemplate on what we are each born with, and how we slowly lose these abilities as we grow.” BAU was founded as a dance company and not as a service or programme for promoting health benefits, it was “an experiment to see when sighted and sight impaired people come together, what kind of dance language would result…we experimented to see what happens when we do not use our sight. Me and other sighted dancers would often blindfold ourselves during the lessons.”

The above examples illustrate artists learning and developing new ways of facilitation, but many are also compelled to learn and borrow from other art forms. A dimension that the author was unable to investigate was community artists working in teams. There are also limits to how much one can learn and do. In addition to personal expansion of practice, artists also look for external support. Evelyna clearly states her preference in working in teams. In addition to Exist and Grad, there are roughly a dozen artists who regularly work with Evelyna in week long or weekly projects. In describing the teamwork, she stated that “every artist I try to let them do what they are good at...so as long as we are moving in similar directions it is ok”. Commenting on the teamwork in the
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usages can be observed in the musicians. When Exist facilitates song making, he would often use interesting images to inspire ideas or stories. Pete uses drawing exercise to inspire different sound quality, and subsequently uses those drawings as a simplified music score to lead percussion ensemble.

Grad extended his expertise in theatre to shadow puppetry. It is useful for his facilitation because it “can become a self-projection of the participants for [participants] to express themselves or to be imaginative.” However, Grad sometimes would go beyond his expertise. He explained, “I can use music in my workshop too, but my role is again to encourage them to try it. If music comes up in a workshop, you can’t avoid doing it.”

For Evelyna, who was new to both embroidery and fabric art, took on a similar role in encouraging skilled locals at Yunnan and Henan to go beyond producing items for sale and use these media expressively and creatively. In her recent projects with elderly, she seems to have accumulated enough skill with fabric and needlework that she has incorporated them in her own artworks. She also started listening to music that the elderlies would have listened, so that she may sing along with them.

Overall, the continuous developments of their skill in community art seem not to be solely professional choices, but are rather driven by their own passion for art and their personal journey in art. The artists continue to pursue their own art in parallel to and within the work of community art. From all of the artists, this can be observed at different levels, such as the artists enjoying themselves in the workshops they lead, facilitating art making that draw on their own fields and maintaining a personal practice outside of community art. What is more interesting is how the artists’ own practices are sometimes intertwined with their facilitation.

intensive week long projects, Evelyna stated that “these working trips are very tiring because we meet at night and in the morning, things change a lot, I change a lot...so the artists have to know how to accommodate my change. But we change because when we face different groups we need the flexibility to change”. Again, the motivation to accommodate the needs of the different groups is expressed. Exist also regularly works with his team of artists in many of his musical drama projects. In addition to musicians, dramatist and filmmakers, his projects also include stage production specialists with youth work and social work background, catering to an even wider range of personal development.

70 In a conversation with Grad and India percussionist Ashok Kumar on Oct 13, 2015, Ashok commented that Grad has demonstrated a strong awareness of rhythm, which is a prerequisite to working with music.
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For example, the Long Walk project was a production that Pete conceived in the wake of the Morecambe Tragedy where migrant workers were drowned by unfamiliar ties. The scale of the production required both facilitation of song making by community groups and collaboration of artists including Pete. As observed in the Hong Kong performance in 2009, the professional musicians, the various local groups and the community music trainees, all performed together under the conducting of Pete as fellow musicians. This is also the case in his participation of More Music’s marching band Bay Beat, performing and visibly enjoying with other band members under the direction of a facilitator whom he trained and nurtured for over a decade (Figure 3.20).

Hiep created circle painting directly as a result of his own meditation and breathing exercises in drawing circles. Originally finding peace in solitude, the exercise turned into circle painting where he finds joy and recognition in the company of others.

Evelyna’s work Sisters (2009) is a complex cross-stitch work designed by her and handcrafted by the ladies of Chow Shan Village in Henan. Prior to this work, Evelyna has already made several visits to the villages where she has connected with the ladies through her fabric and drama workshops on women’s health and rights. Having empowered them to apply their skills with fabric to creative and expressive works, Evelyna conceived this collaborative project where she gave the ladies freedom to

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71 Asian People’s Theatre Festival Society (2009). The Long Walk. Hong Kong: Asian People’s Theatre Festival Society. “The Long Walk is a journey in music, images and songs in response to the 2004 Morecambe Bay tragedy in which 23 Chinese cocklers lost their lives”. The migrant workers in this instance were working illegally.
decide on suitable stitching techniques and to modify her original design. The result was a piece of highly skillful cross-stitched work that became one of Evelyina’s most widely exhibited work for both its aesthetic and symbolic value (Figure 3.21). More recently in the Grandpa Grandma Memory Boxes project, Evelyina and the other artists also created personal work that they exhibited alongside the older adults’ work.

Exist’s youth music and drama projects and trainings have resulted in numerous lasting friendships. These past-participants, young and old, returned to join in band and drama teams where Exist and his team of artists acts as both coordinator and members. Also popular are the monthly open-mic evenings where everyone takes turn sharing stories and songs.

In the company True Heart Theatre, Veronica continues to works alongside other playbackers with a mixture of cultural background to perform to a similarly mixed
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London audience. Together they explore issues of identity that is as pertinent to Veronica as to those that they want to reach. Veronica shares with other members the leadership roles so that she along with everyone else can take turn in simply enjoying the acting (Figure 3.22).

Figure 3.22
Veronica, kneeling, performing as part of the playback theatre ensemble.

Photo courtesy of True Heart Theatre

Grad’s use of PT training as a growth process in high school influenced his acting. Working with various communities has prompted him to take part in theatre productions catered for specific communities, and also to perform in productions that are current to the concern of the communities he meets in facilitation.

Sze is not only the facilitator, but also choreographer and occasional dancer, of BAU. As mentioned above, BAU was not a rehabilitation service. Sze stated, “it was very equal, we did not purposely identified who had sight impairment or not, if you observe our performance or classes you could not tell...In our training we look at each person’s unique character, and the choreography would cater to that.” Sze was not only doing this for sight-impaired people, but with them. BAU was part of her professional career as a dancer and choreographer.

Looking at the background of the artists, it appears that their passion for this practice originates from their own past and ongoing experience in art. Each of the artists have themselves experienced art in ways that deeply impacted and satisfied them in different stages of their lives.
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**Summary - Connecting the points of a similar journey**

The above provides a picture of the interviewees as artists who appreciate art not only in its final products, but equally for its process of expression. It is a view of art where conventions, traditions and techniques are foundations rather than burdens that have limited, and in some cases continue to limit, their own creation and their overall practice. In the role of a facilitator, they have found methods, fellow practitioners and legitimacy in a practice that combines their love of art with their preference and skill of working with people. Though there is a sense of compassionate service in their work, they somehow view participants as equals and make the effort to realize that. A central way that the artists realize this equality is through giving voice to every single individual, as content providers and as expressing individuals by exercising their sensibilities. Enjoyment experienced in the process is both a goal and an indicator of something developed. Moreover, they see artistic creation as something to be shared not just in its presentation, but in co-working and collaborations that often involve themselves. While the artists are aware of, and in some cases capably making use of art as a tool for a range of personal and social development, their various working contexts influence how these dimensions are made apparent. The artists continually learn and develop their practice to improve their facilitation of such an experience. Finally, their personal experience in art seems to be a driving force behind their practice.

To put it more simply, the interviewees are highly human-oriented. They seem to prefer sharing the experience of art more than sharing their own artistic creation. They have been deeply impacted by art, and want others to experience something similar.

**How does this data help in defining Community Art?**

The above data and analysis provides this research with an explanation of what they do and why they do it. The following section will draw on their views to answer some basic questions raised in the quest for an understanding of community art. The statements below are proposed in the context of community art. Again, it is now only the culmination of the artists’ views, to be placed in dialogue with relevant theories in later chapters.
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What is Art?
Art is first and foremost about expression and the use of human mental and physical abilities, such as emotions, creativity and senses. Conventions, traditions and techniques exist to enrich that process of expression. The assumption behind this belief is that it is better for people to express themselves in more ways.

What is Community?
Definitions of community are wide and varied. While all the artists’ facilitation work are either self-declared or externally categorized as community art or being community related, their primary scope of concern needs to be clarified. What can be observed from the artists’ that inform how they view ‘community’?

First, the seven artists predominantly speak of experiences with smaller groups, with a preferred ratio around one artist to twelve participants. This scale allows facial recognition and familiarity on a first name basis among artists and participants. It also allows enough time for individual voices. Second, the groups mentioned by the artists come from a range of association that includes locals of a small village, trainees from several cities, people in mutual conflict, staff members of a company and participants gathered first time for a project. Third, the impact and goals explained by the artists are often not primarily targeted at the wider context of the community, but first and foremost at the present experience within that gathering. Finally, within that confine of collaboration, the artists all see a connection between individual behaviour and group dynamic. If a single statement is to be made regarding community artists’ concept of community, it is the following: Community begins with individuals, and that is where community art begins.

Exist expressed that it is actually difficult to find no commonalities among a group of people. Is this concept of ‘we are all somehow connected’ naïve and idealistic? In practice this means that community artists believe, or expect through experience, that there is potential or even inclination for people to be more connected. The assumption behind this belief is that it is better for people to be more related.

72 See Caporael (2001) for a discussion of the evolutionary importance of face-to-face groups. A group of 40 people is actually well beyond effective face-to-face interaction; hence, artists preference for group sizes of approximately 12 people. Caporael, L. R. (2001). Parts and wholes: The evolutionary importance of groups. *Individual Self, Relational Self and Collective Self*. 241
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What do the arts have to do with community?
Combining the above views of art and community, two implications are provided here. First, if art is first and foremost about expression and the use of mental and physical abilities, and that individuals in a community are considered to be valuable members, then art is a channel for exchange among members of a community. As such, this exchange is informed by all the intricacies of their ‘language.’ Second, since the expressive language of art is both personally and culturally shaped, and the contents of expression are themselves subjugated to internal and social dynamics, art making is itself a process in the formation of meaning and expression. What is communicated includes meaning, expressive tendencies or habits, and a complex personhood that includes conscious and unconscious motivations and intentions. This is the complexity and richness that art offers to people in interaction.

What is the role of the community artist?
A corollary to Exist’s comment that the role of the community artist is to “mak[e] people who do not realize they are a community into a community,” and to “make people who do not realize they are artistic artistic.” The role of the community artist is to facilitate this process. Artistically, they introduce the media of art in a way that enables people to wield it themselves, strengthening the abilities of those who wishes to express in greater richness. Socially, they mediate this process where people individually and together create works that maybe personal, social, or both. This is the role of the community artist, facilitating a gathering of people through an artistic process to achieve an interconnected set of artistic and social goals. One interesting aspect of the role of the interviewees is that all of them are effective in a wide range of settings across age, ethnicity, social status and cultural background. It appears that their facilitation skills are highly transferable.

A revised definition

This section began with a profile of the seven artists, followed by a data analysis which yielded findings that provide the artists’ insight into the nature of community art. The above analysis has provided a revised definition of community art:

73 The preliminary definition of community art was defined as a meaningful gathering of people facilitated in a participatory art activity aimed at a quality process and product with long term impact.
Community Art i) is where a meaningful gathering of people ii) participates in art making iii) to undergo an interconnected process of iv) artistic experience and social interaction v) towards satisfaction and enrichment.

Two general aspects of this revised definition are highlighted. First, it does not contradict with the existing understanding of community art as compiled from the existing studies. Second, it focuses on the conception gaps the author has identified in the literature review.

It specifies the definition of community to a ‘meaningful gathering of people’ and focuses on the implications of ‘community’ in the term ‘social interaction.’ The definition also indicates that community art is not a genre of artwork, but rather a process of participation where physical presence is of importance. These two points combine to further narrow down its focus on physical social interactions. The term interconnected emphasizes on the complementarity of the artistic and the social of the experience. There is an obvious strive towards an enriching and satisfying experience.

This definition proposes that the process is primarily artistic and social, and that it is somehow connected. Also, the impact is slightly clearer with two dimensions. Enriching indicates that some value is carried onward or away from the participation. Satisfaction suggests that the impact can occur both during the process of participation and at the end of the participation. At this point, data collected through the interview suggests that one should feel inspired, educated, refreshed or more whole instead of diminished as a result, regardless of whether it is an unsuccessful performance or a challenging collaboration. Furthermore, though the analysis identified fun and enjoyment as an important factor, it does not imply a lack of physical or mental challenge; it appears that challenge exists in learning something new or putting effort in something worthwhile.

The goal of this research is to define community art, to provide ways of understanding it and propose evaluative guidelines for good practice. The above data is the view of seven artists across different media, recognized for their effectiveness in a range of
Chapter 3 - Data Analysis

countries and settings. The upcoming chapters are more in-depth analysis of their views and methods using existing theories on art, people and community.

How do theories of community conceptualize ‘a meaningful gathering of people’? How do theories of art conceptualize art making? How might artistic experience and social interaction be interconnected? What might be considered enriching and satisfying within an artistic experience and social interaction?
It was demonstrated that the interviewees saw art as first and foremost about expression, valuing expression and valuing that which is expressed. Conventions, traditions and techniques exist to enrich that process of expression.

This chapter first looks at the system of art that the interviewees feel to be burdening and limiting their personal practice and their work in community art. Dewey’s theory of art and aesthetic will then be provided as an alternative view that matches better the beliefs expressed by the interviewees. This sets the background to introduce the ethological perspective of art by Dissanayake that proposes art as a human behaviour essential to their survival and thriving.

This chapter answers questions posed earlier. What is the value of the process of art making? How can the arts and human concerns be so intertwined that these artists can treat them simultaneously? Putting it in another way, this chapter seeks theoretical support for the following claims proposed in the data analysis:

1) The claim that artistic and human concerns are connected
2) The claim that the arts are somehow fundamental to being human beyond cultural reasons
3) That art should be valued for its process as much as the completed product

Reconsidering the value of art in light of rigid traditions and conventions
The traditions and conventions of the arts can be an obstacle that discourages people to engage in artworks and the activity of making. Gombrich’s statement suggests a view of art that is connected to human survival and behaviour.

We cannot hope to understand these strange beginnings of art unless we try to enter into the mind of the primitive peoples and find out what kind of experience it is which makes them think of pictures, not as something nice to look at, but as something powerful to use. I do not think it is really so difficult to recapture this feeling. All that is needed is the will to be
absolutely honest with ourselves and see whether we, too, do not retain something of the ‘primitive’ in us. (Gombrich, 1995, p. 40)

Gombrich’s story of art does not begin with the renaissance paintings, Roman architecture, nor ancient kingly artefacts of the south or the east, but with the prehistoric cave drawings of the ‘primitive’ people. He explains that ‘primitive’ does not mean simplistic, a common misconception that he points out, instead it means a connection to “the state from which all mankind once emerged” (p. 39). The key to understanding the beginnings of art, according to Gombrich, lies with an honest attitude in discovering and acknowledging the ways that one is still connected with the roots of the human species. This is where the redefinition of art will begin. But before this backtracking to the dawn of humankind, a snapshot of a more dominant idea of art will provide an understanding of the context in which community art has evolved.

Concert hall, galleries and museum are historically, at least for the past few centuries, places where ‘connoisseurs’ and ‘elites’ attend to experience art created and performed by highly trained artists. Though this landscape has been challenged and has changed substantially, the institutions that train and define artistic ‘excellence’ continue to hold sway on what and how art should be. The influence of these elites on culture and the wider society means that this system of art remains dominant and continues to influence art related fields.

In the introduction of Creative and Mental Growth, Lowenfeld & Brittain (1985) explains that such a concept of art is vastly different from what art could be for children’s education. He described what this concept connotes in people’s minds by saying that museums, pictures hanging on walls, disheveled painters, full-color reproductions, attics with northern exposure, models posing in the nude, a cultural elite, and generally a feeling of an activity that is removed from the real world of making a living and bringing up a family. (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1985, p. 6)
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In such a view, the opposite of the starving and dishevelled painters are the great artists, composers and virtuosos who are held as the hero of the art world. While the value of masterpieces is undeniable, it needs not be held as the only aspiration in art.

In comparing the similarities of value and methods between art therapy and surrealist artists, John McNiff (1992) in *Art as Medicine* points out that surrealism began as a revolt against the exclusionary system of art, a system that he ascribed to have been a product of “the professional discipline of art history [which] tends to deal with a circumscribed and closed group of artists rather than with the complete phenomenon of art” (p. 45). However, he claims that this revolt had eventually failed because “Surrealism was handicapped by its inability to separate itself from the heroic ideal of the artist, an ideal which reinforced economics of establishing the value of an art object according to individual's reputation” (p. 50). McNiff therefore places his faith in art therapy, which being outside of the “market and heroic tradition” and is able to achieve the goal that Surrealism failed (McNiff, 1992).

Jones (2005), also discussing art therapy, proposes including works created in art therapy sessions to the 'complete phenomenon of art', which

> even when kept in a drawer, have a real life and meaning for the person or group involved in their creation and through this make a greater contribution to our society . . . this broader concept of art, including all creative utterances by all people, is not a new one. It is only within the development of Western civilisation, where the artist has achieved the status of myth in his own right that the art of the unknown or anonymous person has been ignored by society. (Lanham, 1989, p. 21 as cited in Jones 2005, p. 31)

All the claims above point to the fact that there is unexplored value in the works of those not trained in the arts. Not everyone needs to receive training in perspectival drawings or classical Hindu dance gestures, and not everyone trained traditionally proceeds to practice arts strictly within the gallery or theatre system.

This confining view of art has legitimized a similarly narrow stream of art history, one
that also fails to recognize the ‘complex, multifaceted discipline’ of Public Arts. Cartiere (2008) explains that this is due to a “[l]ack of historical context, evaluation, and confusion about the definition of public art” (p. 8). Arlene Goldbard (1993) also expresses a need for the community arts to establish its legitimacy through charting its history and roots. Sharing the same refusal of a dominant system of art, Goldbard describes the community arts to be rooted in anti-Romantic thinking about the arts: against the notion of the artist as working for the approval and reward of a disembodied marketplace of the elite; and in favor of the idea of the artist as an integral part of community life, working with and for ordinary people and rewarded, as other workers hope to be, with a decent living and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (1993, para. 20)

If the epitome of the art world is not to become the prima donna lavished in fame and fortune, nor the posthumously discovered eccentric genius, then to what kind of artist should children aspire? What is the value of art? To be wielded by whom in the society? Dewey explains that if ‘good’ works of art continue to be out of reach, it does not mean that people will not be affected. Instead, it means that people will naturally turn to aesthetic experiences with which they can relate, sometimes to unfortunate consequences:

When, because of their remoteness, the objects acknowledged by the cultivated to be works of fine art seem anemic to the mass of people, esthetic hunger is likely to seek the cheap and the vulgar. (Dewey, 2005, p. 14)

The views of the above scholars and practitioners illustrate that the elitist and exclusive view of art has not only failed to connect to the wider population, but is also unable to account for the development of art education, art therapy and in general artistic engagement in communities. It is important to note that they are not speaking against artistic mastery. Instead, they are pointing out that art is much more than those that are found in galleries, conservatories and private collections. This attitude very much resembles those of the community artists interviewed; for example, Pete asked why only western music was taught in his university, Sze questioned why
dance can be held so rigidly, Veronica did not aspire to the path of a stage actor, Hiep was not satisfied with the solitary path of many painters, and Exist was more interested advancing his art facilitation skills than his instrumental proficiency. A theory of art that seeks to explain a wider phenomenon of art where everyone is or can be an artist would need to be fundamentally different from one that has rigidly upheld narrow traditions and conventions of art.

Belfiore & Bennet (2008) discussed in depth the use of arts in the society, charting through two millennia of development of the arts and its intellectual debates. While the debate prior to the 1800s has been between whether the arts is good or bad for the society, Kant gave rise to a third camp by proposing that “works of arts have no purpose outside of themselves, they serve no ends whatever and are thus free from any finality or function” (p. 178). This is the root of the popular concept ‘art for art’s sake’.

Noel Carroll (2008) explicates the core of Kant’s theory as being concerned with aesthetic judgments rather than aesthetic experiences...the grounds for issuing aesthetic judgments are, in large measure, a matter of having certain kinds of experiences, namely, feelings of disinterested pleasure (which are, of course, otherwise known as an aesthetic experiences). (p. 147)

Carroll describes this traditional formulation of aesthetic experience as follows:
the requirement of disinterested pleasure is paramount, though, since not all aesthetic experiences are pleasurable, in the usual sense of that word, this condition has been subsequently sometimes modified to the more minimal condition that aesthetic experiences are valued for their own sake. (p. 145)

Moreover,
it has become common to drop the stipulation that aesthetic experiences are necessarily pleasurable and instead to suggest only that such experiences must be valued for their own sake and not for the sake or purpose of something else (which, needless to say, is another, perhaps more precise way of saying that these experiences are to be engaged disinterestedly). (p. 147)
Thus, rather than whether or how art can be a force of ‘good’ or ‘evil’ in the society, Kant steers intellectual discourse on art towards criteria for judging what is or is not art (ibid.). Greenberg (1982) explains that the Kantian approach functions through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself. By doing this, each art would, to be sure, narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of this area all the more secure. (p. 5)

Greenberg identifies this approach as being inherently scientific

[t]hat visual art should confine itself exclusively to what is given in visual experience, and make no reference to anything given in other orders of experience, is a notion whose only justification lies, notionally, in scientific consistency. (p. 8)

This approach is not helpful in furthering insights in the expressive art therapies, art education or artistic engagement in communities where the emphasis is often to bring non-artists to creating and enjoying art, where a range of extra-artistic impact are intended, and where process is considered to be as important as the product. The intention of this discussion is not to disprove the theory of aesthetic as explained by Carroll, nor is the author equipped to do so. Instead, it is to illustrate that these two claims of art and aesthetic explained by Carroll, that A) the value is experienced in the contemplation of the artwork, and that B) the experience should be for its own sake, does not capture the full range of artistic activities in the society. Instead the views that i) process and product both matters and ii) art is connected to human and society in multiple ways, are more compatible with discourses on the social impact of art that has lasted for over two thousand years (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008).

Davies (2012) explained another limitation of Kant’s theory, stating that “by rejecting aesthetic content of the sensuous and sensual kinds, Kant privileges the distal senses of vision and hearing over the proximal senses of touch, oral taste, smell, and kinesthetic awareness when it comes to aesthetic experience” (p. 17). The problem lies in the privileged position of certain senses over others in giving access to aesthetic experience.
Therefore, it is only natural that practitioners and scholars of art education, art therapy and artistic engagement in communities find the dominant traditions of art and its aesthetic theory suffocating, and deem it necessary to establish the legitimacy of their field elsewhere. This is an urgent task not only to artists who have been pushing the boundaries with exploratory works of art that evolved from ‘art as communication’ to ‘communication as art’, the proliferation in the practice and research of ‘community-based art education’ and ‘art therapy for social change’ attests to the need of an understanding of art and aesthetic that is connected to other parts of life.

**Dewey’s concept of art as experience**

Dewey provides such a view. Phil Jackson (1998) explained Dewey’s idea that “the connection between art and ordinary affairs is relative rather than absolute” (8). Leddy (2013) and Shusterman (2010) provide two discussions of criticism and debates on Dewey’s aesthetics that describes the nature of Dewey’s ideas. Shusterman (2010) explains:

> the frustration that many philosophical readers have felt with respect to Dewey’s style, whose flowing formulations are sometimes more potently suggestive than precisely clear. His very broad and extensive use of the polysemic concept of experience does not promote optimal clarity. (p. 32)

In the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Leddy (2013) summarized Shusterman’s view: that “Shusterman thinks that Dewey sees defining art in terms of experience as a matter of getting us to have more and better experiences with art, and not of giving a definition in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions” (section 3, para. 11). This final point identifies a spirit within Dewey’s work to get people to ‘have more and better experiences with art’ matches the intention of artists working with communities: to work beyond or rebel against the dichotomy of ‘Art’ from everyday lives in order to draw people’s participation. Though Dewey is often referenced in art education, the author believes that Dewey is equally relevant to this field of practice.

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74 As discussed in the literature review, Dewey’s theories of education and art will be drawn upon for their applicability in explaining how people are facilitated in artistic activities. This section discusses the aspect of his theories that explains how art as an experience is connected to other everyday activities.
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In *Art as Experience*, Dewey (2005) lamented that “instead of finding in an attendant of temple, forum and other forms of associated life” (p. 8), art is most often segregated in museums and galleries, legitimized under “philosophies of art that locate it in a region inhabited by no other creature, and that emphasize beyond all reason the merely contemplative character of the esthetic” (p. 9). Dewey believes that

[w]orks of art that are not remote from common life, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also marvellous [sic] aids in the creation of such a life. The remaking of the material of experience in the act of expression is not an isolated event confined to the artist and to a person here and there who happens to enjoy the work. (p. 81)

What is the experience of art and art making? Dewey believes that the nature of all experiences is the same. It is the quality of experience that differs. Dewey observed that the experience of the people of his time, and possibly of the current readers’ as well, is characterized by “inchoate…distraction and dispersion…extraneous interruptions or of inner lethargy” (p. 35). He then begins to explain his concept of *experience*:

In contrast with such experience, we have *an* experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfilment...integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences...its close is a consummation and not a cessation. (p. 35, italics original)

Such experiences are aesthetic, where the “[s]uccessive part flows freely, without seam and without unfilled blanks, into what ensues...because of continuous merging, there are no holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers when we have *an* experience” (p. 36). And finally, such experiences conclude in a “movement of anticipation and cumulation [sic], one that finally comes to completion” (p. 38)75.

75 “There are pauses, places of rest, but they punctuate and define the quality of movement.” (Dewey, 2005, 36). To expand upon Dewey’s musical metaphor, a pianist practicing a new piece may have to start and stop again many times in order to play it through completely. While each restarting is abrupt in itself, when the pianist finally masters the piece, these stops and
Dewey (2005) stresses that the aesthetic experience is not another kind of experience, “but that it is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience”, accessible to all (p. 46). As such, Jackson (1998) explains that the arts are only “refinements of qualities to be found in ordinary experience” because there are no absolute distinctions between “experiences connected with the arts and those connected with life in general” (p. 6). While some may consider this view to lower the value of the arts, it has the effect of making it more accessible.

While Jackson (1998) explains that Dewey believes the arts “are not the sole source of aesthetic pleasure...not the only repository of the holistic and unified” (p. 6), Dewey does believe that they are highly adapted to deliver such an experience. Dewey (2005) explains that “experience has pattern and structure, because it is not just doing and undergoing in alternation, but consists of them in relationship” (p. 44). He illustrates this with the example of the painter, who undergoes the effect of his painting in order to know his progress and decide upon a direction for his doing, highlighting the relationship between the “doing and undergoing in relation to the” whole painting (p. 45).

Though the phenomena of doing and undergoing are inextricably intertwined, conceptually they can be distinguished. Aesthetic refers to the experience one undergoes, to appreciate, perceive and enjoy, denoting “the consumer's rather than the producer's standpoint” (p. 47). The artistic refers to doing. Dewey (2005) explains that “art denotes a process of doing or making” (ibid.), in that every art does something with some physical material, the body or something outside the body, with or without the use of intervening tools, and with a view to production of something visible, audible, or tangible (ibid.)

Critical of the language and discourse on art, Dewey points out the fallacy that the artistic and aesthetic are often considered separately (p. 46). He states that the truly artistic must also be aesthetic since art is created for perception (p. 48), and conversely, that that perceiver would deepen their appreciation with knowledge of the artistic (p. replaying all become a part of the complete experience of learning that piece of music, which culminates to the conclusion where the piece is learnt. Similarly, a painter that struggles with a painting over countless frustrating days may find culmination when the painting is completed to her satisfaction.
Jackson explains that the artist at work must also be attentive “to the emerging sense of an enveloping whole, a sense of the whole that guides the selection and placement of component parts (Jackson, p. 37). Doing and undergoing, production and perception, the artistic and the aesthetic are in mutually informing alteration towards an emergent end. Jacob (2012) described this as “two sides of the same coin, two halves of the same thing, like inhaling and exhaling, [Dewey] would say” (Jacob, p. 3-4).

Campbell (2011) explains Dewey in a way nearer to this research.

We think too often in terms of the object in the frame or on the pedestal, and not enough about how it arrived there. Our lives are full of enjoyments like singing and dancing, building and hiking, and cooking and gardening; but we think that they have nothing to do with art, because art is wholly other (Campbell 2011, p. 29)

According to Dewey, there is simply no ‘other’ ‘Art’. All art are qualitatively the same as experiences in life.

Dewey provides a theory of aesthetics that is founded upon everyday experience, most accessible to people engaged in the production and perception of the arts. The next section draws on the ethological view of art formulated by Dissanayake where the arts are founded upon daily living as a survival need and part of human nature. The connection of Dissanayake and Dewey and their implications will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

Defining the phenomenon of art through an ethological lense

Dissanayake’s (2014) conception of art that “take into account the artistic/aesthetic behaviour of people of all times and places” (p. 57) is useful and adopted to explain the phenomena of community art. This view of art is similarly criticized of being too broad and reducing art to its “lowest common denominators” (Davies, 2012, p. 131), the shortcoming being that its boundaries are blurred with play, ritual and other forms of entertainment or experiences.

Though this chapter draws on Dewey to support the more personal dimension of art, his theory is by no means disconnected to wider societal concern as will be further discussed. Finkelpearl (2013) provides such a connection between the personal and the social with the phrase “the politics of the distribution of the aesthetic experience” (p. 346).
In *The Artful Species: Aesthetics, Art and Evolution*, Davies assesses theories by various evolutionary psychologists who argue that art is an adaptation, that is, a behavior that has developed to allow human to survive better\(^\text{77}\). Stating that despite being a critic, he finds Dissanayake’s formulations to be “among the most developed and nuanced theories...avoiding some of the more common faults” (Davies, 2012, p. 131). Davies (2012) concludes that “Dissanayake is right to stress that art is *universal, ancient, and intrinsically pleasurable*, and right also to suggest that this strongly indicates that art connects to evolution” (p. 186). However, he is not satisfied that her formulation can demonstrate that ‘art is an adaption’. For Davies, such a claim requires the theory to “identify an evolutionarily significant function performed not only by *all* the arts but also by *only* the arts” (p. 123)\(^\text{78}\).

Davies criticizes Dissanayake’s definition of art as ‘elaboration’, ‘making special’, ‘artifying’ or ‘artification’ as being “so thinly characterized that it remains in doubt that her topic is art as we understand it” (Davies, 2005, 299). Dissanayake responds by stating that her ethological approach is a vastly different way from contemporary aesthetics, and that she “employs a broader, more universal framework that is based on the observation and description of animals, including the human animal” (Dissanayake, 2014, 54)\(^\text{79}\).

Dissanayake’s goal, one that supports the argument of this research, is to identify the root and cause to why human and civilizations across time have been drawn to participate in the behaviour of ‘making special’, ‘artifying’ or ‘artification’. Therefore, though Dissanayake eventually addresses contemporary forms of art, her formulation draws primarily upon art forms such as dance, music, painting, crafting and drama practiced by ‘primitive’ communities\(^\text{80}\). The similarity that the community arts also often use these art forms is perhaps indicative that the community arts also draw on something ‘primitive’ in contemporary individuals and communities.

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\(^{77}\) Other behaviours seen as possible candidates of adaptations include play and ritual.

\(^{78}\) This resonates with Greenberg’s (1982) explanation of the Kantian scientific approach to defining art and aesthetics.

\(^{79}\) This researcher doubts whether Dissanayake’s theory has to answer to Davies’ requirement of ‘all the arts’ or ‘art as we understand it’. Considering the current agreement (or lack of) what art is, which sometimes depends on conceptual models to conceive something as art, such as handing out sandwiches to the homeless or a conversation about politics, Davies’ suggestion of an ‘art as we understand it’ seems somewhat irrelevant to this discussion.

\(^{80}\) In the sense employed by Gombrich, to be connected to “the state from which all mankind once emerged” (Gombrich, p. 38)
Despite of his criticism, Davies’ comments attest to the validity and relevance of Dissanayake’s formulations to this research. First, Davies agrees that she has identified key connections that support the essential role of the behavior of art to human survival. Second, Davies’ criticism that her definition of art has overlaps with other activities provides connections with the data collected. Interviewees and other community artists have expressed that they often adopt warm up games, exercises and rituals that evolve into fully-fledged acting, singing or painting (to be described later). More fundamentally, this appears to be consistent with the spirit of community art, as represented by the interviewees and observed in numerous projects, which is more concerned with making art accessible instead of deciphering between art and non-art.

This section presents Dissanayake’s formulations of art’s connection to human survival. Its breadth touches on multiple disciplines including psychology and social psychology, which will be addressed in the next chapter. She shares a similar concern for the dominance of the elitist and exclusive concept of art and proposed an ethological approach that reaches to its biological root towards a definition that is applicable to all cultures through history. Dissanayake is discussing art as a human behaviour and not just items made for appreciation. Her iteration is quoted here in full:

To begin with, let us conceptualize art as a behaviour (or behavioural predisposition), rather than an object (“work” of art) or quality (beauty, skill) or cognitive capacity. Ethologically speaking, art is something that people do (like play, display, court, mate, mourn, establish territory and hierarchy, form families, practice aggression and ethnocentrism, and so forth). Because there is no general verb (e.g. “to art”) for what people do when they engage in art, I call it “artify.” (2014, p. 44)

Universality of Art

Compiling past studies, Dissanayake (1995) observes that every human society of which we know-prehistoric, ancient, or modern - whether hunter-gatherer, pastoral, agricultural, or industrial, at least some form of art is displayed, and not only displayed but highly regarded and willingly engaged in (p. 34)
She observes that societies throughout history, and their people, have invested great time, energy and resource into art. Since only activities important to survival receive significant levels of investment, artistic activities “fill a fundamental human need, satisfy an intrinsic and deep human imperative” (1995, p. 33-34). Dissanayake is not arguing for art making in the narrower contemporary sense such as drawing or dancing, but for a “general behavioral complex that underlies these activities” (p. 37, italics original). Dissanayake points out that “one of the ways in which nature has ensured that we do the things that are essential for survival is to make them feel good” (1995, p. 31). Eating feels good because it alleviates hunger, therefore human naturally eat to fulfil a need. If the universality of art falls short as evidence of its’ status as an adaptation, it does support that it is complexly intertwined to behaviours that are essential to human survival.

While Davies (2012) has reservation that the survival value of art can be proven to be irreplaceable by other human behaviours, he does agrees that art is universal. He claims that not only is every individual capable of responding to some form of art within their own culture with a level of sophistication, “so extensive is the active participation of amateurs in art-creative behaviors that many achieve executive low-level competence in their favored art form and can be counted as artists to that extent” (p. 54).

Moreover, Davies suggests that artistic appreciation is likely cross-cultural because human beings share the same perceptual systems that enable the arts, and the basic paths of personal and social development and tension that also give rise to a similar fascination of “certain familiar dualities: birth–death, peace–war, love–lust, love–hate, love–jealousy, health–illness, selflessness–selfishness, family–self, individual–group, crime–punishment, health–disease” are shared across cultures” (p. 55). Thus, while culturally encoded meanings may elude a foreign audience, the universally accessible aesthetic features provide entry points that enable appreciation.

To summarize, Davies agrees and further proposes that art is universal in two ways. First, every individual is in some degree able to respond or create certain forms of art. Second, art can be universally appreciated to a certain degree.

Rhythmic-Modal Expressions of Mother-Infant Mutuality
The behaviour of art, like numerous other behaviours, evolved out of the mother-infant mutuality that is essential for the upbringing of children. Dissanayake summarizes the exchanges that solidify this relationship to encompass “visual, vocal, and gestural indications of interest, openness, familiarity, submission, appeasement, devotion, and affection” that are derived from the exchanges observed universally among adults (2014, p. 46). These rhythmic-modal expressions of mutuality between mother and child “eventually take their places as means to other ends” (2000, p. 49), from which arises “shoots that can grow into the radiant and sublime blossoms of friendship, love, and affiliation”, but also unfortunately can “proliferate into hateful clumps of violence and slaughter” (2000, p. 69).

Dissanayake explains that human bonding, from interpersonal to large social groups, is essential to survival, because “cohesive societies would have prospered more than fragmented and uncooperative ones, and- the individuals within them would have had better chances for survival” (2000, p. 64). Individuals’ perception of the group matters because “individuals who felt intrinsically part of their group would want to contribute to it and defend it” (ibid.). Therefore, individuals “are innately or automatically predisposed to acquire the worldview and ways (that is, the cultural meanings, significances, and values) of this group” (2000, p. 74).

Meaning, Mastery and Uncertainty
Is the ability and propensity for recognizing meaning inborn? Dissanayake claims that it is, but in a way that is naturally relevant to one’s survival, stating that “an infant does not create meaning so much as recognize what is meaningful” (2000, p. 73). The human mind is capable of “interrelated powers of memory, foresight, and imagination gradually” which “developed and allowed humans to stabilize and confine the stream of life by making connections between past, present, and future, or among experiences or observations” (ibid.). Moreover, being biological and survival significant, humans naturally invest emotions in them, “that is, we have evolved to care about them” (ibid.). Consequently, cultural knowledge and practices were established to ensure individuals of a group are informed about, pay attention to and act according to these “biologically significant things” (ibid.).
Instead of a rational set of information, Dissanayake (2000) explains that behaviours regarding the “biologically significant things” are more convincing when embedded in a system of stories and myths, as observed in every human groups (p. 80). The use of stories and myths is partially due to the fact that they can affect human deeply (p. 82). More importantly, she points out that while these systems demonstrate the human need to understand and take control of their surroundings, their forms as stories and myths attests to the fact that even today, science and technology still falls short of full understanding and mastery. Therefore, humans’ need for meaning can only be satisfied with “the complex logico-aesthetic integrations cosmological, theological, social, and psychological” that are found in human explanations (p. 86).

Understanding and technological mastery are innate and essential for human survival. As such, Dissanayake (2000) explains that the “manual interaction with the natural world (the source for all those things from which ancestral lives were constructed) would also have to be inherently satisfying” (p. 100). She proposes this manual interaction, which began as early as the “infant’s drives to reach, grasp, and investigate with mouthing, looking, and dropping”, to have a critical biological importance, and that “they are things all babies everywhere want to do” (p. 102). Manual interaction, essentially “sense perceptions and motor skills”, develops both cognition and socialization since it provides a platform for social interaction (p. 104). More fundamentally, Dissanayake describes this as a “‘hands-on’ type of life”, where people in the past handle and make most of what they needed, experiencing the “pleasure and satisfaction inherent in having direct physical involvement with nature” (p. 108). Further, she points out that a positive attachment to nature would have enabled finding “gratification from it and an aptitude for making practical use of its bounties” (p. 111).

Dissanaayake (2000) recognizes that in addition to refashioning natural items into tools, early humans also often decorated them, using “regularized, repetitive geometric ornamentations to deliberately counteract the random or untidy look of natural forms” (p. 115). This is an extension of the manipulation or appropriation of the natural world, recognizing one’s “difference from it as well as their dependence on and interdependence with it” (p. 114).
The manual interaction or manipulation just described corresponds to the imperative of understanding and technological mastery essential to survival. However, what happens when hands-on manipulation falls short? This is an interesting duality that Dissanayake has identified, the hands-on manipulation of uncertain elements where the act of ‘elaboration’ or ‘making special’ becomes significant.

‘Elaboration’ or ‘Making Special’ as Behavioural Correlates in times of Uncertainty

Dissanayake (2000) explains earlier that humans have emotional investment, or care about, biologically important things, but not everything biologically important can be mastered. As a result, in the face of uncertainty, “they are moved-motivated-to exceptional, attention-getting, emotion-affecting, memorable activities” (p. 137). She describes that these acts are a correlating behaviour that shows a “demonstration of serious regard” where people engage in “art-saturated ceremonies” believing that “in order for their efforts to succeed, nonhuman powers must be attracted and persuaded by displays of supreme beauty, skill, extravagant, and impressiveness” (p. 139). These qualities, applied through various forms of rhythmic-modal elaboration, required “an expenditure of time, thought, and effort”, demonstrates “unmistakable signs of caring and care” (ibid.).

How do rhythmic-modal elaborations work? The features of rhythmic-modal expressions are sounds (vocal), facial expression (visual) and movements (kinesic). They are “temporally and spatially patterned, dynamically varied, multimodally presented, and multimodally received” (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 130). Dissanayake points out that not only do these characterize mother-infant and inter-adult exchanges, but they are also found in songs, dances and other forms in ritual ceremonies. Their applications add to the extravagance and seriousness of the elaboration and is “an outgrowth, manifestation, and indication to others of strong feeling or care” (p. 130).

Dissanayake (2014) makes her claim clearly as follows

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81 In Dissanayake’s writings, the terms ‘making special’, ‘elaboration’ and ‘artification’ are generally interchangeable. The explanation of ‘artification’ had in parentheses ‘making special’ (2014, 55). The section on ‘elaboration’ simply mentioned ‘making special’ as an earlier usage (2000, 134). Despite its clumsiness, this research will generally use the term ‘making special’ because it makes apparent the dimension of ‘making’ and ‘special’. When discussing a specific passage, the respective term will be used.
Artification, as I describe or “understand” it, is an evolved behavioural predisposition in members of the genus Homo to intentionally make the ordinary extra-ordinary (i.e., to “make special”), by means of artistic/aesthetic operations (e.g., formalization, repetition, exaggeration, and elaboration), particularly in circumstances about which one cares (considers important) (p. 55)

Participation in ‘elaborations’ or ‘making special’ in ritual ceremonies ensures that the stories and myths of a cultural system of a group are reinforced, and that its survival will be sustained; given that the meanings, the knowledge and practice, embedded are accurate and helpful.

However, not only do the intended beneficial effects of ceremonies compel group members to take part, the sensory, emotional and social gratification offered also draws people to participate. Dissanayake (2000) provides a list of experience that such activities activate

...arousing interest, riveting joint attention, synchronizing bodily rhythms and activities, conveying messages with conviction and memorability, and ultimately indoctrinating and reinforcing right attitudes and behaviour...become vehicles for social coordination and concord, instilling belonging, meaning, and competence, which are feelings that comprise psychological well-being (p. 139-140)

More specifically, she summarizes in Homo Aestheticus how the artistic elements of ritual ceremonies are a vessel for emotional expressions, working in similar ways to the arts:

It occurred to me that in a very similar way, the arts also are containers for, molders of feeling. The performance of a play, a dance, or a musical composition manipulates the audience’s response: expands, contracts, excites, calms, releases. The rhythm and form of a poem do the same thing. Even nontemporal arts, like painting, sculpture, and architecture, structure the viewer’s response and give a form to feeling...Both are fashioned with the intent to affect individuals emotionally-to bring their feelings into awareness, to display them. A large part of the compelling nature of rituals and art is that they are
deliberately ‘nonordinary’ (Dissanayake, 1995, p. 46)

In more concise writings of her later article, Dissanayake (2014) made clear her claims of two “ultimate adaptive functions of artification” both applicable to upholding general wellbeing and in the face of crises.

First, by providing shaped and elaborated actions as something to do when beset by uncertain circumstances, artifying could alleviate the deleterious effects of the stress response in participating individuals...A second ultimate adaptive function of participation in the artifications of ceremonies is to instill collective emotions such as trust and belongingness and to coordinate (physically, neurologically, and emotionally) members of the group, so that they cooperate in confidence and unity (2014, p. 53-54)

Therefore, war chants and uniforms function not only by bringing unnerving minds into focus, but also by unifying soldiers into a preferred frame of mind. A similar set of individual and social function can be observed in the use of Canon in D and appropriate attire in a wedding ceremonies or music and visual ambiance in dance clubs.

Naturalistic Criteria for Aesthetic Quality

Finally, Dissanayake (2000) provides a naturalistic criteria for aesthetic quality “that begins with sensation”. Based on her above formulations, “a ‘good” or successful work (whether composed of material, sound, movement, words, or ideas) will address and satisfy human psychobiology as it evolved to live and prosper in the world” (p. 209). She proposes some guidelines.

First, “accessibility coupled with strikingness”, means that the work should be sufficiently accessible and remarkable to the senses. Strikingness is certainly a prerequisite if something is to be recognizable as being special from those that are not made special. However, it cannot be overly striking that it becomes too removed from relatable points of reference. In other words, striking but not too striking, otherwise it becomes inaccessible.
Second, “tangible relevance”, means that the work “have a tangible context in the particular life-world of the recipients-that is, clear connections to their vital interests, the important things relevant to satisfaction and survival in their environment” (2000, p. 212). This follows Dissanayake’s (1992) emphasis that what is made to be sufficiently striking should also be important; so that, people’s attentions are captured towards important things that they should be care about. At a deeper level, Dissana yake (2000) suggests that they should address “universal human needs for belonging, meaning, and competence” (p. 140).

Third, “evocative resonance”, means that the works function not just by obvious demonstrations, but through evoking something that is shared among people. Her statement that “a complexity or density of meaning embodied” (2000, p. 215) suggests to the author to be a clarification of the second point, that in successful works, the “universal human needs” addressed need not be plainly stated, but should be skillfully evoked. Again, the evocation should not be overly allusive lest audience find no resonance.

Fourth, the experience of the work should provide a “satisfying fullness”, which Dissanayake describes as “a sense of completeness or sufficiency is felt – rightness and even perfection” (2000, p. 216). She explains that “such epiphanies may occur only once or twice in a lifetime. Yet in works that strongly manifest the three other characteristics...a high, if not sublime, degree of fulfillment is usually also felt” (ibid.). Furthermore, she stated that it is only accessible in works that have been composed “with care and commitment” (ibid.).

**Summary of the above**

In summary, Dissanayake claims and explains how the behaviour of art i) is connected to important psychobiological needs, ii) is a behavioural correlate to psychological concern, iii) provides alleviation of stress and iv) builds solidarity among group members to overcome uncertainty. It’s power and effectiveness lies in that it is a derivation and expansion upon the mother-infant rhythmic-model elaboration.

Dissanayake's ethological view of art satisfies the criteria derived from the data collected. By identifying how the behaviour of art is connected to a web of human psychological and
social needs, it explains how artistic and survival imperatives can be pursued in parallel, thus also explains why community artists, represented by the interviewees, are effective in engaging people across a range of cultural and social background.

Application of the concept to contemporary examples

Doubtful that the causation among survival, art and other human behaviours can be ever proven beyond question, Davies nevertheless concedes that Dissanayake has satisfied the argument that the behaviour of art and human survival are intimately linked. However, how can Dissanayake’s formulation be applied to contemporary examples?

An earlier explanation from Dissanayake (1995) of how art evolved is provided as a starting point

I suggested that elements of what we today call the arts (e.g., pattern, vividness) would have existed first in nonaesthetic contexts. But because these elements were inherently gratifying (perceptually, emotionally, cognitively) to humans, humans who had an inherent proclivity for making special would use them—not for their own sake, but instead, in ethological terms, as "enabling mechanisms"-in the performance of other selectively valuable behaviors (p. 51)

Dissanayake’s theory of making special claims that the behaviour of art first occurred as a function of human survival, enabled through developed mental capacity, and has continued to be a trait found in all human civilizations. This supports an argument made by Carroll (2008), where she illustrates the insufficiency of applying ‘disinterested’ to the understanding of ancient tribal artifacts that are now considered to be art82:

Likewise, tribal peoples did not decorate their shields with fearsome visages in order to invite their adversaries to contemplate them sympathetically in autotelic acts of attention valued for their own sake (Carroll 2008, p. 155)

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82 Carroll (2008) also noted in order for the mental state of disinterestedness to occur in experiencing of an artwork, the means toward that state should be equally disinterested.
To apply the concept of making special, the decorations on the shield would act as a psychological enabler and a rallying device. The side with the matching and more intimidating shields, spears and war chants may enjoy both positive individual and group effects, which their enemies without a proficient ‘special-making’ specialist lack. The skillful specialist would ensure that the elaboration applied to the war gears would inspire in the enemies a sense of fear rather than frivolity.

Similarly, Gregorian chants, the medieval church music now considered as a form of ‘High Art’ and a precursor for European music, were originally written as part of church rituals and mass. Words or phrases would be set to certain melodies and was often used whenever it reappears in other chants only with slight variations. Early records of plainchants showed primarily descriptions for the rituals during the chants, and it was not after centuries of practice that the musical element gained its own importance (Bergeron, p. 101-102). The highly formal characteristics of Gregorian chants ensured that religious ceremonies would be presented and experienced in a specific way conceived to be acceptable.

In contemporary urban settings, the rituals of birth, coming of age, marriage and death continues to be significant, where ornaments, decorations, songs and sequences are integral parts. In school settings, anthems, coat of arms, team uniforms, annual events and mascots form the traditions and identity that contribute to academic performance and school life. Individually on a mass scale, people groom themselves for first day at work, first dates, important meetings according to prescribed ‘costumes’, ‘rhetoric’ or ‘roles’ or simply to feel better. The behaviour, when appropriately designed and executed, adds to people’s actual and perceived psychological, physical and social wellbeing.

This brings the discussion back to ‘pleasure’, or ‘feeling good’, an idea that Carroll (2008) points out to have been dropped by the theory of aesthetic experience, but that which Dissanayake considers to be determinant of human action. In contrast to an experience characterized by disinterestedness, the preceding discussion shows that ‘interest’ permeates the arts. One may lean towards supporting or rejecting the instrumentation of the arts, but Belfiore & Bennett (2008) has clearly demonstrated that throughout history, disinterestedness in the arts seems to be the exception to the rule.
Dissanayake (1995) stresses numerous times that pleasure is generally linked with what is good for humans, and that ‘making special’ correspondingly is linked with the important. In critiquing the contemporary state of culture where unimportant things are made to be momentarily important through sensational methods, Dissanayake cites Kaplan (1978) in a concluding remark, “that the interesting is no longer important, and the important is no longer interesting” (Dissanayake, 1995, p. 63). She then asked whether the confusing and unsatisfying state of art in our world has anything to do with the fact that we no longer care about important things. In our predominantly affluent and hedonistic society survival is no longer paramount for most of us and spiritual concerns, while perhaps given public lip service are less and less privately validated (ibid.)

Picking up on her concern of the state of art in the society, Kaplan (2000) expresses that As society became more complex, art became increasingly distant from mainstream culture. Our natures have not changed, however, and on a deep level we feel diminished by the removal of this form of making special from our daily lives. It follows then that, for the sake of our mental health, we must find ways to reintroduce art making into our everyday worlds (p. 61)

Not only is making special of the unimportant ‘confusing and unsatisfying’, the modern phenomenon of mass entertainment also poses a problem. Mainstream culture often applies skillful ways of ‘making’ to things that are not so ‘special’\(^3\). This is contrasted to important information that is not made special, as a trip to any public service outlet will show that much information on hygiene, employment or safety continue to be communicated through poorly designed posters, displayed in obscure locations

**Application to the Community Arts**

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\(^3\) That is a dilemma of entertainment as an industry, the depth of relatability of specialness is inversely proportional to the number of people that can relate to it. Therefore, in order to generate more profit, entertainment industries have to design their specialness to be relatable to an ever wider audience, thus compromising its specialness. For example, both Hong Kong and Bollywood films contain themes and aesthetics that are specific to their regional audience, which are often diluted when attempting to reach a wider audience.
This section will focus on the term ‘making special’ as it expounds on the dimension of ‘making’ and ‘special’. How does ‘making special’ play out in ‘community art’? How does it relate to the ideal of ‘everyone is an artist’?

Within tribal settings, tribe members are not audience nor are shamans performer in the contemporary sense. Members are participants in the rituals that are led or guided by the shamans. However, this is still shy of the spirit of ‘everyone is an artist’ where people not only choose among specialness defined and offered to them, but to make their own specialness. Dissanayake’s (1995) claim that art is a ‘general behavioural complex’ connected to human survival is in fact a claim that every human can and should make their own art. This is supported also by Dewey’s (2005) view that being the artist is the best way to access aesthetic experience.

From the previous chapter, a tentative definition for community art is provided. Community Art is where a meaningful gathering of people participates in art making to undergo an interconnected process of artistic experience and social interaction that is both enriching and satisfying. The task of the community artists is to facilitate that process.

Those who are better at making special are required to a) capture specialness and b) express it through a medium of object or performance. While technical proficiency can be assessed, it is not so simple to compare specialness. This suggests that, within the context of community arts, where individuals have a chance to create their own artworks, the emphasis should be for individuals to express things they themselves consider special, to share and appreciate that specialness with others. The role of the community artist then, is to facilitate both the ‘making’ and the recognition of the ‘specialness’. The artist cannot tell others their specialness, but having been trained or committed themselves to the recognition and expression of ‘specialness’, they are able to facilitate others to go through similar processes. Two examples are provided here to illustrate how artists put this role in practice.
First, it is a community painting activity held by Evelyna\textsuperscript{84}. In this particular activity, Evelyna first instructed participants to each paint their own painting, using a magical stone as a narrative device to represent themselves in their own stage of life. Then, the participants described to each other their own paintings. After that, Evelyna instructed the group to create a collage with their existing paintings and further drawings on a large canvas. This larger painting collage would be an imaginary realm by every single member of the group. She instructed them to form the collage based on their understanding of each other’s stories and visual elements.

The community artists, Evelyna and her artist assistants, created and provided the framework, materials, basic skills and atmosphere where the art was created. But it is clear that only the participants themselves, with the knowledge of their own specialness, are able to create their own painting. It was also not possible for the community artists to create the painting collage simply based on visual elements. The creation of the collage, which requires selecting and clipping, combining and juxtaposing of ideas and symbols, are at the same time an artistic and social exercise that can only be negotiated by the group of participants themselves. The community artists would suggest certain techniques or handling of the visual elements, but participants only need to accept them if it adds to the expression of the painting.

The second example is a song writing activity facilitated by Pete\textsuperscript{85}. The session included twelve adults with various physical or mental disability and five support workers who regularly took care of them. As the participants conversed in Cantonese, Pete required on-site interpretation through the current author, who also assisted with playing the guitar and other logistics of the activity. During the first 15 minutes of singing and games, Pete introduced the basic line of the Hebrew song \textit{Zum Gali Gali}, which was then tied into the music composition. \textit{Zum Gali Gali} became the chorus between each verse. Then he asked for participants’ input on the lyrics: the first verse was ‘what do you enjoy doing together’, the second first was ‘how is the weather today’ and the third verse was ‘what do you think of friendship’. The completed lyrics are as follow:

\textsuperscript{84} Held in August 2014, Shanghai, China.
\textsuperscript{85} Held on October 23, 2014 in Macau.
Song by anonymous group in Macau

Zom Gali Gali Gali Zom x 4
一齊唱，一齊做，一齊跳今日 x 2
(Today we sing together, work together and dance together)

Zom Gali Gali Gali Zom x 4
麻麻地，冇太陽，明天會更好 x 2
(So-so, no sun, it will be better tomorrow)

Zom Gali Gali Gali Zom x 4
友誼之光甜蜜蜜 ah ha.... X 4
(The light of friendship is sweet)

Zom Gali Gali Gali Zom x 4

Based on his past experience with adults of various physical and mental disability, Pete applied this fairly standard method for making simple songs with new participants with whom he is unfamiliar. Pete was the skillful musician in charge of the activity, he introduced Zum Gali Gali which sets the tone of the song to be created. He also set the direction of the lyric creation, albeit the topic was as general as small talks between newly met individuals. However, the lyrics created for the verse ‘what do you enjoy doing together’ were real to the participants; they were not provided by the organizations who may wish Pete to compose a song to direct the feelings of the participants. Also, the lyrics contain the names of three popular Canto-pop songs, specifically chosen by a participant who sings regularly, thus portraying unique elements of this group. The song was special to this group. An outsider listening to this song would learn about this group. An outsider with similar experience to this group may find resonance in the song. Alternately, an outsider who finds resonance to the song would realize that he or she in fact has similar experience with this group. This last point is not redundant or a reiteration because people often meet the artefacts or work of an individual, group or a civilization before actually meeting the people (Davies, 2012; Dewey, 2005).

Davies (2012) criticizes that Dissanayake “attends to art’s form and to matters appreciated intuitively, emotionally, or pre-verbally at the expense of giving due weight to art’s content” (p. 131). Though the author agrees with Dissanayake’s approach that
the form is fundamental to understanding the behaviour of art, her concept of ‘specialness’ does provide a way of discussing the content of artworks. This can be illustrated in the above example of ‘how is the weather today’. If it is specified to ‘what do you think of the weather today’, then it is an individual thought on a shared topic that some may disagree. This echoes with Knight (2008) that inclusiveness on a topic does not mean deciding ‘this is the common good’, but rather, discussing ‘what is the common good?’ (p. 110). Furthermore, if a participant has and will continue to be bedridden, this specialness of this topic may become an aspiration or a mockery for his or her condition.

When does ‘elaboration’ becomes art?

A second application of the concept emphasizes the ‘elaboration’ in the behaviour of art. Dissanayake (1995) explains that humans show a natural preference for order, regular shapes and colour, all of which helps with their perception of the world. Pattern and repetition exists in natural pattern and rhythms of wide life and landscape, which probably were the “earliest and most inherent environmental fact of which we are aware” (p. 83). Humans create geometric shapes and rhythm to natural items and occurrences to demonstrate a will to manage and control, and these became the basis for making special by elaborations and its deviation.

However, are all such elaborations art? Though they may all be aesthetic, Dissanayake (1995) points out that it is not easy to draw the line between those aesthetic special making that counts as art and those that do not. In contemporary settings, while it is easy to discern between a fresco and a plainly tiled ground, at what point can the pattern on the tiled ground be considered art? At what point did medieval clergies’ melodic recitation of biblical scriptures, the redaction of epic stories, or writing with brushes, became art? Three examples of community art activities demonstrate this point and how community artists use this ambiguity to their advantage.

When leading circle painting warm up, Hiep would ask participants to do physical warm up exercises, using their body movements to create circles. During this exercise, Hiep would ask the participants to think of objects or real life motions that are circular. For the participants, at what point did they transit from doing physical exercise to
performing a re-enactment? Similarly, in Exist’s music workshops with participants who are accustomed to verbally denying any artistic potential, he often nominally downplays their required artistic input. However, these works would often contain simplistic rhymes to instances of well-crafted poetry. In the third example, participants were directed to paint different colours of circle with watered down colour. As these circles built up, they were asked to create cut-outs of crabs to be placed on the circles. With this application, the circles turned into ripples on of a pond (Figure 4.1a, 4.1b).

Figure 4.1a
Participants were directed to draw together circles on a large canvas.

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 4.1b
Participants created cut-out crabs to be placed on the canvas, turning the circles into ripples of a pond (See also colour plate 3 on p. 252)

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Definitions without an absolute boundary

This discussion on ‘elaboration’ illustrates how applications of rhythmic-modal elaboration evolve from simple elaboration to something artistic such as a patterned floor tiles or something that is generally considered as art, such as the routines of ice dance in Olympic competitions. It was explained how community artists applied this concept of ‘elaboration’ to progressively guide or encourage people to engage in acts that evolved from being not so artistic to very artistic. Similarly, the individuals engaged progressed into the role of an artist. The advantage of such a definition lies in conceptualizing how community artists can guide or ‘nudge’ people from performing ‘non-art’ activities, such as stretching their arms, to performing ‘art’ activities, such as reenactment of eagles in flight. Similar to the interviewees, Dissanayake and Dewey does not seem eager to identify at what point a person becomes an artist.

This research applies both the theory of making special and art as experience in explaining the experience of the participants who are engaged in art making in community art. Dissanayake poses making special as an essential human activity in which people pay effort and care in ways and degrees that culminate into art. Dewey proposes that aesthetic experiences are simply experience that has culminated unrivaled intensity and meaningfulness. By these definitions, the line that separates art from non-art and inchoate experience from an aesthetic experience are subjective. This framework matches community artists’ approach in dealing with individuals rather than treating communities as a homogeneous group.

The experience is most readily accessible by doing art. While Dewey’s theory speaks more of appreciating as an audience, he uses the artist in production and perception as his prime example. Dewey (2005) expresses clearer the integral operations of production and perception when one is engaged in art. Meaning is created that enriches first the person engaged. Art is highly suited in providing an experience, just as it is also suited to the task of making special. Anyone can have an experience, just as anyone can make special.

Another implication of these two theories is the acknowledgement that people are not necessarily participating to do art. Instead, they may very well be participating simply to
find enjoyment, as something important or special to do in a social setting. Without this acknowledgement, artists leading community art projects may feel frustrated that people do not prioritize ‘art’. Yet this awareness also promises that the artistic and aesthetic is just a step away from ‘everyday’ or ‘non-art’ experiences.

Summary
Dissanayake and Dewey have provided grounds in understanding that art, while it is a unique activity, is not disconnected from other forms of activities, nor are artists geniuses with the heaven-gifted task of enlightening the rest of humanity. The interviewees, along with Lowenfeld & Brittain, McNiff and countless other who sees art as something to be shared, agree that the potential of making artworks and having an intense experience that might be described as aesthetic is within the immediate grasp of every individual.

Dissanayake’s ethological view of art demonstrated that art has always been intimately tied to human lives. Her view is supported by Dewey’s theory of art as experience that argues art is but one activity that leads to aesthetic experiences, which are in themselves qualitatively the same as all experiences in general. The claims implicated by the interpretation of the data find support from the discussion of this chapter,

1) that the arts and human concerns are intimately tied,
2) that the arts are fundamental to human survival and thriving across culture, and
3) that the arts should be valued for its process as much as the completed product.

This chapter dealt mostly with the artistic side of Dissanayake’s view, addressing mostly the art making aspect of community art, leaving the psychological and social aspect unexplored. Similarly, Dewey’s theory of experience and education, and its connection with art, will be expanded in a later chapter. From this chapter’s investigation of art, the next chapter looks at the communities and the people that make up them. Theories on community, psychology and social psychology that are compatible with Dissanayake’s framework will be incorporated to understand that aspect of community art.
In the Data Analysis, the comments of the interviewees combined with information and observations of their work indicated their concepts and approach to art and community. The previous chapter discussed the area of art. This chapter looks at the area of community. The findings and interpretations in regards to ‘community’ are summarized here to begin this discussion.

First, the size of groups artists spoke of are relatively small to enable facial recognition, familiarity on a first name basis, and individual voices to be heard. Second, the associations of these people range from people of a neighbourhood, business or non-profit trainees, classmates to first time gatherers. It appears that the interviewees accept various types of association as a starting point for engagement, provided that they are physically present. Third, whether or not any impact outside of the activity is planned, the artists appear to be primarily concerned with people present at the activity. Finally, the artists perceive and engage individuals with a strong emphasis on social interaction. The community artists’ concept of community is summarized as the following: Community is people in interaction. In contrast to more abstract conceptualizations of community discussed by Kwon (2004), the interviewees explain and demonstrate a human-orientedness that finds depth in the direct interaction within a collaborative art making process.

This chapter will investigate and theoretically expand upon the underpinnings of such an approach to community. It is divided into four sections. The first section investigates and proposes a concept of community that can reconcile the range of associations found in community art. The second section investigates the links between human interactions and the communities to which they belong. The third section investigates nature of social belonging and its impact on identity formation and behaviours. The fourth section investigates motivations towards artistic and social behaviours.

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86 The issue of the dimensions of morality in community art certainly deserves attention. Veronica described how certain PT companies are split over invitations to hold staff programme for tobacco companies.

87 In contrast to possible emphasis on ‘private self’.
The four sections focus in from the community to the individual, reflecting the human-orientedness expressed by the interviewees. Each section advances deeper into the interaction and motivations of the individuals that make up the immediate group or community in the activity. Sections 3 and 4 are addressed by Dissanayake from an ethological perspective discussed in the previous chapter. The discussions of this chapter also serve to test her claims and to triangulate upon the collaborative artistic processes in community art.

As stressed in the literature review, social sciences and psychologies are vast fields in themselves. This research draws on knowledge from these fields only to demonstrate one effective integration of an interdisciplinary perspective that is sound and theoretically coherent. The application of these disciplines in this dissertation represents an inductive reasoning to illuminate the understanding of the community arts, and is not meant to be understood as empirically verified findings. While an in-depth review of development of the following theories is beyond the scope of a dissertation, these theories continue to be applicable due to continued application, refinements and updates.

A note on terminology: the word and concept of community applies to:

a) The immediate group of participants in an activity, thus the term ‘group’ is often used to refer to that gathering of participants

b) The potential lasting community formed in the activity

c) The community/communities where the participants originate

Further clarification will be provided when required.

**Concept of communities**

The concept of ‘community’ is generally made up of people, things, places and the connections that bind them. Outside of the academies, this convenient yet complex term continues to be causally used in policy writing, commercial advertisements or public event promotions for both inclusionary and exclusionary purpose. What is the range of ‘community’ that community artists engage?
Sze founded *Breeze Across Us* as a platform for sighted and sight impaired people to dance together, exploring the possibilities in the absence of vision. Evelyina facilitated a mural in Henan that involved villagers of Islamic and indigenous faiths. Exist and his team has partnered with an NGO for several years to create musical dramas for youth to explore gender identity. Hiep has hosted numerous circle painting trainings for art teachers, at the same time facilitating the teachers’ own artistic exploration. Grad provided drama workshops in numerous high school for ‘difficult’ students as part of their after school detention. Veronica provided training to social workers in Shanghai, the experiential training also provided stress relief from their work environment. In Shenzhen, Pete facilitated a group of migrant young adult from various provinces to compose and performed their own music in their housing estate.

The above examples already include associations based on physical conditions, religion, cultural upbringing, sexual orientation, school behaviour, work, professional interest or requirement, migrant status and location of residence. In addition to preferences for group size and working relationship mentioned previously, two observations should be noted from this sample list. First, the associations not only include commonalities but also differences. For example, Evelyina’s project was designed to include villagers sometimes in misunderstanding; Exist’s projects were designed to include youths of various sexual orientation, some holding prejudice. Second, some of these groups include people who are reluctant to be present. For example, membership into Grad’s group is an outright punishment; Pete’s group of migrant youth includes unmotivated people; teachers attending Hiep’s training includes those who came as part of their work requirement. This is the range of ‘community’ that community arts activities often engage.

Concepts of ‘community’ in scholarly studies are no less diverse. In the opening chapter of *The community in urban society*, Lyon & Driskell (2012) discuss the history of the concept of community, which as early as 1955 has developed up to 94 separate definitions (George Hillery, Jr., 1955, cited in Lyon & Driskell 2012, p. 5). In discussing the implication of the failure at a single and precise definition, they suggest that “the presence of such competition is more a sign of a dynamic, significant sociological concept rather than a problem requiring a narrower, ‘scientific’ definition” (ibid., p. 6). This multitude of definitions from various schools and disciplines mirrors the wide range of perspectives
and entry point of artists working with people and communities. Instead of being dumbfounded by its varieties, Lyon & Driskell points out that ‘no single paradigm hold hegemony in social science’, and quotes Warren (1983), who welcomes this matrix of definition by saying: “let us have a multiplicity of paradigms. Those which endure, despite their shortcomings, will find supporters and utilizers only because they can do some things – though not all things – better than their alternatives” (Lyon & Driskell, p. 80).

A mixed approach does not mean a lack of framework. One early approach in the study of community that continues to be a classic in sociology is the ideal types of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft proposed by Ferdinand Tonnies. As stated by Lyon & Driskell, (2012), Gemeinschaft are communities based on natural will, built on sentiment, tradition, familial ties, work and livelihood in a common place; and Gesellschaft are communities based on rational will, holding affective neutrality and legalism as their basis. Lyon & Driskell contrast the two opposites as where people either hold holistic or segmented views of others. In the study of community, these ideal types form a framework for discussing real life situations, where all communities are in constant tension in between.

However, Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are not necessarily exclusive. Weber & Whimster (2004) explain that even instrumental associations can evoke emotional or affective allegiance that transcends instrumental purpose, and vice versa. Thus, given time and will, rational communities can build traditions and bonds that become part of the natural will.

In the conclusion of Community, Delanty (2010) suggests readers to recognize new expressions of community, because “virtual communities, New Age communities, gay communities, national and ethnic communities, religious communities…[s]uch new kinds of community have a powerful capacity to define new situations and thereby construct social reality” (p. 194).88

88 Though Delanty includes ‘virtual communities’, he does further stress that “…these new kinds of community – which in effect are reflexively organized social networks of individuated members – have not been able to substitute anything for place, other than the aspiration for belonging. Whether community can establish a connection with place, or remain as an imagined condition, will be an important topic for community research in the future (ibid., 195) Delanty’s emphasis on place and community artists’ emphasis on physical presence are perhaps different sides of the same coin: the connection of people to people and places for people to make connections. See the connection of people and place in introduction and the writings of Kelley (1995).
Combining the views of Lyon & Driskell (2012) and Delanty (2010), this discussion suggests a balance between the expected association of a group and the openness for community artists to adopt whatever framework for community as the occasion arise. Since the range of groups engaged are so diverse, if a definite answer is to be given to the question of ‘how community artists define community?’, the only possible answer is a bare-bone concept akin to a ‘lowest-denominator’ approach: the community engaged in community art needs to be i) physically present in the same space ii) with the willingness to interact and iii) are opened to building psychological ties.

This bare bone understanding of community is suggested to reconcile the wide range of groups engaged by the interviewees. The interviewees all have communities and groups with whom they have been or continue to be committed over long periods, where established associations continue to be developed. For example: Sze, Grad and Exist’s commitment to certain local schools and organizations; Evelynna’s collaboration with 3 villages in Henan over 7 years; Pete’s work in his home town Morecambe. Such rich conceptualizations of community match the common expectations of artistic engagement in communities or community work in general. There is certainly value in building upon established shared concerns, cultural background or common interests. However, the author must also reconcile the findings that community artists do not easily reject participants that are generally not considered to be communities. In fact, the interviewees seem to be able to draw such groups together rather quickly through collaborative artistic activities. Considering the range of cases available in existing studies about engagement with established groups and communities, this dissertation will continue to explore the potential of this bare bone conceptualization of community in community art.

The full implications of this understanding of community will be discussed at the end of the chapter when a corresponding understanding of human social interaction is formed.

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89 One such definition of community is suggested by Christenson, Fendley & Robinson Jr. (1989) summarized by Lyon & Driskell Jr. (2012), which includes “(1) people, (2) within a geographically bounded area, (3) involved in a social interaction, and (4) with one or more psychological ties with each other and with the place [where] they live” (2012, 108).
The discussion above has provided a concept of community as applied in community art to value the followings in its members: i) their physical presence in the same space, ii) their willingness to interact and iii) their openness to building psychological ties. This set of criteria is consistent with the human-orientedness revealed in the findings. The following sections continue to zoom-in from community to the individuals in interaction.

Human interactions that form communities
This section draws mainly on the work of Robert Putnam (2000), John McKnight (1995) and McKnight & Block (2010), all sharing similar concern for the American society. As Putnam’s work demonstrates, his fieldwork in Italy on community was applicable as a basis for his work in the American community, not in its details but in the nature of how people relate. Similarly, this research draws on how individuals’ role in the community can be conceptualized.90

In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) explains that the breakdown of community is due to the weakening of *social capital*, which are “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 16). He interprets the decreasing trend of civic engagement as a sign of decreasing citizen-initiation where social networks form organically. The result of his expansive and longitudinal analysis of American civic engagement led him to identify that “...it is precisely those forms of civic engagement most vulnerable to coordination problems and free riding – those activities that brought citizens together, those activities that clearly embody social capital – that have declined most rapidly” (p. 44).

Putnam believes that communities thrive when its individuals’ ties are strong and varied. He lists three ways that social capital benefits individuals and communities. First, it “allows citizens to resolve collective problems more easily” (2000, p. 311); for example, organizing and participating in neighbourhood watch programmes or paying tax. Second, it “greases the wheels that allow communities to advance smoothly” (*ibid.*, p. 312), that when people are “trusting and trustworthy...everyday business and social transactions

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90 For example, while Putnam’s diagnosis of the deterioration of communities in America is not directly applicable to other settings, his explanation of the general functions that social bonding can have are.
are less costly” (*ibid.*), including asking the neighbour to hold one's spare keys, sharing rides and resolving conflicts. Third, it widens people's “awareness of the many ways in which our fates are linked” (*ibid.*), and that “[p]eople who have active and trusting connections to others—whether family members, friends, or fellow bowlers—develop or maintain character traits that are good for the rest of society” (*ibid.*). This culminates into the concept of general reciprocity, where Putnam puts it as “I'll do this for you without expecting anything specific back from you, in the confident expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road” (p. 18)

However, social capital does not always function in constructive ways. Putnam (2000) finds that ties can be mutually supportive, cooperative and trusting or they can be plagued by “sectarianism, ethnocentrism, corruption” (p. 20). He explains that *bonding* social capital can be relatively inward-looking and exclusive, but effective in building solidarity, whereas *bridging* social capital are more outward-looking, inclusive, and able to “encompass people across diverse social cleaves” (p. 20). Putnam further comments that “bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves” (*ibid.*, p. 20-21). However, both bonding and bridging social capitals are present and important to any groups and communities.

In the latter half of *Bowling Alone*, Putnam goes beyond identifying the collapse and begins to propose on the revival the American community. He differentiates the role of art by pointing to its uniqueness:

Art manifestly matters for its own sake, far beyond the favorable effect it can have on rebuilding American communities. Aesthetic objectives, not merely social ones, are obviously important. That said, art is especially useful in transcending conventional social barriers. Moreover, social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely artistic” (Putnam, 2000, p. 448).

This acknowledgement of the social function of art from a social scientist echoes the intellectual debates of the social nature of art as explained by Belfiore & Bennett (2008).
Chapter 5 - Community and its People

Putnam is not simply speaking of attendance at sport or art events. He states that “our goal must be to increase participation and deliberation in other, more substantive and fine-grained ways, too – from team sports to choirs and from organized altruism to grassroots movements” (2000, p. 440).

Putnam has provided in broad strokes how individual actions, attitudes and traits and interpersonal relationships are actually the foundation upon which communities and societies are built. It is not a scientific or indifferent account that he provides, but a clear preference that communities are better if people are bonded, trusting, inclusive and that people are willing to simply be ‘nice’ without expecting immediate return. Organization of participation and deliberation in sports, leisure, the arts and social actions are effective ways of building both bridging and bonding capitals, manifested in groups that are diverse and strong.

Scholar and social policy veteran John McKnight provides a compatible diagnostic of the American society in Careless Society: Community and its Counterfeits (1995). He identifies the detriment to communities caused by a culture of professionalization. In the opening chapter, McKnight illustrates how the inhabitants of a rural community slowly lost its ability to handle the arrangement, ceremonies, mourning and caring around the death of one of its member.

He explains that as people of a community become increasingly convinced of the professional’s ability to perform certain tasks better, they outsource more and more often until they become incapable of performing them. This leads to an unnecessary increased demand for professionals such as doctors, lawyers, cooks, counsellors who will heal, settle disputes, prepare meals and counsel the down-casted. Those works that could otherwise be performed by family, friends or neighbours, from nursing a cold to hosting a wedding, are increasingly outsourced to professionals and specialized service providers.

In The abundant community: Awakening the power of families and neighborhoods, McKnight co-authored with Peter Block to elaborate upon the community they envision. Distinguishing a ‘citizen culture’ from a ‘consumer culture’, they state that “citizen's
participation in the community can provide each other what consumers must buy from experts and specialists” (McKnight and Block, 2010, p. 18), such as safety, health, wellbeing of children, environment and the land, an enterprising economy, food and care, areas of life that can be more efficiently fulfilled within the community than business, agency or the government. What McKnight & Block propose is a community where people are not conceptualized as customers, clients, income units, patients or audience members. This is a community that focus on gifts, where people are identified by their strengths they can share rather than their needs. It is where associational life is nurture, both inward and outward.

In McKnight’s (1995) study of Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, groups of citizens decided they had the power to decide what was a problem. Second, they decided they had the power to decide how to solve a problem. Third, they often decided that they would themselves become the key actors in implementing the solution (McKnight, 1995, p. 177)

Extrapolated from de Tocqueville’s observation over a century and a half ago, where wilderness survival was a daily concern, it echoes Dissanayake’s (2000) argument that social belonging boosts human survival. The above decontextualized wording of McKnight (1995) also helps to generalize it for current readers, where the issue of community building continues to be equally important. The first step is for people to get together. Second, it is not action that are decided upon, but the collective realization that their gathering has value.

McKnight & Block (2010) and McKnight (2013) highlight two aspects of the abundant community that deserve further discussion. The first addresses outsiders. The first type of outsiders are those within the community, the “slow”, the “drunk”, the “youth-at-risk”, “immigrant” and many other who are labelled. The writers believe that they all have hidden strengths that the community needs, and their real deficiency lies in their lack of “connection to the rest of [the community]” (McKnight, 2013, p. 17). The concept of deficiency of people in community is similar challenged by Jacob (2005) in settings of artistic engagement in communities, where she explained that “rather than subscribing to a deficiency model, I do not believe such audiences are lacking, that they are empty vessels that we need to fill with art history and art criticism information” (p. 5).
second type of outsiders is those outside of the community. While acknowledging that associations automatically create outsiders, such as the boundaries of neighbourhoods, McKnight (2013) challenges the readers to reconsider the boundary of their community, then further advocates the concept of hospitality as a trait of the abundant community as follow:

Hospitality is the ability to welcome a stranger. This welcome is the sign of a confident community. It has nothing to fear from the outsider. The outsider has gifts, insights and experiences to share for our benefit. (McKnight, 2013, p. 18)

Second, they describe the role of the Connector, who are people that can be in any positions or formal roles having the following traits or characteristics:

| 1. They are able to see people with gifts instead of problems |
| 2. They see the community as a place rich in resource |
| 3. They are well-connected themselves and active in associational and civic life, knowing the often unwritten rules of the community |
| 4. They tend to trust and create new trusting relationships |
| 5. They are themselves willing to contribute |
| 6. They believe in people and are not cynical and doubting |
| 7. They get joy from connecting, convening and inviting people to come together, but not seeking to lead |

Chart 5.1: Characteristics of the Connector (McKnight, 2013, p. 16)

Connectors connect individuals and groups. The writers propose the Connector, which can be played by anyone in the community, as people who can seek out the outsiders inside the community and perhaps be the ones to first offer hospitality to outside outsiders.

McKnight & Block’s proposal gives detail to Putnam’s envisioned society where people take part and take initiatives. It stresses active participation of citizens. It values building stronger connections that nurture trust and “greases the wheels” for communal exchanges and endeavours, and associations that bridges individuals and groups that are unfamiliar with each other.
Summary and discussion
This section has presented the concept of bridging and bonding social capital discussed by Putnam (2000), it is compatible with the concept of the abundant community explained illustrated by McKnight & Block (2010). A discussion beginning from the proposed role of the Connector serves to investigate the applicability of the theories so far discussed.

Anyone has the potential to be a Connector (McKnight & Block, 2010; McKnight 2013). Since no one can be the ‘perfect’ Connector, this means that everyone has the potential to be a Connector at their appropriate time and situation. Referring to the above chart on the characteristics of the Connector, this means that for items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7, different Connectors will be able to identify different kinds of gifts and resources in the community, and will connect different people and groups according to their own connections. Perhaps more challenging are items 4 and 6 of tending to trust and to believe that people are not cynical and doubting, requiring people who are willing to trust and believe when certain groups or individuals are deemed untrustworthy. This is possibly more difficult than recognizing gifts in people because mistrust and cynicism is sometimes created by past brokenness. This especially highlights the need for different Connectors, those who still have faith in certain ‘untrustworthy’ people perhaps based on memories of positive experience in the past, or people who might be in positions to face past brokenness, or those who simply are willing to take the risk in trusting again. This interpretation of the role of Connector that is played by various people at various situations matches the earlier reference to de Tocqueville, of citizens who are willing to take charge in identifying the issues they must face and taking the needed actions.

There are two ways that the concept of the Connector can inform community art. First, the characteristics of Connector can inform the role of the community artist in reaching out to participants and connecting them. Second, it is that community art can be an experience for participants to experiment being a Connector and be inspired to behave similarly in their everyday lives.

The bonding and bridging of social connection, of individuals stepping up in appropriate situations, is a general framework that is proposed to be effective in any community.
Chapter 5 - Community and its People

Bridging and bonding social capital are basically social exchanges that occur at interpersonal levels among groups and individuals. Having made the connection of how human interaction forms communities, the next section looks closer at the nature of these interactions. Are Putnam and McKnight & Block right to hold an optimistic view that individuals prefer social interaction? What is the nature of the tension between bridging and bonding social capital?

Belongingness and social identity
The third section investigates nature of social belonging and its impact on identity formation and behaviours. Specifically, it addresses the tension between human interaction of bridging and bonding discussed above.

Dissanayake (2000) demonstrates the importance of social belonging to the survival of individuals from an ethological perspective. This section provides support from social psychology of the human need of belonging. A seminal text that provided a strong case for belongingness is *The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation* by Baumeister & Leary (1995). The writers review decades of research to put forth the following claims:

1. There is in people a predisposition, readiness and urge to form social bonding in even the most random setting.
2. People generally and strongly resist the breaking of relationships.
3. Cognitively, “[p]eople interpret situations and events with regard to their implications for relationships, and they think more thoroughly about relationship (and interaction) partners than about other people” (p. 505).
4. Emotionally, being accepted generally leads to positive emotions and being rejected and excluded leads to negative ones. This also strongly suggests that “one of the basic functions of emotion is to regulate behaviour so as to form and maintain social bonds” (p. 508).
5. If deprived of belongingness in both short and long term, people can suffer from mental and physical illness, leading or at least contributing to behavioural problems.
6. Regarding partial deprivation, though research is limited, evidence does indicate that such conditions are unsatisfactory. They include relatedness without interaction, interaction without a bond of caring and relatedness without
reciprocation.

7. In one of the weaker links, the writers point out the criteria of the satiation and substitution of needs, when applied to belongingness, is not fully met. Experiments have shown that when bonds can only be substitute to some extent.

8. Finally, akin to an ethological view, the writers stated that belongingness demonstrates the innateness and universality that supports that it is not a derivative of other human traits or behaviours.

Stillman & Baumeister (2009) phrase the importance of belongingness as a basic human need slightly differently. They argue that “issues of belongingness form the core of daily concerns: how to get along with others, maintain connections, avoid and resolve conflicts, and the like.” (p. 250) Citing various other experiments, they find support that, “leading participants to believe that they were unwanted as social interactants” causes them to see life as more meaningless. And in another experiment, participants saw life as more meaningful when they were “asked to think about a time they felt a strong sense of belonging (ibid.).

The idea of belongingness may conjure in readers’ mind images of friends, families and neighbours, but perhaps with the exception of immediate family members, all belongingness begins with something much less complicated. Based on empirical findings performed by different psychologists, Baumeister & Leary’s (1995) state that a) even in groups formed by previous strangers, loyalty and group identification ties can ensue rapidly, b) and that in-group favouritism can appear quite readily to individuals with arbitrary associations, “even in the absence of experiences designed to bond people to the group emotionally or materially” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 501).

Walton et al. (2012) cite more recent experiments to explain this idea of ‘mere belonging’, which includes sense of belonging built upon something as incidental as sharing date of birth. They further identify “cues that evoke just a sense of working together on a challenging task, rather than of working in parallel to others, robustly increase intrinsic motivation, even when people work alone” (Carr & Walton, 2011, cited in Walton et al., 2012, p. 529). Walton et al. (2012) conclude that “psychological qualities like motivation” are not “processes that occur in the isolated minds of
individuals”, but arises “collectively among networks of individuals connected to one another in social relationships” (p. 530).

The above discussion provides support that people need and prefer social bonding and that they can be easily formed. Putting this in perspective, the claim that people need and prefer social bonding supports Putnam (2000) and McKnight & Block’s (2010) assumptions, and the interviewees’ belief that people inherently want to socialize. Two dimensions of belongingness are, the strength of connections and the number of connections, corresponding to the concepts of bonding and bridging previously discussed. Bonding is the strengthening of connections and bridging is the building of new connections. The upcoming discussion further investigates how social identity is formed through thinking and behaviour to build and maintain bonds.

There is a multitude of processes that happens when individuals take part in groups. Myers (2010) was consulted to provide an overview of many of these processes. Impacts of individuals and the groups to which they belong occur both ways. The social processes discussed here are but a few to demonstrate the applicability of social psychology to the understanding of community art. The followings are a selection chosen and illustrated with examples in community art settings. The interviewees rarely use the following concepts, but appear to be aware of such dynamics.

Mere presence of others – Presence of others creates social arousal, which boosts performance on easy tasks and hurt performance on difficult tasks (Myers, p. 269). Interviewees appear to be sensitive to this dynamic by assigning very simple task when leading warm up games in a large group.

Deindividuation – Physical anonymity “makes one less self-conscious, more group-conscious, and more responsive to cues present in the situation” (p. 281). This explains

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92 One of the counterexamples to their own proposal brought up by Baumeister & Leary (1995) is here addressed. As it was also discussed by McKnight & Block (2010), some people are shy or even resist social situations. According to Baumeister & Leary, it is due to a fear of rejection. Believing that their actions will not be well-received or reciprocated, people may avoid rejection by simply not socializing, which is slightly more preferable than outright rejection.

93 The examples below were observed in various activities led by the interviewees, often demonstrating awareness of multiple dimensions of social dynamic within them same activity. These were observed by Evelyna in India on 7 January 2014, in Shanghai on 14 August 2014; by Grad in Hong Kong on 27 September 2014, 8 November 2014; by Hiep in Hong Kong on 7 April 2016; by Exist in Guangzhou on 7-9 March 2013; by Pete in Shenzhen on 12 October 2014, 23 October 2014; by Sze in Hong Kong on 11 & 18 October 2015.
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Pete’s comment that it is hard to lead singing games and exercise with too small a group of beginners. Conversely, with a larger group, community artists are able to rally people into “doing together what [they] would not do alone” (p. 278), such as dancing or acting.

**Social Loafing** – People tend to and can easily *free-ride* on other people’s effort when many people are engaged in the same task. Experiments demonstrate that making individual effort more identifiable can alleviate social loafing. Interviewees often divide large groups of participants into different task groups apparently to counter this effect. Social loafing is also alleviated when the task is “challenging, appealing or involving”, if people “perceive their efforts as indispensable”, if it brings rewards and if people “are *friends* or they feel identified with or indispensable to their group” (275-276).

**Self-synchronization** – According to Kawakami et al. (2012), a person would go to great lengths not only in appearing to blend in to certain groups, but even to convince him/herself that oneself is indeed blending it. Self-synchronization occurs because it facilitates positive interpersonal relationships. But self-synchronization is not unidirectional, as each individual also make up the substance of the group, the value of the group continue to evolve. Conformity is one form of self-synchronization where people would act or think differently from the way they normally act if they were alone. This includes the more insincere *compliance* or *obedience*, and the more sincere *acceptance* (Myers, p. 192). In community art for example, a person may accept or obey the rule of ‘no talking while others are singing’.

Figure 5.1
Older adults holds hand in circle to sing and have fun.

*Photo courtesy of Art for All*
Prejudice – It is a “preconceived negative judgment of a group and its individual members” (Myers, p. 308) that can be conscious and explicit or automatic and implied (p. 310). There are basically three motivations for being prejudicial, i) categorizing is convenient and almost automatic, ii) it strengthens in-group identification, leading to a strengthen self-concept, and iii) it manages uncertainty of the unknown by seeing out-groups as being homogeneous. Experiments have demonstrated that people can be less prejudicial if they are intrinsically motivated because they feel that it is wrong, compared with the extrinsic motivation that they do not want to appear prejudicial.

As this discussion focuses on the formation of social identity, the model of self-expansion is presented as an alternative model to the need to belong in explaining why people seek social relationships. Aron & McLaughlin (2001) explain that people “to some extent include in their selves the resources, perspectives and identities of” people with whom they are related (p. 93). Since this perception allows people to plan and access greater resource which is beneficial to their survival and success, self-expansion is a possible candidate as a central human motivation. Such an expansion makes individuals more resourceful, which at the same time makes one’s identity increasingly complicated.

This complication or “confusing” of self provides an interesting opportunity for overcoming out-group prejudice previously discussed. Aron & McLaughlin (2001) explain that “out-group member becomes a friend, and is thus included in the self” (p. 96). This means that when one’s self has extended to include the member of an out-group, one is no longer able to apply out-group homogeneity as simply as before, and instead would be required to apply certain degrees of in-group favouritism. This is one way of explaining the mechanics behind arranged marriage that signifies peace treaties between tribes or nations. The study concludes that

In sum, there is good support for the idea that a close intergroup friendship, as well as the mere knowledge of an in-group member’s intergroup friendship (the extended contact hypothesis), may effect a change in the mental representations of in-group and out-group in the direction of greater overlap. (Aron & McLaughlin, 2001, p. 98)
Moreover, since the model of self-expansion is proposed as an adaptation for survival, Aron & McLaughlin identify that the inclusion of out-group in the self is “a means by which rigid intergroup category boundaries are undermined,...may even be a motivated process” (ibid.). It would require further investigation to determine whether or not self-expansion constitutes a survival need, but for the purpose of understanding in-group out-group dynamics, this concept can be applied to motivate people to overcome prejudice; that prejudice should be avoided not only because it is wrong, but that it should be overcome because it is beneficial.

The above processes describe the dynamics of individual within groups. However, they are not meant to be casually adapted or that the above provides a full picture. Two issues are raised. First, is it more important to a person to hold or overcome prejudice? Prejudice are formed out of ease of perception and the tendency to feel closer to familiar people, both are important to human survival and thriving. Yet, it is also important to overcome prejudice so that individuals and groups expand their knowledge and resources. A second conundrum involves social loafing and deindividuation. While the process of deindividuation suggests that singing in a larger group supposedly makes it easier to join in, the process of social loafing suggests that people are more prone to free-riding when individual effort is not easily spotted. These two examples serve to remind that human nature is more complex than can be easily explained by simplistic application of theories.

In this section, various concepts for socializations are put forth to explain the interpersonal dynamics of individuals in groups and communities. It is reasonable to expect participants of community art to prefer to be better and more widely connected. Social processes introduced above matches some of the observations in the data analysis, indicating that the interviewees are sensitive towards this dimension of human interaction and are sometimes able to utilize it to the benefit of the activity. Of greatest interest is the possible tension between in-group and out-group that corresponds to the wider concepts of bonding and bridging social capitals. Belongingness and Self-Expansion are two proposed theories for describing why humans need and prefer social bonding. Only the basics of the two theories are raised here to provide alternative views
aimed at enriching the understanding of socialization. A deeper discussion of how complimentary these theories could be would require an advance understanding in psychology that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. What can be claimed is that social bonding, whether motivated by a need to belong or a need to expand the self or both, is both a need and motivator of every individual that makes up a community. This supports Dissanayake’s ethological claim of the central importance of social relationship to human survival. Especially germane is the concept of self-synchronization in explaining Dissanayake’s view that it was important for individuals to acquire the worldview, expressed through symbolisms in art, of the groups to which they belong.

Motivation to work with people in collaborative art

The theories discussed so far have provided support that people should value socialization and that collaborative art making is an ideal way for people to build strong bonds. Dissanayake (1995) discusses in detail the evolutionary importance of ‘feeling good’ in general and specifically in art, explaining that people do not necessarily do what is important, but what is more enjoyable or satisfying. However, interviewees’ comments go even further to identify that many participants are not motivated either in art or socializations, even when they are aware of the enjoyment.

This section zooms-in further to the individuals that participate in community art, investigating why and how they may be motivated to collaborate with people in art making. Within this discussion, the artistic and social aspects are treated as separate but interrelated dimensions. Setting aside assumptions of preference for satisfaction or enrichment through art or socialization, participants are hypothetically characterized as either not interested or unaware of their interest in both the artistic and the social aspects of community art.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

Ryan & Deci (2000) discuss the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that drive people. Relatedness is often the first element that motivates people. It is explained that people

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94 Although the uses of the terms ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ by Clements (2007) and Dissanayake (1995) bare strong parallels with the concept discussed here, Ryan & Deci (2000) is introducing an empirically founded psychological concept while the former authors use the terms in other contexts. The parallel drawn in this discussion seek only to introduce this concept to those practicing of community art and not to claim that they can be wholly transferable it is.
conform or synchronize their actions and thoughts to social groups in order to ‘fit in’. The writers explain that when faced with behaviours that are non-intrinsically interesting\textsuperscript{95}, people may be compelled to comply if they are “valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society” (p. 64). “[P]roviding a sense of belongingness and connectedness” in non-intrinsically interesting behaviours lays the groundwork that facilitates people to internalize the value of such tasks or behaviours.

If relatedness opens one to non-intrinsically interesting behaviours, facilitating a perception of competence is a more permanent step in internalizing behaviour. By offering suitable challenge and relevant feedbacks, individuals are more likely to perceive a sense of competence in the behaviour. But ultimately, individuals must grasp the meaning and value of non-intrinsically interesting behaviours in order to fully integrate the behaviour and become autonomous with respect to it (Ryan & Deci, p. 64).

For example, cleaning and resetting theatre seats after a performance may be considered to be non-intrinsically interesting. A person may volunteer to do it because of existing bonds with the performers. Subsequently he or she may feel that their cleaning has improved through internal and external judgments. Finally, he or she accepts the value and meaning of the theatre performance and internally wishes it to be well presented. Thus, the person becomes extrinsically motivated in this non-intrinsically interesting task, a task where the rewards are external to the action itself. If in the process of cleaning, the person finds the physical action to be interesting, then he or she has become intrinsically interested in it.

\textsuperscript{95}Intrinsically interesting activities, behaviours or tasks are those that provide (psychological) reward or satisfaction in themselves. A similar concept would be autotelic act, those behaviours that are rewarding in themselves without extrinsic rewards.
As for intrinsically interesting activities, are people automatically motivated to engage in them? According to Ryan & Deci (2000), it is not necessarily so. They propose that “interpersonal events and structures (e.g., rewards, communications, feedback)” in relation to an action can be conducive towards feelings of competence that can enhance intrinsic motivation for that action “because they allow satisfaction of the basic psychological need for competence” (Ryan & Deci, p. 58). This feeling of competence must be perceived in conjunction to a “sense of autonomy or, in attributional terms, by an internal perceived locus of causality” in order to enhance intrinsic motivation.

How might the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation apply to community art? Several aspects are proposed. First, as individuals are interested in different activities or art forms, a mix of activities would increase the likelihood of individuals feeling intrinsically interested in at least one of the activity within a workshop or a project. Second, socialization, being with friends or making new friends, is an extrinsic motivation intimately tied to a person’s wellbeing that begins a first contact. Third, extrinsic motivation can be generated by designing activities to be suitably challenging, and by providing feedback so that individuals can perceive that they are in control. Finally, designing and communicating the overarching value and meaning of the various aspects and activities will further enhance and possibly help individuals to internalize, or accept, the value of their behaviour.

Assuming that every individual finds at least one aspect of the entire activity to be interesting, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations should work in synergy to motivate them. One further point should be noted: do individuals know what they are interested

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96 The explicitness of how the value is communicated, when considering that extrinsic goals may dampen inherent satisfaction, is more complexed than can be addressed within this dissertation.
in? Three reasons are suggested to argue that people do not know or are not certain. First, they may have never tried a certain art form before. Second, certain aspects of their personhood have changed since their last experience. Third, they have had a poor experience with a certain art form before. In these cases, extrinsic motivations become even more important in inviting people to ‘give it a try’, which may lead to them realizing their intrinsic motivation in a certain activity.

For example, when Pete expressed that it is easier to lead non-singers to sing in a larger group, he is drawing on the presence of others to compel individuals to willingly comply. He is depending that either extrinsic motivation will increase or that individuals become intrinsically motivated to continue singing. Also, when Grad leads warm up games at the beginning of a drama workshops, he would slowly increase the difficulty or demand of the games to provide suitable challenges to the students, and would never force participants to perform tasks unwillingly. Apparently, this is intended to create a perceived feeling of competence in their chosen involvement. This similarly builds extrinsic motivation in participants who are not yet intrinsically interested in the activity.

However, this does not yet capture the intrinsic and extrinsic nature of community art. The working definition of community art derived from the data analysis suggests that the artistic and social are interconnected. The emphasis is not simply to be together or to create art, but to create art together. This requires changing ‘relatedness’ from an extrinsic to an intrinsic motivation. Focusing on art in order to enjoy the artistic process is an intrinsic motivation, but focusing on the collaborative process in order to enjoy the socialization should also be an intrinsic motivation, both yielding its own rewards. A person may have a lack of interest in art, but is intrinsically motivated to participant in a community art activity to make friends by behaving sociably.

In community art, a person may be intrinsically motivated in art and extrinsically motivated in socialization; extrinsically motivated in art and intrinsically motivated in socialization; or they may be intrinsically motivated in both aspects.
This is not only a matter of conceptualization. While drawing collaboratively on the same canvas easily categorizes as both artistic and social, in the context of community art, can an individual painting exercise be considered only as an introspective artistic exercise? For example, during a painting activity in Shanghai (2014), Evelyna created a story with participants. Then asked the participants to paint individually based on the main character of the story. Finally, she gathered everyone together to talk about their painting and told them to freely adapt their paintings to a collective work. An individual painting exercise in the mere company of others already adds a social dimension. In this example, the individual painting exercise was one step within a larger collaborative project, preceded by an introduction of a shared theme, followed by a sharing of the individual drawings and finally a thematic integration. The example illustrates in community art, how the individual and group aspects, and how the artistic and social as either intrinsic or extrinsic motivations can work in connected ways.

Having established that people can be motivated extrinsically and intrinsically to participate in community art, this discussion now investigates whether or not art is in general an intrinsically interesting activity. Earlier discussions of the nature of art provide such a claim from an ethological perspective. Recalling Dissanayake’s (2014) claim of the ultimate adaptive function of art, the first was that ratifying relieve stress, and the second was that it builds unity that is essential to survival. The alleviation of the effects of stress points to something intrinsic in the act, something rewarding in the act itself. Therefore, aside from importance of social bonding and the meaning made in collaborative art making, the following section will explore from a psychological perspective of how people might find certain actions or behaviours to be intrinsically interesting.

**Intrinsically interesting experience**

In *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (1991) describes the concept of *flow*, a state of optimal experience. He explains that “[t]he self becomes complex as a result of experiencing flow” (1991, 42). Education is a major area where Csikszentmihalyi applies the concept of *flow*. This concept is also often applied to the process of art making (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, 1996; Kaplan, 2000; Machiodi, 2002;
Dissanayake, 1995; Denmead, 2012). From years of research based on a vast amount of data, Csikszentmihalyi (1991) states that,

it is when we act freely, for the sake of the action itself rather than for ulterior motives, that we learn to become more than what we were. When we choose a goal and invest ourselves in it to the limits of our concentration, whatever we do will be enjoyable. And once we have tasted this joy, we will redouble our efforts to taste it again...Flow is important both because it makes the present instant more enjoyable, and because it builds the self-confidence that allows us to develop skills and make significant contributions to human kind (p. 42)

In *Flow and Education* (1997)\(^9\), Csikszentmihalyi lists the conditions of the flow experience as follows (p. 133):

1. Goals are Clear – One knows at every moment what one wants to do
2. Feedback is Immediate – One knows at every moment how well one is doing
3. Skills Match Challenges – The opportunities for action in the environment are in balance with the person’s ability to act
4. Concentration is Deep – Attention is focused on the task at hand
5. Problems Are Forgotten – Irrelevant stimuli are excluded from consciousness
6. Control is Possible – In principle, success is in one’s hands
7. Self-Consciousness Disappears – One has a sense of transcending the limits of one’s ego
8. The Sense of Time is Altered – Usually it seems to pass much faster
9. The Experience Becomes Autotelic – It is worth having for its own sake

There is no clear cut relation among the conditions and the sense of joy experienced. It is more accurate to describe that the items on the lists are both conditions and preferred states mutually reinforcing to sustain the experience of flow. Not only is the concept a useful way to inform on how community art activities can be facilitated to provide an intrinsically interesting experience, where people can become intrinsically

\(^9\) Though this article targets children education, the research behind flow is generated from a vast pool of human samples that are well represented across gender, age, career and cultural background. “We collected over 8,000 interviews in various cultures – in Japan, Korea, India, as well as Europe and many other places” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, 133).
motivated to participate, but it also provides additional understanding of how community art may be enriching. Below are some of Csikszentmihalyi’s elaborations and how they may apply to a setting of community art.

**Challenge, skills, goals and feedbacks**

Designing lessons that matches skills and challenges is one of the most important elements that facilitate *flow* (see chart 5.2). A situation of *low challenge and high skill* will lead to students feeling relaxed, but ultimately bored. On the other hand, a situation of *high challenge and low skill* will lead to students feeling anxious. The ideal state is *flow*, where both *challenge and skill are high*, it is very engaging, which leads to students feeling both happy and concentrated. However, the state of arousal, where *skills are average and the challenges are high*, that leads to arousal, and the state of control, where *skills are high and challenge is average*, are “almost as good as flow” because the task can be fine-tuned to move into *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 139-140). This fine-tuning of challenge during the activity resembles the method of several of the interviewees, who do not strictly follow a session plan but instead adjust each warm up game and exercise as people of various skills react.

![Chart 5.2: Ratio between challenge and skill (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 139)](chart)

Goals and feedbacks are essential to a person’s ability to meet challenges. Needless to say, it is important for teachers to grasp the goals themselves so that they may convey
them to students. But more importantly, it is for teachers “to teach the kid to get feedback for himself or herself, so that they are no longer dependent on” external response, “…in fact, an expert is someone who can give feedback to himself or herself in a job” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 142). Csikszentmihalyi purposely dealt with the area of art and similar creative activities that are more complicated in terms of goals and feedback. First, he suggests that clay, paints and music are materials that will themselves provide one with feedback, whereas literature and poetry are “things that are less concrete” that requires more knowledge to provide feedback (ibid., p. 142). In *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention* (1996), he provides a more comprehensive discussion, that goals are often “suggested by the ‘state of the art’” (p. 114) of the respective domain. Moreover, more creative problems often have less definite goals that are only discovered in the process.

Csikszentmihalyi explains that the grasping of standards of assessment is how children, or people in general, can become autonomous, becoming “free of the system which administers rewards…no longer dependent on the outside”, and that is “the ultimate service you can give a child…to teach the child how to develop their own goals and respond to their own feedback, give feedback to themselves” (1997, p. 143). He identifies the Montessori schools as one such institution where the “the environment, the different materials, the different relationships between children” are designed to enable children to find the right level of challenge for themselves (ibid.).

This discussion of goals explains several characteristics of the community arts. With regards to feedback, two types of feedback are brought up by Csikszentmihalyi from the perspective of an existing state of the arts, and the immediate feedback from the materials engaged. This echoes the concept of ‘specialness’ explained by Dissanayake where a) the materials engaged (ink, granite, sound, body and etc.) provides feedback to the person and b) that although feedback is generated internally, the person is informed by the value system of those important to him or her.

This can be observed in the interviewees in two ways. Though this was not catalogued, Pete, Evelyn, Grad, Exist, Veronica and numerous other community artists most often first say, ‘what do you think’, when they are asked by participants whether or not their
work is good. The first way that participants can be guided to provide a respond to ‘what do you think’, is to solicit their reactions to what they have just made or perform, both psychological and physical. The second way is to discuss in conjunction with works that are comparable in various aspects; works by fellow participants are significant in establishing shared artistic language and meaning, while external works connects participants with the wider ‘state of the arts’.

‘Matching of skills and challenge’ and ‘generation of goals and feedbacks’ both concern actual proficiencies in behaviours and tasks. These two aspects of flow operate to provide feelings of competence founded upon a sense of autonomy that forms both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. When community art is able to provide such an experience, participants find both immediate satisfaction and enrichment to themselves.

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“‘The facilitators always asked for villagers’ own opinion when asked ‘Does my painting look nice?’” (Wong, 2015, 10).
Concentration

Concentration in the present moment is the second area that characterizes flow. Csikszentmihalyi’s (1997) first suggestion corresponds to the previous discussions on social identity, such as the effect of the presence of others, explaining that its effect can be minimized by the teacher, or community artist, by not making people feel over-self-conscious through belittling or over-praising. Also, distractions due to logistics should also be avoided. The resulting physical and social setting would facilitate an environment where participants can focus deeply, can temporarily forget their problems, feel transcendent over one’s own ego and feel time passing differently. This is observed by Malchiodi (2002) in her art sessions with people facing long term illness, that their pain and identities as patients fade way as they immerse into art making.
The logistical aspects of venue, timing, material preparations and etc. are easily applied to the preparation of community arts project. But how can community artists bring people together so that they are not causes for distraction but concentration for each other? Walker (2010) identifies how flow may be better experienced together than alone. Concluding from lab tests, he states that “social interdependence and emotional contagion can enhance the joy and elation felt during and after flow experiences” (p. 9-10). The followings are some of the indicators he proposes as conditions or indicators for social flow.

- shared intense absorption & engagement with the task
- high attention to group members or teammates
- less awareness of self
- surrender of self to the group
- joy, elation and enthusiasm felt and shared throughout group performance
- the experience builds meaning and a collective sense of purpose

Though the concept of social flow is not as established as flow, the above are similar to the effects of social interaction explored in the first half of this chapter, for example, distracted individuals should synchronize themselves to the general state of concentrate held by the majority of participants. As such, the issue of distraction does not lie in how to minimize distraction, but how to facilitate the group so that the presence of others can become a source of concentration.

This is in effect integrating the understanding of individuals’ behaviours in the presence of others and the concept of skill and challenge in flow. This can be observed in the following example. In preparation for presentation of their work near the end of a long term project, Exist sometimes asks individuals not used to public speaking to practice simply greeting and giving their name in front of other participants.

The discussion above suggests that in order that the circle of participants does not distract the performance and skills of an individual, community artists would assign

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Before on-going research is able to better delineate the conditions and effects of social flow (Keeler et al., 2015; Livesey et al., 2012), the working concept and its list of indicators already supports the above proposal that socialization is as valid an intrinsic motivator as artistic participation. If artistic and social processes are inseparable in community art, then individuals can experience both artistic and social satisfaction, or flow and social flow, through it.
simpler task. This is to shift the challenge from the task itself to the challenge of public performance. This illustrates lowering the difficulty of the task to enable individuals to concentrate on its delivery under distraction.

_Autotelic_

Finally, people are much more likely to experience flow if the activity is worth having for its own sake. It may be daily practice on instruments, laboratory experiments or physical exercises that are enjoyable to the particular individual, which are followed intermittently by successfully performing a song or finding certain proofs (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). The rewards lie in the act and possible eventuality of the act itself, but not in becoming a famous musician or scientist. Enjoyment of a task, or _flow_, is much more likely when one focuses on the task itself and not the possible extrinsic reward that may or may not occur in the future. This also corresponds to Deci, Koestner, & Ryan’s (cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000) meta-analysis which found that “virtually every type of expected tangible reward made contingent on task performance does, in fact, undermine intrinsic motivation” (p. 59). This is observed in Evelyna’s insistence of not giving candy as reward for participation, stating that the activity itself is her best gift.

_Discovering the intrinsically interesting nature of art_

Csikszentmihalyi’s claim that art is often well structured for one to experience _flow_, but that it is not the only activity to give access to it, is akin to Dewey’s claim that art does not stand unique in giving access to _an experience_; their similarities to be further explored in the next chapter. From a different perspective, Belfiore & Bennett’s (2008) survey of the intellectual discourse surrounding the impact of art on society attests to this view, that for at least two thousand years thinkers have been debating on the benefits or detriment in the pleasurable experience of art.

More specific to this research, one of Dissanayake’s (1995) basis for her ethological view of art is founded upon the widely held but often dismissed opinion that art makes people feel good. Dissanayake (2000, 2014) describes how infants need not to be taught to use their hands, voice, facial features and bodies:

It is interesting that natural selection seems to have co-opted the primate inclinations to use the hands not only for manipulating or making things but also for expressive communication. Even in early
infancy this gestural use of hands is distinct from other uses. At around four weeks, when babies begin to respond to others’ faces and sounds with social expressions and sounds of their own, their hand movements resemble conversational gestures (Dissanayake 2000, p. 102).

Dissanayake is pointing out what is commonly witnessed when children play, that they naturally will use their bodies, mouths, hands and sounds in ways that make them laugh and continue their exploration. If art is intrinsically interesting, why as people grow older, seem to resist participating in it?

If the arts are intrinsically interesting, then it is possible that people are discouraged to engage in it by their context and experience. Though Lowenfeld & Brittain (1952) has explained over half a century ago that result-oriented education and parenting plays a major part in the detriment of children’s refusal to draw, or sing and dance, their point still seems applicable for children of this century.

The issue that art has become commercialized or elitist is often addressed from a cultural or political perspective. However, the psychological and social dimensions of this issue is rarely addressed. This dissertation proposes that to facilitate an artistic and social experience in community art, is in effect tackling the psychological dimensions of the problem of commercialization and elitism in the arts. This means that the work of the community artists is to help the participants overcome these obstacles, so that they can again engage in art making.

This line of reasoning also applies to the reluctance of people to socialize. Dissanayake (2000) and Baumeister & Leary (1995) have demonstrated from multiple perspectives that people naturally socialize and prefer frequent and quality contacts. However, the advance of research in social exclusion indicates that it continues to be concern in modern society. If people are born to prefer socialization then it can be concluded that it is at least partly the context and experience of participants that have led to social exclusion. This hypothesis is supported by Baumeister & Leary’s (1995) claim that social withdrawal is caused by a fear of rejection. Such an expectation is either founded upon an established self-image or existing unfavourable social relations.

Baumeister & Leary (1995) discussed and addressed counter examples such as selfishness and shyness.
Summary

This chapter first addressed the concept of community as interpreted from the interviewees and projects of the interviewees. Conditions were identified to reconcile the wide range of communities engaged in community art: i) physical presence in the same space, ii) a willingness to interact and iii) an openness to building psychological ties. This framework is suitable because it focuses on the people of the community and the nature of their interaction.

The second section investigated the individuals and their interactions within communities. The work of Putnam and McKnight & Block are applied to demonstrate how individuals, in their actions and interpersonal relationship make up the community. Bonding and Bridging social capitals are two complementary but potentially opposing concepts that explain the importance of social bonds that can strengthen ties and promote inclusivity. When bonds are strong and inclusive, shared resource and expertise becomes better distributed.

The third section examined the assumption, that people in general prefer socialization and that their behaviours and thoughts are synchronized to build and maintain it. Baumeister & Leary (1995) provided a formulation of human’s need to belong, that human beings prefer, and naturally sought after, social bonding that are frequent and meaningful. Several phenomena in social dynamics were discussed including conformity, mere presence of others, social loafing, deindividuation, and prejudice to understand the interaction of individuals in their groups. Aron & McLaughlin’s (2001) theory of self-expansion provides an alternative explanation for socialization and also a potential motivation for people to overcome prejudice, thus providing support that bonding social capital are inherently better if it is inclusive.

The fourth section temporarily set aside assumptions that people want to participate in a collaborative art process to investigate human intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. An important result of this discussion is that, since community art is a collaborative art process where art making and socialization are the key to its process and success, individuals can be intrinsically interested in art and only extrinsically motivated to
socialize, or intrinsically interested in social and only extrinsically motivated in art, or intrinsically interested in both. The proposed intrinsically interesting nature of art was further substantiated through the theory of optimal experience, flow, by psychologist Csikszentmihalyi. Whereas flow describes the autotelic, attention focusing and suitably challenging nature of certain activities, such as art, social flow is a more recent concept that describes its social counterpart, the enjoyable nature of socialization for its own sake. This further supports the duality of the artistic and social nature of community art.

The four observations from the data analysis shown at the beginning of the chapter were accounted for and expanded upon. First, small groups enable better human interactions. Second, there is value in socialization even among minimally connected individuals. Third, significant social value can be attained simply within the immediate activity without focusing on external impacts. Fourth, the social dimensions of individual behaviours are highly significant in their identity formation.

No matter how connected or homogeneous a certain community may seem, the psychologies alerts the fact that every individual in a group see themselves differently, are motivated differently and are at various stages of their lives. Therefore, a bird’s eye understanding of community cannot address the depth of individual human experience brewing beneath. By keeping the group small to engage individuals, community artists are able to meet their participants as people with names and faces. At this level of engagement, psychology and social psychology is an essential tool in conceptualizing what ‘community’ means in the work of community art.

**Application in the context of community art**

It was proposed early in the chapter that working from a bare-bone concept of community may yield possibilities overlooked by methods that emphasize established associations and identities within a community. Having developed this framework more fully, the author will now elucidate these potentials.

First, there is value in working with loosely or un-associated people that are usually not considered to be a ‘community’, such as passers-by at a shopping mall. All associations start from the concept of ‘mere belonging’ discussed above. If a community artist were
to refuse facilitating such a group, then such ‘mere belongingness’ would never have had the chance to take root. These are instances where people of vastly different background may be bridged.

For example, while a PT performance in a community centre on ‘poverty’ will usually attract only sympathetic audiences, a PT performance in a shopping mall on ‘how will you spend your Christmas?’ can attract a mixed group where the more well-off can meet and listen to stories of the lives of the poor\textsuperscript{101}. Similarly, instead of holding an exhibition exposing and questioning the treatment of people with disabilities, the Circle Festival led by Evelyna, Exist and their team provided a platform for people with and without disabilities to collaborate in the arts, thereby bridging and expanding the behaviour of government representatives, sponsors and passing shoppers (Figure 5.6).

Second, there is value in temporary setting aside existing associations and identities, and simply gathering as a group of people with the willingness to engage and the openness to establish psychological bonds. People with established bonds can easily be bounded by expectations of behaviours based on existing identities. However, new connections can be established among existing relations, with new identities and behaviours being formed as a result. Strengthening of bonds not only applies to existing connections among people, but also to establish new connections.

\textsuperscript{101} This point is summarized from an interview with Simon Floodgate, lecturer and practitioner in theatre in education in University of Reading, also a long-time collaborator with Veronica.
For example, Hiep’s circle painting training may have drawn teachers who are only associated by their professions, but the painting activity immediately created a new tie based on participants’ love of art. If Hiep had determined to only develop surrounding their professional association, then the likelihood for new ties to take root would decrease. Similarly, Exist explains that as he has become more experience entering existing groups as an outsider, he is able to see beyond the ties and needs as conceptualized by the hosting organizations, and counter-propose a course of activity for the participants. Therefore, a bare-bone concept of community is not a lack of criteria, but a basis for embracing other ties and associations. This also illustrates Weber & Whimster’s point of how groups gathered for instrumental purposes can become more than their original purpose.

This is a conscious programming decision to subvert of stereotyping that may be formed externally or internally in conscious, unconscious or implied ways. This fluid conceptualization of commonalities among people can also serve to subvert ‘differences’. For example, in Grad’s case, students involved in a fight can be conceptualized to be in common as students all frustrated in school, and in Evelyna’s case, villagers with different religion and culture can be conceptualized in common as villagers that respect traditions. Again, this is not to downplay existing differences. However, the dynamics of in/out-group suggests that it is often difficult to relate to people perceived to different. It becomes harder to apply out-group homogeneity if a new connection has been built with a member of that out-group.

Another dimension of social relationship that is subverted is the implicit senses of superiority and inferiority based on reasons as diverse as physical build, neighbourhood, gender, culture, employment and skills. See further discussions in Afterword.
Grad’s experience provides another example. In the project *Creativity Engage!* held between 2011 to 2013 (Law, 2013), Grad was one of the three community artists who facilitated activities for children with special educational needs. When deciding on student groupings, three close friends from one school were separated into two different groups. The single girl who had to collaborate with students from other schools in Grad’s drama group was left without her usual circle. This also means that she was free to make new friends and behave in different manners. In contrast, in the group where the other two friends participated, it was observed that the existing tie between the two girls tightened to resist new friends and experiences. The example of the separated friend illustrates the *bridging* of new social ties while the other two illustrate the tendency for *bonding* capital to be inward looking and exclusive. The other dimension of the stripping of identity of *Creativity Engage!* is the fact that all of the participating students were identified to have learning difficulties. The year-long community art activity was designed to explore alternate strengths of the students.

The setting aside of established bonds and identity is also important for the community artist. In commenting on the ethics of working for major corporations, Veronica stated that it is important to look beyond the existing situation and ties of that group, so that it is possible “to work with them and expand their sense of their own humanness”, and ultimately for them to learn to appreciate others’ humanness (Needa, V., interview, April

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103 The current author was the research assistant of this project.
11, 2015). This demonstrates a return to people’s most basic identity where new perspectives and behaviours may surface.

One may suggest that this is of practical importance to the community artist because it enables him or her to accept more work. However, the author feels important to point out the optimism and hopefulness sensed from the interviewees, that the interviewees believe in people to be ‘nice’. This is insightfully described by Friere.

Freire (2005) used the word ‘faith’ to describe the belief that people can come together as partners to create and re-create. He explains that it is not a naïve ‘faith’ that is unaware of human brokenness. Rather, possibly speaking of the teacher and student, instead of realities and possibilities of oppression or alienation that may destroy his faith in the people, however, this possibility strikes him as a challenge to which he must respond. He is convinced that the power to create and transform, even when thwarted in concrete situations, tends to be reborn (Freire, 2005, p. 91)

Freire’s description echoes the role of the Connector proposed by McKnight & Block (2010), of those who are willing to trust despite of past brokenness, to find gifts in people where others find liabilities, and to see connections where others see differences.

Earlier discussions proposed that poor past experience creates psychological and social obstacles that hinder people from again participating in art and socialization. By stripping down the social context and the corresponding identities, community artists are able to tackle the psychological and social obstacles that hinder the formation of new behaviours. 

An implication that is not theorized here is the reestablishing of implicit social hierarchies. Members of a group may have implicit senses of superiority and inferiority based on reasons as diverse as physical build, neighbourhood, gender, culture, employment and skills. Alternative sense of selves can be explored by designing activities that draws on new identity and strengths that are vastly different from common expectations. The goal is not to substitute the old ‘superior person’ with the new, but to demonstrate a range of sensibilities and skills, thus arriving at a realization that everyone has something to contribute and are interdependent. Therefore, it is often important to challenge/encourage/motivate a participant who sings well to also learn to dance. This is also important on a personal level because a person that can only sing is limited in his or her expressive and perceptive capabilities. By depending only on the good singer’s ability to sing, it takes away his or her opportunity to develop other aspects of sensibilities.
The stripping of existing context, relationship and identity thus provide an opportunity for individuals to explore oneself, specifically in how one might relate to other people; perhaps to be more tolerant towards or persistent in raising minority oppositions, or to collaborate with people of vastly different background. The investigation into individual motivations finally illustrates the undergirding of individual participation in community art: the enjoyment and feeling of autonomy and competence in the actions and fruits of art making and socialization.

It appears that more important to the community artists then what is or what is not a community, is the potential of a certain gathering of people to be more connected, and the potential of individuals to become more sociable. This description resonates with the artistic objective from the previous chapter, where the emphasis is in getting people to participate in art instead of judging at what point non-art becomes art.

**Advancing the definition**

Interpreted from the responds and observations of the interviewees and their work, it was proposed earlier that community art is where a meaningful gathering of people participates in art making to undergo an interconnected process of artistic experience and social interaction towards satisfaction and enrichment.

1. Since it was identified that any gathering of people can develop meaningful connections, the qualifying word “meaningful” will be dropped from the definition
2. The term “collaborative” will be added to highlight its cooperative nature
3. Since the artistic and social effects are both integral in the activity, they can be addressed with the same noun.

The revised definition now reads: Community Art is where a gathering of people participates in collaborative art making aiming at an interconnected process of artistic and social experience towards satisfaction and enrichment.

As an understanding of the basic elements of art, community and people, and the relationship between art and community begin to take shape, two elements have emerged. First, Csikszentmihalyi’s discussion raised the role the educator as someone who creates and guides the situations where students are able to generate both
knowledge and future goals. However, before this investigation can begin, a final element of the effect of community arts needs to be addressed. It is the concept of autonomy that has been pervasive throughout this chapter’s discussion on the role of individual in a community, in a group setting and in his or her own behaviours.
Autonomy

This chapter investigates the concept of autonomy. In the previous chapter, Putnam (2000), McKnight (1995) and McKnight & Block (2010) explained the importance of civic participation and deliberation to the health of communities, both on an individual and group level. This was supported by Ryan & Deci, (2000) who explained the importance of the sense belongingness, autonomy and the feeling of competence in motivating individuals into action. Looking deeper into individual actions and behaviours, Csikszentmihalyi’s (1997, 1996, 1991) concept of flow informs this discussion of the central importance of autonomy both as a motivator and indicator to individual satisfaction and long term enrichment. Dissanayake (2000) also discussed the importance of humans’ recognition of the effects of their hands-on manipulation that is developed since infancy. Though not examined in depth, the pedagogy of Freire (2000) discussed in the literature also values the central importance of autonomy.

The above framework alone already supports the importance of autonomy, an element that was also pervasive in the findings of the data analysis. Grad describes his work as passing on the tool of art while Evelyna inspired the ladies of Yunnan and Henan to take charge with embroidery skills for both expressive and commercial purposes. Sze committed years to work with sight-impaired participants to prepare them to perform as equal collaborators, urging them not to settle for applauds out of pity. The objective to empower participants to take greater charge of their own expressions and creations in art, a motivation spilling over into daily lives, is an integral part of Circle Painting, More Music and Playback Theatre. Exist goes further to state in his manual that community artists’ skill in facilitating others to create is more important than their technical skills in art (Ho, 2009).

All of the interviewees i) express the need for longer art facilitation trainings for community art so that people can really work independently, ii) have or continue to be

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105 Freire’s theory will be investigated in the next chapter.
106 This interpretation of the data was not emphasized in the chapter on data analysis because it was performed well into the writing process when the concept of autonomy became clear.
107 Interview conducted on 7 October 2015.
108 Public talk on 5 March 2015.
109 Public talk on 13 October 2014.
in partnership in facilitating community art with past trainees or participants. In some of their longer projects, the participants have such a firm (not necessarily complex) grasp of the art form that the interviewees are able to enjoy art making together. The autonomy nurtured also goes beyond the project, where past participants became committed to learning the art form. Similar comments can be made regarding the social side of community art, that i) participants become more independent in their socialization, especially in resolving certain differences, ii) friendships are built that lasts beyond the activity, and that iii) participants became more sociable beyond the activity.  

Systems and structures can be put in place to facilitate autonomy in artistic participation from ease of facility rental and funding opportunities to simply making musical instruments or crayon available. However, these are meaningless to people who do not feel compelled to access them. The theoretical framework constructed so far that is based on the findings of the data analysis addresses the element of human motivation in autonomy.  

Within community art, autonomy is demonstrated in numerous aspects and in various degrees. This chapter draws on the work of Roger Hart’s (1992) Ladder of Participation and Harry Shier’s (2001) Pathways to Participation to investigate how autonomy in community art can be understood more clearly. The applicability of the existing models will be discussed and adapted. A model suitable for community art will be proposed.  

Barn and Franklin (1996) identify that the two models most often mentioned as helpful in conceptualizing participation are “Hart’s ladder of participation and the theories of Paulo Freire” (Barn and Franklin, 1996, cited in Shier 2001). Hart’s ladder consists of 8 stages, divided into the phases of manipulation to genuine forms of participations. Although the ladder is designed to assess children’s participation and the role of adults in facilitating it, Hart refers to humans in general when he expresses that “The ability to

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110 Wong & Cheung (2003). “Keeping the Elderly-Carer relationship fresh through Art”. Oral Co-Presentation at the 16th Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Alzheimer’s Disease International. Artistic participation and improved sociability after beyond the activities is rarely monitored mostly due to a lack of research support. Most notable examples of monitoring outside of a research capacity are: Pete’s organization in the small town of Morecambe is able to track this through their years of community presence; this is also achieved to a lesser extent by Exist’s group that host regular open-mics, music or drama training; Evelyna’s and Veronica’s repeated visits to hold programmes or trainings to various groups also give access to such long term development.
truly participate depends on a basic competence in taking the perspective of other persons” (Hart, 1992, p. 32). Later, in his response to criticisms of the ladder, he updates his metaphor and explicitly expresses that his framework is also effective for other relationships where one guides the other:

whereas the ladder metaphor is usually used to characterize only child–adult relations, the scaffold metaphor can be thought of as a mutually reinforcing structure where all people, including adults and children of different abilities, help each other in their different climbing goals (Hart, 2008, p. 21)

Hart (2008) summarizes one set of criticism, that “[i]n some ways the ladder metaphor is unfortunate for it seems to imply a necessary sequence to children’s developing competence in participation” (Hart, 2008, p. 23). Hart responded that “[i]n fact the ladder is primarily about the degree to which adults and institutions afford or enable children to participate” (Hart, 2008, p. 23), and in practice,

While a child may not want at all times to be the one who initiates a project they ought to know that they have the option, and to feel that they have the confidence and competence to do so on occasion. Adult facilitators of projects should not be made to feel that they must always support their child participants to operate on the ‘highest’ rungs of the ladder, but they must manage to communicate to children that they have the option to operate with these ‘higher’ degrees of engagement (Hart, 2008, p. 24)

Anne Kershaw (2014, 2014a) discusses the strengths of ladders and similar assessment tools in guiding an increase of participation, and at the same time warns of the “dangers and pitfalls in the shift to participatory arts practice that must be avoided” if one simplistically believes that “it can enable us to rapidly progress on the ‘snakes and ladders’ board of arts participation” (Kershew, 2014, para. 12). Her examples of dangers and pitfalls can be found in the reflections of an organization that raised core issues of the mission work with communities and to build capacity.
An important underlying relationship usually connects ‘community arts practitioners’ and the people they work with is that income is derived from disengagement and marginalization, which requires the ethical practitioner to “constantly review our role in perpetuating exploitation of these groups” (Lyons-Rei, J. & Kuddel, C., 2011, para. 5). Their reflection touches on issues including representation in finished works, training, evaluation, ownership and accountability. One especially insightful and sharply phrased reminder to artists and NGOs is to

[tt]rain yourself out of a job - you should be obsolete after the project is over. Build local skills to a level so the community can do it themselves. This is what you promised in your funding submission... And yes, this needs more time, but even on short programs, you can start the process and plant a seed for future initiatives (Lyons-Rei, J. & Kuddel, C., 2011, section Train the Trainer)

This statement takes seriously such popular catchwords as ‘capacity building’ and ‘empowerment’.

The following section discusses the suitability and application of Hart’s ladder and Shier’s pathway. Their existing adult-children application will be substituted by the artist-participants. How can they be applied to artistic and social participation? As an ideal or target to be aspired, how would the top rung of the ladder apply to community art? Finally, if the ladders indicate participants’ increasing autonomy, how does it inform the role of the artist?

Hart’s ladder of participation

Hart’s ladder was originally conceived for describing children’s participation, chart 6.1 shows the original wordings and key adaptation if it were applied to an artist-participants relationship.
# Chapter 6 – Autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Original Heading</th>
<th>Adapted Heading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Child initiated, shared decisions with adults</td>
<td>Participants initiated, shared decisions with artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Child initiated and directed</td>
<td>Participants initiated and directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adult initiated, shared decisions with children</td>
<td>Artist initiated, shared decisions with participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Consulted and informed: Children’s views treated seriously.</td>
<td>Consulted and informed: Participants’ views treated seriously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assigned but informed: Children understand and see the meaning of assigned role.</td>
<td>Assigned but informed: Participants understand and see the meaning of assigned role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tokenism: Children’s voice given no weight on meaningless platform, not given a chance to formulate ideas.</td>
<td>Tokenism: Participants’ voice given no weight on meaningless platform, not given a chance to formulate ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 6.1: The Ladder of Participation (Hart, 1992, p. 8) with adaptation

Hart (2008) expresses that the ladder model draws upon developmental theories available in early 1990s, and provides an update with the concept of the ‘scaffold’, which illuminate the kind of structures that are provided to a learning child by the social world (Gauvain 2001), and in some ways a scaffold may be a more suitable model than a ladder for much of what we are discussing because it implies multiple routes to growth (Hart, 2008, p. 21)\(^\text{111}\)

One major difference between Hart’s ladder (1992) and Arnstein’s ladder (1969) is the top rung. Whereas Arnstein (1969) considers “citizen control” to be the highest degree of participant, Hart (1992) believes children demonstrate the highest degree of autonomy when they are able and willing to ask for help. This is true not only for children, but is also consistent with the understanding of community in the previous chapter, where the ideal state is where people are connected and mutually dependent. Since ‘genuine models of participation’ are generally accepted as good, a discussion of the possible merits of non-participation may yield new insight.

\(^{111}\) For the purpose of this research, only the adapted ladder will be discussed. Please see Hart, 1992, 2005 and 2008 for clearer descriptions and the surrounding criticisms.
Value of non-understanding

Shier comments that the most useful function of Hart’s ladder, from his own assessment and comments by others, is that the ladder helps “them recognize, and work to eliminate, these types of non-participation in their own practice” (Shier, 2001, p. 110). Is this also applicable to community art or the arts in general? Consider the following two examples often observed in participatory forms of art:

Example 1 - Instructions are given for participants to draw as many stars as they can without explanation of their application. Artist then combines them onto a collage of Van Gogh’s *Starry Night*. Finally, the participants witness the visual impact of the collage and understand their part in it.

Example 2 - Participants are divided into 2 groups, each required to learn a drum pattern. The two groups are gathered to perform their pattern together which combines to form an interesting beat. The community artist then sings a widely familiar song on top of that beat.

In both examples, participants begin with few information and end with a realization of the meaning of their action. Also, the action of Example 2 could have been given to mislead participants towards a mechanic task, which then result in unexpected artistic application that is simple and presumably pleasant; a method of misdirection which is often employed by the interviewees. The following guideline can be derived, that certain degrees of non-understanding in art is effective, provided that a) the artist understands what eventual application would be satisfying to the non-understanding participants; b) the artist provides the understanding in due course; and c) the degree, level and duration of non-understanding depends greatly on the relationship and understanding established between the artists and participants.

This discussion echoes the idea of ‘manipulation of expectation’ pointed out by Dissanayake (2014), a dramatic device observable in the mother-infant interactions usually after 4 months of age. Mothers begin this ‘manipulation of expectation’ when simplest forms of interactions become predictable by the child and can no longer trigger

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112 See Literature Review for Bishop’s (2012) criticism of applying Arnstein’s ladder to art, stating that “models of democracy in art do not have an intrinsic relationship to models of democracy in society” (p. 279).
past responses. However, such uses also require consideration of the reception of the infant, or the audience in general when applied to community art. Conversely, if this ‘manipulation of expectation’ is executed poorly participants may feel frustration. Intended understanding such as ‘we can all do art’ or ‘drumming together is fun’ may result in ‘art is not for everyone’ or ‘drumming together does not work with me’; a less negative result would be ‘I get what the artist is trying, but it didn’t work’.

The issue of manipulation opens the discussion of ethics, as illustrated in this following example. First, instructions are given for participants to draw as many stars as they can without explanation of their application. Then, the artist uses the stars on pornographic photographs to cover sexual organs. In this case, regardless of the artist’s intention, the use of the stars could be perceived as ironic. Participants may not agree with the censorship of sexual organs, thus the participations are misrepresented. If the participants agree with the censorship of sexual organs they are victims of the irony. Furthermore, participants may not wish to be publicly involved in such an issue. The issue at stake is not the ethics of censorship, but the ethics of manipulating participants.

Relative inautonomy and non-understanding is often temporarily required in art, and perhaps in other walks of life as well. In community art, being directed to paint the background first, to perfect a dance routine or to listen seriously to everyone’s comments may seem tedious and unsatisfying. However, these hard works can and should culminate into something interesting. Wong (2015), writing on a community mural project in Henan headed by Evelyna, observed that painting the background, though tedious, not only trains beginners in the use of brush and acrylic, but even though painting details may be more immediately satisfying to individuals, the speedier process of a brightly coloured background provides a more visible sense of progress and shared satisfaction. This example also illustrates how handling multiple aspects of an activity can alleviate anxiety in non-understanding: the lack of understanding in the prohibition of perceived satisfaction in individual drawings – a task which the community artist knows is too challenging for the participants – is off-set by the less challenging act of background colouring – a task which the community artist knows is more satisfying.

113 ‘Manipulation of expectation’ fits the function of shock’ as debated between Kester (2004) and Bishop (2006), a discussion of this mechanism is provided in the conclusion.
Regarding the social dimension, the self-regulation required to listen seriously to everyone’s comments is also a challenge to be overcome in a collaborative activity. It is easier to act individually and not cooperate on a collaborative painting. It is harder but ultimately more satisfying to take turns speaking and listen to opposing views in order to collaborate on a painting.

**Stages of ladders as a choice**

As the value of non-understanding was identified, this opens an alternative application of the ladder. Hart (2008) explains that an important aspect of the ladder is to empower children to “know that they have the option, and to feel that they have the confidence and competence” (p. 24) to initiate or direct projects and request the help of those with more experience. However, this research believes that the statement can be taken further, that children or those in development should be educated to know when a certain level of autonomy is preferable, in collaborative art activity as in other areas of life.

What is implied in the discussion of the suspension of understanding above, is the participants’ temporary relinquishing of immediate control. By going along with an uncertain activity, the participant has subjected him or herself temporarily under the direction of the artist. They understand that if at that moment they demand to know the meaning of drawing stars so that they can decide for themselves whether or not to draw the stars, they would have sacrificed the dramatic effect of the activity for the sake of making an informed decision. Between knowing the value of full autonomy and knowing the value of fully relinquishing autonomy to the community artist, lies the complicated negotiation of autonomy in participation that should be based on trust114.

**Shier’s pathways to participation**

Shier explicitly credits the influence of Hart to his Pathway to Participation. Shier’s (2001) model function as a process of decision making, and how that is transferred or shared with children or participants in a systematic way. As discussed, since artistic and social experience does not lie in being informed all the time, column (c) regarding policy will largely be omitted in this discussion.

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114 See case studies in Kester (2011), where he observed that “The relative autonomy of each participant is alternately diminished and enhanced as the subjectivity of the viewer...fluctuates with the subjectivity of the producer” (p. 114).
Levels of Participation | (a) Openings | (b) Opportunities | (c) Obligations
--- | --- | --- | ---
5 | Participants share power and responsibility for decision-making | Are you ready to share some of your Artist power with Participants? | Is there a procedure that enables Participants and Artist to share power and responsibility for decisions? | Is it a policy requirement that Participants and Artist share power and responsibility for decisions?

4 | Participants are involved in decision-making processes | Are you ready to let Participants join in your decision-making processes? | Is there a procedure that enables Participants to join in decision-making processes? | Is it a policy requirement that Participants must be involved in decision-making processes?

3 | Participants’ views are taken into account | Are you ready to take Participants’ views into account? | Does your decision making process enable you to take Participants’ views into account? | Is it a policy requirement that Participants’ views must be given due weight in decision-making? 115

2 | Participants are supported in expressing their views | Are you ready to support Participants in expressing their views? | Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help Participants express their views? | Is it a policy requirement that Participants must be supported in expressing their views?

1 | Participants are listened to | Are you ready to listen to Participants? | Do you work in a way that enables you to listen to Participants? | Is it a policy requirement that Participants must be listened to?

Chart 6.2: Pathways to participation (Shier, 2001, 111), adapted version
(the pathways is read from 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 2(a), 2(b)…..and ends with 5 (c)

An important memorandum Shier provides is that “they may be at different positions in respect of different tasks or aspects of their work” (Shier, 2001, p. 110), which is illustrated in the preceding example of the Henan mural by Evelyna’s team. Also, as an assessment tool, Shier explains that

> [t]he most useful discussion will probably occur when the answer to a question is ‘no’. Then it can be asked, ‘Should we be able to answer “yes”?, ‘What do we need to do in order to answer “yes”?’, ‘Can we make these changes?’ and, ‘Are we prepared for the consequences?’(ibid., p. 116)

In practice, as Hart (1992) explains, the top stages of genuine participation are mostly a matter of degrees, within which numerous decisions and actions operate at various level of autonomy. Shier’s recommendation is to “look for areas where, weighing up all the potential risks and benefits, it is appropriate for children [participants] to share power and responsibility for decisions, then to make this happen in a supportive environment” (Shier, 2001, p. 115). This is further illustrated in the above example.

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115 Omitted from original, minimum achievement of "UN Convention on the rights of the Child".
In the case of painting the Henan mural, when the participants finished the task of painting the background, many returned to the community artist for instructions. Based on the observable skills demonstrated, the community artist would give either strict instructions for those who are unable grasp the activity, or simply general encouragements to those who show awareness of the next steps. Finally, when the mural was more than half completed, the community artists began giving clearer instructions on how to make it look better.

What are the considerations made in between? How does the community artist ensure that the group is able to take on that level of autonomy? Shier’s (2001) model addresses the decision making process. Through self-assessment, the artist is able to increase the autonomy of the participants. The key element of this model, is the artist’s ability to “[weigh] up all the potential risks and benefits of the situation”. What is perhaps missing or only implied in by Shier in the assessment of children/participants “responsibility for decision”, is the ability or skill to carry out their decision. Participants were encouraged to paint freely during the drafting and background painting stage as there was negligible risk in creating a poor painting, while the benefits of painting freely was high. Towards the completion, the participants too were aware of the risk of an incomplete mural and the benefits of a good painting, the community artist easily lowered the level of autonomy of the participants. This refers back to the above discussion of value of relinquishing autonomy.

**Adapted to decisions regarding artistic expression**

As it is, the pathway is most suited for deliberation of views and verbalized ideas such as the pedagogy of the oppressed, where the mode of exchange is spoken dialogues, critical but not poetic. But what of non-verbal and non-rational expressions such as those in the arts? Below is an adaptation that not only substitutes ‘adult-children’ with ‘artist-participants’, but also ‘views’ with ‘expressive tendencies’. As in the above example, the community artist not only accounted for the ideas and contents generated by the participants, but also their painting skills and styles. The result though imprecise, is helpful in conceptualizing non-verbal elements within the decision making process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Adapted Levels of Participation</th>
<th>(b) Adapted Opportunities</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants share power and responsibility for their expressive tendencies</td>
<td>Is there a procedure that enables participants and artist to share power and responsibility for the decisions?</td>
<td>Artist support participants to express through their style in agreeable ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ expressive tendencies affect artistic decisions</td>
<td>Is there a procedure that enables participants to join in the artistic decision making process?</td>
<td>Participants paint according to their skill and style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ expressive tendencies are taken into account</td>
<td>Does your artistic decision making process enable you to take participants’ expressive tendencies into account?</td>
<td>Based on participants visual preferences, assign painting teams along the mural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants are supported in their expressive tendencies</td>
<td>Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help participants express in their own ways?</td>
<td>Participants taking turn to introduce their drafts. Ask for more explanation and descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ expressive tendencies are observed</td>
<td>Do you work in a way that enables you to observe the participants?</td>
<td>Asking participants to draft ideas observe individual visual preferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 6.3: Pathways to participation (Shier, 2001, 111), adapted with ‘expressive tendencies’
(the pathways is read from 1(a), 1(b), 2(a), 2(b)…..and ends with 5(b))

A combination of the original and adapted pathways would provide a tool for self-assessment for community artists who wish to facilitate greater participant involvements in handling the contents and expressions in community art activities.

**Summary and reflection**

In collaborative art making such as community art activities, states of inautonomy and non-understanding are often a part of a fuller experience as observed in the practice of the interviewees. In the improvisatory form of Playback Theatre practiced by Veronica, Grad and Exist, participants as actors learn to send and receive narrative or physical cues of improvisation partners, conductors surrender control to actors to establish their own *mis en scène* and audience as storyteller are often surprised by actors’ empathic sense to interpret the nuances untold during the telling of the story. Warm-up exercises such as physical stretches and mechanical tapping on sticks often are led without explanation, slowly becoming expressive with grace or passion.

Yet, as Kester (2011) observed that “the relative autonomy of each participate is alternately diminished and enhanced as the subjectivity of the viewer...fluctuates with the subjectivity of the producer” (p. 114), autonomy and understanding is balanced.
among participants and community artists. As mentioned in the introduction that all of
the artists prefer activities to last longer in order to develop participants further; or as
Shier explained, to be able to say ‘yes’ more in handing over artistic control to
participants. Every single work of circle painting created, song collaboratively composed,
community drama staged, mural painted and dance choreographed represents an artistic
negotiation of autonomy and understanding. As community artists relinquish increasing
control to participants, they too experience discovery and anticipation as the participants.
Though it requires further investigation, it is likely that community artists too experience
certain satisfactions and enrichments in the process.

To summarize, Hart and Shier’s models are suitable as a guide to access the level of
autonomy when facilitating processes of participation in community arts. They are
useful tools as descriptions and for self-assessment by those leading these activities. As
models describing and assessing levels of autonomy, the adaptations are sufficiently
suitable. However, as the discussion reveals, what is more important than climbing the
ladder or pathway, is the judgement in deciding the benefits of the degrees of
autonomy in different situations in community art. This point is implicated by Hart
(1992) in his top rung, where the children are mature enough to know when to solicit
the help of adults, thus surrendering aspects of control and decision making. Therefore,
beyond a model of autonomy, a model is required to conceptualize the internalization
of that ability to make appropriate judgements.

To state the need for a model beyond the ladder and pathway in another way, it is that
autonomy is not the primary goal of community art. Rather, it is more important for one
to acquire the judgment in deciding what level of autonomy to exercise so that one may
experience the artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment in community art.
Community art is not primarily a tool to practice or educate autonomy. Autonomy is
valued in community art because it enables the participants to define their challenges
and meanings, both essential in satisfying and enriching experiences.

The current research has identified the integrated artistic and social motivations that
are intrinsic to community art. The theories discussed strongly suggest that if the
instrumental values of art or community art (empowering political participation,
behaviour modification, psychological healing, socialization etc.) are emphasized instead of its intrinsic value, its' effectiveness and satisfaction can be greatly diminished (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1997; Dewey, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, the ladder or pathway of Hart (1992), Shier (2001) and Arnstein (1969), which are often applied to context of political empowerment and representation, while immensely informative to this research, only touches the extrinsic goal of community art\textsuperscript{116}.

**A new model: Towards autonomous generation of impact in community art**

The model that is presented conceptualizes how people come to internalize the knowledge and judgment of the intrinsic value of an activity. Such a model would describe a deepening and expanding experience of its participants as illustrated in column (a) and (b) in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Description of achievement</th>
<th>(b) The awareness of the participant</th>
<th>(c) Within a session/project</th>
<th>(d) Long Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Individual able to guide others to generate similar experience</td>
<td>Knowing how to guide others in generating similar experience</td>
<td>Giving suggestions to groupmates within the group</td>
<td>Taking/sharing leadership role in the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Individual able to generate similar experience themselves in different situations</td>
<td>Knowing how to generate similar experience themselves in different situations</td>
<td>Motivated to sing when divided in groups by the artist</td>
<td>Meet up with fellow participants to sing together themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Individual repeats similar activity/action in the future to experience in more intensive or expanded ways</td>
<td>Knowing how to access similar experience in more intensive or expanded ways</td>
<td>Motivated to sing better or sing a new song under direction of artist</td>
<td>Joins other group singing activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Individual able to benefit directly from activity</td>
<td>Knowing personal preference for such experience</td>
<td>Enjoys singing together under direction of artist</td>
<td>Enjoys singing together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chart 6.4: A model towards autonomous generation of impact in community art (with examples)*

The stages are gradual. They may apply to certain aspect of the experience or the experience in general. Column (c) and (d) of the chart illustrates the short term and long term increase in autonomy of participants’ ability and motivation to generate artistic

\textsuperscript{116}Politics or town hall participation is only one arena where participants of community art may choose to exercise the artistic and social enrichment they have gained. It was demonstrated in this research that the enrichment more directly offered through community art deals with self-awareness of expressive and perceptual inclinations and personal identity in social contexts. Effective town hall participation, improved academic result or a better resume are too distant from the intrinsic nature of what happens in community art.
and social effects of collaborative art making. The increase in autonomy is one where the participants consciously exercises or temporarily surrender it.

This model illustrates an increasing awareness of the experience. The awareness does not first or primarily lies in being able to verbalize it, but that the participant is able to access it and is aware of his or her own preference for it. This resembles the Dewey’s (2005) concept of the unspeakableness when one is immersed in an experience that is explained by Jackson (1989). If the concept of autonomy is not part of the objectives, but only an attainment in the process of creation in community art, then community art would have achieved its purpose at this stage.

As participants climb this model, they become increasingly autonomous in generating the impact of community art. This dissertation recommends that instead of judging community art by the qualities of the final product, it should be judged by how much more autonomous participants become in the process.

The phenomenon that participants take on degrees of leadership responsibility within a project or on rare occasions become community artists in the future is not unforeseen. As the charts above illustrate, it is not necessary to become a community artist to guide others to experience artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment. While this is rarely put in writing on project proposals or promotional materials, this is widely practiced in many art settings. Here are some examples:

a. Choir conductors often assign section leaders who are usually better at learning new songs, thus providing a leadership role. Equally important are these section leaders’ ability to hear how their section is singing, providing corrective advice. In this situation, the section leaders are those with higher ability in reading and singing based on music score, hearing the harmony of different parts and transmitting that skill to others.

b. In the major mural project led by Evelyna, participants were instructed to paint and design their section of the wall. Section leaders emerged to motivate others and to coordinate efforts among members.

\[117\] Dewey’s concept will be discussed in the next chapter on the role of the community artist.
c. In circle painting, one ritual that some participants have trouble following is no talking during painting, which is a temporary surrender of their autonomy. Participation of past participants is very helpful in upholding this. Highlighted here is their experience. Their faithful adherence to the ritual compels others to follow, ensuring that everyone would be immersed in the aesthetic experience of emerging painting.

d. In general, it is common to see instructors or facilitators of dance, painting, handicraft or musical instruments to provide some demonstrations, then proceed to work one on one with participants. Those participants that grasp the skill sooner either naturally or are encouraged to share them by demonstrating or explaining to others.

Dewey (1938) uses maturity to describe the adult and educator, his emphasis on their grasp of experience and knowledge points to a role established on merit rather than status. Therefore, maturity is not only a criterion for the educator, but also implies those who are experienced to have the responsibility to act accordingly. The relative nature of those ‘more mature’ implies that anyone can guide the less experienced and mature to a deeper experience.

The ability of the experienced participant to demonstrate or teach others the same skill often shows higher mastery than at least a mechanical reproduction or reenactment of the learned skill. When participants understand what they have just experienced, they are able to go beyond repetition towards expanding or deepening it. Since what is understood is often difficult to be verbalized, community artists or art educators in general can observe participants’ understanding when they demonstrate a self-directed expansion or deepening of the original experience. The importance of verbalizing certain skills also become important in stage four, which enables one to speak abstractly about certain concept and skills.

The important aspect of this autonomy is one’s ability to generate feedback. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) expresses that people “who keep doing creative work are those who succeed in internalizing the field’s criteria of judgment to the extent that they can give feedback to themselves, without having to wait to hear from experts” (p. 114).
Within an activity, this would be the participant who can continue working with fewer stoppages to solicit the comments of the community artist. This participant, having internalized a degree of aesthetic judgment, can judge when it is beneficial to seek comments and weigh their value.

What are the social dimensions of stage four? Considering the range of skills and experience evoked in community art, it is more appropriate to describe the mutual guidance as a sharing of expertise rather than who is educating who. This dimension of the social bonding and bridging potential of the community arts is often overlooked. What is often emphasized in the community art is the dialogue of ideas and views rooted in or influenced by Freire’s pedagogy of the oppress or dialogical aesthetic as proposed by Kester, where the artists “define themselves as artists through their ability to catalyze understanding, to mediate exchange and to sustain an ongoing process of empathetic identification and critical analysis” (Kester, 2004, p. 118). However, community arts focus on the non- or pre-verbal experience of art, giving greater depth and nuance to complexity of communication. The experiencing together and sharing of skills in community art can bond and bridge people in ways that dialogues cannot achieve.

Figure 6.1
Participants setting up exhibition and creating drama costumes with minimal supervision.

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 6.2
Past participants invited by Evelyna to collaborate in an artwork, contributing their expertise and providing effective counter proposals.

Photo courtesy of Evelyna
Advancing the definition

In this chapter, the *ladder of children participation* by Hart (1992, 2008) and the pathway to participation by Shier (2001) are introduced as a guide towards a model to conceptualize the increasing autonomy strived for in community arts.

A discussion of Hart’s model illuminates the use of temporary non-participation and non-understanding to be common and effective in providing artistic experiences, provided that the suspension of understanding is bearable and that the revealed resolution is satisfying\(^{118}\). The implication is that beyond empowering people to have the ability and confidence to take on higher level of autonomy, in collaborative art making or life in general, it is more important for people to understand what level of autonomy is preferable under what circumstances.

Shier’s model is a series of question that guides the organizer or community artist to assess the level of participation currently offered, whether or not they are ready and equipped to increase it. The model was set up to access input of ideas. An adapted model is provided that substitutes the input of spoken ideas in decision making to the input of expressive presences as demonstrated and spoken. It is suggested the original and adapted model could be useful as a self-assessment tool for community artists in catering to the development of autonomy of participants.

Before a new model was presented, it is reiterated that autonomy is not the primary goal of community art. If the goal of community art is expressed in terms of autonomy, the intrinsic goal is to enable people to become more autonomous in generating their own artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment, and the extrinsic goal is to enable

\(^{118}\) Also important is that the resolution be well delivered in order to allow the savouring of the experience, lest recognition cuts-short perception (Dewey, 2005, 104) which will be further discussed in the next chapter.
people to transfer this understanding of autonomy into other walks of life. The autonomy that enables one to generate their own artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment does not lie in being in control all the times, rather, it is the judgment to choose the degree of autonomy suitable for different situations that is important\textsuperscript{119}.

<table>
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<td>3 Individual able to generate similar experience themselves in different situations</td>
<td>Knowing how to generate similar experience themselves in different situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Individual repeats similar activity/action in the future to experience in more intensive or expanded ways</td>
<td>Knowing how to access similar experience in more intensive or expanded ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Individual able to benefit from activity</td>
<td>Knowing personal preference for such experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 6.5: A model towards autonomous generation of impact in community art

Theories in the previous chapters were revisited to demonstrate how various degrees of autonomy serve to expand and intensify artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment. Of special significance, is that the goal of participants being sole receivers of satisfaction is only stage 1 in the path towards autonomous generation of these satisfactions. Community art must set its target towards participants sharing and guiding others in the experience. This is what marks internalization of the experience and an expanded and deeper exchange among people.

In short, with regards to autonomy, the objective of community art is to enable participants to become more autonomous in generating their own artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment. Through this process, the instrumental or extrinsic objective that may occur as a natural by-product is that participants are able to exercise or pursue autonomy in other aspects of life.

As a result of this discussion, the concept of autonomy will also be included in defining community art. Community Art is where a gathering of people participates in collaborative art making to become increasingly autonomous in generating artistic and

\textsuperscript{119} Likewise, in other walks of life, different degrees of autonomy are suitable for different situations. As such, this model is likely to be applicable in assess a person's capacity to autonomously access the intrinsic values of certain activities or tasks.
social experience towards satisfaction and enrichment. With the effect of community art established, the next chapter investigates the role of community artist.
Community Artist

Having established the effect intended in community art, this chapter investigates the community artist who facilitates this collaborative artistic process. Csikszentmihalyi’s writing for education introduces the role of the teacher who facilitates people experience flow, in many ways reminiscent of the role of the community artists. From McKnight & Block (2010), the role of the Connector also provides indications of how a community artist might be. This chapter investigates the role of the community artist as facilitator through the works of Dewey (2005, 1938) complemented by Freire (2000, 1973).

To phrase it according to the understanding established in this dissertation, the role of the community artist is to facilitate a collaborative art making experience where people become increasingly autonomous in generating artistic and social experience towards satisfaction and enrichment.

To remind the reader of the discussion in the literature, Goldbard’s observation of the influence of Freire in the field of community art, community cultural development, community-based art education is widely shared (Clements, 2011; Mulligan and Smith, 2010; Higgins, 2012; Dewhurst, 2012, Bishop, 2012). Many of the practitioners and scholars focus on the intellectual process in their application, explaining that “the process of making art offers participants a way to construct knowledge, critically analyze an idea” (Dewhurst, 2010, p. 8), “to encourage rational discourse, critical reflection and respect” (Clements, 2011), where “[l]earning activities in the program were characterized by open dialogue and structured reflection” (Adejumo, 2010, p. 24).

Bishop (2012), in discussing the nature of participation, focuses on Freire’s conception of the roles of the teacher and students. Goldbard’s (2006) more extensive analysis led to her discussion of Friere’s contemporary Augusto Boal, whose theatre of the oppressed uses “the language of theater to comment both on dramatic work and on the larger world”, asserting “that oppression occurs when dialogue becomes monologue” (p. 119).

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120 In the field of drama and theatre engagement with communities, Johnston (2015) identified shaman, theatre director, drama teacher, political actor, actor/teacher, cultural activist, joker and the therapist as having the function of facilitation to various degrees with differing emphasis. To this list of artists where leading others to create art is part of their work, one may add the choir conductor, band leader, various leadership roles in theatre or film productions, choreographer, playback theatre conductor, artist/teacher of various media. To a certain degree, leading a group of people to do art together, whether individually or collaboratively, has not been a common practice in the visual arts. In dance, drama and music, not only are works created specifically for ensemble performance, working collaboratively is an essential part of the practice. In contrast, visual artists predominantly work alone.
The emphasis on dialogue is the key factor that led the author to argue in the literature review that Freire’s pedagogy cannot fully embrace the phenomenon of community art. The combined works on art and pedagogy was then hypothesized as a more suitable framework. It was also demonstrated in the literature review that Freire’s discussions on the role of the teacher and the teacher-student relationship can be suitably applied to the artist-participant relationship in community art. Therefore, the author does not intend to reject Freire’s work. Instead, the work of Dewey is meant to be compatible with Freire as the existing major conceptual lineage of community art.

This is the flow of this chapter. The first section examines the basic elements of Dewey’s pedagogy, concluding with a comparison of its compatibility with the pedagogy of the oppressed. The second section is an extensive analyzes and integrate Dewey’s overall theories on art and education with the theories discussed so far to extrapolate guidelines for the role of the community artist in the work of facilitation.

Challenging the status of the pedagogy of the oppressed as the key conceptual lineage to community art is not simple task. As a result, this chapter will explain Dewey’s writings in greater detail then might be otherwise necessary to demonstrate its suitability.

**Basic elements of Dewey’s pedagogy**

**The Educative Experience**

Dewey (1938) believes that experience is what educates human, and that experience in art exemplifies all experiences, therefore art is possibly most suitable for education\(^\text{121}\). As a reminder of the discussion in the chapter on art, the following three points by Jackson regarding art are quoted to summarize Dewey’s explanation of the educative nature of art (Jackson, p. 33). First, the arts “lead to consummatory [sic] experiences that often stand unrivaled in their intensity and meaningfulness” (Jackson, p. 33). Second, such experiences affect how we perceive the world. Third, since aesthetic

\(^{121}\) Dewey believes that while art may be the most educative, it is not the only source of experience that educates. Jackson explains in the following quote “To say that encounters with art objects, works of literature, and theatrical performances often leave us better able to deal with future events is, however, not to claim that such experiences are the only ones worthy of being called educative. Many other objects and many other forms of encounter also yield educational dividends”. (Jackson, 6)
experience resulted through art is qualitatively the same as experiences in general, the arts can illuminate how everyday experience could be.

Dewey’s (1938) pedagogy was written in the context of education reforms in the 1930s. He has observed that a rigid curriculum can only suit a limited number of students (p. 45). The rigidity of the goals and objective set in such curriculum requires students to attain a rigid and fixed set of skills and information, resulting in a process where the ability and passion for learning and ‘experiencing’ is extinguished. In contrast to this mis-educative experience, the educative experience “arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future” (p. 38). Thus, the educative experience gives one the ability to transfer it to other settings, or lateral thinking (p. 44). This line of thinking on the long term effect of education is strongly resonated in Csikszentmihalyi’s work discussed in chapter 5. It is essentially explaining the passion the fuels autonomous behaviours.

Dewey explains that influence upon later experience not only applies to the knowledge of subject matter gained, but more importantly in the attitude and desire to continue learning. This continuous learning is not classroom bound, but a formation of purpose put into action in daily lives that involves and requires present observations, knowledge and opinions of past situations and the interpretation of these for future application. To counter the predominately intellectual nature of education, Dewey stresses that “education is based in theory and practice upon experience” (p. 83), that the intellectual reflection is based on and will eventually inform concrete experience.

The role of the educator
Jackson (1998, p. 46) further clarifies that it is not the content of the curriculum or teacher that is educative, but it is experience itself that transforms people. This means that the office of the educator is to create learning experience where students can identify new problems that will stimulate the expansion of their observations and judgments in a way that leads to further experiences. A Note on Vygotsky, zone of proximal development, scaffolding and guided participation. The theory of zone of proximal development (ZPD) by Vygotsky is also a suitable theory that is beyond the scope of this doctoral dissertation. Below is a short discussion based on an 2006 article by Rudolph Schaffer in Key Concepts in Development Psychology. The zone of proximal
mature person has no right to withhold from students experience that might expand them. Furthermore, education must not be abused to be a channel where students express teacher’s will instead of their own.

Dewey stresses on the maturity of the educator as an important factor that enable him or her to guide the experience of the ‘young’ to ensure that their experiences are headed toward educativeness. This requires the educator to be personally involved, so that he or she may provide suitable guidance. Both physical and social surroundings should be utilized in planning an experience that is worthwhile. Dewey points out that this form of education is more difficult for the parent and educator to conduct due to the more intelligent planning required. The criterion of maturity was brought up during the previous chapter’s discussion on autonomy, where after a participant has experienced certain satisfaction or enrichment in community art, he or she may eventually be able to share or guide other through similar experiences.

**Educative Experience is Social**

Dewey (1938) explains that experiences are not private, but that it interpenetrates with the outside world. This means that external elements and people are part of the education process. Thus, the quality of the experience would include interactions with subject matter, hands-on dimension, and the exchanges with other students and teachers. Dewey therefore states that “education is essentially a social process” (p. 58). This would also mean that the educator, as “the most mature member of the group...has a peculiar responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of a community” (p. 58).

development (ZPD) was developed by Vygotsky to indicate “the region between what children already know and what they are capable of learning under guidance” (Schaffer, 2006)\(^\text{122}\). Though it was never explicated in depth by Vygotsky, the concept drew wide attention. Therefore, subsequent scholars formulated further details to address the criticism that it disregards the individuality of the child in favour of cultural and social context of learning, and that its mechanism and process remains vague. The concept of scaffolding was proposed by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), upon a laboratory experiment where they concluded that, “[b]y offering support that is always contingent on what the child is achieving, the child is given considerable autonomy and yet also has the opportunity at every step of relying on assistance, this diminishing as the child increasingly takes over responsibility for completing the task” (Schaffer 2006). The concept’s wide adoption suggests that it is a highly appropriate explanation of the mechanism behind Vygotsky’s ZPD. Yet the mechanism was further refined as critiques pointed out that scaffolding overlooks the communication between the adult-child and that the ‘effectiveness of adults’ actions is dependent on the particular relationship they have with the child” (Schaffer 2006). The concept of guided participation was then introduced by Rogoff (1998) as “the process by which children develop through their involvement in the practices of their community”, a description of the mechanism that levels the status of the adult and child.
This includes re-establishing classroom structures and relationships. The role of the educator, or those who are mature plays an important role since such a structure that characterizes this “genuine community life” does not “organize itself in an enduring way purely spontaneously” (p. 56). Rather,

It requires thought and planning ahead. The educator is responsible for a knowledge of individuals and for a knowledge of subject-matter that will enable activities to be selected which lend themselves to social organization, an organization in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute something, and in which the activities in which all participate are the chief carrier of control (ibid.)

It is an education setting where the social exchanges resemble a “genuine community life” (ibid.). Taking into account that the themes of learning should be relevant to the students’ daily lives, the above essentially describes the community life envisioned by Putnam (2000) and McKnight & Block (2010), where people take an active part in civic life and responsibilities. Embedded in this environment of social learning are the processes of socialization informed by theories of social psychology. Since community art is a collaborative endeavour, Dewey’s concept of the social learning experience, which in many respects are shared by Freire, is highly applicable.

Compatibility of Freire and Dewey

The theories of Dewey and Freire shares significant agreement and presents no fundamental contradictions that would prohibit parallel or integrated application. Four points of similarities are highlighted. First, both authors agree that learning is a social process where the teacher and students learn together. Second, the teacher, as the more mature person, in life and in learning, is responsible for guiding the learning process in a way that is suitable to the students. Third, the goal of learning is both the generation of knowledge plus the passion and ability to continue learning. Finally, Dewey addresses the importance of both the immediately satisfying nature of the

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123 These points are highlighted from the above discussion:
1. Experience is educative and can be assessed by its immediate effect of satisfaction and its long term influence on people.
2. The task of the educator is to plan and guide the experience to expand and deepen the knowledge of the student in a relevant way.
3. The educator must also plan, guide and be a part of a learning community in interaction where the contributions and responsibilities of the learning are shared.
educative experience as well as its long term enriching effect. Even though Freire pays no attention to immediate satisfaction, the intellectual process he describes satisfies Dewey’s idea of experiences that are satisfying.

The findings of this analysis is similar to those by Betz (1992) and Deans (1999), who also demonstrate that Freire and Dewey agree on the nature and source of knowledge and the central role of experience. This examination of the basic elements of Dewey’s pedagogy concludes that it is compatible with the pedagogy of the oppressed, highlighting the further application of Dewey’s overall theories in the understanding of the role of the community artist.

It is the author’s opinion that the only significant diverging point is that Freire’s method consists of dialogue in reflection of action in everyday lives, whereas Dewey urges for experience to be part of the education. Jackson (1998) explains Dewey’s view that intellectual activities focus “more on problems whose source lies elsewhere and whose solution promises to be of maximal value when put to use in future contexts” (Jackson, p. 51). It is perhaps clearer to say that while Freire sees education as mostly an intellectual activity, Dewey sees a role for both artistic and intellectual activities in generating the educative experience. As such, Dewey theory of art and pedagogy should prove more applicable to the understanding of community art.

Analysis and integration

This section is an extensive analysis and integration of Dewey’s overall theories on art and education with the theories discussed so far to extrapolate guidelines for the role of the community artist in the work of facilitation.

A note on the application of Dewey, though he writes mostly about artist and audience in the conventional relationship of the maker (artist) and the perceiver (audience) of art, he nevertheless expresses that “It is not so easy in the case of the perceiver and appreciator to understand the intimate union of doing and undergoing as it is in the case of the maker” (Dewey, 2005, p. 52). This view is employed here to support that

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124 The word satisfaction is used here instead of enjoyment since overcoming difficulty can be painful.
125 The two authors third point is not addressed in this dissertation, which is role of education in effecting wider social change.
people should not simply perceive, but rather engage in the act of making. Therefore, in the following discussion, the ‘artist’ will also apply to participants of community art, who are guided to an experience comparable to the artist who makes.

Also, the term ‘expression’ is not limited to the emotional expression, but includes the manipulation of ideas, form and body that a person expresses.

While a full analysis of the aspects of the role of the community artist will be provided at the end, it would help the reader to recognize an orientation that begins from the inward looking to an ‘interpenetration’ of self with the external environment. This orientation is informed by the pedagogy of Dewey (1938) discussed above. This view is also compatible with Dissanayake’s (2014) primary and secondary function of art, from affecting internal psychological states to the building of social bonds through an increasingly intensive engagement with the world. Csikszentmihalyi’s work provides another basis for triangulating the following guiding lines. As the reader will see, the categorizations below are heavily influenced by the numerous parallels between Dewey’s experience and the conditions of flow as explained by Csikszentmihalyi.

**Senses**

At the very basic, production and perception in the arts depends upon the participant’s ability to perceive, enabled through the “organs through which the live creature participates directly in the on-goings of the world about him” (Dewey, 2005, p. 22). Moreover, it is not senses in isolation, which is often the assumption under the separation of disciplines or expertise in the education system, but the senses working in relation with one another; otherwise, “nothing is perceived” (Ibid., p. 175). Jackson further explained that Dewey’s point of the totality of our perceptual field. Among the most important of these are the interminglings [sic] of the senses working in harmony—the coordination of eye and hand, of sight and sound, of taste and touch, and so forth” (Jackson, p. 59)

Dissanayake’s observation of babies’ multisensory exploration of the world clarifies this point that the “interminglings” of senses are natural to human, instead of being an advance skill (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 102-104).
It is only through a hands-on experience that the senses are engaged, and that contact with the world external to the individual is directly made. This is the basis to which Dissanayake made her point of manipulation of the natural world. Although hands-on-ness is not stated as a prerequisite to experiencing flow, it constitutes an important point where the skillful person’s actions through their bodies and tools seem to operate without their conscious control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1991).

Similar to the artist, who is “not only especially gifted in powers of execution but in unusual sensitivity to the qualities of things” (Dewey, 2005, p. 49), community artists should attain themselves such skill and maturity in production and perception, and be able to guide people experiencing theirs. It would be more effective for community artists to engage multiple senses, or multiple methods of engagement of the same sense of the participants.

Concentration in the Doing and Undergoing

The experience of collaborative art making has such wide variety to its depth that must be explored with the fullest of concentration. Jackson (1998) summarized Dewey’s (2005) description of the effect of this immersion, that “when we are fully immersed in experience, its components so interpenetrate one another that we lose all sense of separation between self, object, and event” (Jackson, p. 3).

There is no doubt that concentration is important\(^{126}\). However, there is one kind of breakage of concentration that often goes unchallenged by teachers, artists, parents, community works, researchers and assessors in all kinds of activities, it is the question “can you explain to me what you are doing?” The author has observed on numerous occasions how Exist, Grad and Evelyna dismiss this question immediately when participants are asked this question by observers during an activity. It was also observed in trainings for the facilitation of community art that the interviewees would often hold off responding to well-meant inquiries until a natural break in the activity.

\(^{126}\) Dewey’s idea of the immersion of doing and undergoing, artistic and aesthetic and production and perception was discussed in chapter 4. The importance of designing an activity and a physical and social environment that enables concentration for extended periods was discussed in chapter 5 based on Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow.
Chapter 7 – Community Artist

Jackson, citing other writers and examples to illustrates Dewey’s (2005) explanation of why participants of community art should not be interrupted to explain or describe their immediate action:

such a description can only be offered proleptically; we can speak of it only after the fact. As soon as we begin to offer a description of the situation we are in, we have exited that situation (by transforming it into an object) and entered another one (Jackson, p. 17)

There are two results to such an interruption. First, if a person is unable to exit his or her concentration to provide an explanation, they are either seen as not having ‘learnt’ anything, or that the activity has failed to ‘teach’ anything. Second, a person is able to provide a response that satisfies the questioner because the concentration, often painstakingly built, has been broken. Jackson further elaborated Dewey’s point that it is when something problematic arises in the experience that the person will pause to reflect on what has just transpired, to “isolate this or that element within experience so that [one] might better deal with the situation as a whole” (Jackson, p. 3).

Increasing Challenge and Feedback

Why and how is concentration sustained? Dewey’s point is shared by Csikszentmihalyi that people will be engaged when a task’s challenge matches their skill, and that they are able to receive or internally derive feedback and standards that guide their progress. To both authors (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, Dewey, 2005), art making is an activity that can provide a great breadth and depth of challenges.

In general, pleasure and pain are normal conditions that one undergoes when facing a challenge, but the experiences are ultimately enriching as challenges are a process of “reconstruction” (Dewey, 2005, p. 41). Reconstructions not only occur intellectually, where the contents of an artwork may challenge one’s values, but also formally, in the ways that the senses are engaged aesthetically, such as introduction of dissonance in colour use or music pitch and tone.

127 Csikszentmihalyi (1991) also had similar observations in the reluctance of mechanics, chefs, athletes or musicians in action who are suddenly asked to explain their work.
128 The purposeful breakage of concentration can also be used constructively to help participants exit overwhelming psychologically states.
Difficulties encountered in the production and perception of art, provided that they are derived “from the work itself and are not just intrusions from the outside” (Jackson, 1998, p. 50), actually benefits the individual. Therefore, artists and audiences are and will continue to be rewarded with newer works that challenge through expansion and intensification of their experience. For these benefits to come about, “[t]he perceiver as well as artist has to perceive, meet, and overcome problems; otherwise, appreciation is transient and overweighted with sentiment” (Dewey, 2005, p. 138). The work cannot be overly challenging in that it is beyond perception, unable to be met or overcame, as experienced by some audience members in the opening performances of plays by Samuel Beckett, or the Sensation exhibition of 1997. Similarly, works may be so unchallenging as to be boring, such as repeated visits to a permanent exhibition or watching reruns of The Sound of Music every Christmas.

How is this balance set? If a work is only intended to be experienced by the maker alone, one can set the challenge according to one’s own capacities. This is true for artists of any skill level. However, if the work is intended for an audience in addition to oneself, a successful challenge cannot be set without sufficient knowledge of the audience. This point echoes the discussion of ‘specialness’ based on Dissanayake’s work, that it is relatively rare to have artworks that are satisfying in its ‘specialness’ and challenge to a wide range of audience.

This explanation of the balance of challenge and ability in appreciation and perception is similar to the matching of skills and challenges explained by Csikszentmihalyi (1997), who provides a graph that detail the various psychological states according to the level of skills and challenges in an activity\(^{129}\). There are also obvious parallels with Dissanayake’s concept of ‘accessibility coupled with strikingness’, a point to be further discussed.

**Perception and Re-Making of Meaning**

Just as forms are reconstructed, so are meanings. Dewey (2005) explains that perception is more than recognition, which is only an identification of certain meaning that is already made in the past. Perception is a “process consisting of a series of
responsive acts that accumulate toward objective fulfilment”, requiring one to “plunge into” the subject-matter (p. 53).

Perception is a reconstruction of forms and meanings that challenges the artist and audience to widen and deepen their understanding. Recognition, Jackson explained, is functional, directed for customary purposes (Jackson, p. 60). As a result, perception is “cut short when there is recognition” (ibid.)\textsuperscript{130}. Dewey explained that recognition only touches superficially the “shell about objects” (Dewey, 2005, p. 104), and furthered that [f]amiliarity induces indifference, prejudice blinds us; conceit looks through the wrong end of a telescope and minimizes the significance possessed by objects in favor [sic] of the alleged importance of the self. (ibid.)

Therefore, an important function of the art is to inspire perception, to challenge humans by throwing off the covers that hide the expressiveness of experienced things; it quickens us from the slackness of routine and enables us to forget ourselves by finding ourselves in the delight of experiencing the world about us in its varied qualities and forms. It intercepts every shade of expressiveness found in objects and orders them in a new experience of life. (ibid.)

Art draws one to perceive and be affected to reconstruct one’s understanding of the world, to imagine and create new meanings\textsuperscript{131}. When people interact with the world in ways that enables them to have an *experience*, they find satisfaction and meanings\textsuperscript{132}.

\textsuperscript{130} This is a point shared by Gombrich. “People who have acquired some knowledge of art history are sometimes in danger of falling into a similar trap. When they see a work of art they do not stay to look at it, but rather search their memory for the appropriate label…I should like to help to open eyes, not to loosen tongues” (Gombrich, 1995, p.37).

\textsuperscript{131} Jackson explains Dewey’s concept of meaning (significance or value) of objects as follows: “Extrinsic meaning...refers to what an object or event signifies. It has to do with the subservient and instrumental role that the object or event plays in the attainment of some end...Intrinsic meaning...inheres within the object or event itself. It intrinsically characterizes the thing experienced...Intrinsic meaning is consummatory [sic] and final. It is meaning enjoyed for its own sake, as opposed to having a practical or utilitarian force...Those situations or experiences in which such meaning predominates Dewey calls aesthetic” (Jackson, 28-29). How do objects or events have meanings? Jackson explained that objects have a history or a context that stands out in one’s mind, while events become an object when it stands out in one’s mind, becoming something unique that one can speak of. These objects are associated by how people perceive them. The meanings, significance and values from previous experience can be expanded or deepened. Jackson calls this “the inexhaustible meaning of things” (Jackson, 24), citing Dewey’s explanation that that “[a]ny experience, however trivial in its first appearance, is capable of assuming an indefinite richness of significance by extending its range of perceived connections” (Democracy and Education, Dewey, 225, cited in Jackson, 32).
Perception and meanings are not necessarily shared by others. Since perceptions and meanings are based on imaginary processes of association, “empirically”, they are also irrelevant to both truth and error; they exist for the most part in another dimension, whose nature may be suggested by reference to imagination, fancy, reverie, affection, love and hate, desire, happiness and misery (Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 235, cited in Jackson, p. 65).

As a result, Jackson explained that “perceptions must be tested...before we can attest to their truth or falsity beyond the perceptual field of the person experiencing them” (Jackson, p. 65).

In this sense, challenges and meanings function similarly. When challenges or meanings are created for oneself, they need only relate to one’s perceptual zone. But when they are intended to be shared by others, they will need to fit others’ skills and perceptual zone. This point is fully echoed by Dissanayake’s proposal of the naturalist criteria for aesthetic quality. Her criteria of ‘accessibility coupled with strikingness’ and ‘tangible relevance’ agree with Dewey that the artwork has to be challenging content-wise and form-wise without being inconceivable, but also ‘evocatively resonating’ so that the viewer do not simply recognize, but are actually engaged in perception.

The importance of plunging into an experience so as to achieve perception beyond recognition echoes the previous chapter’s discussion of the relinquishing of autonomy when participating in art. The artistic device of ‘manipulation of expectation’ or ‘shock’ was explained to be able to achieve Dewey’s idea of perception. A successful application of this device operates first based on the artist’s understanding of the perceptual zone of the viewers. This would enable i) an effective misguidance or suspension of understanding, resulting in ii) a satisfying and not overly surprising final artistic application that is within viewers’ perceptual zone. It is delivered timely through

132 Csikszentmihalyi (1991) also concluded that a person can find satisfaction and fulfilment “[i]f a person learns to enjoy and find meaning in the ongoing stream of experience, in the process of living itself” (19).
an appropriate (artistic) rhetoric so that challenge will be savoured and absorbed, lest it is too easily ‘understood’ or ‘recognized’ so that the skill of perception is not evoked.

Although the above aspects contain an inward dimension, they are concurrently in interaction with the external world. Their significance to community art, where people create art in the company of and in collaboration with others, will continue to be elucidated as this analysis turns to Dewey’s explanation of the wider social significance of arts, and his proposal of the role of the critic as a suitable guide for the role of the community artist. The following figures demonstrate three stages of an activity facilitated by Evelyne where the artistic challenge and creation of meaning are tied together (Figure 7.1a, 7.1b, 7.1c).

Figure 7.1a
Participants complete outline of full body self-portrait with limited details.

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 7.1b
Participants continue the elaboration of detail. Progress is presented during this session to share and affirm progress.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Exercising and guiding perception

Dewey (2005) introduces the role of the critic whose task is comparable to that of the educator. For those in the position to provide critiques, Dewey reminds that it is more important, yet harder to guide people in thoughtful inquiry.

Dewey (2005) explains that new artistic expression emerges from new and unexpressed mode of life experiences and laments that poor critics who resist new movements in art are in effect resisting “new mode of interaction of the live creature with his surroundings” (p. 304). Thus the critic must connect his or her perception to the wider

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133 A basic criteria for being a critic, is the refinement of his or her senses. No amount of theories and knowledge can substitute “obtuseness in perception” (Dewey, 2005, 298).
134 Bell (1982) also expressed similarly that perception is the basis of experiencing aesthetic emotion, that while one can be instructed to know what to look for in painting, it is up to the person to be able to perceive it.
human experience, otherwise, they easily fall into the fallacy of reductionism, passing judgments based on irrelevant or narrow criteria\textsuperscript{135}.

However, the wider surrounding bears only one aspect of the expressed meanings, works of art are also personal. As such, Dewey (2005) reminds that even when appreciating single works, the critic should be knowledgeable of other works of the artist as a frame of reference.

It is not easy for critics or artists trained in the traditions of art to temporarily set aside their wealth of artistic knowledge to appreciate the works of the untrained. Yet this is of utmost importance in community art. The work of Peter Elbow (2009) explains how Dewey’s metaphor of ‘plunging-in’ in the task of perception operates.

Elbow’s explanation of the one who doubts new ideas, is similar to Dewey’s description of the poor critic who resists understanding the developing general human experience and its resulting new movements in the arts\textsuperscript{136}. Though the method of doubting has its strengths, Elbow points out that often

\begin{quote}
we cannot see what’s good in someone else’s idea (or in our own!) until we work at believing it. When an idea goes against current assumptions and beliefs—or if it seems alien, dangerous, or poorly formulated—we often cannot see any merit in it (Elbow, 2009, p. 2)\textsuperscript{137}
\end{quote}

Elbow (2009) provides a systematic elaboration of believing as a methodology that resonates with Dewey (2005). He explains that testing new ideas by believing is a disciplined practice of trying to be as welcoming or accepting as possible to every idea we encounter, not just listening to views different from our own and holding back from arguing with them, not just trying to restate them without bias...but actually \textit{trying} to believe them (Elbow, 2009, p. 2)

\textsuperscript{135} Reductionism oversimplifies the work, isolating “some constituent of the work of art” and then judging the whole according to the “terms of this single isolated element” (Dewey, 2005, 315).

\textsuperscript{136} “By trying hard to doubt ideas, we can discover hidden contradictions, bad reasoning, or other weaknesses in them” (Elbow, 2009, 1).

\textsuperscript{137} Elbow (2009) connects the tendency for groups to doubt unfamiliar ideas to the social phenomenon of \textit{groupthink} that functions through an in/out-group dynamic.
It is “[o]nly after we’ve managed to inhabit a different way of thinking will our currently invisible assumptions become visible to us” (Elbow, 2006, p. 18). Thus, in order to perceive the meanings and challenges embedded in the artworks of others, one has to plunge into them. As community artist commenting on a participant’s work, the approach of doubting would be to point out the shortcomings of the artwork based on external criteria. By believing and plunging into the work based on participants’ individual or shared perceptual zone, new criteria for assessing artworks will surface. This is especially important in understanding the works of the unspecialized, as they are likely unaware of the contemporary artistic trends, making their works seem alien or poorly formulated. By gaining the frame of references of participants, community artists would be able to discover new ways of expressions and ideas, which may be nurtured on its own terms or guided towards other perceptual zone.

While community artists are usually observed to be more ‘believing’, meaning that they approach participants’ works on their respective terms, they sometimes follow up with ‘doubting’, meaning that they also introduce external criteria in providing wider perspectives. In this sense, ‘doubting’ is important as it informs how the artwork might be misunderstood and how the divergent perception might be bridged. This is illustrated in example of the collaborative mural in chapter 6, where towards its completion, participants welcomed advice in making the mural more ‘beautiful’ according to commonly accepted standards.

Facilitating communicative exchange

In the context of community art, the nurturing of personal expression towards forms and meanings perceptible by fellow participants and external audiences is no less than the bridging of the lived experience of people and groups (Figure 7.2). Dewey (2005) unambiguously furthers his view of the moral function of art.

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138 Elbow described methodological doubting as the rhetoric of propositions, and methodological believing as the rhetoric of experience. He identified that learning through roleplaying and experiential learning as samples of methodological believing, where in Dewey’s tradition, educators “set up an experience that leads the learner to create the idea herself” (2009, p. 10).
Dewey (2005) explains that art exercises its office as “a remaking of the experience of the community in the direction of greater order and unity” (p. 81). He believes that art is more universal than the multitude of mutually unintelligible languages that has to be acquired (p. 335). He describes the process as a melting away of barriers that “is far more efficacious than the change effected by reasoning, because it enters directly into attitude” (p. 334). As such, Dewey believes that “in the end, works of art are the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that can occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience” (p. 105).

Dewey (2005) further explains that art “effect a broadening and deepening of our own experience, rendering it less local and provincial as far as we grasp, by their means, the attitudes basic in other forms of experience” (p. 332), and at their best they bring about an organic blending of attitudes characteristic of the experience of our own age with that of remote peoples. For the new features are not mere decorative additions but enter into the structure of works of art and thus occasion a wider and fuller experience (p. 334).

Therefore, similar to his proposal of a moral imperative of the educator or mature person to develop the experience of the young, Dewey proposes that “the moral function of art”, and by extension those who create and present them, “is to remove prejudice, do away with the scales that keep the eye from seeing, tear away the veils due to wont and custom, perfect the power to perceive” (p. 325).
Regarding this claim, the author believes that while the limitations of languages identified are valid, and that the lived and sensory experience of art does have the potential of connecting human across cultures\(^{139}\), the language of art is not without specifics and obstacles for it to be described as a process of “complete and unhindered communication” (p. 105). However, it is exactly the specifics and obstacles naturally rooted in the maker’s experience that challenge and expand the perceivers’ experience. Therefore, it is when both the artist produces and audience perceives in sincerity, that prejudices and the unfamiliar are genuinely confronted and possibly overcame. Within community art, the overcoming of prejudice can occur among participants, between artists and participants, and more indirectly, between participants and non-participating audiences\(^{140}\).

This discussion merges the role of critic with that of the educator. What Dewey (2005) proposes require something more than adherence to pedagogical instructions; it demands something of the attitude and character of the community artist. What are the characters and basic beliefs that characterizes the community artist and their relationship with participants? How does it inform their designing and handling of challenges, meaning making, guidance in perception and communicative exchanges? This analysis continues by integrating Dewey’s work with an elaboration on Freire’s (2000) views.

**Foundation for personal character and relationship**

Expression in art springs naturally out of lived experience. Meanings are given, or specialness identified, because they stand out from the ordinary stream of experience of the maker. Things stand out because it matters to the person, thus, “[c]raftsmanship to be artistic in the final sense must be ‘loving’; it must care deeply for the subject matter upon which skill is exercised” (Dewey, 2005, p. 48)\(^{141}\). How does this apply to the context of community art? The pedagogical writing of Freire (2000) is applied here to illuminate on this.

\(^{139}\) Davies, 2012, 55.

\(^{140}\) As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Freire is often credited in inspiring dialogical art projects where people are facilitated in critical discourse. What Dewey’s view offers here is not a rejection of the use of art in facilitating critical discourse, but to point out that art is specialized in facilitating a different level of exchange.

\(^{141}\) Dewey (2005) provided clarification that “the war dance and the harvest dance of the savage do not issue from within except there be an impending hostile raid or crops that are to be gathered. To generate the indispensable excitement there must be something at stake something momentous and uncertain-like the outcome of a battle or the prospects of a harvest. A sure thing does not arouse us emotionally” (66). This was expressed in strikingly similar ways by Dissanayake (1995) who claims that humans find meanings in things important to their survival, and behave in according ways that enhances their chances of survival.
Freire (2000) explains that the knowledge that emerges from dialogue is generated together by all involving parties; thus all involved must have the *humility* in recognizing individual limitations\(^\text{142}\). This dialogue is no less than a “naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation”, as such it cannot exist “in the absence of a profound *love* for the world and for people” (p. 90, emphasis by the author). Freire explains that the two parties are “jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (p. 80)\(^\text{143}\). Applied to the community arts, the community artist and the participants are partners, “imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power” over this process (p. 75), a trust first demonstrated by the community artists (p. 91).

In addition to this concept of *love*, Freire further demands *faith*, as explained that

> [d]ialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human...the "dialogical man" believes in others even before he meets them face to face (p. 90-91)

Again, this *faith* is applied to both community artists and participants, and among participants. However, the parties of dialogue/artistic exchange – teacher/community artist and student/participants – must not hold *faith* naively. Instead, they must also recognize that alienation is equally likely. Nevertheless,

> [f]ar from destroying [their] faith in the people, however, this possibility strikes [them] as a challenge to which [they] must respond. [They are] convinced that the power to create and transform, even when thwarted in concrete situations, tends to be reborn (Freire, 2000, p. 91)\(^\text{144}\)

Freire (2000) firmly believes that it is only with this foundation of *love*, *faith* and *humility*, that a climate of mutual trust can be established, “which leads the dialoguers

\(^{142}\) As a reminder, the widespread application of Freire (2000) supports the interpretation of ‘dialogue’ as the artistic exchange that occurs within community art and artistic engagement in communities in general.

\(^{143}\) The flow of knowledge and information is no longer unidirectional, “the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach” (Freire, 2000, 80). Under this arrangement, the effort of the teacher needs to “coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization” (Ibid., 75).

\(^{144}\) Before proceeding further, it is highlighted that that Freire’s conceptualization of alienation as a ‘challenge’ to which one must respond suggests that within community art, it is not only form and meaning that are challenged and reconstructed, but also social relationship. Freire’s concept of love and faith is echoed in the theories of belonging and self-expansion discussed in the previous chapters, and is proposed here to be compatible with Dewey’s picture of the educator and critic.
into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world” (p. 91). Otherwise, dialogue is but a struggle between “those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming—between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them” (ibid., p. 88).

Such an attitude would by nature reject a pedagogy where “the teachers...can manipulate the students” (68-69), and that “it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another” (89). Instead, teachers would submit to the belief that their “thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the students thinking. The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them” (p. 77).

When applied to community art where both the artists and participants are engaged in making, the above discussion can be expressed as a guideline for the community artist as follows:

- The community artists’ own love for the participants and the world, and their faith that the participants also share this love, leads to a trust that participants’ contributions to the expression are valuable, and the humility in the realization that no single piece of artwork or single method of making provides the final artistic experience. This is true between community artist and participants as well as among participants.

**Summary and Conclusion: Uniqueness of experience and maturity of community artists**

The above analysis can be summed up into three concurrent objectives of the community artist in the facilitation of a collaborative art making process that is at the same time artistic and social:

A) It is the facilitation of the reconstruction of forms and meanings through challenges.

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145 This was first formulated more generally as “One’s own love for the world and other people, and the faith that others also share this love, leads to a trust that others’ contributions to the dialogue are valuable, and the humility in the realization that one’s own contribution is not complete”.

146 Care and concern.

147 Materials and subject matter engaged.
B) It is the facilitation of connecting and validating the reconstructed with self, collaborating and co-working partners, and potential external audiences.

C) The process must be upheld by a strive towards mutual trust founded upon love, faith and humility.

These three objectives must be strived for in concurrence.

The issue of maturity previously discussed is raised here again to highlight the personal nature of the facilitation in community art. What is proposed as the foundation for the community artist is something that conventional professional trainings cannot adequately provide: personal experience in the artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment through collaborative art making.

All of the interviewees described such personal experiences, some were swept away more dramatically while others were gradually awaken in no less intense ways. The dimensions of their personal experiences include:

i) Artistic, social and the combination of its reconstructions/challenges personally overcame

ii) Artistic, social and the combination of its meaning made, connected and validated with others

iii) The wholeness the experience and long term impact as a part of one's life

These are the dimensions of personal experiences that make up the interviewees’ maturity, enabling them to facilitate community art. The three dimensions are interconnected and possibly not exhaustive of the experience offered.

Maturity as stated above is paralleled to the stages of autonomy explained in the previous chapters. A participant becomes increasingly experienced in the three dimensions above are also increasingly able to access and generate artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment. Yet there is no ‘complete’ experience. The seven interviewees, along with every single community artist, are unique and works uniquely based on their own experience and maturity.
Case Studies

Before the two cases are provided, three hypothetical situations are provided to illustrate how form and meaning are reconstructed in collaborative art making (see chart 7.1).

Participants are challenged in the reconstruction of forms (colour, vocalization, body gestures and etc.) and meanings (politics, religious, gender, culture and etc.). The artworks created are evidence of and symbolic of the artistic and social challenges overcome or reconstructions achieved. This chart demonstrates objectives A and B discussed above. Objective C, the foundation of love, faith and humility is demonstrated in the following chart.

The result of a posture of trust or the lack of highly affects one’s attitude and motivations. The explanation Freire (2000) provides for the posture of trust founded upon love, faith and humility, though somewhat imprecise, is pervasive within the theoretic framework established. Parallels are found in Dissanayake’s (2014, 2000, 1995) ethological view of the social importance of art, Putnam (2000) idea of general reciprocation, McKnight & Block’s (2010) idea of the abundant community and the Connector and Dewey’s (2000, 1938) writings on art and pedagogy. It can be interpreted as being embedded in the theories of the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), the model of self-expansion (Aron & McLaughlin, 2001) and the social dimension of the model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

These two charts only provide a snapshot of reconstructions/challenges to highlight its multiple dimension; they do not illustrate the stages over time. The two case studies illustrated in chart 7.3 and chart 7.4 identify multiple aspects of participation developed.
### Chart 7.1: Three hypothetical situations for reconstructions/challenge in form and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Reconstruction/Challenge</th>
<th>Participants’ ways of overcoming (examples not mutually exclusive)</th>
<th>Examples of social values derived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning a new song</td>
<td>The melody is not easily grasped</td>
<td>Learn the melody</td>
<td>Self-image constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sing it as best as one can</td>
<td>Persistence demonstrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stand nearer those who can sing it</td>
<td>Learning from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Express the impossibility of grasping it within a reasonable time</td>
<td>Acknowledging and accepting limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composing a song together</td>
<td>A clash of colour occurs between 2 adjacent participants</td>
<td>X explains its meaning to Y, Y accepts</td>
<td>Expression, opening self to new perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y explains the disagreement to X, X accepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X and Y compromise on a new line that furthers the meaning</td>
<td>Expression, opening and internalizing new perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X and Y unable to compromise, creates a totally different line</td>
<td>Acknowledging and accepting limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting a mural</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use additional colour or forms to make them match better</td>
<td>Finding common ground and resolutions to conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Either person changes their colour completely</td>
<td>Opening self to new perspectives, surrendering to external values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain the clash</td>
<td>Acknowledging and accepting limitations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chart 7.2: Demonstration of objective C - the foundation of love, faith and humility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Reconstruction/Challenge</th>
<th>Posture of trust founded on love, faith and humility</th>
<th>Posture of mistrust without a foundation of love, faith and humility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning a new song</td>
<td>The melody is not easily grasped</td>
<td>I can learn this</td>
<td>I mastered this, I am better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The artist sees potential in me</td>
<td>The artist do not know my potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I can learn from others</td>
<td>I will be rejected if I seek help from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Once I learn this, it will turn out to be worthwhile</td>
<td>This is not worth learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composing a song together</td>
<td>A clash of colour occurs between 2 adjacent participants</td>
<td>X or Y believes the other person will listen to explanations</td>
<td>X or Y believes the other person will not listen to explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X and Y believes a compromise is possible</td>
<td>X and Y believes a compromise is not possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X and Y believes a respectful outcome can be achieved if a compromise is not possible</td>
<td>X and Y does not believes a respectful outcome can be achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Either party willing to compromise, trusting the view of the other to be valuable</td>
<td>Both parties not willing to compromise, seeing own view to be more valuable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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It was proposed that in community art, participants are continuously engaged through progressive feedbacks and challenges, and should increasingly generate their own feedback and challenges\footnote{A discussion and chart of the various combinations of challenge and skill arriving at various states was provided in chapter 5.}. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and Dewey (1938) share the criticism of rigid curriculums that are only suitable to some students, with the rest never experiencing conditions of flow. Community art supposedly overcomes this problem by keeping group sizes manageable and by adopting a flexible curriculum. The community artist should design activities:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Where most people are in Flow, Arousal and Control and where no one feels Apathy, Boredom, Worry or Anxiety\footnote{While flow is the optimal experience where one is concentrated and happy, arousal and control are “almost as good as flow” because one is concentrated but not happy, and happy but not concentrated in the latter (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, 140).}
  \item Where multiple skills are accessed so that more people can experience flow
  \item With several stages of challenge over time to decrease the likelihood of people being stuck in a certain condition
  \item Where participants can grasp how challenges are set and feedbacks are generated
\end{itemize}

Example A is a day-long music composition activity to be concluded with a performance. Pete was invited by a local NGO to facilitate the workshop in a migrant worker housing estate in Shenzhen, China. The participants were mostly male in their twenties to thirties, some of whom were known to be musical. The workshop and rehearsal was held before and after lunch under a total of seven hours, followed by an after dinner performance. Pete was assisted by a translator between English and Mandarin, and by the current author as a music assistant.

Example B is a 3 hour afternoon session. Evelyna was invited by a tertiary institution in Shanghai to train professional and student social workers to use expressive arts in their work. The activity was held before any explanations were provided so that the participants may focus in the activity itself. Evelyna’s team included one visual artist and one multidisciplinary artist with current author as observer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Pete and Team Activity</th>
<th>Perceived at this point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrival NA</td>
<td>At least they come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interest in singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First impression within expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rhythm and singing games/exercise Easy, various levels provided</td>
<td>Average with some more and some less motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Above average, some experienced singers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Within expectation, no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Entire group brainstormed lyrics about &quot;How would you describe this housing estate?&quot;, Melody by Pete Relatively easy</td>
<td>Improved, some less motivated people provided ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lyric writing skills identified in a few others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Within expectation, no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Learning together the song-in-progress Slightly harder</td>
<td>Improved, only isolated individuals did not sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group is generally capable of learning a song and singing it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly challenging, the next item to be less demanding to provide respite and affirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A simple bridge was created by Pete with suggestions from participants. Relatively easy</td>
<td>Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Within modified expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Practicing the song-in-progress Relatively easy</td>
<td>Increased as song comes together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Within modified expectation, progress consolidated, ready for higher challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Divided into groups of 4, each group write 4 lines about daily experience. Composed to be performed as a rap. Harder, collaborative in rhythmic composition and writing lyrics</td>
<td>Improved, involved almost all the remaining unmotivated people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Specialization emerged, new skills identified including rhythm, poetry, leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups were formed organically to maintain motivation, resulted in imbalanced singing skills. Result slightly beyond modified expectation, motivation spreading and increasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rehearsal with lyric sheets and cues Harder artistically to sing everything, and socially to collaborate among teams</td>
<td>Improved, group verses created ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Narrower range of skill required at this point. Singing skill more visible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Within modified expectation. Increased motivation enables demand of higher mastery. Music accompaniment to include clearer cues for singers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rehearsal towards no lyric sheets and less cues Details are grasped, difficult to perfect</td>
<td>High motivation and focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Effort spent on weaker aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Within modified expectation. Rehearsal shortened to lower tension. One musician assigned to sing with a group with difficulty in entering at the correct moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Performance Song is mastered, difficulty lies in public delivery Stable, anxiety</td>
<td>Challenged met sufficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 7.3: Example A - Increasing challenged facilitated by community artist by Pete
Note: Read chart in sequence from 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2B...ending with 10D, 10E
## Chapter 7: Community Artist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>A - Activity</th>
<th>B - Difficulty</th>
<th>C - Motivation</th>
<th>D - Skill</th>
<th>E – Artist reflection and resulting action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrival after lunch</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>At least they come</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>First impression within expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rhythm and voice games</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Average, excited</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Within expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Storytelling of 'Blue Stone' written by Jimmy Liao, invited participants to modify, give details and to mimic sound effects (Figure 7.3a)</td>
<td>Easy, mimicry of sound fun but slightly challenging socially</td>
<td>Average, focused, not everyone contributed</td>
<td>Able to immerse into the story</td>
<td>Within expectation, minor modification in story details according to contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Storytelling phase 2, individually conceive a treasured blue personal item</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Improved, focused</td>
<td>Able to immerse into the story</td>
<td>Within expectation, original story ending able to embrace all personal contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Painting individually on paper their own 'stone' for 20 minutes, 'stone' personifying self. No talking. (Figure 7.3b)</td>
<td>Depending on willingness to face oneself. No request or hint for skills or 'beauty'</td>
<td>Mostly improved, some people unable to maintain focus</td>
<td>Self-reflection difficult to some. All willing to draw; symbolic and representational.</td>
<td>Within expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sharing of individual painting in group. Allowed to ask for clarification, but not allowed to provide 'counsel' (Figure 7.3c)</td>
<td>Depending on willingness to reveal oneself</td>
<td>Very willing to share</td>
<td>Willing to speak and share socially. Showed interests in others' painting.</td>
<td>Willingness to share deep feelings beyond expectations. Community artists facilitated the sharing and feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Collage creation. Individual must cut up own painting and combine with group mates on shared canvas to be further painted. Work must be negotiated together. Community artists participated as part of the group. (Figure 7.3d)</td>
<td>Artistically and socially difficult. No request or hint for skills or 'beauty'</td>
<td>Begin hesitantly but became highly focused</td>
<td>See below</td>
<td>See below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Collage creation aspect 1 – cutting</td>
<td>Difficult because participants able to perceive cutting as self transformation</td>
<td>High, frustration and hesitation</td>
<td>Some proceeded with reluctance</td>
<td>Within expectation. Community artists asked reflective questions when individuals get stuck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Collage creation aspect 2 - meaning and symbolism through content and composition</td>
<td>Integration of stories and 'selfs' difficult</td>
<td>High, much discussion</td>
<td>Much metaphors and symbolism emerged</td>
<td>Within expectation. Community artists asked reflective questions when groups get stuck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Collage creation aspect 3 – painting</td>
<td>Difficult, to be responsible for painting on a shared canvas, in some cases painting over other people's work</td>
<td>Begin hesitantly but became highly focused, a participant studying design took charge, which motivated others</td>
<td>Average (artistic challenge not emphasized). Design student provided tips and leadership which inspired others</td>
<td>Within expectation. Community artists asked simple questions such as, &quot;what should be the background colour&quot;, and started ideas to invite counterproposals. The proposals of the design student were presented to others for their input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Sharing of experience and reflection (Figure 7.3e)</td>
<td>Depending on willingness to reveal oneself</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ready to share, referred to visual elements and content of artwork in personal ways.</td>
<td>Slightly beyond expectation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Note: Read chart in sequence from 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2B...ending with 10D, 10E

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Chart 7.4: Example B - Increasing challenged facilitated by community artist by Evelyna
Chapter 7 – Community Artist

Figure 7.3a
Storytelling of ‘Blue Stone’ written by Jimmy Liao, invited participants to modify, give details and to mimic sound effects

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 7.3b
Painting individually on paper each person’s own ‘stone’ for 20 minutes, ‘stone’ personifying self. No talking

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 7.3c
Sharing of individual painting in group. Allowed to ask for clarification, but not allowed to provide ‘counsel’

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Figure 7.3d
Collage creation. Individuals must cut up their own paintings and combine with group mates on shared canvas to be further painted. Work must be negotiated together. Community artists participated as part of the group

Photo courtesy of Art for All

Figure 7.3e
Completed collage

Photo courtesy of Art for All

The cases demonstrate several aspects of the manipulation of reconstructions/challenges in community art activities. There are at least two main dimensions, artistic and social, but are often intertwined. The activity in example A required skills with melody, lyrics writing and rhythm, singing and etc. The activity in example B required skills with colour, composition, association, brush and scissor control and etc. The reconstructions/challenges in meaning include reflections of life decisions, sharing personal feelings in front of near strangers, collaboration, appreciating views of those with vastly different backgrounds and symbolic transformation of self.
Chapter 7 – Community Artist

The chart demonstrates that it is not necessary to stay in flow or for challenges to only increase based on several reasons. First, it is tiring to maintain flow, meeting challenges that require one’s full resources. Returning to Relaxation or Control can replenish energy. Second, returning to Relaxation or Control at appropriate moments can be affirming. Third, returning to Relaxation or Control can be an opportunity to introduce a different form of challenge.

Referring to the 3 objectives of the community artist, the charts demonstrate clearly objective 1, the facilitation of reconstruction and challenge. Objective 2 can be observed under column B that lists the difficulties of connection and validation through singing in front of others, collaborating with others and explaining one’s painting to others. Objective 3 is embedded and implied in column C under motivations that is partly a result of developing trust; too many shades to be generalized effectively.

Refinement of definition and application

This chapter completes the process of reconstructing the concept of community art by identifying the role of the community artist. Community art is where a gathering of people participates in facilitated collaborative art making aimed at increasing autonomy in generating artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment.
Conclusion

This dissertation is an investigation of the concept and practice of community art. The integration of literature and expert views has resulted in a revised understanding of community art. This conclusion summarizes the analysis of this investigation.

Review of existing studies and approaches

Existing studies on community art were compiled to propose five common characteristics of the practice, i) that its participants are people with meaningful associations, ii) it values participation beyond the providing of content, iii) its impact is delivered through both the process and product, iv) it is usually facilitated by an artist and v) its impact should be long lasting (Clements, 2011; Cleveland, 2002; Coutts & Jokela, 2008; Dewhurst, 2012; Dickson, 1995; Goldbard, 1993, 2006; Higgins, 2012; Krensky & Steffen, 2009; Lowe, 2000; Mulligan & Smith, 2010; Schwarzman and deNobriga, 1999). While this definition provides an idea of the basic criteria for identifying community art, its specifics and objectives remain vague. Moreover, there is a lack of theoretical support from relevant disciplines that would explain why these criteria are in place.

Unlike the practice of public art that draws heavily on relevant disciplines such as politics, architecture, material and sociology to inform its practice, community art has not enjoyed a systematic study that would identify its frameworks, operations and impacts. This was observed in the panel discussions of four conferences of artistic engagement in communities in Hong Kong in the last few years, where the aforementioned perspectives were adopted even in discussions of community art.

To be sure, practice of community art certainly has a political or sociological dimension that would benefit from such a discussion. However, its own uniqueness is unfortunately unrecognized and subsumed. An assessment of studies of Lily Yeh’s projects, such as the mosaic at the Dandelion School in Beijing and the youth theatre group at the Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia, illustrates such an oversight. First, Yeh’s choices of art forms - the method of tile application in mosaic-making and the theatre participation - were determined in order to facilitate a specific type of
participation. Secondly, embedded in the artistic participation are the personal and social processes that are facilitated. To understand Yeh’s work strictly through the lense of public art would overlook her work at the interpersonal level through hands-on participation in art. Therefore, this dissertation begins with the hypothesis that community art’s uniqueness lies in its operation at the interpersonal level through art.

A second aspect requiring clarification is between community art and relational art. It was identified that artistic engagement in communities, including public art, relational art, community art and other practices that continue to emerge, have developed to become significantly people-oriented. This trend is in large part driven by a resistance to an exclusive system of the arts that is commonly attributed to be upheld by galleries, conservatories, critics and curators. The practice of relational art seeks to make art part of everyday lives again by establishing new forms and aesthetics in socialization. As for community art, where ‘traditional’ art forms are primarily used, this dissertation proposes that this is achieved by removing the obstacles that has made the arts seem removed from everyday lives. An important difference between these two approaches lies in that whereas relational art sees human socialization as the art itself, community art facilitates collaborative art making where socialization is integral.

These aspects, the nature of traditional art and interpersonal dynamics, are not purely conceived as experimental fields in pursuit of art and aesthetics. Studies of community art clearly indicate that certain artistic and socialization process are considered preferable; that there are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ processes that leads to desirable and undesirable outcomes. Taking a step back, the question of how art bring out such outcomes is supported by studies and meta-studies of assessments of social impact of artistic engagement, which calls for a reinvestigation of possible agreement on the nature of art, intended impact, and the casual relationship between them.

Thus, the questions of this dissertation are A) what do community artists mean by art? B) What is the concept of community held by community artists who are actually

150 Within this dissertation, the word ‘traditional’ art is used to refer to forms that have had a long development, mostly the visual arts, dance, music and drama. See introduction for a full discussion of the term and its usage.

151 This claim is observed to be mostly applicable to artistic engagement in communities in general.
engaging individuals in a group? C) How does art function in this conceptualization of community? D) What is the role of the community artist?

**Methodology and data**

The qualitative method of constant comparison analysis is used in this interdisciplinary research. Existing literature and data from seven established community artists are analyzed and integrated in a continuous cycle to arrive at a coherent framework to understand community art and advance its theoretical framework. Different from studies that provide a general understanding of community art, the choice of the interviewees in this investigation is based on a theoretical sampling approach that matches knowledge gaps in existing studies. In other words, while existing studies might be considered more representative, this dissertation targets unexplored area that is hypothesized to be crucial to understanding community art.

An analysis of the interviews identified common views and characteristics. These were compiled according to the four research questions stated above. It is noted that the interviewees see art as first and foremost about the expression and the exercising of the full range of mental and physical processes. In their practices, traditions and techniques exist to enhance the experience of art. They believe that community is made up of people in interaction. Relationships and associations can be potentially built in any group of people. An important role of art in the community is to enable quality interaction among people and groups. The role of the community artist is to facilitate this process. Overall speaking, the interviewees enjoy and excel at working with people and believe that good art is a result of a good participation. They continue to develop their practice in order to facilitate better. Their personal experience and passion of art impacts and drives their practice.

This analysis was followed by an investigation of the theories that would support and deepen the interviewees’ views of art, community, its relationship and their role.

**Integration of theories**

Centered around the ethological perspective of art by Dissanayake, art is understood to have originated as a behaviour essential to human survival that continues to be relevant today. The behaviour of art is a hands-on and mental elaboration of form and meaning
that expresses and exercises survival-significant values. Its primary function lies in alleviating stress and generally improving psychological states. Beyond this psychological impact, the doing and work done facilitate social bonding in communal life that is also essential to survival. The implication is that everyone is able and should do art and take charge of his/her own elaboration or ‘making special’. The strength – also considered to be its weakness – of such a theory of art is that it connects art with everyday activities by blurring the boundaries between art and non-art. While this definition of art has clear social implications, a ground-up investigation of the community dimension is performed in order to construct an interdisciplinary understanding.

The vast and varied associations observed in the engagements of the community artists, combined with their views of community art, allows only the barest definition of community, that simply, community is made up of people in interaction.

Putnam’s (2000) concept of social capital and McKnight & Block’s (2010) concept of the abundant community forms a basis for understanding how individuals and groups in interaction form community. The concept of bonding and bridging social capital are complementary concepts in socialization that combine to build healthy and inclusive associations, culminating in communities that take charge to recognize challenges and their power in meeting them.

The theory of the need to belonging and others that describe social dynamics form the basis of understanding how individuals and groups interact. In addition to substantiating that humans inherently prefer social interaction, prejudice of out-groups is an important social dynamic that explains how bonding social capital can become inward-looking, a seemingly inescapable human tendency.

Hence, in retrospect, contrary to a lack of definition, a definition of community that is void of rich geographic and sociocultural conditions allows the artists to facilitate an environment where individuals can behave beyond their usual identity and nurture new associations. This valuing of the possibility of association over judging what is or is not a community echoes the blurred boundaries between art and non-art; that the community artists are primarily concerned with possibilities of people becoming more
Conclusion

Having built a framework to understand the human dynamics that make up community, the investigation turns to human motivations in collaborative art activities, providing interdisciplinary support for social dimension of art. Dissanayake (1995, 2000, 2014) suggests that art making is at the same time satisfying, or intrinsically interesting, and of instrumental importance. The intrinsically interesting nature of art making is supported by Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow, or optimal experience, which explained in psychological terms the mental states during art making identified by Dissanayake. Combined with the need to belong and the theory of social flow that demonstrates socialization to also be satisfying or intrinsically interesting, this dissertation argues that collaborative art making in community art is theoretically an intrinsically interesting activity.

However, in reality, there are obstacles that hinder people from being artistic and being social. Drawing further on theories of motivations, it is observed that community artist overcome these obstacles in several ways. By offering an experience of social belonging, a feeling of competence and autonomy, participants may find motivation that can often lead to appreciating the intrinsically interesting nature of collaborative art activities. In other words, a person may join simply to make friends, but then becomes interested in drawing, or vice versa.

Different from structural views where people are hindered from being artistic and being social due to oppressive or discriminatory policies or cultural access, this dissertation’s interdisciplinary approach has identified obstacles at the psychological and social level. While involvements in policymaking or social activism generally deal with the structural or political level, the above analysis suggests that community art is unique among practices of artistic engagement in communities in being primarily concerned with the psychological and social level.

An important factor underlying much of the above theories is the value of autonomy in people’s actions, artistic, social and in general.

The nurturing of autonomy is gradual. Models of autonomy were adopted to yield
several insights. First, in art and socialization, full autonomy is not always desirable. Temporary states of non-understanding and un-informedness are common and even necessary, so that for example, manipulation of expectation in art and trust in socialization can be exercised. Therefore, developing autonomy includes the ability to be autonomous, the empowerment to exercise it, and the understanding of what level of autonomy is desirable in different situations. This is considered the psychological dimension of autonomy, where the individual is empowered to exercise such decisions. It is proposed that without this willingness to exercise autonomy, opportunities made available in art, education or politics may not be accessed.

However, community art is not primarily an exercise for autonomy. Autonomy is valued in that participants become self-generative in the satisfaction and enrichment of a collaborative art activity. These are the intrinsic aspects of community art while the general development of autonomy is extrinsic to the activity itself. Therefore, four stages towards autonomous generation of such impacts are proposed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of achievement</th>
<th>The awareness of the participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Individual able to guide other to generate similar experience</td>
<td>Knowing how to guide others in generating similar experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Individual able to generate similar experience themselves in different situations</td>
<td>Knowing how to generate similar experience themselves in different situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Individual repeats similar activity/action in the future to experience in more intensive or expanded ways</td>
<td>Knowing how to access similar experience in more intensive or expanded ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Individual able to benefit from activity</td>
<td>Knowing personal preference for such experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart B.1: A model towards autonomous generation of impact in community art

According to the proposed stages of autonomy, simply achieving satisfaction and enrichment within the activity is only the first stage of autonomy. The goal of community art should be to enable people to be more autonomous in generating the impacts of the experience. Sharing the experience with others in stage 4 is integral to community art.

This is firstly founded upon the social dimension of a collaborative art activity, where sharing of skill is a demonstration of socialization. In this sense, sharing is a normative attitude upheld in community art. In a more utilitarian sense, demonstrating or explaining
a newly grasped skill is clearer affirmation of the participants’ own ability. This affirmation can be motivated by a desired sense of superiority which is antithetical to the socialization theorized in this dissertation. Instead, sharing should contribute to strengthening bonds among existing association, or to create new associations, both essential to any forms of community. In other words, in the language of social capital, sharing new skills with others serves to create a learning community that practice general reciprocity, where ‘I teach you a dance step not in the expectation of direct and immediate compensation, but in the expectation that someone will advise my dance posture in the future’.

The community artists must remove the psychological and social obstacles that hinder people from enjoying the process of art making and socialization, sometimes achieved discreetly or confronted head-on. Autonomy can be developed within a workshop session or across years. There are multiple aspects to be developed: a lifelong dancer realizing the satisfaction of painting, a drama participant learning to collaborate with people with different views, a choir member starting her own singing group. Individuals are unique, with unique obstacles.

The community artist plays a pivotal role. The works of Freire (2000, 1972) and Dewey (2005, 1938) were found to be compatible with differing emphasis\textsuperscript{152}. Dewey’s (2005) concept of education is holistic, experiential, social and life-long. He believes that it is the experience and not the teacher or curriculum that educates people, and that art is the exemplification of the wholeness and educativeness of experience. He explains that art integrates in parallel the artistic and aesthetic; people, when drawing, dancing or singing, is at the same time producing and perceiving what is in production. Education, especially through art, changes people by opening their minds to what the world really is and what it could be. Dewey’s explanation of how art functions is compatible with the theories of Dissanayake and Csikszentmihalyi\textsuperscript{153}. First, the satisfaction and deepening of art making requires continuous elaboration in form and/or meaning towards the previously unperceived. Second, though such works may be privately appreciated, it is more satisfying if it is validated and shared by others. Finally, the fact that it is

\textsuperscript{152} Though Freire (2000) focuses on an intellectual experience, his understanding of the teacher-student relationship demonstrates understanding of the personal and social dynamic discussed above. Yet Dewey (1938, 2005) provides the more suitable framework for understanding how community artists facilitate an artistic process.

\textsuperscript{153} While Csikszentmihalyi often speak of the social setting of education, it is not a central part of his theory of flow.
inherently enjoyable makes people automatically want to continue this behaviour of art.

Yet, adherence to these guidelines is insufficient. Freire (2000) expresses the fundamental beliefs that must underlie the character and orientation of the educator/community artist, summarized and adapted in the following passage:

- The community artists’ own love for the participants and the world, and their faith that the participants also share this love, leads to a trust that participants’ contributions to the expression are valuable, and the humility in the realization that no single piece of artwork or single method of making provides the final artistic experience. This is true between community artist and participants as well as among participants.

The integration of the theories expressed through Dewey’s language can be summed up into three concurrent objectives of the community artist in the facilitation of a collaborative art making process that is at the same time artistic and social:

- A) It is the facilitation of the reconstruction of forms and meanings through challenges.
- B) It is the facilitation of connecting and validating the reconstructed with self, collaborating and co-working partners, and potential external audiences.
- C) The process must be upheld by a strive towards mutual trust founded upon love, faith and humility.

The execution of facilitation in community art is as much personal and as it is professional. The community artist must draw upon his or her maturity of experience in the following dimensions:

- A) Artistic, social and the combination of its reconstructions/challenges personally overcame
- B) Artistic, social and the combination of its meaning made, connected and validated with others
- C) The wholeness the experience and long term impact as a part of one’s life

The maturity of the community artist is in essence the autonomy that he or she is able to exercise with wisdom. Maturity based on experience is unique to everyone; thus,
every community artist is unique and works uniquely.

**A reconstructed understanding of community art**

Expressed in terms of a definition, community art is where a gathering of people participates in facilitated collaborative art making aimed to be increasing their autonomy in generating artistic and social satisfaction and enrichment. The following elements are reiterated:

A) Art functions as a means of exercising and expressing one’s mental and physical output towards valued ends.

B) Any gathering of people can be developed immediately towards sociability, with the further result that individuals become more sociable in their own settings.

C) The delivery must be in a way that empowers participants to be more autonomous in generating those impacts.

D) The skill of facilitation draws upon an integration of professional skill and personal experience.

This framework explains Lily Yeh’s example discussed in the introduction. At the outset, Lily’s emphasis on “sharing that sense of joy when I am creating with many people” (Quoted in Project for Public Spaces, accessed 2016), demonstrates that she is focused primarily on the intrinsic aspect of collaborative art making. Whether it is a youth theatre in Philadelphia, a school mosaic Beijing or the Rugerero Genocide Memorial in Rwanda, Lily designed the projects to have certain immediately satisfying aspect, so that people become aware of its possible effects and feel compelled to become more involved. The term satisfaction denotes something much more than fun. The theories discussed in this dissertation explain how collaborative art making can draw people together, generating solidarity that can bridge differences, console the grieving and celebrate abundance. The long term impact is accumulated in the social bonds built, the progress in psychological states and the perspectives, skills and resources shared.

The definition concluded in this dissertation is not only coherent with, but advances the definition compiled by the author by summarizing a representative range of studies in

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157 It would require an additional section to explore emotional expression in the arts. In this dissertation it is lightly touched upon from the ethological perspective.
community art, restated here: ‘Community art’ is defined to be *a meaningful gathering of people facilitated in a participatory art activity aimed at a quality process and product with long term impact*. Five characteristics of the existing studies were highlighted. The below identifies how they were advanced by this dissertation.

First, participants of community art are people with certain meaningful association that meets certain understanding of ‘community’. This dissertation advanced the understanding of how individual and social behaviours affect groups and communities, arriving at the conclusion that not only are existing associations meaningful, but that i) building new associations are equally important and ii) even when associations are temporary within a community art activity, the sociability experienced within an activity can be carried back to one’s everyday life.

The combined second and third characteristics are that the process of artistic participation beyond providing ideas is highly valued in community art. This was demonstrated by reestablishing art as a behaviour that involves through production (artistic) and perception (aesthetic). This perspective is supported by an ethological view of the survival importance of art making and the theory of *flow* that explained the satisfaction and enrichment that is built-in to experiences such as, and exemplified in, the arts. People can only fully enjoy the arts by being immersed in its various aspects.

Participation in collaboration is also essential to community art’s social impact. In fact, through collaboration in thinking, doing and being together, the artistic and social impacts are experienced together.

The role of the community artist, the fourth characteristic of community arts common to its understanding, is a vast field in itself. Instead of presenting detail techniques of community artists, this dissertation analyzed and proposed certain fundamental values that are shared by the interviewees in their practice and training of younger community artists.

Finally, this dissertation demonstrates how immediate satisfaction and long term enrichment are often connected, responding to a common criticism that community art has no impact beyond providing a good time. Genuine laughter and hopeful artistic
expressions are often a result of both immediate satisfying output of energy (emotion, cognition, physical, etc.) and their resulting enrichment.

Notes and Reflections on Local Application

Evelyna and Mok have been tireless in advocating and executing community arts projects and training potential practitioners; the author being one of countless inspired by their work. As observed during the data collection, a major part of community artists’ trainings held in Hong Kong and China by the interviewees consist simply of art making, so that trainees may personally feel, some for the first time, the expressive and creative power of art. However, it is unfortunate that even after these trainings, many trainees are still reluctant to invest personal time in art making, which is essential in developing ones’ own practice in community art. While not everyone trained may be ready or suited to become a practitioner, social workers and teachers having experienced the power of art should be more equipped to make sound decisions on what type of artistic engagement to use, and what kind of practitioner to invite.

Teachers, social and community workers have become significant parties in using the arts to further educational or social purposes. Bamford, A., Chan, R. & Leong, S. (2011) has found that teachers in Hong Kong often lack confidence to teach in more creative and flexible ways. Equally important, is that the report found that “schools do not necessarily have the knowledge or the expertise to select appropriate partners” (ibid., p. 6). Though a similarly comprehensive study regarding the use of art in social work is not found, the author has experienced similar challenges in his collaborations with social and community workers.

To this date, the practice of community arts still often brings practitioners to institutions and communities with poorly conceived and communicated expectations. This is a persistent challenge faced by the interviewees, and vividly described by Pete of his projects in Hong Kong and China. However, the author believes that this is not a challenge unique to Hong Kong and China. While there may be generalizations that

158 The report explicitly stated that ‘Arts group in Hong Kong see the value of arts education and are keen to be more involved in arts education but from their perspectives arts development funding currently favours ‘artistic excellence’ over audience development/arts education’ (Bamford, A., Chan, R. & Leong, S., 2011, p. 6).

159 See footnotes 22 to 24 in introduction. See also More Music’s blog at http://www.moremusic.org.uk/blog/archived/.
people of certain cultures are more accepting and ready to participate in collaborative art making, this dissertation has demonstrated that personal and social motivations also play a pivotal role in determining their participation.

Therefore, what this dissertation has identified is the skill of practitioners in animating the artistic and social inclinations of people. This skill is certainly not limited to the practice of community art as described in this dissertation, but also advanced by scholars and practitioners at least as early as Kaprow in 1974 (Lacy, 1995). The expertise, or at least its awareness was readily identifiable in numerous practitioners whose Hong Kong, Taiwan and China projects were showcased during Art as Social Interaction and the Forums on Community Art\textsuperscript{160}. Nevertheless, the author believes that the collaborative art making in community art, as identified in this dissertation, is possibly the most immediate and upfront among the range of artistic engagement with communities, and that community artists have shaped their skills to achieve this with people of any background and motivations.

Beyond the physical spaces of where or typical concepts of why people gather, the author personally witnessed the versatility of such practitioners to facilitate collaborative art making during Hong Kong’s Umbrella Revolution in 2014. Exist and a group of musicians and actors with training and experience in facilitating community music and playback theatre, founded the group 24 Hours in the Revolution. The group held 13 on- and off- protest site, roadside music-making sessions for supporters and non-supporters to take turn or even collaborate in songwriting\textsuperscript{161}.

**Developing the community artist**

The framework of community art constructed in this dissertation hinges upon the capability and characteristic of community artists. The integration of theories and community artists of theatre, music, visual arts and dance has identified the common values that bring community artists of different media together effectively, a common practice that has received little scholarly attention.

\textsuperscript{160} See Introduction for a discussion of these conferences.

\textsuperscript{161} See Law (2015) for interviews with Exist and members of 24 Hours in the Revolution.
Conclusion

The access to Evelnya’s team enabled the author to observe in detail this interdisciplinary collaboration that is not simply based upon techniques, but founded upon team members who strive towards the fundamental values of the community artist proposed in the conclusion. Community artists must not only relate to participants with respect and appreciation, but they must also demonstrate that same attitude towards collaborating community artists. Kelley (1995) explained that “collaboration is a process of mutual transformation in which the collaborators, and thus their common work, are in some way changed” (p. 140). The techniques and benefits of collaboration among community artists expressed by the seven interviewees were only briefly investigated in this dissertation.

Community artists are the ones that stand before and between participants, organizers, funders and the audiences of community art. They mediate between the dreams and conflicts of human nature, competing external demands and all aspects of the activity, seeking better resolutions than superficial and insincere art making and bonding. In a climate where scientific measurability and predictability permeates all aspects of policy making, if any form of uniformity is strived for in community art, the author believes that it must be first in the nurturing of community artist to uphold and manifest the beliefs of love, faith and humility in creative and genuine ways in their facilitation, so that whatever satisfactions and enrichments participants find will take roots, find nutrients and bear their own fruits.
This dissertation about community art contributes to the wider concern for the impact of art in the society, a field of inquiry that is connected in a web of other questions. Three wider questions were raised in the introduction. A response is provided for each based on the theoretical framework established in this dissertation.

Question 1: “What is the point of just having fun?”
This is a question often faced by participatory art projects that project an impression that people experience enjoyment. This dissertation has shown that fun, often dismissed as frivolity by the unobservant critic, is indicative of something deeper. The following discussion expands on the observation of fun to discuss concept of satisfaction and enrichment.

The research of Csikszentmihalyi demonstrates that when people are engaged in activities in ways that enable them to experience flow, or optimal experience, they would feel good. Art is one such activity. Art is an intrinsically interesting activity, something that is enjoyable in itself. This is also supported by findings in neuroscience that has proven that the activation of various groups of neurons during art triggers biochemical that makes the person feel good. The wholeness of experience exemplified in art making explained by Dewey, and the stress alleviating effect of elaboration derived from the rhythmic-modal expressions of mother-infant mutuality all point to the inherently satisfying nature of art making.

The above is not to suggest that challenges and other emotions are not welcomed. On the contrary, both in the above theories and in the observation of the interviewees’ work, challenges are an integral part of the satisfaction. Composing lyrics to fit the melody well, building a genocide memorial, the frustrations of collaborative script writing, all takes hard work and are hardly ‘fun’. The release of emotional and physical stress in a completed work or performance naturally results in smiles as well as tears. Successful resolutions are satisfying. The charts below from chapter 7 are examples of both successful and unsuccessful resolutions, which are largely dependent of personal attitudes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Successful resolution based on posture of trust founded on love, faith and humility</th>
<th>Unsuccessful resolution based on posture of mistrust without a foundation of love, faith and humility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning a new song</td>
<td>The melody is not easily grasped</td>
<td>I can learn this</td>
<td>It is too hard for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The artist sees potential in me</td>
<td>The artist do not know my potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I can learn from others</td>
<td>I will be rejected if I seek help from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Once I learn this, it will turn out to be worthwhile</td>
<td>This is not worth learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composing a song together</td>
<td>X composed a line that is contrary to the views of Y</td>
<td>X or Y believes the other person will listen to explanations</td>
<td>X or Y believes the other person will not listen to explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X and Y believes a compromise is possible</td>
<td>X and Y believes a compromise is not possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X and Y believes a respectful outcome can be achieved if a compromise is not possible</td>
<td>X and Y does not believes a respectful outcome can be achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Either party willing to compromise, trusting the view of the other to be valuable</td>
<td>Both parties not willing to compromise, seeing own view to be more valuable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart C1: Expanded demonstration of objective C - the foundation of love, faith and humility

The idea of satisfying resolution also responds to a comment from Bishop (2006) regarding shock

I would argue that such discomfort and frustration—along with absurdity, eccentricity, doubt, or sheer pleasure—can, on the contrary, be crucial elements of a work’s aesthetic impact and are essential to gaining new perspectives on our condition. (Bishop, 2006, p. 181)

Would community art have moments of discomfort and frustration? It certainly does. As discussed in chapter 6, manipulation of expectation is an important device in art as in mother-infant exchange. However, what is not specified by Bishop, but is considered to be an essential aspect of community art, is that the shock in community art is designed to be within the perceptual range of the participants, whether it is in form or meaning. Instead of leaving participants in discomfort, frustration, sorrow or hopelessness, community artists ensure that such psychological states that result in expanded or deepened understanding. As an aside, this dissertation responds to Bishop’s idea by stating that her intended impact from the device of shock can be better realized if it does not desensitize or alienate the audience.
Fun, or immediate satisfaction, is also essential in furthering autonomy. Theories of motivation explains that people are most motivated in a task when they are intrinsically motivated in it, that they become autotelic in the task. For a person to be motivated to create art and be sociable, the person first has to experience it and realize that it is inherently interesting. Once they realize their preference for such activities, they will repeat it, and eventually in more intensive or expanded ways. This process towards autonomy in behaving artistically or socially was explained in chart 6.5 “a model towards autonomous generation of impact in community art”.

The dissertation suggests that the goal of community cultural development will not be effectively delivered simply by explaining its ultimate importance. Instead, the work must begin with providing fun and satisfaction, so that participants automatically repeat, deepen and expand this activity which will ultimately be community and cultural forming.

**Question 2: Must artistic quality be sacrificed for social impact?**

The theories discussed have demonstrated that art is intimately tied to daily concerns. However, a second dimension of this issue is not yet addressed. It is the question that whether artworks created in a collaborative art making process by a group of untrained artist, such as in community art, have lower artistic quality? A hypothetical situation is proposed for discussion: a recognized theatre director is commissioned to dramatize a historical event of Tuen Mun, and a group of Tuen Munites are also commissioned in the same task. Which party will create the better play?

Dissanayake’s naturalistic criteria for aesthetic quality are a way of assessing artistic quality. They are restated here for a discussion\(^{162}\).

A. The work should exhibition accessibility coupled with strikingness

B. The work should have tangible relevance

C. The work should exhibition an evocative resonance

D. The work should provide a sense of satisfying fullness

\(^{162}\) See chapter 5 for full explanation of the criteria.
Who, the villagers or the independently working theatre director, would be more familiar with the perceptual habits, in form and meaning, of the villagers? This would affect ones’ ability to create works that exhibits (A), (B) and (C). However, (A) also requires skills in the elaboration of forms and meanings. Similarly, skills are required to make the artwork evocative rather than didactic. However, evocative resonance requires skill, and again the understanding the perceptual range of the audiences. Finally, there are two levels of satisfying fullness that can be targeted: those that are invoked by in rare works that exhibit (A), (B) and (C) in outstanding ways, and those that demonstrate care and commitment towards (A), (B) and (C).

These criteria certainly provide relevant points of considerations that do not alienate the artistic and social dimensions of art. However, it is believed that no absolute conclusion can be reached. While individual aspects of artistic quality can be compared, the wholeness of an artwork hinges upon complex factors that resist any sweeping comparisons, not to mention how different audiences perceive the same elements.

Dewey’s theory of aesthetic was commented by Shusterman to be more concerned with getting people to experience more rather than to define what is or is not aesthetic. Similarly, the author suggests that Dissanayake’s view of art, that has no definite boundary between art and non-art, reflects how community artists guide participants to elaborate simple vocalizations, visualizations or gestures to become artistic. Finally, the author suggests that it is more educative and interesting to explore merits of an artwork by entering into the frame of reference of the creators, than to pass easy judgments on what is objectively good or bad. Even if certain artworks are widely considered to be timeless masterpieces, the human need and enjoyment of art cannot be fulfilled by masterpieces alone.

*Question 3: How can the impact of art be measured? Is it duplicable?*

The report ‘Understanding the value of arts and culture’, commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in England provides an update to the problem of
assessment discussed in the literature review\textsuperscript{163}. It is discussed here to address the issue of measurement.

The findings of the report identify those impacts of art that are convincing and those that seem questionable. For those areas where the impacts are convincing, they include the shaping of individuals social identity that leads to increased empathy and the appreciation of human diversity, the nurturing of the engaged citizens that fuel civic participation and political imagination, and the arts in education that develop “cognitive abilities, confidence, motivation, problem-solving and communication skills” (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016, p. 8).

For those areas where the impacts are uncertain or questionable, they include urban revitalization that often results in gentrification, the peace building and antagonism perpetuating effect in areas of conflict, and the inadequately understood ways that art impacts the economy.

The only area where quantitative assessments are convincing is the field of health and wellbeing. Within this area of assessment, it was suggested that only with “qualitative and personal evidence can the more pervasive benefits for health and wellbeing be fully grasped” (ibid). Moreover, the report also agrees with Skingley et al. (2012) that there is a lack of consistency in research design and methods.

Contrary to an emphasis on quantitative evidence, the report values qualitative evidence that connecting individual development to sense of improved civic responsibilities. The report points out that the most important contributions of arts and culture to other areas are embedded in that individual experience: perhaps not economic impact but rather the capacity to be economically innovative and creative; perhaps not urban regeneration driven by large new cultural buildings but rather the way small-scale arts assets and activities might help communities and neighbourhoods; and for health not just clinical arts therapies but also the link between arts engagement and supporting recovery from physical and mental illness (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016, p. 7)

\textsuperscript{163} Crossick & Kaszynska (2016) Understanding the value of arts and culture. Arts and Humanities Research Council. Being released in March, 2016, it was too late to be included in the main analysis of this dissertation. This discussion is based primarily on the executive summary.
As a result, the report recommends that the thinking about cultural value needs to give far more attention to the way people experience their engagement with arts and culture, to be grounded in what it means to produce or consume them or, increasingly as digital technologies advance as part of people's lives, to do both at the same time (ibid., p. 7)

The understanding of community art constructed in this dissertation matches the report's suggestion to focus more on how people experience the production and consumption of art. The report strongly suggests the improvement of qualitative evaluation design that matches the process-orientedness and complexity of artistic engagement.

Returning to the measurability of community art or the social impact of the arts in general, if a definite answer is to be given, the author must conclude that any meaningful assessment must be dependent upon its qualitative evidence. If impact is only meaningfully communicated through words which in turn give meaning to numbers, then any discussion of duplicability must also be qualitative rather than quantitative. A hypothetical example of a successful community art project is proposed for this discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of activity</th>
<th>Reasons behind this result</th>
<th>Duplicable aspect</th>
<th>No guarantee of duplicability in certain aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The artworks are pleasant, innovative and inspires wide resonance from the audience</td>
<td>The artworks spring from expression of participants</td>
<td>Making artworks that spring from expression of participants</td>
<td>Not all expressions are ‘pleasant’. Inspiring for one person may not be so for others. Community artist cannot twist interpretation and meaning of artworks to create resonance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The participants demonstrate confidence at exhibition opening</td>
<td>The confidence and satisfaction is indicative of psychological and social states</td>
<td>The participants will behave in improved psychological and social states</td>
<td>Personal development varies. Improvement does not mean arriving at sociable states. Anger and denial are important stages of facing past brokenness. Personal growth to some may mean learning to say no or being quite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants report improved relationships outside of workshop</td>
<td>Improved relationship indicative of personal development</td>
<td>Improved self-understanding and sense of social self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart C.2: Hypothetical example of a community art project
But not all forms of quantitative assessments are rejected. As the report suggests, quantitative evidence for impact of art in health and wellbeing are strong. Is it possible to apply these assessment methods to the community arts? Research led by psychologist Hui on Evelyn’s community art workshop for elderlies demonstrate such an application\textsuperscript{164}. The co-authorship of Hui and Evelyn is also an example of the complementarity of qualitative and quantitative analysis recommended by Crossick & Kaszynska (2016).

A laboratory approach to understanding the effect of facilitating artistic activity can be found in Koestner et al. (1984). In an experiment where children behaviour are tested according to adult instructions, it was found that contrary to certain theories, expectations of social behaviour can be communicated to children without lowering their intrinsic motivation to paint and the creativity observed in their paintings. Similarly, a battery of laboratory experiments in social psychological was consulted in this dissertation to inform the understanding of belongingness, self-regulation, and the relationship between their psychological and physiological factors. While it is unlikely that any community art activities will be held in laboratory environment to enable isolation of cause and effects, experiments such as these can inform the training and practice of teaching or facilitating art making.

The three questions above are sufficiently complicated to be topics for dissertation, which would lead to other equally complex questions. I believe that this is the nature of the question of the social impact of the arts. Art and people are two evolving concepts that will never be fully conceptualized or definitively understood. As scholars and practitioners, it is our duty to continue to explore through practice and reflection of their evolution, and how might the arts not be alienated from the everyday lives of people.

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Bibliography


Bibliography


Bibliography


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Mulligan, M., & Smith, P. (2010). *Art, governance and the turn to community: Putting art at the heart of local government*. Globalism Research Centre, RMIT.


Colour Plate 1

Circle painting activity facilitated by Hiep at a school for those with hearing impairment. Collaborative works created includes this mural based on circle painting concepts.

Photo courtesy of Circlepainting.org
Colour Plate 2
A collage of photos illustrating the work of Sze, provided by the artist.

Photo courtesy of Sze
Participants created cut-out crabs to be placed on the canvas, turning the circles into ripples of a pond.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Colour Plate 4 (Figure 7.1c) Finished full body portrait. Both technique and content has been greatly enriched.

[Text on lower left] “I like singing and facing the camera lense. I learnt to write myself”.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Colour Plate 5
(Figure 3.21)
Artwork,
*Sisters*,
created in collaboration between Evelyina and past participants

*Photo courtesy of Evelyina*
Evelyna facilitated village ladies in creating hand-crafted dolls with sexual organs to hold sex education programmes. Photo courtesy of Art for All.
Colour Plate 7
Detail of quilt collaborated by ladies in Henan.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Figure 7a (Top)
Figure 7b (Left)
Community art project promoting hygiene at primary school in Henan, China. Top: lake of germs and garbage painted (approx. 9m wide)
Left: Bacteria and worms surrounding people (approx. 7m wide)

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Children of different ethnicities create drama, props and backdrop for mini performance.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Relocated fishing village older adults create map and boat route of Hong Kong.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Colour Plate 10
Collaborative tree painting by older adults with partial or full sight impairment

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Colour Plate 11
Older adult create collage about himself

Photo courtesy of Art for All
Mural facilitated by Evelyna and team at transitional housing estate in Bangalore, India.

Photo courtesy of Art for All
### Interview Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Nature/Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liang, Evelyna</td>
<td>Dec 19, 12</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov, 2013</td>
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<td>Conversation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Public Talk/Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>2:30</td>
<td>Public Talk/Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mok, Chiu Yu</td>
<td>Apr 14, 15</td>
<td>1:34</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consent for Participation in Interview for Academic Research on Participatory forms of Art with Communities

You are invited to volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Researcher Wong, Samson Kei Shun from Lingnan University. Interviews will be conducted in person, through email and other forms of online communications. Your contribution through sharing your knowledge, views and experience is much appreciated.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

2. The interview will last approximately 1 to 1.5 hours unless otherwise agreed by both parties. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio record of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. The audio recording will be kept confidential.

3. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Supervisor of the Researcher and/or the Research Ethics Sub-Committee. For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Research Ethics Sub-Committee may be contacted through ________________________________.

4. I give / do not give (please choose one) permission for the Researcher to publish my name for the purpose of this research.

5. I give / do not give (please choose one) permission for the Researcher to publish my affiliations that can potentially identify me.

6. I give / do not give (please choose one) permission for the Researcher to keep the interview record for future reference in the research of participatory forms of art with communities. The Researcher is required to inform me prior to its future uses.

7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

__________________________________________
My Signature
Date: __________________________

__________________________________________
Signature of the Researcher
Date: __________________________

My Printed Name

For further information, please contact:
Wong, Samson Kei Shun
Email: samsonkeishunwong@ln.hk