

WITH NETWORKS IN-BETWEEN:
Interplay of Art ... Learning ... Teaching

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How is the notion of **network** addressed
in
contemporary **art**
and
in
contemporary **pedagogy**?
...

net · work \ Pronunciation: \ˈnet-,wɜrk\ Date: 1535

1 : a fabric or structure of cords or wires that cross at regular intervals and are knotted or secured at the crossings

2 : a system of lines or channels resembling a network

3 a : an interconnected or interrelated chain, group, or system <a network of hotels> **b** : a system of computers, peripherals, terminals, and databases connected by communications lines

4 a : a group of radio or television stations linked by wire or radio relay **b** : a radio or television company that produces programs for broadcast over such a network

5 : a usually informally interconnected group or association of persons (as friends or professional colleagues)

[<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>]

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In my examination of the implications of digital media in the production, dissemination, and reception of contemporary art (May, 2010), I described a general shift that has occurred: the aura of the art *object* has shifted to the *encounter with* the artwork and the *relations* produced from this aesthetic experience. Referencing Anna Munster (2001), I argued that the notion of the aesthetic should be rethought of as an “arena of sensation,” rather than dependent upon style or formal qualities of a particular artwork. In examining certain forms of digital art, those that do not fit easily into traditionally defined categories, I suggested that the dissemination and reception of the work be considered as integral to the production of the work itself. This becomes very apparent with Internet art that embraces and relies upon the networked capabilities of a participatory and, sometimes, generative electronic system. In an interview discussion between Geert Lovinck and Vito Campanelli, both recognized as leading scholars in interactive media art, Campanelli states,

... we need, now, to surpass the concept of Contemporary Art in order to define a new context, one able to contain the theory and the culture born during the last years and centered around the new medium: the Internet ... It's not just a question of definitions, rather, it is an issue of a cultural shift: giving up the critical and interpretive tools still in use, to build new ones rising from the awareness that the computer (or the database, as Manovich would say) has replaced narrative as a predominant cultural representation. (para. 39)

Although Campanelli's words motivate me to help shape this new context for art production, I think it is important for us to understand that the Internet is *not* a medium in the fine art sense, but rather a network for transmitting forms and ideas. To fully understand this cultural shift, we

need to focus on the relational exchanges that transpire on, in, and through the Internet. We need to think beyond the Internet as a thing and understand it as a *network*. We should acknowledge that the Internet is *the* network of all networks, but let us keep in mind that it consists of and leads to experiences with other networks (social, business, educational, artistic, etc.). It is not that I question Campanelli's knowledge in this area (I am quite sure he has already thought about what I am saying), I merely suggest that we address the Internet, more specifically, the notion of "network," within a broader cultural context in order to develop the necessary critical and interpretive tools for art practices that encompass these production methods. What new understandings might emerge by examining how the notion of "network" has been explored in past art movements and how might these findings inform our interpretations of current art practices based around a network, whether that network is the Internet or another form of networking? How does the notion of network, and the relational exchanges that define it, impact not only communication processes of art but the communicative aspects of knowledge transmission in general? How has the notion of network evolved in the field of art, how has it been examined as a structure for teaching and learning, and what about the areas in-between?

The subject of education has attracted renewed attention from contemporary artists and, similarly, education theorists have increasingly gravitated towards interpretations of modern and contemporary art. In this paper I examine the development of network concepts in relation to both contemporary art and education, with particular attention placed on processes of communication and learning. In this research, I position myself as someone with invested interest who works in and between areas of art and education. Networked art practices share

conceptual overlaps with contemporary understandings of teaching and learning, embracing participatory and collaborative approaches. This paper examines these overlaps.

By examining the trajectory of a network approach to art-making – from Fluxus art philosophies to mail art to relational aesthetics to Internet art – I intend to delve into the network in-between “art” and “education.” As my interests pertain to the relational and experiential elements of network processes in art and education, the following topics will be discussed throughout this paper: network as *assembling*, network as *situation*, network as *relational exchange* and network as *complex*. I begin by providing philosophical underpinnings to the meaning of *network*. I will then describe my understanding of networked art, as informed by Fluxus art practices, and proceed to discuss contemporary examples. I will examine how the notion of network has been explored in modern and contemporary art, and how the notion of a decentralized network has been formulated and discussed in contemporary curriculum and pedagogy. I will explore issues regarding nonhierarchical relations and concerns of planned enculturation, while arguing for application of decentralized approaches to teaching. Connections between art, learning and teaching will be addressed throughout. In the final section I discuss in more detail an epistemology that is based on the process of seeking and discovering, an emergent learning, as opposed to defining an accurate representation of reality.

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... Being with Networks ...

In network theory, a node's relationship to other networks is more important than its own uniqueness. (Varnelis, 2008, para. 24)

Coessentiality signifies the essential sharing of essentiality, sharing in the guise of assembling, as it were. This could also be put in the following way: if Being is being-with, then it is, in its being-with, the "with" that constitutes Being; the with is not simply an addition...it is not the case that the "with" is an addition to some prior Being; instead, the "with" is at the heart of Being. (Nancy, 2000, p. 30)

Not long ago people talked a lot about the virtual, but today it's clear that the people in flesh and blood are the destiny of the network and not just machines. (de Kerckhove, 2008, p. 11)

The phrase "network society" has become widely popularized through the writings of Manuel Castells (1996, 2001), in which he focuses on electronically processed information networks, describing them as the basic units of modern society. However, for Castells, technology does not *determine* a networked society, rather it enables the social and economic activities to emerge (Castells, 2001). As I write this paper in 2010, the word "network" is too readily associated with computer technology and business management, even though the electronic network is merely one network amongst many. The Internet, and its dominant position in our fast-paced and globalized society, has overshadowed all other meanings of the word "network." And, instead of *networking* eliciting communication and transmission of thoughts within a group of people, we immediately conjure up a mental image of competition and financial gain. "Network" is listed in most dictionaries as both a noun and a verb, but there is emphasis on it being a thing – a group of objects, machines, or people. The *relational* aspects of that which defines a network, the assemblings and links between its multiple components, as well as the *process* of making connections, receive less than adequate attention in our contemporary society. Ted Aoki, a prominent scholar in curriculum studies, wrote that we are habituated to dwell in a noun-oriented world, stating, "this may be a sign of our Western

epistemological imaginary that centers on naming things, commodity-oriented as we have become” (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 420). Within one of Aoki’s insightful essays “In the Midst of Slippery Theme-Words,” he reminds us that every word has possibilities of multiple meanings and there is a legitimating process that goes into our deciding which meaning to choose, whether this decision is conscious or unconscious. Aoki encourages us to examine the seemingly insignificant words (and, with, or, etc.) and the linguistic pauses (... / ; / , / - / etc.) between nouns and things, in order to be aware of that which exists alongside and in relation to the elements – elements that often include ourselves.

French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, cited in the introduction to this section, argues that we exist in the “with,” meaning it is the connections to others that form who we are as human beings, and it is these connective experiences that actually constitute our Being: “... the with is strictly contemporaneous with all existence, as it is with all thinking” (Nancy, 2000, p. 41).

Author Philip Armstrong, in his book *Reticulations: Jean-Luc Nancy and the Networks of the Political* (2009), describes how in *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy detaches the concept of networks from various technological determinations as if to remove the mediated system and expose the “bare and ‘content’-less web” that enables the communication, further stating:

...the path that Nancy opens up here, the path that leads us toward a “bare and ‘content’-less web,” is not a return to the origin or essence of communication hidden behind the contemporary flourishing of technologies and its accompanying theories. For this web or network of communication is the enabling condition in which to think the very disposition and exposure of Being...the “with” or *cum* which – and in which –we “ourselves” communicate in and as a network. (p. 119)

Nancy’s writing demonstrates a deep understanding of what constitutes a network and provides insight into our experiences with/in a network culture and the relationships we form with other beings.

Both Aoki and Nancy emphasize the relational and experiential aspects of being-with networks, the ephemeral moments of connectivity that are difficult to put into words. I align this with understandings of aesthetics. In my previous paper “Postmedium: Processing the Digital in Contemporary Art,” I discussed how the aura of the art object has shifted to the *encounter* with the artwork and the relations produced from this experience, now commonly referred to by many as “relational aesthetics” (Bourriaud, 1998/2002). I argued that the aesthetics of Internet art are intertwined with the social implications of that particular network, and that the lack of materiality contributes to its “postmedium” condition. Designer and media theorist Warren Sack (2007) describes “network aesthetics” as the production and reproduction of connections between people and data and their interminglings on the Internet, such as the emergence of a shared set of metaphors or definitions. Following notions of technological determinism, however, Sack suggests that by using the word “network,” the Internet itself “forces all other ideas of networks out of one’s head” (Sacks, 2007, p. 204) creating a problem for talking about and understanding this abstract notion of *network aesthetics*.

As my previous paper stemmed from an analysis of the aesthetics of the *encounter*, this paper extends the focus to that which precedes and follows the encounter with networked art – the relational processes that contribute to and are left lingering from the experience of the work. Aoki might suggest that we shift our focus once again in order to grasp a better sense of network aesthetics – to the “with” of the encounter, the relational exchange between ourselves and the network, ultimately the belonging *with* others. Instead of focusing on digital technology as the defining characteristic of a network, I will instead focus more on the meanings and relations that

emerge in and between the multiple connections....as a way of informing how we might advance our understandings of the “inter” of the Internet.

Throughout this paper I will use variations of network as noun and verb, and will be mindful of the surrounding words and punctuation I use in describing network concepts, with the understanding that the network *is* us. Even though *networked* belongs to the same linguistic family and is imminent to the same commercial interpretations, in addition to implying the notion of being enmeshed and caught within the structure of the network, there is perhaps potential for *networked* to be recognized not as a single thing but a *process* or state of ongoing relations in flux. The closest variation to “with,” *networked* implies a working-through and a textured web of interconnections. As I proceed to examine notions of network in art and in education and in the often undefined spaces between these fields of inquiry, I invite you to be mindful of the interplay between the multiple ideas that shape this paper. I invite you to recognize the gaps that I might not acknowledge or draw attention to and to extend my theories of network/ed into your own thoughtful responses. Inspired by the words stated by Fluxus artist Robert Filliou in his book *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts*, (in all-caps) “WHATEVER I SAY IS IRRELEVANT IF IT DOES NOT INCITE YOU TO ADD UP YOUR VOICE TO MINE” (Filliou, in Patrick, 2010, p. 52).

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... Network/ed Art ...

*The art of networking is shaped by weaving open relational dynamics that are coming into being, and, in many cases, difficult to define. Even those who produce this type of art (or have produced it) often do not define it as such, or rather prefer to not limit it with some agreed upon categorization ... **it is no longer enough to define these practices in terms of the medium used.** The art of networking is transversal to the arts that are characterized by a medium of communication and realization. (Bazzichelli, 2008, p. 18-19)*

This art need only have one object or no object at all. There is no such thing as a singular object, a thing-on-its-own. There is always some kind of relating. There is some kind of flow, or circulation of giving and receiving. (Kimbell, 2006, p. 155)

Networked art consists of connections made through participatory and generative processes, often, but not always, incorporating digital technology. As the quotations above indicate, there are many ways we can describe this type of art. Some may not want to use the term “network,” for reasons discussed in the previous section, however, problems will arise with any one defining word (i.e. participation, collaboration) due to the multiple approaches and conceptual nature of the work: “...it is also the most difficult type of contemporary art to define, for it is not based on objects, nor solely on digital or analogical instruments, but on the relationships and processes in progress between individuals” (Bazzichelli, 2008, p. 26). I have chosen to research network/networked art¹ more in the terms of it being a *practice* of art-making not restricted to a specific medium and often including interdisciplinary methods. Perhaps its interdisciplinary nature is due to the aftermath of postmodernism, but I think it is more likely in response to the realities imposed on artists living with/in a network culture.

Similar to the majority of associations with the word “network,” the label “networked art” is often used to describe computer generated works made up of multiple components. However, artists and critics argue for an understanding of network or networked art that is not

¹ Although I am hesitant to defer to the use of only one term, I am inclined to choose “networked” over “network,” for reasons discussed on the previous page.

based on digital technology as a defining characteristic, and not based on the use of any particular medium (Bazzichelli, 2008; Corby, 2006; Saper, 2001). In this chapter I trace the relational aspects of networked art to the Fluxus art movement of the 1960s and 70s, looking at notions of 1) network as assembling, and 2) network as situation. In the first section on ‘network as assembling,’ I will address the pre-digital practices of mail art and identify connections between mail art and networked art of today.

/ The Relevance of Fluxus /

...Fluxus is the principal core of our discussion on networking, because it brings with it some assumptions that would be later encountered in much of the subsequent collective art, laying the foundations for the networking culture as we understand it today. (Bazzichelli, 2008, p. 30)

The philosophies inherent to Fluxus art have influenced a variety of current art practices, and have inspired recent writing on the topic (Bazzichelli, 2008; Klefstad, 2006; Patrick, 2010; Saper, 2001), notable retrospective exhibitions on Fluxus art (BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, 2009; Museum of Modern Art, 2009; Stendhal Gallery, 2010) as well as contemporary shows that draw attention to Fluxus practices (e.g. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *The Art of Participation*, 2009). Patrick (2010) contends that Fluxus is the origin of relational aesthetics, describing relational aesthetics as a “stepchild of Fluxus,” further arguing that Fluxus, particularly Robert Filliou’s visionary approach (which will be described throughout this paper), has become highly relevant to the current moment. Before exploring the concept of network in terms of assemblage and assembling, I will first provide some background to two leading figures of Fluxus art that I feel necessary to discuss in relation to networked art practices.

George Maciunas has been described as a key figure for Fluxus and the real networker of the group. Maciunas coined the term Fluxus in 1961 which, similar to the Happenings² initiated by Allan Kaprow in New York at the end of the 1950s, operated on the border between art and non-art, intending to be more of a life-practice than an artistic movement: “*You don’t do Fluxus, you simply are it*” (Smith, 1998). Bazzichelli (2008) writes, “For Maciunas, Fluxus did not manifest itself simply in an attitude of thought, but was seen as a life practice and a “being” within art in an open way, total, and at the same time, free” (p. 33). It seems that Maciunas was the brains behind Fluxus. He created hyper-textual maps (from 1953 to 1973) of sketches and diagrams drawn by hand, identifying the Fluxus alternative attitudes to art, culture and life. Examples include his *Fluxcharts* (the Fluxus diagram), dated 1966, where he applies the concept of the expansion of space-time directly to the experimental music of John Cage, and *Fluxus (Its historical Development and Relationship to Avant-garde Movements)*, containing names of Fluxus artists divided into categories (Bazzichelli, 2008). Maciunas and original members of the Fluxus group were reacting against the art canon, creating a movement that embraced being excluded – an issue that is now critiqued in light of the resurgence of Fluxus-based practices and even the recent development of a canonical Fluxus (Klefstad, 2006).

Another Fluxus artist who has had an influence on contemporary networked art is Robert Filliou. Filliou was referred to by some as an artist-sociologist and is most known for developing the concept defined as “eternal network” (with George Brecht), often used to describe the mail-

² On the purpose and place of Happenings in art, the social gatherings of artists and friends, Kaprow (1961), writes: “Happenings are events that, put simply, happen. Though the best of them have a decided impact - that is, we feel, ‘here is something important’ - they appear to go nowhere and do not make any particular literary point. In contrast to the arts of the past, they have no structured beginning, middle or end. Their form is open-ended and fluid...These events are essentially theatre pieces, however unconventional” (p. 115).

art networks which I will elaborate on in the next section. In describing the term “eternal network” in a 1973 article in FILE magazine, Filliou wrote,

If it is true that information about and knowledge of all modern art research is more than any one artist could comprehend, then the concept of the avante-garde is obsolete. With incomplete knowledge, who can say who is in front, and who ain't...I suggest that considering each artist as part of an Eternal Network is a much more useful concept. (Filliou, 1973, n.p.)

Filliou (1973) suggests that each collection or assembling of art is mobile and spans across different networks of artists and poets, a temporal process that functions as a kind of relay system. However, aligned with my earlier argument of the Internet not being the *only* network, I do not wish to suggest that networked art consists merely of a network of artists. “What Robert Filliou meant by the phrase, Eternal Network, is not simply that there is a network of artists, but that art itself is on a network with all sorts of other activities, like planting rice, going broke, sleeping” (Bull, 1999, para. 7). Filliou valued the everyday gesture and the merging of art with life. Strong arguments are being made for a reconsideration of Robert Filliou’s visionary approaches, seen by some (Bazzichelli, 2008; Patrick, 2010), as highly relevant for the current moment in contemporary art. Filliou’s art practice will be discussed a bit later in this paper, particularly his exploration of merging performative art with teaching. I shift now to Fluxus influences on assemblings in networked art.

/ Network as Assembling /

: mail art /

The togetherness of singulars is singularity "itself." It "assembles" them insofar as it spaces them; they are "linked" insofar as they are not unified. (Nancy, 2000, p. 33)

In discussing the idea of “assembling” in relation to network art, Saper (2001) acknowledges Walter Benjamin’s insights into the importance of assemblings as collections

rather than individual works, in that the collection reconfigures the objects into the self-referential context of the collection itself and destroys the context of the origin of the objects. In the case of mail art, we might think of the mailed items as the objects and the collection as that which is created through a distribution system – not that the origin of the individual mailings must be destroyed but that they should be interpreted as a part of a larger networking process. This aligns with the argument proposed in my previous paper, discussed earlier, in that the *aura* of the object is transferred to the relational encounter (which I extend further here, to the *processes* of assembling and networking).

Mail art exists as art-making through the postal circuit, the practice of sending and receiving items in any desirable format, beginning in the 1950s and continuing until today. Considered as an informal network, connections are created through people that know one another (although networking art on the Internet is changing this), and the system operates as both one-to-one and one-to-many mailings. Generally speaking, the networker proposes themed projects, with parameters of mailing directions, and sends a notice out to the people in the network for them to accept and participate. The generally agreed upon “father of Mail Art,” was Ray Johnson of New York, who in the 1950s created a collaborative network that became known as “The New York Correspondence School.” This was in reference to the “New York School” of abstract painters at that time, who were becoming members of the art canon at that time (Held, 1995). Although Dada artists Kurt Schwitters and Marcel Duchamp incorporated rubber stamps and postcards into their work, it wasn’t until the 1950s that the postal system itself was explored as an artwork (Saper, 2001). Influenced by Fluxus principles, the mail art network is decentralized and consists of both artists and non-artists. Multiple terms have been used to

describe mail art (correspondence art, postal art, eternal network, etc.), which suggests something in common with the networked art of today. Held (1995) writes of the unsettled definition of mail art, stating,

Although it might appear to some that the many different variations of the names and spellings of the phrase used to connote postal activity is a reflection of the confusion inherent to the medium, rather it should be inferred that the variations are a symptom of the decentralization which characterizes the medium ... there is no central leadership. (Held, 1995, p. 20)

Each participant contributes their own narrative creation, typically assembled into a collection by the networker, and participants are then given a small publication or edition of some format of collection.

Included at the end of this paper are some samples of mail art, chosen to illustrate a range of subject matter and style. The selection of mailings also reveal the different understandings and conceptual approaches belonging to those working with mail art. Welch (1995) describes how the movement grew from a “correspondence art” of intimate quality exchanges to a much larger international “mail art” blitz creating a division between members, stating: “Independence, individuality, and democracy are the ideals most fiercely defended in network mailstreams, but these characteristics are often stronger than the spirit of dialogue” (Welch, 1995, p. 187). Figure 1 reveals one of the reactions to this debate; Figures 2, 3, and 4 are clear examples of the kinds of social and political messages taken up in mail art, which contrast the superficial quality of the “mass media” aesthetic that many artists reacted against.

In thinking about the range of passionate personalities that existed throughout the evolution of this expanding network of artists, I am reminded of Nancy’s ideas of our belonging-with the network and being-with others. This, in turn, brings to mind Hannah Arendt’s *Human*

Condition (1958), in which Arendt stresses the importance of individual uniqueness: the relations we have with others is what allows our unique distinctness to emerge. Revisiting Arendt, it is interesting to note that she also discusses the intangible quality of the “in-between,” stating, “We call this reality the “web” of human relationships, indicating by metaphor its somewhat intangible quality” (Arendt, 1958, p. 183). Here we are presented with another instance where there is a desire to express this intangible quality of human relations within a network, ironically referred to by Arendt as a web.

: intimate bureaucracies /

Intimate bureaucracies seek to use the social situation as a canvas to construct new languages, new poetries, and new arts. (Saper, 2001, p. xiii)

In sociopoetic works, this inherently social process of constructing texts is expanded to the point that individual pages or poems mean less than the distribution and compilation machinery or social apparatus. (Saper, 2001, p. 11)

In his book *Networked Art*, Saper (2001) analyzes the artistic process of assemblings, while proposing ways of understanding future networked practices. Referring to mail art practices, Saper describes how the work produced does not fit neatly into an art historical context because the individual works in any given assembling may lack aesthetic sophistication, often intentionally: “The works are about process, contingencies and group interactions, not lasting truth or eternal beauty” (p. 150). Saper uses the oxymoronic phrase “intimate bureaucracies,” when comparing postal mail art and the networked practices today, stating, “An intimate bureaucracy makes poetic use of the trappings of large bureaucratic systems and procedures (e.g., logos, stamps) to create intimate aesthetic situations, including the pleasures of sharing a special knowledge or a new language among a small network of participants” (p. xii). Examples of this might include some of the works from the net.art practices of the 1990s, which I discussed

in my previous paper, or more recent examples of the [Graffiti Research Lab](#) (initiated by artists [Evan Roth](#) and James Powderly, providing artists and activists open source tools to use in urban public spaces and an Internet platform for online dissemination) or even the [Rhizome](#) web resource (initially started as an artwork by [Mark Tribe](#), currently functioning as a place for new media artists to share and connect with one another). Another important phrase Saper uses to discuss networked art is “sociopoetic,” stating, “In sociopoetic works, this inherently social process of constructing texts is expanded to the point that individual pages or poems mean less than the distribution and compilation machinery or social apparatus” (p. 11). I feel this also relates to contemporary artworks that are not necessarily produced by a network of artists per se, but which incorporate a social process of construction, utilizing and perhaps questioning the system of a social apparatus. Some examples of sociopoetic contemporary artworks that consist of assembling (we might also use the word aggregating), and which evolve out of networked practices, (some digitally networked and some not) are briefly described below.

> *Lucy Kimbell*

[Lucy Kimbell](#)'s *Audit* (2001) is a conceptual project in which the artist attempts to “audit” how she is perceived by others, as well as the interactional process of doing so. Kimbell designed and distributed a nine-page questionnaire form to 69 people that she was acquainted with on various levels and basically asked people what they thought she was worth. The questionnaire included ridiculous and sometimes intrusive questions, such as, did they think she earned a reasonable living, would she be a good parent, and how would they rate her contribution to contemporary art. The book that was produced from this project included the artist's selective

feedback made in response to the participants' responses. Kimbell initiated conversations with practitioners from various disciplines (an economist, a psychoanalyst, a sociologist, a cultural theorist, an estate agent, and an auditor) and included excerpts from these conversations within the book she co-designed and edited.

When discussing the actual format of this work in her essay "If networked art is the answer what is the question?," Kimbell (2006) writes, "The project could not ever reach a conclusion – having begun as a questionnaire-doodle, it was now designed to produce a book, a thing for reading, which showed something about the spaces between me and the respondents..." (p. 159). The design aesthetics of this piece (Fig. 5) are suggestive of the Fluxus approach of mail/correspondence art, however, Kimbell works within the "trappings" of the research questionnaire format in order to challenge it through personal tension and humour.

Kimbell (2006) describes other artworks she has produced that examine the identities of participants in relation to the networks they belong to: 1) [*Making a Difference at the University of Plymouth*](#) (2004), and 2) [*Pindices*](#) (2005); the latter being a collaborative project with sociologist Andrew Berry. In the first project, Kimbell examined individuals' relationships to the organizations they are embedded within and help to produce. Situated in the semi-public context of a university building, people walking could choose to disrupt the day-to-day realities of campus life. People had the opportunity of partaking in a simple act (pressing a button), which then contributed to and triggered previous participants' actions that had been recorded for viewing and listening. The systematic nature of this piece is reminiscent of the "relay" effect I used to describe mail art practices. The project combined a live event, a real-time digital system built into the university building, audio, email and the Internet, offering audiences several

different ways of engaging with the “disruption.” In discussing networked art in general, Kimbell summarizes much of my own argument when she writings,

There is no such thing as a singular object, a thing-on-its-own. There is always some kind of relating ... As contemporary art staggers from visual spectacle to relational aesthetics to politics to beauty and back again, it is worth asking what the emergent category of networked art can add to what is already happening elsewhere within visual and live art practices. The foundation myths of networked art in cybernetics, systems art, art & technology, kinetic and performance art point to the importance of information and data rather than technology. In networked art, the performance of gathering, analysing, presenting and reading data can be achieved with many technologies, which may well not be electronic. The making of it is what matters. (Kimbell, 2006, p. 155)

Kimbell points out that the artist’s interest is in the information and data rather than the technology, which is similar to other writers (Munster, 2008; Stallabrass, 2003) who discuss it as an art form concerned with data, and reevaluating how we understand data.

...

> *Julie Andreyev*

On the other hand, there are networked projects in which the technology is integral to the data and makes up the subject of the work. [*glisten\)HIVE](#) (2010), by [Julie Andreyev](#), consists of assemblings from electronic feeds of text snippets transmitted through the Twitter software application. Participants are asked to ‘tweet’ what their animal companions are thinking, feeling, or doing, with the intention of addressing animal consciousness and human relations with animals. The messages are then projected in real-time on semi-transparent screens that line the wall of a physical exhibition space (Fig. 6). The text is generated into swarms of social-insect patterns, resembling the movement of bees navigating themselves towards a hive. Participants viewing the artwork in person are able to submit text messages using an onsite computer terminal. Electronic sensors work to track human movement in the exhibition space, which then

triggers the digital projection. **glisten)HIVE* contains a similar structure to traditional mail art practices: Andreyev functions as the networker who puts forth the parameters and instructions for submissions, then works with other artists and non-artists (Simon Overstall and Maria Lantin) to determine the technical configuration of a projected audio-visual installation. This piece suggests a potential for intimate bureaucracies to be formed through social media practices, in an effort to disrupt the flow of corporate text messages that stream through our daily encounters with/in/on the Internet.

...

Many contemporary networked art practices evolve out of an experience related to some aspect of social, cultural and economic impact – assemblings and interpretations of data. In describing artists involved with intimate bureaucracies, Saper (2001) states, “[they] seek to use the social situation as a canvas to construct new languages, new poetics, and new arts” (p. xiii). In order to gain a better understanding of this work and the Fluxus practices that led up to it, I will now discuss the notion of network as situation.

/ Network as Situation /

: participatory and performative creation/

"Instead of using the word 'art' most of the time in trying to invent new concepts I have thought of our activity as one that involves Permanent Creation." (Filliou, 1984, cited in Patrick, 2010, p. 52)

Unlike all the other arts, including film and literature, this new art, intensified by access to the Internet, is not defined by any medium's form. It is not a thing like a painting, printed poem, or film. **It is a situation: networked art.** (Saper, 2001, p. ix)

In my previous paper “Postmedium,” I mentioned Nam June Paik’s *Magnet TV* (1965) (Fig. 7) as an early example of experimental tactics made towards media objects – a piece in which Paik transformed the usual function of the television into an entirely new and creative

form. Paik's intermedia practice was positioned within the Fluxus movement, with some of his works advancing the concept of participation in/with artwork. In further discussing the participatory qualities of Paik's work, it only seems appropriate to follow *Magnet TV* with a brief mention of Paik's *Participation TV* (1963) (Fig. 8). "By speaking into the integrated microphone of *Participation TV*, the viewer creates a voice-generated television image – unpredictable explosions of lines – as acoustic signals feed through an amplifier and into the monitor" (Frieling, R., Pellico, M. & Zimbardo, T., 2008, p. 99). With this work, the encounter associated with *Magnet TV* is now expanded, more complex, and the arena of sensation surrounding the work is inclusive of relayed effects from the participants' interactions. Another significant work by Paik that draws attention to our participatory relationships with media is *Random Access* (1963) (Fig. 9), where participants perform the work by running the sound head from a tape recorder over numerous strips of audio tape. In these both *Participation TV* and *Random Access*, the artist has set up a situation for the audience to relate to and be with.

Although these two works by Paik behave and perform when interacted with, this work is generally referred to as participation art and described as interactive rather than performative. When we think of the word "performance," we tend to associate it with "performance art," that involves theatre or dance and usually acknowledge the artist as the one performing, not the artwork or the audience. Filliou suggested that the word "performance" not be limited to a discrete category of the arts, but rather be considered as a performative aspect of creation; he preferred to describe art production as "permanent creation" over "art-making" (Patrick, 2010). In previous writing I have discussed the behavioural and performative aspects of not only the relational encounter but the media itself (as defined by [Variable Media Network](#)). Regardless of

the inclusion of new media or not, forming a new language that extends on networking aspects of previous art movements seems necessary for current art practices that centre around relational aesthetics or, more specific to this paper, practices that enable networked processes of art production. Perhaps with a renewed interest in Filliou, the word “performative” might be used by artists and writers even more than it currently is, as something that emerges from the relational *situation* as opposed to the artist’s actions: **“Performative refers to the operative and systematical aspect of something as an occurrence: something is not performative in itself, but rather becomes performative by being enacted and experienced within a specific framework”** (Networked_Performance). In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss networked practices in which the situation is what leads to the production of the art.

> *Harrell Fletcher*

In 1998 artists [Harrell Fletcher](#) and Jon Rubin created [Pictures Collected from Museum Visitors’ Wallets](#), an example of relational aesthetics created through networked processes. However, examining this piece twelve years later, it might also be considered social media *without* the Internet. Fletcher and Rubin have each been influential in the development of art *as* social practice, instigating collaborative projects with different communities and engaging nonart audiences (Frieling et al., 2008). In the piece mentioned above, the artists utilized the *situation* of the art museum experience in order to address the expectations of the viewing public. Fletcher and Rubin set up a stand in the lobby of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and then proceeded to ask if they could photograph snapshots from visitors’ wallets³. They then enlarged

³ Basic description of artwork was collected from Frieling et al. (2008).

and framed the images, leaving untouched the folded corners and other signs of wear, in an effort to address the preciousness of objects that people expect to see when they go to a museum.

Looking at this piece from the vantage point of today's Internet culture, the installation of photos (Fig. 10) suggests an assembling of profile pictures collected from current social media websites, such as Facebook (Fig. 11). It is interesting to observe the range of types of people and the various visual characteristics of the photos and, when displayed in one unified horizontal line, the viewer can imagine relationships amongst the characters as opposed to being told how to interpret the series of photos. In this piece, the author/creator shifts to the participants and the audience, with the artists playing the role of networker.

Fletcher increases the level of audience collaboration with a later work that he produced with Miranda July called *Learning to Love You More* (2002-2009). Using the networking and dissemination capabilities of the Internet, the pair developed a [website](#) on which they routinely posted "assignments" with simple instructions for participants to complete and submit online (Fig. 12). The assignments were always theme-based and open to any media. At the time of 2008, more than five thousand submissions were posted from all over the world and some were selected to be shown in physical exhibitions and other public presentations (Frieling et al., 2008). The results were often quite endearing and reminiscent of Maciunas' desire for Fluxus "amusements". The project ended on May 1st, 2009, but the [artwork/website](#) continues to exist as an archive, inspiring [some people](#) to start up their own LTLYM blogs. Fletcher is a good example of someone who maintains a networked practice of art and teaching; he is the founder of the [Art and Social Practice MFA program](#) at Portland State University in the United States. The

content of his work is about social practices, some of which utilize digital media and many that do not.

...

If we consider art as a situation to collaboratively perform and experience, as “permanent creation,” we begin to see a strong relationship to pedagogy and practices of learning, that is if we had not already seen this before. With some interactive digital artworks, the participative element can be as little as pushing a button to activate movement and, in these particular cases, the relational and generative aspects have not been emphasized in the same manner as with networked art. In *Learning to Love You More*, the platform of a website was used to create an alternative, and perhaps a new form, of what we now know as social media networks. This collaborative project that demonstrates critical and reflective inquiry into everyday narratives through a mixed-media format, was established before MySpace and Facebook, and much earlier than Twitter. Online projects similar to this one could be incorporated into the art classroom in order to analyze and discuss the organizational elements of the Internet and our interpretation of social media (Sweeny, 2009). In the teaching and learning of art, assignments that explore online social media practices do not necessarily have to involve mastering digital media. Projects can be assigned that look at the relational exchanges produced on/within the Internet by perhaps transforming the communicative actions we observe with social media into non-digital forms to gain a new perspective of our daily interactions. For example, in online social networks like Facebook, people have the option of giving an invisible “gift” to a friend, sending them a digital and often cartoonish memento (Fig. 13). Interactions such as these could be discussed and

explored in the art classroom, by looking at contemporary art that addresses these sorts of social practices.

...

> *Jochen Gerz*

The Gift (2000/2008) (Fig. 14), by artist Jochen Gerz, could be considered an artwork that resembles the transactions that occur with social media, but produced without. In 2000, *The Gift*⁴ occurred as a photography project in which local residents in Tourcoing, France, were invited to have black-and-white portraits taken by young artists and photography students over the duration of one weekend. Each participant was then given a portrait of one of the other individuals in return and was asked to display it in their home, enabling those who might not otherwise own contemporary art to display a piece that was part of a larger network of portraits. Gerz communicated with local newspapers to publicize the work and publish the pictures. A year later the project was realized again for an exhibition in Germany, this time with the photography studio and production process on display, along with the framed portraits. In 2008, at “The Art of Participation” exhibit in San Francisco, *The Gift* occurred again – framed photos were installed and participants were invited to receive the portrait of another visitor at the closing reception. Those who participated have been contributing pictures and commentary [online](#) to demonstrate how they exhibit the photos in their homes. *The Gift* was conceived before the immense popularity of online networking with acquaintances not known in “real” life, and could potentially be used as an example in art classrooms when encouraging students to think about the actions we perform in online social networks. By looking at the act of giving and receiving in

⁴ Basic description of artwork was collected from Frieling et al. (2008).

contemporary culture rather than narrowing the focus to one specific media, a theme-based approach to art pedagogy is chosen over a media-based approach, allowing for a networked pedagogy more aligned with networked art practices.

...

In the introduction to this paper I stated that contemporary artists are interested in concepts of education and social practices of learning (e.g. Harrell Fletcher), but this is not new. Mail art practices have been introduced in art education (Held, 1995; Welch, 1995) and interesting Fluxus projects were developed in the past that centred around ideas of merging art with education. Along with his charts and diagrams, Maciunas planned for the organization of an experimental school, for which he laid out a list (somewhat of a manifesto) of ideas to adhere to, much of which based around the purging of “authors” and a model for alternative forms of social organization (Saper, 2001; Scholz, 2005). Robert Filliou published a book in 1970 called *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts*, in which he launched an attack on what he perceives as the limitations of contemporary art (Patrick, 2010). The format of the book is like a workbook, with spaces for the reader to contribute. On both the front and back covers (Fig. 15), Filliou makes it clear that the book is a process (a “first draft”) intended for collaboration: “It is a Multi-book. The space provided for the reader’s use is nearly the same as the author’s own” (see Fig. 15, back cover). Filliou’s book attempts to decentralize the authoritative voice of the author, who we might also understand to be the teacher, and even goes to the extent of including the reader (if he wishes) as an author (see Fig. 15, front cover). The book later evolved into video pieces made in response to the book, an ongoing performance of sorts ([Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts, Part 2, Video University, 1979](#)).

summary of “Network/ed Art”

Throughout my discussion of Fluxus art and contemporary networked art practices, I have examined how the notion of network has been explored as both a collection of assemblings and a performative situation. I have observed a disruption of hierarchy, an emphasis on process, the significance of relational exchanges, and arguments against authoritative (or centralized) systems. The last section of this paper will discuss some of these concepts in relation to the field of education, centering around the idea of a decentralized network of learning and teaching at the post-secondary level. With/in a network that is decentralized, learning occurs on par with teaching, and for this reason I have chosen to switch the usual word placement we often use when discussing the two together – instead of teaching and learning, *learning and teaching* will be used.

∴

... Decentralized Learning and Teaching ...

“When it is told, it is, to the one to whom it is told, another given fact, not an idea. The communication may stimulate the other person to realize the question for himself and to think out a like idea, or it may smother his intellectual interest and suppress his dawning effort at thought. But what he directly gets cannot be an idea. Only by wrestling with the conditions of the problem at first hand, seeking and finding his own way out, does he think. **In such shared activity, the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher** -- and upon the whole, the less consciousness there is, on either side, of either giving or receiving instruction, the better.” (Dewey, 1916/2005, p. 95)

/ Network as Relational Exchange /

: decentralized and nonhierarchical spaces for learning

The traditional classroom environment, often consisting of a centralized network, does not always allow for an open communication process to occur. In a decentralized network, there may be more incentive to discover meaning with certain ideas, objects, and experiences, as opposed to being told exactly what to do (see Fig. 16 for illustrative comparison of networks).

Decentralized approaches to teaching are most appropriate for learning situations in which there exists more than one response to a topic. There must be more than one interpretive possibility to begin with and structures need to be in place for ideas to stumble across one another – this being more important than the way the physical system is organized (Davis, B., Sumara, D & Luce-Kapler, R., 2008, p. 199). In a decentralized approach to learning and teaching, a collaborative process of relational exchanges is more important than the physical structure, sharing similarities with Fluxus and networked art. However, perhaps it is easier to dismantle the hierarchical relationship between artist/author and viewer/participant/reader, than it is to implement actual changes in pedagogy and classroom learning. It could be that the educational environment elicits a way of doing things and by making changes to these *spaces* of learning the learning process might change as well.

The spatial experience of learning and teaching has been written about by various curriculum theorists, albeit each defining the phenomenon with different language to describe its intangible qualities. Aoki wrote about the *live(d) curriculum* as something in opposition to planned curriculum and explained the concept by using a visual illustration (Figure 17) of his “rhizomean curricular landscape” (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 419). There are similarities between Aoki’s curricular landscape and a decentralized network, as the hierarchy and linear structure inherent to the traditional teacher-student relationship are removed. Aoki suggests that the rhizomean landscape signifies the multiplicity of curricula that occurs in the learning space and the relationships that happen ‘between’ the teacher and students – the exchanges of communication. Referencing Deleuze’s writings, he draws attention to the term ‘multiplicity’ not being a noun, since within multiplicity it is not the elements that matter but what is in between

them, "...as a site of relations which are not separable from each other" (p. 420).

The rhizome form (Figure 18) is divergent and layered, extending in all directions, and rather than being comprised of a set of points and positions, it consists of lines in metamorphosis (Deleuze & Guittari, 1987). In describing the rhizomatic form, Deleuze and Guitari (1987) state, "A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines...these lines always tie back to one another" (p. 9). The learning and teaching of art, has the potential to become a rhizomatic experience, whether this occurs within assigned projects that involve cross-disciplinary ways of working with media, or within the dialogical space of a group critique. With the rhizome image as a metaphor, one can imagine the flow of knowledge and skills that emerge in the space of learning, from one participant, to another.

In "New Media Art Education and Its Discontents," (2005) media activist and educator, Trebor Scholz argues that new-media arts curriculum must be concept-driven rather than media-defined, that learning and teaching should occur in a way that questions knowledge through authority, and that more attention should be paid to establishing relationships among peers and developing interpersonal skills. Learning about each other and gaining an understanding of other peoples' interests will create more knowledge of network culture. Ron Burnett (1999) describes the interpersonal just as important as any other part of the learning experience, claiming that the structure of the traditional educational experience, both from the teacher's and the student's perspective, mitigates the value of invention and exploration. However, disadvantages of a decentralized approach to learning include a major shift in curriculum planning that requires the teacher to adjust strategies according to individual groups, and that the teacher be willing to feel

uncomfortable during an unpredictable learning and teaching experience (Milbrandt, Felts, Richards, & Abghari, 2004). Scholz (2005) suggests alternative models of art education based on the Freie Klasse (free class) model of the Berlin University of the Arts writing, “participants should organize courses in which they teach each other, write their own curriculum, and invite speakers of their choice...self-reflexivity would be encouraged, and no grades given” (p. 102). Many alternative models such as this one suggest moving away from the studio/workshop atmosphere, as this is said to open up the creative process and critical thinking. From a North American perspective, the example of the ‘free class’ model is quite extreme but perhaps we need to network more with European programs in order to find the right balance in our own university art programs.

: power-with vs. power-over

The effectiveness of a decentralized approach to learning and teaching at the university and college level can be difficult to determine. How much power should the teacher have within decentralized classrooms that incorporate collaborative learning? and, How much participation should students be accountable for? Perumai (2008) found evidence of university students actively resisting a decentralized approach to dialogue in the classroom, which led to the teacher having to reclaim authority, resulting in students then submitting to the teacher’s pedagogic authority. Perumai states that power relations of pedagogical interaction will not be overcome by simply adopting different classroom practices (such as student-centred) and that it might be more useful to analyze the kinds of pedagogical strategies and ideological normalizations teachers enact in their classrooms (teachers privilege certain epistemological stances, and disprivilege others). In the conclusion to Perumai’s study, the author suggests that in some cases attempts to

rid classrooms of power are futile, and that teachers should embrace power by using it more knowingly while being aware of its effects in terms of interpersonal relations. This raises the question: Is power impossible to remove from the classroom? How should power be dealt with in decentralized approaches to curriculum?

In *Transforming Power: Domination, Empowerment, and Education* (1992), Kreisberg distinguishes the more authoritative “power over” from “power with” which is characterized by collaboration, sharing, and mutuality. Acknowledging the links Foucault made between power and knowledge, Kreisberg examines power relations in schools and its place in the process of empowerment of individuals. He identifies how the *power over* relationship “cuts off human communication and creates barriers to human empathy and understanding,” (p. 47) whereas *power with* is a “developing capacity of people to act and do together” (p. 71). Kreisberg addresses the dominant discourse of power in modern Western culture and states that upon closer examination, it becomes clear that conceiving power as solely *power over* is inadequate. As we extend these understandings of power into decentralized and nonhierarchical approaches to learning and teaching art, teachers need to be conscious of the level of power they possess while in group critiques and conversations with students: “Dialogue is the sealing together of the teacher and the students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing the object of study. Then, instead of transferring the knowledge statically, as a fixed possession of the teacher, dialogue demands a dynamic approximation towards the object” (Shor, I. & Freire, P. 1987, p. 14). The *teacher needs to become a learner*, with a willingness to relearn the content and to become engaged in the dialogue.

/ Network as Complex /

: from spiral to lattice to rhizomatic networks

In an attempt to articulate an understanding of the aesthetics within both networked art and networked learning, I discussed how the rhizome has been used as a metaphoric representation of a decentralized network. When comparing the illustrations (Figures 16 and 18), we can see that there are more lines and intersections within the rhizome, and the lines continue past the final nodes, suggesting an ongoing and even more complex decentralized network. The intersecting lines and multiple nodes suggest different strategies for seeking new knowledge in and across concepts and disciplines. The rhizome model might also be viewed as a more complex version of the lattice model that Arthur Efland proposed. In “The Spiral and the Lattice: Changes in Cognitive Theory with Implications for Art Education” (1995), Efland begins by discussing Bruner’s “spiral curriculum” model (Fig. 19) which influenced the field of education beginning in the 1960s – a cognitive learning theory claiming that certain ideas provide a foundation for more advanced understandings of those ideas. Efland then argues for a new curriculum model in which, “the learner’s knowledge is portrayed as a lattice-like structure, one that utilizes differing strategies for seeking new knowledge” (p. 135) and one that prepares learners for a complex world (Fig. 20). One of the main arguments from this article is that the hierarchy imposed on the spiral model might inhibit later learning if the complexity of the material being taught was simplified. Teachers have a pedagogical instinct to simplify instructions for easier understanding and when students are expected to move into more advanced ways of thinking, the simplified representations may limit the depth of later understandings (Efland, 1995).

Efland writes that a lattice model would allow for learners to be able to transfer knowledge

from one context to another, whereas this may not happen with a spiral curriculum, stating, “Even though knowledge may be present, the learner may not have access to it or recognize its potential relevance for solving a problem or seeking new understandings” (Efland, 1995, p. 137). He was appealing for interaction between sub-disciplines within art education (studio studies, art history, aesthetic, art criticism) for the numerous connections needed for successful art learning. Others have taken this appeal one step further by questioning the narrow disciplinary model that still remains in post-secondary art schools, arguing for an interdisciplinary model of learning and teaching that responds to our complex society (Amerika, 2008; Fouquet, 2007; Scholz, 2005).

Sweeny (2008) extends upon the lattice model by suggesting art educators structure their teaching according to principles of complex network systems (differentiation, interaction, self-organization, and emergent behaviour), writing, “If the properties of complex systems were to be compared with the practices of contemporary artists, might art educators have a better understanding of developing forms of creation, distribution, and collaboration currently in practice?” (Sweeny, 2008, p. 89). The author also draws parallels to the open classroom movement of the 1960s in which emphasis was placed on learning in small groups with the teacher being less of an authority figure: “It is relevant for art educators teaching in a networked age at all levels to return to the philosophies of the open classroom, as many of these structures resemble aspects of complexity theory. Perhaps the theories were developed too soon and can only now be implemented in an age of networks” (p. 96). In many ways, the open classroom movement is being brought back into education through the implementation of online learning and teaching.

With the Internet becoming more and more of an accessible tool for interconnectivity and

interactivity, some art educators like Sweeny are suggesting that teachers take advantage of the flexibility that is part of the Internet and use it to inform pedagogical practices. Social networking sites and online learning systems enable interactive and participatory collaborations, allowing for multi-directional conversations that can occur in multidimensional spaces (Davis et al, 2008). For instance, recent research in post-secondary art education has shown that digital technologies, such as social networking websites, are being implemented into post-secondary foundation level art curriculum resulting in better peer-to-peer interaction and creating active learners as opposed to passive participants (Collins et al., 2007; May, forthcoming). As online technologies are being incorporated into the learning and teaching of art, more research needs to be done to properly evaluate how the technologies impact the content being taught and how students are learning to think and express ideas within these environments.

: seeking emergent learning

Within the study of complexity theory, learning and teaching is described as collectives elaborating emergent knowledge (Davis, et al., 2008). The notion of emergent knowledge has been extended beyond complexity theory and applied to an understanding of knowledge termed “temporal epistemology,” a quest for knowledge that is not based on developing accurate understandings of a finished reality but rather, “discovering more and more complex and creative ways of interacting with our reality” (Osberg, Biesta, and Cilliers, 2008, p. 215). Osberg and Biesta (2008) discuss the ‘space of emergence’ in which meaning and knowledge is formed in the classroom, however, they argue that the logic of emergence be not only applied to knowledge, but to human subjectivity as well. Their concern is that even though the teacher structures the curriculum to allow for emergent knowledge to occur in this space, the problem of planned enculturation still exists. The authors are less interested in the pedagogical methods that

create emergence of meaning and more interested in the *kinds* of meaning that are allowed to emerge in the classroom:

This question is important because, if meaning is understood as emergent, and if educators wish to encourage the emergence of meaning in the classroom, then the meanings that emerge in the classrooms cannot and *should not be pre-determined before the 'event' of their emergence*. This raises the question of whether it is possible to maintain an emergentist conception of meaning in an 'educational' context, which in turn raises the question of what is meant by 'education'. (Osberg & Biesta, p. 314; italics in original)

The authors discuss criticisms made towards anti-authoritarian (decentralized) versions of progressive education which claim that this pedagogy has no real educational value, concluding that “for an emergentist conception of meaning to contribute to discussions about education it must not reduce the concept of education to untutored learning” (p. 316). The authors illustrate through the work of Ulmer (1985) that simply designing a pedagogy that allows for the ‘invention of meaning’ (or in Ulmer’s terms *inventio*), does not release pedagogy from the logic of enculturation (p. 319). Osberg and Biesta argue that emergence must be used on two levels – for knowledge/meaning and for human subjectivity. They suggest that we need to abandon pre-conceived notions of *what* constitutes a human subject in order to understand *who* we are in relation to each other, and that if this process occurs as knowledge emerges in the educational space than it is possible to have curriculum that is free of enculturation. The authors refer to Arendt (1958), underlining the importance of keeping “frustrations” and differences in the classroom to allow individual uniqueness to emerge in students: “For Arendt, who we are is not something that exists before the other, nor is it something that appears because of the other. Rather it appears only in relation to the other (neither before nor after)” (p. 322). Osberg and Biesta conclude that the ‘space of emergence’ for knowledge and subjectivity requires that

differences amongst participants be maintained in the classroom. This suggests that the responsibility of the teacher is to enable the students to become more unique and *not* to ensure a desired end but rather to “complicate the scene” (p. 325). Through this research, Osberg and Biesta extend the concept of emergent knowledge beyond that of complexity thinking by emphasizing deeper, and more complex, philosophical notions. It also suggests that decentralized networks, as learning processes, might be understood to also describe the identity of the learner.

summary of “Decentralized Learning and Teaching”

Throughout this last portion of the paper I have examined the notion of emergent learning within decentralized approaches to contemporary curriculum and pedagogy. A decentralized network for learning and teaching was described as sharing a similar relational exchange as that which occurs in Fluxus and networked art. Debates surrounding nonhierarchical teaching and issues of authoritative power were mentioned and an argument for a ‘power-with’ versus a ‘power-over’ approach was made. The trajectory from a spiral to a lattice curriculum model for art education was discussed, as well as pedagogical models that stem from complexity theory. In addition to the concept of emergent learning is a demonstrated desire for emergent subjectivity and the construction of unique individual identities, even though the inherent purpose of education becomes challenged when contemplating this proposal.

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Conclusion

One might think that simultaneous emergent knowledge/meaning and human subjectivity would be more possible through the learning and teaching of art than with any other subject area, but, as is generally understood, nothing is learned without some form of enculturation. The

challenge put forth in Osberg and Biesta's proposal is for educators to be constantly mindful of planned enculturation and to attempt to dismantle it when teachable moments occur. This challenge is aligned with the notions of network examined in this paper, and an overall understanding of knowledge being something to locate oneself *within*, rather than something to acquire – a temporal epistemology based on an ongoing dialogue with process, relations, and exchange.

In conclusion, I have discussed various aspects of art and learning in relation to the notion of network, focusing on the relational and experiential aspects of communication processes. I have argued for a disruption to the traditional hierarchical teacher-student relationship, one that can be made through decentralized approaches that require the teacher to perform as an engaged learner. Art has been interpreted as active negotiation with a complex world and a network culture, and a way to seek new understandings. I have ultimately argued for an interplay between art and learning and teaching. By discussing Fluxus and contemporary networked art practices in conjunction with learning and teaching, I have attempted to make more visible the space in-between these areas and the potential for permanent creation with/in these networks.

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Figures



Figure 1
Sally Mericle, *Mail Art My Ass: Looks Like Junk to Me*, U.S.A., 1989. Rubber Stamped Stampsheet.
(Welch, 1995, p. 188)



Figure 2

Crackerjack Kid a.k.a. Chuck Welch, *Boycott Exxon*, U.S.A., 1989. Artists' Stamps.

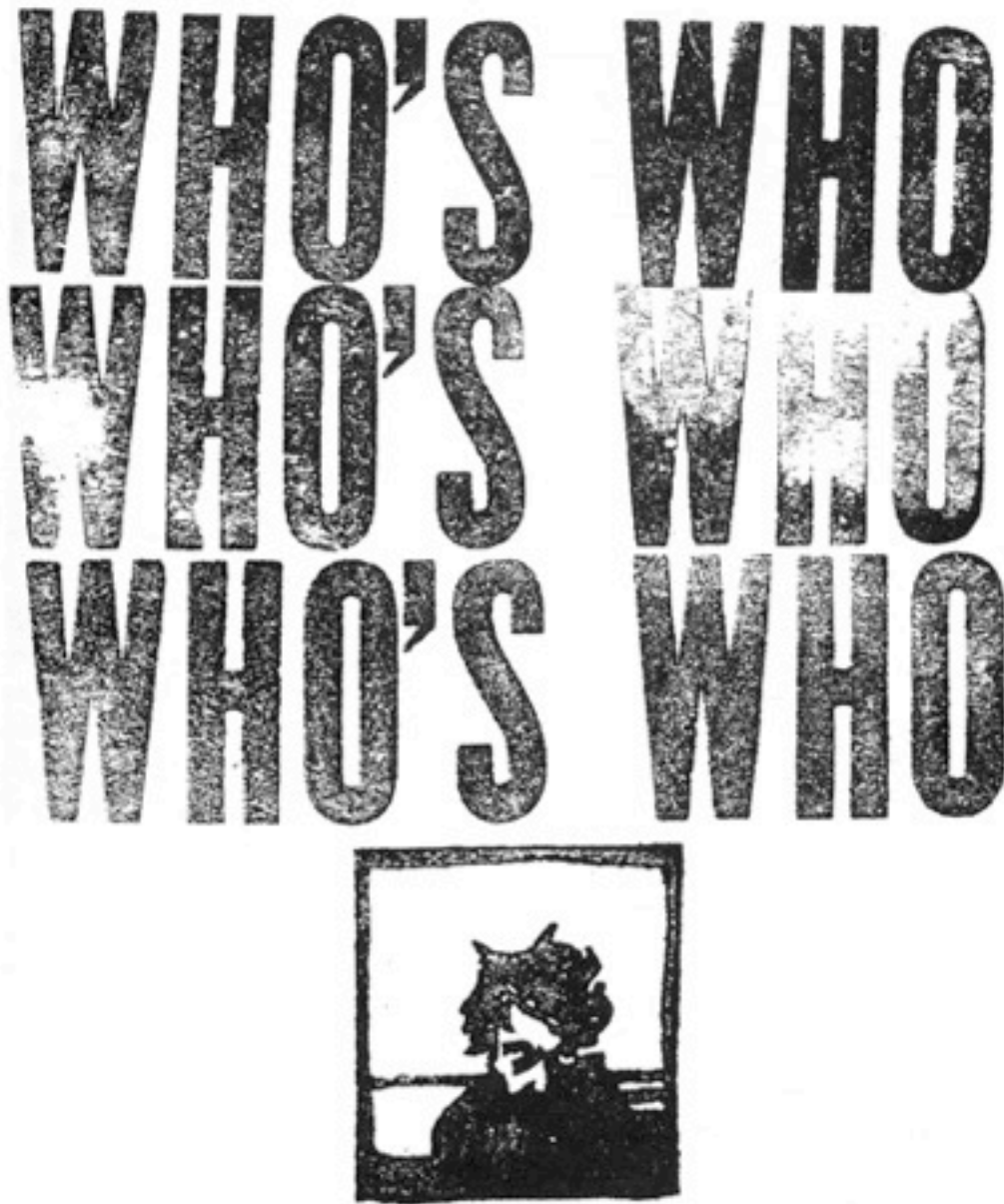
"The stampsheets appeared in North American newspapers such as The Toronto Star and The Washington Post. An Exxon Stockholder who acquired teh stampsheets reported that he placed the stamps on his cancelled stock certificates and mailed them to Exxon. Stamps were covertly placed on Exxon products and gas pumps" (Welch, 1995, p. 203).



Figure 3

Clemente Padin, *Uruguay*. 1975. Artists' Stamps.

"Padin's objective was to "denounce the inhuman and brutal repression of the fascist government, 1975. Other stampsheets from the same period denounce transnational enterprises and state-run institutions such as the CIA" (Welch, 1995, p. 204)



The Happy Young Men and Women
With Nearly Perfect Lives, INT.

Figure 4

John P. Jacob, *Rubber Stamped Folder of Who's Who of the Happy Young People Enterprises (HYPE)*, U.S.A., 1982. Mail Art Project. (Welch, 1995, p. 212)

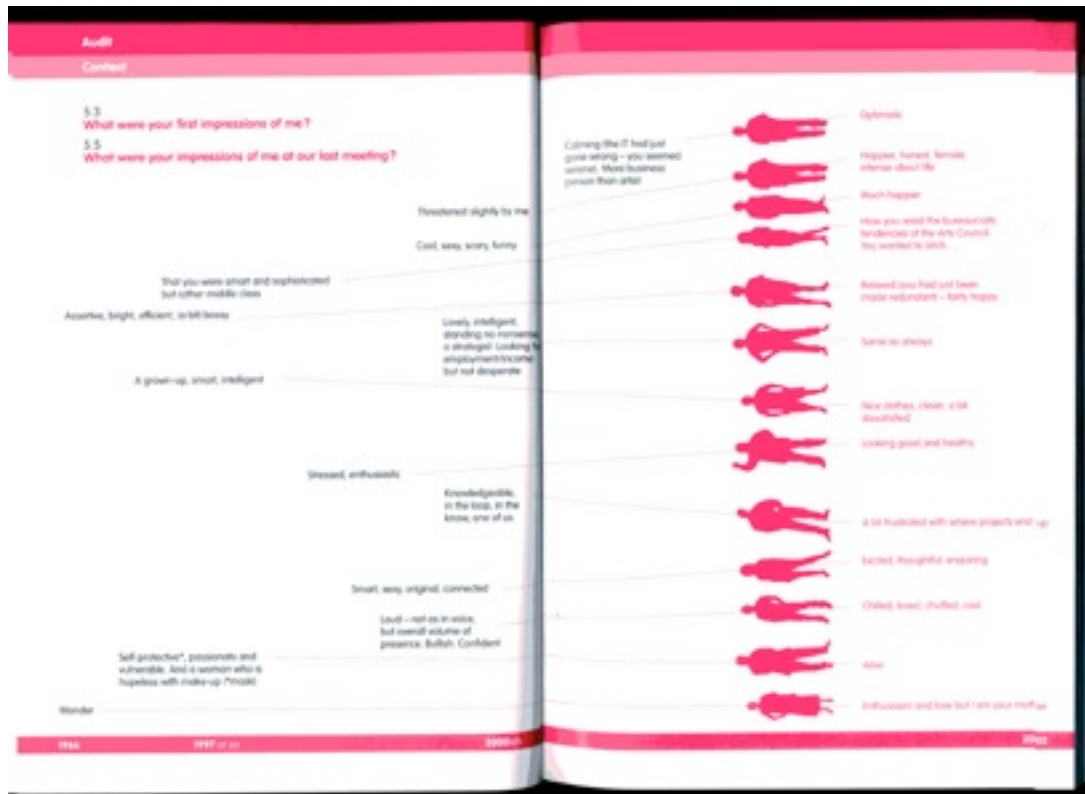


Figure 5 Lucy Kimbell, *Audit*, 2001. top: front + back book cover; bottom: example page layout (zoom in for details). London: Book Works, 2002.



Figure 6
Julie Andreyeve (with Simon Overstall and Maria Lantin), **glisten) HIVE*, 2010. Installation.
Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 7

Nam June Paik, *Magnet TV*, 1965. 17 inch black and white television and magnet.
source: <http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/magnet-tv/>



Figure 8

Nam June Paik, *Participation TV*, 1963. Manipulated television, signal amplifiers, and microphone. Installation view, 2007. (Frieling et al., 2008, p. 99)



Figure 9

Nam June Paik, *Random Access*, 1963.

left: 1978 installation - Score, audiotape, recording head, and Plexiglas.

right: 1963 installation - Audiotape, recording head, and speakers.

(Frieling et al., 2008, p. 100)



Figure 10

Harrell Fletcher and Jon Rubin, *Pictures Collected from Museum Visitors' Wallets*, 1998.

Chromogenic prints. 10 prints, each 40 x 30 in.

Installation view at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2004.

(Frieling, et. al, 2008, p. 153)

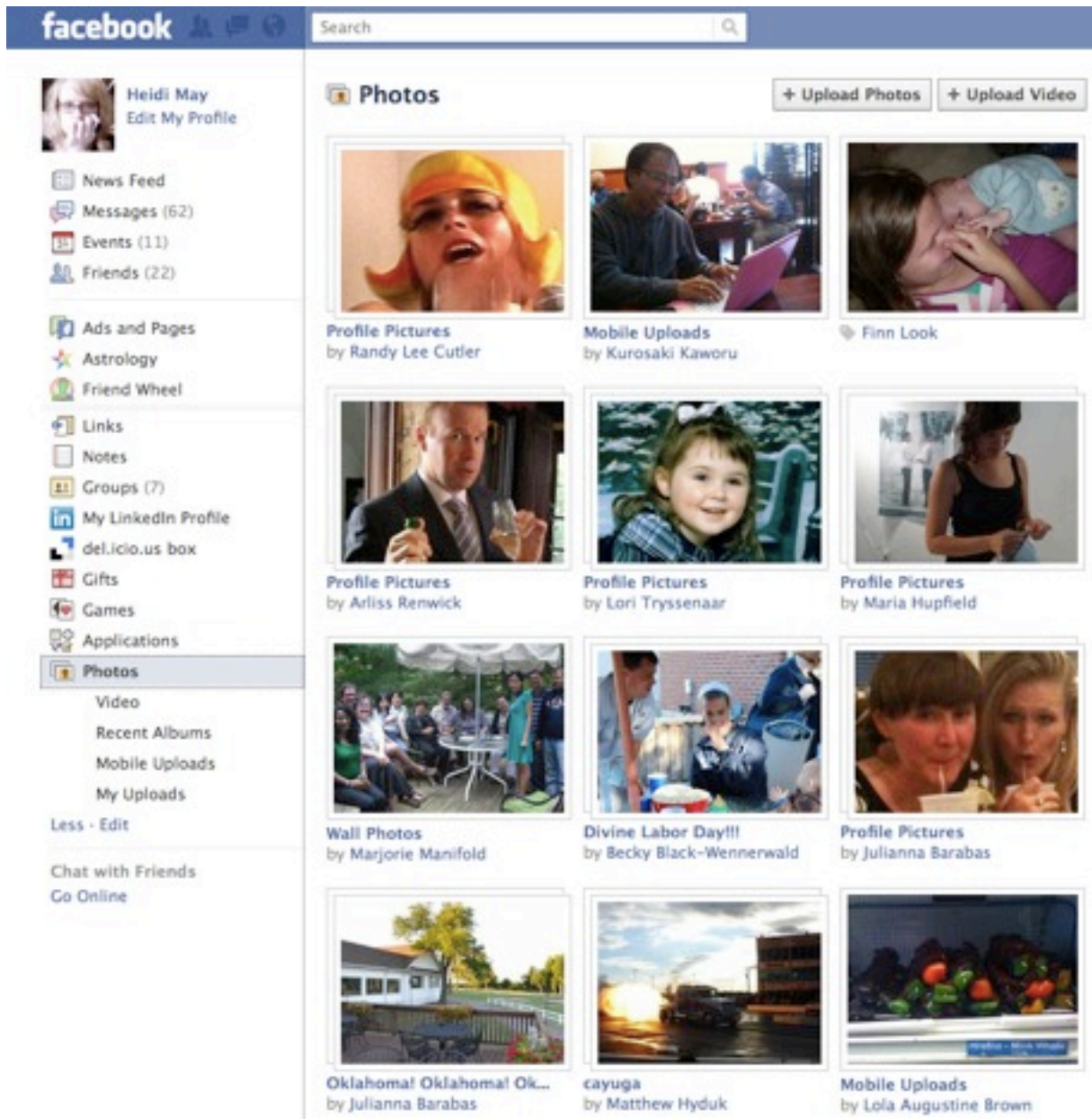


Figure 11
Screenshot of a collection of photos from my Facebook profile, randomly chosen from photo albums created by my Facebook friends.

<http://www.facebook.com>



027-09 Harrell Fletcher and Miranda July *Learning to Love You More*
2002-present / Online project
(<http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com>) /
Courtesy the artists

In *Learning to Love You More* the general public responds to creative assignments on a website launched by Fletcher and July in 2002. Participants follow the simple instructions and submit documentation (a photograph, a text, or a video) to be posted online. The artists liken the prescriptive nature of these assignments to "a recipe, meditation practice, or familiar song" that guides people to their own experience. Now numbering more than five thousand from all over the world, the virtual submissions may also be selected for inclusion in physical exhibitions and other public presentations. —TZ

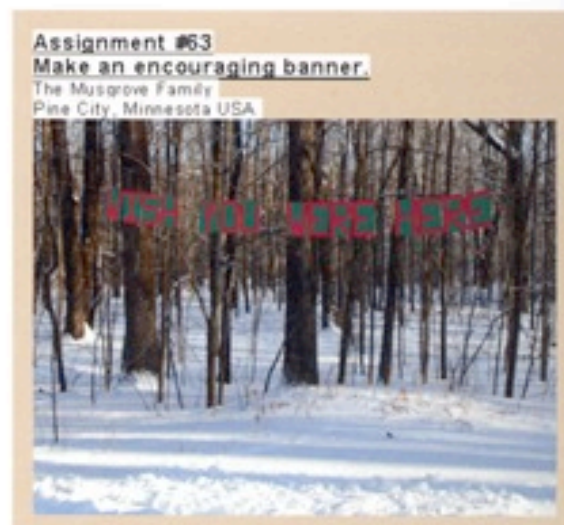


Figure 12
Harrell Fletcher and Miranda July, *Learning to Love You More*, 2002-2009.
Sample projects from <http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com>
(Frieling et al., 2008, p. 155)

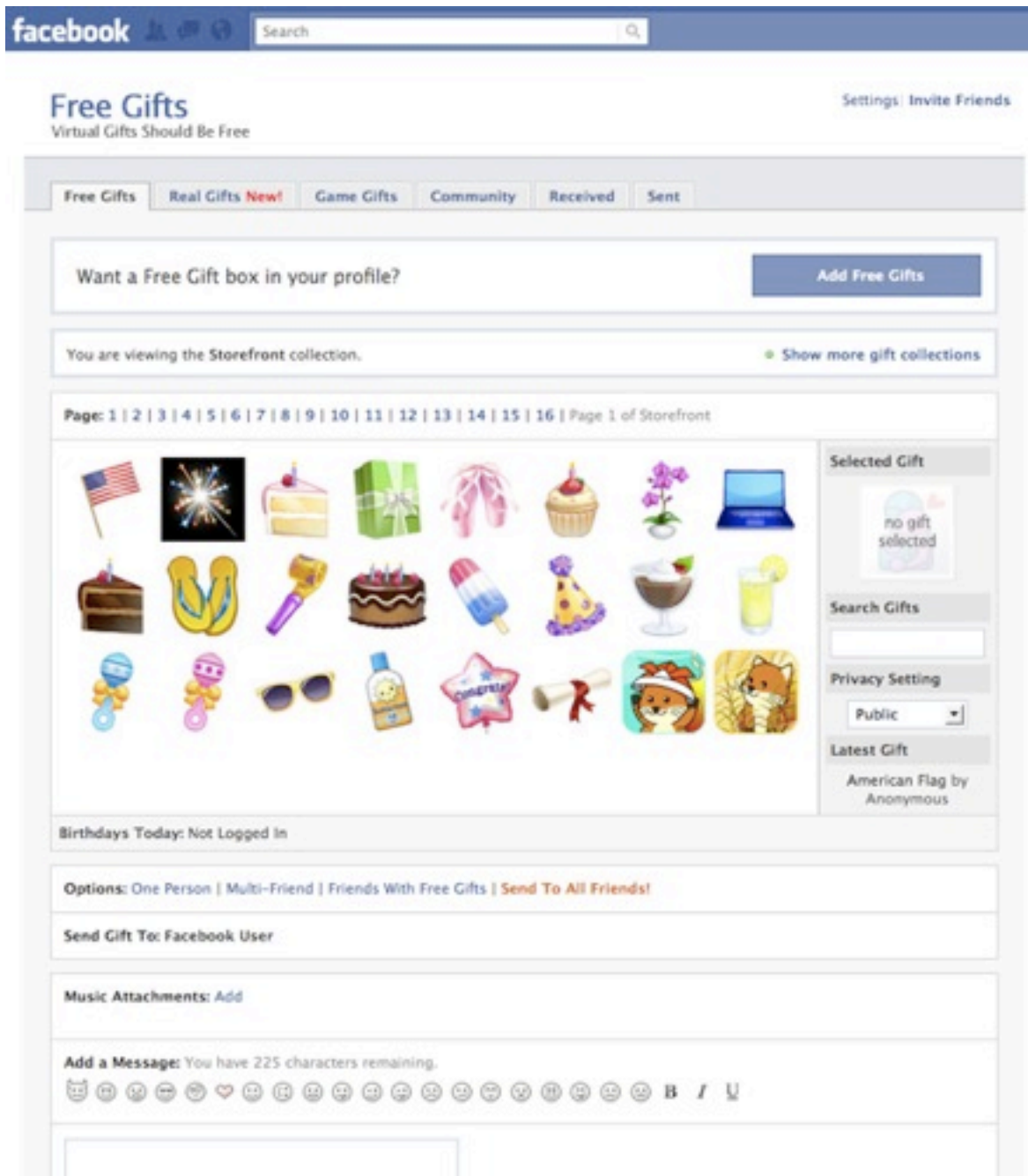


Figure 13
Screenshot of virtual gifts to send to Facebook friends.
<http://www.facebook.com>



A



B



C

Figure 14
Jochen Gerz, *The Gift*, 2000.

- A - Installation view at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany, 2000.
- B - Le Fresnoy, Studio national des arts contemporain, Tourcoing, France, 2000.
- C - Newspaper reproduction of installation photographs, Germany, 2000.

(Frieling et al., 2008, p. 167-169.

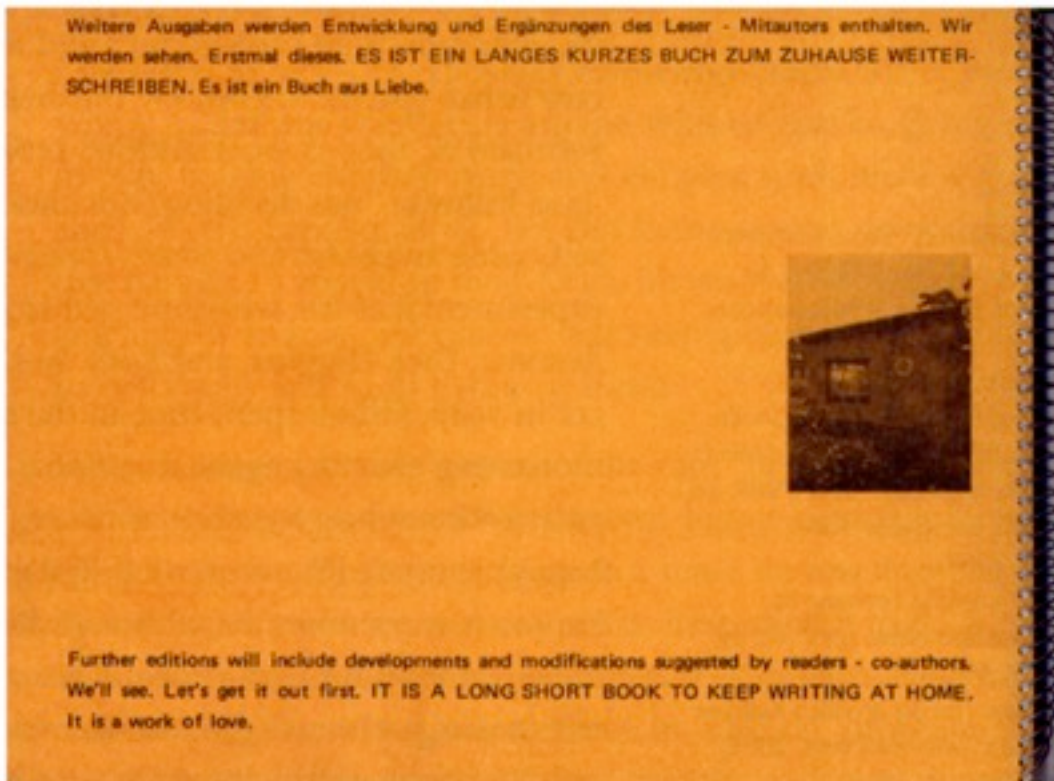
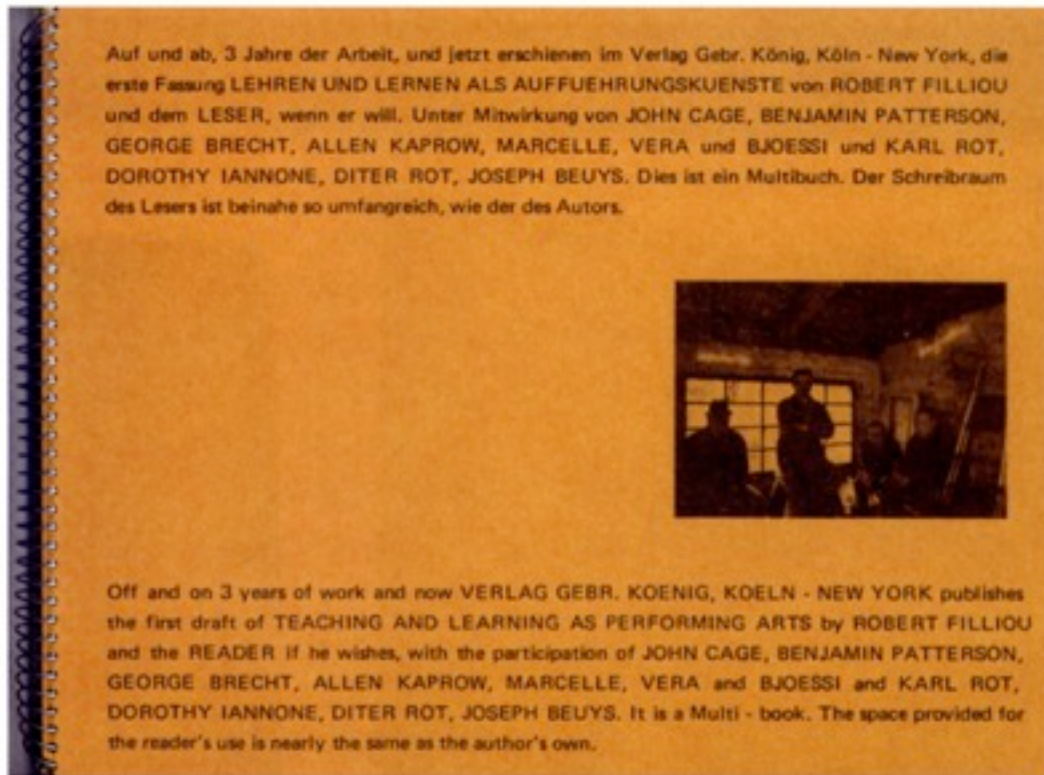


Figure 15

Robert Filliou, *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts*, 1970. Top: front cover; Bottom: Back cover (zoom in for details). pub. Verlag Gebruder König. (Patrick, 2010, p. 50).

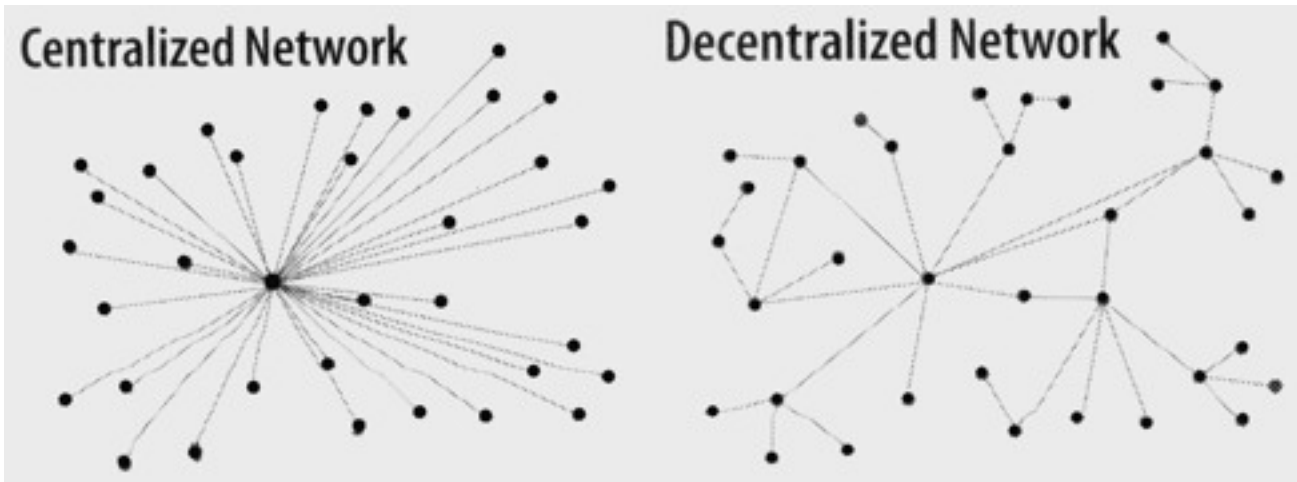


Figure 16
Models of centralized and decentralized networks. (Davis et al., 2008, p. 56)

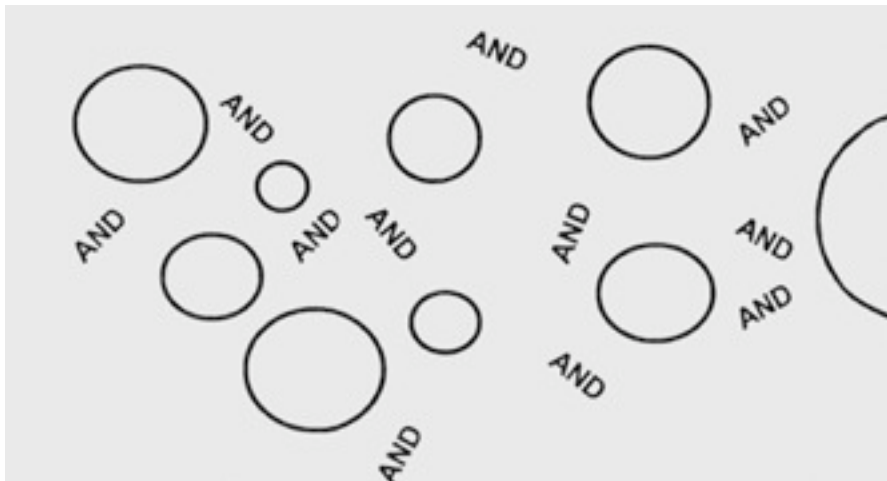


Figure 17
Model of "rhizomean curricular landscape". (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 419).



Figure 18
Model of rhizome.
<http://www.librarystudentjournal.org>

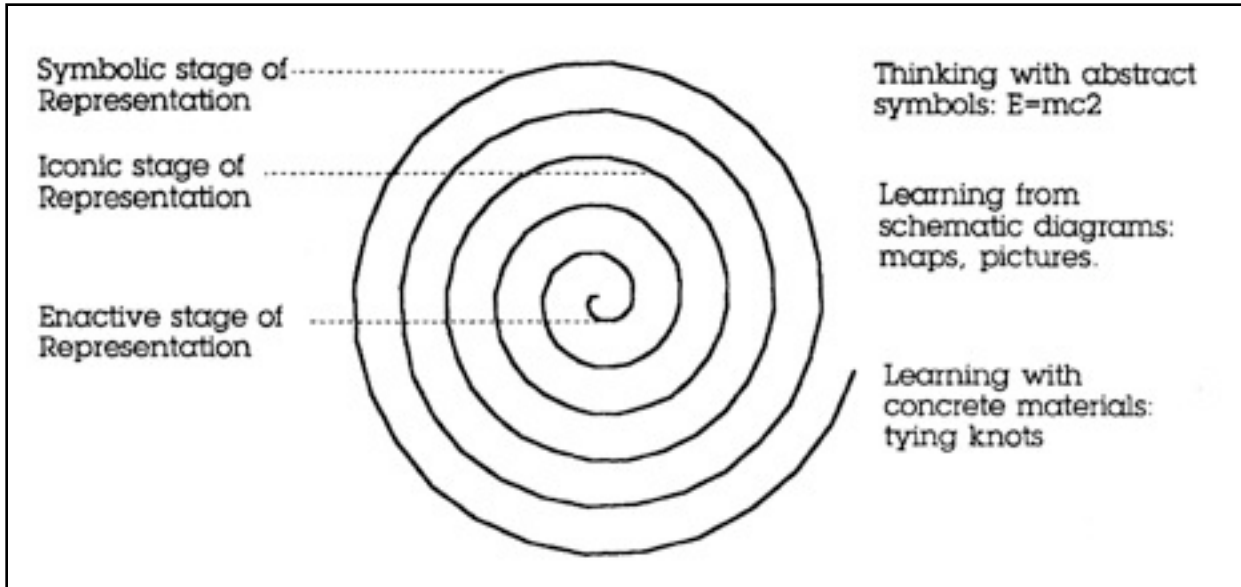


Figure 19
 Model of the Spiral Curriculum (Bruner).
 (Efland, 1995, p. 135).

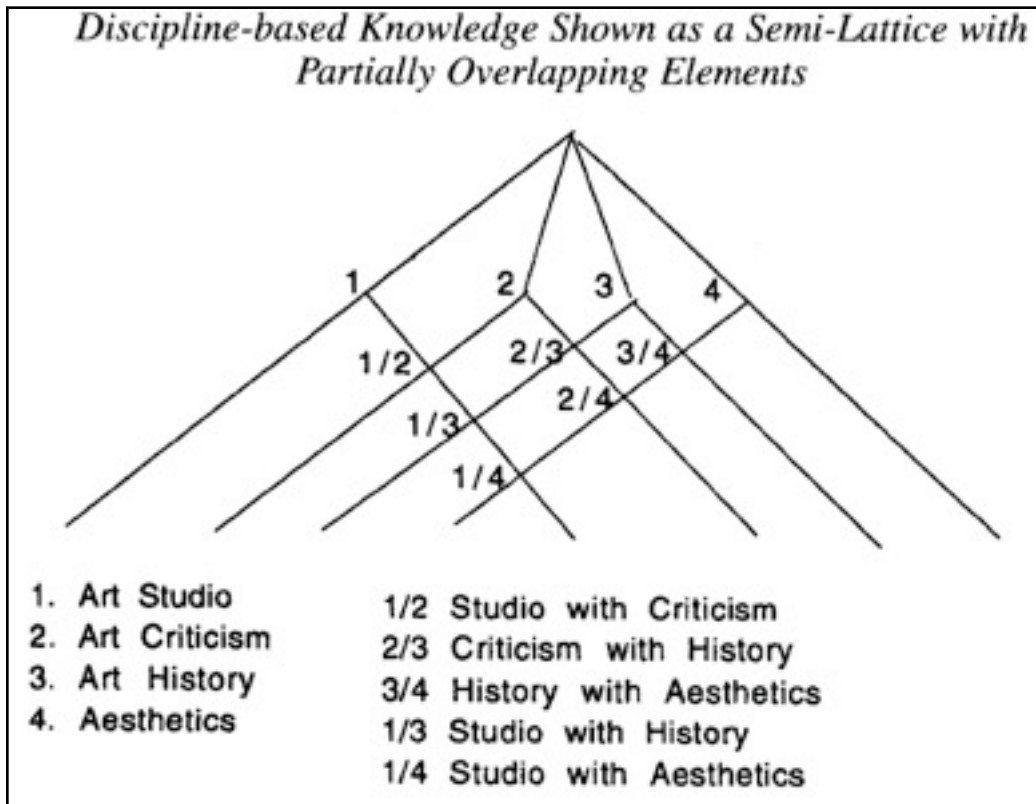


Figure 20
 Models of Lattice Curriculum (Efland).
 (Efland, 1995, p. 151).