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# *A/r/tography and Communities of Practice*

SPECIAL ISSUE

*A/r/tography  
and the  
Visual Arts*

SPECIAL ISSUE

*A/r/tography  
and the Literary and  
Performing Arts*



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Visual Arts Research

**Rita Irwin, University of British Columbia**

**Anita Sinner, Concordia University**

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Guest Editors: *Rita L. Irwin*  
*Anita Sinner* Editor: *Lindy Joubert*  
Associate Editor: *Naomi Berman*  
Designer: *Rosie Ren*

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# Abstract

In this visual essay, we explore several special issues of journals focusing on a/r/tography:

- *Visual Arts Research* (2012, V 38, 2)
- *Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts e-journal* (2013, V 3, 1)
- *Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts e-journal* (2013, V 3, 1)

Each assess how a/r/tography is evolving within diverse communities of creative practice that bring transnational and transcurricular perspectives to bear on the development of new research strategies within arts-based research and artistic practice through the lens of a/r/tography. We review select pages from articles and interludes from these special issues that represent the scope of new directions underway within emerging a/r/tographic communities of practice.

En este ensayo visual, indagamos en varios números especiales de publicaciones centradas en a/r/tografía:

- *Visual Arts Research* (2012, V 38, 2)
- *Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts e-journal* (2013, V 3, 1)
- *Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts e-journal* (2013, V 3, 1)

Con el objetivo de evaluar como la a/r/tografía esta evolucionando dentro de las diversas comunidades de practica creativa que aportan perspectivas transnacionales y transcurriculares para influir en el desarrollo de nuevas estrategias dentro de la investigación basada en las artes y la practica artística a través de la óptica de la a/r/tografía, revisamos una selección de artículos e interludios de estos números especiales que representan el alcance de las nuevas direcciones en marcha de las emergentes comunidades de practicas a/r/tograficas.

# in conversation ... a photo essay



Visual Arts Research



[http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/  
visuartsrese.38.2.issue-2](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/visuartsrese.38.2.issue-2)



According to Leavy (2012), Ricardo Marin-Viadel and Joaquin Roldan use visual a/r/tography in order to present assessment criteria for how we might understand and evaluate a/r/tographical works. Their visual renderings allow us to see how viewers bring their interpretations to the arts.

Visual Arts Research

Pushing the boundaries of academic articles, Marin-Viadel and Roldan from the University of Granada, present us with an original and innovative approach to a/r/tography practice through the visual photo essay.

Quality criteria in visual a/r/tography photo essays: European perspectives after Daumier's graphic ideas.

Ricardo Marin-Viadel  
Joaquín Roldán  
University of Granada (Spain)



Figure 1. **Visual abstract.** "Ricardo Marin-Viadel looking at the expert's eyes" by J. Roldán, 2011. Digital photography with a indirect visual quotation from Daumier (1855).

*A research photo essay in visual a/r/tography is a coherent, systematic, and original group of visual images about education (or any other social science). This relatively recent research methodology essentially produces new visual images about educational questions. Like any other research methodology, visual a/r/tography assumes: a) certain basic epistemological positions, b) distinctive methodological strategies, and c) specific quality criteria. We suggest five different paths to identify assessment criteria, the most important of these residing in the development of a framework of correspondences between quality criteria usually applied to research reports based on words (sentences, paragraphs, verbal thinking) and those based on visual images (photos, photo essays, visual thinking).*



To demonstrate new ways of thinking, the authors include visual as well as textual references.

of the research. A visual a/r/t/ography report must be very scrupulous with the quality of photos, pictures or videos, and requires extreme care in the publication or display of visual images be they presented separately or organized in groups.

A visual a/r/t/ography report is not a simple accumulation of images in the same way that written inquiry is not only a cluster of sentences and paragraphs. The overall organization of the images in the research reports, as well as the balance, rhythm and cadence of each of the visual images and their relationship to the whole, is crucial for assessing their quality. For this reason it is necessary to identify the kind of visual structure used: for example, independent images, photo series, photo essays, etc. (Marín-Viadel & Roldán-Ramírez, 2010). The visual structure of a piece of research is very evident (similar to the way in which the type of writing and the literary quality of a written text is clear in the first few paragraphs); but for investigational purposes it is necessary to explicitly state their typology, in a similar way to that which is done when defining the type of statistical analysis used to synthesize quantitative data.

#### Conclusion

When drawings, photo essays, websites or videos are used for educational research purposes they must be organized as distinct forms, subtly different when they are used in other professional fields such as photojournalism or art making. The visual narrative and demonstrative structures used in visual a/r/t/ography should eventually become a specific genre or style with its own quality criteria, similar to how we distinguish between visual narrative structures in television advertising or in sociological films. Visual a/r/t/ography is a new form in which to do research, which, consequently, is a new way to make visual art.

It may be too premature at this time to propose a complete and comprehensive list of quality criteria for visual a/r/t/ography. However, the development of some of the strategies described above may help to shed some light on the problem.

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Figure 5. **Photo essay.** "Looking the expert who are looking at art, which looks to their viewers. n.4" by authors 2011. Organized with three digital photos and a direct visual quotation, bottom centre, from Daumier (c. 1860). Top, "Student and photo projection" 2011 by J. Roldán with an indirect visual quotation from Daumier (c.1860-70). Bottom, left "Appreciating the Fountain at d'Orsay Museum", 2008 by R. Marín-Viadel, with an indirect visual quotation from Ingres (1856); right "Appreciating the pastel portrait", 2008 by R. Marín-Viadel with an indirect visual quotation from Blanche (1887).



The conceptualization of a/r/t/ography resists categorization while recognizing that aesthetic and educational conditions infuse research-creation.

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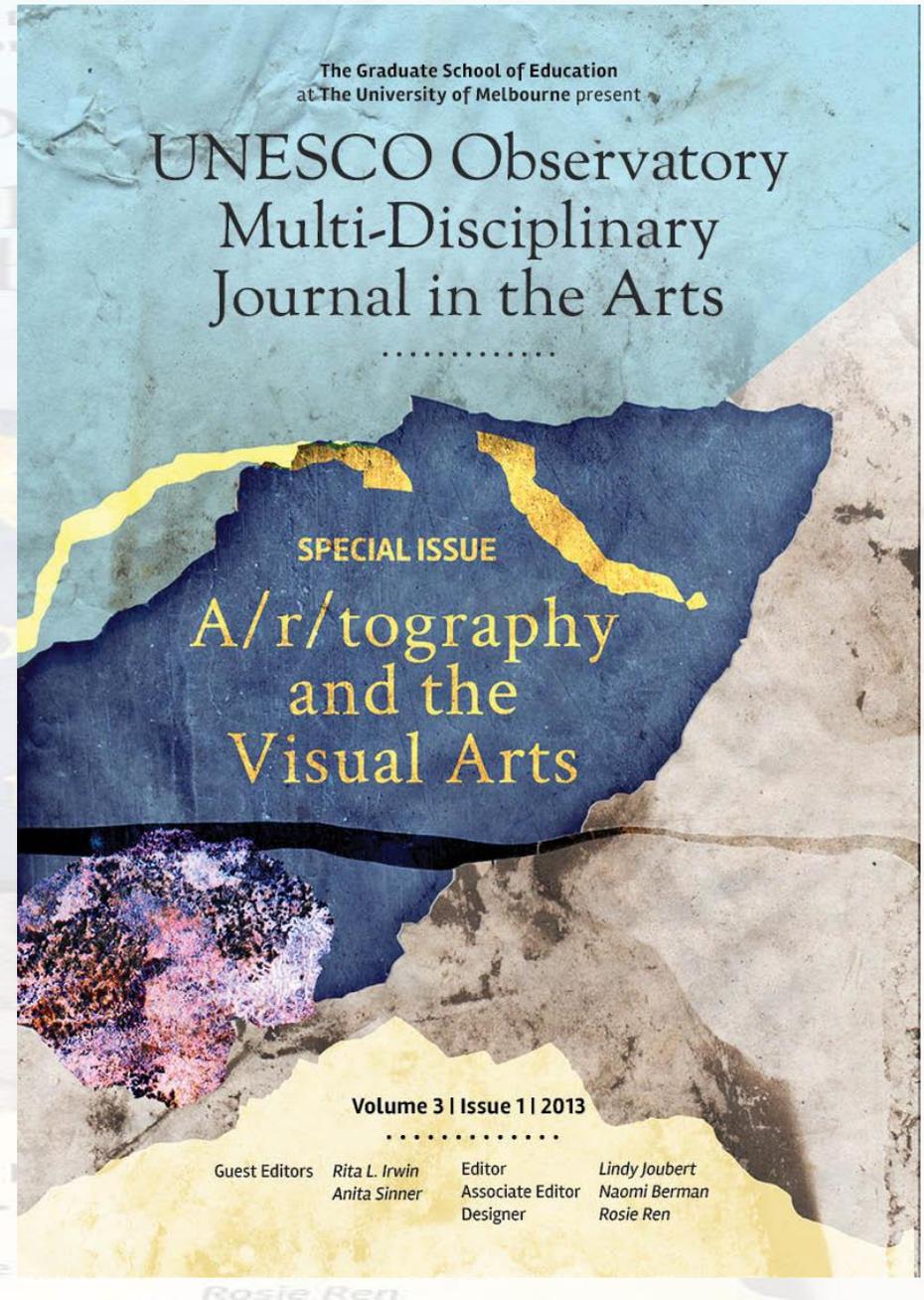
**Figure 6. Photo essay.** "Looking the expert who are looking at art, which looks to their viewers. n.5" by authors 2011. Organized with two digital photos. Top, "Appreciating women's portraits at Louvre", 2008 by R. Marín-Viadel with two indirect visual quotations from Vigée-Le Brun, left (1796) and right (1786); bottom "My students and photo projection" 2011 by J. Roldán with an indirect visual quotation from Daumier (c.1860-1870).



# in conversation ... interludes

a movement, a  
representation  
between parts  
of a larger  
production

[http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/UNESCO/ejournal/ejournal\\_vol3iss1.html](http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/UNESCO/ejournal/ejournal_vol3iss1.html)

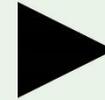


# Translated Energy

*Christy Ortiz*

## DESCRIPTION

This video relates to the exploration between my artist, teacher, and researcher selves. It is a visual metaphor that represents my experiences as a researcher during an inquiry process. The bike ride symbolizes the psychological and intuitive energies exerted throughout this process, translating them into an observable activity. Each scene makes reference to some key experiences: establishing a starting point, understanding the process as a journey, and adapting to changes when necessary. Although these elements are ephemeral, they hold no less value to those that are measurable. Additionally, there is great significance of these aspects within the at/tographic, in-between roles of the artist and teacher. As artists, a starting point begins with the first mark. As teachers, we adapt to the organic nature of classroom activities. Overall, it is within each of the artist, teacher and researcher roles, and their contiguous relations, where we develop and strengthen these intuitive energies.



Warp 1.9 by The Bloody Beetroots ft. Steve Aoki

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbWwVuO1PVU&feature=youtu.be>

# Artist/researcher/teacher in Transit

**Corinna Peterken**  
Doctoral Candidate  
Teaching Associate  
Monash University

## ABSTRACT

This collage is composed of items collected as I walked along the beach near my home on the Mornington Peninsula. As I gathered these pieces over many weeks I embraced the continual process of becoming artist/researcher/teacher (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo & Gouzouasis, 2008). In presenting my methodology in art works, images and poetry along with academic writing, new possibilities are opened and extended as they are taken up and used as a transitory space for understanding (Springgay, Irwin, Wilson Kind, 2005). As artist/researcher/teacher I am participating, creating and inquiring (Irwin & de Cossin, 2004) through a methodology of w(a/o)ndering, pondering and making. This research immerses me in playful living inquiry (Irwin, 2003) while becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) in transit. The fragments of self, lives and memories that emerge are collected and considered as they are juxtaposed and placed where they seem to fit. Through doing this, blurred subjectivities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) are with/in what is made and written; seen or unseen.

## KEYWORDS

*collect, transit, making, w(a/o)ndering, ponder, becoming*



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in conversation ...  
unfolding stories

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[http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/UNESCO/ejournal/ejournal\\_vol3iss2.html](http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/UNESCO/ejournal/ejournal_vol3iss2.html)

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Through a conversational forum, M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Agra Pardiñas and Cristina Trigo Martínez share a literary-visual assemblage exploring stories of teacher identity construction, memory, and contemporary art practice as an ongoing exchange that folds and unfolds over time.

## Excerpts and Dialogues for an Archive Shared Stories on Art Education

**M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Agra Pardiñas**

University of Santiago de Compostela  
SPAIN

**Cristina Trigo Martínez**

Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea  
(CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

### ABSTRACT

This text, built from the idea of a literary and visual assemblage, reflects on processes of construction of the Shared Stories project that was developed by Primary Teacher students of second year in the Educational Sciences Faculty of the University of Santiago de Compostela. The text is set out as a dialogue along different moments and among different actors. One of the voices belongs to M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Agra, with her questions as a teacher when formulating to her students a project based on the recovery of the memory of Arts Education, another to Cristina Trigo, who joins to show folds and corners of the story from the contemporary art point of view, and the rest of the voices to the students who are the authors of the project.

### KEYWORDS

*Relational Pedagogy; Art Teacher Education; Collaborative and Dialogical Research; Expanded Education; Multiple Narratives; Projects based in Processes; Contemporary Art; Visual and Literary Assembling; Construction of Situations; Experiences*

The a/r/tographic pulse of three special issues:  
a) bringing together transnational voices,  
b) offering unique versions of a/r/tography, and  
c) extending the original methodological structures first imagined a decade ago.



*There are some few things that cannot be explained with words. Sensations are difficult to externalize, to express with words. Sometimes we experiment such intense moments that the beating of our hearts should be read as a Morse code, and the surface of our skin as the writing of an ancient codex handwritten on parchment paper. Maybe, in this way, we could be better understood than with words structured in verbs, nouns, adjectives... We are talking about affections; about the body as a surface of feelings and senses, as a place in close relationship with the world; about a sensitive map. (Olivares, R. 2011, p.4)*

**MJ:** The fog diffuses the landscape; through the large windows it can be observed how different levels of depth of grey and ochre hues arise and announce to me that the autumn, I hope, will be radiant after a summer invaded by light and colour. Sitting at my table, with the computer on in front of me, I decide to start writing and recalling the project which I lived and shared with ninety students and many others whose stories I listened to. However what for and why? The project talks about the past, about other times, although my purpose is not this. Nevertheless when I evoke the process, the comings and goings of my memories come closer to other times and places.

My university students are in their second year of their degree in Primary Education. At the beginning of the academic year, I always wonder which are their expectations about the subject I teach, what do they expect from me? Which ideas do we start from? Do we know ourselves and each other? Which are our strong points? How could we embark on a collective action? What will be the most important thing? How am I going to organise the 50 hours of class? Which affections, attitudes, feelings, emotions, and sensations have we got about art in general and about contemporary art in particular? And about the art education we have received?

## FOLD 1: WHERE WALTER BENJAMIN LIVE

**C:** I am at my office faced with a blank page and surrounded by notebooks and books. I don't know how to begin to sew on the net that was created by Maria Jesús and her students. The Dvorak concert for cello sounds in my computer, but I also listen to some birds and to the sound track of a film coming from the movie room. Everything is taking place simultaneously, everything comes together; the voices are superimposed. Thinking about the work done by María Jesús' students, Walter Benjamin (Berlín, 1892- Portbou, 1940) appears in my mind. Apart from stressing the birth of new technologies, he understood that modernity involved a change in the representation and experience of the "space-time". Contemporary life entailed a change in the perception of space as well as in the logic of cultural representation. For thirteen years, Benjamin "built up" his work, *The Arcades Project* (1927-1940) that he could not see published. It was composed by juxtaposed excerpts: quotes, annotations, drafts. It was an open project, capable of multiple combinations. For Benjamin history is not linear but full of folds, of corners that we should survey. This implies travelling through the memory from what is small to the tiniest and from the tiniest to the minimal things. What this microcosm shows is increasingly closer to us. In his work, he relies on literary assemblage technique working as a junkman who does not subtract anything valuable nor describe, he only shows what he has found and offers it to the others. Watching this great showcase, every minute object in it acquires new meanings. We travel the past through the present. I decide to start tacking a dialogue on the stories that M<sup>a</sup> Jesús has sent me.

*John Berger said in his first book, A Painter of Today, that, in any discipline whatsoever, the creator rarely knows what he is doing, absorbed as he is in the immediate difficulties that have arisen and having only a slight intuition of what there actually exists beyond the most immediate. And that slight intuition, that fog which must be crossed over to arrive at the side of clarity, is the process we gaze at when admiring a sculpture by Giacometti or reading a poem by Leopardi. (Coixet /Berger, 2009, p. 14)*

**MJ:** The project we are about to start is a crossing. And we pass through the fog with a suitcase that is not ours, a suitcase full of a multitude of stories given to us so that we can make them our own.

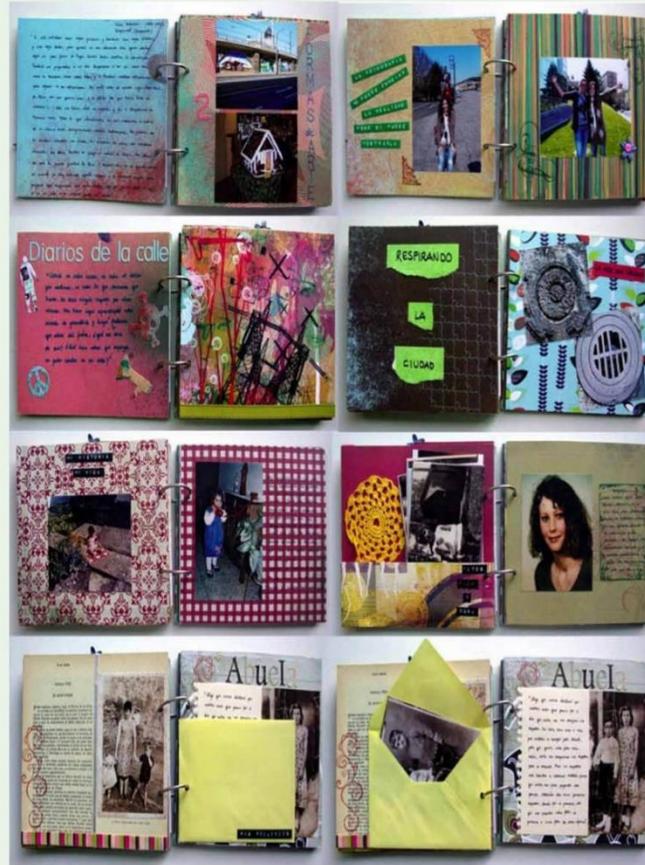
*Initially I feel confused, as it usually happens at the outset of something new. It's like pushing or better than pushing absorbing, the very own target absorbs you towards its essence. And in the meantime, you wonder, what am I doing? Where am I heading to? Will I ever reach somewhere? And I will. (Coixet/Berger, 2009, p. 77)*

## NOTES FOR A POSSIBLE DIARY

**MJ:** After having reflected about the above questions, the confusion I felt was general. It was still difficult to find a possible way to express everything that was taking place. We thought about a diary that would be our artist book. The time of writing in a diary is the time of looking back everything that has been harvested, hunted, absorbed during the day. It could be images, feelings, sensations or even a look of somebody we have met across. The senses converge and the word is born as an antidote against time.

As a community of inquiry, there appears to be an understanding of the concept of a/r/tography yet there is significant diversity in how a/r/tography is interpreted.

In this paper, the authors open spaces for the performance of research, a trend only just emerging in the social sciences in significant ways.



Apart from rescuing images, we play with words breaking them, turning them into onomatopoeias, into explosions; we create short stories with de pictures of Chema Madoz and Joan Brosa; we play to write this stories from the end to the beginning; we explore ourselves in other languages.

#### A GIVEN DAY IN MARCH: HAVING A COFFEE

**MJ:** We had a chat about artist books and travel notebooks. However, how do others do it? What do they look for? Who are they? We look for information and links with the personal project. We talked about the meaning of memory, of its value as something unique and unrepeatable and about artists who work with these ideas: Christian Boltanski (France, 1944), On Kawara (Japan, 1933) or Eva Koch (Denmark, 1953).

#### UN-FOLD 6: THE DWELLING OF THE VOICES OF EVA KOCH

**C:** *Villar* is a video installation of Eva Koch with six projections that was conceived as a visual collage that tells us, from different viewpoints; an experienced story lived during the Spanish Civil War in which five siblings were separated. Eva Koch's mother was one of the five. The artist searches for memory, facts, words and gestures. Every story goes beyond the personal to become universal. Universality of war in separation, sorrow, lost roots and death. Different testimonies which speak of the same, different ways of living the same experience. Screens which are activated or stopped by the presence of the spectator who with his/her movement are able to give voice or to silence. The multifaceted narrative which Lawrence Durrell announced in *The Alexandria Quartet* (1962), the technique of counterpoint which allows us to compose music for several voices, independent among them, but able to form harmonic combinations as a whole.



# *A/r/tographic movements ...*

A/r/tography may be described as a profound interruption within research, opening spaces for advocates and critics to collectively contribute to the evolution of a/r/tography in ways that are consistent with the theoretical orientation of relationality at the heart of this approach.

We acknowledge that a/r/tography, like all scholarship, is imperfect, suggesting movements over time and space as encounters, not a presumption of conclusions or static understandings within closed systems, but a living practice, mapped most recently in three special issues which demonstrate the changing parameters of a/r/tography.

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# A/r/tographic propositions ...

From a perspective of communities of practice, we continue to consider:

- 1) how relationships between art forms and social domains connect makers and materiality;
- 2) how the vitality of living in in-between spaces, where thirdness is a site of productive tensions that enlarges form, content and style of creative practice; and
- 3) how transdisciplinary forms of a/r/tography are sites of emerging, critical masses of relational knowledge, shifting the parameters of visual inquiry as disruptive of understood norms.

The special issues encapsulate how authors are theorizing and practicing a/r/tography as critical, experimental, reflective, speculative and evaluative engagements concerned with contemporary artistic practice and pedagogical encounters. This conversation continues in an upcoming special issue of a/r/tography with *Visual Inquiry: Learning and Teaching Art*, as well as plans for the introduction of a journal dedicated to a/r/tography and research-creation.