

A photograph of a person with long dark hair, wearing a pink t-shirt, painting yellow flowers on a white surface. The person is holding a paintbrush and is in the process of painting a yellow flower. There are several other yellow flowers already painted, and a small purple flower is also visible. In the foreground, there are paint containers for yellow, green, and blue, along with a paintbrush. The background is a plain white wall.

# BECOMING NOMADIC

PLAYFUL MATERIAL  
ENGAGEMENT IN ART  
CURRICULUM

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# BECOMING NOMADIC:

## PLAYFUL MATERIAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE ART CURRICULUM



In early childhood art education classrooms, experiences for children tend to focus on either process or product (activities designed simply for exploration and expression or over-planned and premeditated cookie cutter projects). However, it is the space in between these two polarities that I (as a teacher and researcher) am most interested in. I believe that within this “between space” dichotomies or truths can be challenged. We can move beyond process vs. product, freedom vs. structure, and content vs. form. We can create spaces that are multi-dimensional and provide children and adults with ways to create, play, think, explore, and reflect together through and with art.

The work that I will share with you today comes from a research project where I aimed to create this kind of between space. Over the course of ten weeks, I taught and engaged in research with a group of fourteen 3, 4, and 5-year-old children. Every Saturday the children came to an art class held on a university campus in the south west United States. For two and a half hours, they were invited to engage in a wide variety of artistic encounters that I designed for them. At its core, this space was designed to foster freedom and exploration. It aimed to be a place for children, not one where they were acted upon to produce a certain kind of pre-determined product or outcome (Dahlberg et al., 2013). The classroom space and art educators within it valued multiple perspectives and an appreciation for difference, possibility, fluidity, complexity, and ambiguity (Dahlberg et al., 2013).

The experiences offered for the children were grounded in a co-construction of knowledge and identity, occurring “not from young children being taught but from what children do themselves, as a consequence of their activities, relationships, and the resources available to them” (Dahlberg et al., 2013, pp. 80-81). As such, the curriculum in place was developed alongside and with the children rather than for them.



The children's ideas and interests guided the kinds of materials, artists, and experiences they engaged with, fostering their power and forming a type of lived (Cahill & Gibson, 2012) or emergent curriculum. Rather than focusing on predetermined learning outcomes, a lived curriculum focuses on the "doing, being, making, creating, and living qualities of learning experiences" (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007, p. 179). Within this lived or emergent curriculum model, teachers and children engage in both active exploration and creative production, without "complete certainty" of where it might take them (Malguzzi, 1993, p. 9). This type of collaborative inquiry between adults and children begins with an imagining of what is possible, rather than beginning with a final end point in mind, allowing learning experiences to "emerge uniquely with materials" (Cahill & Gibson, 2012, p. 98).



Within this particular art classroom context, the children began each moment of inquiry through exploration and play with materials, offering them the time and space to "express themselves in many languages" (Dahlberg et al. 2013, p. 81). In this way, art becomes a form of meaning making, used to help children realize their thoughts and actions, to form opinions, and to engage in relationships with other people (Knight, 2013). It is a pretext for dialogue and interaction, as a way for children to represent what they already know and what they desire to know, as a way for us to learn, and a way for children to communicate their experiences (Thompson, 2013).

The lived curriculum model embraces the idea children are capable of constructing knowledge through art experiences that are both guided and spontaneous; and that through art, children exhibit multiple ways of knowing, learning, and representing their thoughts, ideas, and theories (Tarr, 2008).

The idea of playful material engagement was at the core of the curricular model embraced within this art program. The physical classroom was thoughtfully curated to suggest an openness of possibility and interaction. Directly to the left upon entering was an array of two-dimensional materials organized by color – markers, colored pencils, sharpies, crayons, and construction paper. Available in the same area were other items like rulers, scissors, hole punchers, tape, pipe cleaners, and staplers. These materials were located directly near the children's sketchbooks, which were often the first things they worked on when they came in in the morning. In other areas of the room there were also different types and sizes of paper, watercolors, tempera paint, and a variety of loose parts for the children to use (both natural and manmade).

There were also two overhead projectors and a light table within the classroom. These materials were always available for children to use and placed in areas of the classroom that were accessible. In addition, every Saturday morning I introduced various material provocations with new and unique materials: fabric, wire, yarn, recycled objects, clay, wood, cardboard, etc. The children were invited to use these materials in any way they wanted. At some moments this resulted in waste, mess, and chaos, while at other moments the results were beautiful and unexpected creations, and joyful material manipulations.



In efforts to maintain a sense of routine for the children's experience in this program, we did have some broad curricular structures in place. When arriving, the children were invited to draw in their sketchbooks. These were voluntary drawing experiences, where they could create whatever they wanted using the two-dimensional materials available. After about 10 minutes I would invite the children to the carpet so we could talk about special materials available for the day, artists I thought they might be interested in, or small field trips planned. After this the children could choose how they spent their time. Many would return to the same materials over and over, or explore the new media available. Some would work alone, while many worked together or alongside each other. The art educators (me and two former undergraduate students of mine) would spend time with the children helping them, collaborating with them, and documenting their work.



Over the span of the ten-week program, I wanted to not only provide time and space for play and material engagement, but also introduce students to contemporary and historical artwork. During our morning carpet meetings, I would sometimes show large projections of artwork for us to discuss. We looked at the land art of Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Schilling, the sound suits created by Nick Cave, and prints by Jose Posada. We discussed these artworks using dialogue and conversation strategies. Following these large group presentations there were often invitations for the children based upon themes, subject matter, or materials found within the artwork discussed. The children had the choice whether to engage with these invitations or not.

Sometimes the work of artists was shared more subtly and interspersed throughout the classroom space. Alongside an invitation to create and build with wire were some printed examples of Picasso and Calder's work. Upon noticing the children's interest in castles, I hung some examples of castle paintings around the room. These were smaller introductions to art, meant to quietly inspire or provoke interest. Additionally, the program also involved two visits to our University art museum. During these visits the children took photographs of work they liked, created drawings, played games using certain artworks as starting points, and embraced embodied experiences – posing as figures they found in paintings, laying on the floor to alter their view, walked around finding works that excited them, and simply talked about what they were seeing.

One of the larger goals of this program – and my work with young people broadly – was to question how we can create more equalized and/or ethical interactions with children. In addition to embracing the living curricular model as well as playful material engagement, I want to briefly share one other idea today – fostering spaces for children to share their work on terms they help to create.







The culmination of these art classes was a public exhibition of the children's artwork, as well as an opening reception for the exhibition. This exhibition was conceptualized as a co-curatorial process. The children participated in the selection of the artwork to show (sometimes selecting work to show on their own and sometimes in collaboration with me), they decided and voted on the title of the exhibition, and they

made curatorial choices about how their work should be shown physically. Additionally, some of the children recorded audio statements about their work that were displayed next to the appropriate pieces through QR codes. The nature of collaborating with the children to make decisions about the exhibition created a show that was controlled, in part, by the children themselves. They shared the artwork they liked the most (or were the proudest of) on terms that they helped to create.

On our final Saturday class, we walked to the gallery together. All the selected work was there, framed but laying on the ground not yet on the walls. The children moved around slowly, weaving in and out of the artworks that lay framed on the floor (see Figure 27). Carefully, they searched for their own artwork, calling out to me or friends as they found pieces that they had both created and chosen for display.

Working with small groups of children at a time, I invited them to think about where they wished their own artwork would hang or sit in the gallery. They picked their framed pieces up carefully and made choices about what their exhibition should look like. The children relished in this power, sometimes spontaneously and sometimes more thoughtfully. Some of them made choices to display all their own work in one place, separate their work throughout the gallery, and how pieces should hang (side by side or one on top of another).

Public exhibitions of children's art communicate to both the children involved and the community at large that the children's art and ideas are important and valued. It shows that they have a point of view to share and that we (as adults and educators) care about their perspectives. Additionally, sharing children's work also helps to challenge long held ideas about what children are capable of, helping to create a strong and competent image of children. Offering children the opportunity to be involved in the creation of an exhibition pushes these ideas even further, encouraging them to make choices about how people see their artwork and positioning them as artists.



# MATERIAL ENGAGEMENT NARRATIVE: MAKING MARKS ON NATURE



While planning this program, I knew that I wanted to find a way to “teach” that would inherently challenge the traditional early childhood art experiences that were usually offered to children. One of the methods that I employed to directly engage in this was to gather the children together during our first class and ask them what kinds of art experiences they wished to have. During this meeting Alex replied that he really wanted to make art outside. Many of the other children agreed, and so for our second class I came up with some ideas about how the children might engage in this “make art outside” experience.

I shared the land art of Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Shilling with them before we moved outside, thinking that this might inspire creation with natural materials. Yet there was no formal lesson planned nor any type of required making. Together (children and adults), we carried various art making materials out to the courtyard. We brought natural materials as well as more traditional ones – sticks, rocks, leaves, pinecones, paper, string, watercolors, markers, etc. Some of the children even selected their own materials to bring outside – things that they really wanted to use in making, such as pipe cleaners. Some of the children were inspired by the artists that I had shared and set to work creating animal houses with natural materials.



## **“I’M GOING TO PAINT THE TREE”**

Elissa began her outdoor artmaking experience with a strong declaration of “I’m going to paint the tree.” She marched over to one of the large trees in the courtyard with a paintbrush full of watercolor in hand. After the initial marks had been made, breaking the conventional classroom custom of painting only on paper, other children joined in. Soon there were at least three other children who all worked alongside Elissa in her task of painting the tree.



Danielle and John seemed inspired by the idea of painting on a new and unconventional material. Rather than join in the tree painting, they embarked on a different route of “painting rocks”. For them, this was primarily a tactile and sensory experience, resulting in the dropping of small rocks into jars of water that were tinted with watercolor (see Figure 8). This was, clearly, how you painted rocks. Other children joined along and began painting pinecones as well.



Having observed the children’s desire to paint on natural materials, during our third class I offered them the opportunity to paint on things from nature inside the classroom. I proposed this project to the children at the end of our second class, after watching them paint rocks and trees, and many of them were very excited about this prospect. So the next week I offered the children pieces of bark, sticks, pinecones, and rocks (both large and small), as well as painting materials - pallets with paint, brushes, and small jars of water to wash their brushes. Though there was no direct instruction, the natural materials were offered in lieu of paper as an invitation to create using only the materials provided. John and Danielle, seeing some of the same materials they had enjoyed so much last week (the jars of water and small rocks) got to work creating in the same manner – they put rock after rock into the small jars of water until they began to overflow, spilling water all over the table and the floor (see Figure 8). While it was clearly my intent that there was no single way to explore these materials, this was not exactly what I had in mind. For safety reasons, I felt the need to intervene at this point. I was worried about children slipping on the water on the floor, so I stopped Danielle and John from “painting” any more rocks, and cleaned up the mess they had made.

In each class session I continued the practice of engaging in conversation with the children about things that they were interested in, and then attempted to bring these elements back into the classroom through various provocations or invitations. A few of the young girls expressed an interest in flowers, so I brought some into class during our fourth meeting to extend this inquiry. I offered two small bouquets of flowers on the light table, alongside magnifying glasses, painting materials, and paper. Two children engaged with this opportunity - Beth and Danielle. Beth participated in a very traditional way, the way I had originally imagined. She created two observational paintings – one of each bouquet. Danielle, however, interacted with these materials in a less conventional manner. Engaging once again in a more sensory and tactile experience, she used the paint and brushes available to paint on the flowers themselves. She created no art product per se, but more so used the materials available to participate in a creative experience, challenging the established ideas that both Beth and I had about the provocation itself. The painting of trees, rocks, and flowers, at their core, inherently confront established norms about behavior within an art educational space, while at the same time worked to reject traditional boundaries of materials and their appropriate uses.



# MATERIAL ENGAGEMENT NARRATIVE: THE POSSIBILITIES OF PAINT

On our second Saturday I offered the children the chance to engage with color mixing. They were given some small cups full of red, blue, yellow, and white paint along with empty pallets, brushes, and blank white paper. I encouraged them to experiment with mixing different colors of paint together to see what new colors they could make. This was a messy endeavor but for the most part the children working at this table kept their paint to their pallets and painted images with their new colors.

In contrast, Alex desired to embrace this activity with a greater sense of fluidity and playfulness. He used his hands and fingers to mix the paint together on the paper itself, bypassing the pallet and eventually extending beyond the paper onto the table. He created a rich brown color in the process. He used his fingers to manipulate the paint, taking it out of the cups and then pushing/pulling it all over the paper and table. Rather than using the paintbrushes, he used the paint cups themselves to make marks in the paint.

Beth was working next to Alex and had already mixed some lovely shades of pink that she used to paint a picture of two girls outdoors. However, most likely inspired by Alex's nontraditional use of the materials, she also began to explore the paint with her hands. Using the brush she added some color to the table (which was covered with a black plastic sheet) and began to use her fingers to mix it around. She then used the brush to add paint to her hands themselves, rejecting the pallet, the paper, and the table.

While paint is not normally perceived as a loose part, it can become one when used in exploration. This can happen when the

classroom is invented as a “laboratory type environment where they [children] can experiment, enjoy, and find out things for themselves” (Nicholson, 1971, p. 31). Due to the open nature of this classroom, the children felt free to use paint as a type of loose part, not feeling constrained by a brush, paper, or pallet. They were able to invent rather than follow directions. “Improvisation within accepted conventions is, of course, one of the features of creative activity in art” (Eisner, 1990, p. 46). Both Alex and Beth rejected using the paint in a conventional way, choosing instead to invent their own painting process. It is this quality of invention that loose parts possess, and what allows the paint to act as such. As Szekely (2015) notes, “play with interesting objects of all kinds stimulates creative thinking for all ages. Forms and toys that are open and least structured contribute the most opportunities to innovate” (p. 16).





Although it was my agenda to encourage play and exploration of materials, the children often pushed me to and beyond my comfort levels. On the seventh Saturday of class I stood near Ben as he approached one of the two painting easels in the room. They had small jars of tempera paint in front of them along with brushes and water, and paper in place. They were ready for use. Ben's interest however was in mixing the paint, and not on the paper. He poured the paint from one jar directly into another rather than mix on a pallet or the paper. This was certainly not my intention and the tension in me rose as the colors became muddled and mixed. But I did not stop him from mixing in this way. As Szekely (2015) notes, adults might want to recognize that in play, they do not have to be in charge. In fact, it might be useful to think of the child as the leader and the adult as the follower, where the adult takes direction and cues in order to become more familiar and comfortable with play. (p. 20). Ben was not only thinking about how to create new colors (as he additionally said), but also considering the way that the paint drips from the jars, how it looks as it blends together, and what happens when you mix large amounts of paint together.



Though I was frustrated by what I considered to be the ruining of my pure jars of paint, I remained by his side during this exploration and got him the materials he needed (empty jars) to further his investigation of color mixing and pouring. This release of control is important to fostering play, especially in an artmaking context, which traditionally tends to be fairly structured.



Playwork theory puts the children's play at the forefront and tries to encourage the adult playworkers to follow rather than lead. Balke (1997) posits that in moments of play, adults' wishes may not be what is most important for the child at the moment, however, and the child's preferred activity may lead to more learning than would a structured learning environment. It is a question of timing: who is dominating the time and space made available for the child. (p. 357) This idea asks us to carefully consider what it is we are hoping for children to learn or experience in spaces of education. Do we want them to know simply what we want them to know? Or do we want to create spaces where they experiment and play in order to discover what they themselves want (or need) to know? Bruner (1986) notes, "in play, we transform the world according to our desires, while in learning we transform ourselves better to conform to the structure of the world" (p. 78). This classroom was transformed by the children rather than vice versa.

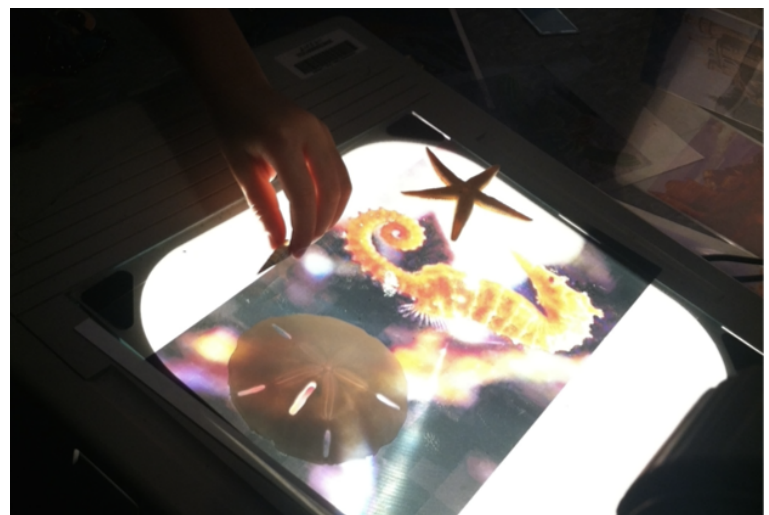
**"I'M JUST GONNA MAKE NEW PAINT...SEE WHAT HAPPENS WITH SO MUCH. I'VE NEVER TRIED THAT...AFTER I PUT THESE COLORS INSIDE HERE I'LL MIX THE YELLOW AND THEN THIS BECAUSE THOSE ONES HAVEN'T BEEN MIXED..."**

# MATERIAL ENGAGEMENT NARRATIVE: PROJECTOR STORIES

During the length of this program there were some materials that were constantly available for the children to work with. Among those were two old overhead projectors. Accompanying these projectors were various solid, transparent, and translucent loose parts; transparency images of things the children expressed interest in (such as castles, volcanoes, rainbows, and underwater animals) and things I had offered (such as desert scenes and cacti); as well as blank transparency sheets that could be drawn on.

These projectors were a constant source of interaction among the children, and most often they used these materials as I had assumed they would. They placed materials on the projectors that created impermanent designs, interacted with the projections on the wall physically, and even took photographs of their work. However, the open ended nature of the materials and the lack of direct instruction on how they should/could be used did open up possibilities for the children to develop their own ideas about what they could create with what they were offered.

On the second day of Wildcat Art, Saul began to spend time with the overhead projectors and specifically the image transparencies that accompanied them. Amanda noted him sitting on the floor in front of one of the projectors with some of the image transparencies alongside him. After putting a castle image on the projector, he proclaimed, "Look you can see the castle up on the wall!" He then found a volcano transparency and put it on top of the castle one, declaring, "I made the castle on fire! I put the volcano on the castle and now it is on fire!" At the very end of class, with his mother impatiently waiting, Saul extended this





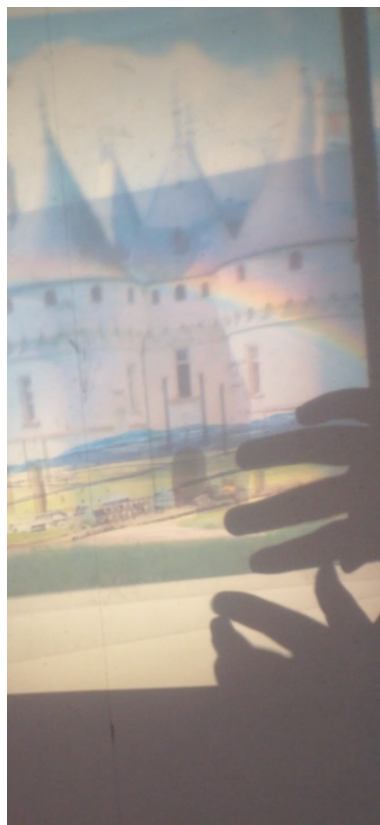
interest in layering the transparencies into a storytelling experience. Still sitting on the floor, he explored layering a volcano image over a desert landscape, noting, “and finally when someone was walking across the desert they realized ‘huh! This desert was once a volcano!’”

Though I’ve utilized these same materials with various children over the course of many years, I had never observed this type of storytelling before – it was not something that I was prepared for. However, it was something that was repeated by Saul as well as by Seth throughout Wildcat Art and extended into video documentation as well. During our third class, Seth asked me to film a story he had created with the transparencies. Employing the same technique as Saul, he layered each transparency on top of another, adding a new one with each arc of the story (see Figure 5).

Seth, enjoying the experience of both storytelling and using the projector, retold this story over and over. While a few words changed each time, the essence of his story remained the same. While he worked, he faced away from the wall, looking primarily at the projector as he added each new image, focusing on the story arcs rather than the images he was projecting.

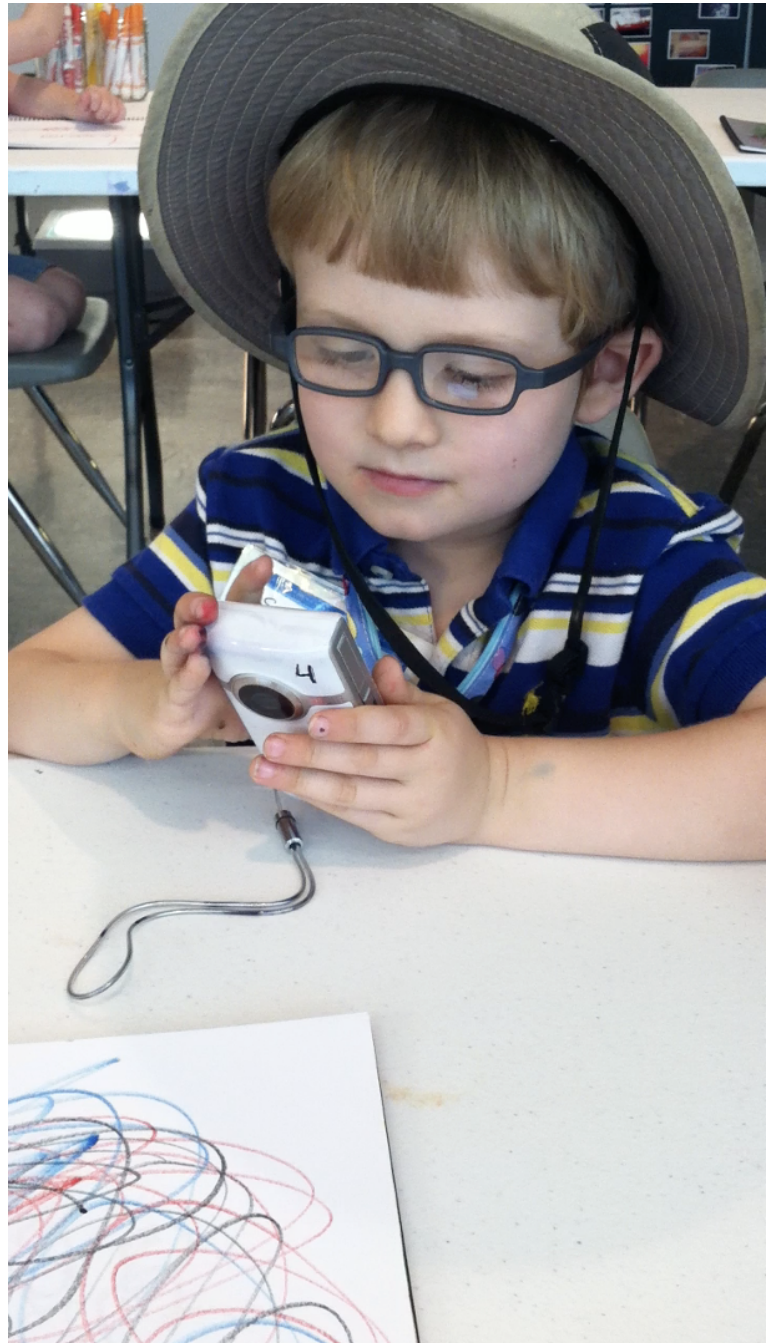
During his second retelling of the story, which was also being video recorded, I decided to extend Seth’s experience by asking him to focus on the projection itself rather than the story. As Seth moved each single transparency off the projector to make the next image visible, he placed them down on the floor, in a single line, reflecting the order of the images and thus, the story. When our recording was done, I noted his careful arrangement of the transparencies and he asked me to take a photograph of the line of images.

Both Seth and Saul enjoyed telling stories with the projector images, and built off each other’s knowledge and experience within this process. The chaotic nature of the Wildcat Art classes made it hard to note exactly how these ideas were communicated among Saul and Seth, however the experiences recorded through classroom documentation help to create some sort of timeline. Saul’s first storytelling encounter most likely inspired Seth to do the same, and Seth’s realization of the effects of layering did not go unnoticed by Saul. During our fourth class, Saul created another story with the images, this time rejecting the layering technique and taking up Seth’s process of moving each transparency aside as the story unfolded.



# MATERIAL ENGAGEMENT NARRATIVE: STORYTELLING + A WIRE ANIMAL BATTLE

Elements of storytelling were also very prevalent within this classroom. Though they were not specifically asked to, the children often used the various materials in the classroom to engage in elaborate play and storytelling. Saul in particular had a passion for this! He would work, silent and dedicated, on stories in his sketchbook. Sometimes his stories were encapsulated in a single page, while others spanned several pages. Saul would frequently pull the teachers in the class aside to share his stories. We would often ask to photograph his drawings, and eventually this progressed into Saul asking us to film him sharing his stories. He would show his drawing and narrate the story for digital documentation, always asking to view the video once it was complete.





One morning, he spent a long time creating four different animal sculptures out of wire. His construction of these animals occurred alongside Jessica (one of the art teachers), who sat with him during the whole process. She created photographs and videos of his artistic process, and then he requested that she take a video of the animal fight.



Jessica reflects that, “There was a lot of problem solving while making these animals and Saul talked out loud while thinking of the possibilities and processes. For the elephant he told me to do the feet, I suggested he do the feet and he said, “let’s both do the feet” and we each took one to work on. After all of the creatures were finished there was a fight between them and he wanted me to record it; the giraffe was the only survivor...Afterwards he wanted to watch the video. “That was fun.” He smashed the remaining creatures up even more but agreed to let us keep the giraffe for the art show despite initially wanting to take it home to show his mom and dad. “Now they look just like one piece of wire all smashed up. They will know next time.”

Children can really only truly play and be creative when they have a space that is open to their needs, interests, and desires as well as materials to manipulate. Nicholson (1971) argues that “in any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity, and the possibility of discovery, are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it” (p. 30). He posits that there is a direct correlation between creativity and the inclusion of loose parts in play spaces.

In this program the children played with materials and explored what they were capable of in ways that I hadn’t imagined. Sometimes their work was about process. Saul’s wire animals serve as one example. He spent significant time with Jessica creating them, but at the end was happy to ball them up into various wire mounds. While the video of the animal’s interactions remains (and perhaps was the product he was most interested in), the wire sculptures themselves were simply destroyed.



The opportunities to engage in both process and product orientated artmaking experiences communicated to the children that their experience playing with materials was just as important as what they are able to make. When they spent time learning the language of media, they seemed to feel more comfortable manipulating that media in order to communicate their ideas. This is powerful because it positions them as knowledge holders who have important things to say and are capable of communicating these things in interesting ways.

# WEAVING IN THEORY: BEING NOMADIC

The opportunities for the children to explore the possibilities of materials and engage in artmaking inspired by their own ideas was possible because the classroom was constructed as a space of possibility and fluidity. Drawing upon the theories of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), this classroom can be understood as a type of nomadic space characterized by change, movement, and improvisation rather than rules and structure (Sherbine & Boldt, 2013).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) introduce the idea of the nomadic first through a description of “nomos” - a way of arranging people, thoughts, or spaces “that does not rely on an organization or permanent structure” (Roffe, 2005, p. 184). It stands in contrast to “logos,” a space where “everything has its right place” (p. 185). Logos space is characterized by boundaries while nomos space is open and lacks intrinsic structure.



They also present the idea of nomadic as being a “smooth space,” a space that is always in a state of multiplicity (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 371). The smooth space is flexible and does not require movement in any singular way or direction. Experience within this type of space is situational because the space is always in a constant state of flux.



Through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) traditional schools and classrooms do not function as open, smooth, nomadic spaces. They are, in fact, quite the opposite. They are governed by structure; there are certain ways to exist as teacher and student within a specific type of classroom and there is often little room for negotiation of these roles. Its curriculum functions in a similar fashion, grounded in notions of “sameness” (Sherbine & Boldt, 2013, p. 79) or commonality. Classrooms are traditionally not open, but built with “walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 381).



The experiences I shared earlier within this presentation were possible because the classroom was constructed as a type of smooth nomadic space. There was no single way to be or exist in the classroom. Neither the space nor the experiences within it were defined in advance. Rather, they were constructed and altered as children and adults moved within it and created it. The notion of movement grounds this classroom as a nomadic space.

**THERE IS A “FREEDOM TO WANDER, TO MAKE USE OF THE KNOWN WHILE PURSUING THE NEW” (SHERBINE AND BOLDT, 2013, P. 84).**

This quality of movement was evident within the classroom, and grew as the children became more comfortable with the idea of this space as nomadic. The children became more comfortable with the inherent movement within this space as the weeks went on, and they became, in essence, nomads. They moved from point to point, from process to process, from choice to choice. However, there were no predetermined paths for them to follow; how they moved among these points was not laid out in advance. They could interact with each process as they wished or even not at all. There were no required activities or means to engage with the provocations offered.

The children’s rejection of the traditional boundaries of materials can be understood as a type of nomadic creation. In these moments, they were making in these types of in-between paths, challenging preconceived trajectories. In a way, the materials and the space both became nomadic as well – there was no single way to use or create with them or in them. The trees outside became a canvas for painting, a place to put a birdhouse, and an offering of shade to play under. The flowers in the classroom offered something beautiful to look at and a pliable surface for paint. The classroom functioned as a space that did not limit them with “borders or enclosures” but rather encouraged multiple ways of knowing, being, and interaction.



In this space there were no required ways of being; children were free to pursue their own interests, desires, and actions. They were nomads. Conceptualized in this way, the classroom was, in essence, created by the experiences of those within it. Each child’s (or adult’s) actions and experiences affected everyone else and their experiences. Embracing the nomadic allowed the children to reject the boundaries and associations that come with traditional classroom spaces. Additionally, they developed a level of control over the space because their actions helped to shape it.



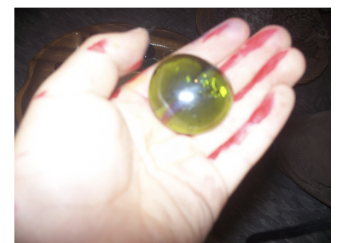
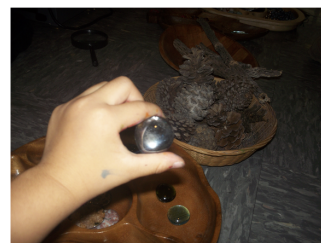


**"THE NOMADIC TRAJECTORY... [IS] AN OPEN SPACE, ONE THAT IS INDEFINITE...A SPACE WITHOUT BORDERS OR ENCLOSURE" (DELEUZE AND GUATTARI, 1987, P. 380).**

As they became more comfortable with the classroom, the values that undergirded it, and the materials available, they began to create in unexpected ways and affect each other's experiences. As Seth's and Saul's projector stories developed over numerous classes, it became clear that while they created them primarily independently, the actions of the other were taken into consideration and built upon. They were not offered the projectors and transparencies with specific outcomes or required uses, but were given the freedom to engage with these materials as they would. As such, their interactions with the materials grew and developed based on each other's experiences rather than a singular way of knowing or using. This in turn affected what was possible to create within the classroom space itself.

In this type of shifting space, the nature of teaching, learning and creating can be altered in meaningful ways that are not always foreseeable. It creates a space where it is possible to follow rather than copy (Roffe, 2005). Copying would suggest a standardized way to use or do something based on the way it has been done in the past. Materials are used in certain ways, children engage in prescribed activities, and both children and teachers live out their traditional educational roles. Yet the notion of following creates a different kind of space. Following suggests an exploration of ideas, the ability to go in multiple directions or travel various paths. The provocation of the flowers described earlier offers a way to think about this notion of following in the classroom. The flowers were not presented as a closed material; they were simply introduced into the space alongside other materials. While Beth chose to paint them in an observational sense, Danielle painted them in a literal sense. Because of how the flowers, as a material, were offered, a space was created where the children were encouraged to follow.

As the children made the space what it was due to their choices and actions, the space in turn helped to "make" the children, their experiences, and their artistic creations. By embracing qualities of the nomadic in the classroom, the atmosphere of the space helped the children to understand that their ideas and ways of being are just as important as the teachers'. The welcoming of their own artistic theories, projects, and materials communicates to the children that their own beliefs and actions are worthwhile; that they have important ideas that deserve to be developed and heard.





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