Creative Collaboration in Art Practice, Research, and Pedagogy
Creative Collaboration in Art Practice, Research, and Pedagogy

Edited by
M. Kathryn Shields and Sunny Spillane

Cambridge Scholars Publishing
To our friends and family, especially at SECAC, who make collaborating worthwhile.

In memory of
Nancy N. Shields
&
Mary H. McLaughlin

Stronger together.
—Hillary Clinton
Figure 0.1 Mark Dixon in performance with “Invisible.”
# Table of Contents

List of Illustrations ........................................................................................................... xi

Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
Redefining Creativity through Collaboration

**Part 1: Fear and Risk**

Chapter 1.0 ......................................................................................................................... 9
Fear and Risk
Sunny Spillane

Chapter 1.1 ......................................................................................................................... 17
Embodying Reciprocal Relationships in Participatory Art Education Practices
Sunny Spillane

Chapter 1.2 ......................................................................................................................... 33
Inspired by Monsters
Wendy DesChene and Jeff Schmuki

Chapter 1.3 ......................................................................................................................... 47
Outliers, Fringes, Speculation, and Complicity: On Making and Teaching Complex, Contradictory Art
Heather Harvey

Chapter 1.4 ......................................................................................................................... 63
Why Collaborate at University?
Scott Betz

Chapter 1.5 ......................................................................................................................... 79
On the Collaborative Spectrum: Stories of Collaboration and its Pedagogy
Mark Dixon
**Part 2: Shifting Boundaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Shifting Boundaries</td>
<td>Sunny Spillane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Transnational Queerings by the Post <em>Natyam</em> Collective</td>
<td>Cynthia Ling Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The Cultural Universality of Sacred Geometry</td>
<td>Reni Gower and Jorge Benitez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Otto Neurath’s Social History of Art</td>
<td>Benjamin Benus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>The Remaking Language Project</td>
<td>Meena Khalili and Brent Dedas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td><em>A Brave</em> Collaboration: A Case Study of Collaborative Dynamics and Collective Imagination within the Pixar Art Department</td>
<td>Heather Holian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Re-membrance and Re-placement: Paddling towards Collaboration with the Waters that Run through Us</td>
<td>Maia Dery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 3: Friendship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>M. Kathryn Shields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Rethinking Marcel Duchamp’s <em>Fountain</em> as a Collaborative Process</td>
<td>Bradley Bailey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3.2 .................................................................................................................. 267
Oppressor/Oppressed (%) Drawings
Matt Shelton and Nikolai Mahesh Noel

Chapter 3.3 .................................................................................................................. 279
Friendship Networks: Collaborative Art Practices in Socialist Hungary
Izabel Galliera

Chapter 3.4 .................................................................................................................. 293
In Cahoots: Outdoor Public Sculpture, Spaceshifts, and Colonel Crackers
Jenny K. Hager

Chapter 3.5 .................................................................................................................. 311
Getting the Lead Out: Mel Chin’s Fundred Project for New Orleans
Kathryn Shields

Chapter 3.6 .................................................................................................................. 323
Collaboration Goldmine: Tattoo Parlor Creative Process
Matt Tullis

Part 4: Serendipity

Chapter 4.0 .................................................................................................................. 329
Serendipity
M. Kathryn Shields

Chapter 4.1 .................................................................................................................. 343
Digital and Open Source Tools in a Collaborative Arts Praxis
Markus Vogl and Margarita Benitez

Chapter 4.2 .................................................................................................................. 357
Museum as Medium: A Collaborative Conversation
Stephanie Sherman and George Scheer

Chapter 4.3 .................................................................................................................. 371
The Question of Animals and Being
Linda Brown

Chapter 4.4 .................................................................................................................. 385
Everyone Was There: Travel Desk at the San Diego International Airport
Sheryl Oring
Chapter 4.5 .................................................................................................................. 391
Transmogrify
Jack Arthur Wood, Jr.

Chapter 4.6 .................................................................................................................. 395
Wind Drawings: A Partnership with the Invisible
Mark Nystrom

Contributors.................................................................................................................. 399
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


Colorplate 1.4: Bettina Semmer. 1991. Untitled (B. with Spaghetti), oil and gouache on canvas, 200 x 200 cm. Photo courtesy of Bettina Semmer.


Colorplate 2.1: Glimpses from the Post Natyam Collective’s *Queering Abhinaya* process. Photographs by Andrei Andreev.

Colorplate 2.2: Jorge Benitez and Susan Schöl Performance at VCUQ, 2013. Photo courtesy of Reni Gower with permission to print granted by the artists.

Colorplate 2.3: Chart from the booklet depicting student enrollments at University of Leiden 1575 to 1924. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Colorplate 2.4: Meena Khalili and Brent Dedas, Student work from *Remaking Language* project. Photo courtesy of Meena Khalili and Brent Dedas.

Colorplate 2.5: In the *Brave* art room, co-director Steve Purcell (left) discusses crew artwork with production designer Steve Pilcher (right), director Mark Andrews (behind, resting on table) and members of the *Brave* art team. ©Disney•Pixar

Colorplate 2.6: Maia Dery, untitled photograph, 2016. Courtesy of Maia Dery.


Colorplate 3.4: Performance of “Volcano Furnace + Flight of the Phoenix” at Jāņi Festival for the 7th International Conference on Contemporary Cast Iron Art in Latvia. Source: © Gerhard Haug, Berlin, Germany, June 2014.

Colorplate 3.6: Brad Ausbrooks and Matt Tullis. Best Session Ever. Photo courtesy of Matt Tullis.


Colorplate 4.2: Natural History (2014). Elsewhere’s entryway installation mimics the store’s original (dis)order through a sculptural index of the material cultures and inventories contained in the collection. Courtesy of Elsewhere.

Colorplate 4.4: Sheryl Oring, Travel Desk. Photo by Dhanraj Emanuel, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

Colorplate 4.5: Jack Wood surrounded by prints from the portfolio, 2017. Source: Jack Wood, Photograph courtesy of Lars Roeder.


Figure 0.1 Mark Dixon performing “The New Obsolete” with Invisible, 2012.
Figure 1.1.1: Sunny Spillane, All Tomorrow’s Parties, performance at 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL, 2012. Courtesy of Adriane Pereira.
Figure 1.1.2: Sunny Spillane, All Tomorrow’s Parties, performance at 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL, 2012. Courtesy of Adriane Pereira.
Figure 1.1.3: Sunny Spillane, All Tomorrow’s Parties, performance at 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL, 2012. Courtesy of Adriane Pereira.
Figure 1.1.4: Sunny Spillane, All Tomorrow’s Parties, performance at 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL, 2012. Courtesy of Adriane Pereira.
Figure 1.1.5: Sunny Spillane, All Tomorrow’s Parties, performance at 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL, 2012. Courtesy of Adriane Pereira.
Figure 1.1.6: Sunny Spillane, All Tomorrow’s Parties, performance at 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL, 2012. Courtesy of Adriane Pereira.
Figure 1.1.7: Sunny Spillane, All Tomorrow’s Parties, performance at 621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL, 2012. Courtesy of Adriane Pereira.
Figure 1.2.1: PlantBot Genetics, Public Event with ArtLab and Moth Tents. Photo courtesy of Wendy DesChene and Jeff Schmuki.
Figure 1.3.1: Heather Harvey, Hole Drawing (Smith Chart). 2009. From the exhibition Fractious Happy at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts. Courtesy of the author.
Figure 1.3.2: Heather Harvey, . . . into this honeyed presence strewn, 2010. From an exhibition at University of Virginia’s College at Wise. Courtesy of the author.
Figure 1.3.3: Heather Harvey, Solid Objects and the Wandering Clew, 2012-14. Found objects from daily walking practice. Courtesy of the author.
Figure 1.3.4: Heather Harvey, Feynman’s Sister and Other Space Weather Hazards, 2015. From exhibition at VisArts at Rockville. Courtesy of the author.
Figure 1.3.5: This Used to be a Racquetball Court... (and it bothers you more than it bothers me), a site-specific exhibition created collaboratively by students in Art 394 Installation/Site Specific class at Washington College, Chestertown, MD, installed in a racquetball court in the college’s Johnson Fitness Center. Courtesy of the author.
Figure 1.4.1: Author’s Venn Diagram illustrating the overlap of roles and time between fatherhood and profession.

Figure 1.4.2: Bettina Semmer. 1991. Untitled (B. with Spaghetti), oil and gouache on canvas, 200 x 200 cm.

Figure 1.4.3: Center for Design Innovation. Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Figure 1.4.4: Michael Wegerer, Barbara Holer, Richard Phillips, and Scott Betz. 2015. “LOOP” performance view, Kunstlerhaus Museum, Vienna.

Figure 1.4.5: Michael Wegerer, Barbara Holer, Richard Phillips, and Scott Betz. 2015. “LOOP,” Kunstlerhaus Museum, Vienna.

Figure 1.4.6: Scott Betz, Will Betz, and Kate Betz. 2015. “How to Fold,” performative installation including printed maps and video, Kunstlerhaus Museum, Vienna.

Figure 1.5.1: Kitchen Renovation Dinner Theatre, Pictured: Liz Seymour and Beth Nixon, 2003. Video still: Mark Dixon.

Figure 1.5.2: Invisible performing The New Obsolete, 2012. Photo: Alex Maness

Figure 2.1.1 Meena Murugesan in Post-Colonial Blueberry Study (video still). Courtesy of Meena Murugesan.

Figure 2.1.2 Shyamala Moorty in I Am (Not) (video still). Courtesy of Shyamala Moorty.

Figure 2.1.3 Shyamala Moorty in I Am (Not) (video still). Courtesy of Shyamala Moorty.

Figure 2.1.4 Sandra Chatterjee in Maud Allan Study. Photograph by Andrei Andreev.

Figure 2.1.5 Sandra Chatterjee in Maud Allan Study. Photograph by Andrei Andreev.

Figure 2.2.1: Reni Gower, Papercuts: Emerald / Detail, 2013, 81" x 56", Acrylic on hand cut paper. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.2.2: Jorge Benitez, Courtyard, 2013, 11” x 15” Graphite on Arches paper.

Chapter 2.2.3: Reni Gower, Papercuts: Cobalt, 2013, 81” x 56”, Acrylic on hand cut paper. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2.2.4: Jorge Benitez, Azulejos, 2014, 24” x 36”, Graphite / ink on architectural vellum. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Figure 2.2.5: Top Left: Julia Townsend, Untitled / Detail, 2013, 72” x 48”, Hand cut paper and wall tracing

Bottom Left: Hanane Korchi, Dancing Buds / Detail, 2013, 80” x 10”, Hand cut paper

Top Right: Mohammed Saleh Amin, Untitled / Detail, 2013, 37” x 30”, Hand cut paper

Bottom Right: Sahebzada, Untitled / Detail, 60” x 10”, Graphite tracing

All photos courtesy of Reni Gower with permission to print granted by the artists.

Figure 2.2.6: Jorge Benitez and Susan Schüld Performance at VCUQ, 2013. Photo courtesy of Reni Gower with permission to print granted by the artists.

Figure 2.2.7: Geometric Aljamía; a Cultural Transliteration at VCUQ, 2013. Reni Gower (left to right) Papercuts: White/copper, Papercuts: White/emerald, Papercuts: White/cobalt (81” x 56” / each). Photo courtesy of Reni Gower with permission to print granted by the artists.
Figure 2.3.1: Cover to the booklet accompanying the exhibition *Rondom Rembrandt*, 1938. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.2: Exhibition panel showing the numbers of “Rembrandt’s students and painters influenced by him.” Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.3: Schematic drawing showing the approximate scale and interactive character of the exhibition. A visitor is depicted participating in a game in which he selects the columns in which artworks and architecture are correctly grouped together. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.4: Chart from the booklet illustrating fluctuations in Leiden’s textile industry output from 1400 to 1850. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.5: Chart from the booklet depicting lifespans of Rembrandt and his family members. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.6: Exhibition panel depicting the distribution of Rembrandt’s paintings in Dutch collections. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.7: Chart from the booklet depicting student enrollments at University of Leiden 1575 to 1924. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.8: Exhibition panel depicting Rembrandt’s “contemporaries and world events.” Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.9: Exhibition panel comparing “the subjects and destinations” of Rubens’ and Rembrandt’s paintings. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.10: Photomontage illustrating Neurath’s approach to exhibition design, ca. 1939. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.3.11: New Year’s greeting card from the International Foundation for Visual Education, 1938. Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection, University of Reading.

Figure 2.4.1: Pencil sketches on tracing paper exploring combination options of sans serif letterforms to create the 27th letter of the alphabet by graphic design student Eugene Botchway. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.2: Pencil sketches on tracing paper exploring combination options of serif letterforms to create the 27th letter of the alphabet by graphic design student Eugene Botchway. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.3: Early digital sketches by graphic design student Chancellor Freels. *Photo in Murfreesboro, TN by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.4: Final printed concept showing refined hierarchy, layout and long form text setting, and contrast relationships by graphic design student Chancellor Freels. *Photo in Murfreesboro, TN by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.5: Final printed concept by graphic design student Shaunice Jones. At this point students began to utilize hand-drawn elements in their posters,
inspired by their drawing practice and use of spray paint. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.6: Early hand-drawn sketch phase of the poster project addressing layout concerns and curiosities by graphic design student Kassidy White. *Photo in Murfreesboro, TN by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.7: From hand-drawn sketch to on-screen digital sketch, graphic design student Kassidy White translates her ideas from paper to pixel. *Photo in Murfreesboro, TN by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.8: Preparing for the collaboration, graphic design student Kiera Jane creates her stencils by projecting her design and outlining it on Bristol drawing paper. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.9: Graphic design student Eugene Botchway cutting his stencils from his Bristol paper tracings. In this stage students had to be careful not to lose their counterforms from their typographic shapes. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.10: Graphic design student Chancellor Freels (Middle Tennessee State University) places his first layer of 30% grey spray paint to begin the collaboration process with his painting student partner at Western Kentucky University. *Photo in Murfreesboro, TN by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.11: In-process image of first layer application of 30% grey spray paint using Bristol stencils on Arches water color paper. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.12: Second layer color application work by painting students at Western Kentucky University, responding to the previous students’ marks. *Photo in Bowling Green, KY by Brent Dedas.*

Figure 2.4.13: Detail of second layer color application work by painting student Courtney Carter at Western Kentucky University. *Photo in Bowling Green, KY by Brent Dedas.*

Figure 2.4.14: Remaking Language series in process of drying, hanging in the halls of the Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center at Western Kentucky University. *Photo in Bowling Green, KY by Brent Dedas.*

Figure 2.4.15: Graphic design student Shaunice Jones pondering her next mark, responding to her collaborator’s work. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.16: Graphic design student Shawn Gray adding the final layer of contrast with 100% black spray paint to his part of the collaborative series. *Photo in Petersburg, VA by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.17: In-process image layer with grey, color and black contrast. *Photo by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.18: In-process image layer with grey, color and black contrast. *Photo by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.19: Final layer in the process with added white highlights. *Photo by Meena Khalili.*

Figure 2.4.20: Final layer in the process with added white highlights. *Photo by Meena Khalili.*
Figure 2.4.21 – 2.4.28: Remaking Language Project selected paintings. Photo by Meena Khalili.

Figure 2.5.1: Tia Kratter, Highlands landscape study, acrylic, 2007. ©Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.5.2: Steve Purcell, Study of Dun Carloway Broch, Isle of Lewis, watercolor, 2006. © Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.5.3: Steve Pilcher, Highlands landscape study, digital, 2007. ©Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.5.4: Bill Cone, Highlands landscape study, pastel, 2006. © Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.5.5: Matt Nolte, Study for Mum-bear and Merida, pencil, 2007. ©Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.5.6: Matt Nolte, Crow, clay, 2011. © Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.5.7: Nelson Bohol, model of Castle DunBroch set, clay and wood, 2008. © Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.5.8: Tia Kratter, Standing Stones, acrylic on foam, 2008. © Disney●Pixar

Figure 2.6.1: Maia Dery, untitled photograph, 2016. Courtesy of Maia Dery.

Figure 2.6.2: Maia Dery, untitled photograph, 2016. Courtesy of Maia Dery.

Figure 3.1.1: “The,” Rogue (October 1916), p. 2.

Figure 3.1.2: “The Richard Mutt Case,” The Blind Man, no. 2 (May 1917). Francis M. Naumann Fine Art, New York.

Figure 3.1.3: Henri-Pierre Roché, Marcel Duchamp’s studio at 33 West 67th Street, 1917-18. Jean-Jacques Lebel Archive, Paris.

Figure 3.2.1: Nikolai Mahesh Noel, “Maintain,” public performance, Richmond, VA. October 2011. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Figure 3.2.2: Nikolai Mahesh Noel and Matthew P. Shelton, “Number 6,” from The Oppressor/Oppressed (%) Drawings, graphite, acrylic, and tea on paper, 2011. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Figure 3.2.3: Nikolai Mahesh Noel and Matthew P. Shelton, “Number 6” (detail), from The Oppressor/Oppressed (%) Drawings, graphite, acrylic, and tea on paper, 2011. Photo courtesy of the authors.


Figure 3.3.2: Tamás Szentjóby, Expulsion Exercise: Punishment-Preventive Auto-Therapy. Photograph documenting performance at Chapel Studio in Balatonboglár, 1972. Photo copyright György Galántai. Courtesy Artpool Art Research Center.

Figure 3.3.3: Laszló Beke, The Meeting of Czechoslovakian and Hungarian Artists, 1972, Chapel Studio in Balatonboglár. Installation View. Photo copyright György Galántai. Courtesy Artpool Art Research Center.

Figure 3.4.1: “Colonel Crackers” at Hemming Park during the “One Spark” festival, downtown Jacksonville, FL. Source: © Jenny K. Hager, March 2014.

Figure 3.4.2: “Spaceshifts” performance in Jacksonville City Hall Windows during the “One Spark Festival,” downtown Jacksonville, FL. Source: © Jenny K. Hager, March 2014.
Figure 3.4.3: D. Lance Vickery’s “Burdens of Flight” at “Sculpture Walk,” Jacksonville, FL. Source: © Jenny K. Hager, September 2014.

Figure 3.5.1 Mel Chin, Fundred Project, pictorial overview, 2008-2016. www.fundred.org. Photo courtesy of Fundred Dollar Bill Project

Figure 3.5.2 Map of New Orleans neighborhoods indicating lead levels in soil. 2001. HW Mielke, CR Gonzales, ET Powell. Courtesy of Fundred Dollar Bill Project.

Figure 3.5.3 Mel Chin at SAFEHOUSE. 2008-2010. Located in New Orleans’ St. Roch neighborhood. Photo by Arthur Simons III courtesy of Fundred Dollar Bill Project.

Figure 3.5.4 Fundred, Houston Initiative as part of “No Zoning: Artists Take on Houston” at the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston. May-October, 2009. Photo courtesy of Fundred Dollar Bill Project.

Figure 3.5.5 Fundred Dollar Bill collected from Brooks Global Studies School in Greensboro, NC. September 9, 2009. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 3.5.6.1 Brad Ausbrooks and Matt Tullis. Best Session Ever. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 4.0.1: The Scientific Method as an Ongoing Process. by Wikimedia Commons user ArchonMagnus. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scientific_Method_3.jpg

Figure 4.0.2 Schematic showing the iterative process and components of Design Thinking. by Wikimedia Commons user MrJansen1984. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/17/Design_thinking.png

Figure 4.1.1: Documentation of a S.A.R.A. performance during Ingenuityfest 2014. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Figure 4.1.2: Dancer during a S.A.R.A. performance. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Figure 4.1.3: A dancer showing a visitor how S.A.R.A. works during the Cleveland Maker Faire 2014. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Figure 4.1.4: The alpha version of the OSLOOM software. Photo courtesy of the authors.

Figure 4.1.5: A screenshot of the coded fashion application.

Figure 4.2.1: Elsewhere Library (2015), Museum Visitors explore collection books and artist projects. Courtesy of Elsewhere.

Figure 4.4.1: Sheryl Oring, Travel Desk. Photo by Mingzhao Dong, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

Figure 4.4.2: Sheryl Oring, Travel Desk. Photo by Dhanraj Emanuel, reproduced by permission of the photographer.

Figure 4.5.1: Transmogrify (Collaborative woodcut Roy Nydorf and John D. Gall), 2013. Source: Jack Arthur Wood, Jr., with permission of the artists. Photograph courtesy of Lars Roeder.

Figure 4.6.1: Mark Nystrom. Winds / January 12, 2016 / Boone, North Carolina / Process.2005.01. Courtesy of Mark Nystrom.
Most people have no trouble conjuring the clichéd image of a creative genius suffering in isolation for the realization of their calling to paint, sculpt, draw, or write. According to scholar Cathy N. Davidson, though, 21st century—technology and the realities of our brain function promise to change all that:

Global teaming requires an inherent humility, an intuitive and inquisitive gift for unlearning and learning, because one’s patterns and expectations constantly come into productive collaboration with those of people schooled in other traditions, other cultures (Davidson 2012, 205).

Moving on from the suffering, lone artist, in reality artists have long been forerunners in the arena of cooperative productivity—perhaps most notably performing artists. In a world where collaborations across disciplines and across vast distances seem omnipresent, how are visual artists and scholars affected?

This book came to life at SECAC in Sarasota (2014) while we, Sunny and Kathryn, were sitting by the pool reflecting on our wonderful professional community. We thought, what better way to honor and celebrate those brilliant minds and professional relationships than bringing them together in a book? The first invitation was extended right then and there and the book you are now reading started taking shape. To be fair, the seeds for this idea began even earlier, when Kevin Concannon invited Kathryn to chair the SECAC affiliate session for the 2014 College Art Association conference. As she thought about what made SECAC special, the collegiality and the friendships stood out to Kathryn immediately. She started looking back at past conference programs and noted that in 2013 an astounding twelve SECAC sessions were dedicated to collaboration. That seemed significant enough to be the topic of the affiliate session. Three of the essays in this book were part of that CAA session, called “Collaboration
in Art and Art Historical Practice.” In October 2014, Sunny and Kathryn co-chaired a SECAC session entitled “A Pedagogy of Participation,” bringing in two more contributors. That was when we decided to edit this collection. We reached out to colleagues we knew and quickly expanded the list of contributors. We had a few more holes to fill and looked to SECAC members to fill in the gaps. It is no exaggeration to say that this book could not exist without SECAC.

This collection of essays reflects current and nuanced discussions of the ways that participation and collaboration can meaningfully inform the production, study, and teaching of art with inspirational, exciting, innovative, and unexpected results. The essays in this collection include both historical and contemporary approaches to collaboration as a creative methodology for art practice, art historical scholarship, and art pedagogy. Some of the questions addressed include,

- What are some desirable alternatives to the isolated creative genius myth?
- How can artistic collaboration best inform educational and business structures where independent results have long been required?
- How does a student or professional get “credit” for collaborative work?
- What value can we find in authoritative knowledge and how does it relate to collaborative and participatory forms of knowledge construction?
- Can we propose alternatives that embrace the complexity of participation?

Because there are numerous ways to discuss these dynamic and multi-layered essays, categorization and re-categorization is not only possible, but necessary (not to mention interesting). You will find that there is a great deal of overlap between the approaches and ideas in the essays and, as such, we could have organized them in any number of ways. By exploring the following alternative structure for arranging these essays, we can see a new set of concepts rising to the forefront of our consideration.

Several of the essays feature Pedagogy and as a section theme it would have highlighted theory and boundary-crossing as modes for teaching and working. Such a Pedagogy section would have brought together the essays by Sunny Spillane, Mark Dixon, Heather Harvey, and Maia Dery.

Focusing on Interdisciplinary Practice would have allowed us to gather essays that integrate work across fields traditionally considered separate. Interdisciplinary Practice is a key aspect of the collaborations between
Redefining Creativity through Collaboration

Reni Gower & Jorge Benitez; Markus Vogl & Margarita Benitez; Meena Khalili & Brent Dedas; and interdisciplinarity is the focus of the work examined by Benjamin Benus and Heather Holian.

**Community Practice** would focus on art that specifically engages the public or works in shared spaces. The essays related to Community Practice are those by Jenny K. Hager; Sheryl Oring; Stephanie Sherman & George Scheer; Wendy DesChene & Jeff Schmuki; Kathryn Shields; and Matt Tullis.

We considered using **Relationship as Form** as a more abstract grouping because it redefines and locates the dynamic force behind creativity within a collaborative paradigm. This section would have focused on art that creates a new genre centered on social bonds as foundational to the point of considering relationships the actual medium. Relationship as Form can be found in the essays by Bradley Bailey; Scott Betz; Cynthia Ling Lee; Linda Brown; Izabel Galliera; Mark Nystrom; Matt Shelton & Nikolai Noel; and Jack Arthur Wood, Jr.

The notion of “relationship as form” is also connected to socially engaged art practices, which have been theorized by several notable curators and art historians including Nato Thompson in his book *Living as Form.* Creative collaboration entails shifting boundaries of power, position, and identity between domains of knowledge and collaborative participants. For many in the arts and education, collaboration is fundamentally about these shifting boundaries and the new relationships that emerge from them. Whether or not collaboration is the explicit focus of a project, relationships between collaborators—which may include artists, viewers/participants, teachers, students, institutions, and communities—inform the context, meaning and ultimate form of the work.

In the end, we settled on the current organization because we feel these themes are especially relevant for contemporary art practitioners. The formal connections present in the alternative organization are now woven into conceptual groupings. Each section introduction further explores these topics and discusses connections to the essays included in it.

**Fear and Risk** has become a notably relevant topic for collaboration in the arts, both as a cause and an effect. Art students and professionals must produce results and, in the process, have to recover from failure again and again. In truth, we learn much more from failure than success. This section
introduces both theory and practice about navigating complexity, questioning scientific advancements, incorporating family and friends, maneuvering in public spaces, and developing sustainable, creative life strategies through collaboration.

**Shifting Boundaries** shakes up traditional disciplinary categorization and hierarchical power structures to create new collaborative structures. Many of the contributors in this section work across disciplines and across cultures, pulling together knowledge in ways that prove enlightening and inspiring. Other authors examine historical and contemporary examples of collaborating across disciplinary, categorical, and cultural boundaries.

**Friendship**, or social bonds, offers a framework for collaborative art practice that builds on synergies and embraces their positive impact. At times these synergies emerge organically, while at others they are sought out. The essays in this section range from social justice work to community interactions to work inspired by enjoying the company of others and celebrating complimentary talents.

**Serendipity** represents the more magical and unexpected aspects of collaborative arts practice. Embracing the unknown, opening up institutional limitations, inviting exchange, and harnessing the wind are among the ways that artists find and create new frameworks for creative art practice, research, teaching, and learning.

This collection opens up discussions of reciprocal relationships between educators and students, artists and viewers, researchers and practitioners. It recounts the crossing of boundaries between design and crowd-sourcing, humans and animals, “fine art” and tattoo parlors, science and natural disasters. In addition to recognizing the relationship between social justice and social practice, the authors consider creative exchange, the marketplace, the classroom, the museum, and nature as sources for inspiration and exchange.

The contributors are interested in the liberating implications of redefining creativity using intersections of numerous disciplines and shifting power structures as ways to inform meaning-making. This collection was designed to share stories that might be applicable or relevant to readers’ own classrooms, art practice, or scholarship. As such, it directly appeals to college professors of studio art and design, art history, and art education as well as to artists, scholars, and teachers who work collaboratively. It might
even draw readership from business professionals seeking critical thinkers and creative problem solvers to energize their industries. We hope to inspire conversations about the ways relationships become crucial for construction, reception and display; meaning and power; design, content, and action.

**References**


**Notes**

1 SECAC is the institutional name of a non-profit dedicated to education and research in the visual arts. SECAC provides community for artists, art historians, educators, students, and interested others (many of whom are members) by hosting publications, conferences, and awards, etc. Formed by the letters of the organization’s previous acronym (referencing the Southeastern College Art Conference), its name reflects its evolution to an international, rather than a regional, organization and builds on the familiarity and momentum already generated by “SECAC.”
PART I:

FEAR AND RISK

SUNNY SPILLANE

WENDY DESCHENE AND JEFF SCHMUKI

HEATHER HARVEY

SCOTT BETZ

MARK DIXON
CHAPTER 1.0

FEAR AND RISK

SUNNY SPIELANE

If making art gives substance to your sense of self, the corresponding fear is that you’re not up to the task – that you can’t do it, or can’t do it well, or can’t do it again, or have no talent, or have nothing to say. The line between the artist and his/her work is a fine one at best, and for the artist it feels (quite naturally) like there is no such line. (Bayles and Orland 1993, 13)

We will wander, improvise, fall short, and move in circles. We will lose our way, our cars, our agenda, and possibly our minds, but in losing we will find another way of making meaning in which, … [like] the battered VW van of Little Miss Sunshine, no one gets left behind. (Halberstam 2011, 25)

Art, Fear, Failure, and Collaboration

In my struggle to hammer out a framework for this section introduction, my internal script sounded a lot like the above passage from Bayles and Orland’s classic Art and Fear. As a junior faculty member with a lot to prove and a tenure clock swiftly ticking, it often does feel like the line between myself and my work is very thin, and that I myself – rather than my work – am being evaluated, and with very high stakes. I jumped into this book project gleefully with both feet, bursting with ideas about collaboration and excited to explore them with some of my favorite colleagues and friends. But as often happens, once the project started taking shape and deadlines began approaching, performance pressure set in. Did I have any original insights at all about collaboration? Had I read enough to feel confident theorizing collaboration in different ways? Could we finish this in time to include it in my tenure packet? Would I reveal myself, through my labored writing and pedestrian thinking, to be a fraud? These kinds of fears reflect traditional notions of creativity as an
individual pursuit, in which success or failure, defined within narrow boundaries, is a measure of self-worth. “For many people, that alone is enough to prevent their ever getting started at all” (Bayles and Orland 1993, 13).

But what might change if rather than fearing failure, I instead began the writing process by accepting that I have already failed, at least by some traditional measures? This book, in fact, is not a testament to anyone’s individual genius. Rather, it situates creativity within collaborative relationships, including those between the authors and editors of this volume, and what we made together is greater than the sum of its parts. This characterization of creativity – and orientation to failure – is captured in the second quote above, from Judith Halberstam’s *The Queer Art of Failure*. Here, creativity is envisioned as a collaborative endeavor that begins with failure and moves forward together into uncharted territory where new meanings are made. In this view, failure is presumed instead of feared, which allows it to be conceptualized as a generative space of creative freedom and possibility, while collaboration provides the social support necessary to mitigate risk and overcome individual fears.

In a section titled “Fear and Risk” readers might reasonably expect the authors grouped under this theme to explore our performance anxieties and self-doubts and offer insights about how we navigate them (as in *Art and Fear*). However, the authors in this section describe fears that go far beyond failure. Some of these include: career-related fears about how collaborative work might be evaluated for tenure and promotion by traditional measures that privilege individual authorship; fears for our students and a powerful sense of responsibility to teach in ways that are responsive to their needs and prepare them for the world beyond college; fears of doing nothing to instigate social change in the face of serious environmental threats and grave social inequities; fears of stagnation and boredom as artists and teachers if we keep doing the same things in the same ways; and fears of compartmentalizing our lives and disconnecting from our authentic selves if we don’t do the work that honors our consciences and our spirits.

**Risk and Happiness**

In Barbara Bradley Hagerty’s recent National Public Radio series “Stuck in the Middle: Work, Health and Happiness at Midlife” her research on midlife revealed that unhappiness at work is strongly related to risk
aversion (Hagerty 2016). According to Hagerty, taking measured risks in order to advance in our careers, to keep learning and growing, and to introduce novelty, increases our satisfaction and happiness. Additionally, her research indicated that happiness was associated with warm relationships. If this is the case, it makes sense that for the authors in this section, although collaboration sometimes entails risk, it also enables risk, building warm, supportive relationships through the process of solving problems together.

All of the authors in this section describe ways that collaboration supports us in taking risks and helps us overcome fears about life, career, creative practice, and teaching. We collaborate in order to reach higher in our teaching and creative practices, to push beyond the limits of what we currently know and are able to do. When we get stuck, we are energized by the dynamic uncertainty of collaboration and open to the ways it intervenes and changes the direction of our work. Many of us also collaborate when we realize we can’t get to where we want to go by working alone. We may not always know where we want to go – we’ve likely started from a place of failure, as in Halberstam’s example of Little Miss Sunshine - but we know we’re heading in the wrong direction and we need a change.

The authors in this section acknowledge a variety of risks involved in collaboration, ranging from unpredictable creative outcomes to uncomfortable relationships with collaborators to outright failure. However, we also know that making gains in our work requires taking risks, and that it is a bigger risk to not grow than it is to fail and shift direction. Although collaboration itself may sometimes seem risky, collaboration solved as many problems as it created for these authors, including: shifting the direction of established or habitual creative practice in fruitful ways when we were “stuck;” facilitating integration of previously compartmentalized areas of our lives and work – family, creative practice, teaching, spiritual practice, activism – that we may have feared to bring into the professional arena because of perceived stigmas attached to them; providing a social support system that sustained and motivated the artists to persist in creating “risky” new work.

Teaching and Accountability

“Studying standard sensible strategies and well-worn paths is problematic, and arguably the dumbest way to get to where we are trying to go. It is far better, and more energizing and ethical, to stay open to new approaches,
pivot towards the particularities of a given class or student, take risks, and welcome occasional failure.” (Heather Harvey)

In the quote above from Heather Harvey’s essay in this section, she describes the absurd situation of her institution striving for game-changing student achievement in scholarship and creative activity – what she terms “outliers” – while requiring that faculty structure their courses around predetermined student learning outcomes measured with standardized rubrics. This culture of teaching accountability has begun trickling up to the university context from K-12 education (Lederman 2013). Indeed the state university system in North Carolina, where I am employed, recently appointed Margaret Spellings, a chief proponent of No Child Left Behind (2001) and Secretary of Education under President George W. Bush, as President of the UNC System. This attitude toward assessment of student learning and achievement, as Harvey describes so cogently, can be actively antithetical to meaningful teaching and learning in the arts, where, arguably, successfully meeting a predetermined outcome misses the point.

Artists and educators have long considered failure to be a natural part of learning and growth, for ourselves and our students, especially in such complex learning processes as those involved in becoming an artist and/or a teacher (Dweck 2006; Hanawait 2015; Hyatt 2015; Le Feuvre 2010; Smith and Henricksen 2016; Spillane 2015; Taylor and Bastos 2008). Against this backdrop of high-stakes accountability, however, it can be challenging for all of us to embrace failure and take risks that are necessary to the continued development of our teaching and creative practices. When graduation, career, reappointment, and tenure are on the line, art and education can be high stakes endeavors in which failure is not an option.

Several of the authors in this section devote a lot of attention to the ways collaboration informs their teaching practices. For many of us, we teach collaboration for the same reasons we collaborate in our professional practices – to push students out of their comfort zones, to facilitate integrating previously compartmentalized areas of their personal lives and academic work, and to provide social support for doing “risky” new work. Although most of us are held accountable for demonstrating student learning outcomes, we also hold ourselves accountable for teaching responsively and for preparing students to be resourceful, resilient, and responsible.

Modeling resourcefulness and resiliency, Heather Harvey describes adjusting to some of the constraints of teaching at her institution (funding,