

# The Canadian Art Teacher Enseigner les arts au Canada



## Editorial

Amy Atkinson and Marie-France Berard

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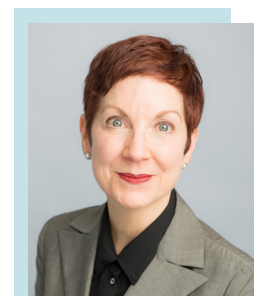
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# 2023 EDITORIAL



Amy Atkinson

Amy Atkinson is a Ph.D. Candidate at Concordia University in Art Education. Amy has been a Canadian Art Teacher for over 15 years in Ontario and Internationally. Her research interests lie in the areas of Teacher Education, Research-Creation and looking at ways to support and elevate the role of Art Teachers within both schools and communities. As an artist and writer herself, Amy explores new materialities and ways to encourage sustainability within her practice.



Marie-France Berard

An art historian, Marie-France Berard was Responsable des visites at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal from 1995-2008, and gallery educator at the Vancouver Art Gallery from 2009-2020. Earning a Ph.D. in Art Education at the University of British Columbia, she is interested in contemporary art theory, the notion of the art museum educator as the Deleuzian 'mediator', and in creating pedagogical spaces of encounters for pre-service teachers with and through the arts.

## Issue 19.2

### Creating our Future[s]

As we looked at the idea of *Creating our Future[s]* in art education, we recognized that the notion of future had to be plural, complex, multifaceted, addressing a myriad of socio-political, cultural, realities linked to place, peoples and practices. Not only that, but these futures are not pre-determined, we as individuals and societies create them. Yet, in our roles of teacher educators and art educators, one classroom reality forcefully calls for our attention; that of the innovative uses of technology and our new-found grappling with Artificial Intelligence's image generating capacities thanks to a trained artificial neural network. Over the past year, ChatGPT, Dall-E 2, Craiyon or MidJourney have exploded onto the scene and permeated the consciousness of [im] possibilities for creation. Within art education, the use of AI technologies is widely debated in relation to issues around the creative process, copyrights infringements, the socio-political hidden implications in the data base AI relies on and, ultimately how it might impact the work of artists. At this early stage of AI development, it is challenging to know which way to turn.

As we sat down to write this editorial, we wondered what AI has to say about art education? There are many ChatGPT-esques applications proliferating throughout the internet, we chose a familiar one, Chatsonic. Requesting the 'excited' tone of voice, we asked: "Chatsonic, write 100-200 words about the future of Canadian art education."

*The future of Canadian art education is a topic of great importance and excitement. As we have progressed in our understanding of the importance of arts education, there is a growing*

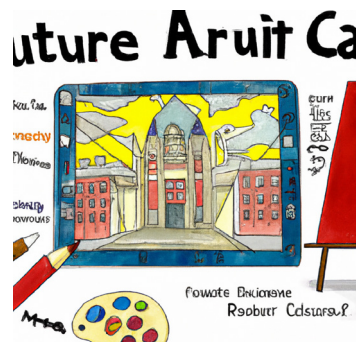
*need to broaden, deepen, diversify, and intensify it throughout the world. The context of arts education plays a crucial role in determining its contents, just as it does in all disciplines. However, there has been a historical divide between the artistic-humanistic culture and the scientific culture, with the latter receiving more attention and support. This shift towards the sciences was driven by the belief that science was the key to solving society's problems and driving economic growth. Unfortunately, this led to a decrease in arts courses and programs in many educational institutions worldwide. But now, there is a recognition of the contributions that art and culture make to Canada's civic life, and there are calls to harness their power for social change. Organizations like ACI's Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge are celebrating the future of art in Canada by connecting young makers with opportunities to showcase their talent. With this renewed focus and support, the future of Canadian art education looks bright and promising. It is an exciting time to be part of this vibrant and evolving field.*

As Krenn et al. (2022) demonstrate in their scholarly research, AI is continually improving in future predictions by building up an exponentially growing knowledge network. Thus, it is welcoming to read from AI that the future of art education is a "vibrant and evolving field" and we are pleased that Chatsonic recognizes the superb work done by the Art Canada Institute's (ACI) in creating the Canadian Art Inspiration Student Challenge. The program hosts many exciting and dynamic young makers exploring new and contemporary ideas not

just within the tried-and-true 2D/3D realms but into the 4D realm of possibility.

Since we are both involved in the visual arts, we were also curious to see what a text-to-image app with the key words "art, education, Canada, future" would produce. Below left are two images generated by the Apple Store iPhone app Wonder, and to the right, are two images created by Dall-E 2 from OpenAI.

In terms of generative propositions, these images are rather banal and disappointing, yet they expose some of the tropes and stereotypes currently circulating in the digital world. While being entertaining to work with, AI is drawn to what seems like a simplistic and obvious visual output with combinations of basic elements of art, specifically shapes, line, and colour, featuring obvious references to the recurring colour wheel project considered by some art education theorists (Gude, 2000) as a contentious topic, one that is discussed with Dr. Lorrie Blair in the Creativ-tea conversation. AI generators are increasingly found to be problematic as they churn out predictable generalized knowledge; as noted here with regards to art education, we obtain cliches on creativity or the instrumentalization of the arts for social change. Furthermore, studies have shown that the AI generated messages are perceived as lacking in precision and thus contribute to communicative uncertainty (Liu et al, 2023). Informed by MIT scientist and digital activist Joy Buolamwini (2023), founder of the website Algorithmic Justice League, we need to consider that AI produces "unchecked and unregulated" data created by a privileged digital population amplifying forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, and ableism.



Exponential advancements in digital technologies and artificial neural networks are now blurring the lines between our in-persona and online worlds. How might we understand the ethical role and task of art education? Heeding John Dewey's (1897) creed stating that, "Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living" (p.36), it is clearly obvious that regardless of our unsettlingings, Canadian art educators align with their own realities and stay true to the inherent value found in the material, exploratory and creative process. We think you will agree with us (and AI) that there are many bright and promising processes being questioned and explored within our 'vibrant and evolving' field of Art Education.

We are honoured to open this issue with **Dr. Mary Blatherwick**, professor of Visual and Creative Education at the University of New Brunswick, who delivered the prestigious Gaitskell Address titled 'Limitless: Reshaping the Future of the World Through Art' at the CSEA 2022 Annual Conference. Eloquently, she discusses how educators are key in enabling their students to gain a deeper understanding of the role the arts can play in reshaping the global community. It is through sharing our stories and appreciating those of others that essential insights can take place and possibly influence the nature of human existence.

With **Dr. Peter Vietgen**, professor of Art Education at Brock University, and **Dr. Joanna Black**, professor of Art Education at the University of Manitoba we are treated to "An Interview With Dr. Roger Lee", and the readers will be privy to a reflective view of Dr. Roger Lee's pioneering work in online learning at Western University. In this interview transcript, Lee shares his intentions and practical applications for the first online Art Education program in Canada.

**Drs. Patti Pente and Cathy Adams**, professors in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta in their article "AI in the posthuman art classroom" discuss the relevance of using AI-generated art in the classroom as a way to educate about ethical concerns related to artificial intelligence. Pente and Adams advocate treating AI not as a mere tool but as a collaborator in the creative process.

In "Enhancing Cultural Consciousness", professor of Art Education **Steve C. Willis** shares how he uses his co-authored publication *Global Consciousness through the arts: A passport for students and teachers* (2018/2023)

accompanied with online conversations with scholars and artists to foster student engagement and dynamic conversations. Through a series of documented student reflections collected throughout the Fall 2020 semester, Willis shares his excitement about the potentiality presented by students as they approach encounters with scholars and artists through the virtual medium.

Emerging from a playful online exchange of self-portraits and giving each other the task to render them in any medium, in 'Fusion? Image', artists and educators **Lei Chen** and **Miguel Carter-Fisher** describe their process of involving their students from three universities in China and the United States. While portraiture is a traditional genre, for the students the cross-cultural exchanges created an artistic and innovative pedagogical approach which illuminated art education's potential in the context of social responsibility and cultural diversity.

In "My Curious Day with George: Dr. Szekely Prescribes Play to a Visiting Artist-Teacher," elementary art teacher **Jamia Weir** shares her takeaways from an inspirational meeting with renowned 'professor of play' which enabled her to re-energize her teaching process and embrace Dr. Szekely's motto to "Teach like there's no tomorrow." We can all be uplifted by Dr. Szekely's words of wisdom, remembering in our hectic days of balancing students, curriculums, publishing, research, that one thing remains a constant: "art will continue to energize and bring us joy if we keep playing with it, like an old and/or new friend."

Working artist and elementary art teacher **Jihanne Mossalim** explores the link between AI and more traditional modes of creation in "What Happens When an Artist Appropriates Emerging Technology to Create Portraits?" Mossalim shares what she discovered artistically and pedagogically through her painting process, explaining that AI holds this wonderful ability to surprise and challenge conventional approaches to art-making. Emerging technology can extend artistic expression by infusing the digital world into the real world.

In "Beyond the Fridge: Opening Zones of Agency with Young Artists", teaching artist **Nicole Bauberger** draws on her art and teaching practices as well as her role as emerging curator of the Yukon Arts Centre Youth Gallery to share in a two-handed telling, how working locally and outdoors, with a view to future use of the artworks made, shaped successful programs

such as the Monster Parade, and interactive works in the Dalton Trail Gallery in Yukon during the COVID pandemic.

In “Future Identity Matters: The Essence of Adolescence With Comics”, art teacher **Dan Attic** observes that art as a school subject continues to be perceived as recreational. For students who may not envision a connection to art as forthcoming, Attic created comic jams to capture and sustain creative interest in his secondary classrooms, and encouraging students to see themselves as more than producing work for aesthetic value, but also as researchers, exploring and discovering concepts of personal and social interest through art.

For our creative work, secondary art teacher and Concordia graduate student of Art Education, **Daniela Fundaros’** poetry “Multifaceted” explores the complex identities and roles of an art educator: as an artist, a teacher, and an artist-teacher. While Fundaro finds fulfillment in artistic pursuits and personal introspection, and sees value in inspiring their students and creating community, yet their role as a teacher comes with bureaucratic responsibilities that can be overwhelming.

#### In MAKING DISCOVERIES:

Concordia Ph.D candidate in Art Education and artist **Dave LeRue** takes us to a Sound Performance in Montreal’s Casa Del Popolo exploring “What Does a Housing Crisis Sound Like? A Review of Réverbérations d’une crise”. Montreal, like all major Canadian cities, has seen skyrocketing property values and rents which have put most citizens, but especially those on lower incomes, at increased precarity. Le Rue explores how sound can reveal human stories in the way cities evolve with obvious problematic issues such as renovations and increased homelessness. Sound can also reveal subtle infractions to the social fabric in the city; prolonged listening rewards listeners and offers a space to slow down and contemplate. Some approaches used within the sound performance could be adapted for effective use in classrooms.

Marie-France Berard had a conversation with **Manon Gauthier, Andrée-Caroline Boucher (Ph.D), and Michelle Rhéaume (M.A.)** about the superb online resource **Studio Riopelle** created to be an educational program as part of the Québécois artist Jean-Paul Riopelle’s Centenary Celebrations. The article highlights the core mission of the Riopelle Foundation which was inspired by the artist’s dream to share his passion for art, in this context through

the themes of play, nature, freedom, earth and trajectories. The bilingual French/English digital interface provides different pedagogical approaches for students of all ages, such as gamification, flipped classrooms, interactivity, integration of the cultural dimension and pluridisciplinarity.

#### In CREATIV-TEA:

Amy Atkinson sat down with **Dr Lorrie Blair**, Art Education professor at Concordia University in Montreal, to discuss ideas of futures within art education. By looking back at what was, Dr. Blair unpacks trends and teaching concepts to encourage future scholars of art education to bring back some sense of direction. Dr. Blair shares insights into the relevance of art education and observes that it is time for art education scholars to take on more leadership: we need to change our mindset, stop feeling like we’re in the margins and instead, start visualizing the future that we as art educators want to create.

#### ARTIST-TEACHER

For our insert, we are excited to share the artwork of artist-teacher, **Michelle Wang**. Wang is a Canadian Artist-Teacher currently teaching Visual Art at the Canadian International School in Hong Kong (CDNIS HK). As a cyanotype artist, Wang’s work embodies the paradoxical relationships existing in the world, exploring the interplay between opposing forces, such as perfection and imperfection, presence and absence in an attempt to find balance. Wang was introduced to the medium of cyanotype while traveling in Japan in 2016. She was fascinated by the unique textures and varying tones produced as well as the countless possibilities for experimentation. Fuelled by her interest in botany, Wang’s “Roadside Cyanotype Impressions” series began in 2018 traveling across the rural areas of the Izu peninsula of Japan, then to a road trip journey of the east coast of Canada in 2019, and then through the northern regions of Italy in 2023.

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