Art/Research International
A Transdisciplinary Journal

Getting Lost Through the Relational Mail Art of Art/Re-search (T)here
A Decolonizing Methodology

Geneviève Cloutier, Gladys Rowe, Nadine Flagel, Lucia Lorenzi, Irene Jansen, Wendy Crocker et Adam Clare

Résumé de l'article

Art/Re-search (T)here is a SSHRC-funded project that creates new understandings of art, research and decolonized processes amongst theories of knowledge. The relational mail art of Art/Re-search (T)here unfolds through post theories of the (post)qualitative posthumanist philosophies and decolonized practices. These disruptive co-compositions happen by getting lost through thing-power, and through the decolonial project of re-turning to the dynamic whole. (T)here, co-conspirators collaborate through art to reimagine re-search. The project's initial research questions change alongside co-conspirators in transit as binary knowledge is (un)learned and disrupted. As the mail art travels to entangled spaces, processes are risky, glitchy, (un)known, and trans-formed. In letting go of research questions, art/re-search creates trans-formations. The authors put a call to action for re-searchers to work together through art in ways that question the structure of academia and how we come to know/be. Through relational (un)learning and risk-taking, some-thing lost is getting (t)here.

Citer cet article

Cloutier, G., Rowe, G., Flagel, N., Lorenzi, L., Jansen, I., Crocker, W. & Clare, A. (2024). Getting Lost Through the Relational Mail Art of Art/Re-search (T)here: A Decolonizing Methodology. *Art/Research International*, *9*(1), 236–265. https://doi.org/10.18432/ari29766

GETTING LOST THROUGH THE RELATIONAL MAIL ART OF ART/RE-SEARCH (T)HERE: A DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGY

Geneviève Cloutier
University of Ottawa
gclouti2@uottawa.ca

Gladys Rowe
Indigenous Insights
rowe.gladys@gmail.com

Nadine Flagel
Independent re-searcher
nflagel@dal.ca

Lucia Lorenzi
Independent re-searcher
luciamarielorenzi@gmail.com

Irene Jansen
Independent re-searcher
ijansen@jungle.ca

Wendy Crocker
Northeastern Graduate School of Education
w.crocker@northeastern.edu

Adam Clare
Sheridan College
adam@thingsaregood.com

Geneviève Cloutier (she/they) is an artist, facilitator, part-time faculty member, writer, activist, parent, consultant, and settler living on stolen Algonquin Anishinaabe territory. They have a PhD from the University of Ottawa where they co-created art and research to reimagine knowledge systems through relational processes. Art/Re-search emerged as a decolonizing methodology.

Dr. Gladys Rowe (she/her) is Swampy Cree from Fox Lake Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba and also holds relations with ancestors from Ireland, England, Norway, and Ukraine. Gladys is a scholar, filmmaker, poet, author, facilitator, researcher, and evaluator. She is the host of *Indigenous Insights: An Evaluation Podcast*.

Lucia Lorenzi (she/they) is a visual artist and cultural theorist working on Kwikwetlem territory. Their research is grounded in trauma theory, with an interest in silence, testimony, and narrative communities. Her artistic collaborations have recently been published in Duke University Press, *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, and the University of Alberta Press.

Nadine Flagel (she/her) is a white settler living and creating on unceded land of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), səl̓ilwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) peoples. She is an editor with a PhD on intertextuality in English Literature, and a self-taught fibre artist with a focus on reusing textiles.

Irene Jansen (she/her) is a human rights researcher, educator, and activist with 25 years of experience working in public sector unions on stolen Algonquin Anishinaabe territory. She facilitates digital storytelling and other participatory storywork. Irene holds a BA from McGill University (1989) and a Master of Social Work from Carleton University (1993).

Wendy Crocker (she/her) is a white settler who continues her work as an agitator, innovator, and orchestrator for those whose voices have gone unheard. She holds a PhD in Curriculum Studies from Western University (2013) and is on faculty in the Graduate School of Education at Northeastern University in Boston, MA.

Adam Clare (he/him) is a professor at Sheridan College where he teaches game design and coordinates the postgraduate game program on the territory of the Anishnabeg, the

Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. He continues to make games at the studio he co-founded and works independently as an artist.

Abstract: *Art/Re-search (T)here* is a SSHRC-funded project that creates new understandings of art, research and decolonized processes amongst theories of knowledge. The relational mail art of *Art/Re-search (T)here* unfolds through *post* theories of the (post)qualitative posthumanist philosophies and decolonized practices. These disruptive co-compositions happen by getting lost through thing-power, and through the decolonial project of re-turning to the dynamic whole. (T)here, co-conspirators collaborate through art to reimagine re-search. The project's initial research questions change alongside co-conspirators in transit as binary knowledge is (un)learned and disrupted. As the mail art travels to entangled spaces, processes are risky, glitchy, (un)known, and trans-formed. In letting go of research questions, art/re-search creates trans-formations. The authors put a call to action for re-searchers to work together through art in ways that question the structure of academia and how we come to know/be. Through relational (un)learning and risk-taking, *some-thing lost is getting (t)here.*

Keywords: art; research; relationality; decolonization; getting lost

Art/Re-search (T)here is an emergent SSHRC-funded doctoral project that creates new understandings of art, research and decolonized processes amongst theories of knowledge. A group of seven co-conspirators made art, both together and alone, to unlearn and reimagine what is possible in and outside academic spaces. This article moves through how the project's initial research questions were co-composed through relational mail art, which provoked me (Geneviève Cloutier) to re-think *post* philosophies, between the posts, as it were, of (post)qualitative, posthumanist philosophies and decolonized practices. These disruptive co-compositions happened by getting lost (Lather, 2007) through thing-power (Bennett, 2009) and the decolonial project of re-turning to the dynamic whole. These entanglements are worked through in this article as the art and re-search processes are shared; the co-compositions, decompositions, and re-compositions.

Art and research are re-searched through glitchy (Russell, 2020), (un)known, and trans-formed entanglements (Barad, 2007) that create new "university ecologies" (Loveless, 2020, p. 27) through decolonized and relational processes. Like Jeannie Kerr (2019) who considers (post)human possibilities while inhabiting ethical spaces of re-turning, art/re-search works through "settler colonialism and the discursive constructions that problematically frame their lives as distinctly separate from Indigenous peoples" (Kerr, 2019, p. 319). As a group of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour), queer, and settler re-searchers, the authors of this article co-created spaces for (un)learning how to do art and research, both in and outside academic spaces. Art/re-search emerged as a decolonizing methodology that facilitates a co-constructed re-imagining of what it means to learn and re-search, together. This article is a call to action for researchers to work together through art/re-search to reimagine how knowing/being is constructed and controlled in and outside of academia; *because getting lost is something.*

A Call

My initial objective was to co-create space to engage with art and research, both individually and collectively. Excited about the generative intersections, I wanted to have different geographical areas and fields of study included in the project as everyone involved would be encouraged to "get lost" (Lather, 2007). I was also looking for people who did not have enough support to pursue arts-based research in their respective institutional spaces; collaborators who were looking to work relationally to *do research differently*.

The tagline on my initial call for participants read: "Are you interested in getting lost, even momentarily, through art? We are looking for researchers from diverse academic fields".

Figure 1
Recruitment Poster

On a first-come first-served basis, six incredible co-conspirators with backgrounds in Interdisciplinarity Studies (i.e., Film Studies, Indigenous Studies, & Social Work), English, Cultural Studies, Labour Studies, Education, and Game Design joined the 12-month project. A questionnaire was given to co-conspirators[1] to open conversations about everyone's experiences and interests in art. Curated works and collections were then created and uploaded to shared cloud folders. We met via video call for 1.5 hours every week for 3 months before moving to bi-weekly meetings. We also used a Facebook group and Instagram for daily interactions, making space for self-directed and collective inquiries that embraced relationality amid everyday reality. Encountering each other's process through social media outside of our meetings contributed to familiarity and community-building.

Ensuring that meetings and spaces were facilitated in non-hierarchical ways was crucial; having diverse ways to connect was pivotal to build community, to be vulnerable and inquisitive. Making sure everyone felt connected was critical to the art/re-search process.

Everyone submitted a project proposal to receive feedback about their art from the group before they began working on their independent research. These proposals were meant to document ideas and processes. Co-conspirators were encouraged to deviate from what was originally proposed if new ideas arose. *Art/Re-search (T)here* unfolded in an emergent manner as co-conspirators re-searched and re-turned to their work in artful and relational ways. Receiving ongoing support and feedback through the process was underscored in our co-created virtual networks.

The art/re-search that emerged after 10 months provided material to engage in relational inquiries about art and research across fields. Collaborative mail art was taken up to re-think and disrupt the questions that the project began with. There was a desire to share lines of inquiry through materiality: the virtual was not enough. As such, we further engaged with our individual and collective art/re-search processes through a collaborative mail art project. Mail art became a way to (un)learn, reimagine and re-turn to the collaborative inquiry as it moved through the hands of seven art/re-searchers and co-conspirators across Canada between British Columbia, Quebec, and Southern Ontario (with a stop in Washington, DC) over the course of 2 months.

The initial research questions were printed on copies of paintings I made at the beginning of our time together. The self-perceived failures of my mark-making folded into my emergent knowing/being. Theories became disrupted further indicative of the entanglements of un/knowing. We continued to meet online to discuss what was emerging during the process as the following questions were re-searched:

1. What epistemologies and ontologies are experienced as you engage with arts-based research?
2. Do you engage with art as a transformational process and if so, how?
3. How does the notion of "getting lost" speak to you, if at all?

(T)here, everyone engages with re-search questions in different ways. Arts-based research, getting lost, epistemology, ontology, and transformation become messy, intermeshed, risky, glitchy (Russell, 2020), (un)known and trans-formed. This is where we become entangled through critical re-imaginings of community research as social change (Cloutier et al., 2022).

Figure 2

Genevieve and Irene, Initial Contents of Mail Art Package with Collaborative Remixed Images

Coming to Know Co-conspiring Art/Re-search through Mail Art

We speak about the need for a revised sense of creative allyship in academia, underscoring the call for relational actions in academic spaces that support transdisciplinary growth amongst people who are often excluded from art and research. There is urgency to support one another in spaces that often leave people and methods out, to open up spaces to differences, for accessibility, for entanglements to emerge from self-direction, collaboration, co-creation, and non-hierarchical processes.

The term co-conspirator reimagines allyship by people that work towards sustained practical change (Chattopadhyay, 2018; Taylor, 2019). Through *Art/Re-search (T)here*, within

the movement of opening academic spaces up to further differences, "we are challenging that system and so we have to conspire. We have to plot and plan" (Feminista Jones in Chattopadhyay, 2018, para. 9). Being a co-conspirator requires persistent action and dedication to practices that aim to foster relationality.

In her chapter, "Unfolding: Co-conspirators, Contemplations, Complications and more," Carol Taylor (2019) tends towards a need for co-conspirators and posthumanism in higher education; towards reimagining pedagogy, practice, and research. I/We (a term I will use throughout this article to refer to the co-conspirators) look towards this important work as it provokes a need for BIPOC and settler re-searchers to become "co-conspirators of difference" through manifestations of materialised and affective methodologies (p. 4). Art/re-search unfolds as a methodology that supports the work of co-conspirators in decolonizing ways of knowing/being in academia and beyond. This is a call to action for more of this work to be done across and outside academic spaces and disciplines; to re-turn and re-search.

Relational Art/Re-search

Co-conspirator Gladys Rowe teaches us about her own doctoral work regarding Indigenist re-search whereby she looks towards Anishinaabe scholar Kathy Absolon (2011) who describes the hyphenated term re-search as a process of looking again: "Re-search is an act of resistance and resurgence for Indigenist Peoples" (Rowe, 2020, p. 17). (T)here, I/We consider how re-search can be employed by co-conspirators to reimagine learning landscapes through various relational prompts and entanglements. This becomes a part of heartwork generated by the mail art. Like Gladys, we feel called to re-search for community responsibilities, personal transformations, and to decolonize research methodologies.

(T)here, art/re-search is entangled with a need to decolonize practices with Indigenous and non-Indigenous co-conspirators who want to reimagine new ways of engaging with the world. Rather than discovering information, questions were (un)learned and co-composed. Art/re-search became a relational and decolonizing methodology and opened dialogue with diverse universities, departments, and re-searchers interested in getting lost "in the midst of differences" (Aoki, 1993, p. 268) in order to reimagine what research does and who it includes.

To do this work, difficult histories and conversations have to be acknowledged (Taylor, 2019). Through the mail art, co-conspirators lingered with how "tensions exist over the history, culture, and identity of the people who live together in the place now known as Canada" (Donald, 2012, p. 533). Colonialism had to be disrupted through our relational mail art entanglements. *Art/Re-search (T)here* co-created spaces to do this important work.

Getting Lost Towards the Decolonizing Posts

Figure 3
Mail Art Package Send-offs

We are prompted by Patti Lather's concept of *Getting Lost* (2007) but begin to disrupt these theories through the mail art. (T)here, getting lost means acknowledging and troubling how the Euro-Western academy consumes "parallel discourses in Indigenous contexts without explicitly nodding to them" (Todd, 2016, p. 8). We contend that practicing relational art/re-search can reveal "the gaps between what institutions, people, and governments say they do and what they actually do—as revealing units of analysis" (Tuck, 2010, p. 644). Getting lost through relational art/re-search allows us to question the structure of academia and the suffocating analysis that exudes from it. We examine entangled understandings of post theories via mail art that moves through the post offices.

We move through "getting lost as a way to move out of commanding, controlling, mastery discourses and into a knowledge that recognises the inevitable blind spot of our

knowing" (Lather, 2017, p. 170). (T)here, we are with the philosophers and researchers who contend that not knowing is a necessary step to experience what might be known one "has to not know in order to find out what might be known" (Bencard et al., 2019, p. 142). We join them in troubling binary knowledge as *something pinned down.*

Spivak (2015) has done the important work of deconstructing reductive and essentialising philosophies of knowing/being and thus invites us to deconstruct our understanding of these binaries, as "the real in deconstruction is neither essentialist nor anti-essentialist. It invites us to think through the counterintuitive position that there might be essences and there might not be essences" (p. 11). Spivak points to how the use of words "is irreducibly catachrestic" (p. 181): misunderstood, misused, taken up, divided, and uncertain. Re-positioned within the history of philosophy regarding how humans represent knowledge, these disruptions reveal tensions in how language is used and shared. Elizabeth Grosz (2020) demonstrates this as she writes:

> Western metaphysics is structured in terms of binary oppositions or dichotomies. Within this structure the opposed terms are not equally valued: one term occupies the structurally dominant position and takes on the power of defining its opposite or other. The dominant and subordinated terms are simply positive and negative versions of each other, the dominant term defining its other by negation. Binary pairs such as good/bad, presence/absence, mind/ matter, being/non-being, identity/difference, culture/nature, signifier/signified, speech/writing, and man/woman mark virtually all the texts of philosophy, and provide a methodological validation for knowledges in the West. (p. 27)

This disruption of reductive philosophies and practices comes into conversation with how Patti Lather (2017) troubles binary understandings of language and shows us that getting lost necessitates taking "such losses into account" (p. 13). These losses are re-situated in knowledge through the loss of a fixed colonial self. This is about destabilising the colonial ways in which knowledge is constructed and doing so relationally, in community, with a dynamic whole. This is an unstable process, but one that accounts for getting lost beyond binary structures of colonial oppression.

In transit with (un)landing sites that are set in motion with/out bodies, this process creates movement and resists fixed positions (Ellsworth, 1997). The mail art of *Art/Research (T)here* opens up entangled pathways and critical re-imaginings. At the same time, "the bits and pieces are sovereign, are distinct, and remain so within an ecology of a dynamic whole" (Tuck, 2009, p. 640). Getting lost in multiple ways of knowing can help us decolonize groups, institutions, dominant culture, structures, and our lives.

More recently, post-qualitative philosopher and researcher Lather (2017) has written that "the task is to do justice to the complexity and instability of all of this in addition to the

dislocated identities of post-humanism that challenge oppositions of language/material and culture/nature" (p. 172). She opens a generative philosophy, but her work on posthumanism is not fully developed. I/We believe that the post philosophies should honour Indigenous philosophies. They are central to decolonizing the way the academy sanctions knowledge systems and should not be excluded.

In *Jagged Worldviews Colliding*, Leroy Little Bear (2000) reminds us that the idea of being in flux is not owned by the post philosophies of Western thought. In Indigenist ways of knowing, and from time immemorial, the "constant motion in flux leads to a holistic and cyclical view of the world" (p. 7). (T)here, emergence can occur through communities and relationalities that honour the dynamic whole (Tuck, 2009).

While un/grounded in decolonizing the histories of philosophical inquiry, I/We are (re)positioned in the "many posts-, with a history and legacy of that which it strains with" (Bayley, 2019, p 359). I/We consider posthuman methods, in this way, in relation to "the intersecting epistemics of gender, sexuality, race, class, geography, indigeneity, and beyond" (Causevic et al., 2020, p. 6). I/We have a responsibility to unsettle the divisive colonial codes and methods that limit our ability to create the change needed to honour the dynamic whole.

In decolonizing contexts, disrupting colonizing binary philosophies occurs while I/We acknowledge "the problems that arise when interfacing Indigenous worldviews with poststructuralist theory or any project that has a focus on becoming and not being" (Tuck, 2010, p. 646). (T)here, I/We linger with ethical spaces of re-turning (Kerr, 2019, p. 325). What it means *to be* is interwoven with the ethical entanglements of knowing. Zoe Todd (2016) asserts that Indigenous epistemologies (knowing) and ontologies (being)—the lively lands that emanate— should not be consumed by academic landscapes. She points to "the Ontological Turn that could potentially be promising tools in the decolonial project, if approached with an attention to the structural realities of the academy" (Todd, 2016, p. 9). (T)here, getting lost requires that re-searchers disrupt binary ways of knowing/being while honouring the dynamic whole.

This resonates with the mail art process as co-conspirators added to the blank pieces of paper that I had initially included in the package; differences emanated while simultaneously coming together, creating multiple wholes, landscapes, and bodies of getting lost.

Getting Lost is Something

Nadine received the package first and brought the four pieces of paper together right away. In her own art/re-search, she unlearns her dissertation and academic research which

examines contemporary novels by African-Canadian, African-American, and African-British writers. (T)here, burlap, red thread, and black ink bring four words together, apart, so research questions can be (un)learned, re-arranged and co-composed, again. The first entanglement and offering on the collaborative mail art assemblage begins a relational process where multiple readings, configurations and questions are offered: ***Getting lost is something. . . Something is getting lost. . . Lost is getting something. . . Is something getting lost. . .***

Figure 4
Nadine, Stitched Panels with Various Co-compositions
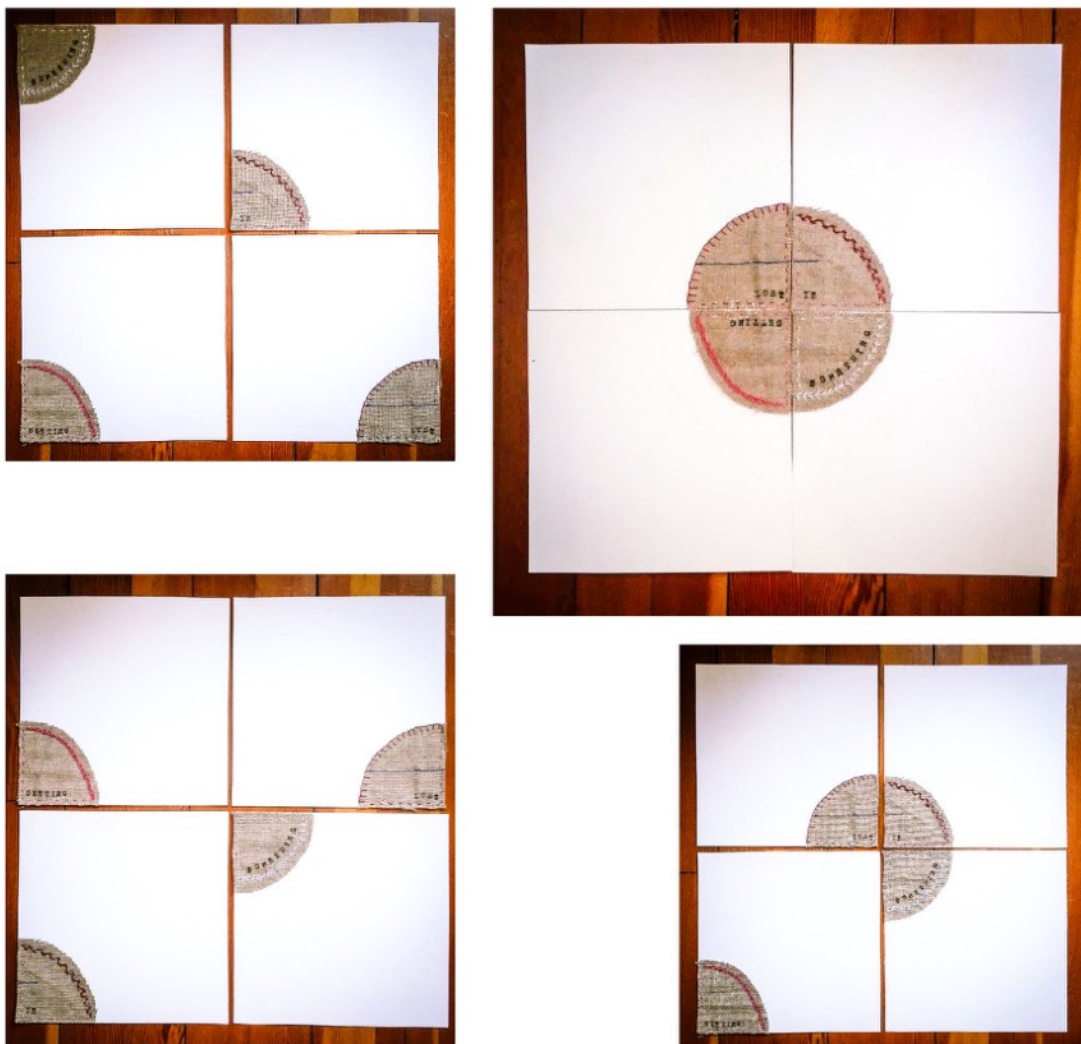
What happened next becomes (un)known as it was entangled with the other co-conspirators' contributions to the mail art. Interestingly, Nadine included a journal entry written on the back of paper she had found in the copy room of a continuing studies office at

a local university. The recycled paper contains information about directed approaches to risk-management and assessment. This addition to the mail art provoked conversation amongst the group as we collaborated through the mail art, journal entries, and ongoing meetings. These assemblages are entangled with the questions and encounters of these risky, collaborative, and (un)known emergent practices. Like Patti Lather (2007), we wonder "where these indeterminacies, puzzlements, and confounding might travel and with what effects" (Lather, 2007, p. 161). What will emerge from getting lost?

Getting Lost as Un/Familiar Thing-Power

The words and objects that Nadine included on the pages resonate with the collaboration that emerges. These *some-things* allow us to think about what things do. Moving through the emergent mail art into different aspects of individual, collective, and relational works creates (un)grounding re-connections that happen "in modes of attention, attachment, and agency, and in publics and social worlds of all kinds that catch people up in something that feels like something" (Stewart, 2007, p. 2). As things have power, they take on different meanings with different landing spaces and bodies. (T)here, "an entanglement is not meant to refer to the interconnectedness of all things, but to the specific material relations that bring about the ongoing differentiation in the world, and the ethical responsibility of being entangled" (Kerr, 2019, p. 321). What will these entanglements do for the art/re-search that emerges?

Graham Harman (2018) contends that what a thing *does* is more important than what it *is.* Bennett (2009) calls this "Thing-Power: the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act" as bodies and re-searchers engage in embodied experience through art (p. 6). The thing is thus an actant, a "vital player" in the world (Springgay & Rotas, 2015, p. 567). While these entangled movements are crucial to relational works, I/We consider the danger of ontological erasure. (T)here, through decolonizing and relational art/re-search, the things of our collaborations are ontologically dynamic and whole. What things are and what they do are entangled as part of this process.

Some-thing with thing-power emerges through the tensions of the assemblages with/out the self through Wendy's contributions to the mail art. This happens in relation to her identity as an edgewalker as she reflects on her work with a Mennonite community. Wendy took a page from an article she had written, glued it to the back of a canvas board, and placed it on the opposite side of lace, a material often used by the Mennonites she worked with. In this process of working in between spaces of representation, she draws attention to its thingness, its materiality. Through this playful reflection as an edgewalker, she considers the tensions of getting lost through the caves of one's own knowing/being.

Figure 5

Wendy, Journal Entries and Painting (Lace and Homeschooling)
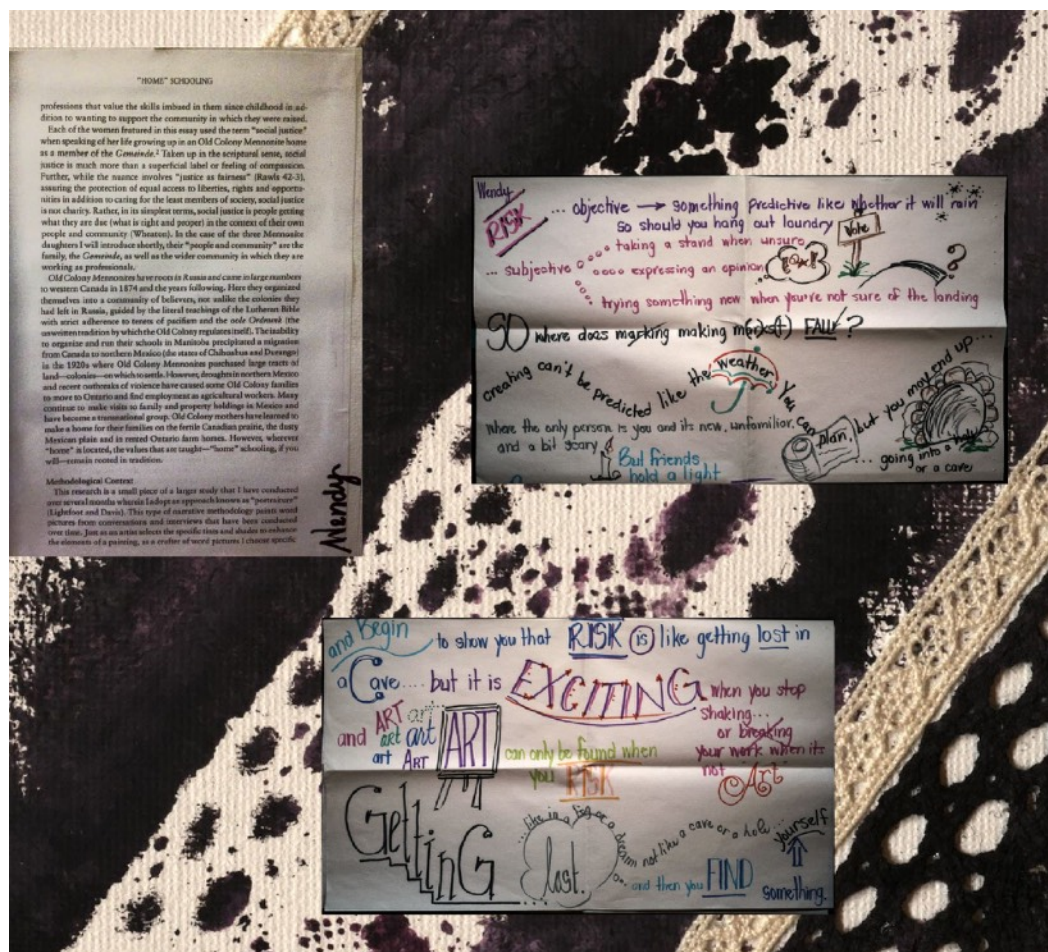
Understandings of getting lost expand as co-conspirators question the role of self. (T)here, getting lost is entangled as some-thing else emerges—through lace, colour, (text)ures, again—unfolding into new lines of inquiry: "a sort of multiplicities without end, this is working multiple othernesses as a way to keep moving against tendencies to settle into various dogmas and reductionisms that await us once we think we have arrived" (Lather, 2007, p. 171). The thing-power brings attention to the knowing/being that is excluded from academic spaces; the narratives that we offer to engage with the (in)tensions and absences.

Patti Lather (2007, 2017) provokes us to think about the "distinctions between loss and lost in working toward research practices that take into account the crisis of representation" (Lather, 2007, p. 13). (T)here, I/We are in trans-it with the losses, as the self is lost, found, and lost again. Getting lost through art/re-search is some-thing that "throws itself together in a moment as an event and a sensation; a something both animated and inhabitable" (Stewart, 2007, p. 1). As the mail art emerged, we witnessed that art/re-search happens in

the (un)landing. As more was added to the mail art package, we considered what was included and what was excluded and how we moved through the (in)tensions and entanglements that emerged between us.

There is so much about academic spaces that needs to be re-thought and co-composed. Thing-power is echoed in Karen Barad's (2007) work about things as entangled matter, whereby thingness comes into being—already in entangled relations. While it can be destabilising, jumping into relational encounters through art/re-search can disrupt oppressive ideas about how knowledge/being is co-constructed, about the un/knowns and the exclusions—the necessary and risky re-turns. Thingness can come into being; it also provokes us to think about what is (t)here.

Figure 6
Various Contributions to Mail Art Panels

(T)here, "a critique needs to move not away from but toward the gathering of the 'Thing' mediating, assembling, gathering many more folds" (Lather, 2017, p. 71). This is more dynamic than potential, filling into some*thing;* it is *"*fleeting and amorphous, it lives as a residue or resonance in an emergent assemblage of disparate forms and realms of life" (Stewart, 2007, p. 21). Art/re-search embraces thing-power as it lingers amongst the un/knowing (in)tensions of how art-making and meaning-making is co-composed, getting lost, still. Wendy offers art/re-search material that invites us to think about how her liminal positionality as a border crosser emerges with different encounters and modes of meaning-making. (T)here, we think about how being a border crosser involves juxtaposing "texts in

such a way that highlights difference (racial, cultural, historical, socio-political, linguistic) without essentialising or erasing it, while simultaneously locating points of affinity" (Chambers et al., 2008, p. 142).

Lines of ongoing collaborations continue to emerge as relational art/re-search unfolds, making us wonder: how can we take the leap to disrupt how "the academy plays a role in shaping the narratives that erase ongoing colonial violence" (Todd, 2016, p. 15)? What are the ways in which art/re-search participates in the decolonial project? How can relational inquiries ensure entangled participation?

Getting Lost as Risky Thing-Power

Lucia reimagines risk identification through mark-making on the paper with the word "something" stamped on it. In the art/re-search she created before the mail art, she used data visualisation to explore how sexualised and gendered violence exists within spaces of knowing and unknowing. Getting lost through paint is thus re-searched as risk plays on some-things that allow us to be with the known unknowns. Within the context of trauma and statistics, she painted over data to (re)position herself within the multiple meanings that can emerge from such an artistic and material practice. She provokes us to think about what is missing from data and what traditional research practices exclude. (T)here, the paint that disrupts research occurs in conversation with a call to (un)learn the way research is done, requiring us to investigate the colonial exclusions and epistemic violence of how knowledge is controlled and silenced.

Figure 7
Lucia, Mail Art Panel (Abstract Skyline)
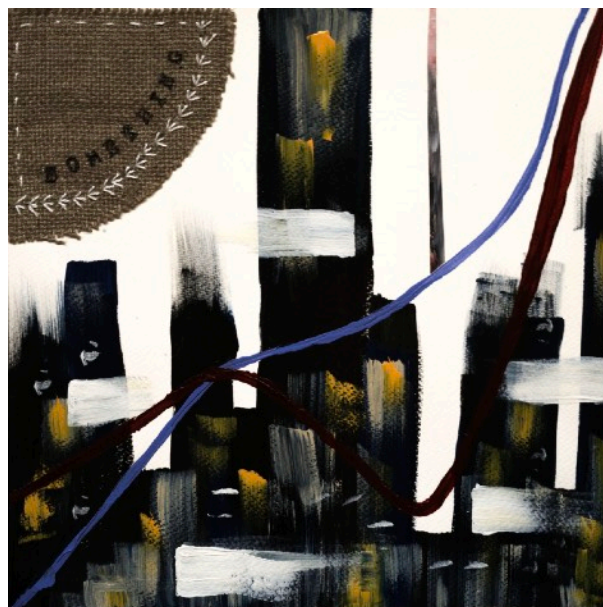
In relation to trauma studies and what is omitted from statistics, art/re-search can lead us to think differently about what is inside and outside the entanglement. Pain and trauma cannot be wholly communicated or understood by those who did not experience them. The things of this area of study emerge as data un/known—while "research is never on the mark" (Lather, 2007, p. 8). The process is material and dynamic, as embodied discursivity exudes lines, shapes, and colour, highlighting the instability and (un)knowing of how we come to know.

These some-things being studied are embedded with forces that are not always measured. This becomes emblematic of closures and re-openings and troubles the fixed meanings of things as they trouble "knowledge as static, fixed and organized according to pre-formed categories" (Springgay & Rotas, 2014, p. 553). How do traumas get categorised in research when so much is unknown? How are narratives coded to exclude experiences of knowing/being?

Through an acknowledgment of the impossibility of representation and the oppressive academic landscape, art/re-search acknowledges the "uncertainties, misrecognitions, ignorance, and silences" (Britzman, 1995, p. 164). Through supportive and relational art/re-search, it is our hope that knowledge systems can continue to disrupt the binaries and "rethink and redescribe the world" (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 406) in decolonizing ways.

In colonizing systems of oppression and binary knowledge systems, "'others' are seen to be known or ultimately knowable, in the sense of being defined, delineated, captured, understood, explained, and diagnosed" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 321). Blurring boundaries and co-composing knowledge troubles the binary in this way. Relational and decolonizing art/re-search includes the dynamic whole in ways that are non-hierarchical and emergent. We consider how these risky non-linear, unpredictable methods can open art/re-search up to trans-formations, whereby some-thing risky invites relational re-turns to a multiplicity of inclusions.

(T)here, Lucia took the risk-assessment business lesson and turned it into found poetry through redaction and journaling. She engaged with assemblages that are un/revealed through risk-taking and getting lost, again. To work with and between many different academic fields through art "has always carried certain risks, such as the revelation of incompleteness possible when the skills of one discipline prove insufficient in another context" (Loveless, 2019, p. 45). Co-conspirators considered how a "commitment to emergent and collaborative methodologies is both fruitful and full of inherent risks" (Gallagher & Wessels, 2011, p. 239). Risk-taking comes up again as a playful emergent line of inquiry in this regard, as colliding fragments are entangled. An assemblage is generated as a chance-based encounter, awake to the moments felt that "knowing is a matter of part of

the world making itself intelligible to another part. Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated" (Barad, 2007, p. 185).

Figure 8
Lucia, Mail Art Journal (Somethings – Risk)

(Un)Learning Binary Knowledge and Research Through Glitch

Rosi Braidotti (2014) dares us to take the risk—towards collectivity, inclusion, relationality, hope. These are risks (as glitch) that can contribute to disrupting oppressive academic spaces. (T)here, our co-conspirator Adam invites us to engage with glitch to co-compose knowledge. I/We think about how "glitched bodies—those that do not align with the canon of white cisgender heteronormativity—pose a threat to social order. Range-full and vast, they cannot be programmed" (Russell, 2020, p. 102). So, what happens when co-conspirators co-compose glitch through art/re-search?

In his provocation, Adam draws from his art/re-search on how shipping containers impact whales. He printed and cut up two digital photographs and invited others to co-compose meanings along with the other content of the mail art package. Adam's contribution to getting lost demonstrates "awareness of epistemic limits where constitutive unknowingness becomes an ethical resource" (Lather, 2007, p. 172). The image can never be assembled as it was before. Pieces can be assembled and reassembled, dynamic, random, multiple, here, there. . . There are many options when encountering his contributions to the mail art, and I/We considered how "bodies in this era of visual culture have no single destination but rather take on a distributed nature, fluidly occupying many beings, many places, all at once" (Russell, 2020, p 46). Getting lost with a mail art assemblages troubles fixity, reimagines alternatives. Glitch exists outside of system of colonial oppression and capitalism, challenging us to imagine new compositions that reduce harm to whales and their environment.

Figure 9
Adam, Various Art/Re-search Glitch

The pieces are re-assembled in different configurations with re-searchers from different fields, geographical locations and social locations. We think about how "multiple and messy kinships are deep, un/bound to each other in history and story . . . embedded in languages and landscapes to which we do (not) belong" (Low, 2013, p. 104). (T)here, we witness an emerging accountability to a continuous process of loss, getting lost, knowing/being and re-turns. Art/re-search inspires us to think about the dangers of fixity when it comes to the colonial oppression of people, land, and knowledge systems.

Art/re-search acknowledges each entanglement as risky glitch, allowing us to "strategize and collectivize towards uselessness, a failure that imagines, innovates and emancipates" (Russell, 2020, p. 147). Art/re-search moves through knowing/being beyond binaries so that the exclusions and un/knowns are acknowledged. I/We consider Gayatri Spivak (2015) who invites us to (un)learn reductive and essentialising philosophies of knowing/being, claiming that "the real in deconstruction is neither essentialist nor anti-essentialist" (p. 11). Rosi Braidotti (2013) works through these ideas in relation to earlier philosophies of humanism in her book *The Posthuman,* underscoring that "this Eurocentric paradigm [of humanism] implies the dialectics of self and other, and the binary logic of identity and otherness as respectively the motor for and the cultural logic of universal humanism. Central to this universalistic posture and its binary logic is the notion of 'difference' as pejoration" (p. 3). Through a posthuman exchange, Braidotti troubles historical dualistic philosophies and enables processes whereby difference is situated amongst entangled states. These post philosophies expand. They become uncontrollable by way of their multiplicity as different bodies become entangled and trouble prescriptive understandings of knowing/being; "glitches are difficult to name and nearly impossible to identify until that instant when they reveal themselves" (Russell, 2020, p. 73). I/We must honour what and who is being harmed in colonized systems; these oppressions of knowing/being need to be glitched.

(T)here, we contend that posthumanism and other post philosophies can and should address how the colonial project is intertwined with knowing/being (Gerrard et al., 2017; Spivak, 2005). Zoe Todd considers how Juanita Sundberg (2014) "describes her own efforts to engage with post-humanism as a decolonizing tool kit, while flagging how Eurocentric the project of post-humanism remains" (Todd, 2016, p. 9). Through Adam's glitch art, I/We imagine new pathways and think about how art/re-search and new co-compositions provoke us to (un)learn how the colonial project controls knowing/being; how various colonial processes cause harm to the human and more-than-human world. The glitched mail art of *Art/re-search (T)here* demonstrates that co-composition can help us dismantle binary systems of colonial oppression, helping us reimagine alternatives of working together, rupturing what causes harm.

I/We are not claiming that art/re-search will make possible solutions to the world's problems and injustices. Rather, this is to underscore that relational ways of working together can play a prominent role in how we can begin to imagine and mobilise social change. This work is "always in need of new ways of accounting and rendering accountable" (Loveless, 2020, p. 27). Art/re-search can be employed by co-conspirators in diverse ways in order to re-think and re-turn. This is a call to action.

Figure 10
Adam, Mail Art Panel (Glitch)
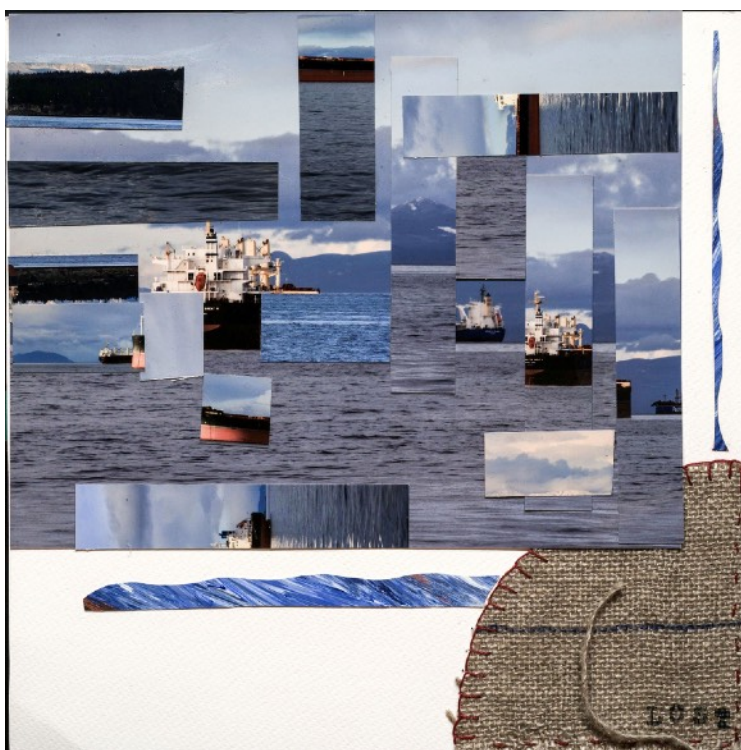
Art/Re-search and Thing-Power as a Decolonized Process

Irene left traces of places in the mail art paper with the word "is" stamped on it. She looks towards the land as these collective lines of re-questioning emerge. (Re)positioned on the unceded land of the Haudenosauneega, Anishinabek, and Huron-Wendat, she reflects on what was stolen and what is lost because of the colonial histories that she re-searches through digital storytelling. To do this, and to become un/settled through art/re-search, she traversed the land that her Dutch family settled on.

In *Making Home on Anishinaabe Lands: Storying Settler Activisms*, May Chazan (2020) writes that "settlers are beginning to destabilize their own claims to belonging,

question their own ways of knowing and being on colonized lands, and support Indigenous resurgence through listening, (un)learning, relationship-building, and meaningful allyship" (p. 37). This work is situated within the relationalities of settlers and non-settlers engaged in collaborative meaning-making on (what is now called) Canada (Simpson, 2017). We engaged with the thing-power of the mail art with a shared desire to reimagine and re-search spaces, to trans-form and re-stitch art/re-search—with all of our relations (King, 2003/2005).

(T)here, I/We acknowledge an intention not to "recast the process within a hyperindividualism that negates relationality" (Simpson, 2017, p. 9). The milkweed inhabits this space. The bark is bent and tells a story, too. Land and our relation to it should be honoured, troubled, worked through. These mail art assemblages inspire a sense of accountability. This requires a relational account of what land *is* as it traverses to different people through geographical territories.

Zoe Todd (2016) contests a purely ontological understanding of land. An ontological view of land is static, something to be consumed. Jeffrey Nealon (2021) also troubles an "ontologically prescriptive sense of nature" (p. 46). Through art/re-search, I/We are continuously reminded that ontologies are often founded through a set of violations (Butler, 2003) that do not account for their many entanglements. These methodological re-imaginings decolonize knowledge production through relational entanglements.

This is a call to action to deconstruct and co-compose thing-power through art/re-search in order to reimagine responsibilities for our relations with each other and the world. The thing-power of art/re-search unsettles allyship, what it means to co-conspire against oppressive knowledge systems, and unlearning and learning towards decolonizing solidarity (Kluttz et al., 2020). Thing-power mobilises *Art/re-search, (T)here*. Bennett (2009) reminds us that thing-power includes the ability to act, respond, and be a vital player. This is where art/re-search, as a relational way of knowing/being with BIPOC, queer, and settler re-searchers, provokes us to think about how it can mobilise social change within the decolonial project. Art/re-search becomes a catalyst for unsettling thinking and acting as an act of solidarity, because:

> decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically. (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7)

Irene spoke about being inspired by the work of co-conspirator Gladys, who had made films about decolonization and the land. The generative collaborations spark further entanglements through *Art/Re-search (T)here*. In the words of Gladys, "re-search projects, questions, methods, and meaning-making are relational, iterative, and lived deeply within our hearts and spirits. We feel called to re-search for various reasons—community responsibilities, personal transformations, and broader contributions to processes of

decolonization and resurgence" (Rowe, 2020, p. 47). Through various art/re-search entanglements throughout the project (and beyond), Irene encounters dispossession and, as a co-conspirator, aims to create social change. A decolonized re-turn requires co-conspirators to show up in community and to form commitments towards action through education and activism. This includes relationality with all of our relations. Through relational collaborative methodologies, we consider how relational art/re-search can have impact in the world; this is only a first step in un/settling the colonial project on a societal level; seeding possible trans-formations.

Trans-Formations

Through mail art, *Art/Re-search (T)here* creates trans-formations with co-conspirators who wanted to co-compose thing-power in order to (un)learn colonial systems of oppression that limit understandings of how I/We come to know/be. I/We imagine a "(post)human view of the world, whereby there is no reason to go to war, to hate, to oppress, objectify, steal. Rather, a relational and dynamic view of the world paves a road to peace" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 249). (T)here, I/We "become entangled across many borders, reimagined in ever critical, radical and inventive ways" (Bayley, 2019, p. 365), moving towards the transformative aspect of art/re-search. Perhaps these risky methods can open art/re-search up to trans-formation, whereby some-thing, as thing-power, disrupts colonial hierarchical understandings of how we come to know/be.

Figure 11
I*rene, Mail Art Panel (Stolen Land)*

Relationality and transformations were considered by Gladys, the last person to add to the mail art. Surrendering to relational processes and disrupting cemented understandings is central to resistance, the co-creation of ethical spaces. Creating means to be in relationship, to get lost, to re-turn, to connect. For Gladys, re-creating and re-searching "is a resistance to the ongoing colonization of Indigenous ancestral lands and bodies" (Rowe, 2020, p. 35), and this is expressed between and amongst poetry and mark-making. (T)here, the self is relational as she worked through the emerging lines of inquiry through paint and poetics. Orange, red, white, and purple washes form streaks of movement outward and inward. Her words express how disconnection, silence, and disintegration fade through co-creation. Art/re-search provides a decolonized methodology in this way.

Figure 12
Gladys, Mail Art Panel (Trans-Formed)

This is a call to action for researchers to reimagine how knowing/being can emerge through art/re-search, with and through a dynamic whole. Research questions can be disrupted and become generative through relational and decolonizing art/re-search methodologies. The arts-based research—getting lost, epistemology, ontology, and transformation—that our project started with became entangled, glitchy, (un)known and trans-formed. Post philosophies were reimagined via the relational mail art process. Stories and material were shared; movement and change were honoured; the past (and simultaneous present) were disrupted; co-conspirators could come together again. Re-turning should happen with inclusive voices, hands, and co-conspirators. These decolonizing trans-formations emerge from getting lost within relational processes, and by embracing risky entanglements and the dynamic whole of thing-power. Sometimes, *getting lost is something*, *(t)here.*

Figure 13
Mail Art Panels (Getting Lost is Something)

REFERENCES

Absolon, K. E. (2011). *Kaandossiwin: How we come to know*. Fernwood Pub.

Aoki, T. (1993). Legitimating lived curriculum: Towards a curricular landscape of multiplicity. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 8*(3), 255-268.

Barad, K. (2007) *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Bayley, A. (2019). How did 'we' become human in the first place? Entanglements of posthumanism and critical pedagogy for the twenty-first century. In C. Taylor & A. Bayley (Eds.), *Posthumanism and higher education: Reimagining pedagogy, practice and research* (pp. 359-365). Palgrave Macmillan.

Bencard, A., Whiteley, L., & Thon, C. H. (2019). Curating experimental entanglements. In M. V. Hansen, A. F. Henningsen & A. Gregersen (Eds.), *Curatorial challenges: Interdisciplinary perspectives on contemporary curating* (pp. 132-146). Routledge.

Bennett, J. (2009). *Vibrant matter: A political ecology of things*. Duke University Press.

Braidotti, R. (2013). *The posthuman.* Polity Press.

Britzman, D. P. (1995). Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight. *Educational Theory, 45*, 151-165.

Butler, J. (2003). The question of social transformation. In E. Beck-Gernsheim, J. Butler & L. Puigvert (Eds.), *Women & social transformation* (pp. 1-28). P. Lang.

Cahnmann-Taylor, M., & Siegesmund, R. (2008). *Arts-based research in education: Foundations for practice*. Routledge.

Causevic, A., Philip, K., Zwick-Maitreyi, M., Lewis, P. H., Bouterse, S., & Sengupta, A. (2020). Centering knowledge from the margins: Our embodied practices of epistemic resistance and revolution. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 22*(1), 6-25.

Chambers, C., Hasebe-Ludt, E., Donald, D., Hurren, W., Leggo, C., & Oberg, A. (2008).

Métissage: A research praxis. In J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 141-153). Sage.

Chattopadhyay, P. (2018, October 26). Feminista Jones doesn't think you're an ally. *Out in the Open*. [Radio Broadcast] CBC Radio. https://www.cbc.ca/radio/outintheopen/allies-1.4850186/feminista-jones-doesn-tthink-you-re-an-ally-1.4850215

Chazan, M. (2020). Making home on Anishinaabe lands: Storying settler activisms in Nogojiwanong (Peterborough, Canada). *Settler Colonial Studies*, *10*(1), 34–53.

Cloutier, G., Shields, A., Do-Nguyen, L.,Jamouchi, S., & Gillard, Y. (2022). "'Becoming I / we'" together as critical. In C. Burkholder., F. Aladejebi, & J. Schwab-Cartas (Eds.), *Facilitating community research for social change: Case studies in qualitative, arts-based and visual research* (pp. 259-276). Routledge.

Donald, D. (2012). Indigenous Metissage: A decolonizing research sensibility. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 25(*5), 533-555.

Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review, 59*(3), 297–324.

Ellsworth, E. (1997). Teaching positions: difference, pedagogy, and the power of address. Teachers College Press.

Gallagher, K., & Wessels, A. (2011). Emergent pedagogy and affect in collaborative research: A metho-pedagogical paradigm. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 19*(2), 239-258.

Gerrard, J., Rudolph, S., & Sriprakash, A. (2017). The politics of post-qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry, 23*(5), 384-394.

Grosz, E. (2020). *The nick of time: Politics, evolution, and the untimely*. Routledge.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 1*4(3), 575-599.

Harman, G. (2018). *Object-oriented ontology: A new theory of everything*. Pelican.

Kerr, J. (2019). Indigenous education in higher education in Canada: Settler re-education through new materialist theory. In C. Taylor & A. Bayley (Eds.), *Posthumanism and higher education: Reimagining pedagogy, practice and research* (pp. 313-328). Palgrave Macmillan.

King, T. (2005). *The truth about stories: A native narrative*. University of Minnesota Press. [Originally published 2003]

Kluttz, J., Walker, J., & Walter, P. (2020). Unsettling allyship, unlearning and learning towards decolonising solidarity. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 52*(1), 49-66.

Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science.* State University of New York Press.

Lather, P. (2017). *(Post)critical methodologies: The science possible after the critiques. The selected works of Patti Lather*. Routledge.

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldview colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.). *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 77-85). UBC Press.

Loveless, N. (2019). *How to make art at the end of the world: A manifesto for research creation*. Duke University Press.

Manning, E., & Massumi, B. (2014). *Thought in the act: Passages in the ecology of experience*. University of Minnesota Press.

Massumi, B. (2009). National enterprise emergency: Steps toward an ecology of powers. *Theory, Culture & Society, 26*(6), 153–185.

Nealon, J. T. (2021). *Fates of the performative: From the linguistic turn to the new materialism*. University of Minnesota Press.

Rowe, G. (2020). *Resurgence of Indigenous nationhood: Centering the stories of Indigenous full spectrum doulas* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Manitoba.

Russell, L. (2020). *Glitch feminism: A manifesto*. Verso.

Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done*: *Indigenous freedom through radical resistance*. University of Minnesota Press.

Spivak, G. C. (2005). Touched by deconstruction. *Grey Room, 1*(20), 95-104.

Spivak, G. C. (2015). *Outside in the teaching machine*. Routledge

Springgay, S., & Rotas, N. (2015). How do you make a classroom operate like a work of art? Deleuzeguattarian methodologies of research-creation. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 28*(5), 552-572.

Springgay, S., & Truman, S. (2017). On the need for methods beyond proceduralism: Speculative middles, (in)tensions, and response-ability in research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 24*(3), 203–214.

Stewart, K. (2007). *Ordinary affects.* Duke University Press.

St. Pierre. E. (1997). Circling the text: Nomadic writing practices. *Qualitative Inquiry, 3*(4), 403-417.

Sundberg, J. (2014). Decolonizing posthumanist geographies. *Cultural Geographies*, *21*(1), 33–47.

Taylor, C. A. (2019). Unfolding: Co-conspirators, contemplations, complications and more. In C. Taylor & A. Bayley (Eds), *Posthumanism and higher education: Reimagining pedagogy, practice and research* (pp. 2-26). Palgrave Macmillan.

Todd, Z. (2016). An Indigenous feminist's take on the ontological turn: "Ontology" is just another word for colonialism. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, *29*(1), 4–22.

Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(3), 409–27.

Tuck, E. (2010). Breaking up with Deleuze: Desire and valuing the irreconcilable. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *23*(5), 635–650.

Tuck, E., & Yang, W. K. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1*(1), 1-40.

ENDNOTES

[1] As I describe our art/re-search process, I consider how the process cannot be reproduced. Every co-conspiring group will have different art/re-search through their diverse and expansive spaces and co-compositions. At the same time, and through this call to action, I contend that these entangled and relational spaces, the time it takes to foster real relationships through art/re-search, should be reproduced as a new dynamic whole.