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*Collectively becoming a/r/tographic: making meaning with young people*

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**Collectively becoming a/r/tographic:  
making meaning with young people**

Tornando-se a/r/tográfico coletivamente:  
construindo sentido com os jovens

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**Abstract**

In an increasingly tight era of standardisation the voices and agency of young people are often placed into confined curriculum spaces. The arts offer a rich playground to explore the world which young people and adults navigate. In this paper we present the little aesthetics of young people as they become a/r/tographers collectively: transforming mainstream schooling. Advancing Hickey-Moody's (2016) notion of little publics, we position the a/r/tographic products of young people as examples of little aesthetics and as ways to enact pedagogies of resistance and refusal. The work illustrated in this paper rethinks Australian schooling into local and international identities through a public a/r/tographic lens.

**Keywords:**

Little aesthetics; little publics; Public pedagogy; A/r/tography; Collaborative art

**Resumo:**

Em uma época cada vez mais padronizada, as vozes e as agências dos jovens são frequentemente assentadas em espaços confinados do currículo. As artes oferecem um rico playground para explorar o mundo que os jovens e os adultos navegam. Neste artigo, apresentamos a pequena estética dos jovens à medida que coletivamente se tornam a/r/tógrafos: transformando a educação geral. Avançando a noção de pequenos públicos de Hickey-Moody's (2016), posicionamos os produtos a/r/tográficos de jovens como exemplos de pouca estética e como formas de promulgar pedagogias de resistência e recusa. O trabalho ilustrado neste artigo repensa a escolaridade australiana nas identidades locais e internacionais através de uma lente a/r/tográfica pública.

**Palavras-chave:**

Pedagogia pública; A/r/tografia; Arte colaborativa.

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## *Introduction*

Australian schooling is following global trends to standardize education and measure everything, through high-stakes testing regimes. This tightly ordered way of doing education relegates arts to the side. Arts and art education fall down the rungs of learning hierarchies established by schooling authorities that privilege literacy and mathematics. Even in movements like maker spaces (Smith, Hielscher, Dickel, Soderberg and van Oost, 2013) that espouse commitment to creativity, technology dominates and relegates creativity and the arts to a place of less importance. As Harris (2014) has noted in *The Creative Turn*, creativity continues to move far from the arts into business and political rhetoric, often in the guise of innovation. Standardisation, crowded curricula and testing regimes regulate young people through their measurement strategies, classifying students into categories of low, medium and high; or below, at, and above expected level. Learning is a fluid and evolving process that at times is messy and nonlinear in movement, and in this way the hierarchy of a standardised curriculum directly and indirectly pushes the arts to the margins. These approaches are oppositional to the nature of the arts, which at times is a messy, nonlinear process of uncovering, and uses a range of conceptions, articulations and concepts of beauty to unveil. These conceptions and arts processes are evolving and growing and move towards 'vague ideas' (Knight, 2013: 25) as opposed to fixed products. Moving towards vague ideas is a process, art is a process, learning is a process, and through the standardisation of educational practices, the art of young people is held within the thick lines of output as measurement. True artistic inquiry resembles the qualities of art: it is a nonlinear process and cannot be contained through standardisation. We only need to be reminded of the works of Marcel Duchamp, Barbara Kruger, John Cage, Marina Abramovic, Yoko Ono, or Leigh Bowery (as a random sample) that challenge simple views of what art can be. Standardisation is the antithesis of art, neatly cropped, staying within the lines while following a checklist has never worked for art historically and contemporaneously: nor does it work for art education.

The education system could be much more when it displaces the economic and capitalist rhetoric of a standardised and standardising view. We do this by looking towards the doing of art as a situated and relational practice that includes the worlds and ecologies of young people. The arts are a vibrant part of our cultural lives and when used effectively in education they offer alternatives to how we as educators work with the lives of young people. In this paper we explore the artwork of young

people as they depict and communicate their perspectives about the places they live. The narratives of young people highlight their situatedness and this speaks to how adult and youth worldviews are entangled and are in states of becoming.

Young people are 'meaning makers' and through their art they generate potent insights into the worlds youth and adults share. Looking with young people's art at these worlds encourages 'communication between adults and children in educational and other intergenerational contexts' (Knight, 2013: 23). This communication is both located within schools and the places, communities, and beyond-school-lives young people participate in and live. This communication between young people in a variety of artistic contexts will shape how we view these artful conversations through the lens of a/r/tography. At the core of a/r/tography is becoming: this becoming is enacted through holistic and entwined processes that move fluidly between being an artist, researcher and teacher—mapping the relational intersections of being and understanding. The meaning making young people engage in are through artistic events, projects and experiences and are communicated within and across borders. Young people's art negotiates the global and local simultaneously through rhizomatic ways.

Following Knight (2013) we too perceive youth as meaning-makers that 'pull on a diverse collection of ideas, experiences, imaginings and information to form their opinions, learning and relationships with the world' (23). We as the authors engage with young people's relationships to their worlds through their art. In particular we are interested in the art made by young people. Drawing on the artistic work and projects generated and facilitated by Gallery Sunshine Everywhere—a small youth oriented arts gallery located in the western suburbs of Melbourne—young people (inclusive of all ages from early childhood through to young adults) act as partner artists. Viewing young people in this way aligns with Hickey-Moody's (2016) youth oriented concept of little publics. Little publics considers how young people participate in civicness and in doing so the public sphere is encountered in a multitude of ways. Little publics are heterogeneous and can be aligned to many and varied social and political conventions and attitudes (Hickey-Moody, 2016). Little public spaces can also act as sites of resistance and refusal and like adult realities they are highly political. Through the meaning making of young people's artistic products multiple spaces are unified to create shared communities. Doing so invites aesthetic and intellectual conversations to arise.

The not for profit organization Gallery Sunshine Everywhere enables young people to engage with the arts within and beyond schools. Gallery Sunshine Everywhere ([www.gallerysunshineeverywhere.com.au](http://www.gallerysunshineeverywhere.com.au))

gallerysunshine.com) is a community based organization that for ten years has been facilitating exhibitions in a local café of pre-school, primary school and secondary school students' art work. We draw on a variety of exhibitions and experiences that have grown from the work of Gallery Sunshine Everywhere and this enables us to explore their creative expressions through a public pedagogy lens. Doing so enables the voices of young people to share their public views of and with the public. We position young people as collaborative a/r/tographers who are responding and drawing on collective ideas and practices. These creative expressions then enter public discourse through the opportunities Gallery Sunshine Everywhere provides. These young artists collectively speak their understandings of the world around them through shared themes. Collaborative a/r/tography blurs the boundaries of formal schooling to include the public sphere as a playground of teaching and learning. The art of children and adolescents is so often an unfettered expression of the complex environments young people become within. Working collaboratively in this way shifts the focus from individual accomplishments to a collective rendering of complex communities.

### *A/r/tography in the interest of publicness*

A/r/tography is a holistic practice-led approach to research that sees the practitioner/s as artists, researchers and teachers. Through their practice these areas map the processes of becoming pedagogical. This hybridized form of research has been used to document the becoming processes of beginning teachers (Irwin et al., 2006; Irwin and O'Donoghue, 2012; Springgay, Irwin, and Kind, 2005). A/r/tography enables teacher educators to draw upon their professional practice in artistic ways and makes visible their pedagogical sensibilities and possibilities in ongoing, community engaged dialogue. This dialogue moves from the self to the relational and back as part of an ongoing dedication to learning, curiosity, imagination, and design. Individuals unfold their learning together. Doing so they 'enact, develop and problematize' the unravelling sense of 'becoming pedagogical' (Gouzouasis et al., 2013: 3). As Irwin et al. (2006) highlights, pedagogical connections are rhizomatic that join in nonlinear ways as individuals interweave their values, ethics, realities, knowing and doing. The complexity of youth understandings and art practice is shaped by the extent to which they are offered and respond to specific themes in their artistic work as well as their capacities for self-regulation and incorporation of life experience into their art work. Through the tripartite view of artist, researcher and teacher young people's becomings are pedagogical as they draw (conceptually and physically) on the world and their relations within it. This paper is located in teacher education with teacher educators as the writers who are drawing together the relations between partner schools, youth artists and community organizations.

Art enables rhizomatic relations to be experienced and when coupled with a/r/tography young people are able to inquire individually and collectively as they open connections between the places where their lives are situated. Such connections benefit young people and adults alike as they speak to one another through relational contexts. Approaching a/r/tography through communal forces, and within the public sphere, enables a way for adults and young people to become-together in multiple ways guided by what is pedagogically public. Teaching and learning, creating and making, performing and observing across formal and informal settings. This communal and community-based approach towards a/r/tography becomes pedagogy of publicness.

Biesta (2014) argues that there are three distinct forms of publicness that place pedagogy within the public sphere. He outlines public pedagogy as being pedagogy for the public (instruction given to the public sphere); pedagogy of the public (instruction done within and by the public), and pedagogy in the interest of publicness (instruction that lives in the multiplicities of the public and resists market driven agendas, and is a form a pedagogical intervention). In Biesta's argument he contends pedagogy is political and that when educators and public pedagogues—people enacting educational activity in public spaces—engage in the interest of publicness new ways of being and doing are generated. Through the work of the public pedagogue/s binaries are able to be dismantled and new possibilities are given space to emerge and be activated. Power structures are examined and disrupted, and a pedagogy of refusal becomes possible (Springgay, 2015). Activist and experimental in its nature public pedagogy in the interest of the public demonstrates what is possible when we work in solidarity and through sustainable ways as diverse groups of people come together. Public pedagogy in the interest of publicness enables a doing, a 'pedagogy of demonstration' (Biesta, 2014: 23): not following any set curriculum that is taught, delivered, signed and sealed. Rather the process of learning is open to plurality. Embracing difference as an asset, a/r/tography coupled with Biesta's notion of pedagogy in the interest of the public, activates young people as equal contributors to the complex and dynamic ecologies that shape and create our communities. This view of pedagogy in the public sphere 'is entirely public, both in its orientation and in its execution' (Biesta, 2014: 23). Young people can be seen as pedagogues who make and teach meaning through a/r/tographic processes. When brought into these places youth contribute and communicate in valid ways that are in the interest of public and speak about a world that is perpetually changing.

Hickey-Moody (2016) extends on the role youth enact in the public sphere by noting that the worlds and realities of young people are relational to those inhabited by adults, yet are distinctly different and highly political. The worlds and habits of young people

are civically enacted and through Hickey-Moody's idea of 'little publics' we are able to theorise and conceptualise the agency and voice of young people. The actions and doings of young people are civically influenced and their opinions and thoughts carry political weight and as adults working with young people little publics 'shows how voice is made from the materiality of action' (2006: 58). The concept of little publics calls for a change in actions conducted by adults where they consider the agency and voice of young people as active members of the places we dwell. In this way the public exhibition of young people's art work draws from Savage's (2014) definition of the political, popular and concrete publics of public pedagogy. In his definition of the political sphere the public is one bounded by nation states, homogenous entities that speak, identify and define a large mass of people: identities such as Australian, or Sri Lankan. The second public sphere young people's art moves within and through is the popular realm. In this concept of the public Savage notes the role of popular culture as a pedagogical agent. The worlds of young people are heavily influenced by popular culture and these filter into the everyday of youth as they re-present their worldviews and realities through art. Thirdly the concrete realm of public pedagogy is bounded by smaller relational frames. The site where the art is exhibited, the small projects young people are co-creating, and the smaller geographical locations they speak from. It is through each of these public realms the a/r/tographic work of young people can be seen to be acting within and through. Young people are fostering political (international) publics through co-constructed books and learning partnerships; young people are using and taking ownership of images and ideas transmitted through popular culture and the public sphere; and young people are speaking from local geographic borders, such as the western suburbs of Melbourne through the possibilities generated by Gallery Sunshine Everywhere.

The communities of young people gather, speak, and perform, in shared spaces between adults and young people and through our interactions we witness our investments in the public as a whole (locally and globally). Committing to the realities of young people as contributors to publicness we extend the idea of little publics to consider the aesthetic reasoning of young people: we refer to this as little aesthetics (Cooper and Ryan, 2016a, 2016b). Through arts practices the aesthetic judgments and actions of young people become pedagogical and they demonstrate values, beliefs, knowledges and ways of moving through the places we share. Youth voice is represented and articulated through their commitment to publicness: the political, popular and concrete layers. Little publics as an idea offers an insight into exploring the aesthetics of young people that live besides and with adult aesthetics. Through aesthetics we are able to witness our shared and differing commitments to the places we live. The aesthetics of young people are at times moulded by adults and at other

times are distinctly separate and like Hickey-Moody's (2016) little publics there is a mutual gaze between young people and adults. Sharing the visions, concerns, or hopes and dreams of young people enrich our communities by including the future caretakers of this planet with voice. This invites aesthetic agency and affect to open dialogue. Our aesthetic expressions through art capture 'the act of witnessing' (2016: 69) and these acts demonstrate, reveal, scratch at, and engage, with our commitments to one another.

Collaborative a/r/tography becomes a process in which we can witness one another in a flat way, similar to a flat ontology. Bryant (2011) poses an ontological view that avoids hierarchy and transcendence, in Bryant's flat ontology the presence of one entity ruling over another is removed and relations are rethought. A flat ontology he says, 'recognizes that humans have unique powers and capacities and that how humans relate to the world is a topic more than worthy of investigation' (2011: 246). Young people's a/r/tographic inquiries become valid and important in our local communities as they investigate how young people relate to the world we share and co-construct. This ontological view offers a way for little publics and aesthetics to speak as part of public discourse without being subjugated to adult domination. Avoiding dualisms and hierarchies of aesthetic knowing a shift towards a more egalitarian view activates in roads into creating and committing collectively: teaching and living together through and with our inquiries, from and across various forms of public identity: the political, popular and concrete.

Through art we are able to understand the phenomena around us that is expressed with and beyond linguistic representations. Artistic practices and products engage in the affective and cognitive and through aesthetic communication as visual art we allow metaphor, analogy, story and imagination to present views on our public and private lives. Producing visual texts as valid sources of information enables a cross-fertilization between little and big aesthetics; meeting, ebbing, flowing, and interacting in a delicate dance of relations, entanglements and enmeshment. Continually and contiguously our evolving and developing entanglements are grounded in relatedness that enables us to become pedagogical – a key feature of a/r/tography. A/r/tographic processes are reflexive and 'disrupt traditional teaching practice and the arbitrary boundaries of fixed disciplinary knowledge' (Gouzouasis et al., 2013: 8). Interdisciplinary a/r/tography situated within Hickey-Moody's (2015) idea of little publics blurs the boundaries of young and old. It is a contact zone where little and big aesthetics come together as they meet in relational contexts. In doing this, little and big aesthetics communicate distinctly at, and with, each other and a series of commitments are established.

These commitments as noted by Gouzouasis et al. (2013) are:

- a commitment to inquiry;
- a commitment to a way of being in the world;
- a commitment to negotiating personal engagement in a community of belonging; and
- a commitment to creating practices that trouble and address difference (2013: 3).

Children's art, aesthetics and little public expressions communicate these commitments and their agency over such commitments: becoming active citizens and political agents in the places adults and young people share.

There is a misconception that all children's art is alike and has a quaint naïve quality. The scribbles and markings of young people are often sequenced from being non-literate to literate as the dominant duology of education: literacy and numeracy predominate. Once children reach the age of being 'literate' and 'numerate' their art is likely to fall into the shadows. However the literacies of young people are more than words and the wealth of arts-based, practice-led research encourages other valid forms of knowing and being in interdisciplinary ways, denying the 'siloes' approach to disciplines in western schooling traditions. Through a/r/tography the work of young people becomes pedagogical, as they become artist, become researcher and become teacher in public spaces: generating texts that are multimodal and speak across the range of human experiences. In this paper young people display complex visual literacies equal to or more powerful than the standard, measureable literacies. Far from a singular naive doodle on the blank page, young people are communicating a variety of things that invite us as audience to appreciate difference and intentions and how we become-with our communities. These artistic acts are pedagogical and embody a key feature of a/r/tography which is, being with community in relationship (Irwin & Springgay, 2008).

The approach we describe in this paper draws from this and also blurs the boundaries of mainstream schooling, challenging the step-by-step worksheet approach of learning to enable deeper discourse about the educational worlds we live in as artists, researchers and teachers, for young and old. Welcoming 'socially engaged art' allows adults and young people to rethink our encounters with learning, and thus create learning environments that deviate in-to and out-of the margins: skimming the liminal.

*Drawing through the margins of communities and schools*

Reacting against standardised perspectives found in contemporary education critiques how knowledge is acquired and how knowledge is entangled within our personal and collective states of being and knowing. In standardised education successes and failures are markers of progress; not meeting the learning intentions, criteria or other dictated mandates teach us failure is negative. This approach creates a dualistic view of student growth, dividing young people into those who can and those who cannot. These binaries are bound by deficit ways of thinking. As Springgay (2015) highlights such binaries can be replaced by critically working with 'failures' to working with rather than against the interruptions that are present in learning opportunities and experiences. This approach re-considers how we look at teaching and learning to co-create learning experiences that are inclusive of student and teacher realities. This allows openings for deep and critical learning that enables pedagogy of refusal: refusing to work in singular ways but rather embracing new concepts of 'failure' as multiple points of entry into arts-based inquiry and doing. In this way working with little publics and aesthetic expressions enacts a pedagogy of refusal.

The work we present in this paper, displays what results when taking young people's art beyond the classroom, away from standardized testing regimes, and becomes located within the community. Doing this the artistic product becomes the teacher in a public sense and represents the artists' journey into research and artistic representation. Further, themes are those shared within the broad community, not bound by school curriculum documents. As such, the approach resonates with Knight (2013) who sees collaborative ways of working with young people as a way to enable 'small acts of resistance': offering adults various states of being with young people, where young people make 'detailed and intelligent observations' (2013: 31) as they generate visual texts. Through collaborative drawing Knight argues for pedagogies of resistance that undermine 'perpetual cycles of visual conformity' (2013: 31) so commonly found in art rooms around the country. Knight promotes collaborative drawing (drawing done collectively and concurrently between young people and adults) as a way to push through one-way approaches towards art education, looking to how young people and adults make visual meaning together, co-existing on the one page. The 'in the moment' expressions that come from the process of collaborative drawing are void of failures: each artistic gesture creates and becomes something else as the artists collectively create and communicate. Knight is drawing within the margins of mainstream education where adults are invited into learning with young people. It becomes co-existence and co-sharing: flattening. The teacher driven approach found in mainstream Australian education reduces the notion of multiple teachers: school

teachers, parents, family members, environments and experiences that merge and meet through interactive moments. In this way, arts practices offer intellectual and relational voices to learning moments that express, communicate, respond and direct, providing openings between the margins of formal schooling and the wider world beyond.

In their preparation of art work for a local government sponsored exhibition celebrating Neighbour Day (last Sunday in March), children in Grade 6 wrote about their drawings. The samples below indicate how wide ranging the stories were. They were very different from the responses given in interview by other young people engaged in a similar project in a previous year. This latter group mainly regurgitated the story that their teacher had told them about the origins of Neighbour Day. In both cases however, local council representatives selected some of the art work to use in their publicity for grants which residents could use to celebrate Neighbour Day. In this collaborative project, the school students were engaged at many levels. Within their schools they were artists and researchers, preparing and writing about images around Neighbour Day. Within the exhibition on the walls of the local café, they were artists and teachers, providing strong visual images and accompanying stories for café patrons. Their roles as artists, teachers and researchers came together in the validation of their work by local council and their use of it very broadly across the whole municipality as the sole publicity documents for Neighbour Day. Through the process of understanding and exploring what neighbours mean to young people and their families, they made visual representations of these knowings that were shared with each other as part of the artistic process. A collective rendering and understanding of neighbours is thus generated. Taking this learning outward into community settings through the work of Gallery Sunshine Everywhere this collective comprehension of neighbours then enters the space of neighbours. It lives in a communal space where the artists are active speakers at the event opening, where they became teachers through arts-based communication processes. The writing and themes generated by the students are shared to the wider public and local community, collectively communicating the places and spaces neighbours meet and converge through the eyes of young people: through little aesthetics. These artful encounters communicate the meaning behind Neighbour Day as seen through these young people's minds and this then speaks up to the adults in the world, allowing reflexivity on our shared environment.



*I drew this picture for Neighbour Day*

Figure 1: Whenever I see Jane

*I drew this picture for Neighbour Day because Jane is a very close neighbour to my family and me. Whenever I see Jane we wave to each other and say "Hi". For me, Neighbour Day is a day when everyone around you is happy and feeling the brightest. This is what Neighbour Day feels like to me (Marisa, Year 6)<sup>3</sup>*



Figure 2: Three best friends

*Three best friends riding around their friendly neighbourhood as their neighbours wave and become friends. (Jessie\*, Grade 6)*



Figure 3: The neighbours' pool

*This picture is in our neighbour's pool on Neighbour Day. With all the Neighbours and Friends. We play together (Mark\*, Grade 6)*



Figure 4: A peaceful place that everyone likes

*A peaceful place that everyone likes. And every person helps each other. Greetings every time you walk past someone. Here, kids can play safely. As you cross past roads, cars let you go first. Kids helping old people cross roads. It's just a lovely day (Grace\*, Grade 6).*

<sup>3</sup> \*Names marked are pseudonyms

Figure 5: *It reminds me of home and fun times*



The reasons why I drew my Neighbour Day picture like this is Because it reminds me of home and fun times I had talking with neighbours and friends around me It also reminds me of me and my dog Jay Jay walking in the park and having a good day. The other reason is my childhood memories And how my family takes me to the park and play and talk as a family. Those are the reasons why I drew this picture. Because it reminds me of my family and friends (Dana\*, Grade 6).

### *Youth led A/r/tography*

The exhibition referred to above was facilitated by Gallery Sunshine Everywhere in partnership with the local council to promote civic mindedness. With a vast range of exhibitions Gallery Sunshine Everywhere foster artful partnerships with schools, community organisations, refugee support groups and more. This places young people at the center as creative agents and extend opportunities to come together and create, make and respond, while at the same time inviting adults into supporting and witnessing the creative work of young people. The exhibitions combine the formality of the work being framed and opening events being arranged along with the accessibility of the café venue in a traditionally disadvantaged but gentrifying suburban area in Melbourne, Australia where there are no galleries.

Other collaborative child led a/r/tography activities with which Gallery Sunshine Everywhere is engaged and which take young people's art beyond the school gate include the production of books including images by young people in one country and accompanying stories by young people in another. Examples can be viewed at (<http://wordsandpicturesprojects.blogspot.com.au>). In their development of the content for the books, young people draw together their roles as teachers, artists and researchers.

They research how they will represent their lives for those unfamiliar with where they live, they prepare images and words, sometimes in English, sometimes in languages other than English that convey something of their lives and experiences, opening the way for elaboration by a child in another country. These international partnerships are part of a larger ongoing project that seeks out artistic responses between and with young people in different parts of the world. In this paper we are most interested in how through these actions young people become the teachers to one another about their places, and art is seen as the catalyst that provides youth to be pedagogical. By way of example, we present below an image prepared by a refugee child from Eritrea living in Sudan and the accompanying story prepared by a local student in Melbourne, Australia. In the curious world of learning and becoming these artistic entanglements cross borders and oceans. The little aesthetics of young people in these geographically distant locations speak across boundaries and validates the realities, imaginations and artistic responses of young people as ways of generating peace and international connections. In doing this these little public articulations enacts a public pedagogy that is in the interest of publicness – for adults and young people alike.



Figure 6: *What it means to me:* by Halima Idris and Thomas Nightingale

It looks like life the evolution of the world in small forms. It tastes like home, a sense of belonging like no other!! It feels like a new beginning of something great. It is always growing and adapting to the life of the world, giving gifts, being kind. Giving hope, life and a touch of magic. It's like a jigsaw: all the pieces make the puzzle, kindness makes an evolution. By working together you can do great things. A little help and a happy spirit and you are away. Work together, include everyone regardless of who they are. Life is a chain started by one followed by many people to make a world. Life

is simple. Include. Be kind, help the world journey on. Why? Because you can make a difference. You can start or continue a chain like others have done before you. Show your emotions and be kind. That's what matters most. Bringing things together it forms happiness; all you have to do is work together and be kind. (Tartakover, Ryan and Alishek, 2015)

The stories in this book were written in English because among the several photographs collected along with the young people's drawings there were many of the rudimentary school they attended in Sudan including one showing a teacher pointing to a board on which there were several English words. The completed book has since become an intercultural resource for schools in Sudan and Melbourne. In a second example of the Words and Pictures project, three groups of young people were drawn together: one group at a school in Sri Lanka, another at a Tamil language school in Melbourne and a third at a local secondary college in Melbourne. In coming together as collaborative young a/r/tographers, writing and preparing images around the again themed Hopes

and Dreams, these young people played exemplary roles as artists, teachers and researchers and drew on their facility in English, Tamil or in both languages.



Figure 7: Without affecting nature

*Power is very important in the world today. We use the invulnerable resource of air power without adversely affecting nature – G. Kalaikhsana (Sri Lanka)*

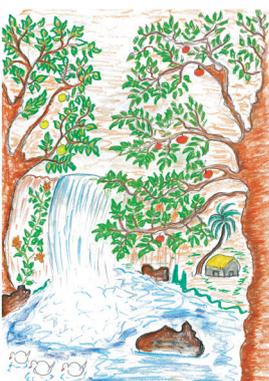


Figure 8: A cool place

*I'd like to live in a cool place – N. Roshan (Sri Lanka)*



Figure 9: Fishing industry

*The fishing industry is an inseparable part of the lifestyle of coastal people – G Kalaikhsana (Sri Lanka)*

Figure 10: The environment

*Always keeping the environment clean will make life more comfortable and enjoyable – M. Tharsika (Sri Lanka)*



Figure 11: Crane and moon

*Beautiful moonlight, with a crane feeding in the water – T Thinojini (Sri Lanka)*



Figure 12: Weapons

*Weapons cause the world's biggest atrocities. We must teach people not to use weapons – G. Kalaikhsana (Sri Lanka)*



Figure 13: *The world on the horizon* (Mary, Sunshine Secondary College)



Figure 14: Burden-free

*The birds represent the feeling of freedom and peace. They also represent death (since they are the colour of black). The sky is grey due to the overwhelming feeling of depression. The girl is covering her mouth because she is frightened about making another mistake. – (Lauren, Sunshine Secondary College)*



Figure 15: Girl vs Ghost

*Girl vs ghost. Be careful: there can be ghosts around you*  
- Pavisa (Tamil Language School)



Figure 16: Freedom -Hari (Tamil Language School)

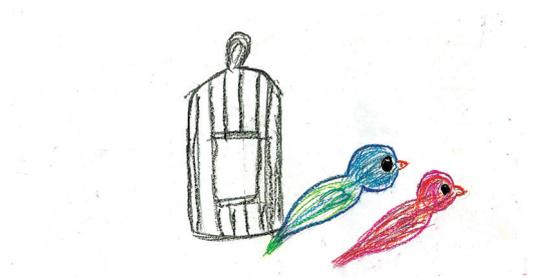


Figure 17: Monsters (Tamil Language School)

*Monsters don't have to be good: they can have freedom*  
- (Sanjay ,Tamil Language School)



Figure 18: The hope for the world

*I wanted to draw something that showed hope. I drew people around the world together: that shows hope for everyone* - (Sanjeev ,Tamil Language School).



Figure 19: *The world on the horizon* (Jo, Sunshine Secondary College)





Figure 20: Dream

*Dream: dreams that are lucky –Akshaya(Tamil Language School)*



Figure 21: My parents love me

*I know my parents love me because they buy me lovely things. For my birthday, mum gave me this beautiful gold and pink top – Ashvigha (Tamil Language School*

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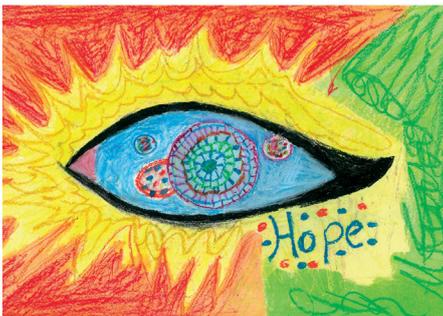


Figure 22: Hope

*The eye of hope: you can see the hope in the eye of a person – Binthu (Tamil Language School).*



Figure 23: *The world on the horizon (Vincent, Sunshine Secondary College)*



Figure 24: Darwin

*This reminds me of Darwin cause it had bright colours and Darwin is really hot! – Roman and Lu Jing Jing*

Further initiatives such as the above reinforce the relational and community orientations and possibilities of collaborative a/r/tography. As documented elsewhere (Cooper and Ryan, 2016a, 2016b) Gallery Sunshine Everywhere seeks to activate young people as little publics and their words and pictures as 'little aesthetics', playing important educative roles through the presentation of their work in a local community cafe. In doing this Gallery Sunshine Everywhere is taking action to witness the views and lives of young people, embracing pedagogies of refusal, refusing standardised one-way curricula agendas, to create pedagogies of resistance to rethink the ways little and big worlds are entangled, internationally and locally.

In the final Words and Pictures example students from the Shenzhen Guangdong region of China and students at Mother Teresa Catholic Primary School, in Canberra, Australia collaborated to produce another of the books in the Gallery Sunshine Everywhere series.

Figure 25: The purple castle

*Once far away in China was a purple castle – Georgina and Lora*



Figure 26: It's a troll

*It's a troll that jumped into a painting and has been splattered in beautiful colours and got all dressed up and he might go to a party. The troll is on a quest to make himself happy. When he got dressed he laughed out loud, 'ha ha ha!' He had the best time ever – Evie and Alisa*



Figure 27: So I started laughing and dancing

*Dark eyes laid upon me in the night laughing at me. Colours bursting out of its head. I didn't know what it was or what to say so I ran away but it caught me and then I realized it was from the festival so I started laughing and dancing – Eva and Jason*





Figure 28: The king of colours

*One colourful day in the rainbow the Kind of colours swooped past the black and white creatures, He tried to eat them but they were so big he sent a bird who cut them up with his mouth and then ate them – Ethan and Eagle*



Figure 29: The cold dark forest

*The boy was lost in the cold dark forest. He calls out loud for help but nobody comes. He starts to walk along the pathway. He finds a bell of peace and rings it while singing. Everybody comes out and cheers – Elvin and Peter*



Figure 30: No sign of sun

*It was cloudy and stormy and there was no sign of the sun – instead it was pouring rain. Everyone was waiting for the sun to come out and brighten up the dark, stormy day. It was like that for the last few days but the next day when everyone had given up the sun peeked through the clouds. It was still raining at the same time and then an amazing burst of colours appeared in the sky and everyone rushed to their windows to see all the amazing colours in the sky. They knew that the sun would come again every rainy day – Claudia and Shao Chengyu*



Figure 31: Uluru

*As the Eucalyptus trees grow the river flows. A nice view for a few. The flowers blossom to the call of the red rock standing tallest of all. All the cracks causing caves, boulders falling to the waves. Emus galloping to the wind howling. The sun shines and the kookaburra chimes. The kangaroos stand to the heat not a sound – not a heart beat – for this is the red center – Claire and Song Zikang*

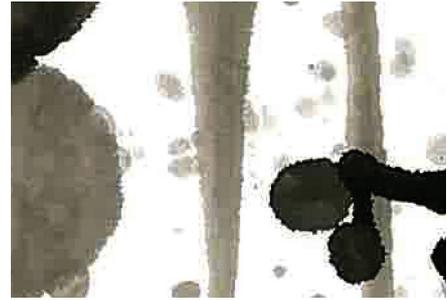


Figure 32: Sunset

*This is a sunset because I can see yellow and other colours in the sunset. You can see the sun behind it – and there are bits of light not joined together to the sunset – and it makes the sunset spread out – Andrew and Chen Ruixuan*

Figure 33: Snow

*This art work reminds me of snow and people playing in the snow building snowmen – Will and Hedy*



### Conclusion

Professional standards in Australian education call for learning to be connected and relevant to student lives, allowing multiple perspectives and intercultural understandings. This becomes problematic as schools are often restricted in how they bridge the inside and outside and foster extended community based learning experiences and partnerships. Within a timetabled approach to learning, connections with the local community are rendered to incursions, excursions, assembly performances, performing arts shows, graduation ceremonies and other one-off events. McInerney, Smyth, and Down (2011) ask educators to critically embrace concepts of place, identity and community to extend mutual knowing and being in the local area, between young and old where we all shape identities. This asks educators to critically and creatively engage with the places students live, even if they themselves do not live in that area. Educators need to critically engage with their own concepts and actively provide students with real world opportunities to holistically explore place, identity and community themselves, starting locally and moving globally. Embracing a collaborative a/r/tographic approach to teaching and learning can extend learning opportunities outwardly across borders and boundaries. Doing this contributes towards understanding concepts of place, identity and community for educators and students.

The work of Gallery Sunshine Everywhere enables teachers, students and community members to enter a contact zone that communicates through the eyes of young people. Providing young people opportunities to engage with the arts beyond the confines of the school gates. The artwork of young people is presented in a local café in a municipality that has had a lack of art venues for young people to experience. These experiences provide students with real life exhibitions where their work is framed and presented in a public space and enable these young people to become the teachers of where we as members of the same community rest our heads at night. As seen through the Words and Pictures book series this youth oriented approach has brought

young people from global locations together through collaborative approaches to teaching and learning. This way Gallery Sunshine Everywhere generates validity for young people's worldly expressions: giving opportunities for communicating and for teaching. As well as adopting a public pedagogical approach that collectively paints the places, identities are shaped and intergenerational ways of being together embraced, not overshadowed by 'adult knows best' agendas. The work of Gallery Sunshine Everywhere blurs the margins of schooling by working within and outside the school walls in collaboration with teachers and other school staff, community organisations, local councils and other stakeholders as well as the general public – as demonstrated through projects such as Words and Pictures and Neighbour Day. Through these collaborative a/r/tographical processes, products and opportunities instigated with Gallery Sunshine Everywhere young people's voices and aesthetics live in relation to adult worlds, in relation to young people's worlds and together offer our publiced rhizomes of perspectives, painting the richness of how we know and be in the world.

Arts pedagogy can be a form of cultural resistance (Hickey-Moody and Page, 2016) and becomes a political act. Collaborative a/r/tography made by young people is likewise an act of resistance, a political move, a refusal to work in pre-defined standard ways. Arts approaches to pedagogy opens doorways, windows and mirrors into the worlds we become-with as we interact, share, and co-create with young people. Through the material thinking of art making young people speak from a little aesthetic view. These aesthetic statements are material realisations of realities. In their articulation of these works young people and adults move beyond borders and boundaries, systemic in nature, to be more relational. They teach within and through Savage's (2014) notions of what constitutes differing public spheres in the interest of publicness. Enhancing our shared spaces and places in the macro and micro relations of life, locally and transnationally. Honouring a relational approach that celebrates 'the social and cultural changes that emerge through intra-actions between people and matter in processes of making, collaborating and observing' (Hickey-Moody and Page, 2016: 19). These interactions mingle in the enmeshed worlds of young and old coming from in-between places. Going with the flow opens possibilities as we action the enmeshing of people and matter: people and their aesthetic expressions. Looking with and through a/r/tographic processes with students maps their becoming-with to enable holistic approaches to learning that truly do refuse and resist top down prescribed schooling.

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