

# PreOccup<sup>y</sup>/Maximum Occupancy

Kryssi Staikidis  
Northern Illinois University  
[kstaikidis@niu.edu](mailto:kstaikidis@niu.edu)

## Editorial

When the Editor and Associate Editor conceived of this call for papers for PreOccup<sup>y</sup>/Maximum Occupancy, it was based on the Caucus members' input during the annual meetings of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education (CSTAE) at the National Art Education Association conference, NAEA 2012, New York. We listened to our colleagues speak about the year's events, and we discussed how we as art educators could respond to the needs of the Caucus and of our field for Volume 33 of the *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education (JSTAE)*.

As Editors developing a call for papers, Sharif Bey and I used a kind of call and response method of work. We questioned, debated, and discussed the Caucus dialogues during which a variety of possible themes arose—geography of the body, viruses-viral, trickle up, banding together, immaterial, and preoccupy/maximum occupancy. PreOccupy/Maximum Occupancy was chosen by the group. As Sharif and I worked, we distilled our own ideas related to the theme in a somewhat non-linear way, ending with the question: How might we create a call broad enough to elicit multiple submissions that could and would inspire writers, artists, educators, and activists? Since we could not visit each other's homes, we did this through virtual collaboration. At the end of each session, we sent each other some questions, or prose, a poem maybe, the result of our conversations, our easy exchange of ideas. Our communication style seemed to mirror a version of what Patty Bode, Caucus Coordinator at the time, described as having taken place at Occupy Boston. The practice of the "human microphone" deeply impressed her: each listener close to the speaker simultaneously repeated the speaker's words and passed them along through the group. In our working together as editors in some small way like a human microphone, we too amplified each other's voices as a call and response.

The Occupy Movement was also born as a response. It was an uprising—a resistance to being silenced in the face of a system producing wealth for the few at the expense of the many. And although the Occupy Movement began in the U.S. in 2011, it quickly became part of an already developing worldwide movement that is still echoing across the globe, giving people far and wide a sense that their voices must be heard. As editor of the 33<sup>rd</sup> volume of the *JSTAE: PreOccupy/Maximum Occupancy*, I ask: How has each author interpreted the meaning of to occupy? Occupy, for me, is connected to the idea of taking up space, creating space with, creating space by, without creating space for. I associate occupying space with speaking up, having the courage to voice ideas, moving out of a space of silence, staking claim, taking up space where none has been provided. It is my belief that we need to be careful with phrases like "giving voice to," "allowing another to have a voice," "creating a space for" because such phrases imply that the we who give voice, or allow for another's voice, or create a space for the other often do not acknowledge our own privilege. We who get to speak are often part of a dominant culture that perhaps does not always recognize itself in the role of an elite holding power and does not always acknowledge itself as a gatekeeper. With little acknowledgment of our centered visibility that pushes others into the shadows, we in some ways ask that others remain there, or perhaps even demand it in insidious silence. By virtue of our positions as academics, teachers, scholars, and researchers, we hold and yield power, but we abuse that hold if we do not acknowledge it. In contrast, the writers in this volume specifically oblige us to take responsibility through acknowledgment, collaboration, resistance, and support for a kind of occupation that shares power, recognizes everybody, and makes or co-constructs room. In these writings, the authors acknowledge the importance of presence. And their concept of this presence has taken many forms in this volume.

Even though the editor is generally assigned the privileged position of presiding over authors' writings, I will move over so you as readers can interpret the authors' responses to the themed call for papers yourselves. Inspired by the form and function of the human microphone in the Occupy Movement, with its integrated call/response mechanism, the remainder of this editorial will be presented in the form of a call and response. Like listeners in the distance who repeat the words again, I will offer up an excerpt from our call for papers, to which chosen excerpts from each author's manuscript will respond in her/his/their own words. In this way, you as readers can also be a part of this people's

microphone. In close proximity to the speaker, you as readers can perhaps repeat the words again to yourselves until all people gathered hear the words. And like the Occupy Movement(s), past and present, all people, artists, authors, editors, and readers close by or in the distance are invited to repeat the words again, until all people gathered hear the words.

Below is the entire Call for Papers, followed by call and response sets of excerpts for each author: the first excerpt in each case is from the call; the following excerpts are responses from one or more authors.

| <b>JOURNAL OF SOCIAL THEORY IN ART EDUCATION CALL FOR PAPERS</b>   |  |
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| <p><b>We welcome multiple interpretations of the theme for:<br/>JSTAE VOLUME 33<br/>JOURNAL THEME: PREOCCUPY/MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY.</b></p>  |  |
| <p>We hope that this collaboratively developed call for JSTAE Volume 33 will encourage submissions from any possible author, poet, artist, writer, researcher, teacher, whether in higher education, K-12, administration, policy, or general education. We hope that contributors will address this call from a broad range of perspectives. For this reason the editors of JSTAE and membership of the CSTAE hope to inspire individual or collaborative responses related to the theme: Preoccupy/ Maximum Occupancy with possible springboards listed below.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Occupy</b> - Forms of "direct democracy" have been practiced for millennia in many indigenous communities and small-scale societies that have accomplished community-based participatory decision-making. Naming this practice of consensus-based decision-making "General Assemblies" can be traced (in the western worlds) to the Athenian democracy (around the sixth century BC in Ancient Greece). In the General Assembly of the Occupy movement, the practice of the "human microphone" also known as the "people's microphone," is a means for communicating speech to a large group of people, without amplification equipment. Each listener in close proximity of the speaker simultaneously repeats the speaker's words. Listeners in the distance repeat the words again, until all people gathered hear the words. In this way, all participants amplify the voices of others, completely embodying their words, repeating those utterances whether or not they agree or disagree with their words. Every person who speaks to the group is honored. Each idea is made audible by taking the idea in and reflecting it back. Full democratic participation takes place whether or not one agrees with the ideas that are set forth. It is the value of ideas being set forth that is honored. Can art education be a form of direct democracy?</p> | <p><b>Preoccupy</b> -...engross the mind to the exclusion of other thoughts.<br/><b>Preoccupied</b> -...with mundane tasks and discouraged from re-envisioning.</p>  |
| <p><b>PreOccupy</b> - Preoccupation can compel us to withdraw at a time when our presence and voices are most needed to raise consciousness or amplify issues. With maximum presence can we evoke the kinds of changes we hope to see in our futures as artists/researchers/teachers?</p>  | <p><b>Maximum Occupancy</b> – Maximum Occupancy is a cautionary sign that one might read on an elevator when numbers of occupiers reach a limit. The elevator will fail to ascend if it exceeds its occupancy and can also become a dangerous force if it comes crashing down. The role of assembly can be a powerful force, but without maintaining sight of the vision, direction, and purpose it can prove to be counter productive. Do we truly empathize with the respective challenges and hopes of others? Can we be united by a common vision? Do we share a dream? Can divergent visions and conflicting aspirations occupy shared space?</p> |
|  | <p><b>Occupation</b> – Is art education more than an occupation? A way of life, a calling a means to full participation in democracy? Art education can expand or constrict participation. Preoccupation with standards, expectations, bureaucracy, assessment can impede maximum occupancy of teaching and learning. Who is occupying art education?</p>  |
|  | <p><b>Maximum Occupancy</b> - In order for change to happen, is great risk inevitable? Are we willing to take great risks in making education/art education change? What kinds of risks? Our jobs? Is it more than an occupation? Our participation? Our reputations? Our lives? Our children's futures? (Taylor, personal communication, 2012)</p>  |

## PREOCCUPY/MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY

### CALL:

**OCCUPY** - FORMS OF "DIRECT DEMOCRACY" HAVE BEEN PRACTICED FOR MILLENNIA IN MANY INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND SMALL-SCALE SOCIETIES THAT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING. NAMING THIS PRACTICE OF CONSENSUS-BASED DECISION-MAKING "GENERAL ASSEMBLIES" CAN BE TRACED (IN THE WESTERN WORLDS) TO THE ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY (AROUND THE SIXTH CENTURY BCE IN ANCIENT GREECE). IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT, THE PRACTICE OF THE "HUMAN MICROPHONE," ALSO KNOWN AS THE "PEOPLE'S MICROPHONE," IS A MEANS FOR COMMUNICATING SPEECH TO A LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE, WITHOUT AMPLIFICATION EQUIPMENT. EACH LISTENER IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE SPEAKER SIMULTANEOUSLY REPEATS THE SPEAKER'S WORDS. LISTENERS IN THE DISTANCE REPEAT THE WORDS AGAIN, UNTIL ALL PEOPLE GATHERED HEAR THE WORDS. IN THIS WAY, ALL PARTICIPANTS AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF OTHERS, COMPLETELY EMBODYING THEIR WORDS, REPEATING THOSE UTTERANCES WHETHER OR NOT THEY AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THEIR WORDS. EVERY PERSON WHO SPEAKS TO THE GROUP IS HONORED. EACH IDEA IS MADE AUDIBLE BY TAKING THE IDEA IN AND REFLECTING IT BACK. FULL DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION TAKES PLACE WHETHER OR NOT ONE AGREES WITH THE IDEAS THAT ARE SET FORTH. IT IS THE VALUE OF IDEAS BEING SET FORTH THAT IS HONORED. CAN ART EDUCATION BE A FORM OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY?

### RESPONSE:

#### **This is What Democracy Looks Like: Art and the Wisconsin Uprising: Kim Cosier**

"I would argue that if we wish to continue to engage in art education as a profession, we must get beyond fears that may hold us back and do as Bastos (2009) has advised—start somewhere. The future of public education lies in the balance. Many people who marched around the square next to me in the Wisconsin Uprising would never have imagined themselves to be protesters even a week before the uprising began. But when you realize those who would do away with public education are coming for you, and your students, you may surprise yourself. So if you are afraid or otherwise resistant, begin with descriptive lessons and slowly (at first perhaps) ease yourself into social action. Soon you will find yourself chanting, 'This is What Democracy Looks Like!'" (2013, p. 16).

#### **Anonymous: The Occupy Movement and the Failure of Representational Democracy: jan jagodzinski**

"It may be somewhat of a sacrilege for many art educators to think of the Occupy Movement as political and ethical art whose affect was to create a 'smooth space' of media attention within the striated territory of capitalist interests, which by law sets up the corporation as having the rights and responsibilities of persons with Wall Street as its pulse center. Yet, that is the aim of this essay: to treat the Occupy Movement as a 'sense-event,' a bloc of sensations in relation to the creative philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1980), where art is theorized as a constant *traversal*/flight into and across disciplines, thereby placing the social always into question" (2013, p. 22).

#### **Poetic Occupations: Artists as Narrator-Protagonists: Jack Richardson**

"Conceiving of artistic practice as a form of poetic occupation compels us to reconsider what constitutes an artist. That is, rather than an individual representing the world through his or her unique point of view, the artist is always already conceived of as being-in-common with the world and as such possesses a perspective that is always already multiple. The artist is not solely a recorder of that which already exists, but is one element among many within the contingent relationships that constitute his/her being as being-in-common" (2013, p. 40).

**CALL:**

**PREOCCUPY** - PREOCCUPATION CAN COMPEL US TO WITHDRAW AT A TIME WHEN OUR PRESENCE AND VOICES ARE MOST NEEDED TO RAISE CONSCIOUSNESS OR AMPLIFY ISSUES.

WITH MAXIMUM PRESENCE CAN WE EVOKE THE KINDS OF CHANGES WE HOPE TO SEE IN OUR FUTURES AS ARTISTS/RESEARCHERS/TEACHERS?

**RESPONSE:****Craft As Activism: Elizabeth Garber**

"Craft activism, as much DIY, can be understood both as an occupation and a way of life that involves participatory or substantive democracy (Macpherson, 1962, 1973; Torres, 1998; Garber, 2005) in which socially equal and reflective individuals contribute to building "a sense of community, of association, of neighboring and joining" (Torres, pp. 146-147). Craft activism engages participatory making where democratic processes are valued. Craft activism occupies spaces within individuals' lives, but moreover in local communities, engaging a "human microphone" of makers and viewers directly in participatory democracy. For activist crafters, such making is a way of life, a way of voicing and participating, of expressing, and of raging that reaches a public directly, sometimes drawing them in" (2013, p. 55).

**Feminist Zines: (Pre)Occupations of Gender, Politics, and D.I.Y. in a Digital Age: Courtney Weida**

"The zine genre demonstrates powerful and accessible means by which art education projects and provocations can sustain and enliven active learning through self-publishing, activism, and D.I.Y. ethics. Further, women's documenting, sharing, exhibiting, and selling their artwork both online and offline through zines can be viewed as an occupation of the hegemony of gender divisions in art and technology, forming feminist spaces for a counter-culture of women creating, trading, collecting, and purchasing zines" (2013, pp. 80-81).

**CALL:**

**OCCUPATION**-IS ART EDUCATION MORE THAN AN OCCUPATION? A WAY OF LIFE, A CALLING A MEANS TO FULL PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRACY? ART EDUCATION CAN EXPAND OR CONSTRICT PARTICIPATION. PREOCCUPATION WITH STANDARDS, EXPECTATIONS, BUREAUCRACY, ASSESSMENT CAN IMPEDE MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING. WHO IS OCCUPYING ART EDUCATION?

**RESPONSE:****(Pre)determined Occupations: The Post-Colonial Hybridizing of Identity and Art Forms in Third World Spaces: Amanda Alexander & Manisha Sharma**

"Perhaps our identities, cultures, and art forms do not have to be rooted in one discipline, one cultural practice, one set vocabulary for us to be valuable. Our whole range of self-understanding and perceived affect can change with a more hybrid understanding of that simple and most basic question: *who do we want to be?* Of course, the very asking of this question makes visible an understanding of being in positions of power as art educators, researchers, and cultural workers whose self-determination is recognized as a decision to occupy a vocal place in conversations we believe to be important" (2013, p. 100).

### Hosting the Occupation of Art Education as Aporia: Nadine Kalin

"Throughout, I endeavor to keep the question of whom we teach unanswered and open, while searching for spaces of possibility within unpredictable, aporetic entanglements inherent in normalizing frameworks within the field of art education. I contextualize Derridean notions of aporia, hospitality, monstrous arrivant, undecidability, and responsibility within the specificities of art teaching that call on us to imagine the field and ourselves otherwise. Art education as aporia must be both rule-governed and unruly, open to the heterogeneity and incalculable of what may come to occupy our field as household" (2013, p. 105)

### CALL:

**MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY** - MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY IS A CAUTIONARY SIGN THAT ONE MIGHT READ ON AN ELEVATOR WHEN NUMBERS OF OCCUPIERS REACH A LIMIT. THE ELEVATOR WILL FAIL TO ASCEND IF IT EXCEEDS ITS OCCUPANCY AND CAN ALSO BECOME A DANGEROUS FORCE IF IT COMES CRASHING DOWN. THE ROLE OF ASSEMBLY CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE, BUT WITHOUT MAINTAINING SIGHT OF THE VISION, DIRECTION, AND PURPOSE IT CAN PROVE TO BE COUNTER PRODUCTIVE. DO WE TRULY EMPATHIZE WITH THE RESPECTIVE CHALLENGES AND HOPES OF OTHERS? CAN WE BE UNITED BY A COMMON VISION? DO WE SHARE A DREAM? CAN DIVERGENT VISIONS AND CONFLICTING ASPIRATIONS OCCUPY SHARED SPACE?

### RESPONSE:

#### **Big Gay Church: Religion, Religiosity, and Visual Culture: James H. Sanders III, Kimberly Cosier, Mindi Rhoades, Courtnie Wolfgang, & Melanie G. Davenport**

"*Big Gay Church* is a performed interruption of the NAEA conference and an occupation of the church as institution, one that questions how LGBTQ2 subjects have (or have not) been addressed in the field of art education. Prior sessions have critiqued queer cultural consumption and naming practices, but most recently troupe members have explored political and social intersections with the church, particularly as it is narrowly imagined by the religious right. Members of the *Big Gay Church* troupe have also shared their personal experiences with religious orders and institutions, those that with few exceptions have seemed to loathe, ignore, exploit, or repress LGBTQ2 subjects. The performed provocations recounted here have been occupying the annual meeting space of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) since 2009" (2013, p. 119).

The past two years as editor of the *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education* have filled me with a sense of pride in the field of art education. I have had the privilege of working with young scholars who are thinking progressively about the necessary changes in our field to make it truly inclusive; with scholars who have shaped my own work as a young scholar, those who pioneered the CSTAE, and whose values have been a home for those of us who sought an elsewhere where all people count; and with reviewers who have demonstrated a commitment to support the work of others and encouraged them to broaden their visions. Each volume has felt like a bit of a life's work, as I have tried to help the authors' voices cohere into a unique shape.

In closing, I want to thank Patty Bode for her leadership as the Coordinator of the CSTAE during my time as editor. I also want to thank Alice Pennisi, the current coordinator of the Caucus, for her support of JSTAE Volume 33: PreOccupancy/Maximum Occupancy. In addition, I

want to thank the editorial review board, Bob Sweeny, Senior Editor, and Sharif Bey, Associate Editor. Thank you to all the reviewers who are the core of the journal. Many thanks to the contributing authors whose hard work and constant conscientiousness make this volume so rich. I want to extend my extreme gratitude to Kelly Gross, whose exceptional organizational and technology skills, work ethic, and vision made her an outstanding editorial assistant. And a huge thank you to Ildikó Carrington whose copy-editing skills and love of language have been a great help to me as editor. Finally, thank you to my institution, Northern Illinois University, for supporting my work as editor of this journal.

Kryssi Staikidis  
Editor, *JSTAE*