Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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B.A. (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 1982)
M.Ed. (Hindu University of America, 2007)


Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Friday, May 13, 2016
1:00 p.m.
David Turpin Building
Room A137

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Mike Emme, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Wanda Hurren, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)
Dr. Darlene Clover, Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Shaun McNiff, Division of Expressive Therapies, Lesley University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Harald Krebs, Department of Music, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This research is an ethnographic case study that asks the questions “what is transformation?” and “how does art transform individuals and their communities?”

The narrative describes key moments in the researcher’s journey to South Africa in search of answers to these questions. Findings describe the village of Hamburg’s developing art practice and includes the artists’ own voices and views on this topic. Hamburg is a Xhosa village in South Africa that has faced many challenges due to the spread of HIV/AIDS. One response to the impact of HIV/AIDS on family and economic structures has been the development of an extensive community-based art practice.

To engage questions regarding how art transforms people, the researcher reviewed Western and Eastern literature on transformation and compared this with interviews conducted whilst living in the village of Hamburg for two months, where she joined the women as they made their art. These interviews, some of which are deeply moving, form the data from which conclusions are drawn. The gritty, embodied nature of this community’s experience with transformative art processes broaden the existing, sometimes disembodied, academic understandings around transformation, which to date include mostly White, male notions of transformation, drawn from therapeutic, educational and spiritual discourses, as there is no extensive transformative discourse in art education as yet.

The researcher’s findings suggest that literature on transformation through art is needed within education, which should include female, Black African experiences. The researcher’s conclusions are then applied to classroom and studio practice, where she challenges educators, researchers and practitioners within art education to take the link between art and transformation much more seriously, as a powerful technology for growth, empowerment and resilience.