

Disseminating Visual Research: Arts-Based Approaches

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In her introduction to the book *What is Research in the Visual Arts: Obsession, Archive and Encounter*, Marquard Smith asked, 'How might other models of research from other fields and disciplines influence and shape the future of visual arts research' (2008: xxi)? With this question in mind, this chapter focuses on how models of art practice can influence and shape the future of visual research. The chapter is not intended as a comprehensive review of all the ways of engaging in visual research from an arts-based perspective; rather, it addresses three art forms: installation art, video art, and film.

At the 2009 International Visual Sociology Conference in the UK, I witnessed a debate between a visual sociologist and an artist about doing visual sociology and doing art.¹ The extent to which visual practitioners are increasingly defined by their differences, rather than by their similarities, was revealing. Notwithstanding that artists and visual sociologists work in different fields, each with their own histories of emergence, practices of engagement, and strategies for evaluation, both are committed to engaging the

visual in collaborative, cooperative, and participative practices of inquiry and representation, albeit to varying degrees. And, while respecting the differences between the two fields, and not wanting to collapse visual research into visual arts or vice versa, nor suggesting that practitioners in both fields do the same thing, I believe there are good reasons to create a space where ideas about art-making come in collaborative contact with ideas about doing visual research.

The past two decades have witnessed the growth of new art forms, new art practices, and new artistic and cultural discourses that inquire into and extend understandings of issues with social, cultural, and political significance. New art forms and art practices have given rise to new networks of transmission, dissemination, and distribution. As Nicholas Bourriaud explained: 'The role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real' (2002: 13). An artwork, he claimed, 'is no longer an end but a simple moment in an infinite chain of contributions' (Bourriaud, 2005: 20). And artists, as Daniel Birnbaum

(2009) suggested, invite us to see new and different visions of the world, which amount to ways of ‘making a world’ – imagining new possibilities not heretofore considered.

If we believe that there are different ways to understand the world, and if different forms provide opportunities for understanding differently, then it would appear reasonable to consider the contribution that art can make to visions of the world. Thus, it is fruitful to raise questions about how artists of our time inquire into issues, and create opportunities for specific understandings to emerge from their work. Similarly, it is productive to ask questions about how meaning-making occurs in the production of an artwork, and about what habits of mind are cultivated in the artistic process. Moreover, such questions may provide new and different inquiry practices for visual researchers in other disciplines to consider, as they develop and refine their own methodological practices. Paying close attention to how artists work, and focusing, in particular, on the representational repertoires and scopic regimes they utilize, provides potential alternative inquiry practices, analytical frames, and dissemination possibilities for the field of visual research more generally.

INTRODUCTION

I begin this chapter by considering some of the more obvious connections between visual research theory and practice, and the work and practices of artists who engage documentary in their work. I focus specifically on Tacita Dean’s 2005 artwork, *Presentation Sisters*. Following that, I examine, in some detail, the work practices of Willie Doherty, an Irish conceptual artist who works mainly with photography and video. I do this to make visible the ways in which he inquired into issues of social, cultural, and political significance, and to show how he created opportunities for specific understandings to emerge in and from his work. I focus on his

installation *Same Difference* (1990) to raise questions about how meaning is produced, first in the production of artwork and subsequently in an encounter with the work. This analysis of Doherty’s installation suggests some ways that visual researchers might think about how stories are recorded and constructed, visually and spatially. I discuss how conditions for knowing, and knowing differently, are created in the form of an artwork, and show how meaning is made and empathic understandings are generated in encounters with that artwork, and demonstrate how the choice of medium is closely linked with the types of understanding that can be gleaned from an artwork.

Following the analysis of Doherty’s installation, I discuss how forms of expression used might be taken up in a visual research project. I describe how I created an installation to disseminate findings of a research study that investigated the masculinizing practices of a male single-sex residential teacher training college in Ireland during the opening decades of the twentieth century.² Similar to Doherty’s *Same Difference*, this installation, which combined visual and textual data from the research study, disseminated the outcomes of the study to a wider and more diverse, largely non-academic, audience. It provided opportunities for relational understanding, and served a further role in the inquiry process by creating new configurations of image and text in an enclosed space while generating new questions about the topic under investigation. As an artwork, it extended and reinterpreted the narratives it depicted (Bourriaud, 2005).

Before discussing the two art installation pieces, it is important to note that arts-based educational researchers have identified and articulated how inquiry practices and processes in the arts can inform the research practices of educational researchers. It is believed that the arts have the ability to contribute particular insights into, and enhance understandings of, phenomena that are of interest to educators and policymakers. Elliot Eisner, the first to propose a place for the arts

in educational research,³ argued: ‘the arts provide access to forms of experience that are either un-securable or much more difficult to secure through other representational forms’ (2006: 11). During the past two decades, arts-based educational research has grown significantly. As a way of conducting and disseminating educational research, arts-based research has become highly visible in education research conferences, scholarly publications, graduate courses, theses, dissertations, websites, etc. Different methodological approaches for engaging the arts in educational research have been advanced, including *a/r/tography*, arts-informed research, and aesthetically based research, to mention a few (see Cole, 2002; Cole et al., 2004; Irwin, 2004; Irwin and deCosson, 2004; Springgay et al., 2005, 2008; Bresler, 2006). Philosophical understandings and rationales for researching in, with, and through the arts have been put forward, but rarely problematized. And in the past decade we have witnessed a noticeable increase in the number of articles that deal with arts-based research practices that involve the visual arts (see Slattery, 2001; Sullivan, 2005, 2007; Irwin et al., 2006; O’Donoghue, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b; Springgay, 2008). As I have argued elsewhere (O’Donoghue, 2009), while arts-based researchers have been active in finding ways to use artistic practices and process in educational inquiries, they have not given due attention to emerging theories and philosophies of contemporary art, to critical accounts of artists’ lives and practices, or to artists’ autobiographical writings. Rather, emphasis has remained on the philosophical understandings of the role and purpose of art, even though, as Elizabeth Chaplin wrote: ‘the production and reception of visual art works are social processes, and they cannot satisfactorily be explained by reference to internal aesthetic factors’ (1994: 161–162). For Bourdieu, ‘The work of art is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art’ (1993: 35).

In addition to arts-based educational research, in the past decade, in the UK and elsewhere, there has been a growing interest in theorizing art practice as research, which has been commonly referred to as practice-based research. Evolving mainly from artist practitioners working in visual and performing arts departments in universities, along with colleagues in related disciplines of performance media, practice-based research emerged at a time when the practices of art making and the production of art, broadly conceived, had shifted considerably. In the 1990s, a new generation of artists focused on knowledge production in and through art practices rather than the production of artworks as traditionally conceived. Supported by journals, conferences, and research evaluative frameworks (such as the Research Assessment Exercise in the UK), practice-based research is fast becoming institutionalized: Practice-based research doctoral degree programs are now available to students in several countries; funding for research using practice-based and practice-led methodologies is increasingly common, and conferences advancing the theory and practice of practice-based research are held regularly.

Articulating the qualities of practice-based research has become a particular focus of theorizing art practice as research. For example, Henk Slager (2009) suggested that ‘artistic research’ is ‘a mode of research not focused purposefully on generating “expert knowledge”, but specifically on expressing experimental knowledge’. Such knowledge, he argued, ‘cannot be channeled through rigid academic-scientific guidelines of generalization, repetition and quantification, but requires full attention for the unique, the qualitative, the particular, and the local’ (2009: 2). The idea that art and art making are forms of knowledge production and sites of knowledge in and of themselves is core to the theorization of art practice as research. As Karen Raney (2003) observed, “‘research’ has to a large extent replaced “expression” as a model for art practice’ (2003: 5). Several artists have used research methods such as

interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, narrative and collaborative inquiry as a starting point or as the main body of their work. Mark Godfrey (2007) drew attention to the idea of artist as researcher in his essay, 'The Artist as Historian'. As he observed, 'there are an increasing number of artists whose practice starts with research in archives, and others who deploy what has been termed an archival form of research' (Godfrey, 2007: 142–143). Godfrey drew his readers' attention to the work of Jeremy Deller (a winner of the Turner Prize in 2004) who, in his event-based performance piece, *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), reenacted the clash between police and coalminers from the miners' strike in Britain in 1984 and resuscitated its memory in the minds of many former miners, politicians, and the general public.

Interestingly, artists' work and production practices have not informed, to any great extent, the theorizing and methodological development of visual research in the social sciences to date, even though the practice of art today is more similar than dissimilar to the project of visual research. While the project of visual research is not easily summarized, the chapters in this handbook demonstrate a general agreement that visual research is interdisciplinary and concerned with ways that culture and social relations are constituted and rendered in and through the visual, by visual means, and visual practices. Considering models of artistic practice and representation is especially relevant for those visual researchers, who, influenced by work in visual culture studies, are interested in ways in which cultural practices and social relations are articulated visually, are embedded in visual practices, find meaning in different forms of visibility, and are produced in and through visual processes. As an approach to inquiry, visual research is less concerned with answering predetermined questions than it is with generating new insights that are not easily available through verbal modes. This is a place where there already exists a strong connection between the work of visual researchers and artists.

PRESENTATION SISTERS

The work of the British-born artist Tacita Dean is a case in point. For example, in 2005, as part of a public art commission, she produced an hour-long film called *Presentation Sisters*. Shown first at the South Presentation Convent in Cork, Ireland, as part of the Cork European City of Culture Visual Arts Program, the film traces the daily routines and lives of the last five remaining Presentation nuns in that convent. Through fixed-camera angles, close-ups, long takes, high angle shots, reaction shots, low angle shots and forced perspective, Dean captures and emphasizes the daily rituals of the five nuns. While in the making of the artwork, Dean adopts an approach that is essentially documentary in nature, unlike a visual ethnographic or documentary study – and here I am thinking particularly of David MacDougall's visual ethnography of a boys' boarding school in northern India – *Presentation Sisters* was not made to answer specific questions. Rather, Dean is intent on recording, making sense of, and representing that which presented itself to her during 3 days in the company of five nuns in their convent. In her arrangement of images and sounds and the manipulation of time and space, Dean creates a work that gives material form to an invisible process: the disappearing presence of religious communities in Ireland. Much is lost in that process, and Dean's film reminds us of that which will eventually be lost, as fewer and fewer women enter the religious life.

The organic and unplanned nature of the work was explained in an interview that Dean gave Nick Coleman, published in the *Independent* on 18 March 2007 (Coleman, 2007). She explained to Coleman that she was invited to Cork to make a work for the city, but didn't quite know what she would produce. The idea came to her during a tour of the city: 'I was taken to the Titanic Centre – I'm known for my interest in sinking ships – and just by chance I saw a nuns' graveyard. The graves were like baby

teeth. Tiny. And there was one grave missing.’ It was that missing grave – that empty plot – which gave Dean the idea for the artwork that eventually became *Presentation Sisters*, but not before it changed due to unforeseen circumstances. She told Coleman that she had intended to make a film about the last six nuns in the Presentation Convent, ‘thinking about who’s going to get that last space’, and that it would be called *The Last Plot*. However, as she explained:

I arrived back in Cork to find that a nun had died in the interim period and instead of filling the last plot, they’d actually removed one of the stones and created two empty plots – they double and triple hang in these graveyards – so the whole premise of my film was dubious. I ended up filming the remaining nuns in this huge empty building they occupy because they can’t get any new novices. They turned out to be amazing women (Coleman, 2007).

While Dean’s film demonstrates the similarities between the project of visual research and the project of visual art, it offers a model for inquiring differently to visual researchers, especially those interested in studying specific populations and their associated cultural practices. In exploring the intimacy of convent life, Dean used the formal vocabularies of Dutch baroque art. She has drawn repeatedly on the compositional devices found in Vermeer’s work of the seventeenth century. Vermeer’s practices also appear to have greatly influenced the way in which she captures and represents light, and more importantly how she uses light to guide the viewer’s eye. Throughout her film, Dean utilized a compositional principle of layering not only for the purpose of creating depth but also for the purpose of positioning the viewer as an observer – an observer of a world not frequently depicted or made visible to outsiders. By the very act of capturing and representing layers, Dean invites viewers to think about the many layers of meaning contained in the images that she records and presents. Dean’s model is committed to paying attention; engaging in effortful observation; embracing uncertainty; courting ambiguity;

being open to chance encounters; being awakened by situations and being seduced and cajoled by them; being unafraid of not knowing; being curious about knowing differently; and, being open to using representational strategies employed by others who have focused on similar qualities. This model ‘restores the world to us as an experience to be lived’ (Bourriaud, 2005: 32). It produces meaning, and shifts understanding by investing in the inter-human sphere. It is an approach that draws attention to the usefulness of wonderment and, particularly, to the value of wondering, especially for the type of questions or actions that it might call forth. It is a model that privileges the act of pausing.⁴ Given Marcus Banks’ (2007) observation that there are few if any distinctive research methods unique to visual research, Dean’s artistic practice offers generative inquiry and representational possibilities. What would it mean for visual research and knowledge production in the social sciences if visual researchers adopted practices of inquiry similar to Dean’s? This brings me to the case study of Willie Doherty’s work *Same Difference*, in which I will, through a close reading of this installation, further elaborate opportunities for developing visual research inquiry and representational practices based on art practice.

SAME DIFFERENCE

Willie Doherty’s art installation *Same Difference* is a visual and textual work that narrates an experience of living in Northern Ireland during ‘The Troubles’ (see Figure 33.1). The conflict in Northern Ireland that became known as ‘The Troubles’ has been described as an ethnic conflict, given that it was ‘based on political ideologies and social/ethnic identities that happen to be divided along religious lines’ (Cairns and Darby, 1998: 754). In his work, Doherty pursues two main themes, ‘group loyalty’ and ‘maintenance of group boundaries’, both of



Figure 33.1 Willie Doherty, *Same Difference*, 1990. Installation with two slide-projected images and changing text

which are considered core components of ethnic conflicts. Using narrative structures that rely on juxtaposition and decontextualization, Doherty invites his audience to consider how Donna Maguire, an alleged member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), is perceived and essentialized by the two main religio-political communities in Northern Ireland: the Unionist/Loyalist community and the Nationalist/Republican community.

In his installation, Doherty has placed two projection screens diagonally opposite one another in a darkened room no larger than 16 × 18 ft. Onto both screens he has projected a tightly cropped image of Donna Maguire's face. He photographed Maguire's face from a TV screen following her arrest by the Dutch authorities as a suspected Provisional IRA terrorist (Mac Giolla Léith, 2002). Doherty projects words that he has gleaned from the public press onto both

screens. These words come and go, always being replaced by others, but the image of Maguire's face remains. On the screen to the right of the entrance, the words being projected onto the image of Maguire's face are pejorative terms drawn from the 'anti-Nationalist popular press' – 'murderer', 'pitiless', 'misguided', 'evil', etc. 'Murderer' is projected onto that screen every other time. On the screen to the left of the entrance, words of Pro-Republican sentiments are projected onto the image of Maguire's face – 'volunteer', 'defiant', 'honourable', and 'committed'. The word 'volunteer' appears every second time; the term 'volunteer' is used by the Provisional IRA to describe its members. As was played out in 'The Troubles', these two differing perspectives and articulations of Maguire are positioned in opposition to one another, and a certain tension resides in the presentation of both simultaneously and in the same place.

While addressing and giving form to the above-mentioned themes, the installation serves as a powerful means of telling a complex story of segregation and isolation in a divided and fragmented society. It succeeds in generating emphatic understanding amongst viewers, which leads to new and different ways of knowing about 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland, especially for those who did not experience them at first hand. *Same Difference* holds within it the potential for understanding the conflict in Northern Ireland in new and different ways. In conceptualizing and installing the work, Doherty has set up conditions for viewers to experience what it must be like to occupy a space of conflict, one that is situated between two dominant and opposing positions. Invoking the perspectives of the two dominant communities in Northern Ireland, nationalist and unionist, and presenting them in a constructed and confined space, Doherty creates a place where viewers find themselves, through the process of interaction and attentiveness, occupying a contested terrain. Finding oneself between these positions evokes a response. Viewers tend to identify with one of the two articulations of Maguire. The installation forces viewers to do so by conveying to them that it would be impossible to remain neutral in such a place. There is no space for an alternative reading of Maguire: depending on who is doing the looking, she is either a murderer or a volunteer. Here Doherty speaks to the dangers of stereotyping as a barrier to understanding. In the installation, the physical space between the representations of Maguire is both a place of contact and a place of conflict, which closely resembles how space and territory were experienced in Northern Ireland during the period in which this work was made. While the space between both representations contributes to the polarized nature of both perspectives, it also suggests the absence of any meaningful connection or contact between these two communities. Historically, segregation (be it in the form of housing, recreation or education) played a significant

role in establishing and maintaining conflict between these two communities (Hewstone et al., 2004). It serves the same purpose in this installation.

For visual researchers the questions of importance are: How does Doherty narrate in a way that provides opportunities for meaningful engagement that create new understanding? How does Doherty create conditions for generating emphatic understanding amongst viewers that in turn enlarges consciousness? How does meaning unfold and become enfolded in other meanings? How does Doherty narrate a complex story using one image, several single words and four Kodak Carousel 2050 slide projectors, two Kodak Carousel Interval Timers, two Kodak 75–120 mm zoom lenses, two Kodak 60 mm fixed lenses, two sets of eighty-one 35 mm black-and-white text slides and two 35 mm black-and-white slides projected into two diagonally opposite corner walls, duration of 3 minutes repeated continuously in an enclosed space?⁵ And, what can visual researchers learn from Doherty's narration processes?

First, he draws on the medium of installation art. Installation art is 'a term that loosely refers to the type of art into which the viewer physically enters, and which is often described as "theatrical", "immersive" or "experiential"' (Bishop, 2005: 6). It emerged in the 1960s and came into prominence in the 1970s and 1980s. As an art form, it draws from several disciplines, including architecture, cinema, performance art, sculpture, theater, and set design. Installation artworks are experienced through several senses. In *Same Difference*, Doherty creates an immersive space where the significance of territory is highlighted. In creating a bounded space and narrating the different ways in which Maguire is seen through a process of dual articulation, Doherty successfully conveys what it can be like to live in a place of conflict where surveillance is constant; segregation is promoted; neutrality is difficult; and confrontation is inevitable. Standing in this enclosed installation confronted with the

image of Maguire, which can be threatening or reassuring depending on which side of the divide one stands, and witnessing how she is being perceived and described as a cold, callous, deranged murderer on the one hand, and a brave, loyal, intuitive volunteer on the other, reminds viewers of how a culture of suspicion is supported through language; how language is used to instill fear; how language is deployed to fragment and polarize a community; how practices of seeing are informed by language; and how language can inform perceptions of images. It also invites viewers to reflect on who is guilty here and who is innocent; and, how we construct and enact notions of innocence and guilt. Doherty does not advance one cause over the other: rather, he places both together and uses one to draw attention to, and to better understand the other. As Paul O'Brien (2003) observed, 'If one query raised by the work is "which side are you on?" another possible question is "why either?"' (52). In an interview with Tim Maul in the *Journal of Contemporary Art*, Doherty explained that he tries to present 'the viewer with a number of options, so it was about making a choice where I always felt in fact there wasn't a choice but the work proposed that it was a possible to look at something from two positions simultaneously'.⁶

Secondly, the choices that Doherty makes in the conceptualization and creation of the installation are instrumental in setting conditions for particular understandings to emerge. His choices invite particular forms of interpretation. For example, separated from the outside world but intimately connected with its narratives, Doherty invites the viewer to make connections between what s/he sees, knows and experiences. Meaning isn't immediate. Rather, the installation requires viewers to engage in a dynamic process of meaning-making that is contingent upon searching for and making connections between what is represented, what is suggested, and what is imagined. Making meaning in the installation is a multi-sensual experience that requires a reading that extends

beyond the mind to the body. In his decision to place the two diagonally opposite each other in the installation, Doherty not only engages in an act of segregation while drawing attention to group solidarity but also sets up particular conditions for viewing the work. *Same Difference* can never be viewed in its entirety from any single viewpoint. To view, read, and engage with the work one needs to constantly turn back and forth between screens. The viewer can never see the way in which each side of the divide perceives Maguire precisely at the same moment. Setting the conditions for reading and experiencing *Same Difference* in this way contributes to the viewer's feeling of anxiety, disorientation, uncertainty, and even fear within this confined and preplanned space, which is an intended outcome of the work. Furthermore, seeing from more than one perspective invites different interpretations. Different viewing positions allow for new configurations and formations. Because of the manner in which Doherty puts together the component parts of the installation, the viewer is urged to consider how the act of looking from a particular perspective gives us a particular viewpoint, while simultaneously closes off another. In *Same Difference*, meaning resides in, and is constructed by, this fragmented nature of viewing. In his decision to place the two screens diagonally opposite each other, Doherty also creates an in-between space between two dominant positions that eventually comes to be experienced as a place of great discomfort and unease, much like how place was experienced by denizens of Northern Ireland for the three decades of 'The Troubles'. Furthermore, the duration of the viewing is a time to be lived through.

Thirdly, the kind of reading and understanding that the viewer secures from *Same Difference* is shaped and influenced in great part by the medium through which it was produced. The meaning of the work is constituted by, and in the form, medium, and mode of representation that Doherty has elected to use. To emphasize the fact that these readings

of Maguire are ones that are projected onto her with the result that she is formed in the act of projection, Doherty uses a slide projector. Maguire is constructed outside of herself from projections that others apply to her. She has no say in the matter.

Fourthly, Doherty does not offer closure in the piece: rather, the work exists in every encounter with it. It is in the encounter that the work comes into being. While the work is of 3 minutes' duration, as soon as it finishes, it starts again. It loops continuously, regardless of whether somebody is present in the installation or not. The viewer is witnessing something that is occurring over and over again, over which s/he has no control. Labeling will continue even if s/he leaves the installation immediately.

Fifthly, the form of Doherty's *Same Difference* cannot be reduced entirely to what he produced in the installation. As Bourriaud (2002) reminded us, 'form only exists in the encounter and in the dynamic relationship enjoyed by an artistic proposition with other formations, artistic or otherwise' (21). Meaning resides not only in the projected image and accompanying words but also in the space created in the installation and in the knowledge that viewers bring to the installation. Knowing something about Donna Maguire and the focus of Doherty's work more generally enables additional understandings to be secured from the installation. Knowledge about the artist, the work, and the circumstances surrounding the production of the work frames the nature of the encounter with the work and the subsequent engagement with it. The success of the work as a piece that creates opportunities for knowing more or knowing differently about 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland is also reliant on the acrimonious relations that already existed between the two communities, one to which Maguire allegedly belonged. As Bourriaud (2005) observes, 'the artwork functions as the temporary terminal of a network of interconnected elements, like a narrative that extends and reinterprets preceding narratives' (19).

Same Difference invites visual researchers to consider how meaning is produced in place; how it is contingent on an ability to engage with singularity in order to understand plurality. The work operates as a way of creating conditions for bringing together differing histories and memories to generate meaning. It models how stories can be told using multiple modalities. As alluded to above, it is not so much 'what' Doherty tells, but the conditions he sets up that provide the viewer with an experience generating empathic understanding and inviting connections which makes the installation a powerful narrative. *Same Difference* arises from, and is supported by, complex forms of engagement that require attention to that which is presented, to that which is suggested, and to that which is imagined and remembered. For visual researchers, *Same Difference* suggests new and innovative ways of disseminating findings. What if the outcomes of visual research studies were presented in the form of an installation: what new and different forms of understanding might be generated from working in and with this art form? What new and different publics might be reached by visual research disseminated in the form of an installation? How would this form of dissemination provide conditions for inquiring further into topics under investigation?

SAFE DISTANCE

The third example of a fine arts and arts-based visual research project is one I created. Putting into practice lessons learnt from Doherty's installation *Same Difference* and influenced by the three-screen installation *Broadway/Prince Street 04-01* by the artist Beat Streuli, in 2006, I produced an installation to tell a story of how masculinities were actively produced across a range of sites in a male single-sex residential teacher training college in Ireland. Set during the opening decades of the twentieth century and given form in visual and textual articulations,

my focus was on how men were made when they practiced teaching in practicing schools (see O'Donoghue, 2005, 2007c). The installation was produced from visual and textual data that I had gathered during a research study (see Figures 33.2 and 33.3).

In the installation, I created a bounded space enclosed by four floor-to-ceiling walls. Viewers entered the installation from an opening on the right side of the north wall. Using eight Kodak carousel slide projectors and interval timers, I projected photographic images that changed randomly every 10 seconds. Data consisted of four sets of twenty-four 35 mm black-and-white text slides and four sets of twenty-four 35 mm black-and-white image slides. They were projected onto each of the four interior walls. I had digitally altered many of these images, but not in any significant way; some were cropped and the tonal qualities of others were changed slightly.

These images were of men photographed in school classrooms or in the college environs – sitting. Life-size, many faced the viewer, making eye contact. Others were depicted looking sideways or looking away, with their backs to the viewer. Onto these images, I projected text: extracts taken from student Teaching Practice Reports written by the Professor of Method during and after observation periods. These extracts were carefully chosen for what they suggested about how language was used to shape young male student teachers. Examples of these extracts include the following: 'A nervous and fidgety individual, very earnest but a trifle peculiar, strikes one as being old womanish'; 'Took some time to get this young man to speak and act in a manly fashion'; 'Good appearance but stands and moves rather awkwardly and speaks nervously'; 'Speaks in a manly and fairly impressive way'; and 'He has enough

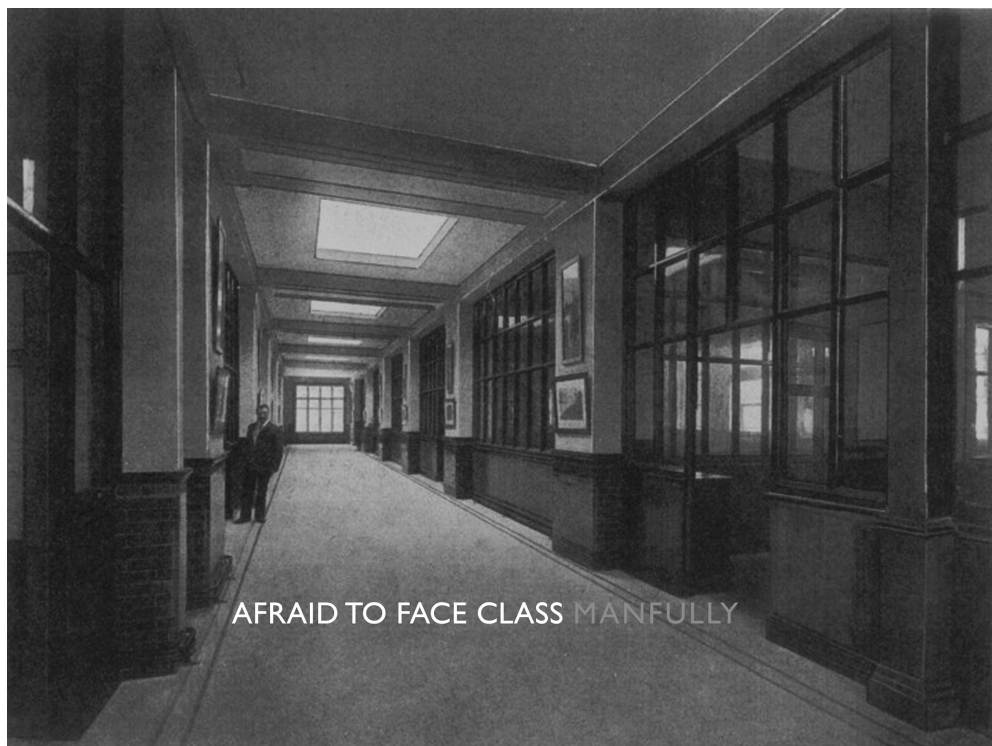


Figure 33.2 *Safe Distance*, 2006, Dónal O'Donoghue. Installation with text



Figure 33.3 *Safe Distance*, 2006, Dónal O'Donoghue. Installation with text

backbone to make a determined effort to correct his own defects'. These extracts articulate, legitimate, or make deviant particular ways of managing and experiencing the male teaching body. In the installation, these extracts come and go, always being replaced by another. These extracts sometimes appear right across and in front of the image (on the skin of the image), and other times they are written in the image (in the body of the image). The only constant is that they are constantly shifting and changing and unsettling the viewers' perceptions, and knowing.

Producing the installation provided an opportunity for me to inquire further into data that I had previously gathered. Experiencing the data as it surrounded me, enabled me to ask new and different questions that were not possible to ask when these visual and textual documents were encountered singularly in the archives during the initial research. Placing visual articulations

of masculinity together with text-based ones and showing several of these combinations simultaneously in a darkened room, I began to see how masculinities were enacted, performed, staged, and articulated in and through specific modes of representation – visual and textual – and over time. I began to make connections and notice relations between the images and texts, the images and images, and the texts and texts that I had not previously noticed, and which were not always sequential. Being surrounded by these images, in an immersive space, provided me with an opportunity to experience in new ways the manner in which the college actively engaged in constructing particular forms of masculinities as well as negotiating relations between them. In juxtaposition, images and texts presented opportunities to think further about the types of masculine roles that were available for male student teachers to inhabit, and to consider how these men took them up, moved

across them, ordered them, regulated them, and defended them.

A recurring theme that emerged from the installation was relational understanding: relations between two active systems of representation – image and text – and meaning-making (re)produced in the installation, emerged. Relations between subject and object, viewer and viewed, surfaced. In the installation the viewer is presented with ways others saw, pictured, and constructed men teachers, thereby suggesting ways in which men student teachers were constructed in the gaze of others and objectified in the act of looking.

The installation provided an opportunity for a visual researcher to rethink the nature of research texts and the relationship between such texts and their readers. Installed in the gallery of the university, it was available to a different audience in a place vastly different from scholarly conferences. Ways of engaging with the exhibition as a research text were different from how academics normally engage with research texts. In this type of work, meaning is generated through interaction and negotiation with the work. From this place, the researcher creates conditions where viewers are likely to experience the work in particular ways, although the researcher can never fully control how the work is taken up by the viewer/reader. It is based on the principle that consumption is a mode of production (Bourriaud, 2005: paraphrasing from Karl Marx). The installation also provided a different narrative structure from familiar academic research texts. It ruptured the pattern of a linear narrative, and formulated a series of discontinuous and partial stories. Instead of summary answers, it produced questions.

CONCLUSION

Artists draw attention to things that often go unnoticed. In this chapter I have presented the idea that paying close attention to artists'

work and practices invites visual researchers to imagine other ways of conducting inquiries and of representing findings. There are a number of qualities that artists use in the production of their work; a number of commitments guide their practice. For example, in the production of *Presentation Sisters*, Tacita Dean was committed to paying attention to, and embracing, chance encounters; to being awakened, and surrendering, to situations in which she found herself. She engaged in effortful observation, embracing uncertainty, courting ambiguity, being unafraid of not knowing, being curious about knowing differently; ultimately, to wondering about the things she encountered and the things with which she was presented. Similarly, in the production of *Same Difference*, Willie Doherty created a situation where viewers were invited to make meaning in, and through three representational forms – text, image, and place. This he achieved by using text and an image that were already in circulation, but the act of bringing them together for the first time in a bounded space and in ways not previously conceived creates new combinations and new texts to be read and interrogated. Both artists engaged in fluid inquiries. In this chapter, I am not making the argument that visual researchers ought to take on the art practices of artists in their research inquiries. Rather, I am suggesting that visual researchers in other disciplines might find it helpful to identify and understand ways in which visual practitioners in the arts engage with and give visual and material form to ideas that eventually lead to new or enlarged understanding of a topic, issue, or phenomenon.

The process of paying attention to artists' work and practices suggests another way of doing collaborative inquiry in visual research. Visual researchers from a variety of disciplines can work with artists (rather than as artists) in situations that require different and multiple visual strategies for inquiring into, interpreting, and making sense of topics under investigation. I suggest collaborative inquiry for the following reason. Artists often

will bring to research situations very different ways of seeing, imagining, understanding, articulating, and inquiring, which leads to better questioning and more robust inquiry practices. The ability and freedom of artists to work on an edge and between borders of the familiar and the emergent create new possibilities for knowing and working together differently. While this chapter is not intended as a comprehensive review of all the ways of engaging in visual research from an arts-based perspective, the artworks and practices considered here will, I hope, serve as an invitation to visual researchers to think further about, elaborate, and refine their inquiry and representational practices.

NOTES

1 Here, I am referring to the visual arts and not to other arts such as theater, dance and music.

2 Masculinizing practices are conceptualized as all those social, discursive, material, and institutional practices and performances that confront, challenge, form, shape, and influence male subjectivities and masculine identities.

3 In the special issue of *Studies in Art Education* devoted to arts-based research, Tom Barone (2006) claims it was in the 1970s in Stanford, when he was a doctoral student, that Elliot Eisner was imagining a place for the arts in educational research. As Eisner himself explains, in that same issue, the first Arts-Based Research Institute was offered at Stanford University to members of the American Educational Research Association in 1993.

4 Dean's practice is a practice of pause at the threshold. Her work emerges somewhere between awakening and surrender. For example, in making *Presentation Sisters*, she was awakened to the intricacies and complexities of that which presented itself to her. As she tries to make sense of that which she encounters for the purpose of giving it form, she surrenders to it – to its form, movement, quality and so on as so forth.

5 A precise description of the technical components of the installation was taken from <http://www.fineart.ac.uk/artists.php?idartlist=15> [Accessed: 1 September 2009].

6 From an interview with the artist conducted by Tim Maul and published in the online journal, the *Journal of Contemporary Art*. Retrieved August 29, 2009, from <http://www.jca-online.com/doherty.html>. No publication date or issue number.

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