

## **3 Points Of Inflection: Collaborative Research Strategies Using Arts-Based Methods**

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# **POINTS OF INFLECTION: COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGIES USING ARTS -BASED METHODS**

Arts-based research methodologies may offer many opportunities to assist educational researchers by providing non-linear **ways of thinking and reflecting** with an array of tools and research instruments that may be applied in the broad field of qualitative methods. Arts-based researchers systematic use artistic processes as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies.

In this presentation we will relate to some of those potentialities, such as collaborative visual research methods and a/r/tography as they are viewed by the **three authors** of this presentation. The authors are members of the research group C3, a group of researchers and practitioners involved in **PROVOKING ARTISTIC-BASED SITUATIONS** to initiate debates and reflections about theory and practice in arts education.

Teresa Torres de Eça, independent researcher, is currently engaged in collaborative inter-cultural projects through **hybridisation of art languages** both in inquire and production to generate axiological experiences. She is interested in studying annotation and coding visual data in collaborative research projects and how participants can increase their role in reporting and analysing data.

We see ourselves in the between spaces of being artists, teachers and researchers, we fill our lives in the liminality of our experiences in arts and education, searching for meaning and understanding through all our senses and ways of expression.

In her **search for making meaning** of her world, Ângela Saldanha, other artist and researcher, is searching for making connexions in her life experiences and finding an informal education setting in the community of her grandmother. A group of people coming from an industrial, society which does not exist any more, surviving in the era of Knowledge and information by maintaining old processes of sharing and knowing. Though her artist lens, Angela discovers a new reality and she his determined to understand and preserve it, in **collaborative community** art projects.

Finally, Luísa Vidal, committed in resisting and in teaching to resist any code of human existence. Collaboratively with a group of young people she explores the possibilities of **visual arts education as an ethical space** enabling us to understand the complex weave of relations which confines us and, from that position of **critical conscience**, to experience the active and the inventive elaboration of each subject by himself.

The three authors of this text recognise themselves as

## **A/R/TOGRAPHERS.**

The term a/r/tography was created to signify the multiple roles played in arts-based

research: *artist-researcher-teacher.* Practice-based underpinnings focus on how “theorizing through inquiry seeks understanding by way of an evolution of questions within the living-inquiry processes of the practitioner” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p.xxii). The practices of artists and educators are considered to be forms of research and the “intellectual, imaginative, and insightful work” they create is “grounded in on going forms of recursive and reflexive inquiry engaged in theorizing for understanding” (p.xxii).

Teresa, Ângela and Luísa share the same commitment with action, they are interested in research to **create events that are personal learning encounters**, most of the time collaboratively. Art production may be lived as learning encounters, as Dennis Atkinson’s (2011) puts it

*“learning encounters that precipitate new forms of learning”* (p.15).

Researching through arts makes collaborative and personal experiences as valid ways of knowing; reflecting upon situations and concepts; collecting and organising data using arts based processes of thinking and making ; and furtheron analysing it.

Looking for a type of understanding that is *relational*, **embodied** and

**ACTIVE.** Through this research perspective, using **hybrid**

**methodologies**, the authors recognise their potential as artists/teachers/researchers and are seeking to report their research using art forms. What the three are experiencing is a quest to find their personal ways of doing research respecting each other. They chose to be a/r/tographers because a/r/tographic

researchers **draw upon personal experiences**

**as they work** through the arts to question, ponder and theorize new questions and possibilities.

xperience through the arts may generate new knowledge, and in their own way the authors are immersed in experiences where the arts, and in particularly socially

**engaged forms of art thinking and making.**

**TERESA WORKING WITH NETWORKS; FINDING BALANCES AND WAYS OF SUPPORTING EDUCATORS TO BE ACTIVE AND CREATIVE, THROUGH SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCES AND TRYING NEW COMMON STRATEGIES DOING INTERCULTURAL AND INTERDISCIPLINAR ARTS EDUCATION PROJECTS. WORKING IN COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE WITH DIVERSITY, WORKING SOME TIMES, WITH EDUCATORS WITH OPPOSITE WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING ART EDUCATION, FINDING STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THEIR NEED TO REFLECT ABOUT THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES AND REPORT THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN FORMS THAT ARE MORE RELATED TO THEM. SHE MOVES IN THREE WAYS OF INTERPRETING EXPERIENCE, THEORIA (KNOWING), PRAXIS (DOING), AND POESIS (MAKING) TO CREATE SPACES IN WHICH MEANING IS “INTERROGATED AND RUPTURED” (IRWIN & SPRINGGAY, 2008, P. XX).**

*In other hand, Ângela is interested in social memories and how these memories intercept her life and her work as an artist.*

*Surrounded by images, objects, narratives, personal memories and community memories, she wants to understand what is her place as teacher and an artist, creating new ways of experiences and knowledge inside communities.*

*She understands people's life is a melting pot of experiences and memories with which they construct a singular person. Her projects are collaborative and focused on the unique experiences of the working group. This diversity is very open in her own work as a teacher, where she works with students and reflects with them about their roots, in the between spaces, to project and questioning the future in ways that may make more sense for her? Their? Personal happiness.*

Not only in her work as an artist, as a teacher and as a researcher, but also in all the other spaces of her life, Luísa engages in the métissage (Irwin, 2004) of the a/r/tographic experience which much more than a research methodology she considers a way of living. Pluralist, rhizomatic and always in unexpected state of becoming, a/r/tography disrupts essentialist, determinist and linear forms of doing and reasoning and replaces it with a dialectic tension which profoundly respects the dynamic movement coming from the infinite number of contingencies each unique being is made of. This very defence of one's singularity – questioning every universalism which subordinates our existence and emphasising our creative liberty to become whatever – intimately inhabits Luísa's work and is now renewed in the collaborative arts-based research where together with a group of young people she inquires on the opportunities that visual arts education may offer to enhance our capacity to resist dominant codes and so to imaginatively shape our own lives.

The role of the researcher is to *evoke*, to **provoke** and to **empower**. Using concepts rather than specific methods, organising information in flexible and intersubjective ways of associating meaning to construct interpretations, this kind of process might be closely related to the term **“RENDERINGS”** described by Irwin and Springgay (p. xxviii), but other terms could be used. Since the authors advocate for the validation of different forms of reporting research and based on the rendering concept, In the last section the authors focus on 3 points of inflection *using non linear ways of expression.*

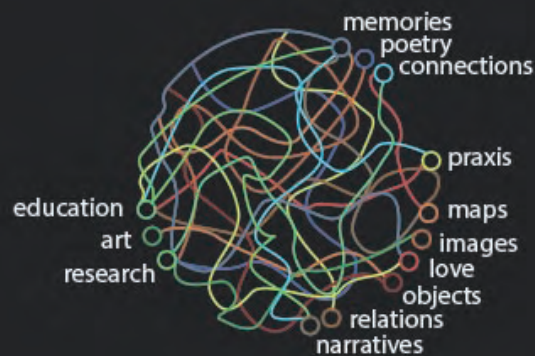
# 1. Contiguity/Living Inquiry

## TERESA

Being in and out; jumping from education to art and to research; being nowhere; in-the-between spaces where living is possible using our drawings to report questions, experiences, and understandings.

Is it possible to report silent ways of research?

## ÂNGELA



## LUÍSA

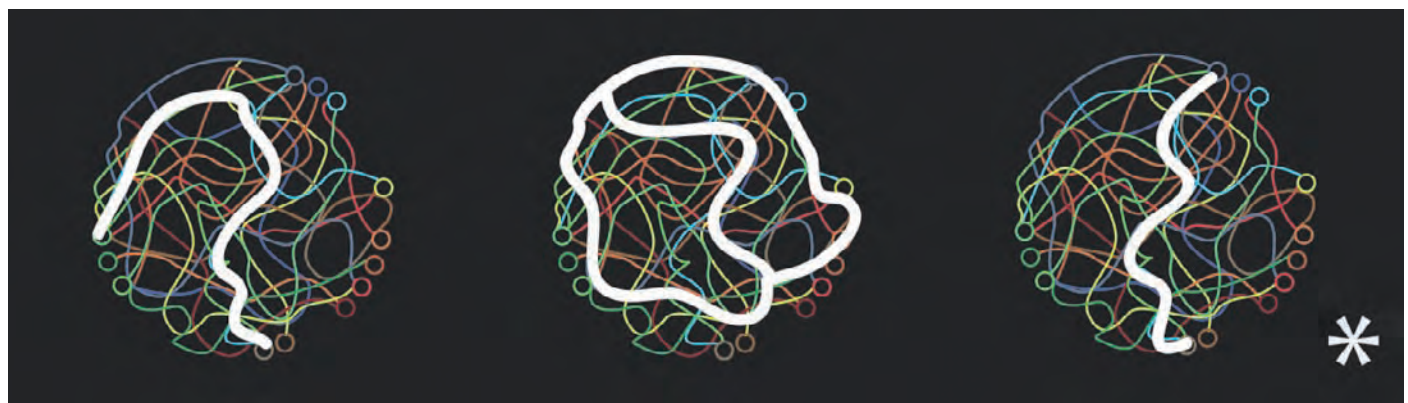
I am (researching) my experience: this-and-that-and-everything-I-can't-expect.

## 2. Metaphor/Openings

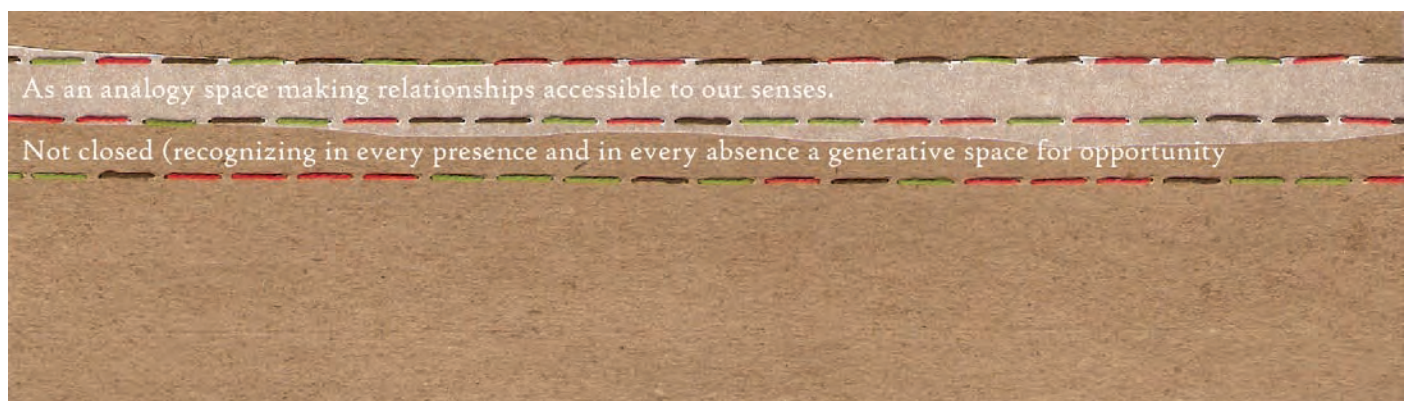
TERESA



ÂNGELA



LUÍSA

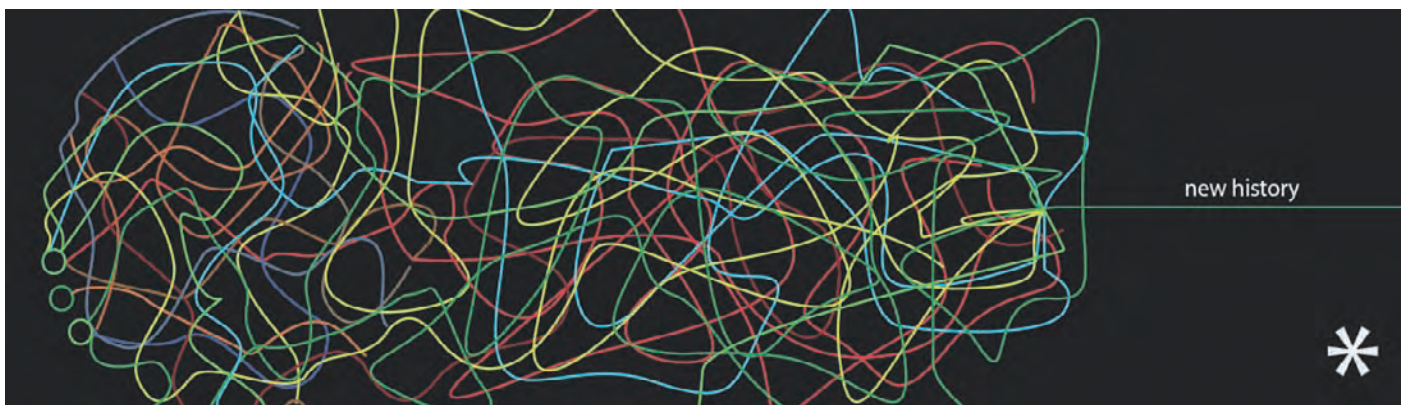


# 3. Reverberations/Excess

TERESA



ÂNGELA



LUÍSA







These images were developed trying to find a way to transmit the idea of involvement, growth, identity, movement, and actuality.

We start up with a schematic and stylized DNA (genetic code, where you can read all the information about a particular being) and electronic connectors (representing innovation and interaction), representing idea with a humanized and fluid dash like a representation of a map.

We tried to pass mutable concepts, as the researcher acquires information and knowledge throughout their practice, thereby increasing their level of comprehension and understanding.

New concepts are being added to the initial image, which can then be perceived through various angles (divine who leave silhouettes of people who come together and change creating new forms) according to the viewer's eye, in a collaborative practice.

# WHY DO WE NEED ARTS BASED RESEARCH PROCESSES IN ART EDUCATION?

## References

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