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Collaborative Art:

A Study of a Non-verbal Collaboration

by

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Abstract

We are being called upon more and more frequently to participate in the growing trend towards collaboration in our working and learning environments. Collaboration is portrayed as a positive, fulfilling method of production and interaction. Is this sense of fulfillment reflected in the experiences of those participating in collaboration?

In this inquiry I set out to explore the experiences of artists in collaboration. I included an unusual parameter; no written or spoken language could be used to collaborate. This moved the participants out of their primary mode of communication and allowed other elements inherent to collaboration to move to the forefront. What emerged were patterns that played along a continuum emphasizing the flexibility within collaboration.

I proceed through the inquiry starting with an outside view of collaboration and moving towards an inside view and the view of the participants. This shift of perspective also provides a shift in understanding. As the inquiry moves inward, it becomes evident that theory and method become a shell and that ownership of collaboration ultimately lies in the hands of the collaborators as they decide how they will or will not participate. This paper seeks to gather an understanding of that participation and consequently the experience of the individual.

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Chapter I

Embryo in the Womb (da Vinci)

Collaboration, project-based learning, teambuilding, global communication; all are examples of the contemporary language currently shaping our learning and working organizations. If we strive to orchestrate more efficacious and effective ways of working co-operatively, sharing information and resources, we will have a greater chance of learning and working together successfully. In the pursuit of common goals and a shared vision, a sense of communal strength and personal fulfilment will be achieved. Where the expertise of all converges, a whole greater than its individual components will be created.

Learning and working institutions in the past have been designed for individuals to work independently and competitively. "In both rationalist and empiricist accounts, things happened pretty automatically and quite unassisted by others. There wasn't much room in either picture for active agency or collaboration" (Bruner, 1996, p. 93). To support a shift towards a more collective approach, a restructuring of the traditional systems is now taking place. Foundations in question are the old, familiar hierarchical top down frameworks espousing individual competitiveness that reportedly block creativity, innovation, motivation and commitment. Information access will no longer be restricted to those in privileged positions and disseminated at will, but will be available to and shared by all. Tapscott (1993) postulates a future collaborative business world that lays aside the multilayered hierarchy in favour of a flatter network (p. 11).

Team members are united by a common vision that cascades across the enterprise.

Individuals are empowered to act, and do so responsibly and creatively. Freed

from bureaucratic control they take initiatives and even risks to get closer to customers and work more productively. They are motivated by one another to achieve team goals rather than to satisfy superiors. With common interests that are immediate and clear, co-operation flourishes. (1993, p.12)

Although our normal, daily interactions are often collaborative, they seem diminished, ordinary, sociable at best, and unrelated to the corporate and educational world of active production-based collaboration. Consequently, collaboration is being reintroduced as an unnatural process, something that must be taught and practised through such events as team-building workshops and project based learning groups. "Working together well doesn't come naturally. It's something we learn how to do" (Bruffee, 1995, p. 14). The "social enterprise in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility....does not organize itself in an enduring way purely spontaneously" (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). We must be retrained. There are rules to be disseminated, methods to be discussed, social mores and conventions to be implemented that constitute community, reinforce intimacy and provide the necessary tools to collaborate and work together for success.

There is considerable contradiction between how we manage our social lives and how we manage learning and working. Yet somehow we have come to understand and juxtapose these two opposing views in one space. While understanding the *naturalness* and advantage of collaboration as a basic living skill, most people also have personal understanding and experience of what Bruffee is referring to when he says "working together well doesn't come naturally" (1995, p. 14).

Confusion ensues as we are propelled into a phase in our social development that is demanding that our participation be collaborative, not because what is being asked of us is unfamiliar or incomprehensible, but because somehow the stage is larger, more diverse. There is a growing expectation of us to welcome and accommodate collaboration in all arenas, on all levels. We see the jigsaw pieces lying before us but are unsure if they really can or will form a recognizable image.

The interactive nature of technology, the ability to 'multi-link', has revolutionized the possibilities of collaborative interactions. "The personal and social consequences of any medium--that is, of any extension of ourselves--result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7). Whether collaboration is an extension of technology or technology an extension of collaboration, each is comfortably nestled within the other. Not only does technology provide a venue for collaboration, collaboration provides a venue for technology. The ability to present and receive information collaboratively has been augmented. We can now synchronously incorporate several methods of communication such as visuals, narration, text, or music.

We have evolved into a collaborative multimedia world. "We live our daily lives in an abundant and redundant multimedia environment in which opportunities for iterative forms of learning are common" (Eisner, 1997, p. 352). Online web sites are filled with images, videos and sound. Business presentations are often comprised of flow charts, graphs, and storyboards. Images in schools in the last thirty years have gone from maps, pictures of the queen, and possibly a few posters to videotapes, digitalized graphics and animated presentations as students compose and construct their own images with the

use of technology. Images and sound are now consciously being built into instruction and presentation.

On TV computers [sic] can produce graphs and designs that rise and fall, fold and unfold, collect or disperse themselves. They can demonstrate, not just portray.

Using these moving graphics, colors can change on a map to point out the effects of various proposals; foods can hop in and out of shopping baskets to represent long-term variations in eating habits; dollar bills can fly into the wallets of the segments of society that have benefited from a recent tax cut. (Stephens, 1998, p. 191)

Recently, my son and I attended a performance by the motivational speaker Rubin Carter. What prompted our attendance was my son's school assignment on "Hurricane" Carter, the boxer who had been wrongly accused of murder and spent nearly twenty years in prison before being exonerated. The research began with books from the library, followed by an Internet search and by the end, included music by Bob Dylan and the recently released movie starring Denzel Washington. It seemed only fitting to experience the man in person who had already been represented through multifarious mediums.

No longer is there only one method of representation, one source of information. It has become significant that we recognize that decisions are being made as to which form of instrumentation to exclude or include. Choices of instrumentation such as images, sound, and video do not merely accessorise but also determine what information will be predominant, more pronounced. Information can be skewed to draw attention to or away from specific areas. "...the selection of a form of representation influence not only what you are able to represent but also what you are able to see....Tools are not

neutral. Forms of representation are tools, and they are not neutral" (Eisner, 1997, p. 351). My two disappointments with the personal performance of Rubin Carter were that they did not play Bob Dylan's song and that Mr. Carter did not look more like Denzel Washington. My impression of Mr. Carter had begun taking shape through the various forms of representation long before encountering the actual person. The forms of representation had not been neutral.

Rushkoff (1994) relays an example of the convoluted way in which we now absorb information through the media.

...on our TV we watch Geraldo watch a monitor play a TV movie enacting a press conference where a tape is rolled of a TV show that in turn plays a tape--the actual, real-world tape purchased for the movie -- made by a guy cashing in on a media scandal, only to pull out and reveal a third-generation American actress pretend to react as the real Amy Fisher might have. By this time Geraldo takes a commercial break, during which an evening news special is pitched that promises to air a brand-new Amy Fisher tape made by another of her boyfriends. (p. 19-20)

The forms of communication utilized by multimedia are provocative. They open and ignite our senses. They are not designed to be translated or explicated by one another but act as independent representations of information, have their own voice and communicate in their own style. Just as information can no longer be privileged to those in positions of authority, privileging the position of any one form of communication over another limits our perception. Concurrently the recognition and endorsement of all forms of communication broadens the horizon. Every form of communication, every language offers up the opportunity to see something new, something different.

Our growing participation in collaboration requires that we open our lines of communication as the array of available forms of representation for communicating expands. We are now using technology to scoop up these representations and dispense them to every corner of the globe. The complexity is staggering. The pot is mixing, the lines are blurring and no one is free any longer to not consider how they will or will not participate.

To better understand the layered collaborative experience of the individual, I focused on two considerations in this research. First, I must acknowledge that the doors have opened to the use of many forms of communication, such as sound, images, and video. They are neither 'neutral' nor subordinate to the more familiar written or spoken word or to one another. To draw attention to how they are used to converse, to relay thoughts, emotions and information, I limited the method of communication the participants could use to interact. I requested they carry on a conversation only in images and to refrain from using any verbal or written communication for the exercise. By removing written and verbal communication, the common, automatic privileging of words was temporarily silenced. This allowed for other subtleties of collaboration to emerge that might have otherwise remained smothered or unacknowledged.

What you choose to use to think with affects what you can think about.

Furthermore, the ability to represent experience within the limits and possibilities of a form of representation requires that you think *within* the material with which you work. When such thinking is effective, you convert that material into a medium, something that mediates. Mediates what? Mediates your thinking. The

choice of a form of representation and the selection of the material to be used both impose constraints and offer possibilities. (Eisner, 1997, pg 350)

Videotapes display actions, create a story, develop the characters. Photographic stills are more suggestive, leaving the possibility open for the viewer to decide what took place before or after the photograph was captured. Music evokes emotion, creates ambience. The choices of representation act as mediators.

Second, as collaboration becomes not so much a choice as a social requirement, many questions are inherently raised concerning the individual's experience of collaboration. As we juxtapose and 'collage' our information so are we juxtaposing and 'collaging' ourselves. The fragments being pieced together are individuals and their individualism, the very thing we are endeavouring to move away from.

More is involved in the process of collaboration than simply the exchange and consolidation of information. If collaboration is often spoken of in terms of what and how information is physically shared, the individual's experience becomes detached from the process. Amid theories and methods of collaboration is human interaction, which is rarely without its bumps and curves. If we overlook, or attempt to by-pass individuals, they become objectified and the very fibre of collaboration is lost.

The individual must be pulled out from under the shadow of the collaborative process. Inquiring into collaboration also requires inquiring into the experience of the individual. What was or was not satisfying about the process? What did the individual consider emancipated or hindered the process? How did being part of a collaboration alter their creative process and expectations. How did they view their relationship with the other participants?

Once again I placed limitations on the research. By focusing on post-secondary and adult learners I could assume a certain level of maturity. I drew upon the knowledge of educators dedicated to the praxis of collaboration and focused on visual artists in collaboration to draw correlation between their experiences and those of the participants.

Working collaboratively does not always provide an increased sense of fulfillment and accomplishment. It does not always nurture the individual's best talents or potential but may in fact compromise them. At other times there seems to be great reward and a synergy that truly extracts a whole greater than its individual parts.

This research is not to determine whether we should or should not collaborate. It is to explore the inside of collaboration. Through my own observations and those of the participants perhaps a greater understanding of what it means to venture into collaboration, for all concerned, can be reached. "The objective of skilled agency and collaboration in the study of the human conditions is to achieve not unanimity, but more consciousness" (Bruner, 1996, p. 97).

Chapter II

The Ancient of Days (Blake)

The Treachery (or Perfidy) of Images (Magritte)

In my search to see inside collaboration, I thought it beneficial to first assemble some sense of the outside of collaboration. What was the contextual framework? What did this container called collaboration look like? The more I tried to define collaboration to others and myself the more elusive it became. Referring to a recent collaborative experience of my own served only to complicate matters.

Last year I enrolled in a graduate class on collaborative learning. We were connected electronically with four other universities and asked to be part of a collaborative online team composed of members from each of these universities. For one of the class assignments I partnered with another student to construct a participatory event around the topic of project based learning. There were parts of this course from which I learned and enjoyed immensely and other parts where I experienced frustration, resistance and stubbornness. I must point out that the learning did not necessarily coincide with the part I found enjoyable. What evolved from this class was not simply the initial experience of collaborating over distance but a further face-to-face collaboration about a form of collaborative learning. Collaboration clamoured over and through itself, simultaneously acting as parent and child, atom and particle, macro and micro.

I thought that perhaps stories and definitions from others would provide more clarification. I retrieved a book I had once come across many years ago on the Penan

tribe of Borneo. The harmonious, co-operative, collaborative way in which they lived had struck me at the time.

Once there was a small boy who was learning how to hunt with a *keleput*. But he was still too young to use poisoned darts. He hunted pygmy squirrels and small birds instead of the monkeys, deer and *babui* sought by the men and older boys.

One day the boy was hunting in the forest alone. Suddenly a *telle*, a pygmy squirrel, darted up a tree to feed on bark fungus. The boy put a dart in his *keleput*, aimed at the squirrel, and blew into the pipe. The dart pierced the squirrel's body and the tiny animal fell dead to the ground.

The boy was very hungry because he hadn't eaten for a couple of days. He eagerly cooked his catch over a small fire. While the meat cooked, the boy made a traditional Penan offering to the animal's spirit. Then he ate the entire squirrel. When the boy returned home, he told his friends and family how he had killed and eaten the squirrel. He was shamed because he knew that he had broken the most important rule in his village: He had not shared.

His parents were not angry. Instead they laughed and said, "You need a new name. From now on we'll call you Telle!" And for the rest of his life, the boy remembered the day that he forgot to share. (Siy, 1993, p. 36-37)

For the Penan tribe of Borneo collaboration is a 'given'. It is an accepted lifestyle. Developed over centuries this communal way of living embodies the entire tribe. Taken and administered gently to those learning the delicacies of the balance, all contribute so that all may benefit. The Penan tribe of Borneo "...teach their children that everything must be shared among all the people. Even a tiny fruit is sliced into enough pieces so that

everyone can have a bite. Sharing is so natural among the Penan that in their language there is no word or phrase that means "thank you" (Siy, 1993, p. 37). The composition of this collaboration is expansive, encompassing many people and many years.

The collaborative needs of the Penan, however, seem far removed from a simpler example of collaboration comprised of only two people. Bruffee and his friend Jim formed a collaboration founded not on daily activities stretching over centuries but over one piece of literature circumscribed by a specific period of time.

Late last spring, a colleague of mine at a university out west—I'll call him Jim—wrote and asked if I would read a manuscript of his. He felt he was finally ready for someone to take a close look at it.

Jim's an old friend. I dashed off a note saying of course I'd read it, with pleasure. At the beginning of June, ...I got a weighty package in the mail--279 pages plus notes. I read it, scribbled clouds of barely decipherable marginal notes, and drafted a six-page letter to Jim congratulating him on first rate work, suggesting a few changes and mentioning one or two issues he might think through a bit further. (Bruffee, 1987, p. 42)

Jim and I are peers. When Jim asked me to read his work and I agreed, we became an autonomous collaborative learning group of two with the task of revising and developing the written product of one of its members. (Bruffee, 1987, p. 44)

The stories above all speak of collaboration but they are very different from each other. How could something constructed for a whole community also be applicable to only two people? How could one collaborative activity so comfortably subdivide itself

into many? These stories did not clarify but rather contributed to a growing stack of descriptions. Collaboration was appearing far more complex than I had initially perceived.

Peasant Wedding (Bruegel).

Collaboration speaks of tradition, it speaks of culture, it speaks of breadth, it speaks of whole community or the simple coming together of two people in partnership. But it speaks of no one time; no one place and no one size. It is open to all and is experienced by all. It has existed throughout humanity for centuries, shrouded in social habits and customs, from quilting bees to spiritual ceremonies, from community events to what appears to be the smallest of exchanges. A collaborative teamwork effort today may only be a modern day version of harvest time years ago.

As diverse as collaboration is, the very act of coming together, having reason to participate, interact and interchange with others is the common thread. We have all witnessed or partaken in acts of collaboration ourselves many times. The reasons we come together are as broad as the array of possible scenarios. But we have come together. We have come together to collect, to collude, to 'collage', sometimes to collide and not least, at times, to be part of a collective. The exchange of ideas, the need of another's talents, resources, intellect, the pains and pleasures of joining with other agencies is a search for something broader, something better, something *else*.

Marilyn Monroe (Warhol)

Without a description of any one definitive relationship or interchange for collaboration I turned to the educators. Perhaps those who had studied the theory and praxis of collaboration could summarize what was truly meant when we proposed venturing into collaboration. Surely, for all the methods and procedures written, formulas developed, experimented with, massaged, expanded, manipulated and analyzed, they were closer to understanding what constituted collaboration.

Girl before a Mirror (Picasso).

Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to make the distinction between co-operation and collaboration. Collaboration, at times, is considered synonymous with co-operation. Many researchers use the terms interchangeably and even suggest that one is not possible without the other. Co-operation is considered by those who support co-operative learning techniques to be "the most important and basic of human interaction, and the skills of co-operating successfully are the most important skills anyone needs to master " (Johnson & Johnson, 1975, p. 99).

In the mid-seventies, educators Johnson and Johnson (1975) defined three possible goal structures for classroom learning: individualistic, competitive and co-operative. They strongly believed integrating collaboration into the classroom required critically reducing competition and individualism and reinforcing co-operation. " ' A *Co-operative goal structure* exists when students perceive that they can obtain their goal if, and only if, the other students with whom they are linked can obtain their goal.' " (Johnson & Johnson, 1975 p. 7). Researchers such as Manning and Wall (1995) agree

with Johnson and Johnson. "Positive interdependence of group members means that [students] need to rely on each other for learning course material, rather than just on their teacher or on themselves as individuals" (p 118).

The very nature of the word collaboration suggests a considerable amount of interdependence. And the goals of collaborative and co-operative learning are similar. However, they were intended for two different groups (Bruffe, 1995). Co-operative learning was designed for primary school children being initiated and acculturated into the conventions of group. This is also the age group targeted for a large portion of research purporting the positive results of co-operative learning. Based on their studies, centred on early school age children, Johnson and Johnson found "considerable evidence that co-operative learning experiences promote higher achievement than do competitive and individualistic learning experiences" (1975, p. 105). Jones (1996) in her research matching learner preference for group work to achievement found that the scores of those working co-operatively and those working alone did not differ significantly. College students engaged in group work, "have shown that co-operative learning may not be as powerful an instructional method as previously thought" (p. 297).

Collaborative learning was developed for a higher level of education, to pick up where co-operative learning left off (Bruffee, 1995, p. 16). In most situations, it would probably be advantageous for a co-operative atmosphere to exist. Collaboration, however, presupposes that the level of maturity, willingness and commitment to participate demonstrated in college or business settings exceeds that of grade school. The need to question and challenge one's peers is not considered to be uncooperative but a tool for expanding and defining concepts. Collaboration in these environments must be

able to absorb the competitiveness and disagreements that exist between individuals. Bruffee (1995) comments that collaborative learning "assumes that resisting the task, rebelling against the teacher, and questioning each other's views within a group may be inevitable and often necessary aspects of learning" (p. 17).

Wildavsky (1986), writing on the relationship of researchers in collaboration, describes the applications of co-operation and collaboration more efficaciously. "Co-operation [is] necessary to get the job done, but different from collaboration because the purpose of collaboration is for 'the participants to make use of each other's talents to do what they either could not have done at all or as well alone' (p. 237). This is the essence of collaborative partnership" (Saltiel, 1998, p. 6).

Collaboration can and does take place with or without elements of co-operation, maturity, willingness and/or commitment. Whether any or all of these factors are present may have an effect on the success or failure of collaboration, but certainly do not act as a prerequisite or determinant of collaboration.

The Diner (Segal).

Researchers such as Bruffee, Bleich, and Goleman have focused their theories and methods of collaboration on the social interactions that enter into any collaborative equation. They discuss the delicate balance of personal relationships, the need for self-control and an understanding of the other participants. Homogeneity secures a sense of belonging. It is this sense of belonging that will hold the participants and consequently the collaboration together. This, they believe, builds the foundation of successful collaboration.

Bruffee (1999), as a young professor, theorized, along with his colleagues, that the way to aid his students in overcoming their oppression, was by working collaboratively towards what they termed reacculturation. Reacculturation "...is a way to sever, weaken, renegotiate our ties to one or more of the communities we belong to and at the same time gain membership in another community" (1999, p.7-8). To gain this membership, Bruffee posits that we must first rely on a transition group populated with empathetic peers to provide us with the necessary background to join the new community, and to then work collaboratively within that community (1999, p. 8).

Bleich (1995) concurs with Bruffee that a fusion, a slow build-up of trust and understanding must be established within a group, but suggests that this union be secured through "a pedagogy of self-disclosure" (p. 44). The self-disclosure Bleich is referring to is not to be mistaken for "confession and revelation" (p. 44). It is an exchange "of our inner or unapparent lives with others" (p. 44). This autobiographical sharing and confiding by the participants generates a perspective that opens the doors to further resources. Bleich admits that this can be a very difficult and risky exercise (p. 44). However, rather than resulting in an outpouring of sentimentality and self-indulgence, Bleich reasons, "the pedagogy of disclosure desentimentalizes group work, teaches how to maintain discipline while working with one another, and provides a sense of the *meaning* of collective achievement as going with, extending, and changing the meaning of individual achievement" (1995, p. 49).

Goleman (1998) believes that discourse, supported by emotional intelligence, demarcates a star collaborative team. "Bringing emotional intelligence to a working relationship can pitch it toward the evolving, creative, mutually engaging end of the

continuum; failing to do so heightens the risk of a downward drift toward rigidity, stalemate, and failure" (p. 215-216). Emotional intelligence requires our openness to understanding the position of each person involved. "This emotional competence builds on both emotional self-control and empathy, allowing people to see clearly rather than be swayed by their own point of view" (p. 161).

Acculturation, disclosure, and emotional intelligence all address the social interactions significant to any collaboration. However, they read as preliminary, precautionary measures to be taken to ensure a group cohesion that, in return, promotes the promise of averting any possible disruptions and allows the collaboration to proceed productively. Thus, the strength of the collaboration seems to lie in the individuals' ability to accurately assess the position of the other participants so that they themselves may then act accordingly. The outcome becomes grounded in the participants' emotional maturity and competency. There is a small tear in the fabric however. While the responsibility seems to belong to the participants, the structure is being developed apart from the participants. Awarding greater representation to the needs of the collaboration than the needs of the participants suggests that it is the characteristics of the individuals that must be fixed, adjusted or suppressed to accommodate the collaboration. Consequently, a division between the individual's experience and the collaboration itself is initiated.

Seated Woman on a Bench (de Kooning)

Reflection and opinion on what constitutes collaboration is not limited to those that have consciously attended to the praxis of collaboration. Visual artists entering into

collaboration often do so without employing formal method and theory. They do not belong to preestablished communities with rules and concepts securely in place, but participate in more free form, ad hoc styles of collaboration. There is often little time and no knowledge or attention given to such theories as 'reacculturation' or 'self-disclosure'. As the artist L. Lijn explains, "My experiences of collaboration with another artist, poet, or filmmaker etc. seemed always to occur spontaneously as if we had been thrown together by some wind of chance" (Lijn, 1983, p. 36). These are collaborations requiring great flexibility dictated more by the required or desired assistance of another than by method.

The perspectives of these participants have evolved from direct, raw experience. In contrast to the educators they seem more accepting of disruptions as an innate part of the undulating collaborative process. Controversy, disagreement and questioning, are aspects to be employed to shape and clarify collaboration, rather than aspects to be averted. Visual artists' understanding of collaboration seems to be directly related to the subtle distributions of aesthetic judgement and the evolution of the project. It is the *hashing out* of these concerns that determines the collaboration for them. As the collaboration is often self-imposed it is vital that each person is an active participant in this process. The ways in which the varied possibilities can impact a collaboration become as numerous and individual as the artists themselves. It is a reminder that successful, productive collaboration is alive and well with or without the confines of method and theory.

Kumar, one of the artists involved in a collaborative art piece defined as a travelling essay with a camera, believes that it is diversity, not consensus that draws collaborators together.

AK: We share an unusual geographical and historical trajectory which might be why we are collaborating. To the extent that we are different, our work reveals tensions that some might call contradictions. Should stringent critique really coexist with or accommodate an easygoing diversity? I am not sure that it should. (Chatterjee & Kumar, 1999, p. 7)

Anna Banana, a Vancouver artist, clearly states her perspective of what defines collaboration.

In my opinion, you are collaborating if you have some say in the aesthetic decisions that are made about whatever the thing is that you are jointly doing. If you don't you're not collaborationists. It's an obvious issue (50% partners), and I think that it's a hindrance in situations of collaboration where it isn't designated and spelled out, *'this is a collaboration'*. Whether it's two people, or six people, or, however many. They're all somehow responsible for the final product. (Banana, 1983, p. 17)

The group Henry VIII's Wives, echoes the belief of shared responsibility in their own collaborative dynamic. "We argue, debate, and face ethical decisions" (Skaer, 1999, p. 6). "Thus the work goes through different transformations and is presented numerous times to the group as a whole. We share the responsibility for what is produced and the aesthetics of each work are a compromise" (p. 6).

For the artist Judy Chicago, views on the divisions of such issues as aesthetic judgement and responsibility fall differently. Chicago, in the past, has orchestrated two major collaborative art projects, The Dinner Party, and The Birth Project, each extending over several years, involving hundreds of volunteers (Chicago, 1985). In these two projects, as a professional artist, Chicago's artistic premise was to represent women's largely unknown histories. Relying on the expertise and generosity of volunteers, collaboration became a method of producing the incredible scale and volume of her work. It also allowed her to explore, learn and elevate art mediums often unacknowledged by the art world, mediums that have been relegated to craftsmanship largely due to the fact that women perform them.

Chicago, however, was the creator of the works of art and the link to the art world in which the pieces would eventually reside. Although she credits and acknowledges the contributions of the volunteers, she felt the need to maintain complete control and responsibility for the project and the artwork (Chicago, 1985). " 'Although there was certainly considerable collaboration in the studio, it took place within the framework of my leadership, both aesthetic and philosophical. I always encouraged people to bring their own ideas and skills into the artmaking process, but I retained both aesthetic control and final decision-making authority because, ultimately, it was my piece' " (Sullivan, 1996, para. 2).

Nude descending a staircase, No. 2 (Duchamp)

I would be pleased at this time to say that I have developed an opinion as to the contextual framework of collaboration, that collaboration resides in a common goal,

common objective or common vision. Yet I can only determine that there are very few specifics circumscribing collaboration. Rather than revealing the consistencies of the collaborative context, the writings revealed more inconsistencies. Whereas the educators spoke from the perspective of designer, of observer, the artists spoke from the perspective of participant. Whereas educators spoke of how they had witnessed and conducted collaborations, artists spoke of their own involvement and experience of collaboration.

At first, I was drawn into accepting that the collaborations of educators and artists were somehow different and should be separated. I now realize that by accepting a separation, as such, I would also have to accept that the experience of individuals participating in different types of collaborations would also have to be separated. I would have to categorize the experience of the individuals based on the type of collaboration they had participated in. This would lead us back outside the collaboration to a comparative stance of the collaboration and away from understanding the *inside* of collaboration. If we are to concern ourselves with the individual's experience of collaboration and not with the individual's experience in reference to a specific type of collaboration, then the elements that reside within a collaboration must be discussed.

As the dust begins to settle, I am taken by the evolving *patterns* that transcend the contrasts presented by the educators and artists. By juxtaposing the fragments, the two groups are no longer divided. Instead, together, they expose the discrepancies latent in all collaborations. They bring into question assumptions concerning collaboration that are often accepted simply because they have not been held up against that which is not like-minded.

Sifting through these patterns I begin to see that elements, such as tension and harmony, or acceptance and resistance, are not separate elements conducive to different *types* or *methods* of collaboration but are polarizations of the same element that belongs to all collaborations. By placing the elements on a continuum, the experience of the individual can move freely along this continuum rather than being subjugated to a polarized category. Such definitions as harmony and tension, when assigned to the collaboration overall, usurp the participant's individual experience.

In certain collaborative groups, however, one end of the continuum may be more predominant than the other and therefore appear to be germane to that group. This becomes magnified, at times, in the research as I have limited my findings to two main groups. It must be remembered, however, that there is a plethora of possible collaborative situations that could alter the appearance of these findings.

The Night Café (Van Gogh)

One of the salient patterns that surfaced around the educators and the visual artists was harmony and tension in collaboration. For most educators, a harmonious, non-competitive atmosphere is unequivocally necessary for successful collaboration. Goleman, for one, believes that harmony is essential when working in groups and is developed through our sense of maturity in knowing how to be effective emotionally.

The single most important factor in maximizing the excellence of a group's product was the degree to which the members were able to create a state of internal harmony, which lets them take advantage of the full talent of their members. In groups where there are high levels of emotional and social static--

whether it be from fear or anger, from rivalries or resentments—people cannot offer their best. But harmony allows a group to take maximum advantage of its most creative and talented members' abilities. (1995, p. 161)

Goleman's statements imply that these same talents and abilities would not emerge or be available if tension prevailed in collaboration and that an individual's most worthy talents are somehow linked to harmony.

Bruffee's theory of reacculturation is based on taking preliminary actions to ensure a smoother, more harmonious passage into a new community. His suggestion to 'sever, weaken, and renegotiate our ties' to other communities, however, causes me to question the implied impediment and discomfort of belonging to conflicting communities. For example, would my association with those that are uneducated cause tension and conflict with the educated community I desire to belong to? Or am I unable to become one of the educated without a group of empathetic peers as Bruffee suggests is necessary? And if an empathetic, transition group is unavailable, such as possibly in the case of the self-educated, are they left without a community to belong to?

I am curious as to what role conflict and tension play in collaboration. If harnessed instead of restrained, what type of energy might be injected into the collaboration? Educators may find themselves in the positions of being responsible to mediate or manage tension in classroom environments, but surely it is not desirable to do so at the cost of silencing diversity and difference. Surely when inducting individuals into new communities it is not desirable to replace heterogeneity with conformity. If we attempt to omit tension we may lose the very substance that brings flavour to harmony.

"Conditioned to listen for consensus and monological agreement, we may not appreciate contending voices" (Gergits & Schramer, p. 187).

Most people avoid confrontation and adversity whenever possible. It is often uncomfortable and time consuming. But collaborators are not always like-minded and feel a sense of homogeneity. The amount of harmony and/or tension that exists within a collaboration is not constant. It may be the contending voices that move a collaboration away from acquiescence and stagnation.

Sketch I for "Composition VII" (Kandinsky).

The foundation of harmony is in direct contrast to those that are joined together in collaboration *because* of tension. Disharmony that arises in collaboration can be received as an engaging, enlivening part of the process, salient in creating motivation and inspiration. "Change thrives in the spaces created by contradictions" (Toso, 1994, p. 13). "Innovation comes from resistance; conformity comes from submission" (Toso, 1994, p. 10).

Toso, and Foster, both writing teachers that use group strategies, posit that by attempting to construct homogeneous and harmonious groups we may be sacrificing ourselves, "our somebodiness" (Toso, 1994), the very uniqueness that we bring to the group. "The world is fragmented into many contending voices which cannot be reconciled or communalized. Efforts to soften or harmonize competing voices of anger and frustration by invoking a wooly liberal vision of communal harmony just doesn't cut it" (Foster, 1995, p. 8). Foster purports that the "dark side of community" holds the "power to exclude" those not willing to accept the ideologies presented (1995, p. 9).

Artists, in particular, have used tension as the impetus for their creativity to flourish. The agreement to disagree is the premise on which three New York artists based their collaborations (Cohen, Frank, & Ippolito, 1999, p. 8). As one of the artists, Ippolito, points out, "Isn't our entire dynamic based on disagreement" (Cohen et al., p.8)? "Our past works have been thought provoking in the sense that they alert people to the conflicted collaborative process that usually underlies creation in any medium" (Cohen et al., p.8). Disagreement and intrigue is the reason they collaborate. For them collaboration is not *limited* to agreement. Because they are in conflict, they agree they are in collaboration.

Many of the Impressionists used the tension and competition between them to imbibe what the other participant had to offer. "They not only learned from but competed with each other, and their art changed as a result. Without these friendly rivalries, each artist's work would not have been as rich" (White, 1996, p. 3). "The male relationships were overly competitive. Working together led them to important breakthroughs in style and theme; this resulted in artistic growth for all the painters and in a great number of works of art" (White, 1996, p. 3). Their passion for broadening their own experience of art surpassed their personal relationship. "[Degas and Manet] disliked each other yet were fascinated with each other's art....Each irritated the other. But the turbulence between them was based on a real professional esteem and a desire to learn from each other's work. They were equally talented, innovative, and productive, and their competition pushed them to greater heights of creativity" (White, 1996, p.23).

DiFelicianantonio points out that collaboration is a relationship. Although relationships are not always smooth, differences are something to be *worked with*, not *out*

of collaboration. When sublimated through the task at hand, tension and harmony have the opportunity to become stepping stones rather than distractions or difficulties. "Of course in any collaboration there are bound to be differences but they can't become an impediment. Collaborating is about using tension and friction to move each project forward" (Difelicianonio & Wagner, 1999, p. 5).

While Goleman stresses the need for emotional intelligence in collaboration, the emotional state of any collaboration may ultimately only be as stable as the mood of the participants. "While most people in the group had been trying to add things that were in keeping with what was already there, Zoe felt we were all being 'too nice' [sic]. When it was her turn, she added something to shock the rest of us a bit--or give us something to think about" (Liebmann, 1986, p. 90). Liebmann, an art therapist, although surprised by this reaction also recognized that the friction opened an avenue of exploration that may have otherwise remained latent.

The Fountain (Duchamp).

Where tension, conflict and competition in collaboration can be the salient ingredients, it can also be its destruction. Tension can and does, at times, exacerbate issues of power and control amongst the participants. Collaborations do break down for these very reasons leaving participants frustrated and without resolution.

Bill Evans and Kestutis Nakas have both participated in collaborations where the experiences were not positive due primarily to confusion regarding the power structure and how the participants would work together in the collaborative process. Even when the final product turned out to be a success, the process had

been such a negative experience for each of them that the entire venture is still remembered with frustration. (Smith, 1997, p. 99)

Judy Chicago's relationship with one of the volunteers, during the making of *The Birth Project*, soured over property rights. It finally ended in a difficult mediation.

Wanda's resistance finally capsized in the face of the fact that there was no resolution other than destroying the piece....About ten minutes after I proposed destroying the piece, it dawned on me that the mediation was essentially over, for we had both agreed that destroying the piece was an option we both could accept, although I don't think Wanda ever thought that I would do that. Wanda left in a huff; Sally cut up the piece; and the mediator wrapped it up in a cloth and carried it, like an aborted fetus, to the garbage can. In a moment of rage, I scrawled "Abortion" across the top of Wanda's folder. (1985, p. 64)

Tension and harmony are a vital element of collaboration. To collaborate is to listen, share, exchange, and interrelate. Also, it is to challenge, question, confront, object and possibly fail. Although it does not always look familiar, pleasant or harmonious, collaboration is not something to safeguard or be safeguarded against but something from which to learn and expand. However, when this is not the case it may serve us well to heed Bleich's advice, "We should always bear in mind that for any one group, working together may not, finally, be the right thing" (Bleich, 1995. p. 44).

Balanced Rocks (Goldsworthy)

Another pattern that arises in collaboration is the authority and rules that govern a collaboration, "Who makes the decisions and how those decision are enforced" (Bruffee,

1993, p. 71). Collaborations can operate as either self-governing or controlled activities. By self-governing I am referring to a situation where there is no one person or authority figure directing or regulating the collaboration. Conversely, controlled collaborations are those relying on a designated authority figure. Whether rules are disseminated for us or determined through some manner of mutual agreement, Dewey poses that social interaction relies on some sense of order. "The first is that the rules are part of the game. They are not outside of it. No rules, then no game; different rules, then a different game" (Dewey, 1938, p. 52).

Hangers (Skoglund).

Self-governing collaborations usually operate on consensus and control is dispersed amongst the participants. Each participant may be responsible for a specific self-sustaining portion of the work with no one person taking full responsibility or power over the entire project. This style of collaboration is more likely to be encountered in self-forming, smaller groups, outside institutional environments.

Collaborations as such are generally a process of ongoing negotiations as participants balance delicate relationships that teeter between seeing their own individual ideas come to fruition and possibly compromising for the good of the collaboration. "Sometimes somebody's going to have to do more blending or patching or something to make the cross between the two sets of writing seem more transparent" (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 68).

What are our principles, our ethics, and when do you take over what somebody else has started? I mean, that's part of the tension here.... You're working with this

person and she wants to have control of what she's written, right? Except, you also know something needs to be done, and how do you [step in]? (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 71)

These are difficult and, at times, confrontational issues that require careful circumspection by the participants, as there is no dominant influence to turn to for answers. Consequently, self-governing collaborations often require a strong willingness on the part of the individuals to participate. In an interview with artists DiFeliciano and Wagner, DiFeliciano discussed what was required in their situation to ensure an equitable collaborative relationship.

JW: I remember being furious when we first started working together and you asked if I wanted to produce for you. I said, 'No, I want to direct!' For the collaboration to survive we had to find a way of working together.

TD: But we were committed to finding a way. (DiFeliciano & Wagner, 1999, p. 4)

TD: In deciding to work together I knew I was relinquishing sole creative control over the filmmaking process. I was uneasy at first...

JW: The notion that there has to be one person with one vision at the top. It creates the false expectation that there needs to be one dominating force. The matriarch or the patriarch....It's an option, not a rule. (p. 5)

It must not be assumed that consensus eliminates authority or control. Rather where authority or control is divided, as in self-governing collaborations, it becomes mutable, transferable. Participants must come to terms with granting and accepting roles of authority. They must entrust the critiquing of their work to other members of the

collaboration and in return, accept the responsibility of exercising fair judgement in return when they are called upon to critique (Bruffee, 1993, p. 26).

When I responded positively, I agreed to take on and assert authority relative to him and his work. In that sense, the authority of my knowledge with regard to his manuscript originated not only with his granting me the authority, but also with my accepting it, both, of course, in a context of friendliness and good grace.

Willingness to grant authority, willingness to take on and exercise authority, and a context of friendliness and good grace are the three ingredients essential to successful autonomous collaboration. (Bruffee, 1987, p. 47)

Valley Curtain (Christo).

Where there is a designated authority, as in a classroom, the authority figure is often expected to hold the collaboration together and see that the participants follow through as required. The authority figure may or may not be a participant in the collaboration, but acts as supervisor and often takes responsibility for the overall outcome. Larger groups often require a designated authority figure simply to manage the complexity of the collaboration.

Anna Banana believes that an actual collaboration does not take place when one person has total control, that it is necessary to either hire workers for a project or be willing to relinquish aesthetic control.

Basically it was my own idea and I may have listened to other people but I did it my way and I hired other people to do what I wanted them to do. This is different from saying 'this is my idea', then that idea gets pushed and eventually shaped by

everyone else's influences. That, to me, is a true collaboration. Whereas, as soon as you enter a dollar bill into the transaction, it becomes different and I have control. That's why I want to pay people so that I get to control the product. This is *my* event. I want it to be done this way and in order to have it done this way, I pay. (Banana, 1983, p. 12)

In *The Birth Project*, it was necessary for Chicago to take an authoritative position to ensure quality and to handle the sheer size of the project. As the artist Lijn posits, "On a large scale collaboration becomes a necessity..." (Lijn, 1983, p. 39). Paying the participants would have made it impossible for Chicago to complete her project. Having nowhere near the funds to cover such costs volunteers were an absolute necessity. Chicago also needed to have the power to dismiss those not performing and to legally protect her works of art. "The 'belly dancer' made off with her piece after I ended her project because so little stitching had been done. I had to call the police to get it back" (Chicago, 1985, p. 159).

Perhaps the difficulty does not lie in how position is denoted, but whether it is clear as to how the collaboration will be conducted. Chicago had scores of volunteers offering their services. This was especially true for *The Birth Project* as it succeeded the already well-known *Dinner Party* project. It was clearly Chicago's project, she would have full control, and she took legal measures to ensure this.

Participants may concurrently resist and find comfort in others taking charge. "Some needleworkers resented doing samples and only learned their value after a considerable amount of reverse stitching" (Chicago, 1985, p. 162).

They often tended to react overly strongly to my every response: if I was pleased with their work they were elated; if I was critical, they were devastated. Learning to accept my aesthetic authority without being overwhelmed by my "authority" and learning to separate criticism of their work from criticism of them was hard for many of the stitchers. (Chicago, 1985, p. 168)

Bruffee describes a situation between a professor and a student demonstrating how we have come to rely on authority figures. "In pleading with her professor to teach traditionally and provide 'right answers,' she was revealing a dependence on centralized classroom authority that is common among students and difficult to give up..." (Bruffee, 1999, p. 15).

Bruffee claims that there is always a hidden authority. In collaborative groups that have arranged themselves, an authority figure may never have been identified, yet an innocuous, clandestine unspoken authority may be guiding the process. Bruffee and his friend Jim, although not reporting to any obvious authority, still complied with an unspoken set of rules. "He and I organized our working group on our own initiative for our own purposes, but we played the game, so to speak, by a set of rules we held in common with many other groups" (Bruffee, 1987, P. 46). Chicago, although in a position of authority, also abided by professional standards intrinsic to the artistic community. "Sometimes the stitchers seemed to think that I had arbitrarily made up these standards, but that just indicated that many of them did not understand that there are established, historical standards in art" (1985, p. 163).

Self-Portrait (Leslie).

Although controlled and self-governing collaborations appear to be separate entities we are again confronted with the polarization of an element. Only by stepping outside the collaboration does the element of control begin to split. Within collaboration, where control resides, it is not stagnant, but in a constant state of flux. Both participants and authority figures constantly take, relinquish, and even at times usurp control. It is the flux that keeps a collaboration in motion and alive. It is what allows ideas and possibilities to come forward and not be limited to only one vision. "Seeing that, too, makes me realize that even if she's not thinking in a way that I'm comfortable with and the way that I think you have to approach certain tasks, that there's really a lot of value in thinking in that other way" (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 68).

As Chicago took control, she also found she must monitor her control to allow others to become engaged through their own means. With no previous knowledge of the work ethics or commitment of the volunteers she was taking on it was difficult for her to step back and temporarily silence her expectations.

Women are coming out from the woodwork to work with me; they're so eager, and I'm so scared they won't come through....It was one thing to have them work in my studio under my nose; it's quite another to paint these wonderful works and then hand them over to virtual strangers. (Chicago, 1985, p.33)

One woman in particular distressed Chicago when she visited her at her home. "The idea of my beautifully painted needlepoint canvas being worked on in front of the TV with food and stained hands totally undid me" (Chicago, 1985, p. 147).

How much control one member or participant of a collaboration has may ultimately only be determined by how much resistance they encounter when exercising that control. "I guess where the problem arises, is that there is actually a power struggle when it becomes an issue of utmost importance to you" (Banana, 1983, p. 18). Chicago upset many participants to retain what was important to her, the integrity of the artwork. " 'Over the years the reviews were always intense and very threatening....I was always nervous and scared that Judy would hate what I had done' " (Chicago, 1985, p. 165).

Bruffee believes that we must give something up for the greater good of the collaboration. "What we learn to give up is always getting to do exactly what we want to do. Or, if we do get to do what we want to do, we may have to give up always doing it in exactly the way we want to do it" (Bruffee, 1995, p. 14). Although I understand the importance of negotiation, it unsettles me to think that to give up getting to do exactly what we want may result in a watered down version of individual concepts, never fully developed. Our strengths may be lost in a package that does not adequately reflect the potential of the collaboration or the individuals.

The tug of war between control and compromise is constant. What appears to be compromise or control may only be participants drawing their boundaries of what is or is not important to them and at what cost. If the cost becomes the collaboration itself then perhaps a reassessment of values is required. "Well, a real tension can develop between being concerned about the integrity and the value of the final product and the sustaining of the relationship, especially if it's a personal and professional relationship or a long-term relationship" (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 70-71).

Loomings (Stella).

As the complexity of collaboration expands I find it becomes increasingly difficult to surmise the individual's experience of collaboration. Every individual that enters a collaboration steps onto several sliding walkways at different points. And they do not ride these walkways alone, but in relation with other individuals also seeking out a spot on which to stand. I feel it is a disservice to hone down the individual's experience and would rather expand my own vision to include all the experiences in relationship to one other. Because of the absurd enormity of such a task, however, I am reduced to finding generalities.

Lobster Trap and Fish Tail (Calder)

Some understanding of how individuals find themselves in collaboration resides in our history of individualism and how the cross over into collaboration is being made. As more occasions requiring group work present themselves we must portage between what we have been taught and what we are now being asked to do. Regardless of our involvement and exposure to collaboration in social contexts, we have been well trained in individualized work ethics. The predominant training traditionally encouraged and supported in our work organizations and learning institutions is an individualistic model. We are to work independently, to compete with and surpass our co-workers and peers so that we may stand out, be recognized, be promoted and/or rewarded. "We're a culture that builds individualism and the academy rewards individualism, and everything feeds toward individualism and personal excellence" (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 64-65).

"Students' previous school experience conflicts with collaborative projects. Individual work and independence are ingrained; students have been trained to view learning as an uncompromising individual process, not something to be shared" (Gergits & Schramer, 1994, p. 190). Bleich realized, in his preparation for a graduate teaching class, that he had to go beyond merely introducing collaboration as an alternative teaching approach. He had to *convince* his class of future teachers that it may be beneficial. "It has become easier to persuade the apprentice teachers that students can reach new levels of accomplishment by trying to think, learn, and work with one another as well as with their teachers" (1995, p. 43).

"My individuality early on, was more than simply tolerated it was fostered and promoted as long ago as I can remember. The environment that I am used to working in applauded individual effort, and recognized the uniqueness of solo performance..." (Krizan, 1983, p. 22). "To collaborate with another visual artist never presented itself to me as an option" (Krizan, 1983, p. 23).

Now we are not only expecting individuals to collaborate but to co-operate in forming homogeneous groups they may not wish to belong to. Personal boundaries are indubitably being challenged. The proximity of where one person's boundary begins and another's ends is always in question. Participants risk crossing not only visible boundaries but obscured unforeseen boundaries that both parties are unaware of until a violation occurs.

There were also deep resentments about 'territory.' Luckily we each have a modest sense of humour and started scribbling mercilessly over each other's work and talking out loud...as we intruded more and more on each other's territory with

slashing marks. After a few drawings the results began to look less confused. We were beginning to build on each other's work, to let go, to interrelate. (Grube, Liros, & Barnes, 1983, p. 9)

Fortunately in this situation the persistence of the three artists involved prevailed and a solution was reached. By being forthright with their differences they were able to maintain a compatible working relationship. Another group's collaborative effort did not fair as well.

Fairly soon after the start, Diana demarcated a large space in front of her in red crayon....Zoe and Wendy in the corner next to her tried to make contact with her by moving towards her boundary. Perhaps influenced by the previous exercise, Diana interpreted these advances as aggression, and first strengthened her boundary...and then withdrew to a small 'inner sanctum...Finally, when they persisted, Diana reached out in exasperation and marked a large black cross on one of their patches, Fiona, further up the paper, tried to 'soften the blow' by decorating the cross, but it was too late. The rest of the group looked on aghast at the conflict the painting had shown up. (Liebmann, 1986, p. 90-91)

Guernica (Picasso).

There are limitations and difficulties working alone, but the stresses and risks encountered are familiar, and generally, manageable. The stresses and risks encountered when working collaboratively are often incalculable. They can result in broken trusts, unmet expectations and harboured resentments. Warranted or unwarranted feelings of

inequity, inferiority or superiority may arise and threaten any relationship. Bleich recounts a classroom situation where several of these issues surfaced.

The first exchange closed down the group altogether for that session; the atmosphere of male combat was established, particularly by Jorge's rejoinder about whether his green card will sexually excite Mike. Further evidence of this development is Mike's attempt to flirt with the Anglo female teacher, thus, in a sense, seeking two sorts of ascendancy, sexual as well as ethnic. Lorena then defeats him on both counts at once by speaking Spanish, thus taking him out of his superior status by simply evening the score. Ethnic and gender solidarity defeat Mike's disruption of the group though clearly without securing the peace. (Bleich, 1995, p. 50)

Although this paper is not focused on addressing the social inequities of working collaboratively it must be remembered that prejudice and bias affect any group experience, shape input, responses, willingness, cohesion and enjoyment of group work. The dis-ease that someone can feel when placed in a situation of working with others can cause a great deal of anxiety. They may be required to brave and perhaps even embrace indeterminable risks and uncertainties. It may exacerbate resistance and cause a great deal of stress. Bruffee recounts the case of a young woman named Zelda. "When Zelda called her professor on Sunday night, she didn't understand collaborative learning and wasn't having any of it. She could accept only what she did understand, was familiar with, and wasn't threatened by" (Bruffee, 1999, p. 15).

Individuals either choosing or being required to collaborate with others are often expected to fuse personalities in a cohesive manner with unfamiliar people. In

classrooms most start as strangers not “as trusted, neighbours, colleagues, or friends” (Bruffee, 1993, p. 27). One woman wrote of *The Birth Project*, “I thought I would know a lot of people, but I recognized few faces among the diverse crowd....I felt nervous at the thought of organizing all these strangers and wished that more of the familiar *Dinner Party* network were there” (Chicago, 1985, p. 68).

The desire for familiarity, intimacy and a sense of belonging may be strong but may not be easily attained. Robert Unger believes that difficulties arise because “we are drawn to...and distrust one another at the same time. We continue to resist and feel uncomfortable with one another until we find terms that we feel are translatable...” (Bruffee, 1993, p. 24). There is an “unavoidable conflict we all experience between...our ‘mutual longing’ or ‘unlimited need’ for each other and the ‘unlimited danger’ or jeopardy with which we threaten each other” (Bruffee, 1995, p. 14).

In situations where the participants are familiar with each other, there are other personality issues to confront. “One surprise was that people who were *too* eager to take part and were a drag on the group, lowering its overall performance; these eager beavers were too controlling or domineering....Another negative was having deadweight, members who did not participate” (Goleman, 1995, p. 160). Researchers found that high achievers, capable of excelling on their own were at a greater risk of stress. “Especially with older students or high achievers, we need to address the misgivings students often have about depending on others for learning outcomes” (Manning & Wall, 1995, p. 120). “Despite, or perhaps because of, the transformational nature of collaboration, it is often a messy process, marked by conflict, disagreement, and difference” (Gergits & Schramer, 1994, p. 188).

The Expulsion from Paradise (Masaccio).

Resistance and apprehension toward group work is not unfounded. The difficulty changing from an individual to a collaborative approach may lie in the very comfort and security we have acquired working alone and the system derived consequences of not working alone. The resistance to participating in collaboration resides not only with those participating but also in the institutions and organizations that may be, consciously or unconsciously, supporting the familiar, traditional system of individualism. "At both the high school and college levels, students perceive quickly that their teachers value individuality highly and reward it accordingly" (Gergits & Schramer, 1994, p. 190). "Among the prominent institutions of our society, the schools are least characterized by co-operative activity" (Slavin, 1985, p. 5).

Entes writes about her experience within the university at the PhD level that left her feeling disappointed and without support when wanting to work collaboratively. "My department chair and my dean - strongly suggested that for professional advancement I should publish only in prestigious refereed journals, and *alone*" (Entes, 1994, p. 4). Artists, Pollock and Silk, finally managed to obtain a collaborative MFA in 1998, but encountered many obstacles both as students and professionally presenting themselves as a collaborative team.

We were rejected as a collaborative team by most institutions, which simply could not comprehend the situation. We often have to compromise in order to accommodate bureaucratic needs. For example, when we are given a commission or are paid for a piece of writing, there is always the issue of whose name is going to be on the check....Opportunities such as residencies are not usually realistic

because many programs stipulate they can only award or accommodate one of us. This is similar to what we faced when applying to graduate school. Most programs had a limited number of graduate students they could accept, so to fill two "slots" with one body of work did not seem like a good deal....it does foreshadow what kind of career and educational opportunities you might have if you endeavor to maintain your collaboration within institutional contexts.

Our collaboration was alternately ignored or acknowledged depending on whether or not it was convenient for the institution. For example, we were given only one studio space but we were not allowed to team-teach our work-study class. While we believe that the administration and faculty tried their best to work with us, much of what we experienced enforced the traditional philosophy that art students are naturally educated as individuals. In our case, some of the teacher-student dynamics were strained due to the conventional pedagogy of criticism and intimidation....It occurred to us that much of the dynamic was one of an artificial stress that was developed by the faculty to destabilize the student and to force a mentor and peer relationship with the faculty and other students, respectively. (Pollock & Silk, 1999, p. 4)

Wagner and DiFeliciano also met with similar hesitations regarding their collaborative efforts in the film world.

J.W: While the production company had courted us to work on the series, they were apprehensive about working with a collaborative team. They had fears that we might be at odds with one another" (DiFeliciano & Wagner, 1999, p. 5).

Conde and her husband, Beveridge, discussed some disturbing contradictions regarding acceptance of their collaborative artwork in an interview published in TKO magazine.

TKO: How was your AGO [Art Gallery of Ontario] show received in Toronto?

KB: Within the art community? I would say with hostility.

CC: But, incredibly, there wasn't a fucking person that missed it. Everyone went to see what was not art....They tried to withdraw the book from the art gallery bookstore, but the book had already been sold out.

TKO: Was Nasgaard threatened in any way?

CC: You don't know how close he was to not keeping the job over that show.

Three trustees resigned, pulling out their money from that section of the gallery.

(TKO, 1983, p. 42)

There are innumerable examples, such as these, characterizing a society in flux. Acceptance of the transformation from individualism to collaborative learning and work ethics is far from complete. Collaboration must be seen as more than simply an insightful explorative activity. Unless our systems reward collaboration as they have individualism, resistance towards producing collaboratively will continue.

So why do some, amidst criticism and rejection continue to pursue collaborative efforts? What about Bruffee's bigger and better sand castles? "We join those more collectively oriented communities in our own self-interest: we soon discover that they empower us to build bigger and better sand castles" (1995, p. 14). Is this why we agree to collaborate, in hopes of venturing past ourselves to something grander?

The Third Mind (Burroughs and Gysin)

There are individuals that have participated in collaboration and reached what has been termed, the third mind. By juxtaposing and arranging individual parts a new, greater whole is formed. Combining talents and knowledge that could not be achieved alone enables collaborators to extend beyond the original intention. They truly have accomplished that which was, at least for the moment, unattainable alone. They have contributed their individuality to a project, and were rewarded by experiencing not simply a combination, or a compromise of their individual identities, but something else that was *of* their identities.

The third mind is what Burroughs describes as "the complete fusion in a praxis of subjectivities, two subjectivities that metamorphose into a third; it is from this collusion that a new author emerges, an absent third person, invisible and beyond grasp, decoding the silence" (1978, p. 18). This term, however, was originally coined by Napoleon Hill in his book *Think and Grow Rich*.

Gysin: It says that when you put two minds together...

Burroughs: ...there is always a third mind...

Gysin: ...a third and superior mind...

Burroughs: ...as an unseen collaborator (1978, p. 19).

In the case of the two artists, Leone and Macdonald, they were willing to give up their own singular identities to fuse and create a new identity, not unlike a birthing process where a whole new person is created that has its own identity and yet carries visible and invisible remnants of those who created it. "There has been a deliberate decision to create a new identity that acknowledges the exchange of ideas—each piece is

the result of joint concepts, research and execution, along with a shared willingness to embrace serendipity. Their work becomes a new body, a body that is more than the sum of its parts. Such is the strength of collaborative art" (Platt, 1999, p.22). Monet and Renoir "pooled their expertise to develop a new style that combined Monet's extraordinary feeling for nature with Renoir's unique gifts as a colourist. Impressionism itself was born from their work together" (White, 1996, p. 57).

The individuals' experiences are enhanced. "One of the things, I think, that keeps us doing this, at least from my point of view, is that the development of the ideas is so much richer, and so much more fun....It's both the enrichment of the ideas, which I think would never reach the stage where they're at [if we were working alone]..." (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 64-65).

Essex (Chamberlain)

Collaboration, however, is not an easy process and makes no promises. Some enter into collaboration initially believing that it requires less responsibility, expecting a more fun, social activity only to find that it can be far more difficult than originally anticipated. "Occasionally a student would attempt to join the cohort group, motivated by the false assumption that cohort research produced an easy dissertation. These few students quickly learned the *cohort-supported research* is not a euphemism for *easy*" (Witte & James, 1998, p. 55). "It's time-consuming, it's emotionally [costly], it's expensive because we all live in different parts of the United States - it's enormously expensive" (Witte & James, 1998, p. 58).

Collaboration is not a panacea but an alternative to the traditional ways we have been taught to learn and work and it may ultimately require more patience, maturity and discretion. There will be times when collaboration will boost our levels of achievement and other times leave us feeling frustrated and misunderstood. Collaborators have to give serious consideration to the possible drawbacks of collaboration and to the question: Are we willing to weather the unnamed, unforeseen difficulties that are likely to occur?

JW: The first few years of our collaboration were the hardest. We were both learning about our craft and we were trying to find a way to work together on a number of levels while thrashing out emotionally charged ego issues along the way (DiFelicianantonio & Wagner, 1999, p. 5).

"I would urge caution here....Collaboration can also be overwhelming. It's [definitely] more work" (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 68). "The amount that we produce seems small compared to the amount of work that we put into producing it" (Clark & Watson, 1998, p. 69).

And there are times when only solitude can provide for us. Even the most positive aspects of collaboration can be draining and a time for reflection is necessary. Working collaboratively may accomplish that which can not be accomplished alone, but so too can working alone accomplish that which can not be accomplished working collaboratively.

"It seems that Monet returned to the idea he had expressed in 1868, that it was better to paint alone with nature" (White, 1996, p. 103). Monet wrote to Durand-Ruel, 'I have always worked better in solitude, and from my own impressions,...' "(p. 103). Although Degas had spent much time working side by side with Manet he later expressed similar feelings. "He loved being alone. He felt 'that if one wants to be a serious artist and

create an original little niche for oneself, or at least ensure that one preserves the highest degree of innocence of character, one must constantly immerse oneself in solitude' "
(White, 1996, p. 23).

Motherwell understood that as the collaborative piece he was working on neared completion that what was needed could only be accomplished alone.

I became so absorbed that, though I wanted the painting process photographically documented, I asked my two assistants to leave. And then all went much more rapidly...how shall I say?...in the end, it is better to sacrifice total documentation for that focussed intensity that one can only feel when wholly alone. One tries to ignore social surroundings, companions, presences, but it's not possible. One has to feel only one's own presence. One's private vision, unsocialized and absolute"
(Motherwell, Bigelow & Scofield, 1980, p. 41).

The two artists, Chicago and Kulik seemed to simply burn out. They need a place of silence, away from the noise of collaboration to once again hear their own inner voice. "I think that this period of my life of participatory art-making is coming to a close; I just want to make art alone now" (Chicago, 1985, p. 211). " Kulik said, 'Finally, the dialogue in the duo became a thing in itself. A realization of a work, i.e., communicating to others your own idea, lost importance. I felt bad. I felt the need for a silent consideration more and more strongly, indeed self-surprises with my own non-verbal decisions, an immediate dialogue with a work so that the work gave me a hint what to do next be its own response' " (Michalak, 1999, p. 17).

La Danse (Matisse)

I have come to understand that stories of collaboration will not explain what collaboration is because collaboration *is* the stories. The stories are the very fabric and texture of collaboration. And the story will be different every time, whether it is performed and conducted by educators or artists, without structure or with structure. What is true about collaboration is that it is not static, not germane to one discipline, one area of our lives.

Collaboration is not something to move towards. We are already in collaboration. We need only incorporate it in our learning and working environments so that it is in balance with our individualism. As Bruner suggests, "issues of agency and collaboration need to be treated together - otherwise learning is made to seem either too solo or not solo enough" (Bruner, 1996, p. 92). As this became more evident, it became clearer to me that the understanding of collaboration comes through listening to the voices of the collaborators. The understanding may fall as bits and pieces or large chunks, but every piece that falls is vital and must be valued. No voice should be left unturned no matter how small. For the smallest voice may provide the deepest insight in a process that is entangled in voices.

Chapter III

Layers

Layer I - The Design

Through the approach of interpretive inquiry, I attempted to gain insight into the social practice of collaboration. The reflexive nature of interpretive inquiry provided a basis for gathering meaning from the participant's personal narrative and an avenue for a shared understanding of collaboration. A certain triangulation was ensured by gathering description through several means, i.e. interviews, personal observation, videotaping. Although the interpretation of the process was focussed on the participants' perspectives, my own insights, views and interpretations, as researcher, also influenced the inquiry. I too became part of the collaboration as organizer and by physically being present in the room throughout the exercise.

The research was designed to further any present knowledge and expectations of collaboration by introducing a non-verbal element to the process. How is the process and experience of collaboration further recognized or changed by the elimination of conversation or the augmentation of silence? By making the collaboration non-verbal I hoped to challenge our present understanding of collaboration. I hoped to "...[arouse] and [generate] a new and fresh understanding of something already understood" (Jardine, 1998, p. 40). The actions became open for interpretation as they became the conversation, the words. Interpretive inquiry became the method to harvest these perspectives and evoke meaning as they appeared in this particular interaction. Collaboration is without a

fixed formula and interpretive inquiry allowed for the open ended, cumulative approach needed to examine this type of process.

Layer II - The Participants

This study was conducted with the participation of five volunteers from a graduate class in the Fine Art program at the University of Calgary. All students were from the same program but not necessarily in the same year of the program. They were familiar with one another and had some knowledge of the artwork each was producing at that time. I informed the students that I was a graduate student and was seeking volunteers to participate in my research. I explained that they would be working in groups of two creating a piece of collaborative art followed by interviews on their experience of that process. This was accompanied by a written request for volunteers outlining the project in detail. The students were asked to sign up following the presentation or contact me later if they were interested in participating.

After the initial presentation and sign up, further contact was made with the student volunteers through email to inform them of who they would be grouped with, and to make arrangements for a convenient date, time and location for the exercise. I had randomly broken up the list of volunteers into groups of two. One student who signed up was unable to participate. One student participated in two of the groups. And one student approached me a few weeks later to sign up. Some of the participants, I discovered later, had already talked about or had collaborated on other art projects. None of the students I paired had collaborated with each other before.

Layer III - The Procedure

The participants were required to proceed through a videotaped, collaborative non-verbal exercise. They could select from art materials and/or animate or inanimate objects as the non-verbal medium of communication. These materials were used to produce artistically formatted statements. There were no special requests or materials specified by the participants.

Originally the exercise was designed so that each participant would take ten to thirty minutes every two to three days to produce a visual statement. The entire exercise would extend over a three to four week period. Also the participants were originally asked to keep a brief two to three page response journal of this process so that their immediate impressions would not be lost between visits to the site. Due to the time constraints of the participants' schedules, individuals were reluctant to participate and commit to an exercise that extended over a three to four week period. The suggestion on my part of condensing the exercise into a three to four hour session, followed immediately by the interviews was received much more readily. This made the difference for those willing to participate in the collaboration. This also eliminated the need for a journal to record responses. My impression was that it was spontaneous and remained fresh for the participants by not being stretched out over days and weeks.

Each group could select a topic for discussion before proceeding with the exercise if desired. I suggested some possible topics such as: an artist, a period of art, the process of collaboration, or a topic that they are presently interested in or researching for a class. They were free to discuss this openly amongst themselves as long as the discussion remained only on the selection of a topic. A topic for focus was not a high priority for the

students and only one group chose to do this. It was stressed to the participants that the goal was to make a statement artistically, to relay a message, not to produce a finished piece of art.

Due to the size of the room, there were some physical constraints. For example, the size of the base for the project was governed by the space available. No materials could be used that would damage or mar the space. I used a video camera to film all constructed images and the process. Audio recording on the videotape was edited out upon completion of the exercise. The participants had the option of signing off the right to be personally videotaped. All the participants agreed to be videotaped except one. This person never appears in any of the videotapes or stills. Some of the participants used their physical body as part of the art statement.

A board approximately four feet by four feet covered in white paper was provided as a base for the construction of the exercise. The participants were asked to bring any materials they required with them to complete their portion of the task. Several times they did return to their private studios for more materials. They were instructed to use inexpensive objects or art supplies that were easy to obtain. Unless specified, anything used in the construction could be altered, removed or damaged over the course of the exercise. I offered to provide assistance if there were any costs or difficulty obtaining materials.

Some guidelines were put in place before proceeding through the exercise. Some of these guidelines were negotiable between the participants and me. Others were set by me and were not negotiable.

Guidelines that were not negotiable:

- **The exercise must remain within the designated space.**
- **Each participant must enter the space five times to construct an image or make a statement that could be videotaped.**
- **Each participant would view the other's work before making a visual statement or modifying the space.**
- **There was not to be any discussion between the participants or between the participants and me concerning the concepts, design, or reason for the statements.**

Example of guidelines that were negotiable:

- **Each participant would enter the room separately.**
- **Lighting would remain constant.**
- **Participants would be free to add, remove, or alter any materials or objects placed by the previous participant.**
- **Videotaping would take place throughout the exercise unless the participants requested otherwise.**

The participants decided that leaving the room while the other person completed their portion of the task should be optional. Most remained in the space during the exercise except when they left to gather more art materials. Two of the participants were pleased that videotaping would take place while they were making the art statements and two of the participants said they didn't care. Only one participant requested not to be

videotaped while in the process of constructing their statements. In this case, only the completed statement was videotaped after each turn was completed.

Outline of procedure for exercise:

- First participant constructs an image on the blank workspace.**
- I videotape the first participant constructing the image and the finished statement, or in the case of the one participant, I videotape the image when the participant has finished.**
- Second participant views the image and modifies it abiding by negotiated guidelines.**
- I videotape the second participant constructing the image and the finished statement, or in the case of the one participant, I videotape the image when the participant has finished.**
- First participant views the image and modifies it abiding by negotiated guidelines.**
- This procedure continues until both participants have altered the workspace five times. This includes the first participant's initial construction.**

All participants were interviewed upon completion of the exercise. The participants preferred to be interviewed together and I agreed. This provided greater opportunity for me to further understand some of the dynamics between the participants. This was consistent with each group except one. One of the participants requested some interview time alone. As it turned out the collaborator in this group had to leave earlier

than expected. This resulted in a twenty minute grouped interview followed by the one participant being interviewed separately and the other participant following up through an email interview. It was agreed that I could arrange a second interview if I felt it was necessary. It was not.

Layer IV - The Instruments

An audio recorded interview, approximately one hour to one hour and a half long, was conducted with the participants. Interviews were directed towards the experience of the individual participant.

Questions I focussed on were:

- Was there a preference for working individually or with others on a project?
- Were there any feelings of competition with the other participant?
- What was their reaction to someone tampering with or altering their contribution?
- Did they feel their concepts were being enhanced or compromised?
- Most "projects" are structured to produce a finished, polished product.

Understanding that this was a process, a conversation, and would not produce a product, did this affect their sense of accomplishment?

- What did they consider helpful or hindering in the process?
- What was their response to working non-verbally?
- What response did they have to any guidelines being imposed upon them?

Pseudonyms were used throughout the final composition of the research regarding any reference to comments made by the participants during the interviews. The remaining data were gathered through the videotaping and personal observation of the collaborative exercise. I did request that the participants contact me with any further impressions and/or questions but no one did. All data were reviewed and related to how each participant experienced collaboration in a non-verbal framework.

Through the participants' activities and personal narratives, a new understanding of how human behaviour shapes and/or manipulates collaboration from within is possible. The illumination lies in the phenomenon that each mind holds its own perspective and the opportunity to snatch something of that perspective that might otherwise escape us. Narrative "...is played out on a dual landscape: a subjective one in the consciousness of the protagonists, and an 'objective' or 'real' one that the narrator informs the listener about..." (Bruner, 1996, p. 95). As the whole is integral to the part so is the part integral to the whole.

Because there was no discussion throughout the exercise the mode of communication amongst the participants was unconditioned and unfamiliar "...altering the common field of perception" (Abram, 1996, pg. 5), and stimulating a situation more conducive to reflection. Consequently, awareness of personal involvement was more pronounced and reflexive. Visual imagery stimulated responses that may otherwise have gone unacknowledged and/or unattended. Without the boundaries of written and spoken language, the participants were unable to suppress or manage difficulties and misunderstandings within the exercise in a manner they were accustomed to. This resulted in attention being redirected to interactions that may otherwise remain

unacknowledged. "What drives the story, what makes it worth telling, is Trouble: some misfit between Agents, Acts, Goals, Settings, and Means" (Bruner, 1996, p. 94).

By focussing on the process of collaboration, instead of the product, I was able to educe some of the subtleties of how personalities operate within the collaborative process. Levels of desire and commitment to the process vary and influence an outcome that can not be measured by a final product. It is the individual that moves in and out of the process of collaboration. I witnessed three very different collaborations and six individual experiences of collaboration that revealed much more and much less than I had anticipated. A broader, deeper understanding of how we experience and view collaboration may help us re-evaluate its value in relation to the individual rather than attaching our conclusions to an outcome or product.

Chapter IV

How to Paint

Some individuals are receptive to collaborative projects, others skeptical. In my search for volunteers for this project, there were those that immediately shied away from participating and those who did not hesitate to volunteer. One participant felt that those that did not rise to the occasion actually did themselves a disservice. "I could have told you who was going to volunteer and who wasn't....That's really bad because look what they missed" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000). What is it exactly that they did miss, if anything? Those that did choose to participate, what did they gain or hope to accomplish? What is there to gather and learn from such ventures? What takes place in the midst of collaboration that gives meaning to the experience?

Out of the three collaborative exercises only one group experienced the Third Mind, or as the participants termed it, "It was like a zone. I don't know. We hit the zone" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000). This is not to say that the other collaborations were unsuccessful or unproductive but it was obvious that they did not attain the same feeling of accomplishment. The group that experienced the Third Mind recognized an opening in the exercise, an invitation to explore and birth a product that surpassed their individual contributions. Presented with an opportunity, they took deliberate steps not to by-pass but to relinquish to the unpredictability and proceed through it. "I think it was almost a gesture of...willing to participate because it wasn't so detached objective and cold in a sense...and opened some sort of door that we could go through and take the work" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

Perhaps what those that did not participate missed was not the opportunity to simply lay their work side by side with others but the *opportunity* to lay their work beside another's and experience a synthesis that transforms the experience into something *else*. They missed the *possibility* of opening to something *other*, to accomplish what they could not accomplish alone. The *chance* to create something greater than the individual parts, to "build bigger sand castles" (Bruffee, 1995). The *chance* to experience the Third Mind.

Stretching the Canvas

Collaboration does not organize itself spontaneously (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). Respect must be given to the guidelines designed for any collaboration. There are many considerations that need to be attended to, to bring the event together and provide passage through the project. But the organization does not determine the experience of the passage. We are mistaken to think that the mere organization of collaboration, following the soundest situational theory, ensures anything. We can only set the stage. The actual passage itself can never be predetermined.

The collaborative online class I participated in was well organized by professional educators. However, there were components that immediately made me uncomfortable. I felt disconnected from the other participants. I had no history of them, no image and no frame of reference from which to steady myself. The online communication itself was overwhelming to me with the sheer number of postings and people drifting in and out. I could not find a focus, and at no point felt reassured it would find me. The tenuousness I experienced is not to be considered representative of the experiences of the other participants. Neither can I say that it was the responsibility of the organizers to somehow

accommodate my feelings of disassociation. What I do believe is that an element of unpredictability is germane to any collaboration.

Constructing my own collaboration was far more comfortable. It would happen within a context that I was familiar with, with people I would have contact with face to face. Just as I am sure the organizers of the online collaboration felt all was in place that could be, walking into my research exercises I felt organized and prepared. I had yet to come face to face with what I was unprepared for. As prepared as I believed I was, gaps began to appear.

Paint or Pastels?

I was ill prepared for the participants' comments on their uncertainty, and what may liberally be regarded as a lack of concern, as to what might happen in the exercises and what to expect. "Because this wasn't preplanned..."(Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000). "I hadn't put much thought. I had the materials I had collected from last time so I just kind of grabbed those and then as it progressed I was going up and getting materials" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May 2000). These statements were reflective of a blanket position held by most of the participants towards any preparatory thought or effort on their part.

"It was also quite curious that you actually did have a video camera here....I didn't know if you were going to be in the room or outside the room or at the other end of the university. I had no idea what your involvement was in this room" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I didn't know if there were going to be supplies in here so we also had to deal with that" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"Yeah and I didn't know if...if accumulation was necessarily a part of the exercise" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

Conversely, I had done much preplanning and admittedly was somewhat taken aback by these comments. I surmised that the preplanning was a statement on the fact that little if any discourse preceded the exercise. The unspoken question that seemed to arise was, how can one preplan if there is no discussion? There seemed to be a gap between preparation and discussion, as if one was indubitably linked to the other. Yet not once was I approached, phoned, or emailed for any requests for materials or information other than time and place.

Only one participant indicated having any thoughts about the project before the actual day. "There are some marks that I planned ahead of time. Like on our way back here I just stopped in the wood shop and grabbed a piece of wood I could make into a cross and I don't know at what point before hand I thought I'm going to have to put a cross...Janson¹ and artistry and the cross..."(Vincent, Interview, April, 25 2000).

I felt neglectful. I had not realized that there was any miscommunication as to what would take place. As concerned as I was about a lack of clarity, the participants appeared unconcerned. Not knowing seemed to be more of a curiosity than a problem.

1 H. W. Janson is the author of an art history text used in the study of art in universities and colleges. Later, in the art piece, when the participants referred to Janson they spelt the name as "Janzen" (see p. 80).

Vase of Flowers or a Still Life.

I was also puzzled by the participants' conceptions of collaboration. Although I was not asking them to define collaboration, it became obvious that there was contradiction and confusion surrounding the word. Several versions of collaboration emerged along with why or why not this exercise possibly fell into those categories.

"Because this was really just sort of a reaction....if we had to discuss it and plan it out first...that's where I think the real essence of collaboration really starts to come to the forefront" (Eva, Interview, April 27 2000).

"I don't know if collaboration would be the right word because it looks like [his] piece with my pieces added to it" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"I think also that it's not enough time. To do this just once is such an isolated incident but it doesn't actually get into the stream of what you're doing. If we were to do this on a fairly regular basis I think that would start to have influence on what I was doing in my studio..." (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"I prefer the documentation of an event that occurred or even an activity might be a more appropriate word for me. This is a test that [Vincent] and I carried out and you Linda documented that event--I said event--that activity" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

One participant believed that because the collaboration was constructed for the specific purpose of a study "that weakened the process...it was '*set up*' [italics added] and not occurring within a '*real*' [italics added] situation" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May 2000).

The participants were reluctant to label the exercise as being a *real* collaboration. Concurrently, some of the participants could not perceive collaboration as a place where *real* work occurs. Real goals, real work is carried on outside of collaboration.

"I have neither been invited nor have sought out collaboration willingly. I have no preference for either. It has always been my practice as an artist to work individually" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May 2000).

"I've done some collaborative work before and there have been times when it's been wonderful and I've really enjoyed it and there are other times where I have this particular goal in mind and then I'll decide I prefer to work individually" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"If there was something I saw that I really wanted to capitalize on I could go away and do that separately on my own....So what happens here and what I take away from it are two separate issues..." (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

To further the contradiction I am perplexed by how they can differentiate between what is and is not a collaboration and in the same voice reduce *every* activity to a collaboration.

"It's the same with other artists. Like art history, you're looking in magazines or whatever and you find ideas do filter in through materials or whatever. So in a sense it's always a collaborative process because you're always looking at other artists' work" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"You can't not be influenced that's for sure. It can't not happen" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"I use so many objects out in the world, I find going out everyday is a huge collaborative process because it's always just kind of taking notice of materials and deciding if you can bring them into the studio" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

Listening to the participants, collaboration begins to read like a misguided inductive study. Collaboration is everywhere. This exercise is part of everywhere. This exercise is not a real collaboration because it is set up. Therefore, collaboration is not real because it is part of everywhere, as are set up exercises.

Consequently, collaboration becomes intangible. I gathered that if the exercise had been girded in a definitive goal or product, or conducted for a school assignment, that it would have reinforced a sense of substance and purpose. The continual modification of collaboration by the participants, however, leads me to believe that the word collaboration is what becomes intangible rather than the activity. The complexity of collaboration has been minimized to something manageable that can be dismissed if desired. However, in doing so the participant's contribution and commitment also becomes minimized and dismissed. "and I think the whole act of collaboration has forced you not to be precious....That's one of the reasons I've done collaboration in the past....It's just not to hold on to things so much" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

The contradictions bring to light how difficult it is to explicate collaboration. Yet, is the description so vague that we have the flexibility and leeway to manipulate, circumvent, and even discredit it as collaboration when it suits us? How is it that there is some obscure, transient standard that must be met for collaboration to live up to its name?

Making the first mark.

Visual artists often work alone. They constantly face blank canvases, sheets of paper, smooth metal plates or slabs of clay as yet untouched by the artist's hand. Then a mark is made. The pencil, the hammer, the engraver connects with the waiting material. A tone is set. Whatever occurs from this point on will somehow be influenced by that first mark.

Artists carry out this action time and time again, repeating it so often, alone, in their studios, that it may be a daily occurrence. From my own artistic experience, I have felt the sensation of making that first mark, the sense of anticipation, even invasion of the prepared, unmarked, surfaces. But, as with most artists, it is a familiar act, a process generally met with eagerness to see what will unfold under the hand. Any hesitation is often likened more to how and if the piece will meet the imagination than trepidation over beginning.

The memory of my own experience of making first marks caused me to be unprepared for the hesitation exhibited by the participants. This disinclination arose even with the group that had briefly discussed and settled on a topic for their collaboration. My original notion that a topic would provide participants with a focus and consequently greater ease moving into the collaboration did not have the effect I had anticipated.

The discussion and the placing of the first mark stretched over several phases. It began with a polite back and forth dialectic over the offering up of the position. None of the participants eagerly stepped forward. In one case, it was settled by one participant leaving to retrieve materials, so the other went ahead. All the participants except one expressed the perceived difficulty and apprehension about taking the first turn.

"The first mark is really hard" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"I mean it was great that you laid down the first mark because I don't know if I could have" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"Actually it was harder to make the first mark. The second mark is always easier than the first mark" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"Well I guess I was a bit relieved that [they] ended up making the first mark because I'm a really poor decision maker and I don't like to have control over things like that generally" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"It didn't matter to me if I was first or second in making a mark at the beginning. The process is not unlike the ebb and flow of the tide; you choose to either take control or stand back and watch the events unfold" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May 2000).

Two of the participants related the difficulty to needing time to warm up to the process. "I'm very much a planner, so to just do stuff...to come at it cold, that was the other thing too. To come in first thing in the morning - okay do something" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000)." ...because I wasn't comfortable laying down the first mark and I think that's why I had to warm up..." (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

By separating the collaboration into turns, one person became visibly responsible for laying the ground for the collaboration. A decision had to be made quickly as to who would carry that out. If I had implemented a process to determine who would make the first mark before entering the collaboration, the apprehension may have been somewhat alleviated. No one foresaw this, including me.

With no discussion or verbal support the one chosen was alone in his or her vision as to how to begin. How to proceed belonged solely to them, to take space, to leave space, to paint, draw, sculpt. The decision was his or hers alone to make but would become the foundation for what was to come.

"At different times you may choose to approach it more aggressively and obliterate what is there or you may choose to make only a tiny mark on the surface. The process tells you more about the participants and art practice than it does about the concept of collaboration" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May 2000).

"That's why I started with something I already knew..." (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"My first mark might just have been a picture of the white..." (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I would do a small mark or do something but leave a lot of space....I'm the type of person that I'm going to put this here, is that okay with you? If I were making my mark first it would have been like this little section with lots of space" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

Once the participants informed the space, all other marks became a reaction or response to the first mark and how it had been presented. In fact, the very first mark is the only time that a participant was not reacting. Once the first mark was made the collaboration turned to that of action, reaction.

"I'm not sure what I reacted to. If I reacted to the mark or I reacted to watching [Marcel]. You know I'm not sure....or if I was somewhat informed by the

action...of course the piece always plays a role" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"It's just like action, reaction, action, reaction. So it became sort of...at first for me a bit of a warm up...and then it was quite simply for me this action, reaction bit which made it very easy to get into a zone if you can allow me to say that" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

Adding Sequins

Our biases, prejudices, and expectations ease and stretch like elastic bands, never completely free from what we have witnessed before. They are stored, as flickers and fires that can flare at any moment or keep us warm. The participants brought to this study their own compilation of biases, prejudices and expectations. They had already witnessed the individuals they were about to collaborate with as artists, colleagues, friends, and opponents. They had already observed the artistry and composition of each other. There was already a memory, a history, a personal experience, a mixed relationship composed over time.

The participants expected certain characteristics to surface once again and were not surprised when they did. They spoke of these met expectations with a degree of pleasure. As if they had been reassured of something, as if a craving had been satisfied.

"When [Marcel]...spray painted...I knew what he was going to do ahead of time. I was almost preparing for that to happen...And I knew [Marcel] was going to take white paint and paint over everything I just knew it" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"I had certain expectations because I know [Vincent] so well. I was expecting him to pierce. I was at least hoping he would and it didn't surprise me at all to see the fish and the hooks and the cross and things like that and Janson" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I thought, here's Vincent being all brutal..." (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

In their search for familiarity the participants sought and found components that they believed they jointly possessed such as a shared commonality of artistic choice. They made associations, created links. They reinforced a sense of security based on a perceived homogeneity of style and method of working.

"We do have a similar way of working and tend to work things a lot whereas I think if you put some people together it wouldn't necessarily work that way. Their styles would be too different or their personalities would be too different or something...I think in terms of our art technique and the way that we approach things. We're very compatible that way" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"...'cause again we're both sculptors and we both use objects in our work so there are a lot of things in common" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"With someone else perhaps who I'm not as close with, or perhaps worked quite differently from me, say a formalist painter or something then I really don't know how I would have responded" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I mean because if I was doing this with a pointillist painter I'm sure I would bring my razorblade in" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

But their personalities had not always been compatible. "We had issues around control..." (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000)). And their styles were not necessarily the

same. "What is quite odd is that [Marcel] and I, our work itself isn't very similar at all..." (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

If what they presupposed was somewhat distorted, what was there to acquire from reinforcing expectations and creating a sense of homogeneity in the mind's eye? Did the belief that expectations would be met, that everyone would remain in character, provide a necessary grounding or focal point for the participants. Did they seek a place to rest in knowing that the experience would be shared and they would not be left responsible or to flounder alone in collaboration?

The level of comfort they were seeking, however, may have been founded not on familiarity of action and method but on a basic underlying trust in their peers' capabilities. A trust or sense of homogeneity that would not be present if collaborating with a stranger or someone they felt they were not compatible with. Such a situation would be more suspect and may need to be challenged.

"I really admire [her] work and I don't admire everyone's work." "I kind of trust [her] artistically...that also brings in a trust issue in collaboration. I sort of trusted her marks, whereas I don't think I would have trusted everyone's marks and I would have felt differently about the process and coming in I might have been a little more suspicious" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"Perhaps I'd try to assert myself a lot more if I was doing this with a stranger" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"Well that would have completely changed things 'cause I had certain expectations. The person definitely plays a major role in how I'm going to act in

this collaboration." "I might have just brought in my white paint with a paint roller" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"Well there are probably a few people that I would have difficulty doing this collaboration with and then that sense of fear, but that again has nothing to do with the process but the personal history" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

It would be different with a stranger. It would possibly be more uncomfortable, the expectations vague or unknown. But this collaboration was not carried out with strangers. It was carried out with an inception of trust formulated on expectations that could be confirmed. During the exercise however, while many expectations were confirmed, even more were broken. And they were broken *because* of the very expectations the participants already held of each other. They now bore witness to *something else* based on a rudimentary assumption of what they already knew. The result of the broken expectations was not fear, disquietude, or distance, but contrarily anticipation and stimulation. Their initial perceptions were satisfied, verified, altered and aroused. They met the willingness to risk participating that drew them to the collaboration, by breaking old patterns and consequently expectations. What the participants could expect from one another was that they would surpass the expectations.

"...and that's like when she covered the paper at first. At the same time there was one part of me that was taken aback" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"When you turned it over and started going on the back I thought, oh yeah, good. I thought, I didn't think of that" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May 2000).

"So half of what I expected was that I would make a mark and [Marcel would] take a picture, then I would have to make another mark, then [Marcel] would take

a picture....so I was pleasantly surprised when that didn't happen" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"...and [Marcel] was expecting me to pierce actually. But I sure wasn't expecting him to at all." "It didn't make myself queasy at all when I wanted to do it, but when [Marcel] started I was just, whoa" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

" Oh no what's he going to do. And I didn't know what he was going to do with [the honey] and I just love it. I think that's wonderful" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"What is interesting is we're both leaving this room and I have to admit whenever [Vincent] would leave I'd be like what's [Vincent] getting, what's he going to do. I had no clue." (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

The participants did not only witness their peers breaking expectations, they witnessed themselves breaking their own expectations.

"But all of a sudden I just found myself....Here I am getting my hands dirty. And that's the big joke in the department because I don't like to get dirty and the next thing you know my hands are in varnish or whatever you call it, stain, and I'm getting into it that way." "I didn't expect to get my hands dirty and participate as I did" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"My work is actually very hard edged and so it's not something you normally see in my work" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

They were out of character. They were building upon expectations that were becoming unrecognizable. Each step shaped the next as the participants responded and reacted until they walked away with renewed expectations, biases, and prejudices,

generations away from their original beliefs. The question that arises is what was the source of their homogeneity?

Colouring Within the Lines

Parameters or boundaries are a condition of any exercise, either self-determined or set by another. None of the participants expressed difficulty with the guidelines I had prepared. In fact, their response towards them was neutral. They did not view them as an impediment to the process but as a reasonable and valid component of collaboration. Their only requests were that they be free to enter or leave the room whenever they wished and to be interviewed together. Only one participant felt everyone would be more honest if interviewed alone.

"Parameters aren't always wrong or bad either so that's why having parameters can play a definite role in getting it done. We weren't going and deciding on our own to collaborate...fulfilling a promise to you rather, not so much to each other."

"...otherwise we could have said let's not do this today let's do this tomorrow"

(Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I don't know if it's good or bad it's just different. It wasn't negative, it wasn't positive it was just different. I mean, I guess in the situation, in your situation you have to keep all the factors the same in every situation so I understood that that was the main reason why it was. But I wouldn't say it was either good or bad"

(Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"Laying down those parameters just quite simply is just some framework to begin with anyway. So we'll meet here at this time and then alright let's see what happens and okay let's make six moves" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I don't mind [boundaries] because it gives you something to work with" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

Scribbling outside the lines.

My parameters, I believe, were fairly loose and easy to work within. More than encountering resistance or opposition to the boundaries, what became interesting was the comments the participants broached on what they *could have done*. Sometimes, they came with a sense of mischief and rebellion and other times from the creative artistic nature that calls upon artists to consider all the angles.

"I thought about doing a couple of things before hand to just to shake up [Eva's] world. I actually thought about making my first mark by taking off my underwear, just to sort of shake it up" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"But then you know it's about pushing the boundary, and it's about pushing the rule makers boundary as well. For me that's about...kind of always have to push to force people who are making the rules to question the rules. I think that's a big part of it" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"What happens if I need to do more and I mean obviously here we needed to make another mark therefore it should be done. I mean I think parameters are set to be broken too in a sense" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"One of my favourite things is that if someone gives you a boundary let's see how far it will stretch. I can stay to the letter of the law but I can skirt all the way around a piece..." (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

For most artists it is important to push boundaries, to experiment and evolve through the act of stretching and pulling of materials, concepts, and space. I gathered from the participants' statements that more than feeling the need to act upon pushing boundaries, they wanted to express that they were not powerless to do so at anytime. They made it clear that they played an active role and that rules were not enough to control how the collaboration would unfold if they chose to challenge or rebel. In doing so, I became the obvious third party, the enforcer, the authority against whom the boundaries must be pushed.

"We could have subverted it a bunch more too for you. We could have made it last for a lot--we could have taken a lot longer making our marks you know that's also really interesting. I don't know what that would have done to it if I had said okay now I'm going to go to my studio and think about it for an hour before I'm going to make another mark" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I mean you could leave and we could keep working on it. So it's just like school, you work within those parameters. Only within the rule makers' minds do we have to remain within those parameters. Outside the view of the rule maker we can quite easily step outside and beyond what's accepted" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

Sharing chartreuse.

Once into the collaboration the participants did not so much push the parameters as manipulate them. I had determined that each participant would take five turns each, respectively. Although this was a non-negotiable guideline, the group that experienced the Third Mind continued for six turns each. By the third or fourth turns, we had all grown captivated by how the piece was progressing. The participants had lost track and I reminded them that they were on their fourth turn. Having already drawn their attention to the timing, when they started on a sixth turn I continued to film sensing that they would continue creating regardless of my instructions. There was a feeling that somehow one more turn each would bring the piece to a stage of completion.

While I believed I was setting a non-negotiable parameter, the participants, when inconvenienced, did not totally disregard the parameter but subtly readjusted it. Five turns was not a difficulty until it needed to be rewritten to encompass a range of *about* five turns. There was no sense of disrespect for the parameters, it was simply a matter of needing another turn. Totally immersed, they had lost count and were not even sure how many turns they had already taken. They had discovered the essence of their collaboration, they had hit the zone, and this took precedence for the moment over the parameters. The number of turns became only a guide not a rule.

"The process once I realized it--five steps--then I'm not sure how that changed it but it changed it" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"And again laying down those parameters you know just quite simply is just some framework to begin with anyway. So we'll meet here at this time and then alright

let's see what happens and okay let's make six moves" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

For another group, there was the sense that the piece had reached a stage of completion after just four turns each. This exercise did not carry the flow or contain the essence of the previous piece, yet the participants carried on with a fifth turn not taking the same liberty to abide by their intuition as the other group had. Without the piece taking on a life of its own and playing a part in the decision-making, the participants fell back on the parameters for guidance. The lack of attachment to the piece at this stage is clarified when one participant refers to a turn as *making a change* to the piece rather than in any way *developing* the piece. "Well I did kind of wonder if we got to the end of four times each, if it felt complete, whether we were obliged to make any changes to it, to continue on with it" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

This statement also suggests that it would be my responsibility to make the decision as to whether or not they should or were obliged to continue. It is interesting to me that this participant thought I could in any way make them continue. Research ethics make the provision for participants to withdraw at any time. I could have reminded them of their agreement to participate for five turns each but had to rely completely on their good will to carry out the action.

Which way is up?

For a working space, I had laid down a four by four-foot board covered in white paper and believed that this would be used as the base for the art. I had also covered the floor with white paper to avoid any damage to the floor. Although it was not my

intention, the board was less defined because of the paper on the floor. None of the groups used the four by four-foot dimensions of the board for the exercise. Instead, they created their own space within the space. They employed the board as an area upon which to construct a piece but not to demarcate it. They created their own dimensions. One group laid down a piece of paper to work on, another a carved board, another erected an undefined three-dimensional shape.

The construct of the piece, however, was influenced by the fact that I had designated the working space on the floor. Going into the collaboration, I did not know the mediums that the participants worked in and they did not question how the working area would be decided upon. For instance, a different situation would have been created if I had erected an easel with a primed canvas. This would have greatly altered how the participants, such as the sculptors, approached and felt about the collaboration.

A Dab of Saturated Colour

A distribution of power begins to evolve within any group situation. There are some individuals that assume power, others that believe is held over them, and a myriad of relationships in between. Collaboration is often in a state of flux sometimes settling, other times oscillating throughout the project depending on the needs of the collaboration and the participants involved. This is the inherent nature of collaboration. Positions of power perceived by the participants or the organizer may or may not be accurate yet dictate responses and actions that can disrupt, aggravate, ease, broaden or confine the process.

Holding the brush.

Often, the person in charge is deemed the authority figure and holds the power. This is often incumbent on the fact that the person in charge also dispenses the knowledge. In this case, as that person in charge, I was not the keeper of the knowledge. On the contrary, I was relying heavily on the participants to have the knowledge and confidence to see the exercises through. I saw my own position within the collaboration as that of organizer and researcher. I arranged equipment and space, and set negotiable and non-negotiable procedural guidelines. I had a disparate role from the participants but not a greater one. I was at times silent but not imperceptible. I walked around with my camera, as unobtrusively as possible, hanging over, under and around the participants while they worked. They too moved freely in and out of the space. We all had equal roles to fulfil, theirs as artists, mine as recorder, and did so. Did this make me an authority figure, an equal partner, or an outsider? More importantly how did the participants perceive me?

"So I don't have much trouble calling it a performance and I would even start to wonder if I could call you one of the performers within the performance..."

(Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I see this camera being set up and so I mean that does throw me into a different zone....It does change the way I act and how I present myself in a certain way. I mean I'm aware that there's a camera...I mean I guess in a sense it's...I am as an individual within myself performing when there's a camera around. It's depends on who's eyes. It doesn't necessarily have to be a camera it can be just someone in a room. And what if somebody else came into the room during this act being

carried out. How would I respond to that? Respond to this passer-by who came in" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000)?

"I think what really comes into question right now is what we made...or did we make a video or did we do a performance for you?...And more importantly how much are we trying to impress you. Because I mean we're the collaborators and you're the audience and that's where performance is different because performance, objects, object, artist, viewer, that's where they are all separate, performer, artist, audience become part of this whole mesh that's all one thing together" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"Well it was interesting for me because I was very unaware of you while I was performing my actions and to be honest you may not have been in the room for all I know. I just remember doing some stuff and ripping pieces and I saw some movement around me but it was just like do my thing" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"But once the act was over and I was aware of you I would do an action and then step back and then was really aware actually" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

Acrylic and oil.

Entering the research project, I believe there was equality amongst the participants. Any position of power assumed was not a result of any visible advantage or disadvantage that one participant held over another. Any distribution of power outside the project was unknown to me.

What I witnessed during the exercises were common acts of creating art such as placing, removing, layering, scraping, adding, erasing. These are acts present in art making by an individual artist and were rightly repeated in the art created in the collaboration. Within collaboration however, such acts may infringe upon and alter the other participants' contributions. How this is received and interpreted between them is brought into question.

Separating the participants' marks into individual turns subdued any visible struggles over personally demarcated boundaries. Artists are taught to be conscious of working an entire piece of art. Consequently, few areas were left unaffected. It was open territory. The whole piece became the property of the participant taking his or her turn. The other participant could not interrupt or interfere. They were left to wait patiently, or impatiently, and observe for an unspecified time until the turn was completed.

The most visible struggles that arose within the collaboration between the participants centered on control over content and space. How they dealt with these 'altercations' varied. At times, they battled them out, others required some form of compromise or agreement and still others were settled by one person finding an alternate action and subverting any obvious difficulty. The discord played out inside the piece of art over many turns, unresolved interactions bleeding into one another.

"I was talking to [Vincent] earlier and Janson kept coming up and I'm thinking to myself oh let's not get into art history and Janson and all this. So let's get rid of that J A N. White over that so we've got Zen. Okay that's a loaded word to have here and so I was sort of battling against that sort of content that was continually being injected into the piece" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

In this situation, after much wrestling with the construction and deconstruction of the word 'Janzen' it eventually found its place in the collaboration. But it was not accepted quietly. It was the struggle that created a context for it. The actual struggle and acceptance of the word were inseparable. 'Janzen' evolved throughout the working art. As the struggle persisted the word grew more and more potent. The tension did not produce stagnation but movement and meaning. From the ruins and fragments left of the word a window was created. Through that window the participant who originally wanted 'Janzen' eliminated came to see its importance.

"I mean you've got to really wonder when it says Jesus, 'Janzen' and Zen on a piece. It's like really, a really odd three words to put together in a piece" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"And when I saw the bible that made a lot of sense to what was going on. Because I mean the imagery in the piece--it's just so loaded 'cause the fish appears in the bible so many times, Janson's art history bible, so there's a lot going on there and in terms of piercing things like that" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"Yeah and in the end I did make the last mark with Jesus but at that point...it [seemed] that 'Janzen' should fit and should be here" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

In another group situation, the dynamics were not nearly as powerful and the participants seemed to render compromise as a reasonable solution.

"It was pretty hard when the fetal stuff occurred. And at first I tried to subvert it a little bit but then it seemed like I shifted and decided to go with it" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"Well as soon as you make that body cavity it's really hard not to. That just pushed me even more in that direction cause actually I don't consider those little embryos actually about babies" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"In a sense I compromised. I'm not sure that I want it to be about babies and I can't look at it without thinking about that" (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

Although only one participant made reference to compromising on content, the other participant also compromised, by acquiescing and somehow believing that they were powerless to alter the contributions of the other. "You know you didn't really have any chance to veto say what [Vincent] was doing, right? Whereas the thing is if we had discussed it and planned it out first" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000). Compromise seemed acceptable to both participants.

A weakened commitment to the content, however, created a laxness that in turn caused little if any stimuli to be injected into the art piece. The piece displayed limited tension, competition, or challenge. This mirrored how the participants viewed their own working relationship.

"I think part of the reason why I don't feel particularly competitive with [Vincent] is because he has his area of work and I have my area of work and there's room for both of them" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

"But then that's the dynamic of the people too you know. I don't think [Eva] and I are very competitive..." (Vincent, Interview, April 27, 2000).

This exercise did not resonate with the same invigorating power as the previous exercise and was ultimately reflected in the comments and the final product.

Cut and paste.

In another group, a difficulty arose around boundaries within the space when the entire piece was covered with the first mark. An aggressive, challenging, even provocative act. "The process is not unlike the ebb and flow of the tide; you choose to either take control or stand back and watch the events unfold" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May 2000). Was this an act of control? "Well I thought that at first this was a control thing...but I also think it is about the way [Georges] does work" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

Regardless of whether it was or wasn't an act of control, it was integral at that moment for the other participant to suspend judgement and rise to the challenge of affirming a place in the collaboration. Faced with this apparent difficulty, I was curious as to the how she would manage to infuse her contribution into the thick foundational layer governing the art piece. Interestingly, rather than adding the participant used the act of removing and consequently claimed a space of her own.

"At the same time of course that layer of the first layer really informed the way the piece went, but for me that was in a positive way. I actually liked the way that that affected it, but it was interesting" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"Then I went into it. So then my next mark was to scrape some away or take some away and I actually wrote scratched in--probably couldn't even see it--fill, empty....Then we kept on playing with that..." (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

Even more interesting was how the participant found extra space later by turning the paper over and using the back. She did not compromise but claimed, a significant symbol of empowerment, which proved to be an inspiration to both participants. "Yeah

that's funny because when you turned it over and started going on the back I thought, oh yeah good. I thought, I didn't think of that..." (Georges, Interview, April/May, 2000).

How a difficulty is addressed and attended to is as important as how it is finally presented. By not yielding to or being intimidated by that which confronted them, both the participants, the piece of art, and the collaboration benefited and a new sense of appreciation was realized.

"I think I got more of an appreciation for [Georges] and this whole process actually. I learnt something about [them] and that was good..." (Mary Interview, May 26, 2000).

"Depending on how you go into it or how much you prepare yourself for it is this going to be about control or is this going to be about acquiescing control and learning" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May, 2000).

Writing a Painting

Words as communication become the context for many struggles arising over power and control. Removing the words and making the exercise non-verbal (no written or spoken communication throughout the exercise) rearranged the locus of control. Unable to write or talk the participants were subjugated to either suspending their difficulties or sublimating them through the work of art. Consequently the distribution of power between the participants played itself out differently. The battles being lost or won were silent ones. Verbal feedback to support or direct their movements was not heard. The participants were freed from being praised, questioned or reprimanded for their actions. They could not verbally dictate nor be dictated to. Forced to become solely

responsible for nurturing and expressing their own contribution was seen as a liberation by the participants, not a burden.

"But the fact that we couldn't talk about it also played a huge role in that it freed me up because I didn't have to give a shit about whether [he] would like my next mark or not. It was interesting that way. You know I just made my next mark and he had to deal with it and that was pretty interesting too" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"It's almost like we're not using words or language. I mean it forces us I think as collaborators to sort of...it's almost like over coming a barrier in a sense 'cause we don't have to worry about, okay well what do you mean by doing this or what do you mean by doing that. It's just like action, reaction, action, reaction. So it became sort of...at first for me a bit of a warm up...and then it was quite simply for me this action, reaction bit which made it very easy to get into a zone if you can allow me to say that. I don't know what kind of zone it is....It could be some sort of head zone or spiritual zone or something like that" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"The non-verbal aspect of the collaboration made it easier to accept what the other chose to do on the surface of the paper" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May, 2000).

"I don't want to ever push myself on anyone.... But this way it got away from all that. I felt at that point I was here to do whatever I wanted" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

"It's another form of communication.... Sometimes you can interact with people in a conventional way as I have with [them] and it's not really the most positive. You can't really communicate. You use language but there's all this difficulty. And you can use no words. You communicate in another form and it's a lot more positive and that's how I felt" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

Besides becoming liberated the collaboration grew in excitement and spontaneity.

"I was just reacting to what [Vincent] did... I hadn't really predetermined to any great degree what I would be doing until [my turn]. Whoa okay. I'll grab this."

(Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000)

"Is that what you want though? Do you really want to think about it or not think about it?" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000)

"I kind of liked the fact that we couldn't talk about it because it made it that much more interesting exciting more spontaneous... I just think we had a really big surprise each time. It really kept you on your toes, more interesting and I'd go and come back and there would be something else on it and it was fun" (Mary,

Interview, May 26, 2000)

One participant, however, expressed her difficulty at the onset with not being able to talk. "That's what actually kind of made it difficult for me to start because I'm a very verbal person and everything comes out..." (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

There was no preliminary discussion of design, no clarification of what shape the art piece should accrue. They did not know what to expect or what would be expected of them. This in turn created spontaneity and anticipation. The participants were left in unpredictability, not knowing from one moment to the next what would be presented,

unable to predict the other participant's actions and at times barely able to predict their own. This style of collaborative process produces new variables and exposes how stimulating, transient, mutable, restless and surprising collaboration can be.

Gallery Hanging

The positive and negative space in art manifested in the participants as they constructed and deconstructed, forever building, layering, creating texture. As the work of art was built, so did the participants build new silent relationships based on different premises. Something changed, something was achieved simply *because* they were willing to enter into collaboration.

All the participants responded to an uncommon situation, but only some considered the experience enlightening. The dislodging and repositioning of common acts, a recomposition of the creative energy, allowed for the possibility of the opening of new actions and new events. "I think it was fairly successful for us as a collaborative piece." "You communicate in another form and it's a lot more positive and that's how I felt" (Mary, Interview, May 26, 2000).

For some of the participants, this exercise did not seem to provide anything more than participation in an interesting collaborative event. They saw value in the activity but I question whether it added anything to what they already feel they can accomplish alone.

"It was interesting just to see what resulted from the process but I would only say it as a process. The purpose behind embarking on a collaborative project affects how one approaches it" (Georges, Interview, Email, April/May, 2000).

"Well it was interesting to watch [Vincent] work because mine is much more planned out. I'm always interested in seeing people that work more expressively and it's something that I'm trying to actually start to try and explore in my own work." "I think eventually it'll make me push past boundaries but not now because I also found the fact that - even though it was interesting to work with the materials that we brought in I think that that kept us in our old habits" (Eva, Interview, April 27, 2000).

Two of the participants however, experienced the Third Mind and created what they would not, or even possibly could not, have created on their own. They reached beyond what was familiar and common and risked searching in unpredictable territory.

"No not at all hey. I would have likely done something with Janson a lot more literal. This way it's a little more elusive" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"No not at all, I wouldn't do this" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"What I really appreciated about being able to come together with [Vincent]...I got to share an experience with him that I would have never shared or I never would have experienced on my own" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

Many have experienced the Third Mind, 'hitting the zone'. It is not an isolated experience. It is however, an experience that is felt more than described. Perhaps for that reason, rather than my words it is best left in the words of those that did experience it.

"We have to digest it a little bit. I'm not sure what even--[Marcel] and I just touched upon this earlier. The whole thing seemed a little ritualistic. Makes it a really interesting topic for me the whole idea of ritual and mark making and if you're by yourself it's maybe less ritualistic" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"It shifted for me when [he] actually put down [his] camera and actually went and stuck [his] fingers in some paint and ... started making marks and I knew it was going to be a different experience. And I think we hit the zone before we actually pierced" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"It went to a couple of places that I didn't feel it would go" "When [Marcel] pierced this morning and he went some place he's never gone before..." (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"I think right now I'm struggling to just understand what happened this morning"

"And I'm the same" (Marcel, Interview, April 25, 2000).

"So we thank you. So I thank you for the experience" (Vincent, Interview, April 25, 2000).

Chapter V

Collaborative Art

Collaboration, like art, is a process. It begins with an idea, a vision. How it will end is subject to how it proceeds. How the individuals involved experience and respond to the process will shape it. Collaboration, maybe paradoxically, is intensely individualistic and intensely particular. It resides in the here and now. By its very construct of new time, place and/or participants, it will not and can not be duplicated. Educators who want to foster learning through collaboration must therefore find direction not in a list of similarities but an acknowledgement of the unique differences that will arise in each collaboration. I can only hope to bring illumination to the collaborative process through sharing my own expectations that were broken several times over and my understanding as to why they will continue to be broken with each new collaboration.

View the CDROM. Watch the participants. Learn by acknowledging their individuality and how their individual contributions build the collaborations. Recognize that the collaborations have their own presence and make their own contributions. It is the viewing of collaborations in art, collaborations in process. Collaboration in action offers insight not into what collaboration is, but the potential of what collaboration can be. Watch what cannot be recreated.

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APPENDIX A

CDROM Narration: Introduction

I have lived many times. I have been created and recreated by artists over and over through the centuries. I am their longing, their passion, their expression. I have been a painting, a sculpture, a weaving, an etching, a collage. I stand naked once again ready to be reborn, reinvented in a new form. This time a collaborative form.

APPENDIX B

CDROM Narration: Collaboration: Eva and Vincent

Wow. What a tiny piece of clay. I wonder what it is? It's so simple, so clean. It has an interesting, flower-like shape. It makes me a little self-conscious of my appearance though. Am I as big as my four by four-foot base with this tiny object as my center or am I as small as this piece of clay? It's an odd thing.

A first mark sets the tone, but I'm not sure what tone is being set. And I'm not sure Eva knows. I heard her say she started with something she knew. We all start with something we know I suppose, something familiar, something of ourselves. I don't think she's completely comfortable with me - with this collaboration. Oh, it has nothing to do with making art or Vincent. It's something else. Something to do with how to proceed in this non-verbal triangulation. How to proceed in this ad hoc...unplanned...unexplored way.

Being alone with an artist in their studio is different. They have complete control to work with me as they like. Just them and me. No adjusting to another's likes or dislikes. No imposed boundaries. We're free to....well....maybe that's not completely true. There is an unwritten set of rules within the art world. I remember an artist who had difficulty getting a gallery to display his canvases because they weren't stretched on frames. He had to decide if he would make that concession. He didn't.

Now Vincent. Vincent was comfortable. Comfortable to the point of being mischievous. Or should I say comfortable to the point of wanting to create some discomfort, something unexpected. Said he had thought of squishing the piece of clay.

Said he was thinking of dropping his underwear to shake things up a bit. He should have dropped his pants in his collaboration with Marcel that would have shaken thing up.

I could see that these were two very different individuals working on me. Eva, liked to plan, be prepared, know what was happening ahead of time. And Vincent, Vincent liked to stir things up to see what could happen. The difference was making me uneasy.

When Vincent started with that big piece of Styrofoam I could tell that Eva didn't like it and she could see I couldn't work with it. Why didn't she throw it out when it was her turn? Nothing was stopping her. Why did she feel she shouldn't or couldn't remove it? The guidelines of the collaboration allowed for it. I could be subtracted from. Not just added to.

And Vincent, why did he let the doll's head and soother stay? He didn't want me to be about babies but didn't do anything about it. Why didn't he spray paint them, or cut them up?

Altering marks, covering, spray painting, moving, everything seemed to be acceptable to them but totally removing a mark they didn't like or agree with. That somehow would be an affront. What about the affront to me. They were considerate of each other's feelings but not mine. Couldn't they see that I was left holding pieces and that by avoiding them, they didn't just simply go away? It saddened me deeply to know that they had abandoned me and tried to save themselves.

Maybe they were right. You can't very well have a collaboration without a relationship. But if you don't have a collaboration that's working what are you relating. I know of art collaborations where work was totally removed. No one was offended. It

simply became part of the artistic process. Decisions are made all the time in art as to what to keep and what to throw away. Every project is reworked several times over. Some parts just don't belong no matter how good they are on their own.

As things went along they didn't get any better. Something wasn't melding together. I was disjointed, and confused, and I didn't know what to say. I didn't know how to make it better. Eva's marks were calmer, quieter. Feathers, soothers, colourful objects, objects hidden inside of me. But disconnected and foreign to each other and to Vincent's marks.

Vincent on the other hand kept trying to pump me up. Strong colours, spray paint, bones, sharp objects. And the Styrofoam wasn't helping. The paint Vincent added just seeped through and emphasized that part of me even more.

And then I noticed my center was gone. My heart, my soul. The tiny piece of clay I had grounded myself in. I had kept my eye on it because they kept moving it around, but now it was gone. I searched frantically through the chaos. Finally, I found it wrapped safely in the plastic hanging in my center. A good place, for it had grown close to my heart. The tiny object was one of my few working parts and I didn't want to lose it. Some parts need to go. Others just need to be rearranged. It's difficult to know which are which, or for everyone to agree.

I wanted unification but nothing felt unified. Vincent's splitting of the Styrofoam symbolized my Sybilled self. At one point, he literally tied me together. Then threw a net over me. He even tried moving me to another location and back again. But I couldn't get comfortable. I couldn't pull myself together and neither could they. My disunity was more than physical. I was a disunity of ideas. We all had to accept that it just wasn't

working or perhaps workable. Printmakers will tell you to never try fixing a bad plate or a bad screen. You're wasting your time. Start over. I was feeling like a bad plate.

I have never heard much said about bad collaborations. No one wants to talk about them. Instead, they talk about how they took a bad collaboration and made it work. Or how they employed this theory or that method and consequently avoided a bad collaboration. Perhaps this is why Anna Banana likes to be really clear up front about how aesthetic control will be distributed. Or why Chicago makes sure it is her project and critiques and reviews the work personally. Or why Motherwell takes over at the end of a project to finish it off, bring it together.

Maybe if Vincent's and Eva's styles of making art had been more compatible. Or if their concepts of how to collaborate were similar. Maybe if there had been more friction, less compromise. Maybe if they had paid more attention to me...to each other. I'm not sure. I'm tired. Tired of trying. It just didn't come together. We became the perfect example of where theory and method are necessary in collaboration. When collaboration is working rules are less important, easily broken, adjusted. When collaboration is not working, we fall back on rules to pull everyone through to the end.

So here I am. Pulled through to the end. All stuck together by five turns each.

APPENDIX C

CDROM Narration: Collaboration: Mary and Georges

I am loaded. Heavy with thick oil stick. Georges really laid it on thick. Hardly a speck of white to be found. And dark. Dark impenetrable colours. It's not unusual for an artist to lay a ground, to cover me entirely, but this was overpowering. How was Mary going to lay her mark?

Mary. Mary was so good to me. She did find a way to make her Faced with my thick coating of oil stick she gently began scraping bits of paint away. I could feel the weight began to lift and I could breathe again. She scraped away bits of paint that another artist had applied. And not only scraped but removed and disposed of. mark.

I know artists create by constructing, deconstructing, adding, removing, building, but rarely, rarely, unless directed, work on another artist's piece of art. I remember in the 1800's when Manet took the liberty of *correcting* Morisot's painting. She was livid.

To touch another's artwork. To weave fingers through threads of woven sculptures. To roughly slide palms over the grit of stone or clay. To let fingertips skim the crests of hardened paint or blindly read the subtle embossment of an etching. The touching of artwork. So many paintings hang in galleries, all roped in, aching for touch. No one can get close enough to smell the materials. Know the texture. I understand we can't all be touched. Most of us are very fragile and can be easily damaged. But we have become so precious that even when we are designed to be touched, to be moved, played with, we stand idle. Now here are these two collaborators who must share me. Touch me. Touch each other's work. Here is Mary scraping right through Georges work.

It felt so good when Mary touched me. She massaged me. Blended me. Easing the paint in. Smoothing it out. Long sweeps. Small circles. Guiding one colour gently into the next. Her marks were so subtle, barely visible, but present, always present, building my substance and depth. She bound me together with fine thread, bled weak tissue paper into my pores taking colour from one area and adding it to another as it disintegrated beneath the brush. This act of diffusing did not weaken me but strengthened me. This blending gave me texture and shape. It held me together.

Mary never completely removed Georges' marks. You can never truly remove a mark. The residue, the traces are always there. I had someone completely gesso me over once to redo a painting. But it wasn't the same. I felt old and stale. I couldn't project the same luminosity of fresh paint on a new freshly gessoed canvas. That layer of forgotten paint still lived between the walls of gesso.

While Mary blended, Georges layered. At every turn she added a layer. Adding. Always adding. She laid thin strips containing messages along my borders. Backwards and upside down I tried to read the statements I projected, but couldn't. She adhered carefully cut out shapes. Their white outlines setting themselves apart from the rest of me. And the individually ripped pale strips of paper placed one by one. Their light colour floated gently above my darkness. But adding the white oil stick was the best. I expected the white to mix and get lost in all my dark colours. But instead, it sat right on top, like cream rising to the top, refreshing me, reviving me.

Now Georges' marks were not responses to Marys. They were independent. Georges was working separately, as if *I* was *hers* alone. But I didn't feel separated. I felt as if I belonged to both of them. It was as if one was dressing me up and the other was

putting on my makeup, doing my nails. Although they didn't seem to be working together, I felt together. I felt whole.

I wonder if Georges noticed what Mary did for me. That she did the touch ups. That she cared for me and made me look like I flowed naturally. Mary's the one that brought my attention to this. When she rolled me over and started working on my back - what a *difference*. Her marks changed. They were bold, strong marks. Not subtle. She made me feel 3D. She set the tone and I liked it.

Funny how Georges never did make a mark on my back. She would always flip me over onto my front when it was her turn and although she was pleasantly surprised when Mary turned me over, she never joined her there. Never joined her.

They had taken on different roles. Georges who normally did a lot of blending on her own, did not have to blend. Mary who made bold independent statements working alone, could focus on taking care of my more delicate needs. They assumed roles based on the *other's* role. Working collaboratively they didn't have to play every position. I don't think Mary and Georges set out to take on these roles but fell comfortably into them as they worked on me. They moved into them quickly and I became absorbed in the work at hand. Fortunately, for all of us, they did not vie for the same position but became compatible opposites.

Mary, I believe, was the peacekeeper, the filler. The one that filled in the holes to keep the piece together. I'm not sure what Georges' role was but it dominated me. Scaring me slightly. Making me protective of Mary.

It overwhelmed me when Georges covered me completely for a second time. This time she brushed thick, milky Roplex all over me - front and back. It would have a

beautiful clear shiny skin when I dried - like throwing a mink coat over my shoulder. But I wouldn't be dry for quite some time and Mary had yet another mark to make.

I was surprised when Georges asked for Mary's assistance to brush on the Roplex. Georges independence had caused me to forget. Forget she too could need assistance. She reminded me of the lone artist, working in isolation. Artists often need assistance. Especially artists who work on a large scale. That assistance is often forgotten as the art piece over time becomes credited to one artist, like Chicago, Motherwell, Christo, Goldsworthy.

Mary readily complied when asked to help. I knew she would. I felt her lift me up by my corners while Georges brushed down each side of me. It was the first time that I really felt we were all working together. I was relieved. Satisfied. I wanted so very much for us to feel together. Feel as one.

APPENDIX D**CDROM Narration: Collaboration: Vincent and Marcel**

This one's name is Vincent. I am both his catch and his lure. He approaches me purposefully. Not as something he is going to create but something he is going to explore, listen to, address. He reminds me that I am not only a compilation of materials, paper, canvas, ink, paint, wood, clay, I am something much broader. He begins by bringing in something of himself that already exists and offers it up. It is the beginning of a ceremony, a ritual. And it begins slowly, as all rituals, with a slow drumbeat.

This one is Marcel. He moves quickly. He has an intensity about him. He is interested in me and I am excited by the anticipation in the air of actions to come.

The actions of Vincent and Marcel run parallel. In copycat fashion, they speak to me, in two distinct voices. The collaboration is a union from the start. A collaboration linked by an in-depth silent discussion of agreement and disagreement. I am pleased. I do not want to appear *forced* together at the end. I do not want to be linked by proximity and association alone. I want to be included in their union, and I am. They speak to each other through me. I speak to both of them. By utilizing me, by understanding that I too have a voice they have opened the channels for my voice to be heard and in return they hear their own voices reflected back. I am an equal partner and am truly reborn again. Together we create a Third Mind.

The Third Mind is not only reached through collaboration. Artists working in isolation also experience the Third Mind. The Third Mind is like an undefined space that is created when the work and the artist come to know and understand each other. All

notions of authority are relinquished. All voices are listened to. I whisper to the artists. Call to them. As I call, hopefully, they come closer and call to me until we are able to hear each other. I have called to many artists. Only some have heard.

Chicago heard my voice. Although she appeared to maintain a position of authority to those assisting her, she was not an authority to the work of art itself. Her difficulty lay in how she could relay to the others what she had heard. It took many hours. Many hours of critiquing and reviewing.

Upon hearing my voice Marcel and Vincent began to release a complexity and depth that was both overwhelming and freeing. They readily abandoned the preconceived boundaries of art making. Brushes were kept clean, hands were used to paint. Concepts began to pour over one another. History, tradition, ritual, insight, vision bled through the layers and surfaced as pieces and shadows.

Powerful statements emerged and developed. I held the words Janzen, Jesus, and Zen side by side. Honey spilled over my center, a carved fish, enriching the wooden cross on one side of me and the biblical story of Jesus feeding thousands on the other. And I watched as the bible stuck to Marcel's fingers as he shred this ancient book filled with the very tradition, ritual, history being reproduced. Being reincarnated through me. We mixed carefully selected found objects such as bones and wood with spontaneously found studio objects such as the bible and honey. We juxtaposed concepts of hooks piercing fish, the Zen of fishing, the ritual of fishing, hooks as piercing tools.

Witnessing the ritual of body piercing was the most disturbing however. When Vincent first pierced, I didn't know what was happening. I saw him take the pliers and the hook. Earlier when he had nailed a hook into me, it had pinched my side, so when he

squeezed the skin under his arm with the pliers I felt a strange, sickening feeling come over me. When the hook pierced his skin, straining against the barb, he did not flinch. It was familiar to him. I was on edge. Unsure how this action would relate back to me. Knowing somehow it would. I heard once through idle chat that a German artist had died in a performance art piece. The performance was his self-dissection.

Vincent approached me. His arm swollen where the hook hung. I watched him, never taking my eyes off the hook as he moved casually around me, making marks. Then he carefully tied a fishing line from the hook in my side to the hook in his arm and I felt him tug at the line. Then with Marcel on my side we pulled. We pulled as hard as we could, increasing the tension between Vincent and us. I watched the hook drag his skin out towards me. We became his opponent, his resistance, his test. The line snapped under the pressure. He tied it again. And again it snapped. And again.

When Marcel pierced I felt the drum beat quicken. Marcel had never pierced before. He was out of character. I marveled at his commitment as he persisted when his skin wouldn't accept the hook. The exhilaration mixed with the pain must have been intoxicating. Finally it was through and he too tested his strength.

In the process of composing art the artist does not only compose but becomes part of and interacts with the composition. Sometimes purposefully, sometimes unintentionally. When Joseph Beuys coexisted with a coyote for several days in a New York gallery, wielding only his shepherd's staff and protected by a felt cloak, it became interactive. When two people died during Christo's umbrella project in southern California and Japan, it became interactive. Where the interaction starts and stops is always in question.

I marveled at Marcel's ability and willingness to surpass his limits and seize the opportunity to explore, to expand. It was this enthusiasm and dedication to our process that injected all of us with excitement and anticipation. That allowed all of us to share in the experience. Is this not the real growth of any artist though? To be willing to explore, move out of character, out of context. Is this not the true learning experience? And to do this openly, vulnerably, in the presence of others is admirable.

I hear Vincent and Marcel thank me. And in a paused moment between us that is laced with it's own language I silently thank them in return.