

Editorial

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This is my first editorial and volume publication as Editor-in-Chief for the *Canadian Review of Art Education/ Revue Canadienne de recherches et enjeux en éducation artistique*. I am fortunate to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Heather McLeod from Memorial University of Newfoundland who served as Editor-in-Chief for three years and now serves as the Director of Publications for *The Canadian Society for the Education through Art/ Société canadienne d'éducation par l'art*. Ms. Haley Toll continues to seamlessly execute her role as the Managing Editor. I am excited for the opportunity to engage with the works of art education researchers, artists, and scholars and to be inspired by the ways the arts, in their many forms, provide a unique and nuanced perspective for issues of importance.

This publication was assembled in a year defined by the spectacle of the multiple harsh realities of the persistent pandemics of racism and Covid-19 in Canada and throughout the world. Artists, researchers, teachers, and students experienced lockdowns, travel restrictions, and a rapid shift to online teaching and learning, reimagining the human connection and materiality of our field in a primarily virtual world. The arts became more important for many as a way to mediate the construction and reconstruction of a *new normal* [sic.]. Promising vaccines raise hope against one pandemic, while we grapple with the structural pandemic in place in our universities, schools, museums and galleries that work against equity for marginalized populations.

Berlant's (2011) articulation of cruel optimism as "the condition of maintaining an attachment to a significantly problematic object" (p. 24) is poignant in this moment as we question how to return to a mythic normal good life. Rather than a return, the pandemics have prompted many to pursue a much needed break-up with our attachment to *normal*. This requires that now, more than ever, we shift our passive optimism for a better world in 2021 and beyond, to individuated and collective action to confront the multiple systems that normalize systemic inequity. I believe that our artistic communities are uniquely positioned to engage with this call to action and in an upcoming publication call for CRAE, we will look to the artistic educational fields of practice for your research and scholarship in an aim to disrupt these systems.

In this open issue, we offer four articles and a salon article that, in their own way, advance the arts as enabling alternate insights into the profound and complex issues of grief, sexism, cultural inclusivity, illness, and creative interaction. We begin with the artist statement for the cover image for this issue, which features the photographic work of **Heather McLeod**—as a visual metaphor of the complexity of memory. In the Salon section, **Karen Lee** challenges particular notions of grief through her poetic examination of the loss of her mentor, Dr. Carl Leggo after his passing in March 2019, as she confronts the discourse that *letting go* must be a part of grieving. The works of **Ellyn Lyle**, **Cecile Badenhorst** and **Heather McLeod** explore the concept of the archive and autoethnography to examine the personal and historical struggle of women in academia. **Jennifer Eiserman** challenges the ways in which cultural inclusivity is imagined in Canadian art and art history courses and proposes an argument for the importance of cultural

context in the study of Jewish art. **Stephanie Posa** and **Fiona Moola** take on a literature review that examines the role of the expressive arts in the lives of Cystic Fibrosis patients in terms of the impact the arts may have on their psychosocial health. **Esther Simard St-Pierre and Thérèse Lafférière** look to the ways in which the arts created an opportunity for an elementary class to interact in the creation of a shared object. The focus shifted from the object itself to the ways in which the process enabled forms of creative communication. These works suggest, as Berlant's (2011) use of avant-garde artists and their works did, the potential for artistic practice to provoke alternate ways to forego attachments and to pose the question "how that loss might make an opening" (p. 233) and it is this potential that I hope to continue to explore as one of many directions for CRAE in coming issues.

Adrienne Boulton, Editor-in-Chief, *Canadian Review of Art Education*.

Reference

Berlant, L. (2011). *Cruel optimism*. Duke University Press.