



question everything

Hi,

My name is Liza Torrence and I am an artist, performer, educator, and leader. My experience in art and education has led me down a path of pure curiosity, and passion for *the way we learn*. As a visual artist, dancer, and lover of small people, I pictured myself stationed between walls of a public school giving instruction to malleable brains on how to re-create a famous abstract artwork. However, my life changed when I experienced teaching in an informal setting using makerspace philosophies in a children's museum. I learned what happens when we give kids agency to decide what they learn... they learn! Among a myriad of tools and techniques instructed by arts and making educators, kids had an opportunity to use materials, both commonplace and unfamiliar, to create their own pieces with a purpose. I literally loved seeing the potential of education through the lens of making.

So after pursuing a teaching degree in K-12 art, and working at a children's museum, I went on to study art education at New York University in NYC, to learn more about contemporary artists and activists, and art education centered around social justice issues. This was a stretch from my midwestern education, but that was the point. I have continued to work in museums, rather than my expected path of public school teaching, and currently coordinate museum activities by planning programs, managing museum interactions, and supervising educators. My love for informal education has grown even more, but to be honest, the processes of visual arts and making education has not overlapped with the philosophies at NYU that push a critical pedagogical framework using social justice oriented education, through art. Until now!

Through this project, I am attempting to synthesize informal education with ideas of critical pedagogy by asking questions --> to start conversations --> that lead to making.

So what is this book? I'm glad you asked. This resource is an interactive activity book that provides questions for us to ponder, and allows for various types of responses. It's meant to get the conversations started, and act as a safe place to reflect on your prior knowledge and experiences.

To preface...

Learning is all about context. You may have had a stellar education, but everything you learn is tethered to a perspective. It doesn't mean what you learned was wrong, but more than likely your knowledge is built on the connections you make in your life, and the way this knowledge was told to you. These varying perspectives might be oriented to geographic location, political orientation, experience, culture, color, age, education, gender, standards etc. The point here is, we must **question everything** to understand why history is what it is, why it is explained the way it is, and why society is the way it is. Clearly everyone has a different side to this story, so the best we can do is build knowledge together to understand what is going on. That's why art is so great! Art is not about copying the past, or writing the future, it's about questioning life, and learning through the process of creating artwork.

Lastly, this is not a test. Each and every one of us is shaped by our identity and experiences, so none of us should hold the same perspective. Be real, have fun.

*Please send pictures or videos of your work to **LizaMTorrence@gmail.com**.*

As a researcher and educator, I would love to see it!

Liza

**UNTRUMP
THE
WORLD**

MAINLAND
NORTH
AMERICA

TRIBES

SPANISH OF THE
INDIAN NATION

AFRICA

**EQUAL
RIGHTS
FOR ALL!**

DE TERRACE
IMINATES
You?

FREEDOM
NOW!

2

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

WHAT HAPPENED?

WRITE

What is your identity?

What makes up your identity?

Do you identify with one or more of these characteristics...

[religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, class, culture, family]

...over others?

"Identity is a product of articulation. It lies at the intersection of home and abroad, and is a claim of continuity within discontinuity, a politics rather than an inherited marking. The articulation and re-articulation of identity grows out of the very tension raised between these two constructs, one that is based in social cultural determinence, and the other on biological ones." -Trinh T. Minh-ha

Native

Settler

Slave

Settler Colonialism is the structure in which the United States was formed. Settler Colonialism involves 3 populations: native, settler, and slave. In native North America, European settlers conquered indigenous Native Americans, and used African slave labor. This history has affected the power structure of U.S. society to this day.

Reflect on the population that most resembles your ancestry in its corresponding section. What does this mean to you? Find someone for each of the remaining identities, or all if needed, and write their reflection as well.

What does *privilege* mean to you?

Using advertisements and images found online or in magazines, create a collage that represents 'privilege' in our society.

COLLAGE



Visual culture is...a present-day condition where images play a more central role in the construction of consciousness and the creation of knowledge than in the past.

-Kevin M. Tavin

"Without the general nurturing of the will to justice among the people, no just society can survive."

-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

"The arts are essential in helping today's students discover the many shades of grey that exist through divergent thinking and problem solving."

-Kathleen A. Unrath &
Melissa A. Mudd

"People who live under occupation experience the world as victims of perpetual war."

-Robin D.G. Kelley

"An interrelated educational community that listens to one another, can inscribe the social work of scholarship with a shared sense of critical construction."

-Conor Tomás Reed

"We must also recognize that each generation inherits a different world and requires different solutions, and that the sources of yesterday's hope and liberation can become tools of today's oppression."

-Tidal Issue 2

"Diological art, interventionism, and socially engaged art...These discourses took artistic participation as a preconfiguration of direct democratic participation."

-Claire Bishop

"Displacement destroys culture"

-Unknown

"We need training in the practice of freedom."

-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

"We have to ask ourselves if racism has really declined with colorblindness, and whether colorblindness might be neoliberalism's corollary"

-Pamela Brown

"The best sort of schooling is organized around problems, projects, and questions--as opposed to facts, skills, and disciplines."

-Kathleen A. Unrath & Melissa A. Mudd

"Peace is not just the absence of violent warfare; peace is justice"

-Robin D.G. Kelley

"There's a war on imagination, and we're losing..."

-Amin Husain

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING?

FOR YOU

Write a poem that reflects a time when you felt mistreated for who you are or what you look like.

[illegible]

Read the other poem.

Combine the poems by reading each line from left to right.
What are the similarities? Difference? Why did this happen to you?

FOR A FRIEND

Write a poem that reflects a time when you felt mistreated for who you are or what you look like.

[illegible]

Read the other poem.

Combine the poems by reading each line from left to right.
What are the similarities? Difference? Why did this happen to you?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Talk about a social issue with a friend. This could be anything you find interesting or feel passionate about, including democracy, discrimination, student debt, representation, homelessness, or any present or past movement in society. During your conversation, add a mark to this page every time you speak a new thought. After, reflect on your collaborative drawing.

Critical pedagogy is interested in maintaining a delicate balance between social change and cultivating the intellect.

We cannot simply attempt to cultivate the intellect without changing the unjust social context in which such minds operate.

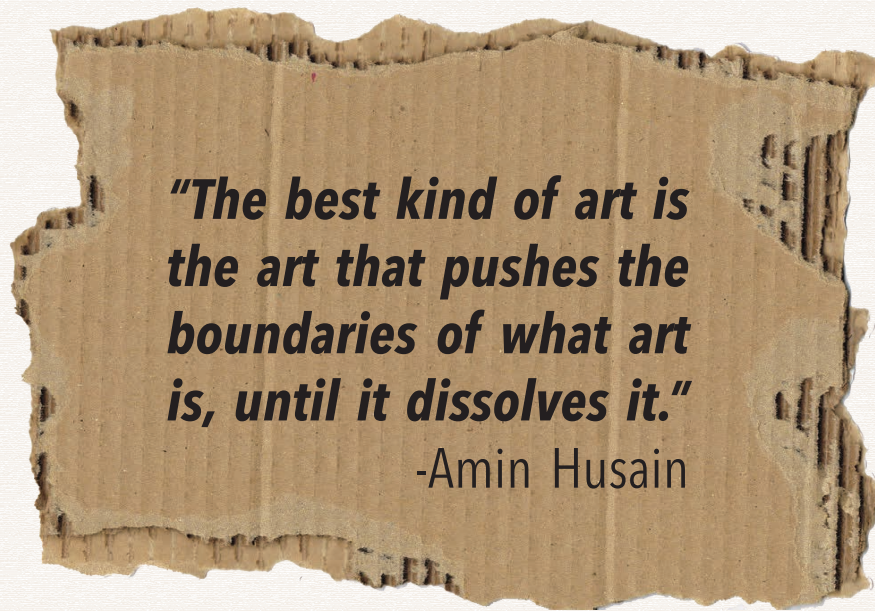
Creating a just, progressive, creative, and democratic society demands both dimensions of pedagogical process.

-Joe Kincheloe

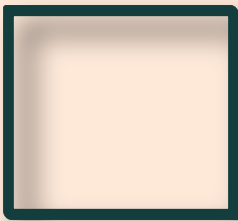
DRAW

What does equality mean to you?

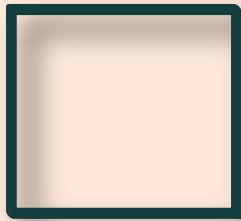
Using a cardboard box, scissors, and masking tape, create an object or image that visually represents equality.



WILL WE EVER BE EQUAL?



YES



NO



MAKE YOUR OWN IDENTITIES THROUGH WHAT YOU MAKE

Go sit in your most sacred place. Think about what it means to occupy a space, or how spaces change depending on who is there.

Using any materials, create an installation or performance in this space, that represents yourself.

Installation art- art that is created, constructed, or installed on the site where it is exhibited, often incorporating materials or physical features on the site.

Performance art- art for which the artist uses their own body as the medium and performs an action or series of actions which become the artwork.

Examples

Using natural materials or found objects, create a symbol that defines you.
Play a song, or several, that resonate with you.
Make a banner.
Paint a wall.
Dance.

OCCUPY



