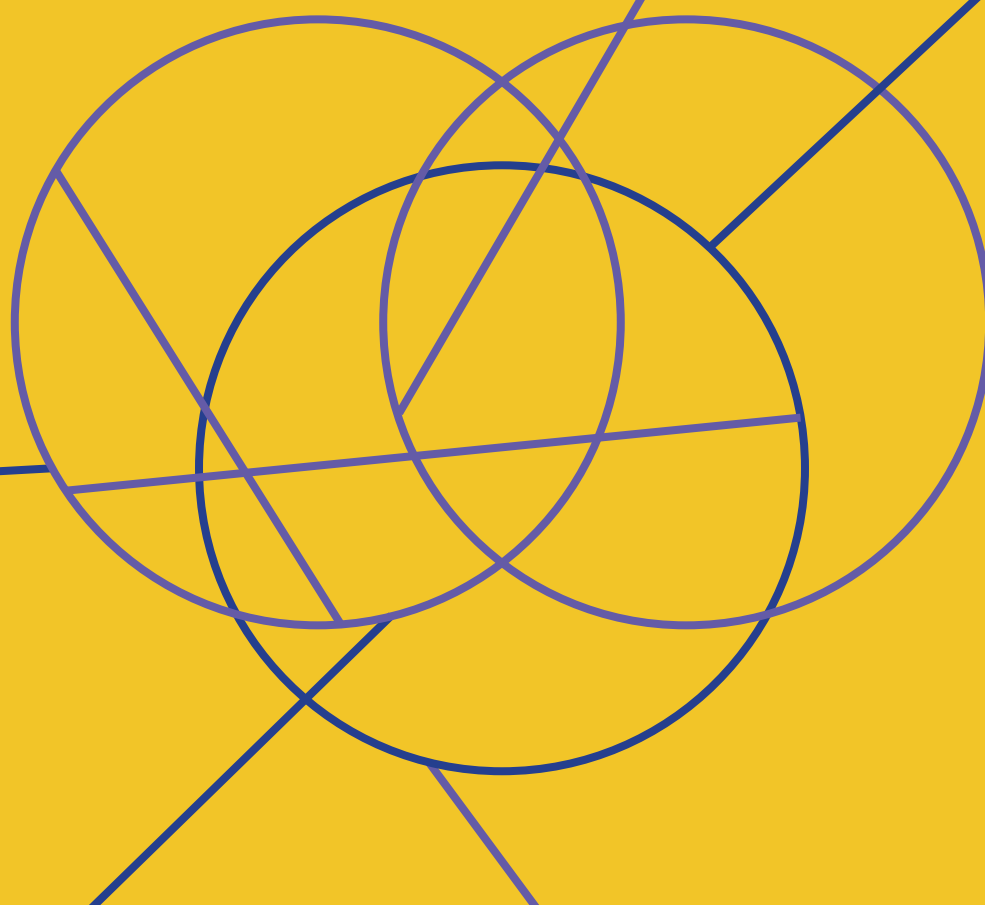Mickey L.D. Morgan

Manifesto on Neighbourliness: Ethics Toolkit for Creative Community Inspiration

Edited by Mirna Palacio Ornelas

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Glossary

Evicted- Removed by colonial authority from one's living-place. This word applies to unhoused and precariously-housed people, who unfortunately do not have the same rights as renters/owners when it comes to eviction.

Research Ethics Board- The Research Ethics Board (REB) is the group at ECU and all canadian institutions that do research involving humans who enforce and offer guidance on TCPS 2 ethical mandates in their institutions.[1]

Accessibility- The spectrum of people's diverse capacities, and the ability to meet needs based on this capacity in order to fully engage with something.

Accomodations/Access Needs- What people need to participate in something based on personal ability.

Epistemology- the study of knowledge, its sources, and ways of knowing.

Epistemicide- To eradicate/kill sources of knowledge and ways of accessing knowledge.

As Alex Wilson and Marie Laing explain: "The term epistemicide is an accurate descriptor of the sustained effort to sever Indigenous peoples from traditional education and traditional knowledges," including access to Land and Water.[2]

Intersectional- Understanding a location/embodiment under multiple intersecting points of oppression at once, for example Black and Woman and Queer. Consequently, liberation for all can only come through abolishing all points of oppression.[3]

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Preface - Place-Based Thanks and Acknowledgement

I. Personal Place

I, Mickey L.D. Morgan, have put together this manifesto as a Kohen of the tribe of Levi, a Dis-abled, Jewish, Trans-Lesbian great-grand- and grandchild of refugees who fled here to Turtle Island during the last century from exile and genocide in eastern europe. As I write, I occupy the stolen Lands and Waters of the Stó:lō, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, Səĺílwətaʔ, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm Nations. With humble gratitude, I thank these Peoples for stewarding the Lands and Waters, I thank the Lands and Waters for allowing my family to be sustained here and allowing me to exist.

I also am writing on a computer with respective parts sourced from resource extraction of Lands I do not know, mined from and put together with racialized and wealth-starved labour of Lands under colonialism. As I charge my computer, it draws power from electricity generated by various parts of the Land and Water sourced locally and from throughout Turtle Island. Energy generation, from the water in the WAC Bennett Dam (now being further devastated by the Site C Dam) to oil in the TMX pipeline which have begun construction without the approval of all host nations constitute and are defended by [repeated colonial violence against Indigenous people](.)[4] This way of understanding and acknowledging Land with relationality and personal connection is gifted to me by my mother and Kajola Morewood and Rita Wong. Part of considering ethical obligations to community in any situation is understanding your relationship to the Lands and Waters, which is a prerequisite to all actions.

II. Institutional Place at Emily Carr University of Art and Design

Manifesto on Neighbourliness emerged, in part, as a way to collate, critique, and share the knowledge and practices I have encountered completing my BFA at Emily Carr University (ECU), with a major of Visual Arts and minor of Social Practice and Community Engagement (SPACE). It is also intended as a resource for making more ethical community work from an institutional position (student/professor, artist-in-residence, research assistant), specifically from ECU and other arts-based and/or post-secondary institutions. The first draft of *Manifesto on Neighbourliness* was completed through a residency with ECU's Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship called Shumka x Satellite Activism and an accompanying self-directed course. It continues with a research assistantship from the [Digital + Creative Knowledge Sharing Series: Data Management in Creative Research](#).[5] This university [was](#) [funded](#)[6] in part by the colonial canadian government and the remainder from a [private capital campaign](#).[7] One of the biggest donors to building the University is RBC, a crown corporation which funds the TMX pipeline and is the "[world's largest investor in oil-sands](#)".[7] Further, in [the plan for the "revitalization" of False Creek Flats neighbourhood](#),[8] ECU being one of many intersecting factors in the plan that dis-place marginalized folks, notably does not include allocated space for poor & houseless folks, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, drug-users, and Dis-abled people. I disagree with the eviction of these very folks from community gathering spaces in so-called "public land" and undermining Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, Səl̓ílwətaʔ, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm authority. I disagree with the actions of these companies, colonial governments, soulless capitalists, and the idea that our school could make anything better if we are not ensuring our most vulnerable neighbours also benefit from the resources the University is helping to amass here and to us with our prestigious campus and degrees. Art: collective, ethical, reciprocal creativity, has the potential and arguably the obligation for this intervention. Such was notably missing from the majority of my own art school experience at ECU, and *Manifesto on Neighbourliness* is intended as a tool to allow for more ethical, community-based work from those who create from a position within an institution.

In addition, anything I or my colleagues do from an institutional place at Emily Carr University is colored by the legacy of Emily Carr, an artist and namesake of this University. While she is known as a second-wave feminist icon[9] (I first learned from my Social Studies 11 teacher), she has been and remains to be viewed with the racist-colonial "Grey Owl" complex that appreciates white parroting of Indigineity and relationship to Land over Indigenous self-representation.[10,11] I am grateful to Dr. Richard W. Hill for the gift of understanding this and other aspects of Indigenous Art History in his class. Some of the specific ways by which the fluidity of the "art-world" acts as an extension of colonial power and art as a means for decolonial Indigenous rebellion –such as that of artists like Kent Monkman and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun Lets'lo:tseltun– is a foundational knowledge from which I write.

Without the support of some specific community members I would not be able to complete this work, specifically I want to express my gratitude for the support, thoughts, and knowledge shared by Laura Kozak and Jean Chisholm and each student to collaborate in creating the Practicing Neighbourly Responsibility course which manifested the ethics discussed in this text. Special thanks to Linda Serrano, Melanie Camman, Emily De Boer, and Felicity Crisp for their additional feedback on the manifesto and

it's accompanying workshops. To Justin Langlois for supervising the directed study that incubated *Manifesto on Neighbourliness.* For the members of ECU's Digital + Creative Knowledge Sharing Series[2] team through which I am a Research Assistant which supported and enabled such a wide and in depth exploration of neighbourliness, Lois Klassen, Dr. Cissie Fu, Suzanne Rackover, Kajola Morewood, and Hillary Webb. For each professor who shared what they could about community work including Zoe Kreye, Annie Canto, Fadwa Bouzaine, Aaniya Asrani, Jacqueline Turner, Dr. Sue Shon, Dr. Su-Anne Yeo, and Dr. Cissie Fu.

I have done a lot of this work from scratch and stumbled through a lot of mistakes, some of which were violent toward others and myself. I am not infallible, and am always learning more about how to be a more ethical artist and member of community, so this is just what I know now, not tomorrow. I have not always been able to do this work. This past year has been the only time I have actively tried to cultivate new and long-term relationships with those who participate, consult, and collaborate in the projects I make for school. My hope is that you and those in your circles who are interested in community-inspired practices while also making work for/in post-secondary will have this manifesto as a place to start.

III. Small Fires & Tending Them

In spring semester 2020 I took Critical Race Theory with Dr. Sue Shon, the first of what would be a few courses that re-awakened the root passion I had for making art: Tikkun Olam, to make the world a better place. To heal ourselves, to make our conditions for living with each other more conducive to actually living, thriving, co-cultivating. To instigate this change now, locally, globally. To leave things better than when I got here. Critical Race Theory would not have been taught in this school if not for the advocacy of Dr. Cissie Fu in her former position as Dean of the Faculty of Culture and Community. Critical Race Theory and Studies would not exist if not for the labour of Black women like Bell Hooks and Audre Lorde. This course also gave me a toolkit of beautifully hope-full, radical texts and the space to critically, seriously, engage with them and my peers. These tools were at the ready when, later that spring, the on-camera murder of George Floyd by a police officer instigated international solidarity actions; at the same time our unhoused neighbours down the street from campus in Oppenheimer Park were [forcibly evicted](#)[12] using vancouver police by the parks board and the city of vancouver, who then moved to CRAB Park making Namegan Nation 2.0 and were [evicted again](#)[13] all without the rights afforded to legal tenants. At the same time we were in the middle of a pandemic with no vaccine that made the inequalities built into capitalism even worse, the structural gaps between poor/working class and upper class far more apparent. I found myself a part of a group of mostly students, some faculty, and a smattering of administrators who publicly express that we do not accept the reified place anti-Blackness, colonialism, and white supremacy hold in society and specifically our university. Filled with hope and anger and more than a few mistakes we who used our collective voices to reject oppression made visible the practice of anti-racism in the summer of 2020 through the Anti-Racist Petition—simply titled [Our Demands](#)[14]—and by gathering together on campus socially-distanced in the hot sun. This process was not romantic, not a comfortable success, but it was remarkable that we all showed up to make our needs public and gather with eachother and it informs what I think of as anti-racist work and neighbourliness.

Since then, things have continued in many ways, I cannot speak to all of them. But, I took personally these demands and they are a foundation upon which I collaboratively have built what started as my graduation project *Mapping East Van.* This project is where I have been able to find the time to sit down and write this text, by moving my activist work, mutual aid, community connecting, tough conversations, into my school work and into my career as an artist.

Specifically, demand [1.F THEY ARE OUR NEIGHBOURS](#)[14]

> We demand an **interdisciplinary course** offered every semester **in perpetuity**, which engages in research and community projects with the Namegan Tent City leaders/organizers/elders. The objectives of the course will be to connect with community leaders of Namegan Tent City, and **work to have the needs they iterate met**. The course must be **responsive** to the Namegan community, and **follow their lead**. We demand the Institution provide or obtain funding and resources so that the projects approved by Namegan leaders/organizers/elders can be enacted sustainably.

As I began to write the first draft of *Manifesto on Neighbourliness*, and since this demand, our neighbours who have been called Camp Hope and Camp Kenny-Trudeau (in a call to action for vancouver Mayor Kenny and canadian Prime Minister Trudeau) have been [violently evicted from their homes](#)[15] in so-called Strathcona Park. This is an Indigenous-led community, and the third such tent city eviction during the COVID-19 pandemic by the violent forces in the name of the colonial authorities for the city of vancouver. [Locking an Indigenous Matriarch in a parks-board cage, lying to the public, having strangers going through folks belongings, and blocking legal observers](#)[16] is what we are urgently up against. Recently, because of continuous community action, houseless folks living by CRAB Park won a legal battle supporting their [right to stay.](#)[17] I don't think we're there, yet, to complete this demand 1.F. But a big part of this manifesto is addressing the things at Emily Carr and other universities that make being neighbourly currently abnormal and purportedly impossible, the considerations we must hold in order to possibly meet this demand ethically.

In sisterhood with Scholars for Social Justice, this Manifesto on Neighbourliness regards [The University as Neighbour](#)[18] (shared during a Mapping East Van event by Steven Lam), endeavouring to question and answer: How can we *be better neighbours*?

I also am articulating this text in opposition to the disabling conditions we make work in, which push deliverables with volume and speed over a thought-out process and strong ethics. I am in opposition to the way that our teachers are [the most overworked and underpaid of all the art schools in so-called canada.](#)[19] All of these place-based manifestations of interpersonal, state, and global violence that I live in and am a part of that does not have to be! I hope, I work, to see these systems of oppression abolished completely. In the meanwhile and as a part of this goal, we establish better practices for how we create.

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A. Introduction

A. I. Responsibility

This is an inter- trans- and cross-disciplinary toolkit & manifesto for ethics of community-based creative projects. Though more widely applicable, it is framed for art school students and professors who are not in the Design faculty, or those who wish to supplement the formal ethical guidelines for design-work, creative researchers. More specifically, it is written to address the lack of neighbourliness that was called to task by ECU student activists in *Our Demands*. By no means is this intended as exclusionary to the wide variety of possible applications, it is simply a matter of my own positionality. While the toolkit is for anyone in the University or other institutions who find themselves with no one to ask questions to about creative community work, *Manifesto on Neighbourliness* is best used as a framework for group settings — classrooms, workshops, meetings, group projects, collaborations, etc.

This toolkit will primarily focus on the perspective of community work that is done by university students falling into the "creative projects" category of research, so it does not have any mandates by our Research Ethics Board. The Research Ethics Board is the group at ECU and all institutions that do research involving humans in canada enforce ethical mandates called [TCPS 2][1] in their institutions. With the lack of ethics mandates around creative projects,[1] student explorations in our studio and elective classes about the ethics of entering communities to be inspired for our class assignments — and afterwards for our projects as professional artists — are seldom discussed. And, when students such as myself have questions about the ethics of entering a community or working with people for creative projects, faculty often do not know what to tell us or where to send us.

Defining community work is a moving target and also is unique to each artist, but for the purpose of this manifesto it is important to ground us in a mutual understanding of what community work is. So, let's broadly think about it as any work which draws inspiration from any person that isn't just oneself, or a place that is inhabited by the other-than-human. Some examples of this across disciplines could include:

- Film and Sound Art students who go into public places to do a soundwalk or filmwalk, or to sample sounds/visuals
- Life drawing/painting of individual community members
- Illustration of logos, crests, or symbols of a community/place
- Community projects courses and courses that work with clients
- Artists who wish to interview folks as precedent research and/or art form itself
- Graffiti and murals
- Collaborating, showing work or discussing someone else's work/"critique"--
  inside *and* outside of the classroom

But when we create using community for our institutional goals without discussion or accountability, the root questions & considerations & CARE are lacking, and this process lends itself to violence.[2]

Are we only ethically responsible to where
we draw inspiration from in academic classes?
NO.
Do studio professors typically talk to their students about our ethical responsibilities,
especially before instructing them to work with community?
NO.
Do all professors have a responsibility to do so?
YES.
Do students have a responsibility to join or start this conversation too?
YES.
Do all creatives?
YES.

A. II. Myths of Neutrality and Institutional Expertise

THE MYTH OF ART AND ARTISTS AS NEUTRAL RATIONALIZES THE ACT OF GOING INTO COMMUNITIES AND BEING AS EXTRACTIVE AS ANTHROPOLOGY OR MEDICAL RESEARCHERS ARE WITHOUT INSTITUTIONAL NOR EDUCATIONAL NOR DIRECT PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE COMMUNITIES WE ARE ENTERING

Anthropologists, scientific, design and/or academic researchers (somewhat) mitigate this violence by being accountable to Research Ethics Boards (REBs), taking courses on research ethics, and having robust discussions with experts in the field of study

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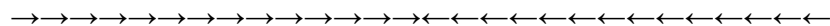
This is clearly not foolproof and the commonly foreseeable violence to community by researchers are one of the first things explored by student initiated and community authored [Research 101: A Manifesto for Ethical Research in the DTES](#)[17]

Something that's obvious, but needs to be said (and will be repeated):
REBs, ethics classes, your teachers, your classmates, "experts-in-the-field", **outside researchers/creators, including you, do not hold authority on the communities you're entering unless you are from the community. You are accountable to these authorities**

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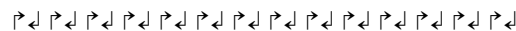
You are fundamentally accountable to those respective institutional and/or legal standards you occupy in your position. This is the nature of making work in/for an institution.

At times these standards overlap with community's — sometimes they do not. But they always must be considered relative to the communities you're working with/in. Your most reliable direction will come directly from community, not a third party.

Whereby the standards of your institution conflict with the standards of community you're entering, you must make a choice: disobey institutional standards, change or abolish institutional conditions, stop the project, or move the project our of the institution. **To continue with institutional standards knowing they conflict with the standards outlined by community is violent.**

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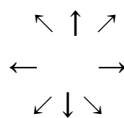
A. III. On Violence

Throughout *Manifesto on Neighbourliness* am making the choice to use the word "violence" instead of the typical research ethic/legal focus on "harm" for the fact that harm is simply violence without intent to commit violent actions. This word choice does away with the implication that harm has some sort of neutrality because those who harm do not intend to commit violence, and emphasises one's responsibility to rectify this to the best that you're able while acknowledging that it still had/has an impact. It also acknowledges that sometimes there will be nothing you can do to rectify violent actions, even those committed in ignorance, and all you can do is go forward learning from this and never repeat it. On a more theoretical and practical basis the definition of *violence* is hard to pin down, and will be explored through examples in section B. Hannah Arendt's book *On Violence* (1970)[18] cites Marx in defining violent action as a "means-end", contextualising this with a means of achieving power and justifying this exertion and acquisition of power through war and nation-statehood.

In Arendt's introduction, she references Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968).[19] This book's introduction, *On Violence*, concludes colonization as violent and decolonization reciprocally so. Arendt critiques this imperative of revolution as necessarily violent, but no matter which view you take, the violence should not be happening to those who are already experiencing violence, those who would otherwise benefit most from the work we are doing.

The final demand found in the opening statement of *Our Demands*[5] (aka The Anti-Racist Petition) adds an additional specific context to violence using description of *inaction* on the part of ECUAD.

"We demand ECUAD rewrite and change any barriers that exist between our needs being met and the systems and structures preventing them. To not do so, is to commit violence." (8)

This is rephrased in section 1.E on the grad studies program.

"As students, we understand that if anti-racist and decolonial values are not at the centre of decision making within The Faculty of Graduate Studies that white supremacy thrives as the default program outcome." (16)

In this case, and others, the description of inaction is an action in itself, it means to allow and uphold a violent status quo of racism and white supremacy. Arendt and I, as Jews who remain(ed) in the wake of our people's most recent mass genocide, and Fanon who was psychologist for French colonial soldiers *and* their torture victims during the decolonization of Algeria, are writing from an embodied perspective of the violence that bystanders can cause. This understanding names systems of/as the institution (in this case, the University) along with those individuals who uphold and enforce our institutional standards as culpable in violence, by action or inaction. It also is explicit that the only remedy to this is direct action against these standards and their resulting actions moving toward more ethical relations.

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B. The Basics

B. I. Where are we now?

Currently the most common process for making community art in a Studio or Creative Process (foundation) course:

1. Introduction: Professor introduces the project,[20] telling students to enter a community either specifically assigned or with students independently going into a community of their choosing, then discussing what is expected as a result of observation and/or creative interpretations of the place. In some cases, this is the first time the students have been to this area, and they will not go back again after this project is over.

2. Venturing Out: Students go into the community independently and on their own time and solely interact by observing and recording using their chosen medium(s). Often, this is considered a "research period", and there has already been or afterward there will be some creative prompts for elaboration provided by professors.

3. Presentation & Crit: Students return to a closed class with their completed research which is presented for critique to students who, for the most part, went to places/communities other than that of the school's neighbourhood (false creek flats/mount pleasant).

4. Adapt, Repeat: The students apply the critique to any further research and their creation of the interpretation portion of the project presented, again, only in class. Occasionally, this also lives in a show on campus or in a gallery.

B. II. How can we do/be better?

Reflect: Working backward from where we are, what are some things to potentially learn from this process? What is wrong here? What are alternatives to this that can be enacted starting from where we are now? Try applying these lenses to your faculty, class/course, degree, etc., then enacting them in your creative processes/the creative processes you prompt in your students. For example:

Reflections are in red and bold

1. Introduction: Professor introduces the project, telling students to enter a community either specifically assigned or with students independently going into a community of their choosing, then discussing what is expected as a result of observation and/or creative interpretations of the place. In some cases, this is the first time the students have been to this area, and they will not go back again after this project is over.

   Professor introduces the project and instructs students to enter a community without a conversation of what it means to enter a community, if they even have had that conversation with themself (and there's no reason why a first time conversation cannot happen in the classroom, we can learn with one another!). Some primer questions for this kind of conversation can be found in B. III, but generally this manifesto can support an introduction and begin conversations about this space.

2. Venturing Out: Students go into the community independently and on their own time and solely interact by observing and recording using their chosen medium(s). Often, this is considered a "research period", and there has already been or afterward there will be some creative prompts for elaboration.

   Students enter which community? A community you are a part of already? A community around the school? Did you support local businesses or initiatives when you went? Did you talk to anyone? Do you know these folks? How can you get to know them and conduct yourself in a way that benefits the community rather than observe only, particularly if this is a place you're not too familiar with? LISTEN. Doing so by responding actively rather than imposing your assumptions onto the community. Be fluid, responsive, responsible, and check yourself. These are people's lives, their community, and potentially a community you will be/are a part of too. Further questions, and questions about questions can be found in 'The Art of the Question' by an anonymous public artist in *The Practice of Public Art*[21] as well the intro and section 1) of *[Manifesto for Ethical Research in the DTES](#)*[17] put together by members of the DTES community and academic co-authors.

You, as the person entering community or instructing others to do so, may have a question in mind already, or a specific subject you may wish to explore. But you should consider what was one of the most important lessons on community work that was shared with me by Nura Ali:

You may not know enough about the people or communities you're talking with or even your own feelings on this to prepare an inquiry in advance.

If you are new to a social practice or community-based style of working you may consider working with communities you already are a part of or have a personal investment in, you may already be doing this if you are starting in the classroom. Consider them as a community, a sounding board, and ideally flush with perspectives different from your own. As affirmed in _Manifesto for Ethical Research in the DTES_[37] and its peer-run community members are experts in & of their neighbourhoods, they are your senior in this regard and your peers as living beings you interact with.

Where can you start once you've picked a place to begin understanding the community you're entering and that lays the groundwork to build/strengthen reciprocal relations?

- Drop in to neighbourhood houses, community and cultural centres
- Listen to, give to, and share calls for aid by local grassroots collectives/coalitions
- Visit local landmarks, follow up on recommendations
- (pandemic-considerate) attend meetings/events, and talk to folx!

3. Presentation & Crit: Students return to a closed class with their completed research which is presented for critique to students who, for the most part, went to places/communities that aren't the school's neighbourhood (false creek flats/mount pleasant) nor their own neighbourhood.

Students should have conversations about their experiences, questions they have, touch base regularly. However, they should only be sharing what they have been given consent to share or what was said in an explicitly public/open situation. Rather than critique, which puts people just on the defense and also positions them as an authority on the work and subject, posit other ways of questioning. This is also a way of supporting the (un)learning journey that is in the process of doing community work in a considerate, understanding, decolonial manner (expanded on in section C). Ideally, this work is done over months or years or lifetimes. If this is right for all involved, the relationships built in this space can be foundational to work that lasts far beyond the restrictive timelines of semesters and degrees, and perhaps will become a part of the community--if you aren't already. It is not realistic to build a new relationship within a few weeks that has any thoroughness or reciprocity, so if this is your timeline it is best to stick to a place you're already in or have existing relationships to, or figure out ways to do this work in multiple capacities so you can have more time.

4. Final: The students apply the critique to any further research and their creation of the interpretation portion of the project presented, again, only in class. Occasionally, this also lives in a show on campus or in a gallery.

To "finish" the project for the timeline of a course, you can be working toward a final project, but sometimes this does not work out! For students to be practicing community work and genuine relationship building, it is unethical and highly extractive to force a final result that requires the participation of anyone other than the students at hand. Regarding the presentation of work associated with this experience, the recording of information from strangers by passive observation is generally questionable, and without a doubt unethical in communities who are already over-researched and/or marginalized. Meaning it is important to attain consent before sharing. This allows for community members to opt-in to the work, and is satisfied even if a "final(ized) project" in the traditional sense is not something wanted by the community/ies students are working in. There is room to meet people where they're at or move to a different place that is more in line with what you want to do. It is important, however, to sit in any discomfort and listen seriously to all feedback shared with you.

An idea shouldn't be taken into another community without a serious regard as to whether this is the right idea for the wrong community or if perhaps your idea could be re-imagined rather than simply moved.

B. III. Place, Power, and Relativity

All of the following are things to think about independently or in a class BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER going into communities to make art

What does it do when a student is sent/goes into a community to research or be inspired *from a place* and therefore *from the community/ies*?

What *power dynamics* are enacted when the student enters a community they are/are not already a part of for the purpose of taking inspiration?

Apply your thinking locally to ECU*: what is the difference and similarities between students going to each of the following vancouver neighbourhoods as you already understand them before the project?

Gastown	Strathcona	Chinatown
West End	Downtown Eastside	Mount Pleasant

If you are not working locally from ECU and/or the city of vancouver, pick some neighbourhoods in your area which vary in factors like class, race, and commercial/residential purpose

Are there spaces/places/communities where students/researchers taking inspiration is a more neutral presence in the community than others?

Are some communities more vulnerable in this situation than others?

20. Sometimes, particularly in third or fourth year classes of the BFA, students propose and commence community-based work on their own. I am one of those students. The mechanics still apply, teachers and students have similarly few resources for each other when it comes to community-based work, as these norms are seldom interrupted if one is not in a class focussed on community work or in the company of social/community practice artists.

21. Cartiere, Cameron, Shelly Willis, and Anonymous. "The Art of the Question." Essay. In *The Practice of Public Art*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

17. *The Manifesto for Ethical Research in the DTES.* "1) Getting to Know Eachother." Essay. 5.

C. You, Me, Them, We, Us, Ours
C.I. Group Agreements and Paying It Forward

In entering any space for the purpose of learning (something we do as students now but always will be doing as artists receiving inspiration), you're also entering into a relationship with the place and all that comprises it. This includes entering a place in person and digitally or through archive, the latter two forms being often necessary to continue this work in a global pandemic. Working/playing/fighting through digital means of interaction with a place is also wrought with complexity, though extremely urgent, particularly around the topic of access which will be focussed on in D. Please read chapter *D. D is for Disability* before creating a Group Agreement to holistically allow needs to be met. Before we begin, we must acknowledge that a relationship comes with responsibility, and an immediate indebtedness— something you will have to pay up now and pay forward.[22, 23]

Wherever possible, an extremely helpful beginning for community work, especially from an institutional position, is to create a group agreement[24] or brave space agreement[25] between your classmates/cohorts and collaborators that is put into some form that can be referred to later on and changed as needed. Writing is the most obvious, but perhaps audio or a mix of drawings and words or just having regular conversations about boundaries are some possible forms. The importance of this **exercise in listening, care,** and **empathy** is to understand that we are coming from different places and to communicate what we need to hold space together.

> The Brave Space Agreement resource by Public Newsroom[25] and the Group Agreement Resources put together by Nura Ali and Annie Canto[24] in their time as ECU students both have guides for how to construct this in your group, but the basics are the same:
>
> 1. A group. Who is this group?
> 2. Someone or a few people to facilitate this creation
> 3. A group agreement which will be/is the baseline for our interactions

Once you create a group agreement, you will have a foundation to do some creative work in the community. Perhaps you have a thing you're thinking about already and are picking a community based on that, but be mindful of the power dynamics that are enacted within the institution you're a part of and between the institution which you're representing and the community you're focussing on.

Another helpful format is the Gift Contract,[23] a form of group agreement created for Decolonial Futures workshops regarding what to keep top of mind to avoid enacting violence from what you bring with you and what you're taking. With the obligations that come with a group agreement you should also think of your presence in a generative way (David Ng *Mapping East Van Podcast*)[26]: what can you offer (without the expectation of exchange)? What can you bring? How can you practice redistributing the systemic power & advantages you have as a post-secondary student/faculty/staff?

C. II. Written Group Agreement Examples

Welcoming Statement for ECU Neurodiverse + Disabled Community[27]
Written by jay White and Taryn Goodwin
Let's make a space where it's okay to show up
for 5 minutes, for 2 minutes, or for the whole time.
Where it's okay to cancel at the last minute.
Where we can show up in our big feelings;
Where can be tired, stressed, exhausted, distracted,
confused, "too much", and everything else.
Where we don't need to hide.
Where all forms of participation are optional,
and guided by choice and personal agency
however you need to in that moment, on that day.
Where we can bring our whole selves without shame,
and without feeling any expectations on us.
Where it is ok if our voices overlap.

REMIX Art Camp Group Agreement[28]
Respect each other
Respect/take care of nature
Don't run when inside
Ask for help & help each other
No screaming
Don't press too hard on markers
Take turns

WRTG 310: Collaborative Writing Group Agreements Summer 2020[29]

Collaboration
We agree to make ourselves available to collaborate with each other using writing as the main driver for that collaboration. Let's agree to participate in each other's projects to the best of our ability. Let's agree to say yes as much as we possibly can even though we might not initially want to – let's agree to inhabit a space of experimentation where we cultivate the impulse to be involved in each other's work.

Communication
When and if we are unable to meet collaboration deadlines, or are struggling to do so, we will communicate with our fellow teammates to ensure informed expectations. Also, if we communicate our struggles, that they be met with care and empathy and the understanding that teamwork does not always move linearly.

We agree to do our best to communicate our own boundaries and actions. WE need to make this class a safe space. We are all in a time in our lives that is full of transition, re-evaluation, vulnerability, growth while we are in post-secondary, even without the addition of a pandemic and the shifting situations that come along with it, putting some of us at more/in different risk than others.

Clarity

Let's try, whenever possible, to not assign a leader. I hope that without a leader, our perception of our share of responsibility in collaboration will shift. Without a person to report to, perhaps we can be better prepared for self-directed collaborative work not just in a pandemic but also later down the road. Let's agree to delegate. We agree respect for the rights of others and to be clear about the role each one plays in a collaboration.

Critique

We agree to respect each other and give constructive criticisms that are not to offend or call out anyone's work. We agree to not take **constructive** criticism as a way of telling us we are bad people. We are not our work, and we all mean the best for one another.

For many of us, writing has been a solitary pursuit, and it can be challenging to share our work, let alone collaborate. This type of collaboration may be a first for many of us, and we agree to keep that in mind when offering feedback.

We agree to offer critique and suggestions from a place of mutual benefit, to see ourselves as a team rather than individual players.

Care

We agree to try and introduce our work in the form of a blurb or content warnings whenever possible in the description of the work and to be open to the addition of them if someone gives this feedback. This is not so that we can avoid challenging reading/writing/learning with our classmates, but so we can make the choice of whether we are in a personal place where we can do so without causing harm to our own wellbeing. For example:

Content warning: racism, sexual assault, anti-indigeneity, institutionalization

OR

I'm writing this to explore my relationship to the idea of white-supremacy that was embedded in the founding of nationalist identity. I mention the racism, sexual assault, anti-indigeneity, and institutionalization which was constructed to uphold these made-up systems with their interconnected and violent ideologies.

24

We agree to consider the point within the context of this course as to when our freedom of expression begins to take away from another individual's ability to feel safe and supported within this learning environment. While we agree it is important to have the ability to express oneself freely, we do not agree that one individual's freedom of expression should be prioritized over another's safety, education and ability to practice without fear.

Generosity

Let's agree to be generous with our words– to give as many as we are able, or are necessary.

Let's agree to listen to what others have to say, and say what we have to say. Let's be generous with our attention.

We agree to remain open-minded, and open-hearted when writing/reading about challenging topics. We have all been born situated, and our experiences have shaped radically different perspectives. We agree to hold that difference with care and attention.

We agree to acknowledge our differences and embrace the knowledge we as a collective can share. Using our accumulated knowledge to further our collaborators' learning experiences. Teaching and learning from each other without judgement and with understanding.

We agree to share our perspectives from multiple backgrounds, engage in the discussion to spark each other's ideas. We agree to be respectful and insightful.

Let's agree to concede our grand ambitions.
Let's agree to try, and have fun.
Let's agree to make plans together, and remake them later.

Surprise

Let's give up enough of our own idea of who the child should be, so we can get along. Let's try to understand why he bought the child a red firetruck and listen when he explains that he had one when he was a kid. Let's re-evaluate our own ideas on the matter when the kid gets some ideas of their own and decides to wear jeans with knee-holes. "By golly", we'll say years later, as we wave the kid off into the world on their Harley-Davidson Motorcycle that they bought with the money they made fishing golf balls out of the pond or something like that. "We sure couldn't've expected that kid to turn out that way." But there they will be. And we will be surprised.

22. Kozak, Laura, and Jean Chisholm. *Place-Based Responsibility*. Emily Carr DESIS Lab, 2021.

23. Andreotti, Vanessa, Elwood Jimmy, and Bill Calhoun. "Gift Contract." Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures, February 24, 2021. https://decolonialfutures.net/2021/02/15/gift-contract/.

24. Ali, Nura, and Annie Canto. *The Anti-Racist Classroom: Towards A Pedagogy of Consensual Learning (Workshop)*, 2019.

25. Holman, Felicia, and Ellie Mejía. "Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces and Why We Gon' Be Alright." City Bureau. City Bureau, February 3, 2021.
https://www.citybureau.org/notebook/2019/12/19/safe-spaces-brave-spaces-and-why-we-gon-be-alright.

26. "Chinatown w/ David Ng." Episode. *Mapping East Van* no. 5, n.d.
https://soundcloud.com/mapping-east-van/chinatown-w-david-ng.

27. Goodwin, and Taryn and Jay White. "Welcoming Statement for ECU Neurodiverse + Disabled Community," 2021. ECU Neurodiverse + Disabled Community.

28. "REMIX Art Camp Group Agreement" 2021.
Imaginary example based on my facilitation of REMIX Art Camp out of Sunset Community Centre, these are common group agreements that kids aged 6-12 would propose.

29. "WRTG 310: Collaborative Writing Group Agreements Summer 2020," June 2020. WRTG 310: Collaborative Writing.

D. D is for Disability

D. I. Intro to Accessibility

Each person has different ways and capacities for engagement. Therefore, everyone who does community-based work must be able to consider them. The spectrum of people's diverse capacities, and the ability to meet needs based on this capacity in order to fully engage with something, is called **accessibility**. What people need to participate in something based on personal ability are called **access needs** or **accomodations**. Accessibility can be organized around anything from availability of tools and technologies or methods for archiving/storytelling, and delineated by everything from region to diagnosis (or lack thereof). Accessibility then is also a practice of compromise, adaptability. This section on Disability is based specifically on my embodied experience as a multiply Disabled person, caregiver, and my connections with Others who are Disabled, Crippled, and Mad/Neurodivergent such as the lovely folks through ECU Disability + Neurodiverse Community.

As Johanna Hedva's [*Sick Woman Theory*](#)[30] illustrates, the standards for the political to live in the street is not accessible to those with chronic illness such as her own. The question: then how do you protest? Where is your direct action? Not everyone can gather and march in the streets, this is particularly evident as I am living through a pandemic currently. The answer: adapt, collaborate. Ask for what you need and what the people you're with need, and do your best to meet this for each other.

We can do this bureaucratically, for example as a diagnosed Disabled student I can go through a process to get an accommodation form. I take this form around to each of my professors which simultaneously lists how I need them to adapt to meet my needs and justifies my asking this of my professors and binds them as accountable. A fixed accommodation form cannot account for fluidity and adaptability that is required to have needs met as they come up and as we create language to articulate. Best practice as a facilitator or a teacher or someone in a position of responsibility & leadership is always to ask if there's anything else you can do which is not covered by an institutional accommodation form. And to keep checking in as needs are fluid and relative.

The obvious centre of making community work is being a part of community, which means these folks need you to also need the ability to be there for the long haul. If you're overworked, over-exploited by capitalism (aka burnt-out), generally approaching/beyond capacity, it's better to rest and come back than not. My accommodation form did not account for this, this is a boundary I have needed to set for myself.

As I mentioned before, community is also place and therefore we must be in conversation with the Land and Water, in addition to you and how you fit reciprocally in community. As a settler here, I learn about this from those Indigenous to Turtle Island. Nishnaabeg storyteller Leanne Betasamosake Simpson speaks of [Land as Pedagogy](#),[31] using play and [process-based](#)[32] learning with the Land according to Anishnaabe epistemology. In the story, Kwezens explores the Land freely, curiously, without danger or policing, "The land, aki, is both context and process." (7). It is clear from this story that a still-existing colonial barring of access to the Land and Water as sources of Indigenous knowledge,[33,34] making Land

and Waters inaccessible to Indigenous people is a form of genocide[2] and is disabling. After telling the story of Kwezens and the discovery of maple sap,[31] Simpson poses a series of obvious but important questions which acknowledge contemporary colonial learning context.

In the words of Erin Marie Konsmo and Karyn Recollet and the authors of *Indigenous & Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, what does it mean to **"[meet] the Land(s) where they're at"**? On water, Erin & Karyn continue on page 241,[2]

> Erin: Before I ever heard the phrase "water is life" I knew the phrase "harm reduction is life." It taught me about bringing water to where our people are at. People who use drugs and alcohol, access safer injection sites, and should be loved not stigmatized. There are calls for the need for water bottles as sites, whether they are land defense camps or safer injection sites. Both of these places can teach us about the water...Naloxone can be both injected or inhaled in a nasal spray. In both forms, this life-giving substance is in a liquid state just like water.

> Karyn: Erin, your words are urgent in this moment—we need to make sure that we are all alive so that we can make it to the water. I wonder—what are the choreographies, the practices we can employ "at the water's edge" so that we can make sure no one gets
> left behind?

To my understanding, meeting the Land(s) where they're at, bringing water to where people are at, and ensuring we can all make it to the water, means we acknowledge where we are and what we can do from here to reduce harm and build something better. It also means understanding our kinship/co-dependence/relationality to the Land and Water, how our access must be intersectional in fighting all oppression which would keep us from reaching the Water.

What does it mean when the ECU campus is here because Skwáchàys is paved over industrial waste and the very existence of the western academy was transplanted here both as tools of Indigenous epistemicide?[4]

We cannot spontaneously dig up the thick layer of industrial waste for the waterway Skwáchàys to re-emerge. But, as Rita Wong said to me, also taught to her by Indigenous Water Protectors, "the water is generous". She explained how after much lobbying and community advocacy, including art projects, the city finally plans to implement the [St. George Rainway](#)[35] which is an ecological community-focussed redesign of part of the headwaters, te: Statlew, that lie beneath.

While there are infinite needs, in practicing accessibility while making community work we can learn from the generosity of the water and her many life-giving ways. Like a river who has long etched its path, you can prioritize practicing a more broad, clear standard so that folks can **access your work/creation processes without needing to ask for extra accommodation AND being fluid in response to additional needs as they are communicated**.

D. II. Accessibility How-to's

<div style="border:1px solid #000; background:#e6e0f0; padding:8px; text-align:center;">

Prepare a pen and paper for individual reflection, finish each prompt with group sharing

</div>

Prompt 1: Let's begin with YOU. Check in! Group sharing for all questions is optional

How is your body? What is it telling you?

What is your current capacity? Can you communicate this somehow if needed?

How can you listen and meet your needs yourself or ask for help in this?

Do you have any specific *access needs/accommodations* which make it easier to work?

Are you someone who can meet in person to make stuff and chat and march together?

Can you engage online? Can you engage digitally?

Do you need a break?

Conclusion: Wherever you are, *acknowledge and hold space for this embodiment*.
Extend this empathy to community too (as you are community and community is you!)
There's nothing wrong with not being able to engage how you're expected if there is another way which would be more accessible!

Prompt 2.A: Sharing in creativity. To practice, this can be applied in reflection to previous projects
Before inviting someone to join you in making art or viewing your finished art:

Have you shared what medium(s) are you going to be making/showing work in IN ADVANCE? if there is more than one work which are using different mediums, each work should have a statement/description

Have you shared an artist's statement or summary of what you're asking folks to participate in and what you want to make/have made? This is a trauma-informed practice.

if your work is/will be heavily visual, have you considered audio-description or, if online, a written text image description?

If it is heavily audio-based, have you considered a transcript/live captions and written description of the audio, and sign language interpretation (which is a different language than written or spoken language)?

Have you asked potential participants about their access needs?

Are you prepared to be available to coordinate access needs while your experience is ongoing? Have you communicated that?

2.B: in person/IRL/physical space? Consider sharing a physical description of where you plan to meet directly to registered participants or on your invitation/poster/event page including details such as:

Is the building wheelchair accessible? How wide are the doorways?

Is there a washroom nearby? Water? Food?

How many people do you expect to be there?

If you're in a group or a crowded place, is there a space away from people where someone can take a rest away from the stimulation?

Is there somewhere to sit?

Conclusion: Unless you know those who you're working with well already (and even then, this is a new relationality), do not assume that someone does not require specific accommodations. Sometimes the institutions you're working in have small grants or funds for accessibility, and additional funds can be applied for through granting institutions. For example, ECU's Culture + Community Faculty has a microgrant program open to all CAC faculty and staff, as well as students currently in Foundation, majoring in CRCP, and minoring in SPACE. You should check with your faculty's dean and your professors to see if other funding streams are available.

Standardized Accessibility is just a start
Standards vary but are a template to build an infrastructure to start interacting with folks, though even standards are relative to where you're working from. Accessibility standards are always going to be just the beginning of the conversations and actions through which you will adapt to community/community will adapt to you. The accessibility of a place and your work should be explained clearly in an accessibility statement. A comprehensive and admittedly well-funded example of an accessibility statement for (Dis)ability focussed accomodations for in-person and digital art programming is a media arts festival called Digital Carnival: Z.[36] Both Digital Carnival: Z and this year's ECU Grad Show (2021) were curated using the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WGAC) 2.0[37] which is considered to be the world standard.
That robust standard of access (which sometimes requires paid professionals & services and definitely significant time investment) is not always possible, so as the convening artist you're also responsible for responding to accommodation requests.

Prompt 3: Accessibility as an ongoing call and response. A supporting exchange.

In pairs or groups of three, share access needs and brainstorm how we can meet them, starting with the workshop space you're working from, then with the whole class. Revisit upon entering/planning community work. Use prompt 2 as a reference for questions.

Example 1:
What do you need to join together? [Describe circumstances and ideal experience]

X: I need _____

YOU: *Ok, I can do _____, does that work?*

X: I don't know, let's try it.
X: Oh _____ is working, but not _____. Could you do _____ instead?

YOU: *Sure!*

and so on. Or something like that. If you can't do something, be honest about that too, but first brainstorm if there's a compromise and/or if community members can also help with meeting access needs.

Example 2: Sometimes it's helpful to share your needs first to establish dialogue and trust.

Mickey's access needs/accommodations:
Personally, I don't do well in crowds and I will probably need to have someone who I know already with me if I am going into a new space. This also applies to an online space.

I like to be able to eat and sometimes need reminders to check in with my body like wear a hat when it's sunny or to drink water or eat snacks.

I'm hard of hearing so I appreciate people not covering their mouth when they talk and leaving cameras on if we are online so I can read lips, or turning on closed captioning.
I also have PTSD, with trauma specifically around domestic violence and self harm/suicide so if you're going to talk in detail about that I'd appreciate a warning, and I may leave the space or disengage with the conversation.

I like to care for people and it keeps me happy to meet people's needs, so please let me know if you need any accommodations to engage with this toolkit & manifesto.

Conclusion: When exploring access, whether with a new group, new project, or when you are new to the process of accommodation, work from where you are and understand that accessibility is a relationship. It will never be perfect, making accommodations and expressing your access needs will always be an ongoing process that requires checking in. This exercise in communicating your access needs also allows you on a personal level to understand how you can ask for what you need to continue with a community, and your boundaries which indicate you need to leave as your needs are not being met.

Prompt 4: Accommodations for inaccess because of various oppression and obstacles which are disabling. What are some accommodations that can be offered for those who experience disability from their position within structural oppression?[30]

For the security of queer, transgender, and gender non-conforming folks, are there gender-neutral washrooms available?

Are you and other facilitators comfortable and experienced with confronting oppressive (ie. misogynoir, racism, transphobia) actions or statements should they come up? Are you experienced with supporting those who this oppression is directed toward?

Is there frequent security/police presence/surveillance? When constructed and upheld by colonial, racist institutions (such as on-campus security, different than security in the form of community like Bear Clan) these forces can be dangerous for Black and/or Indigenous people, Disabled, addicted, homeless, and intersectionally[38] criminalized folks

Do folks have access to the internet or new tech? If not, how will you adapt/prepare for that?

Do folks have children? Can you offer childcare? If not, is the space you're in accessible and engaging for children?

Do folks speak english (or whatever language you're making art in)? Can you offer translation services?

Do folks regularly use drugs? Are you/can you get trained to administer naloxone in the case of an overdose? Do you feel comfortable supervising drug consumption? If not is there a supervised injection site or drug dealers/users nearby who can agree to help?

Conclusion: Access needs and the necessary accommodations are not just for disabilities that are medical or can be diagnosed. Use your best judgement for what is most urgently needed by those you're working with, what you're capable of or can get support in providing, and to ask where you're unsure. Many considerations for this prompt were from models such as Humanities 101 (Hum).[39]

The kind of relativity, fluidity, and responsiveness that is required to maintain accessibility is also how a group agreement can become a living creative practice, or at least how one keeps a practice of empathy. Such is the basis for [Carmel Papallia's Five Tenets of Open Acces](#)[40] and [Johanna Hedva's Sick Woman Theory](#)[30] and much of Crip theory. And while these forms of access are designed for specific embodiments, *to incorporate accessibility at the foundation of your work will inherently make it more immersive and welcoming regardless of access needs.*

30. Hedva, Johanna. "Sick Woman Theory," 2020. http://johannahedva.com/SickWomanTheory_Hedva_2020.pdf.

31. Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 3 (2014): 1–25. http://whereareyouquetzalcoatl.com/mesofigurineproject/EthnicAndIndigenousStudiesArticles/Simpson2014.pdf.

32. Rault, Jas, and T.L. Cowan. "Heavy Processing Part I -- Lesbian Processing." DREC, August 18, 2020. http://www.drecollab.org/heavy-processing/.

33. "About." http://www.tinyhousewarriors.com/#about. Tiny House Warriors, n.d.

34. "Open Letter to Vancouver Parks Board, City of Vancouver from Qw'emexetel Lät Sparrow." Google Forms, September 2021. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfab2A1Fouylc1p_Jm3-XXmZB4e-f4HCG8gDxZgsM-40e2s5Q/viewform.

2. Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, Alex Wilson, and Marie Laing. "Queering Indigenous Education." Essay. In *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, 133. New York, NY: Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2019.

31. Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 3 (2014): 1–25. http://whereareyouquetzalcoatl.com/mesofigurineproject/EthnicAndIndigenousStudiesArticles/Simpson2014.pdf.

2. Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, Alex Wilson, and Marie Laing. "Meeting the Land(s) Where They're At." Essay. In *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, 241. New York, NY: Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2019

35. The St. George Rainway, n.d. http://www.rainway.ca/.

36. "ZAccessibility." Digital Carnival Z, 2021. https://digitalcarnival.ca/accessibility/.

37. *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0*. *W3C* 2. Vol. 2. 2 vols. W3C, n.d. https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/.

30. Hedva, Johanna. "Sick Woman Theory," 2020.
http://johannahedva.com/SickWomanTheory_Hedva_2020.pdf.

38. The combatting of disability/oppression through access must be intersectional. Intersectionality is the acknowledgement/embodiment of more than one point of oppression at once, for example Black and a woman. Neither/none of these points can be understood as isolated from each other, and rather are always compounded. Kimberle Crenshaw in her work A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics (cit. 3) is often credited with coining this term. Though she denies sole credit this theorization has remained significant contribution to feminist politik since the notorious era of insurgent Women of Color Feminism in the 70's and 80's. As stated in the conclusion of this section, an intersectional approach which targets liberation for those who are most oppressed will inherently be accessible for all. This understanding of intersectionality was shared through ECU's Critical Race Theory course in Spring 2020

39. "Home Page: Humanities 101." Hum (Humanities 101 Community Programme). UBC, n.d. https://humanities101.arts.ubc.ca/.

40. Papalia, Carmen. "An Accessibility Manifesto for the Arts." *Canadianart*, January 2, 2018. https://canadianart.ca/essays/access-revived/

30. Hedva, Johanna. "Sick Woman Theory," 2020.
http://johannahedva.com/SickWomanTheory_Hedva_2020.pdf.

E. Accountability and Reciprocity

E. I. Ethical Bodies

The Research Ethics Board (REB) is the group at ECU and all canadian institutions that do research involving humans who enforce and offer guidance on TCPS 2 ethical mandates in their institutions.[1] As a condition of receiving funding from the canadian government for research, the "Agencies" or organizations are accountable to these mandates.[1] Emily Carr University being a school for art and design, much of the community-based work outside of the design faculty does not require REB review as it is art not research "even if they employ methods and techniques similar to those in research (Articles 2.5 and 2.6)."

What could a community-based ethics board look like? A research ethics board which is accountable to community members of the research groups directly?

To say no, create new community-embedded research standards, guide students, a place to refer people with questions about community work within specific communities, to be on lists of people ok to be hired as guests/consultants in classrooms, to have the authority to give statements/recommendations to supervisors like deans and faculty and the public (no-reply email powers, no restrictions on using personal platforms to make comments on students conduct if not being listened to directly), to distribute calls to action to department heads...

Lois Klassen, ECU's current REB Coordinator, shares that the advantage of creative research not being beholden to strict ethics guidelines allows for experimentation and academic/creative freedom, but it should not mean that we are not beholden to the communities we are entering.[41] One or some members of a community will not (unless they are an official community representative, and even then) reasonably represent all of a community as no community is a monolith, however with a body or connections like this we will not be starting from scratch and instead be able to ground our practices with someone who has lived experience in the communities we are entering. The REB is one ethical body, and can be approached for consultation or to approve research-creation projects[42] though creative work is not something that needs REB approval.

Often it is more useful to think of an ethics board as those whom you are accountable to in these community relationships. Those who keep you in check. Your ethics board are your classmates/cohort/collaborative partners, they are your teacher, they are the mentors or relationships you enter into recognizing that someone holds more knowledge than you in a certain field, and yes they are everyone you build a relationship with in the short term through a couple hours-long event and the semester-long, degree-long, or even life-long bonds.

What this accountability looks like will vary, but here are a few suggestions to start, recognizing that every space will have a unique understanding of what accountability acts like:

- Enter places and communities as people first, rather than students/professionals
- Communication and Compromise is Key: Keeping people in the loop, not acting or speaking on people's behalf without their understanding you are going to do so, nor imposing your decisions upon others (democracy, communication, and compromise).
- Opting-in: Be willing to take "no" as an answer, and no answer also as a "no" or at least "not right now"
- Publishing your work in a place that is accessible (ie. not private collections or pay-to-view academic repositories), if this is not possible you can share copies of the work in a way that is accessible and can be distributed to all community members involved or affected by what you're doing.[17]
    - This will be relative, so make sure to ask and be willing to re-imagine or re-form ways that results are presented so they're accessible as well as meaningful
- Group agreements and memorandums of understanding in plain conversational language, written is not necessary but again is helpful to refer back to
- See what you can do long-term, even if it's just donating a small regular amount or volunteering or advocating for the implementation of systems of accountability for future students, faculty, and administrators [17,15,2]
- How can we redistribute the wealth and benefits of the institutions we are a part of to communities who most need it? *University as Neighbour*[15] and *Hum*[39] as examples

For community-based art, and research, the ethics of what you're doing will always extend beyond the planned activity. More than what you're doing, it's important how, why, and for whom you create. In practice this often feels instinctual, a gut emotion rather than/before a rationalization. Rebecca Wang, a fellow ECU alum from 2021, offered her own experience after making activist and community-based art for the first time in *Oppenheimer Park: A Historical Site for the Displaced*[43]

> "One of my main questions before I approach this subject as an outsider, is how do I do it, like, not only on my terms but as a reciprocal effort. Not to just take what I want and leave and do it as a one time thing. When I went and interviewed the coordinator for Carnegie Community Action Project, Fiona York, I met her at one of the SRO's at East Hastings St., and actually she couldn't make it to the original place we decided to meet. She was at the SRO helping her friend packing up food for Camp KT, so I went to that place instead. And during the interview I also helped her pack food and afterward I stayed and did a little bit more, like, **even as someone who did this interview for the first time I knew, I felt at the time it's just so wrong to just got what I want and stood up and leave.** It's just not right."
>   - **Rebecca Wang *Mapping East Van*[44] *podcast***

E. II. On Dis-agreement and Discordance

A pluralistic community and honest exchange means that there will be disagreement and discordance at times, this is inevitable. I've spoken in the previous section about taking "no" for an answer, and in section A. Introduction responses to institutional conflict are outlined. A reminder:

> Whereby the standards of your institution conflict with the standards of community you're entering, you must make a choice: disobey institutional standards, change or abolish institutional conditions, stop the project, or move the project our of the institution. **To continue with institutional standards knowing they conflict with the standards outlined by community is violent.**

In the case of a post-secondary class, particularly after the add/drop period, sometimes you're stuck with em. You're stuck with your teammates and your teachers and your co-workers. You're stuck with the neighbours of the area you live in. Even when you're not stuck with no other options, it's good to give it a try to work through things with folks rather than just leave. You can set a meeting to talk live, or if you're someone who is tired of talking to that person or perhaps will be overtaken by emotion more than you'll be able to move through things it may be better to express yourself in writing or through a pre-recorded oration (voice memo, loom, etc.). If you want, get a mediator or witness to be in the discussion with you, this can be a peer or the student's union or faculty association or even me!

During my fourth year when I had just given up bothering to create critical dialogues in class on my own to no avail, I wrote a letter to the tenured professor for my final reflection assignment. I chose to go to the professor directly because these punitively applied professor review measures are against my values. Anecdotally, I have been told by professors that the end-of-semester student surveys are of greater consequence to non-regular professors who have to reapply for their jobs each semester as they do not have the job security of a regular appointment. Such is a natural conclusion from texts like *Non-Regular*[46] which was created with the anonymized testimony of sessional ECU professors.
[Link to full letter.][47]

> Dear [faculty],
>
> In this reflection letter I am discussing the ways in which the class and it's content has often not practiced transformative care-work, and the spaces created that have the potential to be made and maintained through what has been introduced in this class over the past semester. Using Mierle Laderman Ukeles model[48] of "Two basic systems [for revolution]: Development and Maintenance" and, adding a transitional/mechitza/liminal space because it's never so cleanly divided, I will attempt to critique and analyze transformative care work in the classroom context. This reflection paper is showing care for you, [faculty], by sharing honest criticisms and telling how I've been frustrated and

even disappointed in this course--particularly based on your prolific reputation in the school and [creative discipline] community. Because of the amount of wonderful non-critical things I've heard about you and your practice, I figure perhaps people do not do this critical feedback so often at this point in your career either. As well, this is care for myself and my classmates by not making myself smaller to fit into your class, which is based on your practice and experience, not mine.

First, some principles to understand transformative care work

That which is not transformative care work: *not intersectional, not dissecting capitalism, reformative/punitive*

That which would be/is transformative: *naming/rupturing/providing alternatives to oppressive systems, transformative--but it has to be intersectional, foundational, bottom up (Crenshaw)*[3]

Part of what I have been quite frustrated with is comments you make such as "It's ok if you work with a developer, it doesn't make you a sell-out" without unpacking the capitalism that drives us to such a precarious place that we have to work with developers. I also disagree, and think this would make you a sell-out, but sometimes you need to sell-out to survive. An important distinction from those who go into/sustain relationships with developers with the naïve belief perpetuated in this school that these neoliberal reneviction machines will do [only] the bare minimum legally obligated of them to help the communities they're invading.[49,50] Or, when I as a student have to be the one to make explicit the racism of a white person being more "approachable" than a brown person. Or when [student] must make explicit the colonial genocide of Thanksgiving. Making these things explicit makes space for acknowledging the greater oppressive power structures at play which resonate for students, considering particularly students of color, immigrants and first generation, poor, and otherwise Othered/dis-abled/disenfranchised students in order to ensure our genuine comprehension and engagement.[51] This is also congruent with Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality that has been adopted by women of color feminists and anti-racists, as well as the Anti-Racist ECU petition[12] written this summer, in particular section 1.A:

> At the **beginning of every course** there is an **acknowledgement by the faculty** that if Western ways of Knowing are to be taught in the class-space, it is for the purpose of **becoming familiar with the culture of power and its codes, a.k.a colonial white-supremacy** so that we may be successful in **abolishing** these conditions.

What does it do when I or other students interrupt? What does it do when we message each other privately during class on another platform because private messaging to classmates is disabled but no one asks publicly if we can turn it on? Functionally, students having to constantly apply and teach a fundamental lens in response to each lecture or learning resource is reformative of your teaching measures. It is also exhausting. Half the time I do not have the spoons to interrupt your lecture verbally to put a critical lens to it, unpack the at times dangerous half-truths which allow ignorance

and perpetuation of oppressive structures to be brought into the classroom. However much this intersectional lens makes space for students to learn transformative approaches to abolishing oppression on an individual level, it is an unsustainable way of making change or space without you as a teacher becoming transformational in your approach to facilitation of a caring class-space so we can do so together.

….

And so, with each of the written and facilitated forms provided to supplement this class there is potential for not just revormative but transformative care in the space. But without challenging yourself and us to imagine with criticality of intersectional oppressions, at a foundational level we are missing a space from which we can build better ways of interacting with each other and sustainable systems to provide care for our communities. First, by being explicit and specific rather than elusive when mitigating those things which result from systemic and interpersonal oppression that manifest in/through the class-space, you can address those who have not already begun to unpack this oppression while making care-ful space for a collective imagining of alternatives. We must too be critical of our place as artists and students at ECUAD as to how we perpetuate these violences systemically through neoliberalism. This interpersonal-systemic something that some students make space for already, but you are responsible to bring into the class as the facilitator of this space and as a social practice artist yourself. Though at times the sparks of intervention we bring to each other have been and will continue to be exhausting, it can be especially transformational, revolutionary, when those who bring us together/are responsible for maintenance of the space practice this criticality themselves and nourish us to do so with ourselves and each other. The space of a class, of people who are here to learn with and from our colleagues/potential accomplices in revolution, to create and imagine together, is a perfect space as any for a spark to become a flame of transformation if encouraged with care.

With Anger, Empathy, and Hope,
Mickey

Note: This letter has been edited to conform to the Manifesto on Neighbourliness *citation style and to anonymize the teacher to which this letter is written*.

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Conclusion

Manifesto on Neighbourliness: Ethics Toolkit for Creative Community Inspiration is both a manifesto and a toolkit.

I have deliberately made this academic text situated, without pretending omniscience or objectivity or passivity as is common in academia. I know I am coming from a situatedness that is essential to how I conduct myself in community and how I learn, what knowledge I already come into the room with (or don't). I know that you, as a reader, are also a person with your own positionality. I wrote this manifesto/toolkit with the intention for you to read this personally, for you to better be able to take seriously our responsibility of involving people in our institutional work. Such responsibility is an active one, and requires maintenance.

The biggest loose end from this project, from mine and many folks' time as students at ECUAD, is a lack of sustainable infrastructure within which to create. From the beginning of my time at ECU, I yearned to pick up the work which was started by previous students and current faculty whose classes had since moved on for the semester. The current infrastructure of the school prompts students to create a new project each week, semester, and up to a two year span only for dissertation in the graduate program. Even if undergraduate students are to make a four year project, by design the Bachelor Degree program finishes and new grads are expected to move on/forward along with their ideas. Faculty, administrators, and community collaborators I've talked to over the years regularly lament the passion and momentum which is lost when students graduate and brilliant projects we seeded are not maintained. In some ways this manifesto and toolkit is out of a hope for some of these seeds to be maintained for durations that are as sustainable as each community needs.

I asked, and in some cases insisted, upon what I needed to articulate this exploration that has been in the making in excess of my Bachelor of Fine Arts' four years. What was initially a timeline of three months is approaching one year since I began writing a manifesto (a writing designed to prompt action), and a toolkit (designed to share tools to hold while you act). In itself, the ability to assemble such a toolkit was a community exchange. Hopefully, with fires alight you now have some additional tools to tend them in and beyond the work you do from an institutional position. The position occupied by those who do community work under the authority of an institution and who are not held as strictly to ethical guidelines is one of utmost responsibility. The institution's desires and your desires do not act as a rationalization for you to commit and uphold violence in the communities you enter. The responsibility is instead to centre care and equity, in reciprocity toward the entire ecosystem you create work within, not just the institutional systems of deadlines, classes, projects, and assignments. Hand in hand with such responsibility is the joy of making an impact in your ecosystem and vice versa. One year after graduating, becoming better at creating together is still what I pursue.

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