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Title:
Risking It: Transformational Art in Primary Education

Date:
2022

Persistent Link:
https://hdl.handle.net/11343/326909

Risking It:

Transformational Art Practice

in Primary Education.

by Clare Walton

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This Thesis is being submitted for a Doctor of Philosophy Date of Submission:

Submitted: October 2023
Resubmitted: March 2023

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, Melbourne School of Design

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Submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

Over the past 30 years, children's access to risky activities and play has significantly decreased despite the mounting evidence that it supports children's development. Discourse on children's citizenship and right to engage in risky activities has been examined in the fields of child psychology, geography, urban planning and more recently, socially engaged arts, but there has been very little work investigating how the socially engaged arts practice can create an enabling environment for risky play situated inside the walls of the traditional school. Working across two campuses of a primary school in a regional city in south-east Australia with children (aged 9 to 11 years), this project used a socially engaged arts practice to support participants to build their own adventure playgrounds. The research was documented using photography, and audio recordings, and journal notations by the participants and the researcher. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with parents and teachers, the assisting teacher and artist's assistant. Applying practice-led research methods and critical ethnography, the thesis found that measured risky play activates children's citizenship and enables them to build stronger communities. It also revealed the challenges of addressing perceived risk to the school and to the lead researcher's own practice as an artist.

The creative component of this thesis has been developed as an Adventure Playground called *Kids' Urban Dreaming*, built in collaboration with students across two campuses of a primary school in south-west regional Victoria. The documentation of the building of *Kids' Urban Dreaming* is embedded within the thesis and includes photographic and video documentation. A summary of the creative component is a short video that features members of the Kids Urban Dream Team working together to create their adventure playground, highlighting how measured risky play can support children in the development of their active citizenship.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

- the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated,
- due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

the thesis is fewer than 50,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendix. The actual word count is 43,489.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who have helped and supported me along the road to completing my Doctorate.

Associate Professor Dr Janet McGaw (Primary Supervisor) Dr Danny Butt (Co-Supervisor)

Chair: Associate Professor David Nichols (2017 - 2018)
Dr Alexander Selenitsch (2018-202)
Associate Professor Anna Hurlimann (2021-2022

Panel Members: Dr Marnie Badham (RMIT)

Those who started me on my way

Professor Caroline Whitzman
Dr Andrea Cook
Dr Tanja Beer

All the teachers, school support staff, assistant artist, students and their parents.
Miss E, Miss O, Mr K, Mr F, Miss K

Queen of Water, Devil Queen, Nic Naitanui, Rachelle, Queen of Hearts, Casper, Gamer Boy, Mischief Maker, Frida, Sweetpea, Blue Bell, King Loui, Bumble Bee, Gruffalo, Mischief Maker, Princess K, The Wizard, Sunshine Queen, Captain Invincible, Super Max and Magic Maker

And last but not least my family and friends who each in their own way made sure I didn't go too crazy.

Sources of Funding;

University of Melbourne PhD Scholarship Melbourne School of Design Fieldwork Funding
University of Melbourne COVID-19 PhD Scholarship extension Creativity and Wellbeing Hallmark Research Institute (CAWRI)

Research Question

This thesis examines the potential of measured risky play to support children's citizenship in the context of a primary school and the role that risk plays in the socially engaged artist's creative practice. Using adventure play as a key strategy of engagement, the research examined the overarching question:

How can a socially engaged art practice based on measured risky play in an educational environment support children's social, emotional and educational development?

Preface

The inspiration for this thesis came from a desire to further examine the practice I had developed in my role as a playworker and artist in residence at Fitzroy Adventure Playground, affectionately known as 'Cubbies'.

I was first introduced to Fitzroy Adventure Playground and the adventure playground concept in 2008. Landscape Architect Carl Sørenson developed the adventure playground concept in the 1930's and the first adventure playground, originally known as the Junkyard playground, was built in 1943 in Emdrup, Denmark (Bengtsson, 1972). Inside the adventure playground children take charge and are let loose to design and build their own space. Saws, hammers, old building materials, picks, shovels, axes and a whole assortment of what would normally be viewed as junk are at their disposal. Adults are there merely to ensure that the chaos does not result in serious injury or to help children when directly asked.

Since Emdrup first opened its gates, there have been thousands of adventure playgrounds built across the world, including Fitzroy Adventure Playground (Cubbies), the first adventure playground to be built in Australia in 1972. In 2008, after residencies at Skinners (South Melbourne) and St Kilda Adventure Playgrounds, I was invited to work as an artist in residence at Cubbies. My engagement as an artist in residence at Cubbies led to a casual position as a playworker. For the next eight years I became entrenched in the Cubbies community. My role was to support children to engage in carefully measured risky activities, keep the space clean, cook with the children and make art. But ultimately, I was there to provide children with scaffolding and support to engage in activities of their own design. This was a totally new concept to me as most of my experience up until this point working with children was as an artist-in-residence in schools and running recycled art workshops for schools and festivals, where the programs were pre-designed to themes set by the adults. Through my role at Cubbies, I learnt what child-led art meant and I gained first-hand experience in how the adventure playground directly impacted on the participants' playground directly impacted on the participants' lives and how it helped them to develop friendships and connections to their community.

In 2016 I enrolled in a Master of Public Art at RMIT University to examine and develop an arts practice based on adventure play that invited children and young people to activate disused public space. My master's thesis by creative works resulted in a project entitled *The Ultimate Pop-Up Junkyard Playground*. *The Ultimate Pop-Up Junkyard Playground* brought together over 250 children and young people from across Melbourne and beyond over two days. Together they turned a disused school yard into a village using reclaimed building materials, saws, hammers, cordless drills, and an assortment of found objects. The project provided evidence that supported the adventure playground as a public art practice that can support children and young people to engage in activating disused public space on their own terms.

In Australia and internationally artists have used a socially engaged practice to collaborate with children highlighting their collaborators capacity to engage as creative active citizens in their community. Artists including Darren O'Donnell, Louise Phillips, Lenine Bourke and Assemble Studios argue that children have a right to engage as active citizens and that they are capable of making contributions to the development of their community. In addition, by supporting them, they are also supporting the development of an inclusive community. O'Donnell (2018) argues that children need to be included more extensively in the decision-making processes that directly affect them and that the level of children's participation can be "read as a barometer of a given institution's commitment to human rights" (p. 2). An inclusive society works and engages with children, supporting them to engage in the creation of their community as people whose contributions are of equal value to all other members of that community.

While providing supporting evidence for adventure play as a tool to activate public space, my master's thesis also raised further questions to be examined: How can my practice be developed to help activate children and young people's citizenship? Does it have the capacity to break down social barriers and support participants' active engagement in their community? What are the risks to the participants and the artist? As a socially engage practitioner who has developed my practice with the intention to create social change, these are questions that sparked my curiosity. How could I be certain that the practice created social change if I had not immersed myself in a process of critically examining the longer-term impact it had on the participants I worked with? I wondered, what would it be like to take

measured risk into a traditional school setting, with the intention to support children's social, emotional and educational development using the tools and materials to build their own environment? Would it give children a sense of agency? Would it change their sense of self-confidence? Build their capacity to increase their engagement with their peers and their learning? Would the institution embrace it? Or would it be seen as … too risky?

This thesis has been undertaken by an equal combination of dissertation and creative works. As a socially engaged artist, I developed the creative component as an Adventure Playground called *Kids' Urban Dreaming* within the grounds of a primary school across two campuses in a regional city in south-east Australia. After developing the proposal, I then worked with a group of children at the school for three terms as instigator, facilitator, scaffolder, inspirer, and co-creator. The creative works co-produced with the young artists are both a method of inquiry, and generative of findings for others who want to incorporate risky play into the lives of young people. Images, video links and photographs of the creative work are embedded throughout the Discussion section of the dissertation.

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Introduction

Aims

This research project examines how measured risky play in a socially engaged art practice can support children's social, emotional and educational development and support their engagement as creative active citizens inside the walls of a traditional educational institution. There has been significant research into the benefits of allowing children to engage in measured risky play including the ways it can support children develop their agency and social skills (Sandseter, 2009). This thesis examines how the benefits of measured risky play can translate to support children to redefine who they are within the confines of the school setting. The thesis set out to examine how measured risky play as a key tool of engagement can help participants work through their fear of failure, rejection, making mistakes and connecting with their peers, thus enabling them to overcome their lack of self-worth through the creation of their own safe space inside the confines of the institution. It examined how the process can support participants to develop their capacity to engage as creative active citizens using measured risky play as a key art tool.

Measured risky play in the context of this thesis refers to play that allows children to engage in activities and play that involve the risk of physical injury, making mistakes and testing their personal limitations but where adults are present to regulate to ensure the child's safety (Sandseter, 2009). It differs from what is defined as managed risk, which is typically risk minimisation, in part to protect children from harm, but also to protect adults from potential litigation (Sandseter, 2009). What is perceived as measured risky play or managed risky play though can vary depending on the adult's subjective view and personal experience of risk (Adams, 2001). When risk is embraced in play it is framed as a positive attribute that provides challenges and adventures for children to actively respond to (Smith, 1990). Measured risky play affords children the opportunity to engage in activities that they have never attempted before; they get to experience the thrill of skirting danger and learn their own limitations, which in turn promotes their internal decision making and agency (Stephenson, 2003; Sandseter, 2009; Sandseter & Kennair,2011).

A key element to ensure measured risky play did not become managed risky play in this project was the promotion of scaffolding. Craft (2008) discusses how Brunner's concept of scaffolding – learning through modelling, cueing and challenging – could be developed in a peer-to-peer setting. Craft asserts that scaffolding when developed in a peer-to-peer setting promotes, the more skilled and confident peers to support less confident and or less skilled peers in developing new skills (Craft, 2008). By using tools that are normally relegated to the world of adults (i.e., saws, hammers, cordless drills and pickaxes), participants were provided with the opportunity to engage in measured risky activities and to engage in peer-to-peer learning. As the project progressed participants developed their capacity to engage as leaders and peer-to-peer teachers and learners, demonstrating their ability to collaborate and support each other to develop their individual and collective agency.

In addition, the safe space that participants, the assisting teachers, assisting artist and collaboratively created further supported the participants in the development of their agency. I argue safe spaces play an important role in helping children develop their agency and active citizenship. The safe space in this research project is defined as a space where children have control and ownership over the development of their space and where they are promoted to shape and reshape their physical space repeatedly (Chatterjee, 2005). In the child-created safe spaces children hold the position of power. By unsettling traditional child and adult power hierarchies, I was able to examine the effects of power constructs on children's agency. I found when children develop their own safe space they want to nurture and protect it (Chatterjee, 2005) and in turn, are better able to nurture and develop relationships with their peers.

This project also explores the nuances of risk in a socially engaged art practice that relies on social discourse (Kester, 2005). This research project found that risk comes in a variety of forms. While it can be an impediment to manage, it can also be a transformational tool. Working with measured risk inside a primary school required careful negotiation, explanation and clarity of the risk management strategies I would undertake as an artist in residence. As an artist, I needed to safely relinquish control of the outcomes to my young collaborators while they took social and emotional risks in working together. We discovered together that we needed to find new rituals to enable us to collaborate productively. While at times it was

challenging, we found taking measured risks to be a powerful transformational practice promoting growth in us all.

Methods

This research project used a practice-led research method (Gray, 1996; Bolt, 2010; Nelson, 2013) and critical ethnography (Thomas, 2013) to examine the research question. The data collected throughout the project – which included photographs and videos taken by the participants and myself, semi-structured interviews with the children, parents, teachers and assisting artist, and my own reflective journals – were analysed using narrative (Esin et al., 2014) and visual analysis (Bank, 2014). My arts practice sat at the heart of the methodology, providing key evidence to support the creation of new knowledge (Nelson, 2013). The practice, which shifted between child-led and collaborative, constantly evolved, supporting the examination of questions as they arose and allowing for unexpected moments and challenges to be incorporated into the research process, creating a rich tapestry of insights and new knowledge (Gray, 1993; Nelson, 2013). We cycled between moments of "knowing in action" and "reflection in action", through which I critically analysed my own actions and the participants actions (Schon, 1983), affording me an opportunity to critically reflect on the practice before stepping back onto the site each week.

While the participatory data collection ensured that the child participants' voices were acknowledged and incorporated throughout the development and in the final outcomes of the research project, my practice of journaling ensured that I analysed and critiqued my own role in shaping (or inhibiting) the children's practice. I used critical ethnography to examine the culture, actions and knowledge of the participants, which encouraged me to see beyond the social roles that constrained the participants (Thomas, 1993). This included acknowledging any preconceptions that I held because of our cultural and class differences.

The project was based on the original concept of the adventure playground developed by landscape architect Carl Sørenson in the 1930's (Bengttson, 1972). The child participants, nine to eleven years of age, engaged in measured risky activities including using saws, hammers, cordless drills and pickaxes, to design and build their own safe space. The works created by

the participants and the rituals and practices they created formed a critical part of the data which were recorded using arts-based methods I was familiar with. I gave participants access to my SLR Camera, a GoPro and a mobile phone to record the project when they felt comfortable and confident to do so. They could choose how and when they participated in the data collection method and each of their contributions provided their unique perspective of the project providing further insight into how the project was unfolding. After each session I would sit down and journal, listening to and watching the recordings from the day's session which supported me to re-immerse myself into the session. Together, the photos, videos, interviews and journals constituted a thick description of the project.

Before, during and after each session I analysed the rituals and practices that I and the participants were developing. Critical ethnography — defined by sociologist Jim Thomas as ethnography with a political bent — incorporates an examination and reflection of the culture and practices of my work, the participants and the institution where the work took place (Thomas, 1993). The constant critical reflection before, during and after each session allowed me to see the hidden interactions and moments between the participants and the site, leading to the development of new knowledge (Schon, 1983; Greenwood, 1993). Each week I would re-evaluate the project, reflecting on our varied rituals and practices, the way we interacted and the way the participants interacted with and described their world (O'Neill, 2013). The intertwining of the voices of the participants and the wider community with my own, was a strategy of "triangulation" (Patton, 1999) which ensured my own implicit biases were always challenged by the perspective of others in addressing the question,

"How can a socially engaged art practice based on measured risky play in an educational environment support children's social, emotional and educational development?"

Findings

Measured risky play was found to be a practice that has the capacity to support children reconfigure their relationship to self, each other, and their school, improving their sense of self-worth and ability to engage as peer-to-peer teachers, learners, leaders, and active citizens in their community.

I also examined risk in relation to the development of my socially engaged artistic practice — a practice which relies on social discourse with my collaborators and the wider community (Helguera, 2011). Throughout the implementation of the project the impacts of risk varied. They included the difficulties and uncomfortable situations that can occur when collaborating with young participants; negotiating the challenges of introducing a non-traditional arts practice into a traditional institution; and the risks to participants when the safe space we created was interrupted by the school staff's actions and or inactions. My continual re-evaluation and critique led to the development of new practices that celebrated the participants' rituals and practices and displayed their capacity as active citizens in the design and creation of their safe space to the school community.

The staff and leadership teams on each of the school campuses varied in their engagement, interest and commitment to the program, which had an impact on the program's longevity but not on its effect. Even when school staff were uncertain or lacked commitment there were lasting positive impacts observed by some staff on the participants. The positive impacts the program had on the students also provided a conduit for the development of more positive relationships with parents; relationships that centred around their children's achievements as opposed to their lack of achievement or difficult behaviour. One teacher noted how this continued into the following year and had opened discussions around the inclusion of culture and alternative ways of learning. Furthermore, the outcomes from the project have led to a growing interest in the model with other schools and school-based art programs.

The safe space we created ensured children were able to test their limitations and develop their confidence leading them to new roles, including leadership. The children's newfound success in an environment where they were acknowledged to often struggle transformed their self-esteem, relationship with their peers and their environment, and led to more positive parental engagement with the school too. In addition, the program provided a platform for the children to share who they are with the wider community and display their ability to co-create a supportive and nurturing community.

The voice of the child was fully embraced in this project. The practices and language of the children became the key tools of engagement, this ensured that the participants went from being passive participants to collaborative-participants. Child-led play, the rituals they developed each week when the entered the site to claim it as theirs including watering the garden or sitting in their favourite spot to re-connect to the site and individual and joint ownership of specific aspects of the site. Participants developed collaborative and individual rituals that weaved together leading to the creation of a performative and every-changing safe space where they knew they were accepted for who they are and what they were bringing to the site. The outcomes demonstrate the value of supporting the rituals and practices of children in the creation of their spaces, specifically inside the traditional educational institution.

The Rise and Fall of Adventure Play

Introduction

The term Adventure Playground is often used to describe spaces that provide adventurous play equipment designed and built by adults that encourage physical activity and spontaneous play for children (adventureplay.org.uk). But originally, the term described spaces where children were the designers and builders. Throughout this thesis I use the latter definition. Specifically (a):

> ***adventure playground*** *n. (a) a playground in which children are provided with materials, tools, and other equipment, with which they can design and build their own structures under adult supervision; (b) (chiefly British) a playground containing objects or structures such as ropes, slides, and tunnels, encouraging physically challenging play. (Oxford English Dictionary*)

In this section I provide an overview of the history of the emergence of the adventure playground movement in Denmark in the 1930s; its development in the United Kingdom after the second world war; its adoption in Australia in the 1970s; and subsequent transformations and closures three decades later. Proponents for the concept argue that the adventure playgrounds had the capacity to create safe spaces for children's risk-taking allowing for children to develop the skills required to develop their agency and engage as active citizens in their community. A constellation of factors has contributed to their decline including neoliberal policies that stripped funding and changing values around aesthetics. Arguably the most important cause was an increasing societal aversion to risk.

The Adventure Playground Movement

Landscape Architect Carl Sørenson first introduced the concept of the Adventure Playground, originally entitled the Junkyard Playground, in his book *Open Spaces for Town Country* published in 1931 (Bosselmann, 1998). Sørenson designed it as an antidote to delinquency and to transform "status of the park from an object of aesthetic contemplation into a site of active and participatory recreation" (R, Koslovsky, 2006, p. 1), thus, providing children with a

site they had aesthetic control over within the cold and sterile environment of the urban landscape (Bengtsson, 1972). In the simplest terms the adventure playground supports child-led, risky and imaginative play, a space where children "rule the roost". It supports play in a myriad of wonderful ways which include something as simple allowing a child time to sit quietly under a tree watching the sky or by providing them with the materials and tools to create their own big adventure where towers and forts are built and children decide they are pirates for a day (Chilton, 2008).

Emdrup, the world's first planned adventure playground, prompted an international movement that argued for children to be provided with safe spaces where they could engage in child-led, measured risky play. As Sørenson speculated: "Maybe we could try to design a kind of junkyard playground in suitable areas, where the children would be allowed to use old cars, cardboard boxes, branches and such. It is possible that supervision would be necessary, both to prevent the worst cases of disputes among the children and to lessen the possibilities of children getting hurt" (Sørenson, 1931, as quoted in Bosselman, 1998, p. 63). Little is written or known about Sørensen and the significant contribution he made to landscape architecture outside his native Denmark, specifically the design and installation of children's spaces (Bosselman, 1998). Sørensen's original concept was designed in "response to the frustration many children were finding themselves in, who were growing up in the barren and unyielding environment of the urban housing estate" (Bengtsson, 1972, p. 1). Twelve years later the world's first planned Adventure Playground was built in Emdrup, just outside Copenhagen in Denmark. Initiated by the Workers Co-operative Housing Association in collaboration with Sørenson, Emdrup officially opened its gates on the 15th of August 1943 at 10.45am, during the German occupation of Denmark. On its first day approximately over 900 children filed through the front gates (Bengtsson, 1972). John Bertelson, the first playworker at Emdrup kept a diary of his experiences at the playground which Bengtsson published in 1972 in the book Adventure Playgrounds. Bertelson's diary excerpts regale readers with stories of the children's adventures during the playground's first years of existence, describing how the children created a community outside the confines of the adult-run society where they were free to take charge, play and create their own world.

Figure 1: Emdrup Adventure Playground, F Reiss 1946
Image Sourced: https://arkitektur-n.no/artikler/bylekeplasser

In 1946 the concept was introduced to England after child welfare advocate and landscape designer Lady Allen of Hurtwood visited Emdrup (Bengtsson, 1972). At the time post-war bomb sites littered British towns. Taking inspiration from Emdrup, Allen asked, "why not make some of them (bomb sites) safe places to play in?" (Bengtsson, 1972, p. 25), promoting this 'revolutionary' concept to provide children with creative, intensive and stimulating play experiences to address rising anti-social behaviour in young people (Kozlovsky, 2006). Allen believed these sites were perfect for adventurous and imaginative play, providing an alternative to the sterile, predictable traditional playgrounds. Furthermore, Allen believed the adventure playground also supported children's agency by fostering a sense of community (Kozlovsky, 2006).

Figure 2: Camberwell Junk playground on the site of a bombed church. Times Educational Supplement, 5 June 1948
Image Sourced: http://www.architectureofearlychildhood.com/2012/01/post-war-adventure-or-junk-playgrounds.html

Inside the adventure playground children had control over the space, including some aspects of the operation and the design. This was core to the development of a community that supported children's agency. Allen stressed that a significant feature was the adventure playgrounds' ability to foster ''a democratic community", as children regardless of age or gender were drawn to the concept and were supported to take responsibility for the design, construction and operation of the playground (Kozlovsky, 2006). Due to Allen's promotional work on the benefits of the adventure playground, the first playground was established in Camberwell in 1948 on an old bombed out church site (Londonplay, 2020). The Camberwell Adventure Playground was in existence for only three years before developers bought the land. But it ignited a movement across the UK and Europe, arriving in the US in 1949 and Japan and Australia in the 1970's (Bengttson, 1972). The movement had a significant impact, predominantly in the UK, with over 100 adventure playgrounds built in London alone and a further 150 across the UK by 1977 (Londonplay, 2020).

Adventure Play in Australia

There is limited documentation concerning the Adventure Playground movement in Australia. I therefore draw also on my own experience as a playworker and artist in the adventure playground movement, which I have described in the Preface. Unlike the vast network that was established in Europe after the war, particularly in the UK, Australia's adventure play scene is considerably smaller. It consisted of five adventure playgrounds located in Melbourne prior to Federal Government funding cuts in 2014 (Gough, 2014), of which four remain. Each playground is or was located within close proximity to a local public Housing Estate, providing an alternative to the suburban backyard for the children who reside in the high-rise apartments. They include Fitzroy Adventure Playground (Cubbies), established 1974; Skinners, South Melbourne, established 1976; The Venny, Kensington established 1981; St Kilda Adventure Playground, St Kilda established 1981; and Prahran Adventure Playground, Prahran established 1984. The latter has been closed and replaced by the Prahran Child and Youth Community Wellbeing Hub.

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Figure 6:

Figure 7: Fitzroy Adventure Playground (Cubbies)
Image by: Clare Walton 2016

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Figure 8:

Each adventure playground evolved and became more than just the backyard for children and young people growing up in the housing estates. Fitzroy Adventure Playground was originally a drop in space where children aged six to sixteen years were free to engage in measured risky self-directed and supported play with occasional offsite and onsite camps and sleepovers. When new management was appointed in 2011 additional programs began to be included; circus skills, off-site excursions and other activities, funded by philanthropic institutions and corporations, though its primary focus was still to provide a space where free and measured risky play was promoted. Open seven days a week, it was considered the heart of the community (Taylor et al., 2014).

> *"Living here …. This space you see is a backyard or front yard for anyone living in the flats. The flats are (a) very tiny space for kids to run around in so (here) they have space where they can express themselves in a way that they want"*
> *(Taylor et al., 2014).*

Opened after school and from midday on weekends, the space was staffed by child advocates, artists, and community workers. Up until 2015 there was no requirement for formal qualifications, but as a playworker it was understood that a key requirement was to be willing to admit you did not know everything and were open to learning from the children (The Cubbies, 1982). The role of the staff was to ensure the space was safe, cleaning up before and after each session, providing food after school and lunch on weekends (the children would often cook with the staff) and supporting them as they engaged in play and activities of their choice. Tools and recycled building materials were supplied when children asked to build cubbies and art supplies were always available.

The space has changed greatly since it was first opened in 1974 by Joan Healy with support from local residents and the provision of land by the council. In the film "The Cubbies" (1982) staff, parents, children and community members discuss the significance of the place to children's lives and the wider community. Staff discuss how trucks regularly dropped off loads of timber and other materials that children sorted through to build structures of all shapes and sizes, there is footage of climbing ropes, a flying fox, a giant swing and a fire pit that children regularly congregated around to cook damper and just chill. Founder Joan Healy discusses how it was a space where children were just allowed to be themselves, play on their

own terms, a space where they were taught about things, including how to care for animals (The Cubbies, 1982).

> *Healy when describing Fitzroy Adventure Playground called it "a different form of art where kids are creating and painting their own natural world. It's higgeldy piggeldy, a shanti town that is attractive to kids and some adults too. It's children's art, it's natural – children are coming in and out all day for years, it's like a family. Do you see that at regular playgrounds''?*
> *(The Cubbies, 1982).*

Up until 2013 the playground was home to chooks (who were retired to a staff members family farm due to soil contamination concerns), rabbits, geese and other animals including sheep, pigeons and goats in the early days. As the playground evolved and animals were rehoused or died, they were replaced with guinea pigs but eventually all animals were rehoused and the sheds were refurbished to become Cubby Houses in 2015 in collaboration with the children. In 2013 vegetable gardens became an important feature and were looked after by staff, children and their families and activities including the celebration of Harmony Day, a day that celebrates cultural diversity and inclusion within the community, became a regular feature on the calendar.

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Figure 9:

"The Cubbies is an area set aside by the Fitzroy Council in Melbourne, where kids can build and maintain their own houses from material donated by the community. Here is a snug little house for four, made of old galvanised iron."
(Archer, 1981, p. 36)

Figure 10:

Figure 11:

Figure 12:

In 2014 the newly elected Coalition Federal Government removed all federal funding to the adventure playgrounds despite a 40-year bipartisan history that had supported the five playgrounds, and a shared agreement (between the major political parties) that they were a valuable community asset (Gough, 2014). As a result of the funding cuts and society's growing aversion to risk, the child aesthetic within the playground context has been transformed:

> *"Cubbies adventure playground on Condell St has evidently existed for a long time, …… a place that was definitely not recently created. They make it look like it has experienced a war or natural disaster; decline and abandonment are obvious. Until a few years ago the site looked like an occupational health and safety nightmare. Since then, it has been cleaned up and made safe for a new generation of children from the Atherton Gardens."*
> *(B. Ward, 2009 as cited in research outdoor play, 2013)*

Local councils have stepped in to partially fill the gap, but this has not always been sufficient. In some instances, the original intention of the playgrounds has been forced to evolve, and provide more adult designed programs, or install large artist designed facilities that bare little, if any, resemblance to Sørensen's original concept. In Australia a lack of knowledge and understanding of the adventure playground movement has been evident in the recent upgrades to Fitzroy Adventure Playground. Comments in the media in relation to the Fitzroy Adventure Playground reveal that adult perceptions and fear of risk has stifled the children's aesthetics.

> *"We had grotty old cubbies here and there was dirt and sheep and chickens and all the rest of it," Cubbies chair Margaret Harrison said. Then modern rules and regulations started taking over and so we thought that one thing we needed to do was find the children something really creative, to really stretch their imaginations."*
> *(Slattery, 2017)*

Figure 13: A Redesigned Fitzroy Adventure Playground 2021
Image by: Clare Walton 2021

Harrison and the Board's decision led to the demolition of work designed and created by the children. A large installation designed by an adult became the key focal point instead. The result has been a beautiful sculptural work that provides a sense of adventure for children, who can climb to great heights and feel a sense of thrill when they cascade down the slide, though it has been conceptualised by an adult. Child-led play still exists in this contemporary reimagining of Australia's first adventure playground, but a shadow now hangs over a safe space where children originally took control of their environment and exercised their agency. Regulatory changes that came into effect after new management was appointed in 2015 now require that all children and their families must register before they can attend, hours have been drastically reduced and the space is now staffed by youth workers and culturally diverse staff with support from community and university volunteers as opposed to child advocates, community members, playworkers and artists. While the current management of the playground support child-led play of sorts, many of the core values behind Sørensen's original

concept have disappeared. A description from 2020 claims: “Cubbies has been known for decades as an adventure playground – a “backyard” for children from the urban jungle of Fitzroy to play on rescued and recycled junkyard equipment” (savethechilden, 2020). But Figures 9-12 show it was not a site where they just played *on* ‘recycled junk’; It was a space where they built the environment and the culture *from* rescued and recycled junkyard equipment.

Figure 14: Signage at the side gate to the playground requesting families to register
Image by: Clare Walton 2021

Risk Society and Risk Culture

To understand the key factor in the dissolution of the adventure play movement requires an understanding of the concept of the "risk society" articulated by sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. Beck (1992) traces the rise of the risk society to the advancement in technology post the industrial revolution, arguing that while society has always had to deal with natural disasters, the technological advancements of society have resulted in the creation of "manufactured risks" (1992). Giddens (1999) develops Beck's work, arguing there have been two fundamental transformations in our modern society that have led to the creation of the risk society or what he terms "risk culture". Firstly, an increasing infiltration of science and technology into our lives; secondly the consequent reversal of worrying about what nature can do to us, to us being concerned about the damage that has or is being done to nature by us (Giddens, 1999). Sociologists Barbara Adam and Joost van Loon argue this has resulted in a society that is bound by a proliferation of policies and procedures designed to circumnavigate and or avoid any form of potential risk (Adam et al., 2000). Risk is now almost universally accepted as present in almost every aspect of our daily lives including the lives of children and how they play (Lester & Russell, 2014). Playworkers and researchers Stuart Lester and Wendy Russell (2014) have argued Western societies' aversion to risk has resulted in children's play being overly scrutinized, assessed and regulated in terms of whether it is acceptable or unacceptable risk. Schools, parents and guardians now must ensure they meet societal standards. Both live with fear of societal disapproval, and or legal censure, resulting in them becoming overly cautious. Paradoxically, lack of exposure to some risk is also detrimental to child development (Lester & Russell, 2014).

The notion of risk is not new but Western neo-liberal capitalist society has become more fixated on its future safety than ever before and perceived potential risks increasingly impact us on all levels. It is not only risk but also anxiety that impacts our daily and routine decision making. Giddens (1991) points to the ever-changing knowledge-claims made by the 'experts': one day it is butter that is dangerous to our health, the next we are hearing of the high levels of mercury in the tuna we are eating or that the detergents we wash our dishes in are full of dangerous phosphates. Our daily news is full of manufactured catastrophies, oil leaks, nuclear plant meltdowns and ecological disasters. While our media has always covered these stories,

technological advances in communication now mean these stories are broadcast in real time and with extreme vividness (Rosa et al., 2013). When a society is skewed to perceive potential threats, then actions are increasingly focused around avoiding risks (Adam et al., 2000). As a result, we now live in a society that is increasingly risk adverse resulting in many children growing up in over protected environments with limited opportunities to engage in activities that support the development of their active citizenship.

Few sociologists disagree with Beck and Giddens that we now live in a society that is preoccupied with risk. But a number of researchers believe risks are more differentiated and varied than Beck suggests. Alan Scott, Bryan Turner, Jens O Zinn have argued that Beck has a Euro-centric concept of 'society' and, in turn, a focus on European risks (Scott, 2000; Turner, 2002; Zinn, 2008). This includes a focus on the threat of nuclear power disasters and BSE (Scott, 2000; Zinn, 2008) and a neglect of the risks of environmental, health and political upheaval European colonisation brought to Indigenous societies elsewhere (Turner, 2002). Turner believes it to be doubtful the impersonal and unobservable nature of Beck's criteria of risk, that risks are a hybrid of man-made concepts including politics, mathematics, technologies, cultural definitions, perception and ethics (Beck, 2000), will hold up to historical scrutiny (Turner, 2002). Sociologist Kathleen Tierney (2014) argues that Beck's excessive pre-occupation with technological risks led him to overlook other 'manufactured' risks like climate-change, terrorism, and financial crises. While sociologist Steve Yearly notes that Beck does not acknowledge the differing levels of impact risk can have on people whose economic status, class, gender, age or ethnicity place them outside the hegemony (Yearley, 2014). Sociologist Dean Curran challenges Beck's assertion "that in the risk society the concept of 'class' will no longer be adequate to understand this new emerging social reality" (Beck, 2000, p. 45). Curran observes that wealthier people can minimize their exposure to risk while those without means face intensified risks (Curran, 2013). Beck's argument that the risk society impacts everyone is not refuted. Rather scholars have called for a more nuanced understanding of the impact of risk on those from differing cultural and socio-economics backgrounds.

Nevertheless, there is growing evidence of a range of strategies in middle class Western contexts in Europe, North America, and Australia to protect children from engaging in

activities that have the potential to cause harm. Playgrounds and school yards have been particularly impacted by risk aversion. Sociologist Sean Morrissey (2008) argues that it is clear the activities schools allow their students to engage in are directly impacted by regulations imposed by powerful social and political institutions. In mainstream Australian schools there has been a push to standardise playgrounds since the 1970's, partially due to a fear of potential injuries and a growing culture of litigation as councils, schools and other institutions are held responsible when children and youth injure themselves (Pascoe, 2017). Early childhood researchers Brendon Hyndman and Amanda Telford (2015) argue that the ability for children to engage in games and activities that were once considered a normal part of childhood have declined significantly over recent decades as adults focus primarily on the risks associated with physical play. Play is no longer something children are left to just enjoy, it is subject to constant assessment and surveillance by adults trying to decide what is or is not too risky.

As the world has become more risk averse traditional adventure playgrounds, like those designed by Carl Sørenson, have been diminishing. In Britain alone since 1980 more than half the adventure playgrounds have closed as a result of lawsuits (Ball, 2007 as cited in Peterson, 2011). In Australia the original five have reduced to four due to a combination of funding cuts, risk aversion and the diminishing acceptance of children's aesthetics. Performing Arts Researcher Grant Tyler Peterson (2011) notes in his examination of the history of radical playgrounds that in Britain today most adventure playgrounds function less as malleable spaces and more as safe outlets for physical exercise. The original intention to allow children to "develop modes of expression, citizenship and community through improvisation" (Peterson, 2011, p. 39) has been lost. Even when the designs of children are incorporated by architects, children's involvement in the construction is now strictly limited (Peterson, 2011).

The Risk is There is No Risk

Independent scholar, writer and childhood consultant, Tim Gill (2007), and researchers and playworkers Stuart Lester and Wendy Russell (2014) have argued that the over-regulation of risk has placed parents and those who work with or look after children under immense pressure for fear of being blamed if something goes wrong. In fact, contemporary Western

culture childhood is the most intensely governed period of life, constantly monitored and regulated socially, politically and legally; and within educational institutions they have been rendered powerless and dependent (Robinson, 2013). Gill (2007) argues that the risk society has left parents afraid to allow their children to engage in the world without being under constant surveillance by either a parent or someone implicitly or explicitly engaged to provide supervision for fear of being labelled an irresponsible parent. Schools' fear litigation if a child injures themselves, which has resulted in a reduction in breaks, playtimes and the overregulation of children's play (Gill, 2007; Lester & Russell, 2014). Outside the school environment children's ability to engage in outdoor free play and walk unsupervised in their neighborhoods has been greatly limited. This can be seen in the Stranger Danger campaigns and the regularly reported stories of abduction and tragedy by mainstream media (Gill, 2007; Wodda, 2018). Parents are more inclined to drive their children everywhere out of fear for their safety (Gill, 2007). Public spaces in urban environments are rarely designed for children's active participation and public play spaces tend to provide sterile play equipment that does not allow children to manipulate their environment or test their limitations (Gill, 2021). This has limited the ability for children to create safe spaces where they can engage as active participants in the creation of their environment and learn how to engage as social agents and active citizens.

Playground Specialist and Researcher Tom Jambor coined the term 'surplus safety' to define the excessive measures that adults take to ensure there is no possibility or risk of injury to the child (Wyver et al., 2010). Jambor (1995) argues that adults have a responsibility to protect children from hazards, but they also have a responsibility to ensure children have access to play spaces and environments that allow them to "explore, practice and reach personal levels of competence" (p. 1). When 'surplus safety' overrides risk and the play equipment provided is boring and sterile, children can turn to inventing ways to play on the equipment that involve risky actions that can increase chances of injury (Jambor, 1995). A growing culture of 'surplus safety' now commonly directs the activities children can engage in as society tries to protect children from perceived dangers and risks (Hyndman & Telford, 2015). Hyndman (2017) argues fixed playground superstructures in school playgrounds in Australia are having a negative impact on children's development. Rather than wholesale risk avoidance, Gill argues that the focus should be careful mitigation of real hazards while promoting children's engagement in

good risks that challenge and support their learning, growth and development (Gill, 2018).

Environmental sustainability and childhood studies researcher Karen Malone (2007) also examines the potential impacts of removing all risks in middle class Australian children's lives. Malone adopts the term the 'bubble-wrap generation' (Malone, 2007). In protecting children from harm, adults deny them the opportunities to develop psychological, physical, social, environmental and cultural skills required to deal with everyday risk (Malone, 2007; Gill, 2007). This in turn can lead to children lacking a sense of purpose, self-worth, efficacy, social competence and resilience (Malone, 2007). In protecting children from all risks and potential injuries they are taking an even bigger risk which is denying them the ability to learn how to engage in the world. By viewing the world as a dark, dangerous place where children are innocents in need of constant protection, adults deny children experiences of discovering and learning about themselves and the world they live in and being limited in developing their agency and active citizenship.

Children's Rights to Active Citizenship

Active citizenship is a sociological definition in which the word 'active' distinguishes the citizen as a participant who engages in decision-making, expresses opinions and is actively involved in the shaping of their community (Roche, 1999). It contrasts with the legal definition of citizenship as simply being counted as a citizen by the ruling government (Isin & Turner, 2002). It also goes beyond the formal definition of citizenship which is simply the "legal status of membership of a nation-state, as symbolised by the right to a passport" (Lister, 2008, p. 9). This thesis has adopted the sociological definition as it allows for the inclusion of all children, regardless of their legal status in relation to the current Australian Government's definition of citizenship in the design and creation of their community. More specifically it refers to the child's right to engage and participate in the design and construction of their environment as fully realised community members.

The discourse around children's citizenship has been developed by sociologists, geographers, urban planners and child rights activists who have charted the changing context of children's rights in Europe from the 18th century to the Declaration of the United Nations Rights of the

Child in 1989 and argued for children's right to engage as active citizens and make constructive contributions to the social and physical structure of their community (Thane, 1981; United Nations, 1989; Roche, 1999; Jans, 2004; Cockburn, 2013; Cunningham, 2020). Urban Planners Gleeson & Sipe (2006) argue that engaging children in the process of designing their environments will teach them essential skills, including problem solving and how to socialize (2006). In addition to participation in the planning process Percy-Smith (2015) argues that for children's citizenship to be effective (rather than tokenistic) participation needs to focus on the diverse ways that children affect community via their actions, relationships and contributions. Landscape architect and researcher Marit Jansson (2015) concurs. Jansson argues that for a child-friendly environment to be successful it not only requires their input through the design stage but also throughout the implementation of the project (Jansson, 2015). The adventure playground provides a strong base to promote children's active participation in the planning, designing and building of the environment (Jansson, 2015).

If children are to develop the necessary skills that support their role as active citizens, then calculated risk taking is a fundamental ingredient. Encountering risk in play and activities allows children to test the possibilities and limits to their skills, learn how to mitigate challenges and develop their perception, build physical, motor and social skills, physical strength and the general skill of risk management (Sandester, 2010; Sandester & Kennair, 2011). Supporting children to engage in measured risk-taking allows them to learn directly from the consequences of their actions (Bundy et al., 2011). There is evidence that children are often better at making judgements concerning their capabilities and risk of injury than is evident to adults (Christensen & Mikkelson, 2007). Through taking part in risky activities, children learn to manage risk in everyday life and in turn develop their social identity (Green, 1997). Through sharing stories that involve succeeding on a challenging activity a child is able express triumph and pride (Green, 1997). After all, impressing friends or older brothers or sisters is an important part of the process of social identity formation.

Taking Risks in Education

This section considers discourses around risk within the field of education. Like the scholars in the social sciences who agree that a surfeit of safety, paradoxically, has become a risk in itself (Jambor, 1995; Gill, 2007; Malone, 2007; Wyver et al, 2010; Russell & Lester, 2014), recent research in early childhood education, outdoor education, and socially engaged artists working in education has also shown measured risk is important for child development (Sandseter, 2009; Bundy et al., 2009; Wattchow and Brown, 2011). Free play in outdoor environments can give young children opportunities to test their limits which develops physical skills and sense of agency. This in turn grows young people's confidence to engage in their schools and communities as active citizens. Older students need challenges that are unfamiliar, difficult and risky to continue that developmental journey into confident, capable youth. But what level of risk is acceptable in schools? How are children protected from harm whist also having the freedom to take some risks?

Research shows the environmental context in which these experiences are staged are important mediators of risk and safety, creativity and connection (Staempfli, 2009; Brussoni et al., 2012). Playgrounds are an important environment for early childhood development as they provide a context for social development as well as physical challenge (Sandseter & Sando, 2016). In outdoor education for older youth, place can provide physical challenges but also an opportunity to engage with a more-than human world (Malone, 2016). In socially engaged art education, place can provide a context for creative worlds to be imagined and create a way to connect students with a larger community (Gray & Birrell, 2015).

'Measured' Versus 'Managed' Risky Play

To recap, measured risky play is play that allows children to engage in activities and play that involve the risk of physical injury, the making of mistakes and testing their personal limitations but where adults are present to regulate and ensure the child's safety (Sandseter, 2009). It can be defined as good risk as it is a form of play that promotes trust in children to know their own limitations, allowing them to personally determine if they will participate in an activity that has the potential to lead to physical injury (Zeni, 2021). During measured risky play

children engage in activities they have never attempted before, developing their confidence and skills on their own terms (Healy, 1993), participating in activities that promote their social, physical and intellectual skills (Little & Wyver, 2008). Western societies' focus on risk aversion has resulted in children's play being over regulated and limitations being placed on their ability to engage in measured risky play (Gill, 2007; Peterson, 2011). In measured risky play, children are trusted to know their limitations. Managed risky play, on the other hand, focusses on risk minimisation. Play is structured and designed by adults. It might give children a thrill, but there is minimal real risk of injury. In fact, children are left with a false sense of risk taking. As a consequence, there is little opportunity for a young person to learn to mitigate risks themselves (Wattchow and Brown, 2011). Measured risky play, therefore, is better for children's development. It allows children to learn about themselves as they discover and experience the world (Bundy et al., 2009).

Risk and Play in Early Years Education

In early years pedagogical research, experiential learning through free play outdoors emerges as an important theme that supports children's development, promotes children to connect to each other and their environment. Early years education researchers Helen Little and Shirley Wyver (2008) argue that outdoor play allows children to practice and refine social and physical skills they will use in later life. Early childhood education researcher Cheryl Greenfield (2004) similarly argues outdoor environmental experiences have a powerful impact on children providing valuable learning spaces impacting on children's present and futures. Early childhood education researchers Sonya Nedovic and Anne-Marie Morrisey (2013) focused specifically on the impact of greening spaces, in a study on the redevelopment of an early year's education centre. They found that outdoor play in a natural environment supported children to develop their creative and dramatic play, in turning soothing them, leading to less aggravation when things didn't go their way. These researchers' findings support the argument that outdoor and environmental education promote young children's creative learning and development of their social skills; important factors in developing children's active citizenship.

Playgrounds in school yards and in the public realm are important spaces where children's learning can unfold. In their multidisciplinary research project 'The Sydney Playground Project' researchers Anita Bundy, Tim Luckett, Paul J Tranter, Geraldine Naughtin, Shirley R Wyver, Jo Ragen and Greta Spiers (2009) examined the impacts of policies and processes that have removed risks from school playgrounds for children aged five to seven years. They found that the lack of challenge in playgrounds has limited the potential for positive play outcomes. With parents and teachers focused on the risk of physical injury they appear to be unaware of other dangers that arise when active play is restricted (Bundy et al., 2009). Dangers include the potential for children to become scared to actively use their bodies, which may, in turn, lead to children developing physical health problems including gaining weight and the lowered self-esteem. Play, they argue, is a social experience that supports children to learn skills that they will require later in life including sharing, leadership, negotiation and taking turns. And as it is 'not for real' it can help to minimise the negative consequences that may occur when children argue or feel they have made a mistake (Bundy et al., 2009). Limiting children's active and risky play by focusing only on the negative consequences and 'darker' side of risk diminishes children's chances of discovering that they are adventurous, brave, daring, confident, strong and successful (Stephenson, 2003).

Environmental and behavioral researcher, Marianne Staempfli (2009), contrasts conventional playgrounds where play structures are fixed and prebuilt and children usually play only with their peers, with the interactive nature of adventure playgrounds. She notes that in adventure playgrounds children develop social relationships with children outside their usual circles, including different age groups. Through those negotiations they develop problem-solving skills and a sense of social responsibility (Staempfli, 2009, p. 272). In addition, children develop a sense of ownership of the space through the process of constructing it. They protect it, it becomes a place away from home and an important part of their community (Staempfli, 2009). Creative play where children design and manipulate their spaces provides them with freedoms and choices that give them a sense of agency as they move through life.

Creating their own spaces provides children with a sense of autonomy, allowing them to decide for themselves what actions and risks they wish to take. "Safe spaces" (Chatterjee, 2005) promote children's exploration, allowing them to shape and reshape their physical

spaces repeatedly giving children a position of power in their environment. Safe spaces allow children to exercise their social and political agency, challenging traditional child and adult power constructs. Examining the safe place through the lens of 'emplaced experience' social scientists Natalie Djohari, Gitanjali Pyndiah and Anna Arnone (2018) argue that it is through children's ongoing and evolving relationships with the social and material world that safe spaces emerge. It is not necessarily the physical space or what it holds that creates the safe space but the actions of the children, and the way their actions influence the space, that gives them the ability to identify what is or is not safe (2018). As children re-imagine and reconfigure the space collaboratively to their desired outcome, they are supported in mediating their social relations (Latour, 2005). Thus, safety is created through a convergence of the emotional and material, as children through their actions continuously shape and reshape their worlds (Djohari et al., 2018). Safe spaces, therefore, are never finished as "children (and adults) are constantly creating, or co-creating their geographies" (Horton & Kraftl, 2006, p. 88). The material form changes but so too do the interactions between them; the development of relationships and social discourses are constantly under construction (2006). Safe spaces are arguably living, changing and moving forms that are a combination of material manipulation and social discourse supporting the development of children's active citizenship.

Despite the research support for creating opportunities for young people to engage in measured risk and creative outdoor play in early years there is a limited amount of literature that discusses outdoor play as a tool for children's development in later primary school education. Middle years outdoor education tends to become highly orchestrated. It involves school camps, sport, and environmental education that may or not involve risky activities. The emphasis during these years is developing scholastic skills. Science classes held outdoors within school grounds, weekly gardening workshops that teach students about sustainability, healthy eating and forming community connections replace the free play of the early years.

Risk in Outdoor Education

There is a large and growing body of literature that examines alternative pedagogies arguing for schools to dare to take risks outside the confines of traditional pedagogy (Payne & Wattchow, 2008; Barlow, 2015; James & Williams, 2017). Outdoor and environmental education has been a leader in this area contributing extensive research that highlights the benefits risk provides in supporting and understanding the development of children's agency, connection to, and understanding of the natural environment and the development of their social and practical skills. Environmental and outdoor Education researchers define it as an educational experience that takes place outdoors in nature supporting children to engage in hands on activities that promote connection to and knowledge of place (Payne & Wattchow, 2008; Barlow, 2015; James & Williams, 2017).

Outdoor educators and researchers Brian Wattchow and Mike Brown (2011) recount the emergence and recognition of contemporary outdoor education within formal school settings and communities in the 1970s. Like the adventure playground movement, outdoor educators argue it has supported the social and personal development of young people including their self-awareness, relationship building, communication skills and enhances the concept of self that develops as a consequence of succeeding in adventurous and challenging activities (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Experiential learning programs place an importance on place and sense of control and ownership that cannot be underestimated in young people's education. When youth are provided the opportunity to engage in experiential learning it helps them to develop their social skills and ability to connect to each other and their environment in meaningful ways. This can be amplified when they are supported to use their own languages and rituals, including play.

Over the past 50 years, however, risk in outdoor education has become increasingly managed rather than measured. Wattchow and Brown (2011) argue that there is a tendency to promote a false sense of risk-taking amongst students while staff carefully orchestrate activities to ensure there is little, if any, real risk. Brown's work with education researcher Deborah Fraser (2009) finds that many risk-orientated activities consequently undermine the learner's internal decision making and therefore their actual agency. Students are presented

with two options: do take the risk (where you may succeed) or do not (and be found wanting) (Fraser,2009). This is a very different social conundrum for a young person than in a model of free play where young people have the agency to stage risks gradually. The value of engaging in risk taking activities can be highly personal, contextual and often unpredictable (Claxton, 2002, as cited in Wattchow and Brown, 2011) The way young people cope in situations that appear to be risky with little perceived control will vary and for some they may be debilitating (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2005). Coercing a child to take a risk when they are not ready, is counter intuitive and diminishes their agency. So too do educational experiences that allow only two options: participation or non-participation.

Wattchow and Brown (2011) promote an approach in outdoor education where learners are given the opportunity to exercise autonomy and authentic choices. For example, when heading out on an overnight camp the learners decide what they should take and who is responsible for what items. Brown and Fraser (2009) describe the process of decision making as a social mediation where the consequences are openly discussed, becoming a shared enterprise in which, all participants have the opportunity to learn. In addition, it provides opportunities for participants to "have more agency as they take on new roles, rather than have roles thrust upon them" (Brown & Fraser, 2009, p. 71). In their model of measured risk, participants have more ownership of the project and are provided with the opportunity to be involved in real decision making (Fraser & Brown, 2009). Discovering how their actions lead to consequences that are a result of their own authentic choices, demands that young people learn to negotiate, cooperate and experience leadership and fellowship (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). This in turn supports participants in making real connections to the environments in which they learn.

Place is a central component of outdoor education. It is unpredictable, geographically particular, expands young people social worlds to an other-than human realm and can unsettle power relations between teachers and students. Environmental educator David Sobel, who is credited with developing the philosophy of place-based education, and outdoor education researcher Gregory A Smith (Sobel & Smith, 2010) found that place-based learning challenges the notion of human exceptionalism, making for a richer educational experience, expanding young peoples' sense of community. Educational researchers Tonia Gray, Song

Troung and Amanda Lloyd (2018) note that it also adds complexity: what works in one location will not necessarily work in another. As a result, curriculum is dependent not only on the individual qualities and skills that teachers and students bring to the program but also on the physical site. Outdoor Education researcher Gregory A Smith (2002) further argues that place-based education provides students with the opportunity to not only be mere vessels for knowledge but to also produce it. In addition, when conducted in unfamiliar social and environmental contexts, for both teachers and students – like volunteering at a soup kitchen – outdoor education has the ability to change the power relationships between students and teachers.

Risk in Art Education

In terms of art practices in educational institutions the focus of research has been on economic and time constraints (Filipovic, 2013), power constructs (Comunian, 2017) and the expectations of art outcomes within certain types of pedagogical institutions (Pringle, 2008). But there are some researchers considering creative risk: art education researcher Dennis Atkinson (2008) argues for a form of art education that expands our grasp and idea of what learning is, asking us to expand our understanding of what art is beyond the traditional art mold; while Art Education researcher Jeff Adams (2010) discusses the risks involved in introducing contemporary art practices into schools that focus on learner agency, creative choice and risk over the traditional model, Adams argues for risky creative practices that promote learner agency (2010). Atkinson (2008) argues that the traditional form of 'school art' a term coined by art education researcher Arthur Efland (1976), is questioned when contemporary or risky practices are introduced, and in turn this often calls into question the school's orthodox curriculum and approach to education. Adams (2010) believes the assessment system and 'school art' directly impinges upon children's agency and ability to guide their learning process. Socially engaged projects can offer an alternative to traditional school art as they are reliant on social discourse, collaboration and do not have a preconceived fixed outcome, inviting students, teachers and the wider community to engage in risky creative practices that promote learner agency.

The socially engaged art practice contrasts with traditional modes of art education, inviting

participants to create what artist and researcher Pablo Helguera (2011) defines as 'transpedagogy'. Helguera's views the entwining of contemporary art with education as "pedagogy in the expanded field" (Helguera, 2011, p. 80) adapted from Rosalind Krauss's term "sculpture in the expanded field". Helguera argues that in pedagogy in the expanded field, art education is no longer limited to traditional activities. This allows for 'transpedagogies'; projects which transgress disciplinary boundaries. Artists and or collectives align educational aims with art-making practices "offering an experience that is clearly different from conventional art academics or formal art education" (Helguera, 2011, p. 77). Outcomes can be works that support conversations that question traditional processes while drawing on the prior knowledge and skills of the participants (Askins & Pain, 2011). They can also introduce non-traditional mediums and do not have pre-designed outcomes. Positioning the artist and participants as co- creators helps to alter the perception of the artist as an authoritative figure who delivers knowledge (Gasper-hulvat, 2017). Art education researchers Emily Pringle and John Harland (2008) argue this approach supports the artist and the participants to create new radical rituals and practices that sit outside the expectations of certain pedagogical institutions. Thus, the traditional institution is invited to support the artist and participants to engage in creative risk taking (Adams, 2010), often a challenge when working in the context of a traditional school.

Socially engaged artists prefer to enter convivial environments, Helguera (2011) posits creating informal spaces for discourse that encourage interesting and open exchanges. As arts and education researcher Anna Craft (2008) explains when artists and creative partners enter into creative projects with students' they "tend to adopt co-constructive, co-participative pedagogy, working alongside students to support the realisation of their ideas" (p. 5). In-so-doing, they question the focus on valuing individual achievement over collaborative achievements in a traditional art class. Collaborative creative projects focus on the collective creative process and how questions are answered and solutions found together (Craft, 2008). Traditional art classes, on the other hand, focus on the "acquisition of propositional knowledge, the maintenance of discipline and driven by assessment-orientated outcomes" (Craft 2008, p. 5). When an institution is willing to allow relationships to be developed between the artist and the wider school community (i.e., teachers and parents) the artist can develop a stronger practice that is more beneficial for the participants. In instances where

the institution creates barriers to informal social discourses, reinforcing power constructs, it can hinder creative collaborations (Comunian et al., 2014). This can lead to numerous problems arising including conflict between participants and conflicts between the artist and the institution, challenging meeting timelines and budgets (Filipovic, 2013).

Educational creator and researcher Yaël Filipovic (2013) considers the way time limitations can impact practices, the development of relationships, and community collaborations when working with art institutions. Time constraints require artists to be adaptable, to critically reflect on their processes and to be willing to engage in dialogues that may alter the original intention of the project. Filipovic's reflections align with Helguera (2011), who asks how we address the sometimes "unrealistic goals in relation to the expected time investment" (p. 19). Time limitations and the expectations set by either the artist or the institution can create friction, which has the potential to derail the socially engaged art project (Helguera, 2011). Filipovic (2013) argues that limitations should be reframed: they can also be "the most vital components to collaboration" (p. 134). The unpredictability, risk taking, messiness and non-hierarchical elements that work against the traditional structures and create frictions can lead to open discourse and promote work that invites all collaborators to step outside their comfort zone. Embracing these challenges is at the heart of social engagement.

Social practice, due to its reliance on interactive dialogues and conversations as integral aspects of the work, moves beyond the aesthetic experience, encouraging conversations that are not just a response to the work (Kester, 2005). Art historian Grant Kester (2005) explains how the interactive and immersive dialogues have the potential to "transform our perceptions of difference and open space for forms of knowledge that challenge cognitive, social or political conventions" (p. 11). Independent researcher and artist Darren O'Donnell (2018) argues that open exchange between the artist and the participants is crucial to the immersive experience of a socially engaged art practice. Indeed, including difficult conversations can transition a work beyond an individual's vision to a practice that can make a positive contribution to the community or help repair social bonds that are fractured. O'Donnell (2018) cautions against underestimating the voice of child participants, arguing that there is a need to produce works with children that trigger actual real experiences between people as a function of the aesthetic. Work with children when their voices, rituals and

languages are respected, can be politically charged, taking the work beyond what is often tokenistic involvement of children in public art projects (O'Donnell, 2018).

The promotion of children's voices and aesthetics inside a traditional school can be a risky process. It requires an openness and acceptance of the myriad of ways children communicate and work together. Educational consultant Jay Johnson Thiel (2018) argues for the creation of community spaces for creative practices that are open, accessible and have limited adult intervention, "where children are treated as the competent, capable, creative, and curious humans they are" (p. 24). When children are treated this way multiple outcomes and futures are created, their aesthetic takes over. While adults might see the literal, a child's imagination may turn it into the fantastical. Thiel (2018) argues while such moments may appear to be trivial it is in these moments that children are offered the opportunity "to engage in creative endeavors that work against deficit discourses that attempt to define who (these) kids are" (p. 34). When adults embrace children's wildness and organic happenings in spaces that sit outside the traditional model of 'art classes', their view of what is aesthetically acceptable is challenged. Thiel's approach can also arguably be extended to include the way artists and teachers work with children in traditional schools. Teachers promote experimentation when they allow children to use traditional mediums in non-traditional ways or introduce non-traditional mediums into classrooms (Thiel, 2018). Results can be unexpected, exciting and challenging.

Place can also be significant for socially engaged art programs. Gray and Birrell (2015) argue it is not just about the characteristics of the physical site, it is about what the students bring to the site and the recurring encounters they have with it that can become a dialogue with place. Place-based socially engaged art programs, like adventure play, are always under construction, constantly shifting and changing following the creative whims of the student and collaborating artist. In both place-based pedagogy and adventure play the curriculum or project is based on the needs of the participants, interweaves with their community and is particular to that community. A basic framework is established but it is the students and teachers who ultimately guide and construct the project with a focus on children's agency. Where they differ from outdoor education is in the execution: one focused on physical challenges; the other on creative ones.

Rediscovering Adventure Play

Artists, architects and community workers in recent years have led the resurgence in the adventure playground movement taking the original concept and expanding upon it to support the creation of child-led spaces that promote children's creative active citizenship and children's agency. The contemporary adventure playground movement argues for the rights of the child to have access and control over the design and construction of their own spaces, promoting the child's ability to be active participants in the development of their communities through child-led and measured risky play. In this section I examine two projects that have embraced Sørenson's original concept and expanded upon it, creating spaces that allow children to use play to shape and manipulate their urban environments. I also review the work of socially engaged practitioners and child-focused arts organisations who are using play and risk in collaboration with children to create works that temporarily manipulate and change their environment to promote children's engagement in shaping their urban spaces. Some practitioners promote risk as tool for use during the conception phase, some take risks by embracing the child's aesthetic and some use play as a tool to create works of art that question the limitations placed on children when they are trying to freely explore the urban environment.

Contemporary Playground Projects

In the UK the multi-disciplinary Assemble Studio has embraced the concept of the adventure playground reframing it as social practice in collaboration with child participants. In the US play:groundNYC has most recently embraced adventure play as a tool to facilitate children's engagement in the shaping of their urban environment. Assemble Studio and play:groundNYC both promote child-led play to encourage risk-taking, creativity and experimentation to support children's active citizenship and ability to enact change in their community.

Assemble Studio were commissioned to create the Baltic Street Adventure Playground in 2014 as the lead public art commission for the Commonwealth Games. Designed and built-in collaboration with the children of Dalmarnock, East Glasgow it is a living artwork that is

constantly growing and evolving supporting the child participants in their "dreams and capacity to affect change" (Assemble Studio, 2014). Assemble Studio promotes the adventure playground as a highly relevant tool to act as a "counterpoint to the pressures of modern urban childhood" (Assemble Studio, 2014). The Baltic Street Adventure Playground situates children as social agents of change directly within their community, promoting children's capacities by embracing and celebrating their unique views and abilities. Assemble Studio has provided the child participants with access to a safe space to creatively explore their relations with each other and manipulate their environment, acknowledging and supporting their ability to engage as active citizens in their community.

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Figure 15:

Baltic Street Adventure Playground is also much more than a safe space for child-directed play. Baltic Street is located within an area that has seen much urban restructuring resulting in the removal of community resources including their community centre, housing and food retailers. It is now one of the most disadvantaged and spatially vulnerable communities in Scotland (Traill et al., 2020). Against this backdrop of deprivation, the adventure playground provides the local community not only with a space for play but also offers a vital role in supporting the rebuilding of social connections for community members. Following a bottom-up approach the Baltic Street Adventure Playground promotes 'learning alongside' the children who attend the space and displays their commitment to this ethos by working democratically with the local children to co-produce the space (Traill et al., 2020,). What began as an art project has evolved to become an integral community hub, placing children's play and self-organisation at the centre of Baltic Street Adventure Playgrounds work (Traill et al., 2020).

Like Baltic Street, the not-for-profit community organisation Play:groundNYC, located in 'The Yard', on Governors Island, promotes the adventure playground concept as a tool to support children transform their urban environments. Begun by community engagement artist Eve Mosher as pop-up events in public parks, it has grown to become New York's only adventure playground. Following the ethos of the original Adventure playgrounds, play:groundNYC claim on their website they advocate "for young people's rights by providing playworker-run environments that encourage risk-taking, experimentation and freedom through self-directed play" (play-ground.nyc, 2020). In addition to their work at The Yard, they work with communities to help establish their own neighbourhood playgrounds and initiatives, provide programs for schools and run pop up events for community celebrations and festivals. In-so-doing Play:groundNYC promotes the transformation of the city through play, reimagining the urban landscape "as a place for all children to play, create and explore, regardless of demographic status" (play-ground.nyc, 2020).

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Figure 16:

The founders and staff at play:groundNYC promote children as the experts in play, not the adult (play-groundNYC, 2020). Co-Founder and Head Playworker Yoni Kallai (2020) describes how 'The Yard' on Governors Island supports children to be in control of their environment; to move, build and shape it. On-site children are supported to take physical, emotional and social risks as they engage with other children, are free to choose what they do with the recycled materials provided; they can build a hut and destroy it - it is their domain. The playworkers role he describes as similar to a lifeguard: they do not interfere but are there to assist when needed (play-groundNyC, 2020)).

In line with Sørensen's original concept of the adventure playground, the two projects discussed support children's active participation in the design and construction of their space according to the child's vision. While one is framed as a public art project and the other as a community organisation, both projects embrace measured risk-taking, experimentation and self-directed play to support children's agency. In contrast to projects that are adult-led, the child's aesthetic is embraced, allowing children to bring to the project their unique skills and abilities (O'Donnell, 2018). In an era and context in which children's free play is often supervised, defined and classified as either edifying, a waste of time or potentially dangerous (Lester, 2011 as cited in Lester & Russell, 2014) play:groundNYC and Baltic Street provide spaces where children's play is not censored. Both embrace forms of play that in many situations would be considered trivial, pointless or just too risky. By incorporating the child's right to be actively involved in the design and construction of their community, both ventures are actively subverting typical social constructs (Tesar, 2015). They have embraced measured

risky play as a strategy to engage and support children to be artists and creative practitioners in their own right, believing in their capacity to design and build their own environment.

Risk in Socially Engaged Arts

In recent years a number of socially engaged artists, architects and community organisations have similarly explored collaborations with children to support the development of their agency. Like play:groundNYC and Baltic Street, these practitioners are concerned with the detrimental impact of contemporary society's aversion to risk and hyper surveillance of children's movements on children's active citizenship; their inability to freely access public space and the power constructs of society that devalue children's voices, opinions and aesthetics. Key practitioners include Mammalian Diving Reflex, Lenine Bourke, Polyglot Theatre and ArchiKidz.

When collaborating with children on social practice projects, each of these practitioners believe play is an important tool for enabling young collaborators to express who they are and find their own unique way to safely engage. Canadian based theatre company Mammalian Diving Reflex has been engaged in producing social practice works in collaboration with children and young people since 2006. Darren O'Donnell (2018), researcher, artist and Director of Mammalian Diving Reflex engages children in play to support the creation of complicated and intricate worlds, where he argues children ask challenging questions and engage in spontaneous creative expression, all skills that artists need. It is these skills which O'Donnell argues are vital in the collaborative process between children and adults (2018).

A key focus in Mammalian's work is the examination of the aesthetic power of relationships, devising and demonstrating alternative ways of being together in opposition to the horrors of the world by simply doing something different (O'Donnell, 2018). O'Donnell argues that collaborations with children not only produce interesting artwork but can also bring positive social impact to all involved, and make organisations directly involved with children become better and stronger (O'Donnell, 2018). Mammalian's collaborations with children began as

an experiment but has led to a radical overhaul in how the organisation works. The social projects produced over the past 14 years by Mammalian have embraced radical concepts, risky aesthetics and placed risky tools in the hands of children to examine and question the limitations placed on children's activities. Giving control to children, their works turn the tables on what adults perceive children to be capable of achieving (O'Donnell, 2018).

In their first collaboration with children, *Haircuts by Children*, they asked adults to wholly embrace risk. First performed in 2006 *Haircuts by Children* invites adults to have their hair cut by children aged nine to twelve years of age who have recently undergone a short training stint with a professional hairdresser. The project supports children to attempt something they have never done before; they are provided with sharp scissors to cut adults hair in the setting of a professional salon and are also paid for their work adding a further layer of intrigue and complexity to the work. The project supports children to engage in risky processes to challenge themselves and their abilities by engaging in something they are highly unlikely to have attempted before (Sandseter et al., 2011). Children are thus provided with the challenge of using sharp tools and the potential fear of disappointing their adult customer. They are also offered the thrill of trying something usually prohibited and valued for it through payment.

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Figure 17:

While children take some risks, so too do their adult customers. The *Haircuts by Children* project situates adults at the mercy of young hairdressers inviting them to "trust the children with one of our greatest vanities, our hair" (O'Donnell, 2018, p. 61). Mammalian thereby reverses the traditional paradigm of having a haircut giving children the power to decide on the cut and the colour. Adults are also invited to step outside the confines of the 'normal' roles they are expected to conform to within the public sphere. The work also challenges the role of the artist. Mammalian in this project acts as the producer, while the children become the performing artists and the adult participants their paying clients. Through the work the child is invited to develop knowledge and skills first through observation and then through practice and also to explore their own creative flair. Adult clients in turn are challenged to embrace the child performer's aesthetic, which is then cleverly framed by the producer as an artwork that is interesting, intriguing, and sometimes funny (O'Donnell, 2018).

While the adventure playground movement allowed children to create their own collective spatial and material environments, Mammalian have engineered a momentary performance of power and control by children in a context that is typically controlled by adults. Both are examples of what artists and researchers James Oliver and Marnie Badham (2013) describe as "non-directive ways" (p. 151). Mammalian ensures that their socially engaged work does not become a mere objectification of the participants by directing the practices of the children. In this way they ensure the participants' voice is honored and heard. Allowing participants to develop knowledge and skills, and then apply it with little direction, provides opportunities for children to create their own rituals of practice, which are key to the success of Mammalian and O'Donnell's work.

Australian artist Lenine Bourke similarly embraces children's views, knowledge and skills in her signature project *The Walking Neighbourhood*, actively supporting children's agency and citizenship. The *'Walking Neighbourhood'*, originated from two school residences in Tasmania, Australia and Toronto, Canada in 2010. The project was designed to examine the shared concerns they had about the eleven-year-old students' lack of autonomy due to "the rising hysteria around children in public space and their safety" (The Walking Neighbourhood, 2014). *The Walking Neighbourhood,* examines children's ability and right to access their neighbourhood and engage freely with public space. Like Mammalian's project, it is a

performative practice. Bourke and O'Donnell's project directly questions the limitations placed on children and asks parents and society to re-evaluate their stance on children's abilities, instead allowing them to learn their limitations and support them to engage in measured risk-taking. Using walking as the primary medium, Bourke invites children to design walks that take the adult audience on a journey through their local neighbourhood, exploring the hidden gems and dark corners that are often overlooked or perceived to be too dangerous for children to access. In a similar vein to Mammalian's work, Bourke invites all participants to risk stepping outside the power constructs set by society and rebel for a short time, placing the adults at the child's mercy. The project embraces a simple medium that is easily accessible and supports children to engage with their local neighbourhood in ways that they are often inhibited or discouraged from doing.

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Figure 18:

The Walking Neighbourhood has been produced across multiple locations with each production highlighting the unique views and talents of the children they collaborate with and their connection to their community. Each production varies due to the simplicity of the formula and the ability and willingness of the artists to support the children in bringing their interests, observations and values to the project. In a similar vein to the work produced by Mammalian, the child collaborators are engaged as having unrecognised skills they can bring to the performance. Each participant is invited to bring their own personality and perspective to the performance thus supporting a unique socially engaged project with each iteration that invites the adult audience to reflect on the impacts of society's aversion to risk, on limitations placed around children's agency, and how these together have curtailed children's freedoms and rights to access public space.

The Walking Neighbourhood examines the role children's agency plays across urban spaces including spaces that have been designated as 'adult only' spaces (Phillips & Hickey, 2013). In 2010 researchers Louise Phillips and Andrew Hickey were engaged as researchers on *The Walking Neighbourhood* project by Bourke and in 2012 they launched the first iteration of *The Walking Neighbourhood* in Brisbane (thewalkingneighbourhood, 2014). They examined how the process of engaging children as the lead artists and producers on *The Walking Neighbourhood* it displays the real possibilities of what children' citizenship can look like. Phillips and Hickey (2013) argue that "the intent of *The Walking Neighbourhood* was to provoke social change to counter the metanarrative of the risk adverse childhood(s)" (p. 245). As children collaborate with the adult artist and leads the adult audience on an imaginative journey through their urban and community spaces, they demonstrate what is possible when children and adults collaborate as equal citizens (Phillips & Hickey, 2013). The process supports conversations between children and adults to consider the detrimental impacts the society's aversion to risk is having on children's active citizenship.

The Walking Neighbourhood is an intriguing project that questions the perception of children as needy, in constant need of protection and monitoring, revealing the multiple ways in which children are capable of dealing with and addressing risks in their everyday lives (Lester & Russell, 2014). It invites participants to consider whether the limitations placed on children's movements in their local neighbourhoods are appropriate. But what happens when the

performance ends, when the stage, adult facilitators and artists that have provided a safety net disappears? How many of the children who participated are likely to be given permission to explore and engage freely in their neighbourhood without being under the constant surveillance of the adult. And does the conversation continue within the community once the performance ends?

Society's aversion to risk has also arguably had an impact on the types of performances produced for children. Sue Giles, the Artistic Director of Melbourne's Polyglot Theatre who has been producing work with children in Australia and internationally for over 20 years, argues that there is a distinct lack of risk in the production of work for children (Giles, 2018). Giles calls for this to be addressed by embracing more risky practices and producing work *with* children rather than simply *for* children (2018). Children play a key role in Polyglot's public performances as they are invited to collaborate with the lead artists in a performative process to construct the work. While the concept, or frame, is often developed in advance by adults, the child as the participating performer brings the work to life in collaboration with the lead artists. Polyglot's programs with schools and community organisations invite their young collaborators to bring their stories to the work, co-collaborating in productions that share the child's voice, while still promoting a high standard of conceptual and visual appeal.

Central to Polyglot's practice are play and children's agency. They state a commitment to a clear "focus on emphasising children's inherent creative and socio-emotional capacities, leading to their increased resilience for life's challenges and to the wider community's appreciation of these young people's intelligent contributions to the world" (Polyglot). Play is viewed as a key tool to enhance creativity and acts as a conduit between the adult artist and the child artist, supporting collaborations that produce live works that grow and change over the duration of the performance. Children are also the central focus point, ensuring they are immersed in the experience rather than passive audience members. *Tangle,* for example, is an interactive work during which children enter a space where they are handed a ball of brightly coloured elastic which they are invited to weave in and around tall golden poles, creating a vividly colourful everchanging landscape. A live soundtrack adds to the atmosphere and Polyglot artists roam the site adding hilarity and some chaos. The performance runs for between one hour to two hours and up to 150 people can participate at any one time.

Performed at both indoor and outdoor locations Giles describes it as a “public art spectacle’, a vibrant and interactive work that is most suitable for large open public spaces (Polyglot).

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Figure 19:

The final practice that has informed this project is Archikidz, which grew out of a series of projects held in the Netherlands 10 years ago. The Sydney based not for profit sector of the organisation was founded by architect Emma Rees-Raaijmakers to educate and inspire kids about the built environment. Part of an international network that convenes annual architectural workshops for children Archikidz argues that the built environment belongs to everyone, especially our kids. They argue cities can be better designed and invite children to engage in hands-on workshops to help them better understand the role they can play in achieving more liveable and sustainable cities, showing children they can shape the world they inhabit (Archikidz). Using low risk, child-safe materials like cardboard, ribbons, and chalk, children are invited to engage in collaborative creative play inside transformable, pre-designed and managed armatures in the context of semi-structured, interactive workshops.

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Figure 20:

Archikidz workshops are run in collaboration with several partner organisations from industry, arts, government, and education depending on the event. *Draw My City* in 2013, one event in the Sydney Architecture festival, invited 150 children to collaborate with architects and artists on a 15m long drawing to redesign and imagine their city; '*PLAY[ground]*' part of Vivid Festival 2015, an annual art, innovation and technology festival, turned Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, into what Archikidz describe as the "ultimate adventure playground in the heart of the city". The event hosted a series of workshops for children and families to engage in including '*Junglefy Our City*' where a community green wall was constructed, children were invited to play in a large structure full of colourful plastic balls, run through brightly colour ribbons tied from the branches of a large tree and swing and play in a large structure full of ropes and hammocks. Like the other socially engaged arts practices discussed, the intention of Archikidz workshops and events is to provide a platform for kids to be heard and seen in their city (Archikidz).

Conclusion

Risk and play are central to the work produced by Polyglot, Mammalian and Bourke in collaboration with children. They have a shared central focus on promoting children's agency and perspectives. But the outcomes of these workshops are performative and short lived. Meanwhile ArchiKidz works are spatial, material interventions in urban environments. In this way they share more in common with the process of making and building with the adventure playground movement than Polyglot, Mammalian and Bourke's creative practices with children. But unlike adventure playgrounds Archikidz programs are pre-designed by adults and children are invited to participate in creating the outcome. In addition, Archikidz arguably manage, rather than measure, risk, through careful infrastructure design, curation of play and event management. This includes managing the risk of aesthetic chaos if children were left to wholly shape their environment. Play has been an important tool for each of these socially engaged artists and architects to collaborate with children to support them develop in their role as active citizens. Consequently, their works have been important inspirations for this thesis.

These projects have also challenged me to ask a number of questions. Is it possible to return to the spirit of Sørensen within a contemporary Australian school? Can the structures of an art program based on play that steers the participants to produce a preconceived work be abandoned for something even more open ended? When play is used to design the work do the children really own the work? What does that mean for the artist involved?

Social and contemporary art practices that sit outside the model of traditional school art have been examined in Australia and overseas in relation to how they question the power constructs between students and teachers (Comunian, 2010), question traditional modes of education and support the development of children's agency (Adams, 2010). So too have the difficulties that artists can face specifically funding and time restraints (Filipovic, 2013). But the value of measured risky play to support children's social, emotional and education development and their connection to their school community has been given extremely limited attention in Australia, inspiring this research project.

Kids' Urban Dreaming: Project & Methods

This chapter describes the development of my collaborative practice-led research project, *Kids' Urban Dreaming*; the methods I developed to capture data; and the methods I applied to analyse the data. I begin by situating myself as a socially engaged artist, given I draw on the skills, tacit knowledge and relationships I developed in my previous work. I briefly describe the pilot program I developed to test ideas and approaches. I then describe the process of conceptualising and setting up *Kids' Urban Dreaming* to explore my question. I found that my approach continued to be reshaped and refined over the duration of the project, so I have adopted a chronological approach, discussing how the fieldwork was undertaken, the steps required to establish the project and how it was impacted and shaped by the communities I engaged with. I conclude with an overview of the creative outputs.

The chapter also includes a discussion of the two primary methodologies I used in this research project: practice led research and critical ethnography. I provide an overview of practice-led research in theory and practice (Gray, 1996; Smith & Dean, 2009; Nelson, 2013; Bolt, 2007) followed by an overview of critical ethnography (Thomas, 1993). I also explain the principles of narrative analysis (Esin et al., 2014) and visual analysis (Bank, 2014), the methods I applied to explore the data through the lens of my research question;

> *What is the potential of measured risky play as an artistic tool to activate children's citizenship inside the walls of a traditional pedagogical institution and the role that risk plays in the socially engaged artist's creative practice? Using adventure play as a key strategy of engagement, the research examined the overarching question:*
>
> *How can a socially engaged art practice, based on measured risky play in an educational environment support children's social, emotional and educational development?*

I discuss the immersive process I undertook and the impacts the practice had on me, my participants and the wider community. I then discuss the multi-modal and participatory data

collection processes and recording of the project, including discussing my collaborator's contributions to the data collection and the reasons for choosing these methods of data collection.

Kids' Urban Dreaming: Summary

Kids Urban Dreaming was an adventure play project I undertook with 23 participants aged 9-11, split across two campuses of a primary school in a regional city in Victoria, south-east Australia in 2018. I worked with my collaborators for two hours each week for three school terms. I was introduced to the School Principal and Campus Principals by Miss K (the assisting artist) in 2017. I introduced my research project with the Ethics approved Information Statement. We had some subsequent meetings during which I introduced myself and elaborated on the concept for the project. I had no direct involvement in selecting participants. The Campus Principals and teachers then nominated students at the school who they felt would gain the most from the program. The principal and teachers recognized the potential of the program to assist these students in developing new skills that would support them to find new and positive ways to engage with their education and their school community.

Information Statements and Consent forms, approved by the University of Melbourne's Ethics Department and the Department of Education and Training Victoria, were distributed to students and parents/guardians before participation commenced. Information Statements and Consent forms were also distributed to the assisting teachers, class teachers, parents and the assisting artist. At Campus 1 the welfare teacher was the main assisting teacher and, when necessary, one other teacher would also be on site to assist with students who needed more support. Students were allowed to withdraw themselves from the program. At times I needed to enlist the support of the School Principal to ensure there was compliance with the practices outlined in the ethics agreement.

Over the duration of the program my collaborators and I captured each session using video, sound recordings (mobile phone) and photography. At the end of each session I would journal, reflecting on what happened to refine the session the following week. Semi-structured interviews and or casual conversations were held with parents when they attended the Campus

with one formal session being conducted with two parents at Campus 2 during Term 3. The assisting teacher and the classroom teachers at Campus 1 were interviewed (at the beginning of the program and the end of term 3. The assisting teachers at both Campuses regularly shared their insights with me during the workshops which I recorded in my journal notations at the end of each session. I also conducted an exit interview with the assisting teacher and students at Campus 1 in 2019. At Campus 2 I was only able to conduct one interview with the assisting teacher and an exit interview with the Campus Principal in 2019. The final session at both Campuses were attended by some family members and this enabled me to gain more insight in to how the program had supported their children via a casual conversation.

Project Background, Conceptualisation and Establishment

Kids' Urban Dreaming was developed through combining my work as a community artist with my work as a professional playworker. My idea was to set up a project for students aged 9 -11 years of age in in a primary school setting based on Sørenson's original adventure playground concept. I took my experience as a community artist with children and young people and the tools I used as a playworker to create a practice that is based on child-led measured risky play to develop a creative research method. The tools I originally worked with were recycled and found fabrics, paper, cardboard and clean industrial waste designated for landfill, paints and brushes. These were extended to incorporate recycled and found timbers, old building materials, gardening tools, pickaxes, saws, hammers and drills. The introduction of non-traditional art mediums and tools changed the focus and aesthetic of my work. I went from creating simple installations, murals and running educational recycled art workshops to working in collaboration with children and young people and creating large scale pop-up installations that celebrate the child's aesthetic using measured risky play as the key art tool.

I originally examined the impact of my new practice in a pop-up art installation *The Ultimate Pop-Up Junkyard Playground* inviting children and young people aged six to seventeen years of age to re-activate the disused playground of a former public school in Brunswick, Melbourne in 2016. This led me to question how this project could be translated to an active school as a non-traditional means of increasing student engagement with their community and education? Would it help students to engage as active citizens in their school community,

would it support them to develop their social, emotional and educational development and would the risky aspect of the practice deter the educational institutions from engaging in the process?

I began by undertaking a pilot project *Adventure Build* with a primary school located in an outer western Melbourne suburb in 2017. The project lasted for two school terms, allowing me to examine how the project could work within a traditional curriculum setting. The program was conducted over two school terms with twelve students from years five and six who the school identified as requiring alternative programs to support their emotional and social development. Over the duration of the project students took on leadership roles, built new friendships and one student thanked me for providing a context where they had learnt how to control their anger issues. Although the students were positive and enjoyed the program it did raise questions I had not considered previously. How do I navigate the risk of the institution not understanding or completely supporting the program? And what steps do I take to resolve this problem?

My official thesis fieldwork began in 2018. Following a serendipitous lead, I went to a post-industrial regional city where an artist, who had previously worked on my master's project as my assistant, lived. Miss K had indicated that she felt the program would be of benefit to her community, in particular the local school and introduced me to her community. The local community centre, a youth centre, and a local primary school were all interested my proposal and willing for me to carry out the creative field work in their organisations. Within the first 3 months of my fieldwork, I ended my work on one site: the youth centre. It became apparent that the youth centre was not able to ensure all ethics protocols were followed. Over the next 12 months I continued to work with the community centre one afternoon a week and was on site for two days a week at the school for the last three terms of the school year. At the completion of my fieldwork, I decided not to include the data from the community centre. Although the program had proved successful the outcomes were not comparable to the school projects. Because I followed the participants and their interests, the community centre program became more focused on cooking and running child-led mini festivals and concerts, which was very different from the school sites. The data collected from this site will be used for other purposes instead including publications, promotion of programs and presentations

for which I have permission.

The practice at the schools centred around the participants designing and building their own installations and structures. We sourced old building materials, recycled and found fabrics, bamboo poles and pallets which the participants used to design and build a series of installations. We also incorporated plants and gardening tools. As the project progressed the installations took on a life of their own. The participants, after learning how to safely use saws, hammers, drills and gardening tools, designed and built their own safe havens inside the institution's walls. At Campus 1 they focused primarily on the construction of a large fort right in the middle of the school grounds. Each week participants added and or removed features, created games and slowly constructed a much-loved fort that during recess and lunch times the younger students would play on. A garden was added, and the girls built a dance floor where they choreographed and performed numbers for the other participants. Over at Campus 2 they built several installations. The site there was behind the school buildings and was fenced in, and inaccessible to other students. This provided the participants with a sense of privacy and complete ownership of the site. They designed and built four different installations including a large throne where they created mini performances, pathways to connect each installation together and attempted to grow vegetables.

Over the duration of the project, I learnt to let go of the outcome and to trust the participants with the direction of the site. I learnt to completely embrace the child aesthetic and I came to understand more wholly what child-led play really means. There were numerous frustrations on both sides. I had to learn to trust the participants, to recognise when they needed to be left to their own devices, to know that I could not control or try to manipulate an outcome. The participants were fiery and had amazing ideas that they needed to express, even if it meant failing. We all failed at various stages: me in not always recognising what the participants were trying to communicate; and, at the beginning, in trying to control and direct the participants and the outcome. Participants' failures were not really failures but more attempts at building something, discovering the outcomes were not what they anticipated and having to readjust their design. As I learnt to trust the process and let go of control of

the outcome, the project came to life and the participants began to trust me. My practice was altered entirely. It was not only the participants who learned new skills, but also me.

Despite having spent eight years working as a playworker letting go of pre-designed outcomes and my own idea of what aesthetically worked was not as easy as I thought it would be. It was a constant struggle during the first term of the project. It was not only the aesthetic of the project it was also re-learning how to let the participants take charge of the site, let them decide when and how they would participate. This was a process I had been through when I first began working as a playworker at Fitzroy Adventure Playground but adjusting this process so that it would work inside a traditional school setting came with a number of complications: 'child-led' practices were not fully understood by the school hierarchy, and the school structures and rules were not necessarily always conducive to the adventure playground concept.

In the adventure playground children come and go as they please; they decide on what their main focus will be if they choose to participate; and if they don't want to participate, they walk away at any time, head off to another section of the playground to engage in another activity. Sometimes they even just leave the playground. Inside a school there are rules, regulations and boundaries put in place to ensure children's safety that limit such freedoms. Staff are legally required to know where children are and what they are doing at all times. In addition, there are implicitly held preconceptions about what aesthetics are acceptable. Together these create a very different context to a community adventure playground. Consequently, certain aspects of the adventure playground concept were altered to conform to the rules and regulations teachers are required to follow while still embracing the concept. Participants were not able to just wander off from the site to do their own thing, but if a participant needed some time off, they just had to let us know and were welcome to go back to class and return to the program the following week. The use of play allowed them a sense of freedom: if a child needed to let off steam, we ensured there was a safe way for them to do this that did not conflict with either the school's requirements or go against the spirit of adventure play for others in the group.

Research Methodology

My process of practicing, reflection on failures and successes, and re-orienting my practice in response is what Donald Schön defines as reflective practice (Schon, 1983). Schön introduced reflective practice as a concept in the 1980's and it is still regarded by many as of "pre-eminent importance" (Fish pg. 27-8, 1989, as cited in Newman pg. 4, 2018) greatly influencing the fields of education and the design professions. Schön's work and its relevance and influence has also been widely used as a methodological framework in the fields of Visual and Performing Arts (Barrett, 2007; Nelson, 2013). As I cycled between "knowing-in-action" and "reflection-on-action" acting, I was able to restructure where needed, improve upon my work and then move forward to further actions (Schon, 1983; p.50). Arguably, the students did the same.

Practice-led research has been developed by a range of other practitioners and theorists whose contributions further enabled me to refine my method of working with my research collaborators – the child participants – to gather my data. The data was later analysed using critical ethnography.

Practice-led Research - An Overview

Practice-led research is defined by researchers and artists Robin Nelson and Caroline Gray as research that is initiated in practice (Gray, 1993; Nelson, 2013). Researchers and Artists Hazel Smith and Roger Dean (2009) define it as research where the artwork is defined as a form of research and through the creation of the work new research insights are generated that may be theorised, documented and generalised. At the heart of the research methodology is the practice and thus it is presented as key evidence in the creation of new knowledge (Nelson, 2013). Gray (1993) further defines it as research "where questions, problems and challenges are identified and formed by the needs of the practice and practitioners" (p.3), a process where the artist through their practice unearths the challenges and questions to be examined. In order to examine the questions and challenges that the artist uncovers, the artist will generally use the methods and methodologies that are commonly used in their own visual arts practice (Gray, 1993). Practice-led research is an integrative approach that also incorporates examining the practice through the literature (Gray, 1996; Bolt, 2010; Nelson,

2013). Many proponents of practice-led research are artists for whom the outcome is a body of art rather than research. That is, the art is offered as a research-equivalent that is developed and refined through a process of reflective practice. In this project, the practice leads to a refinement of a method of working with young participants. The outcome is an innovative model of arts-led education that supports young children's development as active citizens in school. Nevertheless, it is also a process through which my own arts practice developed too.

When undertaking practice-led research new insights are unearthed leading to the development of new questions as the work is created, requiring the artist/researcher to be in a constant state of critical reflection (Nelson, 2013). While critical reflection is an integral aspect of the creation of any artwork itself, practice-led research pursues discoveries that can be articulated and disseminated in order to advance a field of knowledge (Nelson, 2013). The process demands the artist take on a dual role, balancing the competing demands of acting through intuition whilst also critically thinking and writing about our practice (Gray, 1996). Gray argues that when these processes are integrated practice and research co-exist rather than oppose one another (Gray, 1996). I found the parallel discipline of journaling each day enabled me to bridge the chasm between the two and facilitated the process of translating it into writing for a scholarly audience.

Practice-led research allows space for the unexpected and serendipitous moments that are a natural process of the creative practice to be enveloped within the research process leading to the development of a rich tapestry of insights and new knowledge (Gray, 1996; Nelson, 2013). If an artist continuously reflects on their rituals, they can become aware of what does or does not work, and unearth tacit and embodied knowledge, knowledge that is not always visible (Nelson, 2013). It is a constantly evolving process "where all mistakes are revealed and acknowledged for the sake of methodological transparency" (Gray, 1996, p. 15). Artist and researcher Barbara Bolt (2010) argues that the artwork alone is not enough to articulate the argument in a scholarly context. It needs to be supported by the exegesis, or critical explanation or interpretation of the work. In-so-doing, practice-led research becomes a "double articulation between theory and practice", (Bolt, 2010, p. 29) with theory evolving out of the reflexive practice while simultaneously informing the practice.

Art and education researcher Estelle Barrett (2007) argues that Schön's work helps us to expand upon research to include discoveries that are made through bodily experiences. Key also to the reflective practice is Schön's (1983) argument that the "knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff which we are dealing" (p. 49). Bolt (2010) argues that engaging with generative processes and tacit knowing have the potentiality to unveil new insights. Thus, the artworks and the written word which are both vital in the development of the thesis (Bolt, 2010). Nelson (2013) also further expands upon Schön's work in relation to the arts arguing that not all tacit knowledge can be expressed in words alone, it is in the performance and doing that much of the knowledge is discovered. It is during the practice of reflecting in and on the movements, the rituals and actions as they occur and in addition, as Greenwood (1993) argues, the reflection before the actions, the process of intention and planning before the artists steps onto the site with the participants, that new knowledge is produced.

The acceptance of practice-led research as a legitimate methodology to support the creation of new knowledge has steadily increased in academic institutions since it first originated in the 1970's. While there are still particular challenges to its inclusion in an already contested site of knowledge-production, a growing body of work has been created that supports the role of the arts and creativity in the production of new knowledge (Nelson, 2013). As a recent discipline that is gradually being acknowledged and accepted within academia the question of what practice led research validly contributes to the knowledge of art is still unfolding (Wang et al., 2017). There are numerous artistic disciplines and ways artistic researchers approach creating new knowledge both within and outside the field of academia. This is witnessed by the broad range of artistic practitioners whose research is led by their practice both in the official channels of academia and outside the channels.

Artists and artistic researchers in Australia have been examining children's active citizenship within the official academic channels across a broad spectrum of multi-disciplinary practices in recent years. Most notably researcher, early years educator and artist Louise Phillips. Phillips examines her practice of storytelling as a medium to support the development of children's social justice awareness and ability to engage as agents of social change. Phillips' research methodology embraces a living education theory approach to practitioner research,

using a multi-modal data collection process that also incorporates critical reflection during and after data collection. Her outcomes led to a deeper understanding of the possibilities that exist for young children's active citizenship (Phillips, 2010). In addition, Phillips is a researcher on *The Walking Neighbourhood* project led by artist Lenine Bourke (The Walking Neighbourhood, 2014). The two elements, research and creativity are integrated, leading to the formation of a critical dialogue between Philips and her peer's work that discusses and promotes the capacities of children to engage as active citizens in their communities.

In the UK, art and design studio Assemble regularly combine practice and research to design and instigate works that examine the nuances of childhood and the child's relationship to their environment. Following a practice led research approach their project *The Voice of Children* is an ongoing research project that combines research, creativity and technology to examine how children explore and play in cities around the world. Assemble uses film as a tool to examine the environment's importance in enabling children's play and how they develop their relationship with the physical world when given sufficient time and space (Assemble, 2016). Assemble combines technology and creativity to promote the visibility of the invisible, capturing the richness of the child's world and how they engage with it. Gray (1996) argues that the process of combining technology and creativity enables artists to unveil new forms of information, allowing artists to make the unseen or invisible visible. Assembles use of film captures the children's rituals and practices as they engage in free play, providing insights that go beyond the practice, comparing environments that have been designed to enable free play like Adventure Playgrounds and Forest Kindergartens with typical play environments that limit free expression. The creative practice in combination with theory supports Assemble in displaying the complexities of the child's world which cannot be as easily captured through written text alone.

The synthesis of theory and practice still faces obstacles according to Nelson (2013). There are some who still view it as "frivolous in contrast with the seriousness of science" (Nelson, 2013., p. 114). Due to the amount of fun, pleasure, and colourfulness that the arts can bring it is deemed to be more suited to leisure pastimes rather than as a tool to engage in serious research (Nelson, 2013). However Gray (1996) and Nelson (2013) both argue that practice-led research has an important role to play in revealing hidden truths in our complex world.

As the act of doing is increasingly recognised as a form of knowing, the practices and rituals of the artist are being acknowledged for the notable contributions they make to the production of new knowledge (Nelson, 2013). Supported by a rigorous examination of the theory, the practice and rituals of the artist open us up to new forms of knowledge production that are a rich tapestry of the visual, sensory and tacit knowledge of the artistic researcher (Gray, 1996; Bolt, 2010; Nelson, 2013).

Critical Ethnography – An Overview

Critical ethnography is defined by sociologist, Jim Thomas, as "conventional ethnography with a political purpose" (Thomas, 1993, p. 4). It invites the researcher to question what could be; examine the culture, knowledge and actions of all participants including the researchers own, demanding that they see, hear and feel beyond the preconceived assumptions that have been uncritically accepted about the communities they engage with (Thomas, 1993, p.2). It requires the researcher to acknowledge the extent to which our knowledge is shaped by the overarching constructs of power in which we are immersed and, through collective actions, transcend those imposed social conditions (Thomas, 1993). Critical ethnography requires the researcher to engage with the participants inside their social spaces with the intention of developing relationships that are reciprocal, trusting and meaningful (Madison, 2005). In turn this supports the researcher in their role of challenging taken-for granted images, ideas and ways of thinking and in doing so they reveal the subtle qualities of social control (Thomas, 1993). By engaging in a process of questioning how we think, the aim is to progress from "what is to what could be" (Thomas, 1993, p. 22).

Thomas (1993) argues that through a process of questioning the researcher can construct a clearer and sharper image of the social space, leading to opportunities that support a revision of the social space that is congruent and beneficial with the participants. The limitations of critical ethnography are if the researcher does not closely attend to the data. Only recording what serves their purpose or imposing biased meanings on the data, refusing to acknowledge things they do not like can lead to poor research findings (Thomas, 1993). The researcher needs to engage constantly in a process of scrutinizing and examining their own knowledge and position of power, questioning their own views of the world, their own biases,

assumptions and acknowledge their own limitations when undertaking the study (Madison, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2013). This is undertaken in line with the examination and discussion of the limitations or faults of the power structures that the research and participants exist within (Madison, 2005). To ensure the researcher avoids regurgitating pre-conceived concepts that are based on prejudice they need to engage in an open, honest and reflexive process over the duration of the research project (Thomas, 1993; Madison, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2013).

Critical ethnography as a methodology supports the creative researcher in the examination of their rituals and their collaborators as they evolve and change. Thomas (1993) argues that it allows for flexibility, acknowledging that the most interesting questions may only emerge after considerable background data is collected, data that emerges from the rituals of practice. Critical ethnography, in line with the socially engaged practitioner's practice, does not follow a linear trajectory based on a set of routine questions that provide a direct answer. Rather it allows examination of questions as they emerge out of the rituals of practice (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

Narrative and Visual Analysis - An Overview

Narrative analysis is a form of analysis that uses a combination of approaches allowing the researcher to combine useful tools that help them to comprehend the wide ranging and diverse stories unearthed rather than treating stories as simply a collection of coherent, unified and natural entities (Esin et al., 2014; Andrews et al., 2004). The use of narratives supports researchers to address the differing and at times contradictory layers of meaning, placing them in dialogue with each other, helping them to understand "how narratives operate dialogically between the personal and the surrounding social worlds that produce, consume, silence and contest them" (Esin et al., 2014, p. 2). Sociologists Cigdmen Esin, Mastoureh Fathi and Corinne Squire (2014) discuss how the constructionist approach to narrative analysis is an extension of sociologist Catherine Reissman's dialogic narrative model. Reissman's model of dialogic narrative analysis emphasises how the storytelling or narrative experiences in social settings are co-constructed, defining this as a form of interactional analysis whereby the dialogic process between the teller and the listener is primary (Reissman, 1933). In this thesis the dialogic process is between the students, assisting

teachers, assisting artist, the wider community and the lead artist and researcher. Here the focus and interest are on the "story-telling as a process of co-construction, where teller and listener create meaning collaboratively" (Reissman, 1993, p. 4). This approach ensures the stories shared include the viewpoints and experiences of all participants and the wider community, not just the researchers.

The constructionist approach to narrative analysis allows for the narrative analysis to not only concentrate "on the linguistic minutia of the co-construction of the story between speaker and listener" (Esin et al., 2014, p. 2) but to also examine the wider social construction within social cultural and interpersonal relations. Esin et al., (2014) argue for a focus on the social narratives as opposed to individual narratives, allowing for the power relations to be addressed as co-constructed, thereby stressing the constantly changing elements that form the narrative in opposition to reading them as the final product of a particular situation that over time may alter or change. This includes the examination of the role of the audience, especially when undertaking narrative analysis that is more socially orientated and the role of the audience is strong. Meanings of narrative are therefore not only limited to the audiences mean-making "at the time location and social context" (Esin et al., 2014, p. 3) where stories first unfold. There are numerous differently positioned audiences including future readers and vastly different audiences who may or will have radically different interpretations, using different frames to understand the stories (Esin et al., 2014).

Key also to narrative analysis is that the narrative researcher also analyses their own social, cultural and political positioning including their theoretical and methodological frameworks (Esin et al., 2014). This can allow for the emergence of a "creative approach to the story" (Esin et al., 2014, p. 4) of the research itself, in turn leading to a more critical and qualified telling of the story than just "simply telling stories of data" (p. 4). Esin et al., (2014) discuss how the constructionist approach views power through the lens of Foucault; power is held widely in various forms, it is acknowledged as multiple, contestable, mobile, always relational and is imbued in language. This promotes an analysis of the data that goes beyond just what the researcher is experiencing. It allows for stories to be woven and threaded together to create a setting that can be then translated and transferred to other locations.

In conjunction with narrative analysis visual analysis was a key method of analysis. Visual analysis is the methodology by which images, both still and moving, are interpreted. Sociologist Marcus Banks (2014) argues that images contain a dual nature – to represent and be – rendering their viability for analysis possible. Produced by humans in response to human social action, they exist independently from them but still retain affective and agentive ties to them. Meanwhile they are also representations "… pictures of (other) things, and in that sense remain tied iconically or indexically to that which they represent'' (Banks, 2014, p. 2). Images used for analysis can be found images, those images produced by the social group or society being examined and or images created by the researcher and in some cases the research participants (those being examined in the study). Therefore, the images used for analysis all carry varying kinds of "intentionality in their production, an intentionality which needs to be taken into account in most if not all forms of subsequent analysis" (Banks, 2014, p. 3). When analysing and interpreting images Banks argues that images can only be interpreted through the filter of the analyst's 'culture'. Referencing art historian Michael Baxendall's concept of the 'period eye' and anthropologist Jeremy Coote's interpretation of this as the 'cultural eye', Banks discusses ways of seeing that allow the viewer to draw visual parallels when encountering the visible world and novel items inside that world that are culturally specific (Banks, 2014).

Visual analysis seeks to understand how the subject sees the image. Coote (2012) argues that in its broadest sense, a society's visual aesthetic reflects how people from that particular society or cultural group see. Coote's concept of the 'cultural eye' implores us to also try to see "art as its original makers and viewers see it" (Coote, 2012, p. 217). This argument supports a collaborative approach to the collection of imagery to be analysed, as it supports the researcher to see the work created not only through their eyes but also those of the research participants. The creation of images both still and moving enables the researcher to revisit the site repeatedly and discover things they may not have noticed when conducting the program or originally taking the photos and videos (Coote, 2012; Banks, 2014). Videography in particular allows the researcher to revisit and reflect on the social interactions and the sequence of events and images. In a similar vein to photography, it carries a mimetic quality and "can be understood as representing aspects of the situation" (Flick, 2014, p. 5). A temporal medium, video records in stretches of time turning motion into data. Preserving the

structural temporary order of ongoing activities, making it possible for the "processual character of social interactions" (Flick, 2014, p. 5) to be examined.

Sociologist Allen Grimshaw (1982) argues that there are two principal advantages to using video and film; density and permanence. Ordinarily a researcher will only have access to social interactions and various personal cues that participants engage in briefly and many will be missed as they often happen in the background or in other areas of the site that are not within their earshot or field of vision at the time. Except for those moments where they are directly engaged with the participants or have observed the interactions and noted them down, they are often missed (Grimshaw, 1982). The permanence of videography and photography allows the researcher to revisit the site repeatedly and, if well preserved copies are kept and made accessible, it allows future researchers to contribute further to the research with their own alternative analysis of what was captured (Grimshaw, 1982).

There are some arguments against using videography as the sole research tool. It is not able to capture every social interaction and the nuances of each word spoken. There is the potential of an overload of data and, depending on who records the videos (as with photography), the angles it is taken from and how the data is analysed, it can or may create biases that impact negatively on the research participants (Grimshaw, 1982; Knoblauch et al, 2014). Ethics are important in the process. How are the images captured? Are they skewed to obtain a predetermined outcome? Are they slanted towards the researchers' unchecked biases and social or cultural viewpoint (Coote, 2012; Knoblauch et al, 2014)? Inviting participants to engage in the collection of visual imagery helps to ensure that their perspective is also collected, helping the researcher to understand more clearly how they interact socially and create their culture.

Application of the Methods in *Kids' Urban Dreaming*

The research methodology for this thesis draws on both practice-led research methods and critical ethnography, using a socially engaged art practice to engage with my participants, and a combination of narrative and visual analysis to analyse the process and outcomes. These enabled me to examine and reflect on the culture and practice of my work, the participants,

and the institution where the work took place (Thomas, 1993). I also critically reflected on the rituals of practice (Nelson, 2013) that the participants and I developed individually and together, and on the creative outcomes as well (Rendell, 2006). The analysis was continual. Before, during and after each session I would reflect upon and examine the data independently, by immersing myself into the site, photographic and visual recordings. I also invited my child-collaborators into the process of recording and interpreting their own work through photography and video interviews of one another. This helped me to generate evidence to examine my thesis question that was then further examined in relation to scholarly literature and other artistic practices.

My collaborators and I captured the rituals as they evolved including the movements, sounds and serendipitous moments. Art-based methods for recording the project were chosen not only as they are an established part of my practice but also as they provided an accessible data collection tool for my collaborators to use. Collection methods included film, photography and audio recordings using a combination of equipment including Go-Pro camera, SLR camera, and mobile phone (for visual and sound recording). Each tool that was chosen to record the practice was easily accessible to my collaborators and supported capturing the serendipitous moments, movements and how the practice and the participants evolved. The reflective and critical reflective notes in my journaling, provided a thick description of the project as it evolved over time (Morrow, 2007). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Principals, teachers, assisting teachers, parents and assisting artist to examine the impact of the project from the wider communities' perspective.

The data collection tools were easily accessible, allowing for the participants to decide if they wanted to engage in the collection processes and which tool they would use. While not all participants engaged in taking the photos, videoing or interviewing they all felt comfortable in being photographed, videoed or recorded by their peers and as the project unfolded each participant contributed to this mode of data collection. The provision of cameras to the participants also allowed those who were not allowed to be photographed or filmed to still engage in the data collection process. This allowed them to be active contributors to the research process and share their views and perspectives of the project without being identified as per the ethics protocols.

The ethics protocols for this project required that parents and children decided if they wished to be photographed or filmed. The majority of the participants and their parents agreed to the participants being photographed and filmed but several parents asked not to be identified. To avoid any stigmatization by the wider community I further protected participants' identities by not identifying the location of the fieldwork and using pseudonyms. Each participant was asked to give themselves a pseudonym and I gave them time to decide and when they didn't, I chose names that reflected their individual characters. The pseudonyms personally chosen were names of characters or popular personalities the children felt a connection to. For example, Devil Queen chose a name that reflected her love of the Disney character Maleficent and Nic Naitanui chose his as the AFL player was someone he loved and identified with due to their shared cultural identity and love of AFL. Sunshine Queen was someone who was always smiling when on site and doing her best to support everyone, while the name Mischief Maker was exactly what the name suggests, he loved to make mischief.

The collaborative data collection process ensured the research question was consistently woven into all aspects of the research process (O'Neill, 2013). The visual imagery and soundscapes recorded by the participants further displayed their ability to engage as co-constructors of the society they inhabit (Ernest, 1994) and captured their unique perspective of the site. Individual participants used the tools to record various aspects of the project they personally found interesting. Frida took photos from interesting angles and loved to photograph their garden, Devil Queen was the chief interviewer at various stages and the camera became a way for Sunshine Queen to engage as an active participant helping her to feel a sense of connection to the site, me and her peers (Fieldnotes, 2018).

Moving and still images and sound recordings collectively captured ensured that not one single viewpoint or voice dominated the data. The data collected amplified the collective voice, but it also wove together the individual participants' voices and my own, displaying how the rituals and practices were a collaborative effort. The collaborative data collection process acknowledged my collaborators as both producers of new knowledge and holders of knowledge, ensuring they were not simply passive research subjects in a tokenistic art/research project (Adams, 2010).

To support the collaborative data collection we used a GoPro, SLR camera and mobile phone. This ensured the site was captured in numerous ways. The GoPro was used for capturing sounds and moving imagery from various heights and angles around the site; it was attached to constructions as they were being built, attached to fence lines, and attached to a bicycle helmet that the participants wore as they ran around the site or worked on the installations. Used as a stationary or moving video camera it captured the sites sounds and activities; the construction of the installations; the little and not so little exchanges, verbal and non-verbal and the development of the rituals.

The SLR camera helped to capture the construction timeline, the construction of the installations and the development of participants' collaborative relationships. It was used to capture serendipitous moments and the little exchanges between participants. The participants used the camera to capture their interactions with each other and the site, create mini photo shoots and photograph the small little details. They took shots from obscure angles that displayed their unique view and connection to the project, adding their perspective to the data collection. In conjunction with mobile phone sound recordings, photos from numerous angles and viewpoints were captured that were integral to evidencing the research enquiry and the articulation of both mine and my collaborators rituals of practice (Nelson, 2013).

I journaled after each session at both campuses. My journals recorded a thick description of the project's evolution (Morrow, 2007). It supported my critical reflection of the practice as it unfolded each week, allowing me the flexibility to move between the role of observer and researcher and artist and participant (Maharaj, 2016). Critical notes recorded my thoughts, feelings, questions and impressions on how the project was unfolding and how my personal ideas, values and experiences were impacting the project (Fook & Gardner, 2007). They described what was built, the physical actions of the participants, their conversations, my actions and the conversations held between me and the participants.

My journals included a straightforward description of the physical acts and conversations, mine and my collaborators and descriptions of the installations. Interwoven were critical reflections on the changing rituals and practices as they occurred. Along with the visual data,

the journaling recorded a timeline of the project and in turn, enabled a critical reflection on the development of the project over time. I used them to evaluate what was and wasn't working and to recognise how some of my own practices disrupted the development of my participants' rituals and practices. This process challenged previous assumptions and led to a way of engaging with the participants that supported them in their engagement as active citizens using language and rituals that they connected to.

Semi-structured interviews with non-participating and participating observers were conducted at both sites to gain an understanding of the impacts the practice was having upon the participants. Interviewees included parents, participating teachers, the assisting artist, principals and non-participating teachers. A semi-structured interview technique was chosen as it provided more flexibility than formal interviews, allowing for a free flowing and intuitively led process, which supported an open and responsive dialogue to unfold (Smith et al., 1995). This in turn allowed for a more immersive interview technique, supporting the disclosure of observations and impacts that I may not have considered or observed myself. I was able to follow up on particularly interesting comments leading to new avenues to analysis, allowing for the uncovering of a deeper, richer and fuller picture of the project (Smith et al.,1995).

At Campus 1 the interviews were held with the supporting teacher, classroom teachers and some of the parents. Campus 2 was more difficult to engage in the process and only one interview was held with the supporting teacher and one interview with the principal. But I was able to interview the assisting artist. I attempted to interview the classroom teachers, but this was not successful as the information required to ensure a successful interview was not disseminated by the responsible staff member. Interviews with some of the parents were held and these provided some important insights into their perceptions of the impact of the project on their children.

The semi-structured approach for interviewing the parents ensured they felt safe to engage in the process. Miss E advocated for keeping the process informal to ensure parents, some of whom the school had previously found difficult to engage, felt safe to participate (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). At Campus 1 interviews with parents and family members

were conversations that were held when the parents visited the site and open-ended exchanges that were led by the parents, where they disclosed their observations of how the practice was impacting their children from their perspective. The conversations were not recorded digitally to keep the process casual. I wrote notes in my journals immediately after, where I also reflected upon the conversations, focusing in particular on recounted impacts of the practice that I had not considered.

At Campus 2 interviews with parents were held on two separate occasions. The first was in a more formal setting where two parents met with me to discuss the program. As with Campus 1, I used a semi-structured interview technique to ensure the parents felt safe to engage and discuss how they felt the program was impacting their children. The second interview session was a serendipitous moment that occurred during the final session at Campus 2. I led the conversation at first, as the parents were shy, but once they felt comfortable, they allowed me to record our conversation and were keen to discuss the impact of the program on their children. While the conversations with parents were limited, they provided a more rounded, richer and fuller picture of the context in which the children were growing up which challenged my preconceptions of the community.

The underlying biases I held were also challenged during interview sessions with the teachers, specifically at Campus 1. My pre-conceptions had been shaped by the lens provided by the media: a low SES community with limited educational aspirations for their children, as well as and conversations with locals (Miss K, Personal Correspondence, 2019) [1]. The interviews at Campus 2 were not as detailed as I was only able to engage with the assisting teacher for one session. While it meant I had a shallower picture of the impacts of the program on participants, it did provide me with further insights into how the two campuses approached the program. The interview with the assisting artist from Campus 2, Miss K also provided me with insights into how the project was viewed by the wider community. Miss K is a local and her perspective of how the project supported the participants to engage as active citizens was important. As a person who had grown up in the community and still resided there, her perspective challenged my preconceptions and caused me to reflect upon my own biases.

[1] To protect the communities' privacy references to media sources have been removed.

The differing approaches and abilities of the campuses to engage and support the program was highlighted by obstacles faced when trying to organise interviews with the participating teacher and classroom teachers. At Campus 1 the supporting teacher Miss E was proactive in engaging the classroom teachers prior to commencement of the project and over the duration of the project. The interviews with Campus 1 teachers were also highly informative, with teachers sharing the back-stories of the participants which provided me with an insight into the challenges they faced. Again, held as semi-formal interviews, they were led by the teachers and I was able to respond to comments and disclosures leading to new understanding of the project and the community in which it was located (Smith et al., 1995).

The attempted interview with the classroom teachers at Campus 2 did not provide any insight into how the project was impacting the participants, it only displayed the limited support some of the institution's hierarchy gave the program. I discovered no information had been disseminated to the teachers which led to an awkward, uncomfortable and confusing meeting with them. The campus Principal, upon his return from leave, attempted to engage the classroom teachers but with limited success. An exit interview was held with the Principal in February the following year where some questions were answered including small details in relation to the how the project had impacted the participants. Unfortunately, due to his lack of direct involvement with the program the insights were limited and the questionnaires he had forwarded to the teachers on my behalf had predominantly been ignored or offered very minimal responses.

I later transcribed the recorded interviews which allowed me to re-immerse myself into the interview. By listening repeatedly to different phrases, I was led to new avenues to examine and again this led me to question my own biases and preconceived ideas about the community, which were based on news and media coverage and stories shared with me by people located in more affluent areas nearby. After the interviews were transcribed, I re-read them while also re-reading my journals and watching videos from the site and examining photographs. As I undertook this process I would reflect upon the interviewee's words and responses, using them to help build a thick description of the process and gain further insight of the impacts of the project on the participants.

The interviews enabled me to develop a comparative analysis of the two sites. It also provided me with new questions to consider including how the power constructs of within an educational institution can hinder or support a research project. The semi-structured interviews led to new questions and avenues to analyse as much as they provided insights into how the wider community perceived the project. The unexpected reactions by some staff, the limited responses by others and the full and descriptive conversations held with supportive staff were woven together to display how power constructs can hinder or support a project.

The analysis of the lived experiences included a reflective analysis of the culture, knowledge and actions of all participants, to question the accepted power structures in which we were all immersed (Thomas, 1993). This enabled me to come to perceive the community's pride, hope and belief that the world could be better for their children despite their economic and social challenges. By engaging in a process of critical reflection on the culture and immersing myself into the community I was able to develop a sense of the possibilities that existed for the participants and validate their emerging rituals and practices. The participants' rituals and practices formed an integral part of the evidence, displaying their capacity to engage as active citizens and social agents. By delegating agency over the data collection to the participants, my collaborators revealed otherwise hidden interactions and rituals, making visible the invisible or overlooked (Gray, 1996).

Unearthing the hidden interactions and rituals was a constant process that occurred during my reflective process. I would examine the data, by considering images, journal entries, videos from the different perspectives of my research-collaborators, re-connecting with the emotions they created in me and reflecting upon the actions and outcomes from those actions. I examined the fleeting moments and the physical structures created; going into as much detail as possible describing the feelings this generated before, during and after the practice (Boud et al., as cited in Greenwood, 1997). When on site I was in a cyclic process of knowing in-action and reflection in-action (Schon, 1983; 1987) constantly adjusting my practice and the way I engaged with the participants. I also analysed the actions of the participants and my actions in relation to the broader cultural and social constructs. This led me to acknowledge what was possible beyond the predetermined social roles to which we

were each assigned (Thomas, 1993). To further ensure I did not just view participants through media caricatures (Lynd, 1967) I developed a method to unearth their individual capacities. Individual participants named themselves, were able to move fluidly between roles of leadership, group participation and retreat, and bring their skills and knowledge. I found this enabled me to better identify their real collective and individual responses to the project.

To disseminate the work beyond the school community and to encourage further feedback from the participants, their families and the wider community, I staged an exhibition at a local gallery that focuses on exhibiting work created by and for young people. The exhibition included a collection of images, a video installation and a reconstruction of the works the participants had built in the school environment inside the gallery. The exhibition ran for one month. The gallery staff told me that families and children interacted with the installations. I visited the exhibition several times and noted myself that sections of the installations had been re-configured and witnessed young children re-arranging installations to work with their own games. Parents stood quietly in the background proudly watching their children freely engage with the work. The exhibition provided further that the children felt safe to exercise agency, re-creating spaces to suit their individual needs in responses to the environment.

I gathered all the visual and narrative records of individual and collective rituals, practices and responses to analyse. I examined this data during and after collection and re-examined it continuously as I wrote up this thesis. I also critically reflected on my own preconceived notions of the community and its culture. The data collection conducted by my participant-collaborators helped me to see the project through their eyes (Fitzpatrick, 2013). As the project unfolded, I used the data to also examine risk in relation to my own art practice.

Figure 21: *Kids' Urban Dreaming* Exhibition, 2019 Image by: *Clare Walton 2019*

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of practice-led research and critical ethnography and has described how I applied it to this thesis research. I have outlined the collective process of data collection that I developed with my participant-collaborators and the process through which the creative practice was evolved through the interactions between the participants and the wider community. I have also discussed the process of critical reflection I applied through my visual and narrative analysis. The next section is a discussion of the discoveries I have made through reflecting on the data in relation to my research questions.

Discussion

Overview

I discuss the impact the project had on the participants, in two sections: 'A Place of Risk and Safety' and 'Disruptions, Rituals and Play', aiming to give a clear and critical overview of the practice and the impacts it had on me, the participants and the wider community. Within these sections I examine Campus 1 and Campus 2 as two separate entities within one project to draw out the differences and similarities between the two sites as the project progressed.

A key concern for me is the nature of risk: the various forms and cycles it takes; and how it impacts the participants and their developing agency. I discuss how measured risk can both support and hinder the development of a safe-haven and trust between participants and between me and the participants. I also consider how risk in relation to this project was far more complex than just physical risk and impacted every aspect of the project including family engagement. Finally, I observe that when risk is embraced, and participants are given agency they can overcome their obstacles to engagement, develop a sense of self-worth and trust in each other, which leads to the creation of a safe-haven where participants' views, opinions, ideas and creations are celebrated.

At first, I found rituals were initiated by me, and as the project developed, by the participants. The languages and actions my participants used to enact their rituals are complex and varied. I find that when play is embraced as a core foundation to creating a creative work it can lead to new discoveries and support the collaborations between artist and participants in the design and installation of works. An interesting impact of integrating play into the practice was how it reconfigured my rituals of practice too. By embracing measured risky child-led play and participants' prior knowledge, I supported participants' agency allowing them to reconfigure their relationships to the site, each other and the institution. In many cases I found many disruptions, both intentional and unintentional, by the participants, non-participants and the institution, led to the positive reconfiguration of relationships and the development of a small community. The ways the participants responded to those disruptions revealed their ability to engage as active citizens. Where disruptions were caused by the institution, it undermined the sense of trust and safety the participants had developed within

the program. But interestingly, I found, it did not diminish the profound benefits. After the program finished, participants were better able to engage as full creative citizens in the school where previously they had had little success building new friendships or taking on leadership roles.

A Place of Risk and Safety

Understanding Risk and Safety

As the project unfolded, I discovered the nature of risk was far more complex than I first imagined. The literature on risk that evolved from sociologists, Beck and Giddens, work from the 1980s focuses primarily on risks created as a result of the post-industrial society. Beck and Giddens argument centres around the concept of the risk society, arguing that we live in a society that focuses on the avoidance of risk and the instigation of rules and regulations so that society is able to avoid risks before they happen (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1999). Arguably Beck and Giddens' concept of risk is narrow and focuses predominately on a European Western middle class neo-liberal society, overlooking the complexities that varying cultural and socio-economic backgrounds bring to the concept of risk. Later risk theorists including sociologist Dean Curran have argued that the nature of risk is complex and what is viewed as risk by one section of society can be viewed entirely differently by another section of society (Curran, 2013). Curran argues that Beck's rejection of class can be reconstructed to reveal how those with relative wealth (linked to class) are more easily able to minimize their risk exposure (Curran, 2013, p. 44). Risk and levels of risk therefore do differ according to class, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. For this reason, I found risks amongst participants were varied and complex.

I discovered a range of risks particular to this community that I had not expected. But I learned to mitigate and work with it in order to support participants develop their agency to become active citizens. I also discovered that the notion of safety was nuanced too. Risks included emotional risks, behavioural risks, the risk of vandalism by non-participants and risks to engagement due to mistrust of me, as an outsider. I discovered that the participants' fear of failure was far more challenging to their participation than the physical risk of injuring themselves. While I expected I would need to manage some behavioural challenges, I hadn't fully anticipated how their behaviour could affect other children's sense of safety in the program and their ability to positively engage. We needed to work collaboratively to ensure the place we worked became a place of emotional safety for the participants to fully engage.

We also encountered a very unexpected risk from outside the group which unsettled the participants on one campus that needed careful mediation so a “risk culture” (Giddens, 1999) did not unsettle the culture of safety that was developing within our group. Other students entered into the area when it was not supervised, damaging the participants' work which threatened the longevity of the project. It also disrupted my participants’ sense of emotional and physical safety. Was it jealousy from non-participants? Or an exertion of power? When participants were involved what was the cause of their desire to destroy their safe-haven? It was unclear. But it derailed the project for varying periods of time on occasions, requiring the participants to begin again, to re-building the playground they constructed and for some rebuilding trust and relationships with their peers. At times some of the participants also engaged in destroying their own work, acting out when they felt insecure or not able to cope with changing situations in their lives (Fieldnotes, 2018). Finally, the project relied on a willingness by the school to take a risk and support the introduction of a non-traditional practice that they did not have complete control over; a project where the participants were invited to question the process, take the lead role and challenge the institution’s power constructs.

Each of these risks required me to develop tactics on the fly: “reflection in action” (Schön 1983). I found the emotional and behavioural risks were best mediated through the creation of what Scannell and Gifford (2014) call a “safe-haven”. According to Scannell and Gifford a safe-haven can provide a “secure base”, where exploration is promoted through the provision of what they refer to as a reference point or anchor for encouraging further exploration and experimentation (Scannell & Gifford, 2014). The development of a safe-haven ensured participants felt safe to experiment, examine their relationships to the site, each other and themselves and went beyond the mere creation of a space that was physically safe. It was enacted through the rituals and practices that the participants developed enabling them to overcome barriers to engagement in the project and reconfigure their relationships with themselves, each other and the institution.

Peer-to-peer teaching was a key factor that supported participants to overcome their personal and collective barriers to participation and was the process that was used to help develop trust. Peer-to-peer teaching supported participants' social agency and made them

realise they had the ability to shape the world they inhabit through their actions. The process supported participants to build trusting relationships with each other, with me, and with the assisting teacher which was core to the success of the project. Trust ensured that the participants felt safe to take risks, experiment and collaborate. As I relinquished control over the aesthetic and process, the power dynamics began to be reconstructed and the participants developed confidence in their capabilities to engage as social agents. The use of child-accessible art materials further supported the restructuring of the power dynamics, and I found participants took on various roles, including leadership and sharing their prior knowledge and skills without needing adult help. Power relations were reset across both sites. Together the participants came to recognise the space as theirs and slowly reconstructed their world.

Figure 22: Bluebell and Frida collaborating on their Tepee inspired installation
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

A Safe-Haven

A key challenge faced by the children with whom I worked was overcoming the social barriers and the stigmatization that they felt from external sources that limited their belief in the ability to participate and create safe place-attachments. This included social barriers with their immediate peer group, families, teachers and community. The first step was to create opportunities where the participants felt safe with one another and in the place where we worked. Scannell and Gifford (2014) say: "places to which one is attached are often a safe-haven where one can retreat from threats, engage in problem-solving, and gain emotional relief" (p. 26). The feelings of attachment, Chatterjee argues, are further amplified when the child can regularly visit the place and develop a kind of friendship with the place (Chatterjee, 2005), while psychologist and researcher Marc Fried (2000) notes a sense of safety encourages exploration and increases confidence. Scannell and Gifford (2014) explain that there are diverse definitions of place-attachment that fall into three main categories: the first considers the extent to which an individual or group attributes meaning to a place; the second is the way that attachment is demonstrated through feelings and behaviours and the third is the nature and characteristics of the place itself that promote the feelings of attachment. To enable participants to develop an attachment to the place where they would build, I needed to first ensure that there was a culture of safety which enabled participants to overcome the social barriers between themselves.

A culture of safety required that participants felt physically safe but also emotionally safe and this was achieved through several means. Firstly, by accepting participants as they presented themselves at the site each week, which meant accepting a level of disruptive behaviour that would not be acceptable in the traditional classroom setting (Giles & Robinson, 2012). Secondly by acknowledging all participants were holders of significant knowledge and skills they could share in the creation of their safe-haven (Adams, 2010). Finally, by listening, watching and supporting each participant as they created their individual and collective rituals and practices.

Figure 23: Shared Ritual of Gardening
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

An important part of making our place safe was to allow participants to develop their own shared rituals while they learned to cooperate. Sennett (2012) has argued that shared rituals enable cooperation between individuals and that it is only through learning to be together that young people learn to stand apart. Many of the rituals typical in traditional school settings alienate students who have emotional and behavioural challenges. The rituals of the bell, sitting still and listening, reading and writing for set durations of time, amongst other things. They tend to be restrictive and universal. Through the new rituals' participants discovered alternative means to deal with their emotions. In turn social barriers slowly dissolved and disruptive behaviours on site lessened.

Across the two campuses there were varied and challenging social barriers to overcome including intergenerational poverty, low self-esteem, lack of confidence and fear of failure, social awkwardness, social anxiety and behavioural issues, lack of trust in authority figures and perceived outsiders, and lack of success in a traditional educational setting. The

participants' difficult and complicated home lives and the very real risk of living in one of the most socially disadvantaged geographic locations in Australia were viewed as problems in the school setting. According to the Australian Bureau of Statics the participants reside in a community where a high proportion of the population has limited access to material and social resources impacting on their ability to constructively participate in society (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). These demographic statistics are used by others in the wider community to categorise the participants and their families, stigmatising them as incapable of being able to contribute positively to society. But in our "safe-haven" (Scannell & Gifford, 2014, p. 25) we ensured participants' abilities and their lack of material and social resources where not viewed as limitations that would inhibit their ability to participate. This ensured that from the outset our place recognised each of the participants to be capable of making a positive contribution to their community.

During the initial conception and throughout the program I discussed with Miss E, at Campus 1 the potential of external influences impacting participants ability to constructively engage (Miss E, Personal Communication, 2018). Miss E hoped that children who display challenging behaviours would display positive improvements in their engagement when participating in a program that gave them flexibility, creative control and the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning tasks (Miss E, Personal Communication, 22nd February2019). She believed the concept of the adventure playground, established inside the institutional walls, would be a safe space for them to flourish that promoted their skills and how they can constructively contribute to their community.

Figure 24: Participants collaborating at Campus 1
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

I used a dialogic process (Kester, 2005), along with measured risky activities, to engage and affirm the vulnerable participants that I believed in their ability to engage as creative, active citizens. Social scientist Ruth Lister (2007) argues that when children are actively involved in the decisions that impact their environment, they are transformed from apprentice citizen to active citizen. I was mindful of Lister's theory of the way citizenship develops throughout the development of the project. Over time, I found our participants did grow to feel safer with one another and became more likely to be willing to take on leadership roles.

As the participants developed their own rituals and practices to engage in measured risky play, they overcame the various social barriers that had previously hindered their active engagement in school programs. Chatterjee (2005) argues that when participants are responsible for the design and construction of what she calls their friendly spaces it ensures that feelings of mutual affection, personal regard, shared interests, commitment, loyalty, self-disclosure and understanding are developed. At Campus 1 Miss E discussed her initial worry for individual participants' ability to engage. This included Samson, a participant whose complex life impacted on his self-worth and constructive engagement at school. Miss E noted

his difficulty in taking criticism of any kind; “I was really worried about him…. he finds it really hard to take criticism or to get things wrong” (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). This was a common obstacle to engagement that Samson shared with several participants who also displayed fears of failure and a limited capacity to engage in new activities. The co-creation of the safe-haven (Scannell & Gifford, 2014) or friendly space (Chatterjee, 2005) provided Samson and his peers a space where they felt safe to experiment without fear of judgement and share their skills with each other. As a result, I observed the participants develop confidence in their abilities and begin to constructively engage using their own rituals and languages of practice.

Figure 25: Participants creating their safe space together at Campus 1
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 26: Samson working on building a door for the new installation
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Over the course of the project, participants took advantage of opportunities to actively reconfigure their relationships with each other. Participants developed new friendships and created new ways of interacting with each other outside the boundaries of official discourse. At Campus 1 participants Queen of Hearts, Devil Queen, Queen of Water and Sunshine Queen developed a strong friendship group through their newfound capacity to collaborate on dances, producing performances for everyone to enjoy weekly. While Devil Queen, Queen of Water and Queen of Hearts had a history of friendship, Sunshine Queen was a participant who had little or no knowledge of how to interact and build friendships with her peers when she first entered the program (Fieldnote, 14th November 2018). Sunshine Queen developed new skills and confidence in herself during her participation in the program as Miss E discussed; "Sunshine Queen is doing really well, touch wood…." (Miss E, Personal Communication, 22nd February 2019). Miss E went on to say that the site had become "(a place) where she can feel special and feel like she is wanted, somewhere that is good for her …… Sunshine Queen and Queen of Hearts have since become really good friends" (Miss E, Personal Communication, 22nd February 2019). The safe-haven was a space where each participant was welcomed and provided with the tools they needed to participate, thus ensuring they developed confidence in their ability to actively participate in the creation of their community.

Figure 27: Choreographing dance performances together led to new friendships
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Saws, hammers, large timber pieces, shovels and other tools helped to shape the rituals and practices the participants engaged in. The tools required the participants to enter a shared dialogue that encouraged more competent participants to support less competent participants, promoting the sharing of their prior knowledge and skills with each other. Malone (2016), when examining children's sensitivities to concepts including interdependence, argues that the provision of place-based experiences with both the human and non-human world supports them to develop a sense of who they are within the world they live. While Malone's focus is primarily on children's engagement in place-based environmental encounters that focus on their ability to take on key roles as environmental change agents (Malone, 2016) this could be seen in children's developing sensitivities that encouraged inclusivity and peer to peer support. At Campus 1 Gamer and Samson supported and included Bobby despite their original relationship to him and each other which Miss E noted as ''totally bizarre but really great" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). As Gamer and Samson engaged in a collaborative and supportive role with Bobby and other participants, they developed sensitivities to concepts including interdependence and formed a relationship to the site as individuals and collectively, displaying their ability to care for and ensure all members of the small community felt that they were instrumental to its development (Malone, 2016). Hammering nails into a wall was just one small ritual that supported collaborations as more confident participants supported less confident participants, breaking down the boundaries that previously existed between them.

Figure 28: Samson and Gamer working with Bobby
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The dialogic process, a mix of conversations and unspoken practices that developed as participants collaborated on the design and construction of their safe space, was integral to forming their cooperative process. As Kester has argued, the conversation or dialogue in socially engaged work is part of the work, rather than being a response to the finished work (Kester, 2005). The dialogue becomes an active and regenerative process, supporting participants to find their voices and imagine possibilities that exist "beyond the limits of fixed identities and official discourse" (Kester, 2005, p. 77). The crate wall at Campus 1 was the central focus point of the dialogue for several weeks. The construction, led by Nic Naitanui, revolved around configuring and re-configuring the crates. Participants held discussions about colour co-ordination, height of the wall, width and ideas for its use once it was completed (Fieldnotes, 2018). Nic Naitanui displayed his leadership capabilities throughout the process and the participants' collaborative relationships grew stronger, as they participated in a shared dialogue that was an integral aspect of the work.

Figure 29: Nic Naitanui working on the crate wall
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 30: Devil Queen and Nic Naitanui collaborating on the crate wall
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

As the lead artist I shared my skills but focused on supporting the participants in their endeavour to share the skills in which they were proficient. New friendships developed as the more skilled participants supported their less skilled peers, passing on their knowledge in their role as peer-to-peer teachers (Craft, 2008). Peer-to-peer teaching was theorised in the work of American psychologist Jerome Bruner. Bruner (2008) argued that 'scaffolding', the concept of learning through modelling, cueing and challenging, could be developed in a peer-to-peer setting. Due to the physical risk of providing young participants with access to building tools, I instructed them on how to safely use the tools at the beginning of the project and then guided them as they supported each other to ensure they passed their tool tests. The participants were first 'scaffolded' by me and as their confidence in their own abilities developed, they shared their skills with their peers. As they engaged in peer-to-peer learning, they developed collaborative relationships by actively listening to each other and constructively working together to create their safe-haven. At Campus 2 by week 3 participants needed only minimal scaffolding to collaborate on the design and creation of wooden steps to create a garden path.

I noted in my Field Notes:

> *"Together they worked out the size of the steps…measured them up and then supported each other in sawing the timber. This was a small project, but it displayed how they were developing in their capacity to collaborate and problem solve as the timber proved difficult to work with … the (original) timber split, so different timber was measured up to create underneath supports … there were issues with the screws being put in the right way but Mischief Maker was determined to get it right" (Fieldnotes, 2018).*

While this was only a small project it displayed how quickly the participants felt safe enough to negotiate, problem solve and work together.

Figure 31: Collaborating on the steps together at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 32: Collaborating on the steps together at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Chawla and Heft (2002) in their examination of initiatives to promote children's citizenship argue that opportunities for children to experiment, explore and learn are fundamental when the project is designed to promote active participation. Further to this, providing opportunities to engage in critical reflection, decision making, and real responsibility and influence are viewed as fundamentally important (Chawla & Heft, 2002). The participants' engagement as peer-to-peer teachers and artists displayed their ability to work together and with me as they extracted themselves from their fear of failure and reconfigured their relationships to the institution and each other. As they actively participated in the collaborative process participants developed competence in their abilities individually and collectively, recognising that their own prior knowledge was valid and worth sharing. Thus, as Wright and Rasmussen (2001) argue they were able to realign their interactions with their social world, drawing on their ways of knowing that were not necessarily recognised by the institution. Together participants overcame the obstacles that hindered their progress. Even when the steps were not wholly successful, they did not throw away what they had produced. The participants found alternative ways to use the timber, adding it as design features, turning it into signs and creating a small pathway to the first tepee installation when it was relocated to the garden.

Figure 33: Steps being reconfigured to create a pathway at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The initial barriers that existed between the participants dissolved as they collaborated to find solutions to construction and design faults in the installations and structures that they designed and built together. At Campus 2, King Louie, Bluebird, Mischief Maker, The Wizard, Sweetpea, Hunter and Frida successfully designed and installed the first tepee (Fieldnotes, 2018). Participants displayed through their actions their eagerness to learn and work together. The early scaffolding, I provided enabled the participants to take charge and develop interactive relationships as they continued to develop confidence in their abilities as designers and builders. The 2nd Tepee at Campus 2 was a successful collaboration building on the knowledge they had gained in the first iteration. They configured the placement of the timber, ensured the structure was stable and encouraged each other to work on the decoration of the new structure (Fieldnotes, 2018). Participants created their own language and rituals as they constructed the tepee. In my scaffolding I was careful to acknowledge their developing knowledge, skills and abilities and give them the space to work more independently.

Figure 34: Collaborating on the 2nd Tepee installation at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 35: Collaborating on design and decoration of the 2nd Tepee at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 36: 2nd Tepee Installation almost completed at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Each individual's prior skills, abilities and knowledge and ways of engaging were as unique as the individuals themselves. The Wizard (Campus 2) performed musical renditions while sitting on top of the hut (Fieldnotes, 2018) while Gamer (Campus 1) was erratic in his engagement processes (Fieldnotes, 2018). As Miss E noted:

> *"…the area is really good for him … the group's really accepting of Gamer (and) of each other, but, yeah, you and the others know when he is struggling." (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018).*

Despite their erratic and or disruptive engagement processes, the participants displayed through their unique abilities, language and rituals that they are competent social actors who can design and construct their world. Theorists and Researchers in the field of sociology including Allison James & Alan Prout (2015), Marc Jans (2004), Anne B. Smith (2010), Barry Percy-Smith & Burns (2013), view children as competent social actors who make contributions to their community through their actions. Educational researchers Susan Danby and Anna Farrell (2004) argue that language is key when children participate using their unique language and skills. By doing so they are participating in the construction of their social world and are engaging in complex collaborations that can also extend into the social world of adults (Danby & Farrell, 2004). When the participants entered the site, they entered a space where their languages and skills combined to create a series of complex interactions displaying how they engage as social actors and active citizens shaping the world they inhabit.

Figure 37: Participant-collaborators engaging as creative social agents at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Participant-collaborators created their own unspoken language across both campuses, building a collective circle of support, displayed by their actions rather than words. Alternative communications were captured through participant-collaborators movements and active participation in the construction of their safe-haven. Sociologist Divya Tolia-Kelly (2007) discusses the use of art materials as a tool to capture the alternative vocabularies and visual grammars we encounter when working in situations where the participant-collaborators struggle to express themselves through oral languages. For example, when one participant displayed a fear of using the tools by stepping back, using stilted actions, fumbling with the tools, or displaying frustration by throwing tools down as they were unsure how to achieve the result they were after, another participant would step in and support them. When one participant began adding design features, other participants would quietly join in and it would soon become a group effort. I continuously witnessed participants' leadership skills and capacity to support each other across both campuses, participants did not discuss how they helped or supported each other, they displayed it through their actions.

Figure 38: Nic Naitanui Bobby to the create the floor for the Fort
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The social interactions and the creativity that took place in the self-created safe-haven also helped to ameliorate, in some small part, the effects of growing up in a marginalized and low socio-economic environment. Fried's (2000) research showed how stable community attachments offer a form of security for those who feel their world appears to be unstable and precarious, even for those who reside in a fairly homogenous community. Fried argues that as attachments to sites grow so too do the attachments between those who visit and use a site (Fried, 2000). I found the same to be true. Participants who had difficulty with social interactions due to past incidents, social anxieties or distracting behaviour learnt to navigate new relationships with the institution and their peers. Sunshine Queen, due to her social anxieties, had never been part of a group of friends before joining the program learnt to relax, feel more confident in her capabilities leading to her becoming part of a friendship group for the first time (Fieldnotes, 2018). Participants developed more mature ways to deal with disappointments. Instead of throwing a hammer, as Nic Naitanui would have done prior to the program when something was not going his way, he learnt to ask Builder Man for help

(Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Miss E acknowledged this was ''amazing for him (Nic Naitanui) because he used to be the kid where I (didn't) know what I (was) going to do about him" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Nic Naitanui's new-found ability to ask for help was achieved through the safe-haven and relationships that had developed that allowed him to find new ways of communicating with his peers. Nic Naitanui's new-found confidence led to him taking on a leadership role, supporting his less confident peers for example when Gamer struggled with his emotions Nic Naitanui patiently worked with him, helping him to achieve his goal (Fieldnotes, 2018). Gamer was a participant who regularly disengaged from the program as a result of outside influences, but he would visit the site when he felt able to engage as he recognised it as a safe space that he was welcome to return to at any time where he was accepted by his peers, me and the assisting teacher (Fieldnotes, 2018).

Figure 39: Nic Naitanui helping Gamer construct the ladder
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Miss E noted the capacity for the program to help participants deal with behavioural issues including anger management and the inability to engage in building positive relationships (Fieldnotes, 2018). “I think it is a really good opportunity for Queen of Water to build on some friendships, but in a supervised kind of way, because I have got to talk her through it … So, this is really good practice for her I think” (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). By allowing participants to follow their own creative ideas we gave them a sense of empowerment and they developed inclusive social relations as a consequence. As Miss E noted: “but then again, I think I underestimated the connection they got from (being) with each other (yeah), … this was like a little family and they were really cute. They don't have that very often. There is not much that they would connect them" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Friendships that developed during the project also continued after the project. At my exit interview with Miss E, I asked if the students had remained friends;

> *“Yes, Queen of Water, The Warrior, Nic Naitanui and Casper are all in the same class and then Builder Man, Bobby, Rachelle, Devil Queen and Super Max are all in the same class (Miss E); And they all still tend to gravitate towards each other? (Clare); Yes, it’s been good for that.”*
>
> *(Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019).*

Figure 40: Participant-collaborators formed a little family at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

While evidence of ongoing friendships was not discussed with the teachers at Campus 2 the participant-collaborators' engagement in the program and ability to collaborate was displayed through their interactions. Painting the installations together in particular highlighted their ability to work collaboratively (Fieldnotes, 2018). Mischief Maker, Frida, Blue Bird and their participant-collaborators worked together to paint the installations and design and install signage around the site, displaying their collective ownership of the safe-haven (Fieldnotes, 2018). By restructuring the site together participants displayed how the program helped them to break down the pre-existing barriers between them, reconfigure their relationships and develop new friendships. Despite the lack of feedback and limited support from non-participating staff the site was recognised by the Principal, Mr K at Campus 2 as having potential moving forward. Mr K believed the site could be used for engaged play that could help with the issues that occur regularly on the playground, and to provide an opportunity for the participants to share what they had learnt by being invited to advise on how the space would be used in the future (Mr K, Personal Correspondence, 2019).

Figure 41: Painting the Site at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 42: Creating signs for the Tepee Installations at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 43: Welcome to our Tepee Sign
Image by: Frida 2018

Trust

Breaking down the pre-existing barriers between the participants was not enough on its own to create a safe-haven. It also required me, as the lead artist (aided by the support teacher and assisting artist) to develop a relationship with the participants that encouraged a sense of safety and trust. Resilience researcher Michal Ungar (2011) in his examination of children's resilience, argues that children's positive outcomes tend to stem from being provided with access to an environment that provides them with the potential to do well. I achieved this through providing a safe-haven that facilitated participants' belief in their abilities to be successful in their achievements and by acknowledging them as co-creators of the site. By ensuring the participant-collaborators felt safe to experiment and explore their capacity to engage at levels they felt comfortable with knowing their work would not be judged or graded, it set them up to achieve and feel a sense of accomplishment in their individual and collective actions. Participants were given room to freely explore, design and build the space according to their requirements. They were promoted as the lead artists whose prior knowledge and skills were essential to the success of the project, thus enabling me to develop a trusting relationship with the participants.

The act of relinquishing a certain amount of authority and control over the design and development of the project, signaled to the participants that I believed in them and their ability to engage as active citizens. Phillips and Hickey (2013) examine the shifting roles of adults and children when their roles are reversed in the public forum, arguing that role reversals provoke adults to recognise the capabilities of children while in turn support children in developing confidence and trust in their abilities to engage as active citizens. As I encouraged participants to take charge of the process, this shifted the pre-existing (and perceived) roles that we played. Participants took charge of laying out the design, deciding where installations would be added to and where new installations would be built, they had significant control over the design and final outcome of their work (Fieldnotes, 2018). By relinquishing a certain amount of authority and engaging in a process that supported participants' agency, they began to believe in their capacity to design and construct their environment.

Further to this Askins and Pain (2011) argue that we need to acknowledge and recognise in participatory projects the unequal power relationships that can exist both in the social group and between the participants and the artist, researcher. The deconstruction of the power relations can be achieved through a variety of methods, including art but also crucial is ensuring that the dialogue that weaves through the project plays an important role in promoting co-ownership (Askins & Pain, 2011). By relinquishing my control over the aesthetic and allowing the participants to lead it using a combination of dialogue and participatory art practices trust and respect developed between me and the participants. This process led to participants feeling responsible for the space and recognising the valuable role they played in its creation. Knowing that I believed in their abilities and that we shared ownership of the space enabled a "culture of communication and trust" (O'Neill, 2010, p. 15), to develop between me and the participants supporting the restructuring of the power relationships across both campuses.

Figure 44: Embracing the Child's Aesthetic
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The initial decision to encourage participants to collaborate on their first installation at both campuses helped to begin the process of dismantling the barriers that existed between them and me. At Campus 2 participants collaborated to design and build a small hut as their first installation; measuring up timber, cutting it to length and checking on each other's progress as they worked away (Fieldnotes, 2018). At Campus 1 participants and I discussed options for their first installation. Scaffolded by me and the assisting teacher they began working together on the installation that became known as the Fort (Fieldnotes, 2018). By alternating between scaffolding the participants and letting them take control, trust slowly developed.

Figure 45: Collaborating on the 1st installation at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 46: Beginning of the Fort at Campus 1
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Developing trust was not easy, however, as many of the participants had difficulty trusting perceived authority figures and 'outsiders' stemming from past experiences. This was evidenced by the sometimes-erratic engagement by some of the participants. Bluebird over the duration of the project was uneven with her engagement and was identified by the Principal at Campus 2 as a student who was prone to withdrawing in the classroom. He noted, by contrast, that her participation in the project was promising: "(It was) Bluebird's … level of engagement (in the program) that was much more promising than in many of her other classes … Bluebird likes to have some control over her learning, rather than us controlling her, there is a lot of power struggles … I think she benefitted from that opportunity." (Principal, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Giving Bluebird and her peers more control over the project than they had in a traditional classroom signaled to them that I respected their input. This helped break down the initial barriers that existed between me and the participants, ensuring they felt safe to engage in the project.

During the initial stages of the project, I encouraged their control of the site by providing images of ideas and encouraging them to use these as inspiration for their work. Nic Naitanui in particular was inspired by the image of a café that used milk crates to create walls and shelves. With some help from the other participants (after asking for help a few times) Nic Naitanui led everyone in the creation of a wall on the outside of the Fort (Fieldnotes, 2018). Meanwhile as the crate wall progressed the Queen of Hearts, Rachelle and Queen of Water designed and installed a sign that declared their ownership of a section of the space (Fieldnotes, 2018). A couple of weeks later the boys also created a sign that read boys only for a section they had claimed ownership over and attached their sign with help from the Queen of Hearts (Fieldnotes, 2018). But a month later following feedback from the wider school community at Campus 1 the signage was removed. The original signage that read "Boys Only" and "Girls Only", segregating the Fort into two sections was viewed by the wider school community as unfriendly. Participants led by Builder Man removed the signs and replaced them with one sign that read "All Welcome" (Fieldnotes, 2018). This initiative wholly led by the participants displayed their growing ability to engage as active citizens and social agents of change who listened and took actions that benefited not only themselves but the wider community. I still witnessed little acts of defiance and disruptive behaviour by participants due to frustrations at faults in their construction, design processes and outside influences. But giving participants the space to make mistakes, support each other in resolving their problems and the room to work through their emotions displayed to them that I respected their ability to solve their problems; that they were safe and that the space was theirs. The participants' actions displayed their growing confidence in exerting their voices and their ability to take on feedback from the wider community leading to the creation of a safe-haven for everyone.

Figure 47: Nic Naitanui creating the crate wall installation
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 48: Devil Queen working on the Girls Only Sign
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 49: Crate configuration and attaching the sign
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 50: Boys Only Sign
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 51: Attaching the "All Welcome" Sign
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

As the project continued, I gave them access to a wider variety of objects and tools that supported measured risk taking. Measured risk-taking honors children's ability to know their limitations and make decisions regarding their involvement in an activity that has the potential to cause physical injury (Zeni, 2021). In contrast to managed risk-taking, measured risk-taking gives agency to the participants, confirming that I trusted them to know their own limitations, and was willing to support them when required. As a result, each participant was able to find a way to participate that maximized their abilities. Gardening tools, for example, were key to engaging Frida and Sweetpea, providing them a platform to share their prior knowledge of gardening (Fieldnotes, 2018). Handing the mobile phone over to Devil Queen to record stories and interview her peers provided Devil Queen with a tool to act as a conduit between her peers and me. Handing the pickaxe over to the Queen of Water to dig holes allowed her to connect in a constructive manner and feel useful to the project (Fieldnotes, 2018). The concept of pedagogic voice as outlined by Baroutsis et al., (2016) promotes the active respect of children's views, listening to their voice and providing them access to tools and means of engagement that display they are being listened to and heard. By both listening to and providing the participants with the means to create positive interactions and exert their voices each participant found their role in the program and developed a sense of trust in me and began to recognise their own self-worth.

Figure 52: Gardening together
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 53: Devil Queen recoding the happenings on site
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 54: Queen of Water using the Pickaxe
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Meanwhile, materials that were easy to manipulate, like ribbons, fabrics and paints, ensured the less confident participants found ways to engage that allowed them to make their mark on the project. For Rachelle at Campus 1 the process was huge in helping her develop confidence in herself and finding her voice. The space allowed Rachelle to experiment and make mistakes knowing that we supported her; “When she is with us it’s the perfect place for her to make mistakes because we will help her and there is nothing we can't solve (together) and I think she knows that and she believes that now, so that's been amazing”. (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Individual personalities and voices were respected as they each found their unique way to engage. Builder Man created a little builder’s kit, bringing in his own pencils to mark out his measurements, allowing him to display his connection to the program and his capability as a participant (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Rachelle continued to add ribbons and design features each week, regularly requesting new supplies (Fieldnotes, 2018). Frida (Campus 2) took control of documenting the process by using my camera. Participants came to recognise that they could trust me and therefore felt competent and safe to exert their voice.

Figure 55: Builder Man working with tools from his builder kit
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 56: Rachelle working with ribbons to decorate the Tepee
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The trusting relationships that developed were core to the project's success. Miss E noted "it was about relationships…. when kids are not working it's because they don't have trust, but I think she (Rachelle) has trust, I think she trusts you, I think she trusts me, I think she is beginning to trust the group and that is transferring to the classroom, she is starting to trust her teacher, she can trust people…. she trusts us" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). While in other contexts in the school environment, Rachelle and her peers across both campuses felt a sense of inadequacy or failure, here they achieved success (Miss O, Personal Correspondence, 2018). By learning to collaborate with their peers, me and the assisting teachers they extracted themselves from their fear of failure and the limitations they felt as a result of their daily interactions with their social world (Wright & Rasmussen, 2001). A sense of belonging was fostered on site and in collaboration with celebrating their achievements I was able to dissolve the barriers that existed at the onset of the program.

Participants learned that I would not abandon or remove them from the program if they felt they needed to take a break, or they engaged in anti-social behaviour. They also learned that the power paradigms between teacher and student/participant did not apply within the boundaries of the site. They overcame their fears and found new ways to communicate outside the existing frameworks established inside the institutional walls choosing to actively engage in the project. Queen of Water did not even have the "capacity to try something new, where it might go wrong or where she might make a mistake" when she first joined the program (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). But for two hours each week she and her peers came to understand that they could take a break when things went wrong and it would be available to access the next week or when they felt better (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). The site was a safe space where they had power and agency to experiment without fear of judgement.

As I stepped into the background, the participants learnt to celebrate their abilities, overcoming their original negative view of self. Some didn't need too much encouragement. At Campus 1 Queen of Hearts displayed her natural leadership abilities by leading the participants in taking ownership of the site from the start. Miss E discussed noted: "last week she just ran with it", she really likes responsibility, she likes to be in control she is a really good

leader…., I think she has missed being in a group environment" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Queen of Hearts also took charge setting up the participant's tools on the shelves. Samson and Gamer, with help from Bobby, set up an area for participants to hang their workers' vests, carefully labelling each hook. Together the participants set up a space that would work for them (Fieldnotes, 2018).

Figure 57: Queen of Hearts taking charge setting up the tool shelves
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Other participants, like Rachelle, took longer to develop their trust and leadership capabilities. Over time Rachelle found her place as a designer taking the lead in the process, requesting new materials and initiating ideas (Fieldnotes, 2018). "By the end she (Rachelle) was making her own stuff or she was taking on the art and decorating things with ribbons … Rachelle was able to build a relationship with you which was really amazing cause she doesn't build them with (just) anyone. No, not at all, she can, but it takes a really long time – I am talking a long time." (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). And Gamer was given a platform to display his prior knowledge, which supported him to develop his self-confidence, something he lacked in the classroom (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018).

Figure 58: Gamer was given a platform to share his skills
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

At Campus 2 Mischief Maker was easily distracted and created distractions but also thrived when on site and displayed leadership skills by supporting his peers in building structures and using tools. Participant's confidence was built as they were allowed small successes over the duration of the program (Mr K, Personal Correspondence, 2019). The ownership of the site and the successes they had allowed the participants to see themselves in a new light, "it was good for them to see themselves succeeding somewhere in the school environment" (Miss O, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Participants individually and collectively developed new identities inside the space as I acknowledged the value of their prior knowledge and skills, supporting them in sharing it, displaying through my actions that I respected them (Marr & Malone, 2007). Developing trusting relationships between the participants and me was key to supporting their growing sense of agency and power to effect change.

Figure 59: Mischief Maker helping Bumble Bee to make a new sign
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Involving Families

The Australian Government has recognised a key component to increasing quality and equity for students is through the development of healthier relationships between parent(s) and schools and increased engagement of parents in their child's learning (Povey et al., 2016). Parents' participation in their child's education is widely acknowledged as important, as is the difficulty of promoting and maintaining it (Larocque et al., 2011). This program from the onset sought to include parents as active participants or, at least, interested viewers. While it was not an educational program in the traditional sense, it sought to bridge gaps between the participants and the wider community including family members and the school. I invited parents, guardians and extended family members to participate through letters, emails and personal phone calls from the institution. But the barriers to family engagement in the project proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, 2016, the geographic locations of the institutions were ranked as Level 1, placing them amongst the most socio-economically disadvantaged in the country (abs.gov.au). In Australia family engagement in children's learning in low-socio economic areas is recognised as being much lower than areas of higher economic status (Povey et al., 2016). These barriers included: personal barriers to engagement, including lack of confidence; fear of judgement by the institution; low levels of academic achievement; an inability to take time off work; other children at home to look after; and no access to transport (public or private) (Miss O, Personnel Correspondence, 2018; Miss E, Personnel Correspondence, 2018). Miss E advised that to encourage family engagement it was important to make the program easily accessible for parents and family members. The formalisation of parental engagement "doesn't work…. they are constantly worried that they are being judged" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). To that end, we ensured they had access to the site in an informal manner and felt they were free to drop in when it was suitable to them. I also took the decision to avoid formal interviews and we invited them to celebrate their children's achievements with us at the end of Term 4.

Family members from both sites engaged with the program as either visitors or active participants in small numbers when the program was first initiated. Their engagement was not continuous and some of this was traced back to participants requesting their parents not to attend. But when parents or family members did attend participants were excited to show them around the site and in some instances asked their parents to actively participate in the program. The tools we used were also tools parents recognised or felt competent in using and they became a conduit to engagement, mediating relations between the participants and the parent (Latour, 2004). Following Marr and Malone (2007), I ensured when a parent engaged, they were recognized as an expert knowledge holder who was able to share their skills with their child, other participants, me and the institution. Bluebell's Dad actively participated, proudly supporting his daughter and her peers, sharing his skills by patiently guiding and supporting them in the process of measuring up and sawing timber for their first installation (Fieldnotes, 2018). Bluebell's Dad did not continue to engage but this was due to Bluebell requesting that he not come along which I discovered later through an informal conversation with him about the project.

Participants sharing positive stories about their experiences in the program with their families was a key factor that further helped to foster family engagement. Through it, participants were able to re-negotiate their relationship to the institution, prompting families to become curious about the program: "Rachelle's sister visited … for her to come up like that proves to me again that they go home and say this is what I did at school today … as opposed to hey I hate school, oh I got into trouble" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). This was in line with research by psychologist and researchers Anne Wallace-Digarbo and David C. Hill (2006) who found that through an art intervention program with at-risk youth, art programs had the ability to support the development of participants' agency, leading to more positive interactions and a lessening of at-risk behaviour. In a similar vein education researchers Harry Daniels and Emma Downes (2014) found drama workshops with children from lower socio-economic background provided the participants with an opportunity to discover alternative ways of thinking and feeling about their world, and the position they hold in it. I found the freedom of expression and movement afforded by the program, the use of malleable materials, and opportunities to engage in free and dramatic play encouraged the participants to redefine their relationship to the institutional environment. In turn, the program facilitated positive discussions between parents and families and the assisting teachers

about their children's achievements in the program (Campus 1).

The program's success in engaging parents was noticed by staff. Miss E observed "even if she (Mum) wasn't coming to the program, Rachelle was asking 'Can you come to Urban Dreaming' or 'Can you bring this', or 'We have got this' or 'My Mum did this'. It was a real connection for them … the parent and family engagement was something I underestimated that this program could do" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Meanwhile, conversations between Miss E and Queen of Heart's Grandfather began to centre around her positive achievements, encouraging her grandfather to start recognising her abilities. Miss E said Queen of Hearts Grandfather "wants Queen of Hearts to do well and he knows that she can do well. I think he is starting to recognise that, because she was, is, so active … it's been really good … look at all the stuff Queen of Hearts is doing!" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Devil Queen's Mum's visited the program several times, displaying her support over the duration of the project: "Devil Queen's Mum came down the first week … she is really keen for her to be involved in this" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). This was later recognised as significant: "I think one of the best things we saw … was the parent engagement … at the last session we had half of her family here … the parent (involvement) for her was really amazing and it has kind of continued this year … it has opened up the communication … a pathway and conversation around culture and more creative things … a different perspective on what Devil Queen's education can look like'' (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Devil Queen's participation displayed to her Mum that education outside the confinements of the traditional classroom supported her learning in a more flexible way. Even parents whose children had erratic connections to the program became more involved. "I got really good parental engagement out of Builder Man's Mum as well. His Mum came to the last one even though he barely came ... she explained he is doing this stuff at home and he does this stuff with his dad, that's the connection again … we don't get that often, ever, so that was really beneficial" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Dialogues became more positive and parents and guardians were more pro-active as they came to recognise the positive impact the program was having on their children.

Parents also discussed the positive impact the program was having on their children during informal conversations with me during the project and in the final session which parents were invited to attend. Their interest in the project developed over time and was evident not only through visits from parents but also in the discussion's parents reported their children had with them about the program. "Bumble Bee's confidence, working with the other children, well, he finds that hard sometimes, so it's been good just hearing him give me some feedback about it and just him mentioning kids he hasn't mentioned before" (Parent, Personal Correspondence, 2018). The Wizard's Mum discussed how he loved the program and how it helps him to connect to his classmates, Sweetpea's Mum exclaimed "Oh she just loves it" and Gruffalo's Mum "it has been good for him too (Parents, Personal Communication, 2018). Parents discussed how the program had provided their children with an outdoor hands-on learning experience that promoted the development of socialization skills, teamwork and helped them to get out of their shells (Parents, Personal Correspondence, 2018).

Despite the perceived barriers to involving families, the assisting teacher from Campus 1 and the Principal at Campus 2 acknowledged that the project had been an important step in fostering a closer engagement between the families and the institution. According to Miss E the barriers to family engagement had been large but the informal processes encouraged their participation. "It's accessible. It's not intimidating. If you get it wrong, it's not run by big power – well it kind of is but (you) don't run it like that – it's not like you are walking into a classroom to try and talk to a teacher. That's intimidating" (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Similarly, the Principal at Campus 2 confirmed there were some positive outcomes for the students during our exit interview, Clare; "So with Campus 1 they said it helped to bring families in a little more, did it do the same here? Principal; "Likewise, we need every opportunity to bring them in and around student learning is the best. And I think, feeding forward, I think we can make use of that space. We can do that, that's important" (Principal, Personal Correspondence, 2019). The Principal at Campus 2, parents and the assisting teachers at both campuses were positive in their assessment of the project and were keen to have it continue into the following year but unfortunately due to changes in the leadership team the program was cancelled across both Campuses in early 2019.

Parental and family attendance was credited to several factors. Firstly, family engagement was always informal helping to alleviate barriers to engagement including fear of judgement by the institution. Staff at Campus 1, in particular, regularly encouraged families to participate in the program, demonstrating to the parents that they valued and respected their ability to have an active role in their children's education. As the program progressed conversations between participants and their families highlighted the positive impacts the program was having on their children. This helped not only the participants re-negotiate their relationship with the school, it also allowed families to experience a positive engagement with the institution despite negative past experiences (Miss E, Personal Correspondence 2019). The program helped provide a positive starting point for future conversations.

Disruptions, Rituals and Play

In this section I discuss the development of *Kids' Urban Dreaming* and the rituals and procedures that participants, assisting teachers, assisting artist (Campus 2) and I engaged in over the duration of the project. Rituals and practices in this thesis refer to the individual and collective movements, acts, verbal and non-verbal language and gestures that lead to the creation of the work. Sociologist Richard Sennett (2012) contends that social exchange is negotiated through recognisable and shared rituals. They can be small gestures – social etiquettes like handshaking, for example – they depend on repetition and they need to be simple to remember and perform (Sennett, 2012). I found that the participants developed novel everyday practices and rituals which they linked together to create a pattern to their day. These rituals were an important part of finding ways to cooperate.

Mary Bouquet (1998) who argues that rituals and practices exist in all areas of our life, even in secular society. Bouquet notes that rituals represent the beliefs we hold about the order of the world, its past, present and our individual places in it (Bouquet, 1998). A key aspect of *Kids' Urban Dreaming* was the creation of new rituals and practices which gave a sense of order to our safe-haven. These rituals, of varying durational cycles, were a key mechanism for mediating the emotional and behavioural challenges that many of our participant struggled to overcome.

But to begin, I consider the rituals and practices that I brought to the project. Part of a practice-led research is to develop a self-awareness about the implicit and explicit practices an artist brings into a project which might need to be modified or abandoned.

Disruptions and Reconfigurations

When I first envisaged this research project, I imagined entering the site and following the rituals and processes that I had developed through my years of working collaboratively with children and young people in numerous educational institutions. I did not envisage that I would need to completely overhaul my approach to my practice. In my previous roles as an

artist in residence I was employed to work with students to design and install works requested by an institution: Sometimes murals or installations, other times cubby houses and stop motion animations. The hierarchical construct of learner and teacher established within many pedagogical institutions assumes students are mere receptors of knowledge, not active producers (Adams, 2010).

Education and art researcher Jeff Adams (2010) notes when discussing the introduction of contemporary art practices into schools that alarmingly there is still a model of educational practice where student's agency is limited and play and experimentation are suppressed. The socially engaged artist, by contrast, asks participants to critically engage in developing their own rituals and processes. In response the artist may also redevelop their own rituals and processes in collaboration with the participants. *Kids' Urban Dreaming* directly questioned the processes I followed and highlighted the limitations that I had previously unconsciously imposed on participants. The question - How can a socially engaged art practice based on measured risky play activate children's citizenship? - required me to examine my own practice. As a result, I came to realise the ways in which I unintentionally contributed to limiting participants' voices. This was a slow process that evolved through reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983; 1987), examining my processes as I worked on site with the participants and reflection before action and after, reflecting on what had and had not worked to help develop the process each week (Greenfield, 1993).

Through working collaboratively with the participants, I found I had to let go of preconceived ideas about what processes would work. Artist and researcher Darren O'Donnell (2018) when working with children argues for the integration of the child's voice, to allow real experiences to trigger the aesthetic of the work, moving the work beyond mere tokenism. This required that I worked with what each of the participants brought to the site each week and sometimes each minute or hour. There is no one-size-fits all solution to engaging with a community and this community was a combination of varying voices, skills, ideas and abilities that changed weekly. What worked one week would not necessarily work the following week. I needed to let go of any preconceived outcomes and be willing to engage in an exchange of ideas, listen to the underlying meanings of actions and respect the participants as more than mere receptors of information. Slowly as this process unfolded, I questioned my own

entrenched rituals and developed new modes of practice, helping to move the work beyond mere tokenism.

When I first established *Kids' Urban Dreaming*, I followed a set of pre-designed rituals for establishing the art project with the participants and the wider community. Where possible I would meet with parents and participating teachers to discuss the project. I would introduce the program using visual aids and discuss the overarching concept. I would ensure participants were willing participants and made it understood that it was their choice to engage. Setting up the tool shed with participants (Campus 1) and conducting tool tests was the first process I entered into with participants. Following this we collaborated on an initial design for the site, including drawing up a map of what they wanted to build. I would continue this process by collating images for inspiration in a visual diary, which I would use for discussions with the participants, inviting them to add their own images. Each session would begin with a discussion about what we were working on or planned for that day. While each step had some value in it – indeed, some were an essential requirement of the ethics protocols – helping me to establish a basis on which to build the project with the participants, and to ensure we measured risk appropriately, as the project progressed some steps became irrelevant.

Figure 60: Tool Test underway at Campus 1
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

I abandoned the usual processes after a few weeks at Campus 1 after encountering unanticipated barriers and interruptions to participants' engagement. At Campus 2 the process was different, the rituals at the beginning of each session were led by the assisting teacher and helped to ground the participants each week, though disruptive outbreaks and differing voices still led to a process of listening and learning to work with what was presented each week on site. The disruptions on site were due to various obstacles in some cases it was because of the complex lives they led and in other instances it was institutional barriers. The rituals I had established and used successfully in the past were not viable with this project. It led me to constantly allow new rituals and processes to develop, led by the participants. I learned to let go of controlling both the process and outcome. As the participants engaged in child-led imaginative play the work evolved and became richer, telling their stories more clearly. As I let go of the need to control the outcome the participants became participant-collaborators, whose voices where the heart of *Kids' Urban Dreaming*. Child-led imaginative play was a positive interactive process that developed on both sites in line with the concept of adventure play.

Figure 61: Participants engaging in play and performance
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The performative process is central to the socially engaged art practice. It is made up of collisions and confrontations that form the narrative and content of the work. As the artist learns to listen and embrace the rituals of the participant-collaborators including play the practice evolves from work where the 'outsider' imposes their language and rituals onto a community to it becoming moving and breathing collaboration that shares the voices of all involved. It is a practice that requires the artist as the 'outsider' to be willing to engage with the participant in terms they understand (Sennett, 2012). And in our role as the 'outsider', we arguably need to acknowledge the differences including the ways we communicate not only through spoken language but also our actions, the ways we learn and how we share ideas and skills. My decision to hand over control led to new rituals and practices being developed out of child-led play. In asking 'what capacity does adventure play have as an art tool to activate children's citizenship' I discovered play was a key tool my participant-collaborators used for communication. As I engaged with participant-collaborators in more playful processes that supported their unique languages and rituals, the participant-collaborators creative and interactive rituals enabled them to build a community of safety with one another.

Video 1: Crate King and his crate wall
Video by: Clare Walton 2019

Nic Naitanui became the known as the Crate King and over several weeks led participants in a ritual that focused the constructing, deconstructing and reconfiguration of milk crates around their installation.

Rituals of Play and Cooperation

Play, movement and imagination led the conversation across both campuses, creating new pathways each week to support participant-collaborators' engagement. Play is an important part of children's lives and has been extensively examined in the fields of Psychology (Gray, 2013), Play Work (Brown, 2003; 2008) Youth and Childhood studies (Jans, 2004; Bundy et al., 2011), Geography (Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Freeman & Tranter, 2011), Sociology (Carroll et al., 2019) and Urban planning (Jansson, 2015). Playwork researcher Fraser Brown (2003) argues "play is the child's fundamental tool for exploring the world, their environment, their interpersonal and physical relationships, and their sense of self" (p. 8). Imaginative and

adventurous risky play as the key art tool encouraged participants to open up to alternative avenues for self-expression and communication, helping to divert disruptive and anti-social behaviour. It was also the basis for developing important rituals that structured the relationships and practices of the participant-collaborators. Participant-collaborators' engagement in *Kids' Urban Dreaming*, and with each other became more positive as they played. New works were created using imaginative, adventurous and risky play, revealing the participant-collaborators' newfound connections to each other and the site.

At first at Campus 1 the orchestrated shared rituals were organised by Miss E revolving around food and drinks, such as beginning the day with hot chocolate and toasted sandwiches in winter at Campus 1. But quickly participant-collaborators developed their own rituals to feel safe and in control of their environments. Builder Man needed to sit on the top of the hut upon arrival, Queen of Water would use the pickaxe to dig holes when she entered the site and the girls used their dance floor to entertain us each week. The Wizard, Frida, Mischief Maker and other participant-collaborators from Campus 2 engaged in watering the plants each week and collecting the tools and carrying them to the site to create a feeling of belonging and ownership amongst the chaos. Digging up soil, caring for the plants, counting how many new plants had grown and photographing the plants were rituals the participant-collaborators at Campus 2 engaged in almost weekly. To help reset the space when she returned, Miss O suggested we set up a ritual at the end of each session where participant-collaborators shared with us what they enjoyed or felt they had learnt that session.

Video 2: Ritual of Gardening – Campus 2
Video by: Clare Walton 2019

The rhythmic digging of holes, placing plants in various positions, adding special features and inspecting their garden consistently occurred at Campus 2. It was a ritual that calmed the participants and supported their connection to each other and the site.

Figure 62: Builder Man in his favourite spot with Nic Naitanui
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 63: Carrying timber and tools from storage to the site at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 64: Dance Floor Action at Campus 1
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Gardening was a key ritual across both campuses where participant-collaborators began to display their individual tacit knowledge. It was also a common language I shared with the participant-collaborators. Tiller (2010) discusses how the tacit knowledge that exists amongst communities is not always visible at first, simmering gently beneath surface, living within the people who are part of the community. Participant-collaborators' tacit knowledge and love of gardening appeared early on in the project as I gave them permission to take charge of the process. They shared a fascination with gardening and digging up dirt across both sites. Through gardening individuals found new ways to engage in the program, to work together and develop a sense of co-ownership. They took control of designing the layout, installing the plants, garden features and sharing their knowledge with each other and me. I embraced each child's aesthetic as I encouraged them to bring their unique skills and abilities to the project.

Video 3: Ritual of Gardening – Campus 1
Video by: Clare Walton 2019

The ritual of gardening at Campus 1 soothed the participants and strengthened the connection to the site. It enabled participants to share their skills with each other and form a stronger bond.

Figure 65: Frida creating design features for the garden
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

O'Donnell (2018) similarly found that when he embraced the aesthetics and knowledge of the children he works with, their creative works take on new life. The spontaneity and expressive playfulness of children and their ability to invent complicated worlds, ask challenging questions which are sometimes unanswerable are all skills that contemporary artists strive for (O'Donnell, 2018). As the participant-collaborators engaged in the small rituals they created, their relationships developed and the site became more dynamic. Some participant-collaborators took on supportive roles to make things they couldn't do by or for themselves (Sennett, 2012). This required me to alternate between being the lead artist, their collaborator and in some instances their student. Individuals began to share their own experiences and knowledge and skills in their specific areas of expertise (Tiller, 2010). For example, the Devil Queen and Queen of Hearts developed a small ritual of collecting buckets of water to soften the soil, so it was easier to dig holes for planting. This early ritual was replaced by Devil Queen a few weeks later when she took paint and plastered handprints across the Fort, leading the other participant-collaborators as they all took turns in covering

their hands with paint and using brushes to create patterns across the Fort they had constructed. At Campus 2 watering the garden each week with the watering can was a long-lasting ritual, it was short in duration each week but was something in which the participant-collaborators all took pride; a ritual they all felt connected to and had ownership over. The rituals they developed in creating and tending the gardens and the installations across the 2 sites were not predetermined, they were constructed to solve problems, bring their aesthetic to the sites and combine individual skills and knowledge. Thus, co-operative relationships evolved based on collectively produced practices and rituals.

Figure 66: Devil Queen with her paint covered hands
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 67: Devil Queen and her gardening rituals
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 68: The transformed Fort
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

In addition to the collective rituals individuals also developed private rituals to exercise their agency in the shared space. Over time, they grew to become more inclusive and became practices that reinforced the group's cohesion. Rachelle (Campus 1) developed a ritual of gathering various materials from our collection of recycled ribbons and fabrics and adding these as elements to the structures. Slowly working her way around the site, Rachelle tied ribbons and glued fabrics to the installation and through this process led other participant-collaborators and me to join in the ritual. Initially erratic in her participation, Rachelle's developing skills gave her the confidence to proactively engage. Her skills as an artist and designer slowly evolved and she took the lead in adding small features and decorations to the installation with encouragement from her peers. Gruffalo and Bumble Bee (Campus 2) had also been initially reticent in sharing their knowledge and skills. After participating in the small rituals of watering, gardening, and supporting other participant-collaborators in painting the structures, they too took on roles of leadership. Participation in small everyday rituals like these enabled individuals who initially hid in the background to develop enough confidence to step forward and take charge of various elements of the structures.

Figure 69: The tepee transformed by Rachelle and her peers
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Radical Rituals: Power, Agency and Citizenship

As the rituals and practices were constantly and fluidly reconfigured, social relations were transformed, including the power constructs (Daniels & Downes, 2014). As participant-collaborators became more confident in their actions the balance of power began to shift and they began to recognise that I respected their knowledge. Tesar (2015) examines the balances of power relations in the education system through the lens of Havel, positioning children as victims and supporters within the education system. The questioning of the system by a child is viewed as a form of rebellion, throughout all stages of education, and they face the fear if they do not conform and follow the established rituals and produce what is expected their work will not be valued or rewarded or displayed on the notice board. They fear they will be cast as the outsider who has broken the social contract. By providing an environment where participant-collaborators individual talents and knowledge were encouraged and celebrated and where they were supported to take charge, they subverted the established social contracts of the campuses (Tesar, 2015). New social contracts were constructed, instead, through the rituals the participant-collaborators created: collecting the water for the garden at Campus 2 was practiced almost weekly, they set the pace and took charge or organising who would take control of this ritual at the beginning of each session. Weeding the garden was something that happened sporadically and required gentle encouragement but the participant-collaborators when engaged in weeding took control and decided which areas would be weeded. It was through these small actions that sections of the space were claimed, created, evolved and social contracts were re-defined.

Video 4: Ritual of tying ribbons by Rachelle
Video by: Clare Walton 2019

Video 5: Ritual of Weeding Campus 2
Video by: Clare Walton 2019

Video 6: Ritual of Watering Campus 2
Video by: Clare Walton 2019

Rituals across both Campuses brought the participating-collaborators into closer connection to the site and supported the development of their friendships. The sharing of rituals enabled participating-collaborators to share their skills and create a language they each understood and could easily participate in individually and collectively.

Figure 70: Participants weeding a section of the garden at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The power constructs were consistently deconstructed and reconstructed, as the participant-collaborators developed their own rituals of cooperation and tested their skills in leadership. They developed increasing confidence in their ability to share their skills because they were acknowledged as holders of significant knowledge. The provision of a platform that supported participant-collaborators self-representation (Adams, 2010; Askins & Pain, 2011) enabled participant-collaborators to use their own languages, rituals and practices based on play to engage as active citizens (Jans, 2010). Play is a non-confrontational creative language, in which the participant-collaborators felt safe to use their imaginations, leading to new friendships and confidence in their abilities to collaborate and take on leadership roles. At Campus 1 Captain Invincible, Super Max and Casper worked exceptionally well together. They problem solved, designed and worked together on every aspect from the design to the creation……they also listened and really supported each other. It was amazing to see them

form such a positive and collaborative team. Their concentration was amazing and their dedication to completing the work so that it not only looked good but was also safe for other children to use was wonderful to see (Fieldnotes, 2018). Devil Queen took on the role of chief storyteller and leader of games, using her imagination to guide participants and her own actions. "She has got a really amazing imagination (I've noticed) … she likes building things out of crates and being a Devil Queen or playing cops and robbers … she engages in the play really well". (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). Participant-collaborators' rituals and practices were at the forefront and centre of the project rather than mine or the teachers.

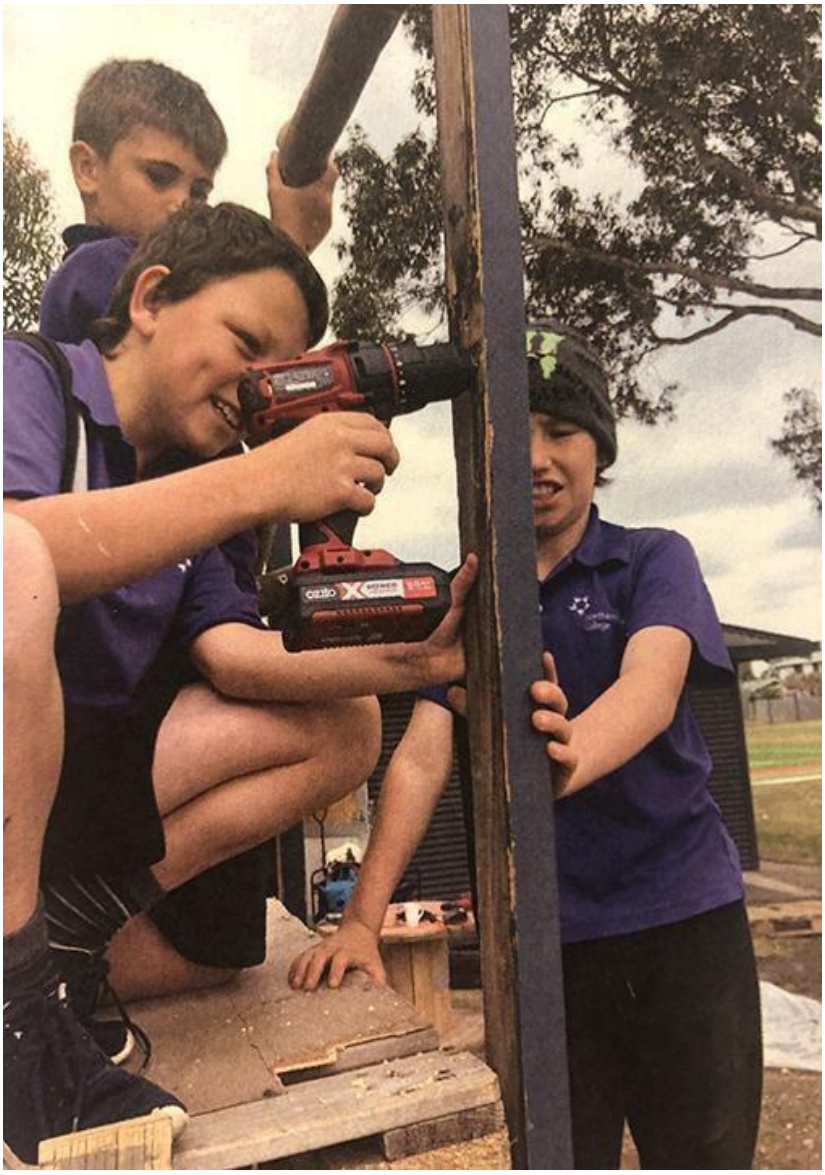

Figure 71: Captain Invincible, Super Max and Casper working on the Fort

Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 72: Devil Queen playing cops and robbers
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

I watched my participant-collaborators exercise citizenship by transforming their environment through play. Citizenship is participatory; and for children play is the most common vehicle for collaboration. Children's citizenship is defined by Jans (2004) as a dynamic process of shifting rights and responsibilities. Jan's argues that children's appropriation of their environment, the ways in which they interact and shape it, are progressive and this enables them to claim local forms of citizenship (2004). Play and participant-collaborator designed rituals and practices supported participant-collaborators who were prone to distracting behaviour find more positive ways to engage. I supported their unique forms of creative expression across both campuses. One day at Campus 1 Queen of Water and Nic Naitanui just needed to play, so they took off to the oval with a couple of tyres. Just letting them play helped with their focus and commitment to *Kids' Urban Dreaming* (Fieldnotes, 2018). At Campus 2 the Wizard, Snowpea and Bluebird at various intervals lost focus, and engaged in disruptive behaviour, impacting on other participant-collaborators ability to stay focused (Fieldnotes, 2018). To help mitigate the disruptions play became a tool for creating performances and new work. Play became the key tool to re-engage and support participant-collaborators at both campuses when external factors and influences disrupted their ability to constructively engage or when they just need an outlet for free creative expression.

Figure 73: Queen of Water and Nic Naitanui just needed to play
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 74: Participants at play at Campus 2
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Over time participants became better at recognising when they behaved anti-socially and destructively. They came to recognize they were members of a community that they had created, leading to alternative and more positive ways of engaging so they were not excluded (Ms K, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Sennett (2012) argues that engaging with others with whom we share little in common is a form of craft, requiring individuals to understand and respond to one another in order to work together. Collaborating, or what Sennett refers to as cooperating is a difficult process, with numerous obstacles and barriers that require mitigation and if not careful can lead to destructive outcomes (Sennett, 2012). The destructive outcomes, which I prefer to think of as collisions and confrontations in the collaborative process, require constant examination and reflection. Participant-collaborators, both individually and collectively, engaged in various collisions and confrontations as part of the process of creation. Ideas and knowledge were continuously transferred, requiring me to listen not only to the words spoken but also 'read' the small interactions and movements participant-collaborators took part in each week. I witnessed them create a small community where they felt safe, where they took pride in their achievements, taking their role as active citizens seriously.

Collisions and Confrontations

By introducing social practice to a traditional institution, I invited the institution to rethink its processes and questioned the traditional rituals and practices it followed. The rituals of art education typically revolve around instructions that students are required to follow to produce work that is then judged in relation to academic requirements (Efland, 1976). *Kids' Urban Dreaming* was unlike a typical art curriculum. The way the institution chose to support and, at times, disrupt the process revealed power constructs that both inhibited and enabled. The disruptions and complexities artists face when working inside traditional schools have been examined in recent years by educational researchers with a focus on creative partnerships between schools and artists (Hall et al., 2007; Hall & Thompson, 2007; Cochrane et. al., 2008). They note a range of obstacles that artists face including time frames, funding and tensions between the artist and institution arising from the expectation of certain types

of educational institutions (Pringle, 2008). Navigating these tensions and obstacles and how the institution and non-participants disrupted the participant-collaborator's rituals was of primary concern in relation to risk to this project across Campus 1 and Campus 2.

Jeff Adams (2010) notes that artists face dilemmas and constraints when introducing contemporary practices that promote learner agency and are not defined by the traditional rituals of school art into traditional school settings. Adams examines the work of Atkinson (2008) who argues that when contemporary art practices are introduced into the school's curriculum it can reverberate beyond the delivery of the practice as it calls into question the more orthodox approaches in the delivery of the school's curriculum. By introducing contemporary art practices into the curriculum, the line is blurred between collaborative and individual production (Adams, 2010). This challenges the long-held assumptions concerning learner agency and learning process outcomes, disrupting the traditional requirements to produce an assessable object or product (Adams, 2010). This can be viewed as a threat to the sanctioned structures promoted by the overarching authorities, questioning their long-established approaches to education (Adams, 2010). My decision to promote learner agency, creative risk, play and ephemeral learning outcomes were "risky choices" (Adams, 2010 p. 683). The radical rituals in this project evolved from the participant-collaborators' shared language, spontaneity and play, allowing them to critically examine their own ways and means of engagement and to engage as active citizens within their school.

Across both campuses disruptive actions at various stages threatened the viability of the research project and either directly or indirectly disrupted the practices and rituals of the participant-collaborators. These included inconsistency in support staff, disposal of participant-collaborators' materials and work, allowing the site to be trashed by non-participants with no consequences for those involved, staff removing tools to use for other programs, removal of equipment and materials storage with no warning, threats to cancel the program by the acting Principal and having to insist on several occasions that compliance with ethics requirements was essential or we could not continue with the program. Each action either by the institution or non-participants directly or indirectly impacted on the

rituals that were collaboratively created by the participant-collaborators. The institution's actions also disrupted the safe space created by the participant-collaborators and placed the participant-collaborators, supporting teacher, assistant artist and me in a risky position.

The obstacles risking *Kids' Urban Dreaming* were different at the two Campuses despite both campuses being part of the same institution, revealing the extent to which the institution was shaped by the individuals who worked within it. While one site made a significant effort to support the project, the other site created barriers. These included failing to disseminate information to the wider community, including non-participating teachers. I found the environment at times awkward and occasionally even hostile. Non-participating teachers were uncooperative when I attempted to interview them. I discovered they had not been informed about the project, or why I had requested to speak with them.

> *Clare: "Do you mind if I give you my email then you can just email me and I can send through the paperwork, that way you know what the programs about", Teacher A: "um well", Clare: " Because at least then you have got an idea and maybe down the track", Teacher B: "I will get it from Miss O, Clare: Oh ok, I am meeting her next week". (Teachers, Personal Correspondence, 2018).*

They appeared to feel uncomfortable, were in some instances defensive and unwilling to engage. Further offers to supply them with details about the project myself were either ignored or purposefully skirted around.

When institutions are not willing to engage in a positive and constructive manner it enacts a power relationship that can hinder creative collaborations. Comunian (2017) highlights the barriers artists face which can include lack of time and or resources. My insistence that the institution followed all the ethics protocols that were outlined for this creative research project was a complicating factor. As an individual artist/researcher my voice was not as powerful, and I seemed to make difficult demands that disrupted the school's usual programs. At times this threatened to place participant-collaborators, assisting teachers, assisting artist, me and non-participants in risky situations.

Campus 2 did not initially provide the support teacher and the participant-collaborators with the correct information and ethics protocols. It was not until I advised I would need to stop the program until all participant-collaborators' permission forms were signed and returned that the school followed up on the agreed ethics protocols. The assisting Teacher, Miss O, had not been given any information or provided with her permission forms when she joined the program. I had to email the forms to her following our first session and she returned them the following week. This created a difficult situation at first, but Miss O and I worked together to resolve these initial problems. In addition, as the project progressed Miss O became unavailable and the Campus failed to provide consistent and informed replacement teachers, disrupting the daily rituals and practices that participant-collaborators' and I had developed with Miss O. The relationship participant-collaborators had with support staff was vital in helping them to feel safe. Removing this safety net led to some participant-collaborators acting out and disengaging from the project. Bluebell, in particular, was impacted by the absence of Miss O, choosing to only pop her head in occasionally and engaging in disruptive behaviour when on site (Fieldnotes, 2019).

The actions by some Senior Staff members at Campus 2 directly impacted already vulnerable participant-collaborators who required significant support in developing trust in the program and in the process. By replacing Miss O with uninformed and at times unknown teachers they inadvertently introduced a risk to the safe space we had created with the participants. As one of the parents noted, inconsistency in support can create a level of distrust (Parent, Personal Correspondence, 2018) dismantling the fragile relationship between the perceived authority figure and the child. The new assisting teacher tried to stop the participant-collaborators using the camera to film each other and did not listen or believe the participant-collaborators when they told her it was allowed. The footage recorded her argument with Bluebird (Fieldnotes, 2018). Her heavy-handed approach in trying to control the participant-collaborators revealed her lack of understanding of the program and the institution's failure to inform her that she was working with vulnerable participants.

By sending teachers to the site who did not know me, the participant-collaborators or the program they disrupted other fragile rituals that we had created. Rituals including meeting each morning to collect the tools together, engaging in a discussion about what participant-

collaborators wanted to achieve that day and collecting water for the garden. These practices were disrupted for several weeks. Whilst the unavailability of Miss O was beyond the control of the institution, a lack of respect for the program was displayed by some members of the institution's hierarchy. Like allowing their staff to borrow our tools without asking, removing the storage facility we used for the tools without any warning and disposing some of our materials and participant-collaborators' work.

There were disruptions at Campus 1 too: once when we were unable to run the program due to unforeseen circumstances (Fieldnotes, 2018); and another time when people broke into the site after hours and damaged the participants' constructions. But these events were beyond the institution's control. The participant-collaborator's response was to demonstrate their ability to engage as active citizens. When a session was cancelled one week by the school due to the unavailability of Miss E the participant-collaborators went 'on strike', refusing to go to class (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018). After the destruction of their site, the Queen of Hearts took great lengths to address the issue, presenting the project at the school assembly. She followed through by finding out who messed with the crates and supported Nic Naitanui in having conversations with the teachers of students who had destroyed their work (Miss E Personal Correspondence, 2018). The crate wall specifically was important to Nic Naitanui who had created it, in collaboration with his peers. Despite numerous attempts by me and the assisting teacher to re-engage Nic Naitanui as a regular and active participant, his trust in the institution's ability to support him to resolve the situation were destroyed.

Figure 75: Campus 1 site trashed by non-participants
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

The teachers and school leadership were not malicious or deliberately disrespectful, but their failure to adequately respond to Nic Naitanui and Queen of Hearts grief and anger at the invasion of our safe space and destruction of their work did reveal the rigidity of the underlying social structure of the institution and its lack of appreciation for or interest in the radical pedagogy implicit in *Kids' Urban Dreaming* (Adams, 2010). But the participant-collaborators' response also revealed their newfound confidence to directly address the disrespect of their work and the inaction by the school hierarchy. Having experienced the empowerment of creating their own rituals and practices inside the walls of the institution the participant-collaborators were emboldened to directly question the institution's culture. In the process I became acutely aware of my lack of power, given my status as an independent artist, to ensure that the safe space was not disrupted by the institution or non-participants. My experience highlights the difficulties artists face when they introduce a program into a traditional institutions that questions the power constructs of the institution.

There is no one size fits all solution to the question of how to navigate the risks and barriers but it does reveal the importance for both the artist and the institution to engage in clear conversations before, during and after the program to help ensure the participant-collaborators safety and their ability to engage as active citizens in the creation of their safe-haven is fully supported. Institutions that are willing to actively listen to the students and work with them to help ensure that their projects are valued even after the artist's role in the process is completed affirm the participant-collaborators citizenship and reinforce the positive impacts of such a project on participant-collaborators' self-worth.

On the last day of Term 3 at both Campuses *Kids' Urban Dreaming* was shared with the community. Parents and family members came along to inspect their children's work and join in a small community celebration. The Campus Principal, the Head of the Teachers Welfare Program and several other teachers from across the five school campuses came along as well. They enquired if it would be possible to extend the program across all five campuses and discussed the positive impact the program had had on the participant-collaborators (Fieldnotes, 2018). The positive impact the program had on the participant-collaborators' and the wider community was evident. Despite the positive reception and an indication that the program would continue the following year, the program was abruptly cancelled across both Campuses in early January via email. There had been a change in leadership; the Executive Principal (who manages all five campuses) and the Principle at Campus 1 had both changed over the summer holidays. During my exit interview at Campus 2 the School Principal Mr K explained that "there is a big focus on more structured learning and teaching at the moment … there is a perception that a focus on explicit teaching will get the numeracy and reading levels up so unfortunately the ancillary programs for the time being are being restricted" (Principal, Personal Correspondence, 2019).

The participant-collaborators at Campus 1 also took part in the exit interview and discussed their disappointment in the program being cancelled. Questions were asked as to why and who had removed their installation from the school grounds. Neither I nor Miss E had an answer for them. Queen of Hearts expressed her personal disappointment, calling the new Principal a 'bad Principal' who did not understand the complexities of their lives (Queen of

Hearts, Personal Correspondence, 2019). These conversations again highlight the fragility of radical programs that operate within traditional power paradigms.

Despite the disappointing ending of *Kids' Urban Dreaming,* it had an enduring positive legacy in the lives of the participant-collaborators. Miss E revealed later that *Kids' Urban Dreaming* led to participant-collaborators developing new friendships and ways of engaging in the school community. Devil Queen took on a role as school leader; Nic Naitanui took on a role as social advocate for students with intellectual disabilities; Rachelle displayed her capacity to support younger and less competent students during classes; and Sunshine Queens new-found ability to take on constructive criticism (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2018-2019). *Kids' Urban Dreaming* showed that embracing risk, giving participant-collaborators agency and supporting them to find ways to overcome their obstacles to engagement through developing their own languages and rituals through play enabled them to become active citizens inside the walls of a traditional school institution.

Figure 76: Decorations already for the celebration
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Figure 77: Final touches before the celebration begins
Image by: Clare Walton 2018

Conclusion

Kids' Urban Dreaming highlighted how a socially engaged art project based on the original concept of the adventure playground can enable children to engage as active citizens in the development of their community when their voice is respected (Jans, 2010). Participant-collaborators designed and developed their own languages and rituals, actively participating to construct a 3D environment in which they could play, hide, create, perform, share, learn and teach one another. Meaningful and collaborative relationships developed between the participant-collaborators. I learned to embrace a practice that was led by my participant-collaborators' – their rituals and languages including play – as they designed and built their

own “safe-haven”. Play was the core foundation of the work. It led to new discoveries that helped me to develop a collaborative process between me and the participant-collaborators. Disruptions both challenged and reconfigured our relationships. A small community developed which gave all who were involved a sense of belonging inside an institution where they had previously felt isolated. The barriers between the participant-collaborators dissolved as I displayed my belief in their ability to share their prior knowledge and skills. Even though I was the ‘outsider’, I developed a relationship of trust with the participant-collaborators where they knew implicitly that I supported and believed in them. In addition, by relinquishing a certain amount of authority and my role as the perceived expert, the power relationships were reconstructed (Askins & Pain, 2011) and the participant-collaborators' agency was further supported.

Participant-collaborators’ abilities to engage as active citizens were displayed as they found new ways to engage with their peers. They developed leadership skills, peer-to-peer teaching and in some instances were able to support their less confident participant-collaborators to engage as collaborators. By embracing measured risky activities, the participant-collaborators tested their own limitations and experimented, leading to the development of new skills, growing sense of their worth and trust in each other. As their self-worth and trust grew, so too did their mutual affection and willingness to protect and nurture their safe-haven (Chatterjee, 2005). Participant-collaborators displayed their social agency and when their safe-haven was disrupted, going on strike, holding discussions with teachers about their site being destroyed by non-participants and presenting their project with pride at the school assembly.

Positive interactions and accomplishments led to participant-collaborators sharing positive stories with their families which, in turn, led to new avenues for further communication with families. It demonstrated to parent’s alternative ways for their children to engage in traditional institutions (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Parents in addition acknowledged the positive impact the project had on their children, helping them to develop socialization skills, teamwork and helped them to get out of their shells (Parents, Personal Correspondence, 2018). The project displayed how, by introducing alternative and radical practices that support participant-collaborator's agency into a school, new communication channels can be opened between the participant-collaborators, parents and the institution.

The informal approach we took to inviting parents and family members to engage in *Kids' Urban Dreaming* ensured they felt comfortable to participate. The positive stories participant-collaborators shared at home contrasted with the earlier refrains: "I hate school, or I got into trouble (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Instead, it displayed the development of participant-collaborator's agency (Wallace-Digarbo & Hill, 2006).

Kids' Urban Dreaming confirmed that a sustained adventure play program in the context of a safe space within a school can work to engage young people who don't feel like they fit in. Over the course of three terms my participants became collaborators, then leaders within our safe-haven, and some even developed the confidence to become leaders in the classrooms and school community beyond. No one hurt themselves. But we did discover other kinds of risks we needed to negotiate along the way: emotional, behavioural, aesthetic, institutional. Was it worth risking it. Yes!

Reflections, Moving Forward and Closing Notes

I have been immersed in *Kids' Urban Dreaming* for the past four years including 12 months engaged in field work. The impacts of COVID-19 on social interactions with the world and the limitations it has placed on our ability to engage as creative workers and artists in schools has led to deep reflection on what is possible. The idea of further developing *Kids' Urban Dreaming* I now see as even more important. Lock downs have had profound ramifications on children of all ages. Reflecting on the past two years of supporting children to engage in creative projects that promote measured risky play and the development of their agency led me to realise that I needed to find new ways to share this project in addition to running programs myself. Consequently, the creative component of this thesis will become a *How too Manual* for schools. This will allow *Kids' Urban Dreaming* to be shared across multiple sites to make it possible to reach more children in a world that is quickly changing. With the real possibility of less funding for creative projects hanging over our heads, new ways to promote our practices and share them with communities where they can make a positive impact need to be explored.

The positive impact *Kids' Urban Dreaming* had on the participant-collaborators including their newfound ways of engaging with their peers and the school community were witnessed across both campuses. This was highlighted specifically at Campus 1 with participant-collaborators taking the social skills they had developed and their confidence into the new school year. Participant-collaborators took on roles as school leaders, began to assist less competent and younger students in various classroom situations and in one case learnt how to accept disappointments in a more positive manner, displaying how they had matured. Assisting teacher, Miss E attributed this directly to *Kids' Urban Dreaming* (Miss E, Personal Correspondence, 2019). Moving forward I believe *Kids' Urban Dreaming* has the potential to support the development of more positive relationships between students who have different ways of engaging with the world. It allows students who do not have success in a traditional classroom setting to display to their peers what they are able to accomplish in a positive, nurturing and safe environment.

Kids' Urban Dreaming gives students who are alienated or feel dismissed or overlooked for a variety of reasons, including low achievement levels in the traditional classroom, a place where they can be the leaders and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Since completing my field work, I have been engaged as a creative worker in a small regional school in Australia where I took this practice and developed it to engage every year group in collaboration with the school. It has given me some hope that creative outdoor risky practices will be more fully embraced by our educational system. Regional Arts Victoria in partnership with the Department of Education and Training and Creative Victoria recognised the importance of offering alternative learning practices that highlight the "value of the arts at a time where creative expression, hope and the sense of community are needed more than ever" (Regional Arts Victoria, 2021). Funded by the State Government the *Working for Victoria* program provided employment opportunities for Victorian based artists, access to workshops, mentorship and training. The aim was to support artists to upskill and develop new skills that would be transferable to future employment opportunities, in addition to the providing extended experiences working in a school and community setting (Regional Arts Victoria, 2021). The programs were run face-to-face, when possible, virtually if not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, and in some instances the programs were on hold until restrictions were eased and non-essential workers were given permission to work in schools again across Victoria. This was not a business-as-usual program but in spite of the restrictions the program continued, with artists and schools adapting to ensure the programs' success with support from Regional Arts Victoria. I was lucky enough to work with a school where the principal saw the program as essential for the student's well-being and I was recorded as a school employee which allowed me to attend the campus when face-to-face teaching was permitted.

As one of the 150 artists who were contracted to work as a creative worker across Victoria in stream two of the program, I witnessed first-hand the positive impacts outdoor risky art practices have on children who have been forced to isolate at home due to the current situation. It was a struggle to begin with introducing the program to the teachers but as I encouraged them to personally participate and work with me in collaboration with the students to design the program there were many positive outcomes. Teachers came to

recognise the benefits of the program on students who have been living through a time when there is a lot of uncertainty and they have been forced to forgo attending school and socializing with their friends. They recognised the positive impact it had on re-settling children. They recognised how giving them ownership and leadership over an aspect of their school day provided them with room to freely move, think and reconnect with their peers in a safe space that they were constructing using their own language and rituals.

The program was designed in collaboration with students and teachers. Every year level was involved and given a section of the school's playground where they could design and build their own structures. The program incorporated all aspects of my practice and again was redesigned to accommodate each year's varying skill sets and abilities. We built nature play spaces and a bush kitchen with preps and year ones, years two and three designed and built their own Fort, year four created a large interactive cityscape across the back of the school building, and years five and six installed an interactive sport and art wall. The program expanded, grew and for each year level was reshaped to allow for their individual voices, aesthetics and skill sets.

Over the duration of the six-month contract, we did face obstacles due to lockdowns but the outcomes and ongoing potential for the program were clearly witnessed. I was invited to work with the students in mid-November over two days to complete their installations and bring a positive conclusion to the program. This I see as a positive outcome as the impacts of COVID-19 have made it extremely difficult for artists to work with schools as we are not recognised as essential workers unless the school personally deems you to be essential and recognises you as a member of staff. I would like to see socially engaged arts practices like *Kids' Urban Dreaming*, become an essential part of the school curriculum given the opportunity it affords young people to work through emotions, gain new skills and develop their capacity to engage as creative active citizens and social agents.

At the end of 2021 I was offered a contract position as teaching artist for the Sydney Opera House's Creative Learning Program. This position again provided an opportunity to further expand the program and see how it transforms with each iteration. Working with Year 3 students in a small rural school that uses play as a key tool in their curriculum has seen the

program embraced and recognised for its full potential in ways it has not been before. Art and play were the key focus across the whole school during the term I worked there and the program again highlighted how individual students who have social and or educational difficulties are able to find their place and be recognised as important members of their community with vital skills and ideas to share. The final conclusion of this project was the installation created with the students which was a key feature in the school's annual Festival of Light. This highlights the potential for the program to further develop.

The participant-collaborators across all sites have displayed their capacity to develop social skills, learn to mitigate and deal with emotional stress, engage in collaborative processes and develop leadership skills. It was interesting to witness the different approaches and ways the project was implemented when taking it to two small regional schools. In both cases I worked directly with classroom teachers and the teacher's assistants. It showed how the program can have a positive impact on every member of an institution, including those who are high performing. Both approaches I found had challenges, but also positive outcomes.

Going forward from this I am looking to collaborate more with schools across regional and urban areas in Australia. Core to the process is that each school is directly involved in the design and implementation of the program. A collaborative process ensures that the project is owned by the students and their school, promoting their voices and ideas allowing for the project to continue long after my role is completed. To support the collaborative process, the *How to Guide* will provide schools and teachers with an outline of how to run the program and examples of my own experiences at each iteration. I recognise it will be a challenge incorporating a project that sits outside the curriculum set by the education department given the obligation to ensure the core curriculum requirements are met. While the Victorian State Government, through the *Working for Victoria* program supported the *Creative Workers in Schools* program, it was still a challenge for schools to incorporate this into their program. Consequently, I have found small pockets of resistance from teachers, despite all costs of the project being covered by the State Government.

In Australia arts is undervalued in the curriculum and creative outdoor measured risky activities even more so. With the recent promotion by the World Economic Forum of the benefits of risky play for kids, including boosting their social skills, co-ordination and the potential for the reduction of accidents in later life, this may change. It has argued that building risk into Kids playgrounds outweighs the risk of accidents improving safety in the long-term (World Economic Forum, 2021). Will Australian schools and designers of children's play spaces catch on to this? Will we see more risky playgrounds and traditional adventure playgrounds popping up more frequently? I do believe that experimentation and new ways of working with children will become more prevalent and the role of children as active citizens will be more fully embraced. We are witnessing the rise of children and young people taking on active roles in social justice and climate change movements. It is important that these practices are supported to enable children and young people, regardless of their economic or cultural background, to feel confident to use their voices to advocate for their futures.

Video 7: *Kids' Urban Dreaming*
Video Edited by: Clare Walton 2022

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APPENDIX A – ETHICS FORMS

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND PLANNING

CONSENT FORM – Parents and Children [redacted]

PROJECT TITLE: "*Kid's Urban Dreaming*"

Name of participant (s): [redacted]

Name of investigator(s): Ms Clare Walton (student researcher) and Dr Janet McGaw (responsible researcher)

1. **I consent for my child** [redacted] **(and myself) to participate in this project**, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.
2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researchers, though I can request a copy.
3. I understand that my child's participation will involve them working with the student researcher on a child led community art program.
4. I understand that my participation will involve a series semi-formal interviews with the student researcher as outlined in the plain language statement.
5. I acknowledge that:

   (a) the possible effects of my child participating in the research have been explained to my satisfaction;

   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw my child (and or myself) from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;

   (c) the project is for the purpose of research;

   (d) I have been informed that my child's confidentiality (as well as my own) will be protected to the fullest extent possible, and a pseudonym (alternative name) will be used for any comments that are documented in the research;

   (e) I have been informed that with my consent the data will be stored at University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years;

   (f) I have been informed that my child and my images will be used for research purposes and may appear in the student researcher's thesis, journal papers, academic conferences, student researcher's professional website and social media.

   (g) I have been informed that transcripts of my interview may be published in the research findings including the student researchers thesis, academic conferences and journals.

   (h) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

HREC1749100.1

I consent for my child and myself participating in the research	☑ **yes** ☐ **no** (please tick)
I consent for photographs of my child to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers)	☑ **yes** ☐ **no** (please tick)
I consent for videos of my child to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers)	☑ **yes** ☐ **no** (please tick)
I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research research findings	☐ **yes** ☑ **no** (please tick)
I consent for images of my child to be shared on student researchers professional website and social media pages (only for research and promotion of the program purposes)	☑ yes ☐ no (please tick)
I consent for photographs of myself to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers)	☐ **yes** ☑ **no** (please tick)
I consent for videos of myself to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers)	☐ **yes** ☑ **no** (please tick)
I consent for transcripts of my interviews to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers)	☑ **yes** ☐ **no** (please tick)
I consent for images of myself to be shared on the student researchers professional website and social media pages (only for research and promotion of the program purposes)	☐ **yes** ☑ **no** (please tick)

Email (parents): [redacted]

Children's signature: [redacted] Date: [redacted]

Parents signature: [redacted] Date: [redacted]

HREC1749100.1

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND PLANNING PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Parents and Children –

Dr Janet McGaw (Responsible Researcher)
mcgawk@unimelb.edu.au
+61 (03) 8344 3038
Ms Clare Walton (Student Researcher)
waltonc@student.unimelb.edu.au
+61 (0) 422 202 869
Melbourne School of Design
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning University of Melbourne, Australia.

Project: "*Kids' Urban Dreaming*" Introduction

Your child (and you) is invited to participate in the above-named Ph.D. research project being conducted at your child's school in 2018 by researchers Clare Walton (student researcher) and Dr Janet McGaw (responsible researcher/supervisor).

Working in collaboration with the student researcher, Clare Walton and the child participants will collaborate to create a series of community art works including sculptures, films, photographs and community meals. By allowing the children to be lead artists in the project it will examine how the practice can help children to build confidence, leadership and team building skills, break down cultural and social barriers and help to engage children with their school community.

An agreement has been reached with your child's school's principal and teachers for your child to attend the program as part of the 2018 years' curriculum from 9am-11am each Wednesday morning. There may be after school activities which will involve the wider community (including parents and family members), if this occurs adequate notice will be provided and activities will only proceed where full permission has been granted by parents and the school.

What will my child be asked to do?
Kids' Urban Dreaming will involve your child being engaged in a series of child-led community art programs facilitated by the student researcher. Your child will be invited to participate in these workshops as one of the lead artists and to act as a co-researcher documenting their own experience and that of their peers, teachers, parents and facilitators by using photography, video and semi-formal interviews.

The workshops based on Adventure Play will involve your children learning

- how to safely use tools (i.e., hammers, saws and cordless drills) to create their own designs,
- to create short films

- digital photography
- performance
- cooking skills

Measures being taken to ensure your child's safety
All activities will be supervised by Clare Walton and the assistant facilitators (volunteers) to ensure they safely use all equipment and tools.

Following measures will be enforced:
- All children will be given an easily understood onsite induction manual
- All children must undertake a tool safety workshop and tool test before beginning work
- The work area will be fenced off to keep participants and non-participant's safe
- Your child will be provided with a safety vest, protective eye wear and gloves for when handling timbers
- If you child is not be photographed or filmed, they will be wearing an orange vest to distinguish them from other students and this will ensure during the editing process their faces or identifying features will not appear in any form of publication

The works created by your child will be used to form a series of public art exhibitions to enable sharing with the wider community what children are capable of and how they view their community. The exhibitions will contain video footage, photographs and 3d works (where suitable). You child will be involved in all stages of the exhibition process including curating and installing. These exhibitions will allow for further feedback from the broader community. Only where permission is granted will your child's (or your own) image be shown.

Your child will also be observed for research purposes throughout this program by Clare Walton. They will be invited to reflect upon their experiences through a variety of means including semi structured interviews with Clare Walton where appropriate. Data will be collected by the student research via journal notes, photography and video. Participating students will also be involved in the data collection using photography and video equipment. This process will allow for a more comprehensive study of the project by the student researcher.

The student researcher will keep all video and photography data on a password protected file at the University of Melbourne. Only the researchers will have access to the data. Students and parents who wish to have digital copies of the works produced may request them from the student researcher and they will be sent to the provided email address. Where permission has been granted by students and parents/guardians some images may appear on the student researcher's social media page and website. If a student does not wish to be filmed or photographed at any time they can request not to be and this will be respected.

Where requested identifying features of child and or parents/guardians will be removed to ensure anonymity. Data will only be collected where permission is granted from participants involved. A qualitative analysis of the data collected will be assessed, incorporating responses from teachers, students (and the data they collected) and parents/guardians to evaluate the program. This will assist in evaluating the importance and value of child-led community arts programs in engaging children in community, developing leadership skills, breaking down social cultural barriers and building community. The research findings may be published in the student researcher's thesis, at academic conferences and journal articles. The project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Melbourne.

How will I be asked to participate?
Parents and guardians will be asked to engage in a 15-20min semi-formal interview at the beginning, halfway through and at the end of the program. This will allow for the student researcher to receive feedback from yourselves as parents and guardians to how you feel the project is going. This can be done in a group where all parents/guardians are present at a time that suits all parties and on site at the school. The semi-formal interviews will be recorded by journal notations taken by the student researcher. To thank you for your feedback the student researcher will provide afternoon or morning tea.

Over the duration of the project parents and guardians will be invited to view their children at work. The times for this will be organized with the school.

How will my child's and my confidentiality be protected?
All care will be taken to minimize the potential for identification for participants that have chosen to be de-identified in publications. If applicable, potentially identifying markers, such as the participant's location (i.e., school) will not be nominated. We intend to protect you and your child's anonymity and the confidentiality of responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. You and your child's name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researcher, for example, to know where we should send the transcripts from the semi-formal interviews conducted with yourself (as parent/guardian) for review. Reviews of student's responses will be conducted with the students during the workshop process. If requested, in the final report, you and your child will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity; however, you should note that as the number of people we seek to involve in the research project is very small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. The data will be kept securely in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, Australia, for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

How will I receive feedback?

Once the report arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be sent to you. It is also possible that the results will be presented at academic conferences and journal papers (including photography and videos of the projects taken by the research student and the school students). Participants who have chosen not to identified will have identifying features removed.

Do I have to take part?

Please be advised that you and your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw your child from the research at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. The researchers are not involved in the ethics application process. Non-participation or withdrawal will have no impact on your child's school assessment.

Where can I get further information?

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the student researcher or responsible researcher on the numbers given above. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on phone: + 61 (0) 3 8344 2073.

How do I agree to participate?
If you would like your child to participate and yourself, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and return it to the school who will pass it on to the researcher.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND PLANNING

CONSENT FORM – School Principal,

PROJECT TITLE: "*Kid's Urban Dreaming*"

Name of participant:

Name of investigator(s): Ms Clare Walton (student researcher) and Dr Janet McGaw (responsible researcher)

1. I consent to participating in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researchers, though I can request a copy.

3. I understand that my role as the school's Principal on the *"Kid's Urban Dreaming"* Project is to provide feedback to the student researcher in relation to the project. I understand the project is designed to help engage children in their community, break down social and cultural barriers, develop leadership skills and build community as described in the plain language statement. I will make observations over the duration of the project and give my responses at times agreed upon by myself and the student researcher and my reflections will be recorded as journal notes. I understand that the researchers may use these results in their study as described in the plain language statement.

4. I acknowledge that:

   (a) The possible effects of participating in the research have been explained to my satisfaction;

   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;

   (c) The project is for the purpose of research;

   (d) I have been informed that if chosen, my confidentiality will be protected to the fullest extent possible, and if I make comments that are used in the research a pseudonym will be used;

   (e) I have been informed that my interview transcripts may be published for research purposes.

   (f) I have been informed that images of me may be published in the student researcher's thesis, at academic conferences, research journals and on the student researcher's professional webs ite and social media pages.

   (g) I have been informed that with my consent the data will be stored at University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years;

   (h) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

HREC1749100.1

I consent for photographs of myself to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers) ✓ yes ☐ no (please tick)

I consent for videos of myself to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers) ✓ yes ☐ no (please tick)

I consent for transcripts of my interviews to be used in the research (student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers) ✓ yes ☐ no (please tick)

I consent for images of myself to be shared on the student researchers professional website and social media pages ✓ yes ☐ no (please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings ✓ yes ☐ no (please tick)

Email: [redacted]

Participant signature: [redacted]

H EC 749100.1

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND PLANNING PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Principal –

Dr Janet McGaw (Responsible Researcher)
mcgawk@unimelb.edu.au
+61 (03) 8344 3038
Ms Clare Walton (Student Researcher)
waltonc@student.unimelb.edu.au
+61 (0) 422 202 869
Melbourne School of Design
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning University of Melbourne, Australia.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

*Project: "*Kids' Urban Dreaming" – Activating Children's Citizenship

Introduction

You are invited to participate in the above-named Ph.D. research project being conducted at the XXXXX XXXX in 2018 by researchers Clare Walton (student researcher) and Dr Janet McGaw (responsible researcher/supervisor). This project will explore the value of adventure play in the context of a child-led community arts practice.

How can a child-led community arts practice based on adventure play be used as a tool to facilitate children's active citizenship?

1. How can it assist in the breaking down of children's cultural and social barriers?
2. How can it assist to engage children in their community and in turn encourage them to be become active members in the shaping of their community?
3. How can it activate public space?

What will I be asked to do?
The research aims to include the observations and feedback from the school's principal in documenting the success of *"Kids' Urban Dreaming',* project.

As part of the program, you will be asked to reflect on your observations of impact of the program on the participating students. This information will be collected via journal notes, by the student researcher at a times suitable to both parties. You will also be invited to be interviewed by children who are acting as co-researchers during the program. This collection of data will be via video and photography.

Where permission has been granted by yourself some images may appear on social media or the student researcher's artist website (no images will be used for monetary gain). If you do not wish to be filmed or photographed at any time you can request not to be and this will be respected.

The data collected may be used for research and will assist in incorporating parent, teacher, principal and students' responses to the value of adventure play within the context of a child led participatory community arts practice to engage students, break down cultural and social barriers and build community.

A qualitative analysis of these outputs will be assessed with all care taken to minimize the identification of participants who do not wish to be identified. The research findings may be published in the student researcher's thesis, at academic conferences and journal articles. The project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Melbourne.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
All care will be taken to minimise the potential for identification for all participants that have chosen to be de-identified in publications. If applicable, potentially identifying markers, such as the participant's location (i.e., school) will not be nominated. We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researcher, for example, in order to know where we should send your interview transcript for checking. If requested, in the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity; however, you should note that as the number of people we seek to interview is very small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. The data will be kept securely in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, Australia, for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

How will I receive feedback?

Once the report arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be sent to you. It is also possible that the results will be presented at academic conferences and journal papers.

Do I have to take part?

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw from the research at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. The researchers are not involved in the ethics application process.

Where can I get further information?

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact student researcher or responsible researcher on the numbers given above. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on phone: + 61 (0) 3 8344 2073.

How do I agree to participate?
If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it to the researcher.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND PLANNING

CONSENT FORM – Contributing Teachers

PROJECT TITLE: *"Kid's Urban Dreaming"*

Name of participant: _____

Name of investigator(s): Ms Clare Walton (student researcher) and Dr Janet McGaw (responsible researcher)

1. I consent to participating in this research project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researchers, though I can request a copy.

3. I understand that my role will be as a **contributing-teacher** on the *"Kid's Urban Dreaming"* Project is to assist the student researcher during the running of the program. I understand the project is designed to help engage children in their community, break down social and cultural barriers, develop leadership skills and build community as described in the plain language statement. I will make observations during the course of my activities on the project and reflect on my work with the researcher during the course of the project. I understand that the researchers may use these results in their study as described in the plain language statement.

4. I acknowledge that:

   (a) The possible effects of participating in the research have been explained to my satisfaction;

   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;

   (c) The project is for the purpose of research;

   (d) I have been informed that if chosen, my confidentiality will be protected to the fullest extent possible, and if I make comments that are used in the research a pseudonym will be used;

   (e) I have been informed that my interview transcripts may be published for research purposes including the student researchers thesis, academic conferences and journal papers.

   (f) I have been informed that images of me may be published in the student researcher's thesis, at academic conferences, research journals and on the student researcher's professional website and social media pages.

   (g) I have been informed that with my consent the data will be stored at University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years;

   (h) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

I consent for photographs of myself to be used in the research ☑ **yes** ☐ **no**
(student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers) (please tick)

I consent for videos of myself to be used in the research ☑ **yes** ☐ **no**
(student researcher thesis, academic conferences and journal papers) (please tick)

HREC1749100.1

APPENDIX B - PROMPT SHEET F0R INTERVIEW

Melbourne School of Design/Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning

Prompt sheet for participant reflection interviews: Principal

"Kids' Urban Dreaming"

Name of investigator(s): Clare Walton (student researcher) and Dr Janet McGaw (responsible researcher)

Introduction: *Thank you for your interest in participating in this research as the school's principal on the Kids' Urban Dreaming Project. This research project explores how Adventure Play within the context of a child led community art practice can help to re-engage students with their community, break down social and cultural barriers, develop leadership skills and build community. Throughout the duration of the project students will work with Clare Walton on a series of child led participatory art programs where they will design and build their own structures, create short films, public performances and exhibitions. The research will also involve your students working as co-researchers in a format of their choosing i.e., photography, video and or interviews. We are interested in your view of how the program has worked for your students. Have you seen an improvement in your student's ability to engage with the school community, has the program helped to break down social and cultural barriers, develop leadership skills and build a stronger school community? Interviews will take place at times convenient to yourself and the researcher over the duration of the program to enable us to have your input and views. Interviews will be no longer than 20min. Your input will help us to evaluate the role child-led participatory community art programs can have in engaging students in their school's community, breaking down social and cultural barriers, developing leadership skills and building community.*

How did you find the students responded to the "Kids' Urban Dreaming Project"?

- What are your initial reactions to the idea of this project?
- What parts of the project do you feel worked best for your students?
- Where there any particular moments that stood out?
- Have you seen any change in how your students engage in school life?
- What part of the program do you feel most engaged the students?

- Have you seen an improvement in their confidence and ability to engage with others?
- Have you seen their ability to take on a leadership role improve?
- What do you believe has been the most positive outcome from this project for your students and the school
- Do you believe this program should become a permanent tool to help re-engage students and build community?

APPENDIX C - DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Department of
Education & Training

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone: 03 9637 2000
DX210083

2017_003588

Ms Clare Walton
Department of Architecture, Design and Planning
The University of Melbourne
GPO Box 4059
MELBOURNE 3010

Dear Ms Walton

Thank you for your application of 14 December 2017 in which you request permission to conduct research in Victorian government schools titled *Co-Designing with Children in the Public Sphere to Activate Children's Citizenship.*

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. Department approved research projects currently undergoing a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) review are required to provide the Department with evidence of the HREC approval once complete.

2. The research is conducted in accordance with the final documentation you provided to the Department of Education and Training.

3. Separate approval for the research needs to be sought from school principals. This is to be supported by the Department of Education and Training approved documentation and, if applicable, the letter of approval from a relevant and formally constituted Human Research Ethics Committee.

4. The project is commenced within 12 months of this approval letter and any extensions or variations to your study, including those requested by an ethics committee must be submitted to the Department of Education and Training for its consideration before you proceed.

5. As a matter of courtesy, you advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools or governing body of the early childhood settings that you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director or governing body.

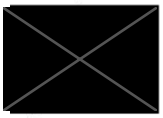
6. You acknowledge the support of the Department of Education Training in any publications arising from the research.

Your details will be dealt with in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. Should you have any queries or wish to gain access to your personal information held by this department please contact our Privacy Officer at the above address.

7. The Research Agreement conditions, which include the reporting requirements at the conclusion of your study, are upheld. A reminder will be sent for reports not submitted by the study's indicative completion date.

I wish you well with your research. Should you have further questions on this matter, please contact Youla Michaels, Project Support Officer, Insights and Evidence Branch, by telephone on (03) 7022 0306 or by email at michaels.youla.y@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Senior Manager
Insights and Evidence

31/01/2018

VICTORIA State Government

APPENDIX D – DOCUMENTATION OF EXHIBITION

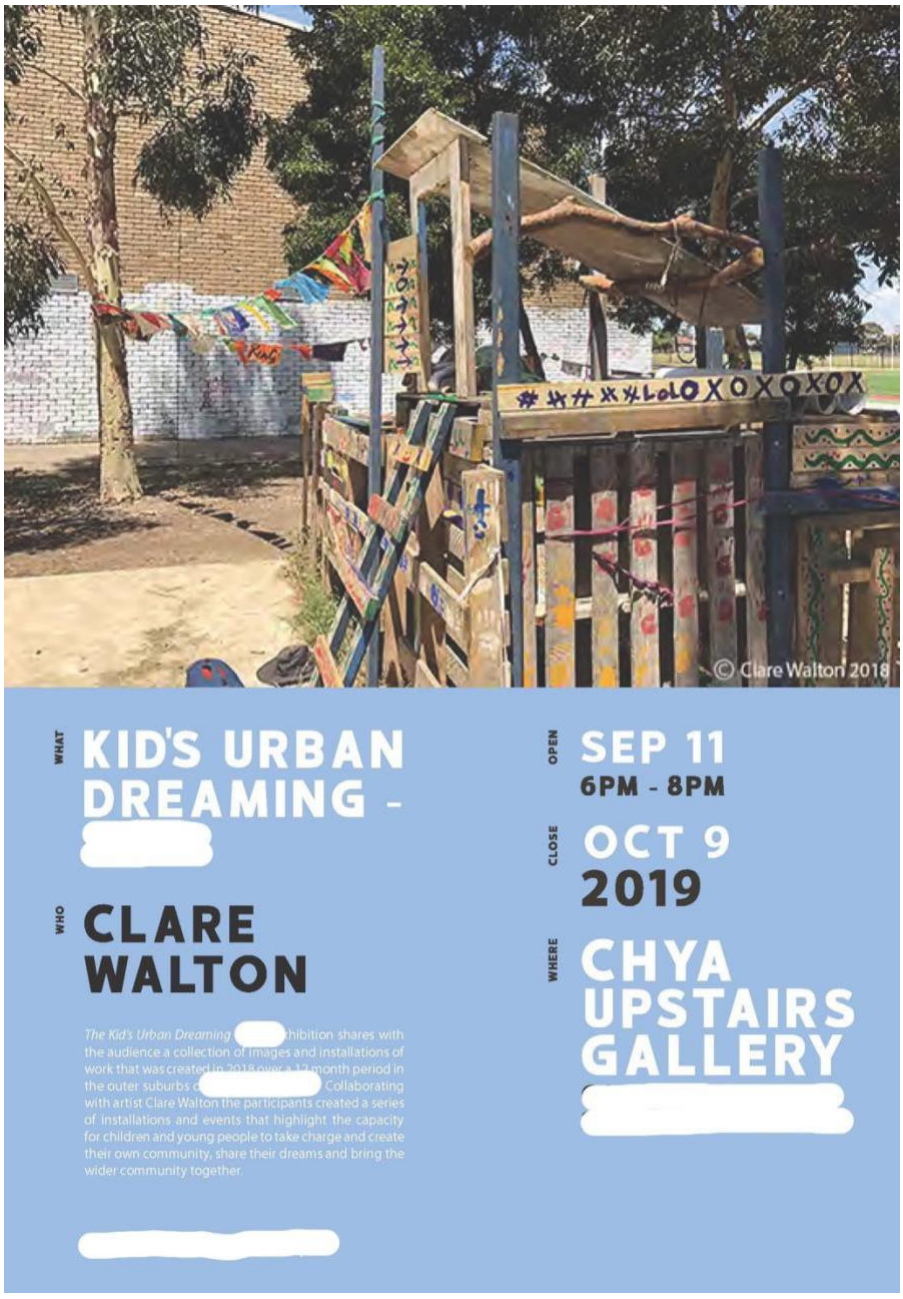


Image by: Clare Walton 2019

Image by Clare Walton 2019

Image by Clare Walton 2019

Image by Clare Walton 2019

Image by Clare Walton 2019

Image by Clare Walton 2019

APPENDIX E - OHS MANUAL FOR STUDENTS

KIDS' URBAN DREAMING ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND SITE

INDUCTION MANUEL

INTRODUCTION

Welcome aboard the Kids' Urban Dreaming Project. As our main artists, designers, architects and builders your role is incredibly important to the success of this project and as such your safety is also incredibly important.

Over several terms you will be working with your friends to create some amazing structures of your own design. You will be learning basic building and design skills and in turn you will be able to pass these skills on to other students and friends

This manual will outline the basic rules, the does and do-nots for when you are on site. We ask that you read it and if you have any questions at all please feel free to ask an adult facilitator or one of your teachers.

SITE RULES and GUIDELINES

The following is a list of rules and guidelines for everyone to follow including teachers and adult facilitators (artists).

- No running on site
- No racism or bullying
- No fighting
- Respect is to be shown towards everyone on site
- All tools are to be shared
- Sawing must only be done in designated areas
- Cordless power drills are to be used in pairs (i.e., one drilling one hold the timber) and drills to be returned to work table once finished.
- When you are finished, we ask that you leave your area tidy and return tools to the tool box along with your safety goggles and vest.
- No construction is to be higher than 2mtrs (we will measure this for you if you are concerned)
- No climbing on your structures unless they have been deemed safe to climb by a teacher or adult facilitator
- YOU MUST LISTEN CAREFULLY TO ALL SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING TOOL USE
- You must listen to all instructions given by your teachers and adult facilitators.
- You will only be allowed to use tools once you have passed the tool safety test and receive your builders permit

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

- You must wear sturdy fully enclosed shoes whilst on site, no thongs or sandals.
- We recommend you bring a sun hat and sunscreen. If it looks like it might rain bring a raincoat and rain hat.
- When on site you will be given a fluoro vest, safety glasses and gloves. The vest must be worn at all times on site.
- Gloves are to be worn if sawing timber or working with metal
- Safety glasses are worn at your discretion but we recommend you wear them when sawing or drilling.

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY

- If you are in charge of photography or filming on the day you must try to ensure only those who are wearing the yellow vest are in the photos or video.
- Ask anyone before taking their photo or filming them.
- Ensure you always hold the camera with two hands and are at a safe distance when filming or photographing someone using tools.

MOST IMPORTANTLY HAVE FUN AND BRING YOUR IMAGINATIONS ALONG