

International Journal of Education & the Arts

Special Issue: Art for the Sake of Care

Editors

Merel Visse, Section Editor
Drew University, U.S.A.

Elena Cologni, Guest Editor
Anglia Ruskin University, U.K.

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN: 1529-8094

Volume 25 Special Issue 1.25

October 7, 2024

Percipience, Embodiment, Contamination(s). The Artist as Wound. Practicing a Feminist Care Aesthetics

Elena Cologni
Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

Citation: Cologni, E. (2024). Percipience, embodiment, contamination(s). The artist as wound. Practicing a feminist care aesthetics. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 25(si1.25). <http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea25si1.25>

Abstract

In this account I will offer an introduction to the arising context of care aesthetics, with specific reference to relationality and to dialogic artistic research. This includes a parallel between the perceptual and phenomenological underpinning of my practice research, and how Merleau-Ponty's notion of *percipience* informs feminist ethics positions including Maurice Hamington's *embodied care*, and Ayla Daly's *affective reversibility*, in addition to Elena Pulcini's model of a *contaminated subject*. With this new proposition of a feminist care aesthetics, I contend that art is always in dialogue and a practice of care, as care is said to be "a basic aspect of human behaviour integral to our interrelationships." This is in the hope it might be a useful tool to turn daily "distractions, interruptions and fragmentations"¹ into opportunities for dialogue and change through art that starting from the individual, can have a transformational societal impact.

¹ Mother Art Collective, 1973, Artists' Statement held at Getty Library, Research Institute, 2017.M.60 (box 1, f.4)

Percipience, Embodiment, and Contamination

The context of feminist care aesthetics² is a not yet fully defined area arising from within care aesthetics³, which in turn developed at the intersection of care ethics and the arts. It is therefore useful to briefly frame these interconnected areas to locate my work therein.

Broadly, care ethics implies that there is moral significance in the fundamental elements of relationships and dependencies in human life and seeks to maintain relationships by contextualizing and promoting the well-being of care-givers and care-receivers in a network of social relations. This context resonates with critical art approaches as well. As I had noted before,

Care ethics allows us to step out of the dominant social, political and cultural system of understanding society and relations, and look at the peripheral (not the central) instead: the circular (not the linear) thinking, the quiet (not the loud) voices in society as strengths (not weaknesses). Care Ethics teaches and trains us, not to get tempted to compete by adopting the same strategies, which have damaged our society and environment, but try different avenues instead (Cognigni, 2019, How would you describe care ethics? section, para. 1).

Care ethics is understood to having originated from the works of psychologist Carol Gilligan and philosopher Nel Noddings in the mid-1980s and challenged male bias, by asserting the “voice of care” as a legitimate alternative to the “justice perspective” of liberal human rights theory. Annette Baier, Virginia Held, Eva Feder Kittay, Sara Ruddick, and Joan Tronto are some of the most influential among many subsequent contributors to the context. Care ethics has had an increasingly sustained attention also because of the many interpretations and connotations of the word care in the light of the Covid19 pandemic, which urged us to understand the importance of health, in a more caring, and socially just and equal society. However, it also brought to our attention how economic and gender inequalities play a major role in limiting access to good health and wellbeing. During that time, it became also apparent how art can be beneficial for health including mental health, leading to the success of, including social prescribing and the formation of creative health quality framework in the UK.⁴ This interdisciplinary area defined as care aesthetics, is referred to in different ways and,

² Very few readings can be found on the matter, including Michna (2023), Tokarczuk (2023), and Place (2022).

³ Saito (2022) inspired by Japanese art; Thompson (2022)’s work on Care Aesthetics and Sheryl-Ann Simpson, Camille Altschuld, Arturo Ortiz & Magdalena Aravena (2023).

⁴ <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/news/general-news/creative-health-quality-framework-launched>

we can now start to map it.

It is relevant to notice that both care and art manifest, and impact the world, through interrelating theories and practices. Tronto (1993), Ruddick (1989), Barnes (2012) and Held (2006) conceptualize care as a practice, as it is something we do that includes a certain attitude as well as “a form of practical rationality” (Tronto, 1993; Ruddick, 1989). In Artistic Research, similarly, as illustrated below, theory and practice interrelate and interchange continuously.

Care aesthetics is now being shaped through a growing number of positions (Thompson, 2022;⁵ Saito, 2022;⁶ Simpson, Altschuld, Ortiz, Aravena, 2023), and part of this debate was hosted in the public series of talks Art & Care.⁷ This aimed at defining a post-disciplinary area of knowledge between artistic research and care ethics, while introducing arising strands within it, including those recalling and reinstating the care ethics’ roots in feminist discourses. This is where I position my own work to define a relevant feminist care aesthetics position.

Although I have engaged with this context in my practice since 2016,⁸ issues of self-care were addressed both theoretically and through my practice before (Cologni, 2004), and I had experienced how art could be instrumental in healing processes in my teen age years. Revisiting my own practice in this text, will allow me to consider it in relation to the percipience quality of the body at the nexus of the theories drawn from care ethics and practices of feminist aesthetics to assert that ultimately art is form of care.

⁵ In chapter 1 of his book Thompson explores the history of aesthetics to claim that inter-human relations might be understood aesthetically through an embodied sensory experience and should be valued for their quality and craft while cooperating in each other's care.

⁶ Saito (2022) contends that ‘aesthetics requires an ethically grounded relationship with the world,’ p 24.

⁷ I curate with Merel Visse 2020/, www.art-and-care.com

⁸ Cologni (2016, 2018, 2021) seeds care periphery the body of at.



Figure 1: Mother's Tools, ©Elena Cognigni (2018, 1 in a composition of 4: wood, steel, custom-made fabric labels, printing tools from the artist's mother's embroidery kit, 20cmx20cm each). In the Care: from Periphery to Centre exhibition, Homerton College, University of Cambridge.

Embodied Care by Maurice Hamington (2004) is the first work to argue for the body's centrality to care ethics, and by analysing our corporeality at the phenomenological level.⁹ In it Hamington states that 'The capacity to care is an aspect of embodiment' [...] The bodies that human beings inhabit give everyone the possibility of care committed to the flourishing and growth of individuals and based on our interconnectedness and interdependence. The conditions are also fundamental in all art, but particularly in that which is relational, socially engaged, and dialogic (Kester, 2006). I have referred to the relational qualities of persons (Held, 2006) in my practice before, and I will here further discuss how through my artistic research the aesthetic experience based on the interchange between art/artist-viewer/participant previously identified in the fruition process (Cogniti, 2004) is a practice of care.

I had discussed before how the *caring with* art approach (Cogniti, 2020a) grounding dialogic sculptural practice (as research as art), is understood as a reciprocal way of caring in the everyday, based on interdependence (Cogniti, 2020b; Tronto, 2013), situatedness and vulnerability (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1994; Kittay, 2019; Held, 2006; Pulcini, 2013).

How might this direction contribute to practicing a feminist care aesthetics?

Merleau-Ponty's notions of percipience and of the body-subject, as illustrated below, provide the resources for an epistemology "that animates the relationality found in care ethics through habits of the body" (Hamington, 2004, p.46) and I also see this crucial for a feminist art practice.

More specifically, the relational aspect of the subject leading to the embodiment of care is here introduced through the work of Maurice Hamington (2004),¹⁰ while considering Anya Daly (2019)'s reading of MP's non dualistic ontology, and reversibility informing an *Ethics of Vulnerability*. This is also relevant to Elena Pulcini (2022)'s proposition to overcome the modernist sovereign subject through a *contaminated subject* as a parallel for dialogic dynamics in art.

⁹ The reciprocal, relational, and responsive aspects of care require the caregiver to listen. Such listening may be broadly defined as attending to verbal and nonverbal communication in interpersonal relations as well as listening to indirect forms of communication, such as the news media, to "hear" the plights of distant others. Listening is a habit of engaging and activating care. For Addams, caring habits such as active listening are not just positive options but indeed part of our moral responsibility to experience one another richly so as to produce the internal resources necessary to act on one another's behalf."

¹⁰ In the seminal book *Embodied Care: Jane Addams, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Feminist Ethics*, he gives a reading of Merleau-Ponty (MP)'s phenomenology which informs his definition of an embodied care, including a Caring Knowledge acquired through Caring Habits.

Hamington and Daly (2019) both articulated the need for a grounding for *Feminist Ethics* below the concrete interpersonal. Hamington does so through *Care Ethics* and Merleau-Ponty's account of embodiment, whereas Daly's account directly addresses the non-dualist ontology in reversibility; perceptual reversibility, intersubjective reversibility of bodies and language and finally *affective reversibility* which underwrites our vulnerability and empathic responsiveness to others.¹¹

Within the context of care ethics, Hamington recognizes in MP's work the important founding role of the body for *Care Ethics*, and more widely as significant philosophical groundwork for an ethics that honours key feminists' commitments, such as: embodiment, situatedness, diversity and the intrinsic sociality of subjectivity. He writes:

“Care denotes an approach to personal and social morality that shifts ethical considerations to context, relationships, and affective knowledge in a manner that can be fully understood only if care's embodied dimension is recognized” (2004, p. 3).

Hamington states that “Embodied” and “affective” knowledge, aim at demonstrating how care is a complex intertwining of caring habits as embodied practices of interaction, which he discusses by referring to three central elements of MP's analysis—perception, the figure-ground phenomenon, and the flesh.

Through care, thus connectedness is brought to life through the interaction described by caring habits, caring knowledge, and caring imagination. Caring knowledge is defined by Hamington (2004) as “the embodied understandings instantiated through habits” (p.12) and caring imagination as the “extrapolations from embodied knowledge to understand situations beyond our immediate experience and to imagine caring courses of action” (p.12).

Hamington states that care is a basic aspect of human behaviour integral to our interrelationships “facilitated by our corporeal existence” and is linked to the habits our bodies

¹¹ Shannon Sullivan however contends that Merleau-Ponty's claim in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) that the anonymous body guarantees an intersubjective world is problematic because it omits the particularities of bodies. According to Sullivan this omission produces an account of “dialogue” with another in which I solipsistically hear only myself and dominate others with my intentionality. Shannon Sullivan (1997) develops an alternative to projective intentionality called “hypothetical construction,” in which meaning is socially constructed through an appreciation of the differences of others. However, according to Sullivan, thinking about the body as being in transaction with its social, political, cultural, and physical surroundings is not a new idea in Shannon Sullivan's 2001 publication.

develop (2004, p. 13). Furthermore, communities, society, and its institutions are systems of relationships that can exhibit varying degrees of care (2004, p. 25), which from the individual is shifted to the context and relationships in society.

Hamington (2004) identifies “a phenomenology of corporeal care” (p. 37) to support and develop his notion of embodied care, how the body can ground care,¹² through MP’s corporeal-centered epistemology to reveal the embodied, habitual basis of care. This is done by identifying how care flows from the knowledge manifested in the body, beyond the body-mind divide and as a ‘body-subject.’ Embodied care thus is based on MP’s centrality of the body’s role in creating, maintaining, and expressing knowledge through habits, and in relation to others, at the basis of care and in this corporeal knowledge starting from our senses. “An active body capable of gestures, of expression, and finally of language, it turns back on the world to signify it”¹³ (Hamington, 2004, p. 45). A body participating in creating meaning through an affective dimension to knowledge that requires both the mind and the body, and that is “the unarticulated, felt dimension—makes caring possible.” (Hamington, 2024, p. 45), which manifests through habits contributing to the possibility of care.

Hamington discusses Merleau-Ponty’s notions of perception, figure-ground phenomena, and the flesh to illuminate the complexity of the body’s workings and the conditions that make caring habits possible. For Merleau-Ponty embodied knowledge begins with the centrality of perception and the “silent conversation” our body has with the world around it, breaking down the distinction between the perceiver and the perceived, and that “human perception is hopelessly interconnected” (Hamington, 2004, p. 47).

A number of feminist philosophers find Merleau-Ponty’s insights useful, but some are also wary of the “apparently neutral sexuality of his claims.” (Grosz, 2001, p. 14). Shannon Sullivan (2001) views Merleau-Ponty as characterizing a universal, neutral body that eradicates important considerations of difference. Other feminist philosophers, such as Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, and Iris Young, and Daly, as below, advocate a reinterpretation of MP to appropriate his insights.

Hamington, thus states that MP posits a theory of perception, inherently sensitive to interconnectedness with body and the world, and which creates a gestalt that includes explicitly articulated knowledge as well as a tacit corporeal understanding. Our bodies’

¹² In this chapter Hamington looks at how (1) Knowledge is necessary but not sufficient for caring. (2) What “counts” as knowledge should include what the body knows and exhibits through habits. (3) Merleau-Ponty’s corporeal-centered epistemology can be extrapolated to reveal the embodied, habitual basis of care.

¹³ MP in Hamington (2004), p 27.

participation in providing the “other knowledge” that remains unarticulated and may be unnoticed but exist, nonetheless, and allows caring habits. Merleau-Ponty’s body’s percipience quality is a foundational habit of care.

The centrality of the body in providing this other knowledge, including the unarticulated, felt dimension seems to me to be so inherently also about processes of artmaking in the studio and within dialogic art practices, and are at the core of all aesthetics experiences (Cologni, 2022; Seamon, 1973) including perceptual ones.

Referring to gestalt theories, MP describes perception as rooted in a figure-ground structure, within which to perceive an object is to discriminate it from all the perceptible objects presented at a given time. So, Hamington explains that, similarly, when relating to another person, the body participates in the process by placing itself in either the foreground or the background, so that our senses focus on the other, and we become part of the background. The other thus is the foreground, or source of perceptual focus, a transition that makes care possible, at times through non-verbal communication.

Another resource for caring habits found in Merleau-Ponty’s work is the notion of the flesh, which overcomes the boundaries of individualistic epistemology in the Western philosophical tradition (Cologni, 2004) through the notion of reversibility. According to Merleau-Ponty, Hamington states, this reversibility creates reciprocity, or “weaving relations between bodies.” (2004, p. 52), notion which he uses as a basis for corporeal understanding of care.

Daly also examines Merleau-Ponty’s analyses of embodied *percipience*, to argue how this offers a powerful western dominant critique of *the view from nowhere*, a totalizing God’s-eye-view with pretensions to objectivity. Daly suggests that, by revealing the normative structure of perceptual *gestalts* in the intersubjective domain, MP establishes *the view from everywhere*. Normativity, through the perceptual gestalt, is returned to the perceiving embodied subject. In line with Hamington, she contends that this subject is defined by inherent intersubjectivity, and is vulnerable to others, which is why has the capacity for care.

Moreover, Daly (2019) draws a parallel between MP and Judith Butler (1989, 1993) to suggest that MP’s work provides important philosophical resources not just for philosophy in general but most particularly for feminist ethics. Discussing *affective reversibility* at the heart of subjectivity galvanising the ethical subject for action she also states that “Empathy is a direct, irreducible intentionality separable in thought from the other primary intentional modes of perception, memory and imagination, but co-arising with these” (Butler, 1993, p. 20).

Furthermore, she contends that the movement at the core of subjectivity initially generated by

shifting attention between the “I” and “we” perspectives, opens up the intersubjective domain. So, she states that “we are not only born into sociality, but our sociality goes to the roots of our being as Edmund Husserl, Max Scheler and Merleau-Ponty have all claimed” (Daly, 2019, p. 20). For Daly thus an affective reversibility internal to the subject underwrites our capacities for care, and also explains why vulnerability can be a motivating ethical force.



Figure 2. Lo Scarto (touch). Elena Cologni (2015, porcelain, series of 30, traces of dialogues, dimension variable).

Feminist care ethicist Elena Pulcini (2013a)¹⁴ also draws from Judith Butler (2005)’s notion of vulnerability to define the concept of ‘contaminated subject.’ This, in addition to Hamington’s and Daly’s debate, is particularly useful to inform the positions of artist and participants involved in dialogic and relational research and as interrelated positions of care.

Pulcini (2022) placed her own research within: 1) the wider feminist project to include the work of Nussbaum (2001), Kittay (2019), as well as Italian thought of difference, the theories of care, the opacity of the self (Butler, 2005; Botti, 2009), and hybridization with multiple forms of otherness (Haraway, 1991, 1985) and Braidotti (2019) a radical operation of

¹⁴ my translation, where cited thereafter.

rediscovery and reconstruction of the self that highlights ‘aspects repressed or devalued by rationalist and patriarchal culture such as vulnerability and dependence.’

She proposed that it is necessary to think of a *subject in relation*, a concept that is transversal to the various feminisms, ‘a subject that [...] recognizes in the other a constitutive dimension of the self’ (Pulcini, 2022, p. 41). Pulcini mentions two significant examples adopting this position, which started in 1970s:¹⁵ the care ethics discourse and ecofeminism (Cima, Marconin, 2017; Cologni, 2020a).

Pulcini refers to the rediscovery of the value of care in the second phase of feminism, starting with Carol Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* (1982), in which the need emerges to move from the pure denunciation of oppression and the conflicting demand for difference to the desire to find new words to *express difference* and to fill it with new content, to construct another identity (Pulcini, 2022, p.41) a different ethic, when feminism established a new ethical paradigm based on care, as we know, inspired by the values of interconnection and affectivity, interdependence, and vulnerability (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1994; Kittay, 2019; Held, 2006; Pulcini, 2013a).

But Pulcini also suggests that this is possible, on the sole condition that the notion of care itself is *rehabilitated* from the sacrificial altruism that *by its very nature* characterizes women and confines care to the private sphere.¹⁶ By separating it from this stereotype, care enters the context of the public sphere, from which it has always been excluded, and acts in its capacity to become a new and revolutionary *form of life* (Laugier, 2009b or Jaeggi, 2018 in Pulcini, 2022).

To do so, Pulcini started critiquing the modern subject understood as a *sovereign subject*, which is an autonomous entity, self-sufficient, logocentric, and closed, and based on the exclusion of what is considered as “other.” This implies a criticism of the modern paradigm where the other, loses the negative connotation it had and becomes a constitutive element of the subject, opening up to new potential.

By sharing this kind of perspective, Pulcini developed an idea that she defines of the *fecondita’ del negativo* (fertility of the negative) stating that through the reintegration of their

¹⁵ the feminism of difference, from Irigaray to Muraro to Cavarero

¹⁶ This I have discussed in relation to Mother Art Collective’s practice in Mother art Collective and Cologni (2024), as well as in a Cologni E., 2023 ‘Il ruolo della cura sulla soglia tra pubblico e privato,’ workshop in the conference Lievito Madre which informed the manifesto available here <https://www.mondo-doula.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Manifesto-Mondo-Doula-190224.pdf> [accessed on 10/04/2024]

grey areas, the Self apparently loses power, autonomy, certainties, to acquire the ability to confront *alterita'* (otherness), and to rethink it outside the assumption of the concept of sovereignty and the potential of domination.

Therefore, starting from this critical approach, Pulcini proposes the notion of the *soggetto contaminato* (*contaminated subject*), inspired by the reflection of Georges Bataille (1978). Pulcini thus defines the notion of “blessure” (ferita, wound), the image of a subject crossed by a cut, by a wound, permanent and constitutive, which exposes them to contagion with otherness, contesting every illusion of separateness or self-sufficiency of the Self.

Pulcini specifies that talking about contamination does not mean talking about one subject *in relation* to another,¹⁷ or as mutual interaction between two autonomous and sovereign subjects, but as that which constantly questions *identity*. Contamination means “hosting” the other within the Self and therefore being capable of recognizing the other, accepting otherness, and difference, as a constitutive part of the Self.¹⁸ Ultimately “The contaminated subject is therefore the one [...] who allows themselves to be destabilized by the other and by the very relationship; so that [...] they expose themselves to the other whose traces they retain within themselves” (Pulcini, 2013a, p. 25).

This means that the relationship is not configured as a symmetrical relationship between two pre-constituted subjects, but rather as an original intrusion from the part of the other that inaugurates the subject at the very moment in which they expropriate their identity, causing its decentralization, *the wound*: “the primacy, that is, the precedence and imprint of the Other, is something original and constitutive and there is no formation of the self outside of this intrusion originally passive and suffered [...]” (Butler, *Critica della violenza etica*, cit., p. 131. Cited in Pulcini 2022, p.25).

In addition to contrasting the idea of relationality with that of autonomy or sovereignty, there is an effect of destabilization, disorientation, dispossession, that the relationship and dependence on the other produce in the subject, consigning them to a condition of *vulnerability*. Pulcini (2013a) understands this in terms of *contamination*. Through the

¹⁷ A large part of the thought feminist proposed the idea of a subject in relation to oppose it to the subject modern Western, self-centered and “logocentric.”

¹⁸ Pulcini (2013a) problematizes Italian feminism emphasising an idea of difference, understood primarily as a sexual difference, in essentialist terms and pointing to the dualism of Western thought. She proposes an idea of difference ‘that contests every presumption of self-sufficiency from part of the subject’ (XXX) and that prevents the subject from closing themselves in their own identity. Nel Noddings describes “engrossment” as an intense preoccupation with the other that comes with caring: “I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality.”

experience of loss and failure of the sovereign subject, the ‘narcissistic wound’ thus is produced, which allows “the awakening, in the Self, of the awareness of one's own vulnerability and one's constitutive dependence” (Pulcini, 2013a, p. 28). Vulnerability is therefore an “extraordinary resource” that the Self must grasp and enhance to recover its nature and that of one's own relational sense of being in the world.

Relationality and Artistic Research

Philosopher Anya Daly (2018) discusses relationality through the aesthetic dimension of Merleau-Ponty's interrogations of primordial percipience and his relational ontology and refers to our living in a shared world, an “interworld wherein self, other, and world are revealed as being ontologically interdependent” (Daly, 2018, p. 19). This resonates with the approach of my dialogic artistic research I am here discussing, as informed by lived experience within feminist aesthetics.¹⁹



Figure 3. *Untitled (Prop)*, dialogic and nomadic sculpture being activated by Elena Cologni with a participant, 2016-2018 (plywood and fabric, 100 x 100 x 2 cm closed / variable up to 250 × 200 cm when open) in *Seeds of Attachment* (2016-18).

In different projects the relational/dialogic approaches, such as the *caring with* (2020), are specific to each. All of those have evolved from a sustained engagement with perceptual dynamics since the mid-90s' (Cologni, 2010), and have also been underpinned by aspects of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, and feminist aesthetics (Cologni, 2004; Jones 1998). These

¹⁹ More specifically relevant here are my projects informed by lived experience and feminist aesthetics, including: ‘turning everything....’ (2006), ‘O Verruzze’ (2013), *Seeds of Attachment* (2016/18), ‘Care: from Periphery to Centre’ (2018), ‘Caring Practices. On Finding the Cur(v)e’ (2021), *The Body of/at Work* (2021). Details of projects can be found at www.elenacologni.com [accessed on 01/08/2024]

ground my practice where intersubjectivity is embodied in situated, performative and participatory approaches I initially adopted to critique western ocular centrism (Jay, 1993) and the modern subject. This was explored by engaging with the notion of self (including the care of the self), in various ways including with pragmatist George Herbert Mead's position (1934) as one's existence in relation to the other (Cogniti, 1999, 2000).²⁰

#



Figure 4. *Diagrammi* (1999). Elena Cologni. Participatory action, live broadcast, Oreste, Venice Biennale, Director Harald Szeemann.

Mead's philosophy of the self has also played a prominent role in care ethics for both Maurice Hamington and Heather Keith. Keith (1999) said of Mead's concept: "the self is wholly integrated into an ecology of both physical and social relationships facilitates a conception of selfhood valuable to the sort of personal and moral liberation called for by feminism" (p. 330).

²⁰ The performance *Diagrammi* was presented part of the Oreste collective at the Venice Biennale, 1999, Curator Harald Szeeman.

My work developed to adopting participatory approaches in the form of experiential exercises, such as *Spa(e)cious* (2012-13) based on William James's notion of specious time, which was challenged through highlighting how others would interfere and are integral with one's own embodied and subjective experience of time in relation to space.²¹ Most of my projects are based on heightening one's own awareness of one's own position within their surroundings, including non-humans, in everyday experiences. Within these, artists and participants are all involved in the aesthetics experience.



Figure 5. *Spa(e)cious*, (2012/13), Elena Cologni, Wysing Art Centre, UK).

These approaches are part of the wider context of situated and socially engaged in art practice research, leading to a co-creation of knowledge (in contrast with individualistic dominant art) (Horvath and Carpenter, 2020), which is meaningful to the locations where the research takes place and is specific to the communities involved. This artistic research mostly refers to a context supporting a collapse of boundaries between knowledges, and of separation between theory and practice, and challenging binaries more widely.

Much has been written on methodologies for practice research and also relational and participatory art practice (Cologni, 2000; Bourriaud, 2002; Reckitt, 2013; Cologni, 2016; Cologni, 2020a;²² Bishop, 2011, 2023). Academic artistic research is here referred to as a

²¹ Among other presentations: Wysing Art Centre in 2013, and also selected by philosopher of science Giulio Giorello for Bergamo Scienza festival 2013.

²² The definition of such an approach was a natural progression driven by an interest in the notion of interdependence within my ongoing dialogic art aiming at “tracing a wider *geography of difference through caring*.” (Cologni 2020). This was done, in the project *Seeds of Attachment* (2016/19) through an ecofeminist

genre (Bishop, 2023), part of the wider context of *artistic research*, and it is relevant now to discuss how it proposes to overcome the problematic binary theory-practice of traditional cultural approaches.

Artistic research in academia has been possible because the academic and the professional contexts have increasingly influenced each other (Sullivan, 2008; Cognigni, 2024²³), and independent (non-institutionalized) artistic research and culture have been crucial in advancing the debate, in particular when referring to site-specific or socially engaged practices, which are defined by and with the community or place they belong with (Cognigni, 2015).

For more than two decades creative researchers have investigated the nature of ‘making’ and ‘tacit forms of knowledge’ embedded in artifacts, and have impacted academia, as creative thinking has become more and more central in cross disciplinary and collaborative ways of working in research and practice²⁴ (Michelkevičius, 2018). Conversely, creative research practice projects are often underpinned or informed by theories coming from other disciplines and contexts. These interconnections, while disrupting set narratives and methods, often allow for new and unexpected results, and contribute to open territories of knowledge, including post-disciplinary contexts such as the care aesthetics one.

Academic art practice research is now being historicized and contributes to the wider art context, but it is believed that “can only become permanently established by emancipating itself from university research” (Henke et al., 2020, p. 5). Clare Bishops (2023) also contends: “Today, research-based art is nothing novel; its presence is almost mandatory in any serious exhibition” (para. 3). She asks us to think about art practice research as a genre, and states that academic artistic research is in fact part of a wider context for artistic research. The work of many artists whether within academia or in the art world is part of this wider context that sees structures of knowledge hierarchies collapse, allowing the visual artist’s voice to become a form of social critique.²⁵ Within this context, we witnessed the rising of participatory

lens (Buckingham 2020) and by referring to how a habitual experience of place (Seamon 1973) in relation to others (Degnen 2015) – the ‘intraplace’ – impacts identity.

²³ Cognigni, E. (2024) Creative Practice (and/as) Research: Art as Research as Art, talk, Faculty of Arts Humanities Education and Social Sciences practice Research Series, Anglia Ruskin University, 28 Feb 2024.
Cognigni, E. (2015) Artistic Research: Practice and Research redefining each other, Research Methodologies talks series, Art Creativity Education and Culture Mphil Course, University of Cambridge

²⁴ The book asks: How can we practice artistic research not only as artists but also as curators and researchers in the social sciences and humanities?

²⁵ This has also been the case for example of *Institutional Critique* (Meyer, 1993, p. 239-256, artists like Hans Haacke, Andrea Fraser, Marion von Osten, Ursula Biemann, and Cognigni 1999)

practices, through the milestone work of curator Nicholas Bourriaud's book *Relational Aesthetics* (1998). In it these approaches were defined as: "A set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space" (Bourriaud, 1998, p. 113). Artists were facilitators rather than makers and art was information exchanged between the artist and the viewers. Crucially, 'the artist, in this sense, gives audiences access to power and the means to change the world.'²⁶ However, Bourriaud is being critiqued by feminists (Reckitt, 2013) who contend that women artists who had adopted these very strategies, were excluded. Furthermore, an ever-growing number of artist and collectives engaging with care are implicitly contributing to this very critique. The surfacing of a wealth of participatory projects in recent years, has opened up a number of related debates, including in art history, and in ethics, and this has shifted the attention from galleries to 'real' places with 'real' people addressing everyday issues (Kwon, 2002, p. 107).

The flourishing of academic artistic research in the UK were politically motivated to generate the success of the 90s, with Ph.D.s in studio art being offered mainly in the UK, and later also in Europe, Canada, the US, and Brazil (Elkins, 2009). There are many reasons why there has been resistance towards it though, and it took longer in some countries for it to be accepted. Perhaps it is because it challenged the dichotomy theory-practice, typical of the modernist structure of knowledge in traditional education. However, creative researchers found source of inspiration in various contexts of methodologies including from the pragmatists, interested in the intersection of theory and practice, philosophy and experience (including women's experience).²⁷

When considering the origin of the word *practice*, *praxis*, I am interested in its social and political aspects. *Praxis* in fact comes from the Greek *phronesis*, which is a capacity to respond to the particularities of experience, and to evolving relationships with others, which for Aristotle enabled the human being to live well within the polis. (Pakes, 2004). *Phronesis* is

²⁶ <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/r/relational-aesthetics>, accessed on 12 April 2024,.

²⁷ such as John Dewey, William James, and Jane Addams, (William James, Charles Sanders Peirce, George Herbert Mead, George Santayana, and John Dewey) were interested in the intersection of theory and practice, bringing philosophical thinking into relationship with the social and political environment. These are also often referred to by colleagues and students in the context of art practice research, also because for these thinkers, philosophizing was an active process which could impact change in social realities, and in turn the use of experience (including women experience) could also modify the philosophies themselves. Feminist pragmatism can be placed among activist-orientated philosophies. These efforts are consistent with feminist methodology; they utilize personal experiences as well as theoretical work that focuses on embodied living in a social organism to address contemporary feminist social and political concerns. Pragmatism and feminism overlap in significant ways, see for example Seigfried (2001) *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey*, and Tarver and Sullivan (2015) *Feminist Interpretations of William James*.

thus associated for Aristotle with the domain of praxis (social action) rather than poesis (making), however these are two faces of the same coin in dialogic art.

This definition helps to contextualise the dynamics implied in the relation between theory and practice, not as an antithetic binary opposition, but as two different forms of practice interrelated through a system of interactions and transferences. Deleuze perceives the relationship between philosophy and art for example as “a system of relays within a larger sphere, within a multiplicity of parts that are both theoretical and practical.”²⁸ In this context philosophy serves a knowledge-based artistic practice and, conversely, art might affect theoretical practice (Busch, 2009). Art theory and practice mutually participate in each other’s - the ancient Greek’s roots of *theoria* (contemplation-witness) and *theoros* (participant), may indicate theory as a mode of participation in practice (Davey, 2006). Art theory and practice can also be considered as relating differently to a shared subject matter, and our experience and engagement with art is dialogical and open ended as conversations have no end everything that can be said about an artwork and its subject matter is incomplete (Davey, 2006), and thus the created meaning is ever shifting (Cogniti, 2009).

These interconnections become at times embedded within *tacit knowledge* that is situated and embodied in specific artworks and artistic processes (Borgdorff, 2005), and speaks to Hamington notions of *embodied and affective knowledge*, to generate questions rather than answering them. Whether it is considered as academic or not, artistic research produces a breadth of original work and rigorous research which has had quite an impact across academia, breaking through set methodologies, and becoming instrumental for engagement and impact.

In my work, there is a continuous shift between intuitive making, co-production, reflective practice, and contextualisation. These, all feed into one another with no set order. The meaning sits in between these ‘locations’ and ‘territories’ and is not fixed (Cogniti, 2009).

The *caring with* approach is within the context of *Art Practice as Research as Art* (Cogniti, 2020a) and is Art, as a mode of practice within which knowledge is socially produced,

²⁸ <https://libcom.org/article/intellectuals-and-power-conversation-between-michel-foucault-and-gilles-deleuze> and reported in: Bouchard, D. (1980). *‘Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews by Michel Foucault’* (Cornell Paperbacks).

embodied, affective (Hamington 2004), situated (Haraway, 1988; Sutherland & Acord, 2007)²⁹ and tacit.³⁰

Caring Relationships and the Aesthetics Experience: A Feminist Care Aesthetics

Pulcini's concept of 'contaminated subject,' with Hamington's and Daly's debate in relation to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology around the percipient quality of the body, and the relational ontology, are particularly useful to inform the positions of artist and participants involved in dialogic and relational research projects as positions of care, and art more widely as a caring practice.

Philosopher Anya Daly (2018) discusses the aesthetic dimension of Merleau-Ponty's interrogations of primordial percipience in his relational ontology.³¹ Percipience is the quality of having sensitive insight or understanding, it also means perceptiveness. Merleau-Ponty's body's percipience quality is a foundational habit of care (Hamington, 2004). These habits are activated by and embedded in life and dialogic art practices and can be understood to also be at the core of the aesthetic experience (Cognigni, 2022; Seamon, 1973) understood as experience of care. Percipience has the same etymological root as perception – the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses – which from Latin "*perceptiōn-*, *perceptiō* indicates the "action of receiving, collecting, action of taking possession, apprehension with the mind or senses" (Oxford Dictionary). So, I see a direct correlation between art that is based on visual perceptual dynamics – and the theories underpinning them – and participatory practices involving the whole body, most of the time associated with dialogic practices. Dialogic art practices thus include art that is responsive to,

²⁹ Situated knowledge in relation to art has been discussed as "understanding knowledge as action best frames the future of public engagement with creative practice, social structures and cultural forms." (Sutherland and Acord, 2007) Within feminist standpoint theory (Hartsock, 1983), situated knowledge seeks to develop a particular feminist epistemology, that values the experiences of women and minorities as a source for knowledge. (McCann and Kim, 2003)

³⁰ Furthermore, feminist standpoint theorists including Dorothy Smith, Patricia Hill Collins, Nancy Hartsock, and Sandra Harding make three principal claims that: knowledge is socially situated; marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that makes it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for the non-marginalized

³¹ Daly refers especially to Merleau-Ponty's second essay "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence" in which his emerging thoughts, were to become the ontology articulated in "Eye and Mind" (1961) and the posthumously published work, "The Visible and the Invisible" (1968). According to Daly, in these 'the other' becomes especially conspicuous, and the first cultural object is, according to Merleau-Ponty, the body of the other. Others are also given through artefacts, language, and the expressive arts. These traces of the Other testify to our living in a shared world, an "interworld wherein self, other, and world are revealed as being ontologically interdependent."

and developed with others (also nonhumans), knowlegdes (Kester, 2006), the environment, and objects within it (Cogni, 2016) as the *caring with* approach (Cogni, 2020a).

The latter has evolved from work developed since around 1994, informed preoccupations with the position of the other in front of, or as part of the work, in the attempt to overcome the duality of artist/artwork – spectator through the perceptual dimension, later intersecting with a more prominent lived experience element. This was underpinned by interest in gestalt psychology (Kanizsa, 1978; Vicario, 2015), kinaesthesia and proprioception (Merlau-Ponty, 1962), also found in the incredible work of artists such as Gianni Colombo and Grazia Varisco (one of my professors at Breara Academy in Milan).



Figure 6. 416_SR1938. © Elena Cogni (concept 2021, installation 2023. 500 x 375 cm on two sides, steel and galvanic brass plating treatment, installation detail).

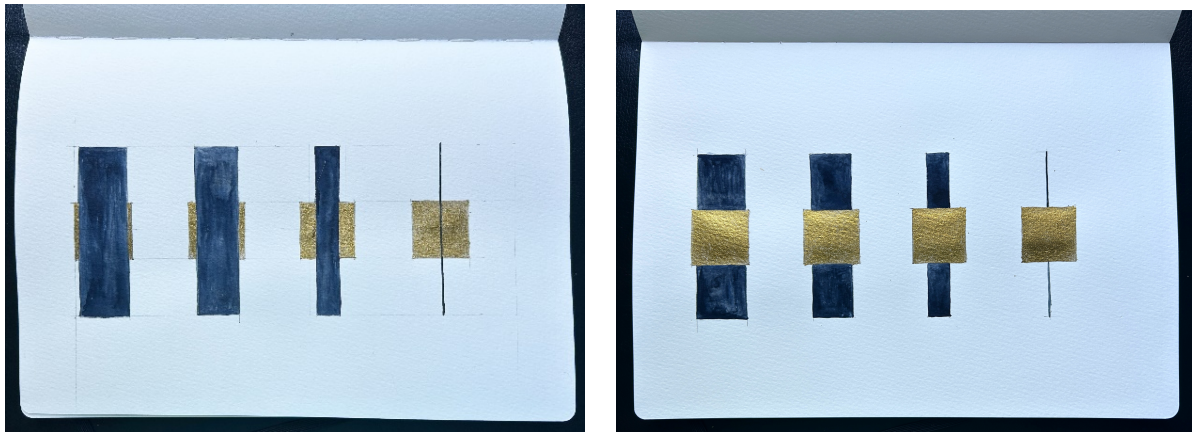


Figure 4., 5. 416_SR1938 drawing series ©Elena Cologni (2022), Studies of perceptual dynamics figure-ground (inspired by Gaetano Kanizsa 1953) and temporality (inspired by Bruno Vicario, 2015), graphite + Indian ink on Moleskine Arte, 21x28 cm.

In particular, according to Merleau-Ponty (1962), the translation process between visual and proprioceptive senses is accomplished in the body first, and only then is “transferable” to the relations with others. He posits the existence of what he called a *schéma corporel*, a body schema (Hale, 2019),³² which operates below the level of conscious awareness, even though it operates in response to given spatial situations.

The “body schema” refers to a persistent and enduring sense of the body’s ability to act in a particular situation, and the means by which particular habits can be acquired. The body schema is continuously renewed to adapt to specific spatial and social situations (Hale, 2019), Hamington would call habits. These capacities can be explicitly informed by visual imagery.³³ At the other extreme lie the unconscious workings of bodily proprioception, giving us at each moment an inner “sense of our bodily posture, as well as the relation of one body part to another” (Hale, 2019, p. 296) and the surrounding environment. The body schema is precisely that which allows us to cope with the worldly situations in which we find ourselves. A

³² Hamington 2004 refers to as well, but translated as body-subject, as above)

³³ I referred to how Merleau-Ponty also called attention to the significance Jacques Lacan’ “mirror stage” in child development (PrP, 135–36), suggesting that this initial recognition of the mirror image marks a pivotal moment in the integration of an independent sense of self, as well as a definitive disaggregation between self and world (Cologni 2004).

relational space of “motor cognition.” where cognition is embodied in action, and the motor system participates in mental processing, including those involved in social interaction.³⁴

For Merleau-Ponty, embodied knowledge thus begins with the centrality of perception and the “silent conversation” our body has with the world around it, I see as most appropriate in dialogic art. Moreover, contrary to the definition of perception that refers to the traditional split between the known and the knower, MP offers a more connected view that breaks down the distinction between the perceiver and the perceived, Hamington (2004) defines as “hopelessly interconnected” (p.47).³⁵

Visual perceptual dynamics generally mostly seen in abstract art, and in my practice, most recently in the memorial 416_SR1938 (Cogniti, 2023,2024), I contend is also the root of dialogic art. One in which all subjects involved, including the viewer, are inherently in dialogue with, because they are part of an interconnected world. The caring dynamics described by Hamington based on MP are appropriate to recall here. Referring to gestalt theories, Merleau-Ponty describes perception as rooted in a figure-ground structure, within which to perceive an object is to discriminate it from all the perceptible objects, to select it. So, if a similar process takes place when relating to another person, then the other is either the foreground, or source of perceptual focus. This transition makes care possible, at times through non-verbal communication. Similarly, the ways in which we communicate can also be silent, based on how our body moves. For example, when crossing paths with someone on the same pavement, we do not need to discuss how to give way with this person, we enact an understanding of how the other might behave based on our experience, which constitutes our embodied knowledge of how people may behave in this context—habits. An exchange takes place with them, at a very basic level we take their spatial position into account and respond, we communicate via our bodies.

A similar dynamics is at the basis of dialogic art practice, where we are in continuous dialogue with others and our environment, within which through caring imagination we can “imagine caring courses of action” (Hamington, 2004) and become ready to operate creatively, *care with* and contribute “to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we

³⁴ Something already addressed by Willima James, but central to Sperry, R.W. (1952). "Neurology and the mind-brain problem." *American Scientist*. 40 (78): 291–312. PMID 18592054

³⁵ Something that a number of feminist philosophers contested as they find Merleau-Ponty’s insights useful, they are also wary of the “apparently neutral sexuality of his claims.” (Elizabeth Grosz, p 14) Shannon Sullivan (2001). Other feminist philosophers, such as Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, and Iris Young, advocate a reinterpretation of Merleau-Ponty to appropriate his insights. Even if this has to be considered, I found his notion of intertwining fundamental to ground the development of my participatory practice.

can live in it as well as possible” (Fisher & Tronto, 1990, p. 40). Within dialogic art an affective dimension of knowledge is produced through the process of communication, collaboration and co-production. And it is this “unarticulated, felt dimension of knowledge which makes caring possible” (Hamington, 2024, p. 27).

Perceptual dynamics were investigated in previous projects of mine, paradoxically while questioning the very possibility to fully realize this communication and exchange. Through my work I adopted different strategies to overcome the separation between seer and seen, subject and object, self and others, and the binary opposition ontology defining the modernist subject. It seemed an insurmountable condition. However, I identified a possible context for ‘knowledge’ shared by the subjects involved first within the fruition process (Cologni, 2004, 2005), and then in the notion of the deferral (Derrida, 1998), the ‘gap.’ I experimented with gaps since 2004 in, including the scotoma (in the visual field), apnea (in breathing), amnesia (in memory), and time (transmission). This was to facilitate audience to co-create in the event because, just like in the Kanizsa (1976) effect (Figure 8), a perceptual gap is where the eye goes to compensate for a loss as how believed that certain combinations of incomplete figures give rise to clearly visible contours even when the contours do not actually exist. Our brain fills in the missing spot with our memories, experience and imagination.

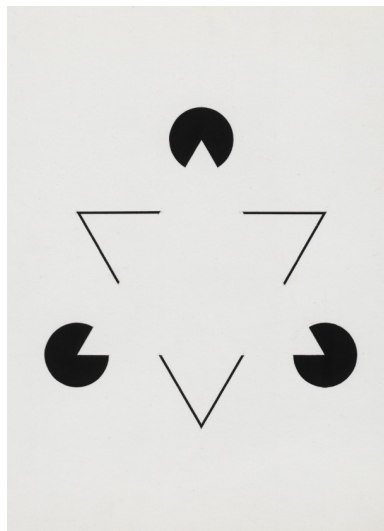


Figure 8. Il triangolo di Kanizsa (1950), Archivio Gaetano Kanizsa, 1944 - 2000 (Fondo)

Thus, a *perceptual lacuna* in an artwork is there to be filled in by audiences. These have been adopted, implied and experienced in my work in relation to the condition within which they happen, generally in the liveness of the perceptual aesthetics experience, and in continuous

present. This is when performances, and dialogic encounters also happen.³⁶ In ‘Lo Scarto’ (2015), I focused on the spatial gap represented by emptiness and silence, a dialogic strategy developed in relation to sociologist Danilo Dolci’s notion of *reciprocal maieutic* (1973) and manifested in the then so called ‘pollination’ phase where the participants became themselves actors in the artistic dynamic (Cogni, 2016). They opened themselves to the exchange with others.



Figure 8. Lo Scarto. ©Elena Cogni (2015).

In this context, I became especially aware of the need to address our positions as artist and participants and how, by being in the ‘background,’ I was opening myself to be changed in the process, I now understand as referring to the MP’s gestalts dynamics (Hamington, 2004) and of ‘contamination’ as well (Pulcini, 2022).

As seen before, contamination means “hosting” the other within the Self and being capable of accepting otherness, and difference, as a constitutive part of the Self (Pulcini, 2022) and that

³⁶ For example, in the one-to-one video live installation ‘Re-Moved’ (Cogni, 2008; Cogni, 2010) the audience’s fruition of the event was due to the time-gap introduced in specific ways to heighten their perception of presentness, while they contribute to the narrative of the piece.

prevents the subject from closing themselves in their own identity.³⁷ A relational subject who is vulnerable and contaminated. Feminists refer regularly to social or relational ontologies because we offer not just an alternative to reductive objectivist patriarchal accounts but challenge these accounts at their foundations (Daly, 2019). Hamington (2004) also discusses the feminist origins of the modern care discourse (p.13) and refers to various writers and particularly to the fundamental work of Gilligan, to say that virtually every feminist ethicist would subsequently have a position on the notions of care. Care ethics, in line with feminist pragmatists, also tries to overcome dichotomies typical of modernism including the gendered dichotomy, which is particularly problematic for care ethics (even though a few feminist ethicists support the idea that care is exclusively feminine) because it limits the application and significance of care (Hamington, 2004), and reinstate the modernist binary approach (Pulcini, 2022).

A feminist care aesthetics grounded in art practice research can indeed contribute to the wider feminist revisions in aesthetics.³⁸ Though the wider debate is beyond the scope of this text, it is useful to briefly note the number of important steps that have been taken by many art historians to reframe the discourse.³⁹ “Feminism questions all the percepts of art as we know it” (Lippard, 1995, p. 172) and feminist artists have challenged the ideas that art’s main value is aesthetic, that it is for contemplation rather than use, that it is ideally the vision of a single creator, that it should be interpreted as an object of autonomous value. The more politically minded artists, including those who participated in the feminist movement of the 1970s, often turned their art to the goals of freeing women from the oppressions of male-dominated culture. Examples of such work include the Los Angeles anti-rape performance project of Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Leibowitz, and *Womanhouse* (1972), a collaboration of twenty-four artists, including Mother Art Collective (Cologni, Mother Art, 2024). At the same time also in Italy and the UK the feminist art scene has been actively questioning the patriarchal power roots of societal norms, and many art curatorial projects are now reviewing those histories⁴⁰ in relation to more contemporary practices.

³⁷ Nel Noddings also describes “engrossment” as an intense preoccupation with the other that comes with caring: “I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality.”

³⁸ This merged with social critiques of beauty norms that circulated in the late twentieth century, and for some time, beauty was rather sidelined in the art world as well (Danto, 2003), and then reconsidered as grounded in communities and thus ineluctably political (Wolff, 2006), and also with reference to race, indigenous people, and subaltern cultures (e.g. Brand, 2000, 2013; Felski, 2006). As we know, the conversation as to “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (Nochlin, 1971) started a new era for the writing and development of art history, by questioning the notion of “male genius.”

³⁹ Vogel, 1974; Sandell, 1980; Pollock, 1983; Hagaman, 1990; Garrard, 1995; Lippard, 1995; Clark, Folgo and Pichette, 2005; Fields, 2012; Horne and Tobin, 2015; Tobin 2023.

⁴⁰ There have been so many import exhibitions, it would be impossible to list them all. Here is a small selection: *The Unexpected Subject*, 1978 – *Art and Feminism at Frigoriferi Milanesi*, Milan Italy, exhibition curated by

Feminist perspectives extend to the aesthetic frames of lived experience, care ethics crucially embrace, for example in domestic environments, to contribute to “everyday aesthetics.” (Saito, 2007; 2017; Mandoki, 2007; Leddy, 2012; Light & Smith, 2004) including subjects like pregnancy, motherhood and labor (Mother Art & Cologni 2024; Cologni, 2023; Lintott and Sander-Staudt, 2011) and as manifestations of care (Saito, 2022). One of my earlier performance works “Turn every meaning upside down, inside out, back to front” (Cologni, 2006),⁴¹ was focused on exploring the bond with my baby during breastfeeding. Exposing the tension between the nurturing and caring role of the mother and the need to regain one’s own body after giving birth as a dialogue with the self through writing (Isaak, Cianfanelli, Iaquina, 2012, p. 303). I was recalling from my breastfeeding diary those moments, an extract of which I include below.

‘November 2004, 2.00. I get up, and go to his room because he is crying, he has eaten from both breasts and has fallen asleep immediately afterwards

2 30. I go back to bed to sleep. I sleep on my side, towards the edge of the bed, next to the door. So, I’ll be quick

5.50. He rumbles. He’s not crying yet. Maybe he’ll go back to sleep....

6.00. He Cries. He’s hungry. I go to his room and feed him from both breasts. He falls asleep on me. I try to put him to bed. Maybe he continues for a while. No way. I put him into his cot to fully wake him up with his things. He’s getting used to his music box and the pictures behind the bed, which he probably sees as blurry shades. Then I turn on the music box and he smiles at me. [...]’

Marco Scotini and Raffaella Perna; recent exhibitions in London include: Tate Britain, South London Gallery; *Breaking the Mould*, curated by Natalie Rudd (2019/2020) surely on women sculpture. *Beyond Form: Lines of Abstraction, 1950-1970*, Turner Contemporary Margate UK curated by Flavia Frigeri.

⁴¹ Mentioned in Jill Fields (2012).

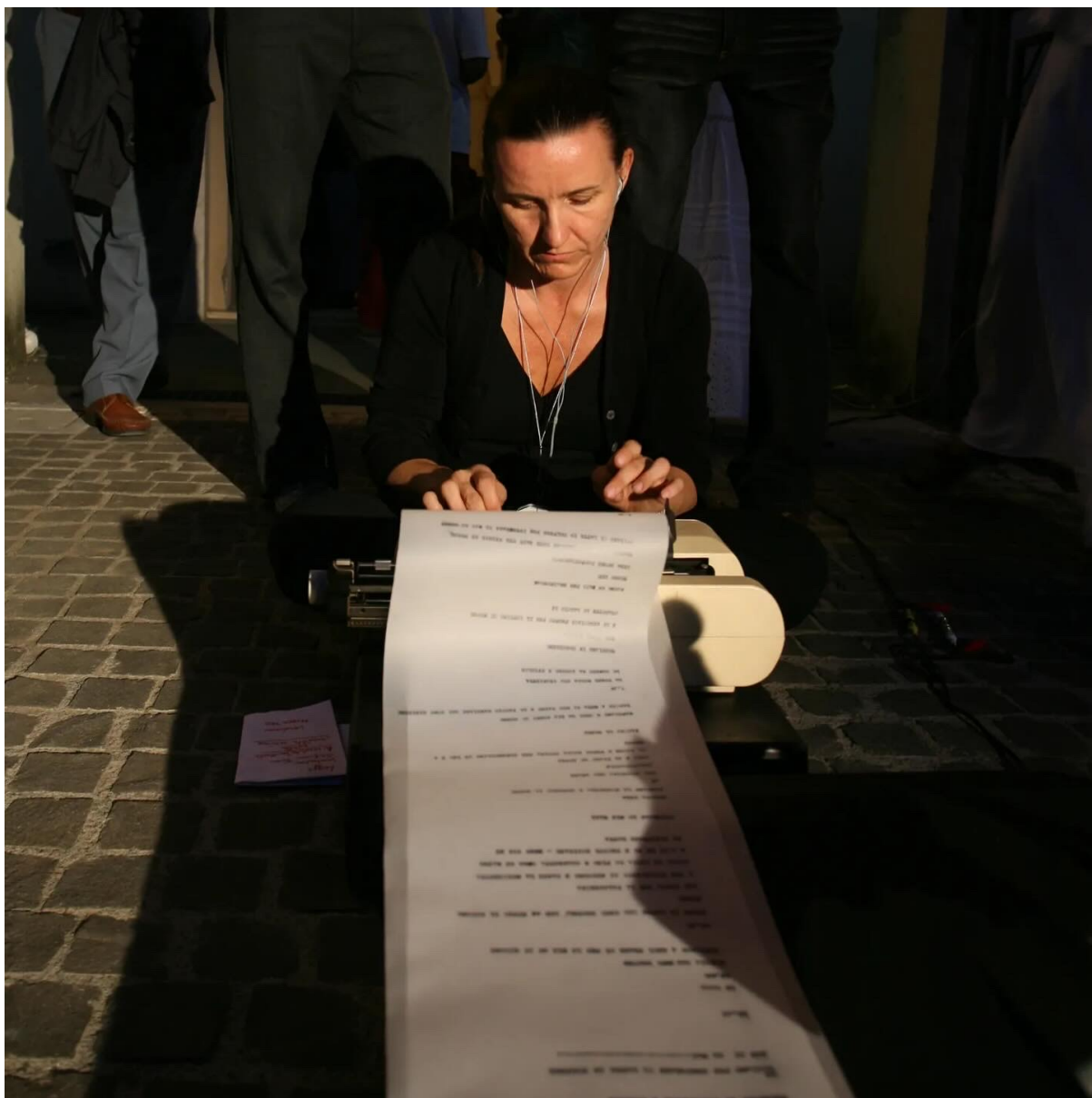


Figure 9. “Turn every meaning upside down, inside out, back to front.” ©Elena Cologni (2006, video live installation, typewriter+ tracing paper+ video camera+ 2 projectors + live delay system, 1x1x30 mts).⁴²

⁴² in *Dissertare/Disertare*, curators Associazione START, Gaia Cianfanelli & Caterina Iaquina, at Centro Internazionale per l’Arte Contemporanea, Castello Colonna di Genazzano, Roma, June/September 2006.

The *caring with* art approach, feminist and dialogic, as seen above, is centered around the interdependent quality of human relations as well as the percipience of the body. I have discussed how, in the above dialogic art dynamic, the process of *contamination* of the subjects (Pulcini, 2013a) is fundamental, as it is within the feminist project, challenging the modernist sovereign subject through co-creation dynamics, at a conceptual, perceptual and more practical level. This is only possible by considering a subject in relation, vulnerable and contaminated, capable of hosting and recognizing difference, and putting one's identity into play and opening oneself to the possibility of change.

As care aesthetics is now being shaped through a growing number of positions as above, mine emphasises the feminist roots of care ethics and how these underpin art practice research, in particular dialogic art. This is where I position my own work, area which I find most appropriate to define as feminist care aesthetics. For this I have considered the percipience quality of the body at the core of the theories drawn from care ethics and feminist aesthetics to assert that ultimately art practice is form of care. However, I also discussed how strategies of care are at the core of art making, which is open to others, while producing an “embodied” and “affective” and caring knowledge (Hamington, 2004) that helps us to “imagine caring courses of action.”

However, the artist practicing a feminist care aesthetics as a *subject in relation*, ‘a subject that [...] recognizes in the other a constitutive dimension of the self’ (Pulcini, 2013a, p. 35), also carries and IS the wound, “blessure.” ferita, which exposes her to contagion with others in the hope to turn together daily “distractions, interruptions and fragmentations⁴³” into opportunities for dialogue and change through art that starting from the self, the individual, can have a transformational societal impact.

References

- G. Bataille, (1978). *L'esperienza interiore*, Dedalo,
- Belcher, S.D. (2014). “Can grey ravens fly? Beyond Frayling’s categories.” *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 13(3), 235–242.
- Bishop, C. (2004). Antagonism and relational aesthetics. *October*, (110), 51–79.
doi:10.1162/0162287042379810

⁴³ Mother Art Collective, 1973, Artists' Statement held at Getty Library, Research Institute, 2017.M.60 (box 1, f.4)

- Bishop, C. (2023) INFORMATION OVERLOAD Claire Bishop on the superabundance of research-based art. *Artforum, Features*, April.
<https://www.artforum.com/features/claire-bishop-on-the-superabundance-of-research-based-art-252571/> [accessed 07/10/2024]
- Boldt J. (2018). The interdependence of care and autonomy. In F. Krause F & J. Boldt J (Eds.), *Care in healthcare: Reflections on theory and practice* [Internet]. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK543738/> doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-61291-1_5
- Borgdorff, H. (2012). *The conflict of the faculties: Perspectives on artistic research and academia*. Leiden University Press.
- Bourgault, S. (2022). Ranci re, and care ethics: Four lessons in (feminist) emancipation. *Philosophies* 2022, 7(3), 62. <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies7030062>
- Bourriaud, N. (2002). *Relational aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland. Les presses du r el.
- Bozzato, F. (2021). ‘Le pratiche della cura o del cur(v)are di Elena Cologni’ [The practices of care or of cur(v)are by Elena Cologni]. *Che fare*, <https://che-fare.com/almanacco/cultura/pratiche-cura-cologni-luoghi/> [accessed on 22/08/24]
- Braidotti, R. (2019). Posthuman knowledge. *Polity*.
- Broude, N., & Garrard, M. D. (1987). Feminist art history and the academy: Where are we now? *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 15(1/2), 10-16.
- Brubaker, D. (2006). Care for the flesh: Gilligan, Merleau-Ponty and corporeal styles. *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*, 229-56.
- Butler, J. (2005). *Giving an account of oneself*, Fordham University Press.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. Routledge.
- Butler, J., Allen, J., & Young, I. M. (2022). *Sexual ideology and phenomenological description* Oxford University Press.
- Butt, D. (2017). *Artistic research in the future academy*. Intellect Books.
- Carr, D. (1978). Practical pursuits and the curriculum. *Journal of philosophy of Education*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.1978.tb00505.x>
- Clark, R., Folgo, A. R., & Pichette, J. (2005). Have there now been any great women artists? An investigation of the visibility of women artists in recent art history textbooks. *Art Education*, 58(3), 6-13.
- Cologni, E. (2009) *Mnemonic present, shifting meaning*. Mercurio.

- Cogni, E. (2010). That spot in the ‘moving picture’ is you, (perception in time-based art).’ In J. Freeman (Ed.), *Blood, sweat & theory: Research through practice in performance* (pp. 83-107). Libri Publishing.
- Cogni, E. (2012). SPA(E)CIIOUS PRESENT, Dynamics of collective and individual experiences of space and duration within specious present, adopting technologies for enhancing audience engagement, while producing forms of documentation. In H. J. Minors (Ed.), *How performance thinks*. Conference Proceedings. PSi Performance and Philosophy working group and Kingston University, 32-39.
- Cogni, E. (2016). A dialogic approach for the artist as an interface in an intercultural society. In P. Burnard, E. Mackinlay, K. Powell (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of intercultural arts research* (.198-208). Routledge
- Cogni, E. (2019). *Interview: Elena Cogni*. Care ethics research consortium. <https://care-ethics.com/2019/06/10/elena-cogni/> [accessed on 14-04-2024]
- Cogni, E. (2020a). Caring-with dialogic sculptures. A post-disciplinary investigation into forms of attachment. *PsicoArt – Rivista Di Arte E Psicologia*, 10(10), 19–64. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2038-6184/11444>
- Cogni, E. (2020b). *Art as a caring practice: New connections for social transformation*. Episode 9, season 1. Moleskine Foundation. <https://moleskinefoundation.org/initiative/the-moleskine-foundation-podcast>
- Cogni, E. (2022). (Un)Monuments of The Everyday. Marking The Journey from Home to Work through the Experience of Venetian Weaving Factory’s Workers. In G. Kacmaz, (Ed.), *Representing pasts – Visioning futures*. AMPS Proceedings Series 32. https://amps-research.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Amps-Proceedings-Series_32.pdf [accessed 22/-09/2024]
- Cogni E. (2023). ‘Il ruolo della cura sulla soglia tra pubblico e privato’ [The role of care on the threshold between public and private]. Lievito Madre Conference, <https://www.mondo-doula.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Manifesto-Mondo-Doula-190224.pdf> [accessed on 10/04/2024]
- Cogni, E., (2024). The presence of memory in the perceptual experience. In A. Melis, R.Vavetsi, F. Finotti (Eds.). *The architecture of exhibitions. Experiential design*. Routledge.
- Cogni, E., Keene, M., Held, V. and Cunningham, P. and Scardi, G. (2020) *CARE: from periphery to centre*. Homerton College, University of Cambridge
- Cogni, E. (Ed.) (2002). *Public private perceptions*. Galleria Neon, Bologna.
- Cogni, E. (2000). Diagrammi. In G. Norese (Ed.), *Oreste at the Venice Biennale*. Charta.

- Daly, A. (2019) A phenomenological grounding of feminist ethics. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 50(1), 1-18. DOI: 10.1080/00071773.2018.1487195
- Daly, A. (2018). Merleau-Ponty's Aesthetic Interworld: From primordial percipience to wild logos. In *Philosophy Today*, 62(3). DOI: 10.5840/philtoday20181024231
- Davey, N. (2006). *Thinking through art: Reflections on art as research*. Routledge.
- Davey, N. (2013). *Unfinished worlds: Hermeneutics, aesthetics and Gadamer*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Derrida, J. (1998). *Of grammatology*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dodds, S. (2014). Dependence, care, and vulnerability. In C. Mackenzie, W. Rogers, and S. Dodds (Eds.), *New essays in ethics and feminist philosophy*, Oxford University Press.
- Elkin, J. (2014). *Artists with PhDs: On the new doctoral degree in studio art* (second edition). New Academia Publishing.
- Elkins, J. (2009). *Artists with PhDs*. New Academia Publishing/The Spring.
- European League of Institute of the Arts (ELIA) (2016). *The 'Florence Principles' on the doctorate in the arts*. ELIA.
- Fields, J. (2012). *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 33, 2, *Special Issue: Feminist Art and Social Movements: Beyond NY/LA*, pp. 1-21.
- Fields, J. (2012), *Entering the picture: Judy Chicago, The Fresno Feminist Art Program, and the collective visions of women artists*. Routledge.
- Finlay, L. (2009). Ambiguous encounters: A relational approach to phenomenological research. *Indo-Pacific journal of phenomenology*, 9(1), 1-17.
DOI:10.1080/20797222.2009.11433983
- Fisher B., Tronto J. C. (1990). Toward a feminist theory of care. In E. K. Abel, M. K. Nelson (Eds.), *Circles of care: Work and identity in women's lives*. State University of New York Press.
- Frayling, C. (1993). Research in art and design. *Royal College of Art Research Papers*, 1(1).
- Garrard, M. D. (1995). Feminist art and the essentialism controversy. *The Centennial Review*, 39(3), 468–492.
- Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard university press.
- Hagaman, S. (1990). Feminist inquiry in art history, art criticism, and aesthetics: An overview for art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 32(1), 27–35.

- Hale, J. (2019). Body schema. In Mildenberg, A. (ed.) *Understanding Merleau-Ponty, Understanding Modernism*, (pp. 295-296) Bloomsbury Academic,
- Hamington, M. (2004). *Embodied care: Jane Addams, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and feminist ethics*. University of Illinois Press.
- Hannula, M., Vadén, T. & Suoranta, J. (2014). *Artistic research methodology: Narrative, power and the public*. Peter Lang.
- Haraway D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- Harman, K. (2022). Caring and the feminist imaginary: creating moments of equality when researching sensory ways of knowing homecare: toward an aesthetics of care? In E. Darlene, K. Sanford, K. Harman (Eds.), *Feminism, adult education and creative possibility: Imaginative responses*, pp. 197-208. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Haselgrove, M. (2016). *Learning: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Henke, M., Strässle, W., Meulen, N. van der. (2020). *Manifesto of artistic research. A defense against its advocates*. DIAPHANES
- Horne, V. and Tobin, A. (2014). An unfinished revolution in art historiography, or how to write a feminist art history. *Feminist Review*, 107, 75–83.
- Horvath, C. and Carpenter, J. (2020). *Co-creation in theory and practice. Exploring creativity in the global north and south*. Bristol University Press.
- Isaak, J.A., Cianfanelli, G., Iaquina, C. (2012). Curatorial Practice as Collaboration in the United States and Italy. In Fields, J. (ed) *Entering the picture: Judy Chicago, The Fresno Feminist Art Program, and the collective visions of women artists*. Routledge, 293-311.
- Jay, M. (1993). *Downcast eyes: The denigration of vision in twentieth-century French thought*. University of California Press.
- Jones, A. (1998). *Body art/performing the subject*. Routledge
- Jones, T. (1980). Research in the visual fine arts. *Leonardo* 13, 89–93.
- Kahlo K. and Kollwitz, K. (2010). Transgressive techniques of the Guerrilla Girls. *Getty Research Journal*, 2, 203–208.
- Kanizsa, G. (1976). Subjective contours. *Scientific American*, 234(4), 48–53.
- Keith, H. E. (1999). Feminism and pragmatism: George Herbert Mead's ethics of care. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 35(2), 328 - 344.
- Kester, G. H. (2006). Collaboration, art and subcultures. *CadernoVideobrasil*, 2, 10.

- Kittay, E. F. (2019). *Love's labor: Essays on women, equality and dependency*. Routledge.
- Klien, J. (2012). What is artistic research? *Research Catalogue*.
<https://doi.org/10.22501/rc.15292>
- Koehn, D. (2001). *Rethinking feminist ethics. care, trust and empathy*. Routledge
- Lippard, Lucy. (1995). *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected essays on feminist art*. The New York Press.
- Marcomin, F., Cima, L. (2017). L'ecofemminismo in Italia. Le radici di una rivoluzione necessaria [Ecofeminism in Italy: The roots of a necessary revolution]. Polografo Italy
- McCann C., Kim S. (2003). *Feminist theory reader: Local and global perspectives*. Routledge.
- Michelkevičius, V. (2018). *Mapping artistic research. Towards diagrammatic knowing*. Vilnius Academy of Arts Press.
- Michna, N. A. (2023). From the feminist ethic of care to tender attunement: Olga Tokarczuk's tenderness as a new ethical and aesthetic imperative. *Arts* 12, 91.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/>
- Mother Art Collective. (1973). Artists' statement. Getty Library, Research Institute, 2017.M.60 (box 1, f.4)
- Nagel, J. (2014). *Knowledge: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Nochlin, L. (1971). Why have there been no great women artists? *ARTnews*, January, 22–39.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2001). *The fragility of goodness: Luck and ethics in Greek tragedy and philosophy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pakes, A. (2004). *Art as action or art as object? the embodiment of knowledge in practice as research*. Roehampton University of Surrey.
https://www.herts.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/12363/WPIAAD_vol3_pakes.pdf
[accessed on 12/04/2024]
- Phillips, M. (2016). Embodied care and planet earth: Ecofeminism, Maternalism and Postmaternalism. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 31(90), 468-485. DOI: 10.1080/08164649.2016.1278153
- Place, A. (2022). Design as a practice of care: Feminist perspectives on preventing harm and promoting healing through design. In D. Lockton, S. Lenzi, P. Hekkert, A. Oak, J, Sádaba, P. Lloyd. (Eds.), *DRS2022: Research Papers*. <https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2022.713>

- Pollock, G. (1983). Women, art and ideology: Questions for feminist art historians. *Woman's Art Journal*, 4(1), 39–47.
- Pulcini, E. (2001). *L'individuo senza passioni. Individualismo moderno e perdita del legame sociale*. Bollati Boringhieri.
- Pulcini, E. (2012). *The individual without passions: Modern individualism and the loss of social bond*. Rowan & Littlefield.
- Pulcini, E. (2013a). Contaminazione e vulnerabilità: il Sé nell'età globale [Contamination and Vulnerability: The Self in the Global Age]. *Soggetti itineranti. Donne alla ricerca del sé [Traveling subjects. women in search of the self]*. Alboversorio.
- Pulcini, E. (2013b). *Care of the world: Fear, responsibility and justice in the global age*. Springer Netherlands.
- Pulcini, E. (2022). Feminism and Convivialism. In F. Adloff & A. Caillé. (Eds.), *Convivial futures: Views from a post-growth tomorrow*, pp. 39-48. Transcript Verlag.
- Reckitt, H. (2013). Forgotten relations: Feminist artists and relational aesthetics. In A. Dimitrakaki & L. Perry. (Eds.), *Politics in a glass: Case feminism, exhibition cultures and curatorial transgressions*, pp. 131-156. Liverpool University Press.
- Saito, Y. (2022). *Aesthetics of care practice in everyday life*. Bloomsbury.
- Sandell, R. (1980). Feminist Studies, Inc. Female aesthetics: The women's art movement and its aesthetic split. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 14(4), Special Issue: The Government, Art, and Aesthetic Education, 106–110.
- Sullivan, G. (2005). *Art practice as research: Inquiry in visual arts*. Sage Publications.
- Sullivan, S. (2001). *Living across and through skins: Transactional bodies, pragmatism, and feminism*. Indiana University Press
- Sutherland, I., Acord, S. K. (2007). Sutherland, I., & Acord, S. K. (2007). Thinking with art: from situated knowledge to experiential knowing. *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 6(2), 125–140. https://doi.org/10.1386/jvap.6.2.125_1
- Thomas, G. (2013). *Education: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, J. (2022). *Care aesthetics: For artful care and careful art* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003260066>
- Tobin, A. (2023). Candace Hill-Montgomery, Against Containment. *Art History*, 46(1), 38-67.
- Tokarczuk, O. (2023). Tenderness as a new ethical and aesthetic imperative. *Arts* 2023, 12, 91. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts12030091>

Van Ruiten, Schelte, and Wilson. (Eds.) (2013). *SHARE: Handbook for artistic research education*. Step-Change for Higher Arts Research and Education.

Vogel, L. (1974). Fine arts and feminism: The awakening consciousness. *Feminist Studies*, 2(1), 3–37.

Wesseling, J. (2016). *Of sponge, stone and the intertwinement with the here and now: A methodology of artistic research*. Valiz.

Artistic Research Projects

Cogni, E. (2023/). *Towards a Feminist Care Aesthetics: The Mother Art Collective* (Getty Research Institute and Archives Library Grant)

Cogni, E. (2021/2023). *416_SR1938* (Universita' di Pisa, Italy. (Arts Council England)

Cogni, E. (2021/). *The Body of/at Work* (La Biennale di Venezia, Arts Council England, British Council, Anglia Ruskin University)

Cogni, E. (2021). *Practice of Care. On Finding the Cur(v)e* (Fondazione Bevilacqua LaMasa, Arts Council England, British Council, Anglia Ruskin University)

Cogni, E. (2018). *Care: from Periphery to Centre* (Homerton College, University of Cambridge)

Cogni, E. (2016/18). *Seeds of Attachment* (The Women's Art Collection, University of Cambridge, Arts Council England)

Cogni, E. (2015). *Lo Scarto* (UNESCO funded, Sicily)

Cogni, E. (2012-13). *Spe(a)cious*, Wysing Arts Centre, UK, PSi Stanford University, Bergamo Scienza, Italy.

Cogni, E. (2008). *Re-Moved*, CCA Glasgow, Glasgow internation 08, director Francis McKee

Cogni, E. (2006). *Turn every meaning upside down, inside out, back to front*.

Cogni, E. (1999) *Diagrammi* (Venice Biennale 1999).

Cogni, E. (1999). *Ancora Cerca* (National Portrait Gallery)

About the Author

Elena Cogni is an artist and Associate Professor in Contemporary Art and Critical Practice and Research Lead at the Cambridge School of Art, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (Anglia Ruskin University, UK). Cogni gained a BA in Fine Art from Accademia di Belle Arti Brera in Milan, an MA in Sculpture from Leeds University and a PhD (2004) in Fine Art and Philosophy from University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins College (CSM). Cogni was Post Doctorate Research Fellow at CSM (2004/06 funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council), Research Fellow at York Saint John's University (2007/09), and Associate of the Creativities in Intercultural Arts Network (University of Cambridge) (2013/2016). Cogni's art practice research is being supported by numerous

institutions (including La Biennale di Venezia; Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, Venice, Italy, MuseumsQuartier, Vienna, Austria; Tate, London, UK; Università di Pisa; Museo Laboratorio Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy) and funded by: Unesco; Artist Newsletter; Arts Council England; British Council (UK); Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (US).
www.elenacogniti.com

International Journal of Education & the Arts

<http://IJEa.org>

ISSN: 1529-8094

Editor

Tawnya Smith
Boston University

Co-Editors

Kelly Bylica
Boston University
Rose Martin
Nord University
Laurel Forshaw
Lakehead University

Jeanmarie Higgins
University of Texas at Arlington
Merel Visse
Drew University
Karen McGarry
College for Creative Studies

Managing Editor

Yenju Lin
The Pennsylvania State University

Associate Editors

Betty Bauman-Field
Boston University
Amy Catron
Mississippi State University
Christina Hanawalt
University of Georgia
Diana Hawley
Boston University
David Johnson
Lund University
Heather Kaplan
University of Texas El Paso
Elizabeth Kattner
Oakland University
Mary Ann Lanier
Groton School
Allen Legutki
Benedictine University

Alesha Mehta
University of Auckland
Leah Murthy
Boston University
Hayon Park
George Mason University
Allyn Phelps
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Erin Price
Elizabethtown College
Natalie Schiller
University of Auckland
Tim Smith
Uniarts Helsinki
Yiwen Wei
Virginia Commonwealth University
Zahra Bayati, Helen Eriksen & Gry O. Ulrichsen
Solmaz Collective

Advisory Board

Full List: <http://www.ijea.org/editors.html>

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).