

# Introduction

Dear reader,

We are happy that this book has found you. If you are looking to add new practices to your teaching, or if you are feeling isolated as a teacher in the classroom, this book is for you. If you are a person in a self-organized learning group, this book is for you. If you are a student, this book is for you. We are excited to share our work with you.

- \* We suggest that the following section be shared with the group as best suits your context, either read aloud—in whole or in part—or assigned to be discussed in your space of learning. Before you begin to read, we invite you to ground yourself in the space: notice the air on your skin and your feet on the ground. What are your feelings and sensations at this moment? What are you bringing to this text? Take a moment to become aware of this. We invite you to notice what comes up for you, as you are reading this chapter. We will ask you to reflect upon this at the end of this chapter.

This book is for those of you who want a holistic arts education that includes how to *be* more fully present, both with yourself and with others. The term “holistic” means that the parts of a given system are intimately interconnected, that they are understandable only in relation to the whole system. How can you talk about making a new project without talking about labor conditions? How can you talk about labor conditions without talking about payment? It’s time to address your artistic labor, your budgets, your storage units, your gifts, and your well-being. Throughout this book, we will continue to state that *art is a system of relationships*.

You hold in your hands the work of two friends and collaborators. We are Susan Jahoda and Caroline Woolard, two arts educators based in New York City, who teach at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and at the University of Hartford, Connecticut, respectively. Susan has been teaching visual art classes in higher education for forty years and Caroline has been teaching for nine years. We work together because we have shared commitments to teaching, to collectivity, to solidarity economies, and to artmaking. We aim to cultivate intellectual and emotional vulnerability alongside our work as educators. We both feel most alive in reading groups, collectives, and in dialogue with people whose perspectives are different from our own, and we aim to bring this into our classrooms.

We have been collaborating for seven years as members of the collective BFAMFAPhD. The collective got its name by combining all of the degrees that a person could accumulate in undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs: a BFA, an MFA, and a PhD. In 2014, we (Susan and Caroline), along with Vicky Virgin and Agnes Szanyi, as well as former BFAMFAPhD collective member Blair Murphy, published *Artists Report Back* to raise awareness about art student debt, to suggest how established artists and recent arts graduates might advocate for one another, and to propose cultural equity initiatives to recognize and strengthen solidarity art economies in the United States.<sup>1</sup> We have taken the last five years to focus on this book. We have been developing this material in our classes, which range widely, from foundations BFA classes to MFA thesis classes,

including skill-based photography and sculpture courses, professional practices courses, as well as interdisciplinary seminars. Many people have worked on this book with us, in particular, Emily Tareila and Emilio Martínez Poppe, members of BFAMFAPhD. *See Acknowledgements for more.*<sup>7</sup> This book includes a compilation of the references, activities, and assignments that have worked best for us, as well as a framework for thinking about the production and circulation of projects.

When we write “we” throughout this book, we are referring specifically to the two of us, Susan and Caroline, and not the general or royal “we.” When we write “you,” we are addressing you, the reader. We imagine that you, the reader, are an artist, an art student, a studio art teacher, and/or a person in a self-organized learning space. We hope that you can open the book and find something to adapt to your context.

Because we imagine that you are often a student in one context and a facilitator in another, we have kept the “you” open to both positions. As teachers, we share our facilitator guides with our students. We know that this is unusual, but it reflects our commitment to student-centered and co-created pedagogies.

Your reading of this text will be impacted by the fact that we (Susan and Caroline) are two white women writing and speaking as a specific “we.” If you invite us to facilitate a workshop, you will see two white women; an older person and a younger person, a tall person and an average-height person. When Susan speaks, you will hear what seems to be a northern British accent, and when Caroline speaks, you will hear an owning-class enunciated speech that hides a Rhode Island accent. Some aspects of our social positions will not be visible, including that you will be in the presence of two cis women; a queer person and a straight person; a temporarily abled person and a disabled person; a tenured faculty member and a tenure-track faculty member; two owning-class people; two United States citizens. As we begin to unpack the “we,” what sensations do you feel in your own body? Be mindful of the relationship between the text and your feelings, thoughts, and body language. Notice the way that you understand the “we” that you are reading. The “we” is very specific. We ask that you try to sense “us,” as two people, writing to “you.” *See Chapter 6: How Are You in the World and How Is the World in You? for a Self-Reflection Assignment about Rank.*<sup>7</sup>

We acknowledge that the use of “we” in the English language does not have the powerful imagined specificity of the first person singular in English. To get a sense of the force of the “I,” compared to the “we” in English, read these two sentences and notice how they land on you:

“We share our facilitator guides with our students.”


“I share my facilitator guides with my students.”

For many readers, a curiosity will emerge about the person who is writing with “I,” that will not appear when they read “we.” “We” could refer to a group, two people, or a whole community, whereas “I” clearly refers to a single person. As Anne Carson reminds us, the English language is the only language that capitalizes the first person singular. The capital “I” is central in English, in the United States, and in arts education, as it prioritizes the individual. Theorists and artists Eve Tuck and C. Ree write that they, “chose to write in the first person singular to double-fold my wisdom and mask my vulnerabilities. I use the bothness of my voice to misdirect those who intend to study or surveil me.”<sup>2</sup> Feminist geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham wrote under a pseudonym and used the singular “I” as well. We, Susan and Caroline, chose to write with a “we” and we ask you, reader, to pay attention to your relationship to the “we” that stands for the two of us. Now that we have troubled the “we,” we will turn to the trouble of addressing “you,” the reader we conjure in this text.

Of course, all of our social identities matter. In *Chapter 1*, we will ask you, the reader, “What is urgent?” See *Chapter 1: Why Now? for more.*<sup>7</sup> When we ask ourselves, as the authors of this book: *What is urgent in our spaces of learning?* We answer: racial justice. We recognize that we, as two white women, will reveal our own racial imaginary as we write, and that the “you” that we refer to can never be universalized.<sup>3</sup> You will read assumptions in our writing that come from our social position.<sup>4</sup>

## Commitments

*We have committed to:*

- Sharing our research and thinking from the past five years;
- Sharing resources so that you can adapt them to your own contexts;
- Offering a range of approaches to teaching, from contemplative practices and collaborative games to spreadsheets and rubrics;
- Continuing to participate in antiracist groups;
- Creating multiple formats for differentiated learning styles: a website, game, syllabi, book, references, and videos;
- Working together in a collective, recognizing that we would not be able to create this book alone; see *Chapter 20: How We Work and Chapter 13: Labor*  *for more.*<sup>7</sup>
- Acknowledging and attempting to navigate the contradictions implicit in our roles as teachers within our institutions.

*We hope that you can commit to:*

- Approaching this book with curiosity and openness;
- Caring for yourself while you read the book; *see Chapter 9: Support /■ for more*<sup>7</sup>
- Identifying which aspects of the book speak to you, and accepting which aspects do not, letting those go;
- Trying some of the practices that we offer in your contexts;
- Understanding your social identity and how this impacts spaces of learning;
- Participating / continuing to participate in antiracist groups;
- Considering ways that you can reflect upon your teaching and learning experiences with other educators who read this book;
- Using our website <http://makingandbeing.com>; and
- Contacting us at [info@bfamfaphd.com](mailto:info@bfamfaphd.com) to tell us what works for you, what does not work, and the ways in which you adapt this book to your contexts.

## **Chapter Overviews**

The chapters in this book are organized in the way that we tend to describe our approach in workshops with teachers and students. We begin with an overview of the fields that connect to our book (*Part 1: Entry Points*), and then talk about why we believe it is urgent to rethink approaches to undergraduate, graduate, and self-organized arts education (*Chapter 1: Why Now*). From there, we build a sense of support with a cohort of learners (*Chapter 2: Spaces of Learning and Chapter 3: Who Do You Honor?*), and then we introduce our framework (*Chapter 7: Lifecycle Phases and Framework*). We close by asking people to imagine the future of arts education. We then share the ways that we work together currently and the ways that you might get involved in a conversation with us (*Part 5: To Be Continued*). Depending on the amount of time that you have, we suggest that you skip to the sections that feel most relevant to your context.

In *Part 1: Entry Points*, we invite somatic healer Alta Starr, educational theorist Stacey Salazar, and cultural theorist Leigh Claire La Berge to write about the connections that they see between this book and the fields of somatics, teaching and learning, and aesthetics. Alta Starr explains how making art connects to somatics, a theoretical and practical approach to transformative change that begins with embodiment. Stacey Salazar provides an overview of teaching studio art and design in Europe and the United States, as a background from which to critically examine pedagogical practices. Leigh Claire La Berge offers an introduction to basic terms in political economy and aesthetics.

In *Part 2: Spaces of Learning*, we discuss our motivations for writing this book and why we believe that an education in art must be as much about ways of being in the world as it is about ways of seeing and ways of making and exhibiting projects in the world. As you make projects, you are facilitating a material transformation, but you are also facilitating a transformation of yourself.

In *Chapter 1: Why Now*, we observe that all is not well in our spaces of learning. We recognize that arts education is out of sync with the realities that artists face. We begin to suggest that an education must connect life in school with life after school, to connect life as an artist with ways of being as a person in the world. In *Chapter 2: Spaces of Learning*, we draw attention to ways in which groups can gather together more intentionally. We then describe the teaching and learning philosophies and strategies that we value. In *Chapter 3: Who Do You Honor?*, we introduce you to the educators who have shaped our pedagogy. While we have not met (and cannot meet) many of these educators, their work is widely recognized and makes our writing, teaching, and ongoing transformation possible.<sup>5</sup> In *Chapter 4: Teacher/Facilitator Guides*, we offer teacher/facilitator guides, including specific assignments, activities, and worksheets that we encourage groups to use on the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth days of class. In *Part 4: The Lifecycle Framework*, we introduce you to the core framework of the book. We use an ecological metaphor to look at the entire “life” of a project, from the moment it is imagined to the moment it is discarded, recycled, or forgotten. The lifecycle refers to the “life” of any given project, made up of ten phases, from source to depart. The ten chapters in *Part 4* provide an in-depth exploration of the ten phases of the lifecycle, presented in the order in which we teach them. In each chapter, we will introduce you to key questions surrounding the phase, share quotations from interviews with contemporary artists who engage with that phase, and end with assignments, activities, worksheets, and a reflection that relates to that phase.

In Chapters 9–18, we cover the phases in the lifecycle framework: Support, Source, Depart, Transfer, Labor, Narrate, Encounter, Tools, Copyright, and Acquire. In *Part 5: To Be Continued*, we provide a speculative thought experiment of the future of arts education, and close by sharing the evolution of *Making and Being* and our collaborative practices.

## **A Living Document**

We wrote this book because we want to have more conversations about teaching and learning with other artists and arts educators. It is not in any sense an authoritative text to reproduce without question or adap-

tation. It is, instead, an invitation to engage in ongoing dialogue with us. The majority of people teaching BFA and MFA classes have never taken an arts education course. How is this possible?

Why do so few artists write about their experiences as teachers at the college level? Perhaps it is because, today, artists are hired and promoted primarily for their exhibition records. Perhaps it is because they have no time to reflect upon their teaching. With adjunct faculty as the new faculty majority,<sup>6</sup> many educators find themselves hired to teach a class with less than a week's notice, without any clear place to turn. It is our hope that artists who teach can be in closer dialogue with one another about the importance of pedagogy in their lives.

Literature reviews of teaching and learning resources reveal that “postsecondary studio art education remains under-researched and undertheorized ... there are no readily accessible and relevant resources that might both inspire the accomplished artists-who-teach to reflect on aspects of their teaching practice and invite them into the conversation about art educational theory.”<sup>7</sup> In addition to this, few MFA programs prepare students for teaching by building curricula focused on pedagogy.<sup>8</sup> While some institutions offer one course on pedagogy for MFA students, only two institutions in the United States hosts centers for teaching and learning that focus on the visual arts—one at MassArt and one at Pratt Institute.<sup>9</sup> This project responds to the lack of practical resources for artists teaching at the college level (and for students who want to learn about arts education as they experience it) by providing pedagogical tools for arts educators and for art students.

You might think of this book as a curriculum, a syllabus, a guide, or a manual. It aims to be a resource you can refer to when helpful, supporting your inquiry into systems of production: how projects are made, how projects circulate, and how your capacities are brought into a wide range of approaches to production. It also aims to support you in practicing powerful ways of being in the world by identifying your interests and then aligning them with relevant systems of production. *See Chapter 7: Lifecycle Phases and Framework for more.*<sup>7</sup>

This book intentionally rests somewhere between an experimental artist's book, a theoretical text about the production and circulation of projects, and a pragmatic arts education workbook. It is an artist's book in the sense that we give ourselves the right to be playful, weaving together writing, illustration, and design to share the quirks of our collective desires. It is a theoretical text in that we have created a framework that guides the structure of the book. *See Chapters 7–18 for this framework.*<sup>7</sup> It is a workbook in that it is written to use in an undergraduate or graduate classroom or in a self-organized space of learning. Like educational work-

books that teachers outside of the arts often rely upon, this book offers directions about how to facilitate activities, practices, and assignments that we have been using over many years of teaching.

Many academics think of a book as a limited space that encloses the totality of an argument and the experience of an idea. But this book is one aspect of an ongoing conversation that occurs across multiple platforms: a website, a card game, videos, and workshops. We weave in quotations, stories, and artists projects in an associational manner that reflects our approach to teaching. In her essay, “Embodiment, Sexual Difference, and the Nomadic Subject,” philosopher Rosi Braidotti speaks about the importance of acknowledging the many voices that enable a text to come into being. She writes, referring to cultural theorist Gayatri Spivak:

Here, the principle of quotations or citations is central [as it is with Spivak]: letting others speak in my text is not only a way of inscribing my work in a collective political movement. It is also a way of practicing what I preach.... Letting the voices of others sound through my text is therefore a way of actualizing the non-centrality of the ‘I’ to the project of thinking.<sup>10</sup>

We have created a workbook that prioritizes the practice of making projects and connecting artists, students, and teachers to one another. We hope you sense our commitment to collectivity and that you can read this text as a generative, living document.

## Reflection

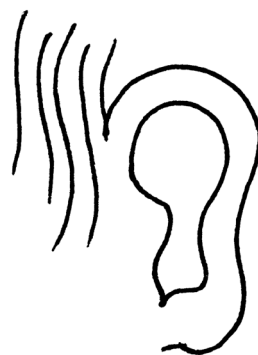
1. Which commitments are you most drawn to, and why? Are there any commitments that you would like to add, as you read this book and try out the activities and assignments?

*Remember, we hope that you can commit to:*

- Approaching this book with curiosity and openness;
- Caring for yourself while you read the book; *see Chapter 9: Support /■ for more*<sup>7</sup>
- Identifying which aspects of the book speak to you, and accepting which aspects do not, letting those go;
- Trying some of the practices that we offer in your contexts;
- Understanding your social identity and how this impacts spaces of learning;



- Considering ways that you can reflect upon your teaching experiences with other educators and students who read this book;
  - Using our website <http://makingandbeing.com>; and
  - Contacting us at [info@bfamfaphd.com](mailto:info@bfamfaphd.com) to tell us what works for you, what does not work, and the ways in which you adapt this book to your contexts.
2. \* What feelings and sensations came up for you while you were reading this chapter? For example, did you feel surprise, frustration, or excitement? How did you hold these in your body? For example, did you sense these emotions in your shoulders, neck, and back while reading this chapter? *See the Social-Emotional Intelligence Project Reflection activity in Chapter 4: Teacher/Facilitator Guides.*<sup>7</sup>



1. See Susan Jahoda, Blair Murphy, Agnes Szanyi, Vicky Virgin, and Caroline Woolard (BFAMFAPhD), *Artists Report Back: A National Study on the Lives of Arts Graduates and Working Artists*, report, 2014, [http://bfamfaphd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/BFAMFAPhD\\_ArtistsReportBack2014-10.pdf](http://bfamfaphd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/BFAMFAPhD_ArtistsReportBack2014-10.pdf).
2. Eve Tuck and C. Ree, "A Glossary of Haunting," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, eds. Stacey Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis, 639–658, (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 2, available, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/557744ffe4b013bae3b7af63/t/557f2d6ce4b029eb4288a2f8/1434398060958/Tuck+%26+Ree%2C+A+Glossary+of+Haunting.pdf>.
3. For works on the "racial imaginary" of "whiteness" see TRII, "The Whiteness Issue," *The Racial Imaginary Institute*, September 2017, <https://theracialimaginary.org/>.
4. Dalton Conley, quoted in "What Is the Difference Between Race and Ethnicity?," PBS Thirteen California Newsreel, 2003, [https://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-experts-03-02.htm](https://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-experts-03-02.htm).
5. In addition, see the many people mentioned in Acknowledgements.
6. See New Faculty Majority, "History," <https://www.newfacultymajority.info/history-and-foundation-al-principles/>.
7. Stacey Salazar, "Laying a Foundation for Artmaking in the 21st Century: A Description and Some Dilemmas," *Studies in Art Education* 54, no. 3 (2013): 247, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2013.11518897>; See also Stacey Salazar, "Studio Interior: Investigating Undergraduate Art Teaching and Learning," *Studies in Art Education* 55, no. 1 (2013): 64–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2013.11518917>.
8. See Julia Morrisroe and Craig Roland, "A Collaborative Approach to Preparing MFA Art Students to Teach at the University Level," *Art Journal* 67, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 87–91.
9. For further information on teaching and learning centers at Pratt Institute, visit <https://commons.pratt.edu/ctl/>, and at MassArt, visit <https://massart.edu/degree-programs/teacher-preparation-program>.
10. Rosi Braidotti, "Embodiment, Sexual Difference, and the Nomadic Subject," *Hypatia* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 6.