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Walking with a Ghost: Arts-Based Research, Music Videos, and the Re-Performing Body

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Abstract
In folk-rock duo Tegan and Sara's 2004 music video *Walking with a Ghost,* two women face one another, mirrored images in black and white. One is dressed in black— grunge shirt, pants and boots, while the other stands barefoot in a simple white dress. The black-clad figure removes three red paper hearts from her twin's chest, leaving crimson gashes in her clothing as the white-clad twin morphs into three mutilated figures. The wounded trio sings to their other self, "no matter which way you go, no matter which way you stay, you're out of my mind, out of my mind . . ." In this article, we respond to the ways that Tegan and Sara's music video relies on their twin bodies as visual and metaphorical

narrative devices as well as sites for re-inscribing cultural memory. We do this by presenting and analyzing our personal audiovisual responses (hypertextual video shorts) to *Walking with a Ghost*. Employing an autoethnographic arts-based research approach, we visually and metaphorically inscribe our own video bodies with text and images to explore personal and cultural reactions. Further, using the experiences of a graduate art education technology class' work with the video, we share the curricular implications for understanding how memory and the body affect, inform, and alter human perception.

In folk-rock duo Tegan and Sara's 2004 music video "Walking with a Ghost," two women face one another as mirrored images. One (Tegan) is dressed in black— grunge shirt, pants and boots, while the other (Sara) stands barefoot in a simple white dress. Tegan removes three red paper hearts from her twin Sara's chest, leaving crimson gashes in her clothing as Sara morphs into three mutilated figures. The wounded trio sings to their other self, "no matter which way you go, no matter which way you stay, you're out of my mind, out of my mind . . ."

As a means to explore further the study and implications of music video in the study of art,[1] we (an art education professor, a recent Ph.D. art education graduate, and a Master of Art Education graduate student)[2] chose to take an autoethnographic and arts-based research approach to the folk-rock video entitled *Walking with a Ghost*. In this article, we respond to the ways that Tegan and Sara's music video relies on their twin bodies as visual and metaphorical narrative devices as well as sites for exploring shared cultural memory. We do this by presenting and analyzing personal audiovisual and textual responses to *Walking with a Ghost*. Employing an arts-based research approach, we visually and metaphorically inscribe our own video bodies with text and images to explore personal and cultural reactions. We also link these visual explorations to arts-based and authoethnographic research methods. Further, using the experiences of a graduate art education technology class' work with the video, we share the curricular implications for understanding how memory and the body affect, inform, and alter human perception.

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[1] See Taylor (2000, 2007).

[2] The professor and Master of art education student worked at the same university, whereas the recent Ph.D. graduate took part in the research solely through online emails, chats, and a Weblog.

In response to the contextual and visual cues we gleaned from the video, the many strands of this project—research, teaching, and artistic practice—are presented not as a traditional narrative, but as non-linear commentary, weaving in and out and shaping the body of this article. The structure of this article mirrors a multilinear web of meaning inherent in visual culture and classroom communities. Through the analyses of our students' experiences as well as our own work, we offer practical suggestions and applications for a collaborative, research, and analytical approach to understanding culture. Our interpretational experiences and those of our students revealed to us that we—students, researchers, and teachers—walk with the ghosts of historical and contemporary media. The process of interpretation leads to better curricular approaches for understanding how media informs and shapes contemporary experience and learning.

Scene One: *Walking with A Ghost*

White-clad twin Sara walks in triplicate toward a long black-mirrored wall singing, "I was walking with a ghost." The multiple Saras hit, kick and shove the wall, also kicking their reflected images on the mirrored surface. The video switches to a close-up view of one of the twin's hands drumming in tandem with the measured beats of the song. The song continues, "I said please, please don't insist" as the black-clad twin (Tegan) sits in darkness amidst scattered red hearts. One Sara pounds the viewer's screen as the others continue fighting their reflected doubles until a small crack appears in the wall. Shifting perspective, the wall breaks open, moving apart in shards emanating from one twin's scarred chest. Two Saras watch and sway as the other moves through the broken opening toward a set of drums. The scene switches again to Tegan sitting amidst red hearts, but this time her head and body are bowed and rocking. Cut back to Sara again, she sits cross-legged with her hands firmly holding earphones to her head. Her quivering knees disrupt the steady measured beats of the song and video images witnessed until this point. A tight close-up view reveals Sara's green eyes open in alarm, "You're out of my mind, out of my mind. Out of my mind, out of my mind . . . " (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Walking with a Ghost,* (2004) Tegan and Sara.
Permission of Tegan and Sara.

Digital Bodies and Music Videos

The body is the primary medium of our everyday lives and we, "as the musician[s] not only manipulate the body/instrument like a separate object, but we live in it and inhabit the expressive musical space it opens" (Behnke, 1997, p. 68). As "a point of meditation" between internal experience/the individual and that which is outside and "publicly observable" (Grosz, 1994, p. 20), the body is a borderland between the public and private spaces we each inhabit.

In digital video such as contemporary music videos, the human body is the tool and object of special effects. The body is ephemeral, a digital ghost that haunts the screen, appearing and disappearing into the digital ether and inscribed with layered cultural meaning in each new frame. Digital bodies are the projection screens for popular narratives, communal fears and hopes, and examinations of the cultural context of media.

The digital body has become a medium for representing the "increasingly complicated relationship between the body and technology in contemporary culture" (Bolter and Grusin, 1999, p. 237). Digital bodies are intertextual forms that can be sliced, ripped

apart, and reassembled with other cultural fragments at will. Rose (2001) describes intertextuality as "the way that the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and text" (p. 136). The cultural body of a music video along with the digital bodies that perform in it are intertextual forms constantly referencing and responding to layers of cultural meaning. Digital movies, particularly in the form of music videos, feature a performing cultural body that has become capable of endless permutations. The body has become an icon that we manipulate to act out our imaginations and explore contemporary life. The basic code of numbers, language, and pixels that is the meta-level of what we term *digital*, calls out for a hacker's imprint, an artist's editing, or a user's commentary on a public blog like so much digital graffiti. It is this constant re-inscribing of a cultural palimpsest that powers digital culture—that gives it so many complex layers constantly referencing one another in an intertextual web of meaning. Intertexuality is also a reflexive process as images and texts self-consciously cite and reference one another in many forms of popular culture. They are in conversation with one another, writing and rewriting one another in a mass-mediated dialectic. Users of this raw material are reaching through the screen, dipping hands in the code and pixels, splashing around in the contents of our social and technological networks.

With digital bodies, "we need to know how the computer sees, to learn how to recognize its gaze and then to imitate it" (Mirzoeff, 2002, p. 11). Through the creation of hypertextual responses to music videos, we experiment with this computer gaze by transforming the body from the traditional binary opposite of the mind, to instead an acting out of the mind and body entangled in digital life.

Scene Two: *Walking with a Ghost*

Sara's white dress becomes a hospital gown as she lies on an examination table. The gown appears starched and pressed on her rigid body. Her hands fervently grip the sides of the table as frighteningly elongated, elastic arms and hands hover slightly above her and cast black shard-like shadows across her body. Two of the hands push and pull a needle and thread and seem to be sewing up a gash in Sara's chest as the camera moves behind her head. The other two hands comfortingly pat Sara's arm and leg. As the alien-arms recede eerily into the blackness in front of her, Sara sits up and looks down at her chest where she discovers three sewn Xs stitching up her gaping wound. The song continues: "Out of my mind. Out of my mind. Out of my mind. OUT OF my mind. Out of MY mind . . ." (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Walking with a Ghost,* (2004) Tegan and Sara.

Inscribed Bodies and Music Videos

Our bodies are inscribed by our experiences whether through physical scars, tattoos, piercings, callouses, bruises, freckles, cellulite, and the wrinkles of aging. Our shifting body is the one artifact we must always carry with us, and these marks are an important way of knowing and remembering both in literal and figurative language. Awareness of bodily experience as a form of observation can provide unique opportunities for insight and reflection (Grosz, 1994). Each of us move through the world along dissimilar paths, yet interpret experiences through distinctive lenses of personal memory that constantly reflect and refract our past, present, and future interpretations of experiences. The way an individual remembers may be in sharp contrast to someone else's memory of the same occurrence. Tracey Warr (2000) puts forth that:

> The body is a fluid signifying system, which in the twentieth century is continuously undergoing challenging and liberating transformations. The boundaries of the individual shift constantly as the boundaries between public and private, and the notion of the individual change. (p. 13)

The concept of the body in the twenty-first century is constantly shifting due, in part, to technological advances. The body/mind is no longer relegated to the here and now particularly since the Internet enables instantaneous relocation (Taylor, 2004), and digital memory is constantly being overwritten. Visual media gain significance as we become accustomed to thinking of ourselves as dependant upon such technologies. We figuratively enter immersive spaces such as video games and cyberspace where bodies are impossible and where digital bodies bear no lasting scars or imprints from physical experience. Instead, technology is an extension of the body and is deeply embedded in human lives through emotional as well as intellectual connections. In music video, we see

not just a recording of the body in everyday life, but a fragmented stylization of musical form combined with computer generated effects that have turned film in its various forms into "a sub-genre of painting" (Manovich, 2001, p. 407). Music video presents a combined experience of language (lyrics), music, and images, drawing on cultural knowledge that refers to or recalls past visual experience. In other words, we interpret the visual images presented in the music video through connections and associations from our cultural capital (i.e.: gender, ethnicity, geography, economic status, education, etc.), our history as well as, the song lyrics, and melody.

Scene Three: *Walking with a Ghost*

Following her surgery, Sara bounds off the table and out the cracked opening to greet her smiling doubles whose wounds have also been repaired. "I was walking with a ghost," she sings. In contrast, as the camera moves back, we see two Tegans observing the happy Saras. "I was walking with a ghost," they sing. With long rubber gloves hanging over their shoulders, they look sadly at each other. "I was walking with a ghost," they repeat as the camera pans down to their now gaping chest wound. The cracked wall opening gradually closes on itself and fades. Through the blackness we see a spectral image of the gloves. "I was walking with a ghost." (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Walking with a Ghost,* (2004) Tegan and Sara.

Method in the Art-Making: Arts-Based and Autoethnographic Methodology

We began our interpretational and arts-based responses to Tegan and Sara's video by reflecting upon and sharing the ways our bodies respond to the cultural and personal memories provoked as we walk with the ghosts of our own lives. We did this through disembodied email, synchronous computer chats, weblogs, and the creation of a computer hypertextual web. As Richardson (2001) suggested, these varied forms of writing became

methods of inquiry that helped us interpret memory through our situated experiences. "Experience and memory is . . . open to contradictory interpretations governed by social interests and prevailing discourses. The individual is both site and subject of these discursive struggles for identity, and for remaking memory" (p. 36). Bresler (2006) claimed that in the production and consumption of visual culture, we change ourselves. In the remaking process, we wrote communal personal narratives that became inscribed on the responsive bodies of art created together as researchers and with graduate students in art education.

As researchers, we need a structure on which to build this art-making and writing in order to connect personal responses to larger cultural and educational issues, particularly within the field of art education. We turned to Ellis and Bochner (2000) who define autoethnography as "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739). Layered autoethnographic texts exploit the experiences of the researcher in an effort to analyze personal experience as a microcosm of larger cultural experience. *How* we see changes *what* we see. As researchers examining the cultural text of this music video, we must acknowledge how cultural forces influence us.

Turning also to arts-based research methods, we found that arts-based research and autoethnography are often on parallel tracks. Bochner and Ellis (2003) suggest that arts-based research and autoethnography share many of the same goals: (1) Blurred boundaries between the social sciences and the humanities; (2) Employment of novel forms of expression such as poetry, fiction, literary forms, visual arts, and performance; and (3) Inclusion of the researcher as the subject, or a focus on the reflexivity of the researcher.

While educational researchers are still trying precisely to define what we call arts-based educational research, Barone and Eisner (1997) identify an arts-based approach to inquiry as having "the presence of certain aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry and its writing" (p. 73). As educational researchers, we emphasize writing and narrative as the primary form in which we present our ideas and findings. Textual and verbal forms are the traditional ways through which we primarily make sense of our world and communicate in an educational research setting. Barone and Eisner, therefore, focus on the literary aspects of arts-based research by identifying several characteristics found in artistic inquiry. Characteristics such as expressive language, ambiguity, creation of virtual worlds, empathy, and the imprint of the writer are traits of educational research studies that claim to be arts-based in nature. Describing such characteristics is helpful, yet additional qualities include a certain standard of artisanship (See Piirto, 2002), as well as an evocative quality that makes arts-based research—and its companion

autoethnography— forms that encourage *feeling* as well as *understanding*. Such forms can include the visual arts, performance, and multimedia presentations such as our own hypertextual video shorts, as well as evocatively written texts. Springgay (2002) suggested that the creation of visual forms of inquiry should be an equally valid form of educational research, with both researcher and audience working together to construct meaning: "Visual art as research demands an understanding of incompleteness and uncertainty. The research 'text' is always in the process of creation, as audience becomes part of the construction" (p. 20). Such an emphasis on shared experience with the audience or viewer links to the intertextual and easily appropriated elements of visual culture such as music videos that can be explored not just by writing, formal critiques, or traditional close readings, but also through manipulating the images themselves in the creation of new visual forms inspired by the original music video. Employing arts-based methods allows both researchers and students to meet at a similar point—to respond to a visual form in a multimedia format and to work together in the creation of new knowledge. In this way, research, teaching, and artistic practice converge through an inquiry of visual culture.

Inquiry through research is a way to make sense of the world and in order to understand our own position in the world, in history, and in time, we must reflect on the ways our bodies are marked by the culture in which we exist. Art making is a way to communicate visually the knowing that exists outside of words—to communicate that which exists between the self and the other. Just as we learn something new with each form of expression, whether poetry, weblog, visual art, video, performance, or more traditional social science texts, each form of expression reveals some new dimension to the research subject "just as the microscope and camera have allowed different ways for us to see what would otherwise be invisible" (Cahmann, 2003, p. 31). Both art making and research combine in the classroom as a music video becomes the 'text' for exploring and creating critical responses and close readings of images and connections to personal and cultural ideas. By critically engaging and thinking through arts-based responses, we nudge students off the banks and into the current of popular and visual culture so they become not just consumers, but producers and active voices with the power to change the current and not just be driven by it.

Using video as a way to create a layered response to a visual experience offers opportunity for deeper meaning and for weaving of the viewer's self into her or his experience of the work and a way of critically examining a video. In arts-based research and autoethnographic practice, research collection and analysis means examining experience as 'data' including even informal, personal, or intimate reflections. All experience and engagement with the subject becomes, in a way, part of the performance text of the research project. Where does an inquiry begin and what boundaries do we

place on research practice? Such questions are at the basis of all arts-based research and practice as exemplified by an intensely meaningful computer based-chat. One of the authors uses this chat as 'data' for creating an arts-based response to the music video *Walking with a Ghost*.

Computer-Based Chat Conversation, August 26, 2005

The following is an excerpt of a computer-based chat conversation between two of the authors of this article, Pamela G. Taylor and Shannon O. Wilder, concerning Tegan and Sara's *Walking with a Ghost* music video. Writing to one another—often at the same time and not necessarily in response to one another—became a collaborative computer-mediated performance based on each author's connection to the video:

3:00 PM
Shannon: I think this is interesting that we are both reading this video from our personal experiences; you through your relationship with your sister, and me through my relationship with myself as researcher! Coldplay has this song called "The Scientist" that has this line in it, "Questions of science, science and progress, Do not speak as loud as my heart."
Pam: Simon Frith (1996) wrote, "the use of the body as an instrument involves, in fact, two components. On the one hand, the material we work on determines our movements - in musical terms the instrument we play thus determines the instrument our body must be" (p. 219).
Shannon: Laurel Richardson (2001) talks about writing-stories that situate work in the environment of the writer—school, work, home, the political environmental, mental environment, etc. "Writing was and is *how* I come to know" (p. 33).
Pam: I wondered too about where we are in the act of watching this video---- and how our own perception of our body's place in the world affects our interpretation.
Shannon: Richardson (2001) was in a car accident that completely changed the way she looked at knowing. Here's a quote: "In *Fields of Play* (1997), I wrote what I called 'writing-stories,' . . . My claims to knowledge were contextualized, and historically situated. Because of writing writing-stories, I am now able to write about the body and mind trauma which I experienced, but could not witness; its aftermath, the coma, the reshaping of my life; pain and loss remembered as I write (p. 34) . . . "
3:15 PM
Pam: So, linking onto what you are saying, our own perception and experiences of the body while watching this video come into play in our

interpretation. . . how I "perform" on the couch, walking up the stairs ....but just being attuned to the way I walk, talk, and listen---to my heart beating---to my own breathing-----

Shannon: Okay, I love that. It really shows how interconnected our bodies and experiences are—

Pam: Walking with a ghost----------the memory-----it is there---no matter what we do----no matter how old we get----it is there---the very same that is was when we first experienced it...

Shannon: Memory and the body . . .

Pam: oh my------is that the ghost?

Shannon: They are so connected. I think it's the ghost.

Pam: Is the video a memory? Whose memory? Tegan's, Sara's, Yours, Mine?

Shannon: Memory can harm the body. Maybe it's coming to terms with memory? Or perhaps re-storying a memory?

3:25 PM

Pam: "Please don't insist"..... oh my.....I'm getting a bit overwhelmed------this is painful...

Shannon: Aren't we always re-writing our memory like a palimpsest[3]?

Pam: But sometimes it won't let us. The worst ones stay.

Shannon: Yes, but they still change depending on your current place in the world. They may always be painful, but we revisit them within the context of our current lives. Otherwise, we would remain stuck in one place forever.

Pam: I couldn't hold Daddy's hand because his skin was so fragile. We just stood closely by and laid our hands on the sheet. [4]

Shannon: That's a powerful feeling of not being able to touch a loved one in their last moments. Really powerful. That breaks my heart. . . .Is your feeling about this memory the same as the day that it happened?

3:30 PM

Pam: I've never said that before. I need a minute...

Shannon: More Richardson (2001), but it's such a beautiful idea and I think you are feeling it right now, "Writing about your life in writing-stories can be a sacrament" (p. 36).

Pam: Thank you....

Shannon: You should write about your father sometime. He was such a powerful influence on you--and still is. He's part of you.

Pam: Yes, and I have his legs.

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[3] See definition of *palimpsest* in the "Bodily Layers, Echoes, Palimpsest and Pentimenti" section of this article.

[4] Pam is referring to her father's death.

A Researcher Responds: *I Have My Father's Legs* by Pamela G. Taylor

I Have My Father's Legs is an animated video short (see Figure 4) that is constructed from thirty separate frames or images in response to the *Walking with a Ghost* video. Each separate frame is layered on the one before telling five stories of scars, birthmarks and other body-induced memory markers on the artist's legs.

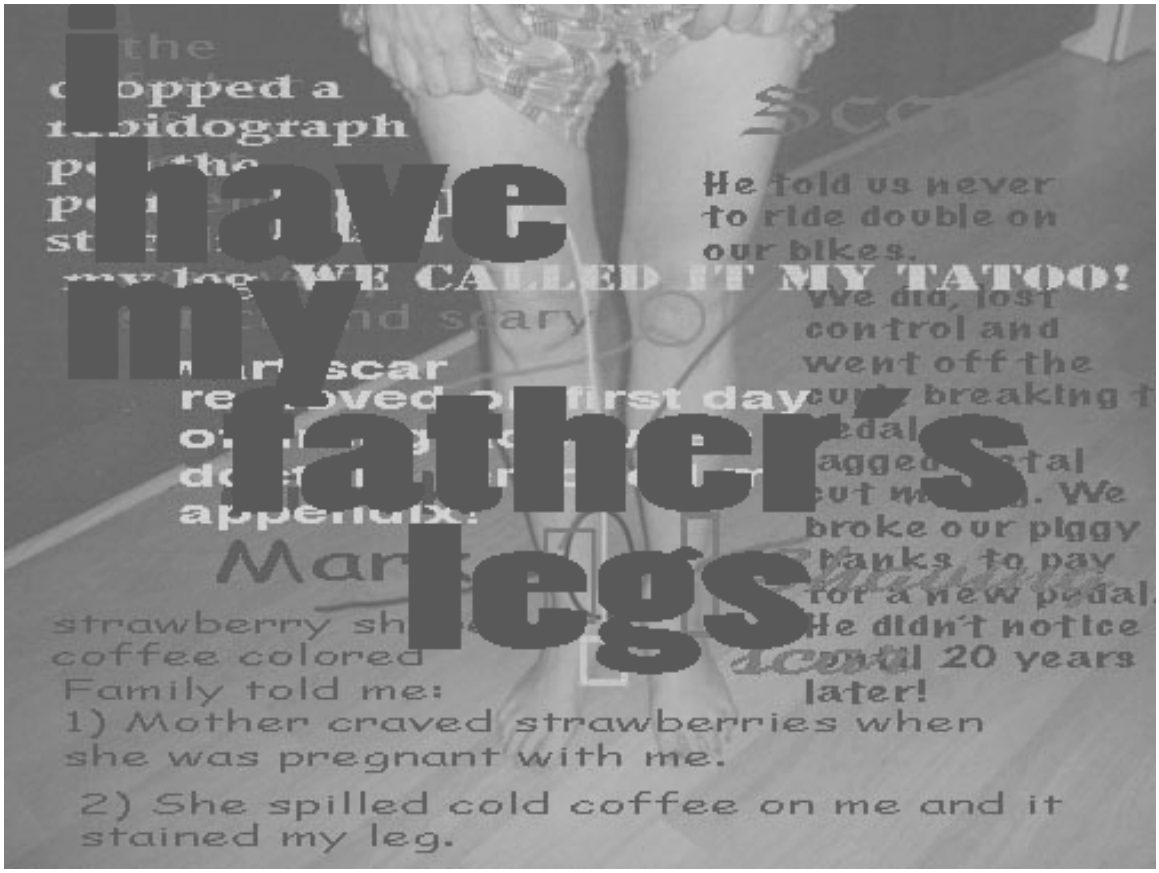

Figure 4. Pamela G. Taylor, *I Have My Father's Legs*, digital animation. 2006.

Journal Reflection: *I have my father's legs. Skinny rather shapeless sticks that rarely tan evenly, they are latent with the scars of a well-used and well-worn foundational structure that both supports and moves. My father and I often referred to and compared our twin legs. He shared stories of his childhood through each scar, bump and indentation. The largest scar on his shin resulted from a harrowing accident at my grandfather's sawmill. Trying to keep the blood out of the truck, Daddy hung his leg outside the window. His consideration nearly cost him his leg though as he brought it in just in time before my overwrought grandfather barely missed the gatepost turning onto the main road.*

I've been teased so much over the years about my skinny legs that I often hide them with long skirts and slacks. My father did the same, wearing long pants no matter the weather. I can literally count on one hand the number of times I saw my father

wearing shorts. My most vivid memories of his legs now stem from the numerous times he lay in bed in a hospital gown. Even during those frightening times, we joked as I placed one of my legs beside his on the bed. We were both comforted and chagrined by the fact that no new muscles had formed and no amount of weight gained ever was visible on the toothpick appendages we called our legs. I have my father's legs and they've carried me to strange and familiar places. Though wobbly and shaky at times, they've stood strong in adversity only giving way when their twins laid lifeless in the hospital bed.

Bodily Layers, Echoes, Palimpsest and Pentimenti

Taylor's "I have my father's legs" video is viewed as consecutive frames of image text layered one on top of the other. Each layer represents a physical scar to her flesh that she employs to tell the story of her physical and emotional connection with her father. Similarly, in *Walking with a Ghost,* the flesh of both Tegan and Sara's bodies was metaphorically represented through their outer layers of clothing—Tegan's was black and Sara's was white. Their red inner layers of clothing—made visible when the twins' chest areas were laid open after the metaphoric removal of their hearts, echoed the interior of their bodies. Our physical bodies have many layers, and our flesh alone consists of (1) the epidermis, (2) the dermis or corium, and (3) the hypodermis or subcutaneous layer. Fat, muscle, tendons, and bone act like additional packaged layers surrounding such vital organs as the heart, brain, lung, kidneys and liver. We are, in fact, layered and complex organisms.

Like Taylor, visual artists use layers and layering in their artmaking as both compositional and meaning-making devices. Sketching, underpainting, and the construction of armatures often provide works of art with a stable and workable ground on which an artist can build. Some artists may paint completely over existing works of art. Often these layers are excavated through X-ray equipment used by museum conservators who are searching for provenance clues. When the underlying layers are visible either vividly or ghost-like—either by intention of the artist or due to a natural aging and fading process, it is referred to as *pentimenti*.

> The word pentimento is derived from the Italian pentirsi, which means to repent or change your mind. Pentimento is a change made by the artist during the process of painting. These changes are usually hidden beneath a subsequent paint layer. In some instances they become visible because the paint layer above has become transparent with time. Pentimenti (the plural) can also be detected using infra-red reflectograms and X-rays. They are interesting because they show the development

> of the artist's design, and sometimes are helpful in attributing paintings to particular artists. (National Gallery, 2006).

Like pentimenti, the word *palimpsest* involves the acts and ideas of layers or concealment. Historically, a *palimpsest* refers to a reused manuscript page whose original text is either ghostly visible or made visible through X-ray or chemical agents. (Bey, n.d.).

We refer to both pentimenti and palimpsest in our discussion of Tegan and Sara's *Walking with a Ghost* music video as these terms provide rich technical and theoretical possibilities for interpreting and visually responding to intertextual artifacts of visual culture. During the writing of this article, we used a recursive writing process that incorporated layers of communication from computer-based chat, email, and hypertextual blogs to create a digital palimpsest that provided the 'underpainting' for this article. These layers become like ethereal and translucent ghosts of correspondence that bleed through our manuscript.

Similarly, we looked through the ghostly layers of meaning in the music video—the elastic arms and hands receding; the shadows; the mirrored reflections; the stark white and black grounds reminiscent of heaven and hell depictions; and the mantra or prayer-like repetitive melody of the music. The Tegan and Sara figures appeared to continually work or struggle to remove, peel back, or look through these layers separating light form dark space in the music video. In addition, an obvious connection may be made between pentimenti and palimpsest as the video relies on the metaphorical peeling back and repair of the twins' clothing-as-flesh to depict the removal and replacement of their hearts. Taylor's journal and video response to this music video added another layer of commentary, critique, and performance to the original body of the music video. Creating these responses was a way of figuring out and creating meaning by engaging in the ongoing call and response of visual culture's dialogue between consumers and producers.

Tracing Ghosts in Our Classrooms

Using the theme of cultural layering and the body, a graduate art education class at Virginia Commonwealth University visually responded to Tegan and Sara's *Walking with a Ghost* music video through the creation of digital works of art. Prior to this class experience, the students read an online article entitled "The Body without Memory: An Interview with Stelarc" by Mark Fernandes (2002). In this article, Fernandes described the work the Australian-based performance artist who incorporated themes of cyborgization and other human-machine interfaces in his work. Stelarc's performance

pieces often involved robotics that for example controlled parts of his body, performed with him on stage, and/or provided controls for his audience to participate in directing the movements of his body online. As a result of this reading, the students joined in a very lively online discussion where they questioned the idea that any human body, be it recreated/presented online or physically and tangibly present in front of us, could exist, perform, or be viewed without referencing memory of sorts. Several students engaged in a discussion about what is and is not bodily. One student discussed the way the body grows, takes shape and that once an object "enters into flesh, it technically becomes a part of the body" (bulletin board discussion, February 16, 2006). Another student argued that Stelarc's body was reacting to external stimuli. While another student suggested that when engaging with technology the apparatus becomes "one with the body" in much the same way as we drive a car and listen to music with ear buds.

This online discussion mirrored the earlier chat between Shannon and Pam as a way of beginning the inquiry and response to the video *Walking with a Ghost.* In this online discussion, students were encouraged to write—or think—through ways the body of the music video, along with the digital bodies that perform in it are connected to, constantly referencing, and critiquing social and cultural ideas, with a particular focus on the theme of the fragmented and editable contemporary body. In arts-based practice, inquiry takes place through artistic practice that blurs the traditional distinctions between research, teaching, and learning as students and teachers are asked to engage in all of these forms of inquiry in different ways.

Following an initial viewing of the video, the graduate students engaged in a criticism discussion that evoked comments upon their first impressions and questions. Initial discussion touched upon ideas such as trying to break through something, the search for balance, hospital references, black versus white as evil versus good, and symbolism of broken hearts. Through class discussion, students tried to imagine what each character in the video might be feeling or searching for in the video performance. Members of the class wondered collectively why there were an uneven number of twins present at the end of the video and what this could represent. As the students bemoaned the fact that they now could not get the haunting tune out of their heads, the class discussed ideas and technical devices associated with ghost-images, layers of meaning, pentimenti and palimpsest in such works of art as Joseph Norman's *Berlin Autumn* (Taylor, 2002) and *Archimedes Palimpsest* (Noel, Leson, Netz, Wolfe & McCourt, 1998). Moving from discussion to art making, the students then engaged in a pentimenti drawing exercise in which they used charcoal and white chalk to draw, wipe through, and draw again concentrated parts of the model's body. As each drawing was wiped through and drawn upon, the students created historical layers in their own works of art, and as they drew, wiped, and drew again, they physically became covered in charcoal as their own hands,

arms, and even faces had become pentimenti or palimpsests—layered too with remnants of their drawing experience.

Following the drawing exercise and the ritual washing away of the layers of experience in the classroom sink, the students again viewed the video and engaged in a collaborative Internet research activity. The discovery of the Tegan and Sara official web site provided many clues for uncovering layers of meaning in the music video. One graduate student interpreted the scene in which Sara found the headphones and began listening to music as the moment that everything got better for her. From there the video moved to the surgery with the disembodied hands of the invisible surgeon performing the procedure. This student also suggested that perhaps it was the music that did the mending. Another student suggested that Tegan removed her own heart in a sacrificial gesture for her twin in order to replace Sara's wounded heart.

In the discussion following the second viewing of the video, students began to talk about their plans and ideas for how they would construct a personal video response to the *Walking with a Ghost* video. One brave student described harrowing plastic surgery experiences that influenced the content of her visual response. She explained how the choices she had made about her body were influenced by her family, her history and by societal expectations of beauty. Her very personal, honest and revealing description of why she reacted the way she did to the video set the tone for the rest of the group. The ensuing conversation involved all of the students in sharing and reconstructing their own very personal narratives of body image, health, and physical and emotional scars. The therapeutic value of exploring personal narrative in new ways can be a form of healing as, "the therapeutic value of narrative becomes apparent each time we deconstruct debilitating life narratives and reframe them in ways that empower us, thus improving the quality of our lives (Parry and Doan, 1994 as cited in Kiesinger, 2002, p. 107). That said, we realize that this particular experience and this quotation is bordering on an art therapy discussion. Although there were and could be therapeutic effects of studying and making works of art and music videos with primary attention paid to the human body, it is not our intention to analyze or promote this aspect of this experience. However, it is important to recognize that a personal narrative approach to art study, research, and criticism is often laden with intensely private associations. Whether or not we choose or are allowed to voice those associations in a classroom setting largely depends upon the class dynamic and should be approached with careful consideration.

As the class was deeply moved by each other's courage and willingness to show vulnerability, the students patiently and sensitively worked together to create visual representations of their stories with computer technologies. In the final analysis and presentation of projects, students took widely varied approaches to their music video

responses. One created an animated PowerPoint presentation that resulted in a story of her family constructed with multilayered photographs and art synchronously timed with a favorite family song. Visual and metaphorical links flashed on each slide ultimately building a collage of stylized bodies overlapping one another. (See Figure 5). Another student constructed a meditation on pregnancy and motherhood by building a layered digital image including images of her pregnant tummy, her newborn son, and medical illustrations of mammary glands along with an eye altered to mimic video static. (See Figure 6). The following account was written by co-author Kathryn Helms, a graduate student in this class, as a description of her video response.

Figure 5. Jan Johnston, *untitled*, digital image. 2006.

Figure 6. Jill Blom, *untitled*, digital image. 2006.

Heart of Hearts by Kathryn Helms

Personal Reflection. *On a break from studying one day, I picked up a novel that I was in the process of reading. There was a poem by Derek Wolcott at the beginning of the book that I had not noticed before entitled "Love after Love."*

The time will come
when, with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome.

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart

to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

-Derek Walcott (Niffenegger, 2003)

This poem reminded me of the Walking With a Ghost video both because of how difficult it is to tell Tegan and Sara apart and because there is a giving of hearts that occurs twice. My thoughts about the music video kept returning to this exchange of hearts. I thought about what it means to "give your heart to someone." The idea of knowing something by heart sprang to mind and I began to think about different kinds of knowing. Aristotle believed that the heart was the seat of thought and reason.

With each viewing of Tegan and Sara's Walking with a Ghost video, different layers of meaning seemed to be revealed. I was drawn to the heart imagery. My association between the Wolcott poem and the Tegan and Sara video raised some questions that were related but unconnected at the surface level—the idea that you can know your self by heart—that there is a self inside your self that loves you best, in fact better than you have loved or can love anyone else.

To commit something to memory—to know it by heart—is to take it into yourself—internalize it—to write it into yourself, to immerse it into the fabric of your being. If this is so, can I know another body by heart? If I do, and I give my heart to that person (as a metaphor for love and commitment) am I giving that person back to her/himself? It seems the only person I can really know in this way is myself. I know myself by heart. And yet, that self is constantly changing. How can I commit to memory that which is in constant flux? If my bodily memory is a record of how I came to be—then knowing it by heart would be acknowledging that I could recall those facts and experiences for use in future events.

The concept of committing something to memory as connected to the physical body led me, through my study of such artists as Mira Schor and Lesley Dill, to imagine that the heart could be full of such static thoughts inscribed on it's surface and that these memories could be passed on through generations like other bodily characteristics.

So, my response began with a search through my father's genealogy files. I found images of my grandmother who died when I was very young and wondered what she knew by heart and whether I carried any of that with me. I chose images that showed her at different stages of her life and layered them on top of an image of her family. I selected text that was connected to my thinking about the Tegan and Sara video and worked it into the visual image. I hope to provoke viewers to think about and connect these images with their own memories and experiences. Their interaction with my video response will create links to ideas and thoughts that I have yet to consider. (See Figure 7).

Figure 7. Kathryn R. Helms, *Heart of hearts*, digital animation. 2006.

Analysis of the Experience: Music Videos and the Re-Performing Body in the Curriculum

We began this manuscript and this experience with a simple yet connective discussion between friends concerning a music video. What resulted was a highly personal and meaningful exchange that provoked the creation of short, simple, yet profoundly cathartic and kinetic works of art in a graduate art education class. The analysis and

research that resulted from these initial experiences included an in-depth exploration of the theoretical implications of performing bodies in music videos in general, with specific attention paid to Tegan and Sara's *Walking with a Ghost.* Along the way, we learned that our interpretations and responses were more profoundly meaningful when we made deliberate connections with the body, rather than simply looking to meaning, technical devices, and/or formal qualities. Our goal then became to find a way to transfer this arts-based research experience and this bodily way of knowing into our own teaching and learning. Rather than considering research, teaching, and learning as discrete practices, making arts-based inquiry the foundation of this curricular experience allowed students to integrate the personal, the critical, and the cultural into their understanding and response to the music video, *Walking with a Ghost.* Blurring these categories, we believe brought theory and practice closer together and strengthened our practice by allowing students not just to study visual culture, but also to become producers, critics, and expert voices inside and outside of the classroom.

Because of the personal nature of our own responses to the video, we recognized that taking this way of knowing into the classroom was a risky undertaking. However, as Taylor (1998) put it, "We, as art educators must be willing to take the risks we are asking of our students. We must share in our experiences, question our value systems, and critically look everyday at the education system in which we operate" (p. 141). That said, a classroom experience cannot be approached as personally or candidly as a conversation with friends. No matter how much of a community spirit is felt or desired in a classroom, trust can only be developed through reliable and consistent professionalism.

The class experience discussed in this manuscript took place mid-way through the semester. The students and the teacher knew each other well by that time. In addition, this was a small graduate class made up of all female students. Although one male student-worker was in the computer lab during most of the classes, we moved to a small seminar room without him when we first shared our personal ideas and responses to the video. This intimate setting coupled with the fact that their teacher shared the story behind her "I have my father's legs" video laid the groundwork for a trusting environment that we believe was crucial to the students' willingness to share their overwhelmingly honest and personal stories.

The hands-on, non-technological, pentimenti drawing exercise physically involved (1) the body as subject; (2) the body as maker of art; (3) the cleansing of the body; and (4) the body as layered meaning-making device. Students felt that this experience both assisted and reassured them that they could use visible as well as concealed layers in their art response. This way a personal imprint could exist in their art but personal pain

could be shielded or protected from public scrutiny or judgment if they desired. As we said previously, unlike our physical bodies, digital bodies can be transformed, copied and manipulated in numerous ways. The "machine" carries with it a distant, disembodied, and impersonal quality, which can offer students a sense of protection in private matters while also giving the impression of endless creative possibilities. Such technological pentimenti may harness the best qualities of both a recursive drawing and writing exercise and the capabilities of digital imagery to create layered, intertextual responses. In the computer, we can hide flaws as well as create refined attributes. We can use the computer to unmask and explore fears while at the same time consciously create impressions of strength and confidence. In other words, the combination of the physical pentimenti drawing exercise and the virtual computer construction was important in the students' experience of exploring and indeed re-performing their own bodies and memories as well as exploring Tegan and Sara's performance in the music video.

We offer the following as practical suggestions for approaching the ways that memory and the body affect, inform, and alter human perception in music video and other visual culture in art education.

1. Choose or have students choose a music video or other form of visual culture that makes obvious connections to the physical body in meaningful ways.
2. Involve students in inquiry-based research activities. Ask them to formulate questions in response to visual art, music videos, and other forms of visual culture. Give them time and resources to find the answers to those questions and share those answers with the rest of the class.
3. Involve students in physical activities as well as thought-provoking discussion, writing, and artmaking. Take time to compare these experiences through discussion or journaling.
4. Employ conflicting media and/or technique (such as charcoal and digitally manipulated imagery, using an opposing hand, and/or other body part to create, draw or manipulate) to provoke students to look both at and beyond their own physicality.
5. Finally, and most importantly, provide a safe and trusting environment that encourages open exploration while at the same time prevents inappropriate and insensitive responses.

Conclusion

Music video could be said to be the embodiment of narrative lifespans —beginning, middle, and end. Music video is a stylized vision on a screen pulsing with the beat of the music. Close your eyes and listen to the music and images appear in the mind helping you 'see' the music. Listen to a song on the radio and you can create your own

narrative, your own music video in the mind made up of re-purposed memories and fantastic imaginings. Such a shared cultural narrative in music video, popular films, and other forms of mass media represent limbs, appendages, and organs in a strangely sutured cultural body. "In music videos, narrative relations are highly complex and meaning can be created from the individual audio-viewer's musical personal taste to the sophisticated intertextuality that uses multidiscursive phenomena of Western culture" (Carlsson 1999, p. 6). Throughout Tegan and Sara's *Walking with a Ghost* video, the twins visually re-wrote one another's forms, duplicating, mutilating, and altering their bodies and memories. The ghosts of memory haunted the figures in this video. And they haunted us—the viewers, as we worked to make sense of and suture our own connection to the personal, emotional, and physical meaning provoked by the video body. Artist Bruce Nauman said "the point where language starts to break down as a useful tool for communication is the same edge where poetry or art occurs" (Nauman as cited in Warr, 2000). In other words, sometimes, we can express in visuals that which we lack words to describe, and a viewer of such visual material may, in turn, respond to and interpret the information differently than she or he would a written work.

In conclusion, we find that the end of this manuscript and this experience is indeed more of a beginning for us as we plan for both our future teaching and research. We had not seen until now the incredibly meaningful and personal artistic relationships that can be developed through a sensitive yet rigorous curriculum that centers on the body as cultural metaphor. Our interpretational experiences and those of our students revealed to us that as we—students, researchers, and teachers—walk with the ghosts of historical and contemporary media, they hauntingly expose and provoke in us a critical approach to cultural understanding.

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