

Learning about place through art

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As a practicing artist and lecturer of art in higher education, I investigate a phenomenon that is perceived to be lacking in art education content and andragogy. This is the phenomenon of Place and Identity that occurs specifically through artistic practice and thinking. My artistic practice and that of many others consistently explore Place and Identity issues through creating artworks and then interpreting what they mean. This is a form of practice led research where the doing and manipulation of materials, informs the understanding. This leads to new knowledge about Place and Identity. My PhD research has involved investigating the phenomenon of Place and Identity through narrative case studies of four Australian artists and developing my own auto-ethnography. Key findings are presented along with some examples as to how I have begun to implement this knowledge into my teaching practice. My intention is to generate a discussion about how the interconnection of artistic practice and thinking, Place and Identity might translate into higher art education. I posit that not only will this provide a student centered focus to art based education, but it also allows students to learn about the significance of Place and Identity in the practice of artists. Furthermore, this way of understanding art might help to deal with the problem in art education of defining what art is. Instead we can focus on the place of art, art and Place, or where art belongs.