

**Current Status and Possibility of A/r/tography in Asia:
The Japanese and Chinese Context - A Session of
"Re-thinking Writing and Graphy in Art Education"**

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Abstract

This paper shares the current status and possibility of a/r/tography in Asia with a review of two exemplars: 1) a faculty initiated project and graduate students researches in a session of a/r/tography at Tokyo Gakugei University Japan; and 2) A/r/tography Asian symposium hosted by A/r/tography Research Centre of Hangzhou Normal University China. Our site profiles demonstrate the case study of introduction and adaptation of a/r/tography into Asian context and how it could be merged specifically with the culturally and socially diverse communities of practice beyond the western paradigm. Together this discussion will introduce how research with, in and through the visual arts is a pedagogic act and action that has bearing on our work as scholars and our supervision of graduate students entering research with a perspective of experimentation on a/r/tography.

1. Introduction

Due to expanding globalization, various social divided and exclusion, we need to be engaging with practice and research of art education relating to these complicated situations. Under the trend of competency base education, we have been faced with a demand to account for our practices with scientific validity. However, the role and the function of art is not limited to the formation of competencies. We need the theories and methodologies that could deal with and encourage the inquiry process of a life full of uncertainty and ambiguity, and that could touch the core of the individual and the intricate relation between culture, society and history. A/r/tography could deals with such a complex, ambiguous and relational living experience and identity the in-between space where "artists-and-teachers-and-researchers who examine educational phenomena through an artistic understanding and inquiry process" (Springgay, Irwin, and Kind, 2008, p.87) . Theory and practice will enhance the student's/learner's living inquiry in their own relational context and existence through the process of art education. We have been conducting the introduction and adaption of a/r/tography to the Asian contexts of Japan and China. It was started from faculty and graduate student research and practice. The review of two exemplary sessions will show the current status and possibility of a/r/tography in Asia.

2. Current status and possibility of a/r/tography in Japanese context

2. 1 The project of the first translation of a/r/tography text in Japanese

Tokyo Gakugei University (TGU) is engaged in the first translation of a/r/tography text in Japanese with the supervision of Dr. Rita L. Irwin. The session on a/r/tography was held on April 21, 2017 featuring Dr. Rita L. Irwin and Dr. Anita Sinner. The translation book will contain several samples of a/r/tography, not only the articles that have been published, but also several new a/r/tography samples conducted in a Japanese context that were presented at the latest session of "Re-thinking Writing and Graphy in Art Education" which was held on November 11, 2017 (Table.1).

Time	Presentation
13:00	Introduction: "Re-thinking Writing and Graphy in Art Education" Dr. Koichi Kasahara, Associate Professor, Art Education, TGU.
13:00	"Living In-Between Actors, Facilitators and Researchers" Dr. Takashi Takao, Associate Professor, Drama Education, TGU. Rino Yoshida, The United Graduate School of Education (Doctoral Program) at TGU Sayako Iwata, Graduate School of Education (Master Course) at TGU
13:50	"Write the production process: The world which surrounds a work. About acceptance and a qualitative change." Shuji Haruno, Osozo-ya
14:40	" An expression transforms the gaze for self" Shotaro Nakamura, art teacher of Setagaya attached secondary school at TGU.
15:20	"A/r/tography and Poetry: From an Experience of a Workshop at UBC" Ken Morimoto, M.A. Education at ICU
15:20 16:00	" Inquiry on "Real Sky" through a Workshop following the Great East Japan Earthquake" Dr. Koichi Kasahara,
17:00	Close

Table1. The contents of the session of "Re-thinking Writing and Graphy in Art Education"

2. 2 Presentations by faculty and graduate students at TGU

After a brief introduction by Dr. Koichi Kasahara, Dr. Takashi Takao, faculty of TGU and graduate students of drama education, made their presentation. These researches illustrated their engagement in practice within in-between as an actor/researcher/facilitator. They suggested the possibility of a/r/tography which

enables them to be conscious of simultaneousness and the multiplicity of their existence and relationship in the drama workshop. They showed the intensity of their ambiguous/uncertain identity through the continuous reflection with "Graphy".

2. 3 A/r/tography in community based art project

Mr. Shuji Haruno was a curator of an art museum, is currently an art teacher at a public secondary school, and is engaging with research. He is a person who is artist/researcher/teacher. He presented "Write the Process of Production: The World Surrounds a Work, Acceptance and a Qualitative Change" through a certain community art project. He happen to met six senior citizen in their 80's who were engaged in the preservation of memories of a bombing shelter which had existed in their neighborhood until the early part of the postwar period when they were young. It represented the experiences and the memories of that period of the Second World War and their childhood. They made the shelter as small-scale clay model by retracing their memory. Haruno compiled these inquiry and process into small books (Figure 1) and also made the metaphorical installation work. The artwork was exhibited at the "Hibiki Hall" for music. "Hibiki" means the resonance of sound. The project, art works and books resonated senior citizen's memories and history, and hope for peace.



Figure 1. Artist book and the installation work by Shuji Haruno

2. 4 The gaze for self: art as the process of transformation

Mr. Shotaro Nakamura is a secondary school art teacher. He presented "An expression transforms the gaze for self." He had been drawing pictures in notebooks from the beginning of his undergraduate education. His notebooks reached over one hundred. His graduation work showed his journey and inquiry (Figure 2) of practices and identity, and the process of his self-transformation. He went back and forth in between making, thinking and writing, and exhibited the whole process by displaying notebooks, prints and writings.

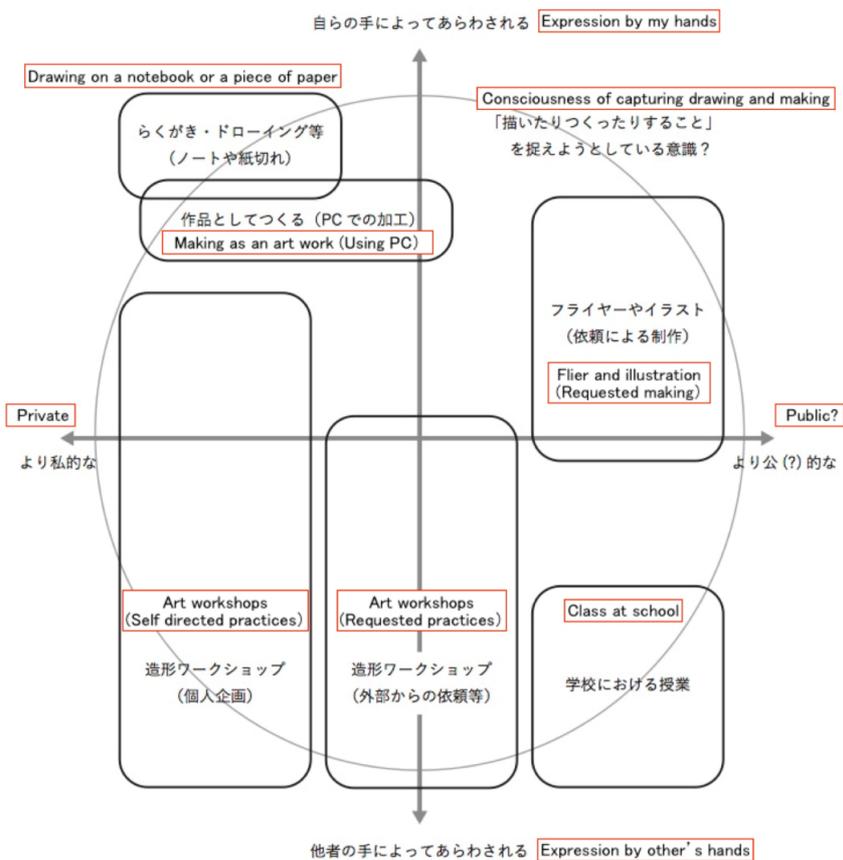


Figure 2.The reflected overview of practice and inquiry.

2. 5 A/r/tography and poetry: from an experience of a workshop at UBC

Mr. Ken Morimoto presented "A/r/tography and Poetry: From an Experience of a Workshop at UBC." He visited UBC and participated in "KIZUNA: Liminal Storytelling" by Yoriko Gillard, and "Poetry Workshop" by Carl Leggo, and introduced the a/r/tography and poetry workshop. Through the workshop, he recognized the importance and possibility of ability to involve those who are not explicitly so-called "artists," "teachers," or "researchers"

as participants, and "the sense of shared experience and artistic practice through the organic generation of art through the process of writing and speaking" (Morimoto, 2017).

2.6 The integration of a/r/tography and critical issues of the Fukushima disaster

Dr. Koichi Kasahara presented "Inquiry on "Real Sky" through a Workshop following the Great East Japan Earthquake." The workshop of "real sky" was an outreach program of the Fukushima Biennale, and made him rethink his relationship with his hometown of Fukushima following the disaster. The words "real sky" is the phrase in the poem "An Innocent Tale (1928)" (Takamura, 1966), and is connected with Fukushima. He came back to Fukushima, took photographs in his young days, collected images of "sky" and planned the workshop. The workshop was held at a kindergarden. He created a big puddle with teachers and parents. The scenery of the sky reflected in the puddle mirror changes its expression every moment. While feeling the swaying light and the beauty of the sky, children, parents and teachers enjoyed and appreciated the sky in the puddle (Figure 3). Next, children played with the images of "sky" (Figure.4, 5) with things that they made to play with the images. Triggs, Irwin, & Leggo (2014) noted "the integrative and augmentative events of perception are entire experiences of reality." Those images of "sky" shared with participants become to a new reality of his/their "real sky" of Fukushima. The inquiry and a/r/tographic engagement newly regenerated the relationship between Fukushima and him.



Figure 3. Children looking at the sky reflected in the puddle.



Figure 4. "Foxtails shaking in the wind" Photograph used in the activity.(left)

Figure 5. "Swaying chrysanthemum. (right) Photograph: Koichi Kasahara, 2016, in Fukushima city.

These exemplars could be appreciated because *a/r/tography* could visualize the in-between space and relationship among people, society and history where it is not easy to express, share and think about the events and stories. It could contribute to living practices, a life-creating experience (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, 117) of one's life as shown in the above exemplars in a Japanese context.

3. Current Status and Possibility of *A/r/tography* in Chinese Context

3.1 Translation from *A/r/tography* to 藝遊学

To translate "*a/r/tography*" from English into a very different kind of language is sometimes more innovation than representation. The term of *a/r/tography* (Irwin & de Cossan, 2004) has been initially translated into Chinese as 藝遊誌 (Yi-you-zhi) by arts-based educational researchers in Taiwan (e.g. in Hong, or 洪詠善, 2013). In the beginning, I could not accept this translation for it does not resemble its English origin focusing on the artist/researcher/teacher identification. However, in the end, after years of searching for a more appropriate one, I acknowledged that direct representational translation is neither possible nor necessary.

It is impossible because *A/r/t*, as acronym of artist/researcher/teacher, has no equivalent Chinese expression due to the nature of the alternative symbolic system, which must also be the similar case in Japanese; besides, the focus of *A/r/t* on an identity issue is difficult for Chinese to comprehend. I encountered the term of *identity* myself for the first time in a classroom discussion in 2011, when I arrived in Canada as an international student. I was bewildered by the term until I

realized that there is no equivalent Chinese term for “identity” that is as popular as it is in the West. It was a cultural shock for me.

“Identity” is translated into “身份认同” (acknowledgement of the part that I myself belongs) in Chinese, but this is a modern technical term, never used in spoken language or Chinese classics. In daily usage, the closest association of “身份” to “identity” is “身份证” (Resident Identity Card) .

Chinese academics are more adaptive to reciprocal shifting among identities than the Western counterparts. For example, the teacher’s profession, according to *On the Teacher* (師說) by Han Yu(韓愈, AD768 –824) , consists of three identities of the philosopher (傳道), the professional master (受業), and the spiritual mentor (解惑)¹. The identity of a literati artist commonly shifts reciprocally among the academics (文人), the poet (詩人), the painter/calligrapher(書畫家), and the civil servant (仕). Thus, this focus on transformative identity in A/r/t is simply too natural to argue for in Chinese context.

Recognizing that it is neither possible to translate the acronym of “a/r/t”, nor necessary to focus on the identity issue of the a/r/tographer in Chinese context, I started to admire Taiwan translation of 藝遊誌, for it emphasizes on the dynamic initiative of the slash, “/”, in “a/r/tography”, which I believe is at the core of a/r/tography as research methodology that potentially encourages pedagogical praxis.

The translation of 藝遊誌 refocus more on the praxis aspect of a/r/tography, such as: Playing with art, researching through art, social networking through art, and flowing with art, or being open-minded to wherever the art leads us. Thus the

¹韓愈《師說》：師者，所以傳道受業解惑也。Translated by Shih Shun Liu (1977) as “It takes a teacher to transmit the Way, impart knowledge and resolve doubts.” With reference to a translation retrieved 10:50 March 1, 2018 from <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/rct/renditions/sample/b08.html>

translation is a line of flight that successfully reterritorialized a/r/tography in the context of Confucianism.

There is one variation from 藝遊誌 to 藝遊學, as translated by me in mainland China in 2017. Small though, this variation implies a significant difference. To replace 誌, method of documentary, with 學, discipline of study, indicates what I envision the possibility of a/r/tography in Chinese context. As 誌, it implies a methodology, counting on documentary, not too far apart from the range of qualitative research. As 學, it implies that a/r/tography is a new discipline of study, with new objective, new methodology and new scope of a field of research, with the potential to redefine the field of Art Teacher's Education into A/r/t Education. I replace 誌 with 學, because 藝遊 has reterritorialized a/r/tography onto a new plane of consistency in Chinese context, holding together the multiplicity comprised of two Chinese traditional professions, the teacher and the literati artist.

Modeled after Confucius, the teacher should play his/her role as moral exemplar as well as companion of students in the way of a flock of fish swimming together, freely orientated and being led at the same time. That pedagogical tradition has a Chinese term “从遊”, literally “swimming together”.

Combining Confucian tradition of 从遊, swimming together, with the literati artists' tradition of 技进乎道, arts evolving to Tao, 藝遊學 is the becoming of A/r/tography with abundant antiquated cases of artist/researcher/teacher training that inspire our contemporary praxis. In this way, Chinese translation of 藝遊學, as consequence of the East-West, historical-contemporary dialogue, opens up new possibilities for a/r/tography in Chinese context.

3. 2 First Asian A/r/tography Symposium and A/r/tography Research Centre of HNU

I first introduced A/r/tography to Art Education Dept., School of Fine Arts, Hangzhou Normal University (HNU) in May, 2015, when, acting Chair of the department, I delivered a presentation on my pedagogical reform of a traditional field trip course with a/r/tographic approach, which is also the theme of my PhD

dissertation *From an Art Field Trip to an A/r/t Field Trip* under the supervision of Dr. Anita Sinner at Concordia Univ., Canada. With that pedagogical experimentation, I tried to convince my colleague that a/r/tography is not just some abstract philosophical theory, but has significant potential in pedagogical application.

Since then, colleagues and graduate students have started to collaborate with me on a few a/r/tographic projects that have been fruitful and won social attention. In Sept., 2017, A/r/tography Research Centre was officially set up by HNU. A month later, the 1st Asian A/r/tography Symposium was held at School of Fine Arts, HNU during Oct.6-9, 2017, with the theme “Asian experience: Cross-cultural application of a/r/tography”, at which Dr. Rita Irwin, Dean of Honor of A/r/t Research Centre, delivered the keynote speech.

At the symposium, a/r/tographers present their research, introduce their experiences and experiments in Asian context; take a field trip tour to schools belonging to the Lower town District School Board, which has around 500 art teachers, and is the contracted base of A/R/T Research Center for pedagogical experimentation; And visit the exhibition of two a/r/tographic projects that benefit kids of special need.

Time	Presentation/Workshop/Field Tour/Exhibition
Oct. 7th	
9:00am - 9:30am	<i>A/r/tography and the Pedagogic Invitation</i> Dr. Rita Irwin (Canada) & Dr. Valerie Triggs(Canada)
10:30am - 11:00am	<i>Proposal of Hypothetic Model of ///Space for A/r/tographic Pedagogy</i> Dr. Jun Hu
11:00am - 11:30am	<i>Inquiry on "Real Sky" through Workshop after the Great East Japan Earthquake</i> Dr. Koichi Kasahara (Japan)
1:30pm - 2:30pm	<i>MA: A Cross Cultural Encounter of A/r/tographic Spaces in/between</i> Dr. Anita Sinner (Canada) & Dr. Jun Hu
3:00pm - 3:30pm	<i>Aesthetic Encounter and Ethics: the Space between</i> Dr. Boyd Wright (Canada)
3:30pm - 4:00pm	<i>Enhancing Social Ability of ASD Sufferers through Relational Art</i> Dr. Jun Hu, Chu Wang & Mengjing Zhu

4:00pm - 4:30pm	<i>What Can We Learn from Blind Children's Tactile Painting?</i> Dr. Jun Hu & Jiangyan Qian
6:30pm-9:00pm	<i>Exhibition of On-going A/r/tlink projects:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blind Children's Print Making • A/r/t Therapy for ASD Rehabilitation <i>Blind Print-making Workshop</i>
Oct. 8th	
8:30am - 9:00am	<i>Teacher Certification Examination as the Institutional Barricade: Art-based Educational Research on Art Teacher Recruitment</i> Dr. Sunah Kim (Korea)
9:00am - 9:30am	<i>Intergenerational Communities Engaging through Art Education in China</i> Dr. Geraldine Burke (Australia) & Dr. Jun Hu
10:30am - 11:00am	<i>A/r/t Field Trip from 2015 to 2017</i> Dr. Jun Hu, Xiaohong Shi, Xuan Liu, Qingrong Yang
11:00am - 11:30am	<i>Exploring A/r/tography in Design Education</i> Dr. Salvador Edmundo Valdovinos Rodriguez (Mexico)
Afternoon	Round Table Talk
6:30pm-9:00pm	<i>Exhibition of On-going A/r/tlink projects:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blind Children's Print Making • A/r/t Therapy for ASD Rehabilitation <i>Smell Game Workshop</i>
Oct. 9	
Morning	Field Tour to Yangzi River Experimental School (Qiushui Rd Campus) to observe the on-going courses as a/r/tographic pedagogical application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kindergarten Children's Ink-and-Water Painting</i> • <i>Primary School Leather Silhouette Animation Making</i>
Afternoon	Field Tour to Yangzi River Experimental School (Sport Park Campus) to observe the on-going course, which is an a/r/tographic project between HNU and Monash Univ. of Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational Art Education (1st grade pupils & retired elderly in local community)

Table2. The contents of Asian A/r/tography Symposium

3. 3 A/r/tography in the Curriculum of Art Education Program, HNU:

Operated as the leading a/r/tographic reform project of the art teacher training program at HNU, the A/r/t Field Trip is an annual course first conducted with 40 junior undergraduate students in 2015, then 38 in 2016 and 40 in 2017. Each offering of the course took around three weeks to travel along the historic Silk Road. The course curriculum is guided by six Chinese couplets in classic style. The poetic effect of each couplet indicates a step of specifically targeted critical thinking, that comprise three rounds of turn and return, constituting what Bergson calls “precision in philosophy” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 29). There are a few academic achievements coming out of this project (Hu, in press a, b, c; Sinner, Jun, & White, in press).

3. 4 A/r/tographic Project for Kids of Special Needs

In line with a/r/tography in Chinese context, namely the tradition of literati art, 藝遊學 implies the possibility of social networking and mental health enhancement through art. This pedagogical potential of a/r/tography is explored in special education through art, aimed at enhancing social ability of autistic children and self-esteem of blind children through creativity (Figure 6, 7).



Figure 6. Part of Mosaic Animation Project, by 9 autistic children at Yang Lingzi Special School, 2017



Figure 7. Eight Blind kids' print-making exhibition at Zhejiang Art Gallery, 2017

3. 5 Folding and Unfolding “/” in A/r/tography

Interpreting “/” with Chinese-Japanese concept of *ma* (間), it unfolds how *a/r/tography* acts in the manner of non-representative research that achieves precision through intuitive discrimination of differences and repetitions.

The slash, /, in “*a/r/tography*” indicates the space “in/between”. The pictograph of *ma*, 間, depicts the space within a symmetrical architectural structure between two posts, the repetition of which comprises classic East Asian architecture. Dr. Jun Hu’s paper *Ma as Machinic Component* (in press) explains how *ma* acts as matter-function with cultural significance beyond architecture.

In the *A/r/t* Field Trip, this spatial aspect of *ma* is actualized in *contrast-linking* (对联), the asymmetrical formalization of the couplet, which is the basic element of classic Chinese poetry that enables differences stand out of sameness, inversions out of no-inversion and reversions out of no-reversion. That discussion unfolds how “/”, in the curriculum of *A/r/t* Field Trip, involves a plurality of meanings while being minimalist in appearance. That discussion is partly presented in this conference with the theme “*Ma*” and the space *in-between: A China-Canada pedagogical exchange* (Sinner, Hu & White, in press).

4. Conclusion

These exemplars introduced how the research with, in and through the visual arts is a pedagogic act and action that has bearing on our work as scholars and our supervision of graduate students entering research with a perspective of experimentation in *a/r/tography*. All of the exemplars inquired about various aspects of life and relations, and that gave a form to the events and stories which are not easy to express, share and think about. That process generates entire experiences of reality. In the Japanese context, we could see the theory and practice of *a/r/tography* provides the new sensibility and methodologies to inquire about the in-between space within individuals, social and historical relationships.

From the insight of a Chinese context, by adapting Canadian a/r/tography to an Asian context, we, instead of treating tradition and contemporary as successive, have positioned tradition in parallel to the contemporary, that conditions the questions of both “what is tradition/contemporary” and “what is not,” so as to open up a variety of a/r/tographic possibilities.

The emergence of a/r/tography in Asia will promote a rethinking of current theoretical perspectives and methodological protocols. This will also activate the development of alternatives for the demands of accounts with scientific validity, The core concept of the INBETWEEN has come to the fore as a mechanism to mediate shifts underway in our institutions and to establish new discourse in our graduate programs, as well as expanding the role of a/r/t to new topography.

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