

ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

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By

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify what resources were necessary to maintain the identities of both artist and art teacher and to understand how the identities of artist and art teacher informed each other. This study consisted of semi-structured interviews with five artist teachers who teach in various contexts (elementary, high school, community college, private liberal arts, and nonprofit). A three cycle qualitative coding method was used to analyze the artist teachers' interviews. This study found that the resources of community, students, institution, money, creative energy, and time interact in dynamic ways to support artist teachers' ability to thrive in both identities. Additionally, the identities of artist and art teacher were found to sustain each other. In conclusion, when artist teachers access the resources required for both their identities to thrive, they can give their students a better art education and experience greater personal and professional fulfillment.

Artist Teacher Identity

Art class is a haven for students to express themselves, take risks and problem solve, learn artistic skills and mediums, and connect with the world around them. Art teachers must create safe and collaborative spaces, facilitate meaningful and rigorous conversations, model artistic expertise, and connect their teaching to students' lives and worlds. It would seem obvious that art teachers would self-identify as artists, and that their artist identity would support their teaching practice. However, it is very difficult to maintain the identities of both artist and art teacher. In fact, art teachers in K-12 education are not expected to maintain their artist identity (Graham & Zwirn, 2010). Yet when individuals access the internal and external resources necessary for maintaining both artist and art teacher identities, then these two identities can sustain each other and benefit art education as a whole. Studies have shown that a thriving artist identity can support an individual's teaching identity, and thus enable them to give their students a better art education and experience greater personal and professional fulfillment (Adams, 2003; Bremmer et al., 2020; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, 2010; Thornton, 2011).

There is limited literature on the topic of art teacher and artist identity. The attack on funding for the arts and focus on standardization creates an environment in which the value of the arts must be proven; therefore many more studies about art education exist in order to prove the value of art education and arts integration rather than to explore identities, practices, and pedagogy within the field of art. This study aims to take the value of art as a given and discover more about art teachers, specifically, art teachers who are also artists.

This study uses the term "artist teacher" to describe individuals who are both art teachers and artists. Naming this identity is important; the lack of a common name for this identity elevates the challenge of needing to prove its legitimacy and value in education. By naming and

accepting the artist teacher identity as valuable, focus can turn to how to support this identity through teacher preparation programs and professional development. The Artist-Teacher Scheme (ATS) is a new model of professional development created to support art teachers' ability to maintain their artistic practice through providing opportunities for artistic growth. Models such as the ATS have long-term benefits for artist teachers and their students (Adams, 2003; Hall, 2010; Thornton, 2011); however, the ATS model is not the norm and more support is needed.

The questions this study seeks to answer are: what are the resources necessary to maintain the identities of both artist and art teacher? How do the identities of artist and art teacher inform each other? And, ultimately, how can I become both an artist and an art teacher and thrive in both identities?

Literature Review

In recent years, more literature has emerged on the topic of artist and art teacher identity. These studies ask important questions about how individuals who are both art teachers and artists impact education, how artistic and teaching practices influence each other, what skills are necessary to maintain the dual identities, and what changes need to be made in teacher preparation programs and professional development so that more individuals can thrive as both art teachers and artists (Adams, 2003; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; MacDonald, 2017). However, this field of study has a long way to go; despite the emergence of professional development programs such as the ATS, it is rare for aspiring artist teachers to receive programmatic support and guidance; art teachers in K-12 education who maintain an artistic practice are an anomaly.

Definitional Distinctions

Firstly, the question of how to define the identity of an individual who is both an artist and an art teacher must be addressed. The various terms studies use have distinct implications. In some definitions of identity, one identity acts as the verb and the other acts as the noun, such as “teaching artist” (Graham and Zwirn, 2010). In other definitions, such as “artist teacher,” both identities act as nouns (Adams, 2003; Hall, 2010; Hoekstra, 2015; Thornton, 2011). Strickland (2020) used the term “Artist Educator”: the identity terms are capitalized and lack a hyphen in order to show equal validity and “equilibrium between the two words.” Garber et al. (2020) included hyphens to show unified identity and used the term “maker-teachers” rather than “artist-teachers” in order to encompass a “wider variety of making practices.” Silverman (2006) distinguished “Educators as Artists” from “Teaching Artists” in order to focus on the process educators can go through to reclaim their artistic identity. Thornton (2011) presented the term “teacher of art” to describe art teachers without an artistic practice, yet emphasized the reality that identities change throughout an art teacher’s career, and thus problematized the notion that an individual is ever solely an “artist teacher” or “teacher of art.” Finally, Bremmer et al. (2020) introduced the term “teacher as conceptual artist” for individuals whose pedagogy becomes their art. Looking simply at these definitional distinctions begins to reveal that there is not a clear way to understand one's identity as both an art teacher and artist and suggests a potential conflict between which identity takes precedence.

Connections Between Artist and Teacher Identities

Various studies have examined the conflicts and synergy between these two identities. Anderson (1981) proposed that to solve the conflict of professional identity, individuals should look to the distinct purposes of the roles; he argued that art teachers should think of themselves fundamentally as pedagogues since their primary purpose is pedagogical. In contrast, more

recent articles investigate the overlap between the two professions. Hoekstra (2015) posited that the duality between art and education may not be the source of conflict in the concept of the artist teacher; rather, the source of conflict was a “limited understanding of education, in such a way that art would appear to be contrasting to education.”

Many recent studies propose that the roles of artists and art teachers are synergistic, intertwined, fluctuating, and complex (Adams, 2003; Bremmer et al., 2020; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, 2010; MacDonald, 2017; Strickland, 2020; Thornton, 2011). When artist teachers successfully balance their identities, they can “[weave] the pursuits of teaching and artmaking into a tapestry of complementary activities” (Graham & Zwirn, 2010). However, the path to identity formation requires conviction and resilience. As Hall (2010) underscored, “negotiating a new identity that integrates the teacher self or persona with an artist self is not a straightforward or always comfortable process.”

How Artist Teachers Can Manage their Two Identities

Various studies have examined different approaches to the challenge of identity integration and management. Hatfield et al. (2006) introduced the use of identity management strategies, which involved either integrating the two identities into one or keeping the two identities separate and managing time accordingly. Hall (2010) stressed that “artist teachers need to develop skills of negotiation through which they can articulate and continuously reappraise their art practice and, at an appropriate stage, use that practice to inform their teaching.” Identity management is a continual process; artist teachers must exercise prudence regarding how and when they integrate identities.

MacDonald (2017) emphasized the importance of prioritizing one identity over the other, specifically, the importance for an artist teacher to develop their teaching identity before

expecting to continue their artistic practice. The reasoning behind this assertion was that for beginning artist teachers, their teaching identity was often the weaker of the two. Since both art-making and teaching required substantial time, the expectation that an artist teacher could maintain their artistic output while developing their teaching identity would lead to the detriment of both practices (MacDonald, 2017). The study showed that during the first three years of teaching, participants were prone to “underpreparing and overextending” themselves; thus, they needed to exercise caution about how they enacted their artist identity. The concept of becoming was central to MacDonald (2017)’s claims: since developing the identities of artist and art teacher take significant time, one must always view themselves as in the process of becoming. Artist teachers should be prepared for the balance between their two practices to have a shifting nature (MacDonald, 2017).

Different studies proposed opposing approaches to the conceptualization of identity. MacDonald (2017) problematized ambitious and ambiguous conceptualizations of identity such as “artist teacher,” cautioning the unrealistic expectations related to maintaining both identities. Instead, MacDonald (2017) recommended individuals “linger in the transient space between artist and teacher” and devote attention to developing each practice individually, especially the weaker of the two, for several years before attempting conceptual integration.

In contrast, Bremmer et al. (2020) introduced a model of full conceptual integration of the artist and art teacher identities: “teacher as conceptual artist.” This model hinged upon the overlap between progressive pedagogy and conceptual art: both can be democratic, situational, and social change-oriented processes. Conceptual art, which emphasizes engagement of the mind, process rather than product, and the indistinction between art and daily life, can allow teachers to work in ways that are established in the arts, yet not present in school contexts

(Bremmer et al., 2020). An intervention presented arts teacher students with six modes of conceptual art—school as material, accumulate, use closeness, co-construct, present narratives, and embrace invisibility—as ways to transform their pedagogy into a simultaneous art practice (Bremmer et al., 2020). For example, teachers as conceptual artists could prompt students to question school rules and procedures through “school as material,” act as fellow artists to their students through “co-construct,” or produce artistic documentation of learning processes through “present narratives.” This study was important because greater value and priority were placed on the teacher identity; the conceptualization of individuals’ teaching practice as being simultaneously their artistic practice could “narrow the gap” between the identities of teacher and artist and allow individuals to integrate their two identities into each other.

The Challenges to Maintaining an Artist Identity

Studies also described the distinct challenges art teachers face in maintaining their artist identities. K-12 art teachers are not expected to maintain an artistic practice; as Graham & Zwirn (2010) stated: “teachers who continue active artist lives are a significant anomaly.” Schools valued conformity: to become an artist teacher, an individual had to defy what was expected of them (Graham & Zwirn, 2010). Hatfield et al. (2006) concluded that administrators, in particular, presented the greatest challenge to artist teachers, because they “did not provide the meaningful feedback needed to maintain an ongoing sense of identity for the art teachers.” In addition to lack of administrative support, “unfair professional assumptions and expectations,” the absence of colleges, and a lack of money were challenges (Strickland, 2020). Teaching could sap artist teachers of their creative energy and time (Garber et al., 2020). A lack of support for maintaining an artist's identity caused negative perceptions of identity and loss of confidence. Artist teachers could feel like failed artists, feel unrecognized for their artistic abilities, feel like they weren't

devoting themselves enough to teaching, or feel frustration towards school systems for preventing them from being an artist (Bremmer et al., 2020; Thornton, 2011).

Benefits of the Artist Teacher Identity for Students

Despite the challenges artist teachers face in maintaining their artist identity, studies show that art teachers who continue their artistic practice have profoundly positive impacts on their students and K-12 art education as a whole (Adams, 2003; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, 2010; Thornton, 2011).

According to Graham and Zwirn (2010), “How Being a Teaching Artist Can Influence K-12 Art Education”, artist teachers facilitated meaningful and current artistic exploration. Their ongoing artistic practice gave them an incentive to stay current and connected to contemporary art. They were likely to seek out-of-school learning experiences for their students, such as gallery or museum visits, bringing visiting artists into the classroom, or community-based art projects. Artist teachers ensured art-making was personally meaningful to their students and not only about techniques. They explicitly taught the connection between art and current social issues and guided students in questioning the world around them (Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Artist teachers transformed their classrooms into studio environments, a type of space which had lasting impacts on students. These studio environments were a refuge where students were welcome at all hours of the school day; they were safe and exciting spaces in which students could take risks, explore, and collaborate (Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Artist teachers drew upon their artistic expertise to facilitate rigorous and critical conversations about art, both in group critiques and individual discussions. Through nuanced interpretations of student work, artist teachers demonstrated their artistic confidence and

openness to new ideas. These types of problem-solving relationships turned art-making into a collaborative process (Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Artist teachers formed transformative relationships with their students. Working through the creative process themselves made artist teachers more empathetic towards their students' challenges and patient with "experiential learning and group process" (Garber et al., 2020). Artist teachers shared their own artistic struggles with their students and modeled experimentation, risk-taking, failure, and persistence. Students could see their teachers as fellow artists, trusted mentors, role models, and collaborators (Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Benefits of the Artist Teacher Identity for Artist Teachers Themselves

Studies show that artist teachers' ability to maintain the identities of both artist and art teacher is not only beneficial for students' education, it also provides personal fulfillment and sustains them in the education profession (Adams, 2003; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Thornton, 2011).

The creative act of making is essential to the human experience: it can provide a sense of interconnectedness and meaning, advance social justice and change, promote social-emotional wellbeing, facilitate self-expression and self-realization, and foster satisfaction in life (Garber et al., 2020). Artist teachers "regarded their identity and work as artists as being a source of renewal, life-long learning, professional development, and self-respect" (Graham & Zwirn, 2010). A thriving artist identity sustained artist teachers' "interest in school learning as an extension of their artistry," motivated them to keep school an interesting place for themselves and their students, prevented burn-out, and helped them continue their commitments to teaching (Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

The creative process of art-making increased artist teachers' confidence (Adams, 2003; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, 2010; Thornton, 2011). This confidence supported artist teachers in guiding the type of learning and practices among their students which would help them have a sense of liberation and voice (Thornton, 2011).

An individual's teacher identity can also benefit their artist identity. A teacher is a continual learner. Thornton (2011) outlined a parallel between "the teacher as artist working alongside students in joint creative enquiry" and Freire's dialogical process, in which the teacher is in dialogue with and learning from students. Teaching art kept artist teachers learning and trying new materials, mediums, styles, skills, and techniques, and motivated them to create art that was relatable to others (Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Impact of Professional Development on Artist Teacher Identity Formation

The artist teacher identity can benefit from professional development (Adams, 2003; Bremmer et al., 2020; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, 2010; Hatfield et al., 2006; Thornton, 2011). Since university art teachers are expected to maintain professional artistic practices, Graham & Zwirn (2010) asked, why is that not an expectation for K-12 art teachers? Professional development is essential for numerous reasons: it provides necessary recognition, increases self-confidence, and facilitates opportunities for artistic growth.

The ATS, which was developed to enable visual arts teachers to remain practicing artists, is an example of an effective professional development program. At its foundation is the conviction that art teachers who maintain their artists' practice will be "significantly more effective in the classroom or studio and more likely to be satisfied with their work in education" (Adams, 2003). The ATS offers opportunities for artistic growth, such as collaborations with galleries, in order for artist teachers to remain connected with contemporary art and artists, and

the mutual support of other aspiring artist teachers, in order to counter individuals' fear of losing touch with art and the "sense of isolation in the classroom" (Adams, 2003).

When both their identities are recognized as legitimate and important to each other, artist teachers can thrive. Thornton (2011) stated, "self-belief is vital to becoming an effective artist or teacher." The ATS is exemplary because it empowers artist teachers to name their identities and offers qualifications that are recognized by the educational system as valid. It gives artist teachers an opportunity to practice as artists in professional, contemporary contexts, and increases their knowledge, skills, and confidence in both the studio and the classroom. (Adams, 2003; Hall, 2010; Thornton, 2011).

Thornton (2011) concluded that being an artist teacher can be a liberating identity. He explained, "it is engagement with the pleasure of making and learning and acknowledgment by others of the individual's creative needs which seems to generate a sense of freedom for the artist and teacher" (Thornton, 2011). In order to access a sense of liberation, individuals must be prepared for the challenges along the path to becoming an artist teacher. With proper recognition, self-confidence, and opportunities to grow as an artist, artist teachers can create a greater impact on their students and experience personal and professional fulfillment.

While some research has been done on professional development, specifically the ATS model, much more research needs to go into other types of resources that can assist artist teachers in maintaining both artist and teacher identities. There is ample evidence about the challenges faced by artist teachers, but little in the way of guidance on what resources would help address these challenges. This is important to address because research has shown how beneficial a thriving artist identity can be for both art teachers and their students.

Questions of identity are individualized, personal, and diverse. This study explored the identities of five artist teachers who teach in unique contexts to answer the questions, what were the resources necessary to maintain the identities of both artist and art teacher? How did the identities of artist and art teacher inform each other?

Methods

Participants

In this study, the term “artist teacher” is used to describe participants. Although participants may not have self-identified using the term “artist teacher,” they all identified as both artists and teachers. The term “artist teacher” is used because both identities are described with a noun and given equal significance.

Five artist teachers participated in this study. Each artist teacher taught in a different setting in a mid-sized Colorado city. All artist teachers were white, four (4) were female and one (1) was male, and four (4) were older than 60 while one (1) was in their 30s.

Juliet

Juliet is a professional artist who teaches art at a community college. She has a degree in fine arts and has worked in painting, book arts, printmaking, and curation.

Brooke

Brooke teaches at a public high school. She specializes in metalsmithing, and although she never pursued it as a career, she created her own metalsmithing program at her high school. She is in graduate school for mindfulness.

Rob

Rob founded and directs Sculpted Sofa, an arts nonprofit, and is a working artist. His creative practice encompasses his personal artwork of drawing, painting, and sculpture, as well as the community-based public art projects he teaches.

Christine

Christine teaches art at a private liberal arts college. She is a professional artist who specializes in reduction woodcut printmaking.

Florence

Florence teaches art at a public elementary school. She has taught art for 48 years. Her artwork spans dozens of mediums and is very object-driven. She is currently a college supervisor in a Masters of Arts in Teaching program.

Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected using a combination of open and closed-ended questions (Appendix A). Questions were designed to provide information on experiences as an artist and/or teacher, as well as unpack each participant's perception of their identity as a teacher and an artist. Additional questions were posed based on a participant's answer to an initial question.

Procedure

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant. Questions were distributed to participants about one week prior to the interview. Interviews were in-person as well as on Zoom © and lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using Temi ©. Transcriptions were edited for clarity.

Data Analysis

A three cycle coding method was used to analyze each participant's answers to questions (Saldaña, 2013). An initial, structural coding method was used to identify relevant information

pertaining to the participant's background and perceptions as an artist and/or teacher. Focused coding was used to then identify the most salient categories: balancing identities; external challenges; internal challenges; systems of support; internal power; learning from students; time; and, changing curriculum. The final cycle employed axial coding methods to determine attributes for each of the salient categories (e.g., *respect* within systems of support).

Results and Discussion

Part I introduces each artist teacher and illustrates their experiences of self-doubt and internal power in order to contextualize this study's findings. Part II addresses the question of what resources are necessary to maintain the identities of both artist and art teacher. Part III addresses the question of how the identities of artist and art teacher inform each other.

Part I: Personal Identity: Confronting Self-Doubt Through Internal Power

For each of these artist teachers, it has been a lifelong challenge to maintain the identities of both artist and art teacher. In pursuing both art and teaching, self-doubt presents as a constant challenge to self-expression. Artist teachers cultivate internal power to mitigate their self-doubt; the term "internal power" is used to describe a range of skills for building personal strength and resilience, such as self-knowledge, positive habit-building, mindfulness, self-affirmation, and grounding oneself in the importance of art. The tension between self-doubt and internal power plays a daily role in the artist teachers' efforts to negotiate their dual identities and sets the context for the ways in which they balance their identities.

Juliet

Juliet explained that in the pursuit of being both an artist and teacher, "internal power... cannot be overestimated." She defined internal power as "developing the skills to access your personal strength, even as you're pulled in different directions or not necessarily getting the

accolades you need. It's so important to be really dedicated to developing skills to flourish and balance." For Juliet, these skills involve a commitment to routine and a connection to ritual.

Gender shapes the way in which Juliet navigates self-doubt. She sees herself "not as a woman artist, but as an artist who has traveled a woman's artist journey." Confidence and ambition are significant to her experience as an artist traveling the journey of a woman artist. She has learned that knowing she excels at something is not necessarily equivalent to confidence and ambition; confidence and ambition are qualities she has continually developed throughout her career.

In recent years, Juliet has experienced a loss of respect in her work environment. Reflecting on the hostility of her work environment, Juliet said, "Respect is so important. I think it's surprising how vulnerable one is to the loss of that." Juliet feels lucky for the years she spent early in her career cultivating her artistic identity and skills because that self-knowledge has bolstered her resiliency during years of deteriorating institutional respect.

Brooke

Mindfulness is Brooke's source of internal power, which sustains her artistic and teaching practices. Brooke's mindfulness practice changed her approach to both her artistic and teaching practice. She now draws strength from her ability to share vulnerability.

Brooke is bipolar and struggles with deep emotions. When making art before discovering mindfulness, she would engulf herself fully in the present moment. As she learned more about meditation and mindfulness, Brooke became more intentional about being in the present moment. She developed a greater awareness of when she was overextending herself and learned to take a step back from her artwork instead of being completely absorbed in it.

With teaching, Brooke knows that students pick up on her presence and emotional energy and mirror it back to her. In the past, she would “try to always just bring the upside, just always be up for them so that they would always be up.” Through mindfulness, she learned how to pay attention to what is going on in the present moment, and share this awareness of herself with her students. She found that “the more you can be vulnerable with them, in an appropriate manner, obviously, they will have more empathy.”

Brooke values holding positive relationships with children and helping them with social-emotional growth. Her prior teaching experiences of wilderness therapy, working with autistic students, and working with abused and neglected kids informs her present approach to teaching. She understands that behavioral outbursts are about the student, not herself, and addresses them with compassion rather than taking the outbursts personally.

Christine

Christine centers herself by remembering what is important. She knows that thriving as both an artist and an art teacher is a difficult task; it is not a feat many art teachers can achieve. Christine grounds herself in the meaning derived from being an artist; one of her favorite things about art is the “opportunity for expression and having something that is meaningful that I get to spend time doing.” The self-knowledge and solace Christine finds through being an artist sustains her. She said,

I learn a lot making art, and I have learned about myself in a number of ways, where I think I'm making this print about one thing, and then it turns out to really be about something else... And so making art has taught me a lot about myself and my history. It can be a discovery. It can also be a solace. Working through things like loss, making art can really be very helpful. I hope that some of my work does that for other people. A lot

of hospitals buy my artwork, a lot of places like that buy my artwork. And I thought, well, it must be healing in some way.

Artist teachers create art because it is deeply meaningful. Art can be a form of self-expression, self-actualization, healing, and communication (Garber et al., 2020).

When speaking about the internal power necessary to be an artist, Christine emphasized that numerous hurdles arise each day. She said,

Things will get in the way, because I don't think people always think [being an artist] is important. So you have to surround yourself with people who do think it's important. And you really have to think it's important yourself. Because it's really easy not to do it. It's really easy to find reasons not to do it. And I'm always surprised how many art teachers don't make art.

Christine's statements imply that she is facing the context of a general devaluation of art and artistic professions. Artist teachers do not live in a world in which their identities as artists are automatically valued; they have to deliberately seek out that value. Thus, surrounding herself with people who think art and being an artist are important is one of Christine's central practices.

Christine understands how easy it can be to lose the confidence necessary for making art when working as an art teacher. She gave the example of an informal art workshop given by her friend at the Colorado Art Educator conference. Her friend invited the art teachers crowding around to participate in his workshop for free, but charged those who only wanted to watch \$100 each. Christine remarked,

I was always surprised how many people left. They wanted to watch it. These were art teachers, but they kind of lost that confidence to make anything. And so I think if at all possible, it's really important [to keep making art].

The fact that so many art teachers lose the confidence to make art speaks to the immense challenge of maintaining the dual identities of artist and art teacher, and the necessity of developing wells of internal power to confront self-doubt.

Florence

Practices of self-affirmation are the most important activity Florence engages in to overcome self-doubt and capture wells of internal power. Florence cited practices such as “[respecting] myself as an artist” and “[respecting] art in my life.” To her, this means “giving art a place in my life that's just always going to be there in one way or another.” To do this, Florence commits to “create time to do art” and “create a studio space and work.”

Florence has also committed to “stay true and authentic to my original path for art-making, thinking, and writing,” and to “give myself permission to experiment and fail and fully experience the process.” She practices self-affirmations to “know that my ideas are valuable,” and to know that “what I have to contribute can make a difference.”

Florence strives to “choose artful enthusiasms” and “see and share the beauties.” She explained, “Something I do for myself as an artist is to be present to everything in life, as much as possible. Because every single minute is just full of beauties and wonderful things.” Florence’s statements echo what other artist teachers find is one of the purposes of art: being aware of life and the world around them. Her self-affirmations demonstrate the way in which she draws from deep wells of internal power.

However, despite nearly a half-century of experience teaching art and being an artist, Florence still experiences self-doubt about her legitimacy as an artist. Her internal voice says, “Am I really an artist? Am I an artist like she's an artist? Like that person who goes to the studio every day? Florence, are you sure you're an artist? Cause probably not.” Florence’s reality of

self-doubt, similar to other artist teachers' experiences, illustrates the continuous nature of self-doubt and the challenge of living in an environment adverse to being an artist (Thornton, 2011). It is essential for artist teachers to build strong foundations of internal power, whether through self-affirmation, self-knowledge, mindfulness, or positive habit building in order to confront that self-doubt. Each of these artist teachers is highly skilled and experienced, yet the internal challenge of holding the dual identities of artist and art teacher is ever-present.

An interaction Florence had with a presenter at a conference reveals the dualism and definitional challenge of fully committing to being both an artist and an art teacher. The presenter asked a room full of art teachers, "Are you an artist who loves teaching or are you a teacher who loves art?" In response, Florence said, "I put myself in the teacher who loves art [category] because I put my everything into my teaching." While Florence's choice to put herself into the core category of "teacher who loves art" is not in itself problematic, the fact that she was prompted to choose one core identity over the other reflects the problematic societal pressure to commit to a single career path. While some individuals may find it useful to choose one core identity and identify strongly as either an "artist who loves teaching" or a "teacher who loves art," others are forced to reduce their identity to fit into one definition or the other.

The reality is that sustaining the identities of both artist and art teacher is extremely difficult and requires great internal power. Yet artist teachers' ability to thrive in both identities is essential because they possess a great capacity to impact students and the world around them in their roles as artists and art teachers (Adams, 2003; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, 2010; Thornton, 2011). The illustration of each of these artist teachers' internal wells of power and realities of self-doubt set the stage for the way in which they access the resources available to them to sustain both identities. The resources of community, students, institution, money,

creative energy, and time interact in dynamic ways to support artist teachers' ability to thrive in both identities.

Part II: Resources

Community

Each of these artist teachers leverage the resource of their community to maintain their identities. Because the education system is not necessarily conducive to artist teachers thriving as both artists and art teachers, they rely on the formation of their own communities, which are smaller environments in which both professions can be valued and acknowledged. Artist teachers' communities are their neighborhoods, classrooms, groups of friends or co-workers, and families.

The community can be a medium of expression, in which artist teachers teach and create art with community members and within community spaces. The community can also be a support, in which artist teachers form groups of like-minded people who share the value of art-making or teaching (Adams, 2003). These communities sustain artist teachers in both their artist and art teacher identities.

Community as a Medium of Expression. Unlike the other four artist teachers, Rob teaches at a community arts nonprofit rather than at a school. He enacts his artist and art teacher identities by facilitating art in the community. Community is the heart of Rob's life's work; his nonprofit's mission is to "build community through creative projects." Rob ensures that Sculpted Sofa remains a truly community-based practice: this means that it is eclectic and co-constructed by community members. He created a broad, all-encompassing mission statement for Sculpted Sofa in order to maintain the organization's integrity as community-based: "To work with kids and community groups to create public art, to build community, and to create environments and

experiences that humanize our world.” He explained, “My goal was always that this was an organization that had lots of flexibility in it, so other people could bring their own passions within the context of the mission, which is very broadly written.” Rob reflected, “I think that's the strength of Sculpted Sofa: that it's varied and all of the pieces can still relate to each other.”

The organization of Sculpted Sofa echoes the strengths of Rob's personal identity. His ability to think in terms of multiple creative processes and hold many identities at once supports the nonprofit's mission to incorporate diverse strengths and eccentricities yet maintain cohesiveness. Rob noticed this parallel between his organization's identity and his personal identity, yet emphasized that it is also just part of “the nature of really being community based.”

The majority of Rob's expression as an art teacher and artist takes place in community spaces. Florence also acts out her identity in communities. Florence's definition of her core identity—“causing creativity and collaboration in communities”—mirrors the mission of Sculpted Sofa.

Florence enacts her core identity through both being an artist and being an art teacher. Therefore, she sees herself as always both an art teacher and an artist. She explained, “I don't have to remind myself, oh, this week you were a little heavy on the art teacher side. So next week let's beef up that artist. It's not like that at all. It's just what happens.” Florence also enacts her identity across diverse contexts. She said, “being an art teacher... extended far beyond the classroom that I teach in. Being someone who nurtures the creative process in people's experience has taken many forms.” For Florence, being an art teacher is way bigger than “a job you have in a school, although that's part of it;” being an art teacher involves nourishing her students' ability to connect to their own artfulness and the “infinite artfulness in the world.”

Florence has taught in many different contexts over her 48-year career. For her, being an art teacher *is* “causing creativity and collaboration in communities.”

Artist teachers create public art in communities as a means of social change. While social justice is a core purpose of Juliet’s own artwork, she also views her teaching as a practice of social justice. Juliet guides students’ development of personal voice. With her students, she discusses the challenge of being an artist in a society that doesn’t seem to value art and asks them, “What are we gonna do about it? Action equals hope.” Thus, every semester Juliet’s students create a piece of public art. She teaches them, “the more intrinsic you make art to society's environment, the more [society will] understand how intrinsic art is to humanity.”

One of Florence’s reasons for teaching art echoes Juliet’s commitment to social change. Florence said, “Art class provides agency for student artists to influence a community and transform the world. So seeing oneself as belonging to the world of art is one of the big things about my teaching.” Artist teachers establish a sense of belonging within their communities and ensure their students also feel a sense of belonging: to belong in a community involves the confidence to create art with community members and within community spaces, and the conviction that they can transform their communities through art.

Community as Support. Community is the greatest support to Rob’s identity. He said, “So much of what we do is only possible with the community's help. So the support is like a thousand points of light kind of thing with Sculpted Sofa.” This support can take the form of community members offering their help, which happens almost daily, or a parent expressing their gratitude for what their child is gaining through the organization. This reciprocal relationship between Rob and the community sustains his teaching practice.

Community is also an essential support for Christine, both to her identity as an art teacher and her identity as an artist. When she first began teaching, Christine didn't receive much useful instruction about how to teach art. At that time, her "most active teaching engagements were with people outside of art, talking about teaching." She sought the support she lacked by talking about teaching with her friends and observing other teachers. As Christine's experience demonstrates, community building can become an essential part of teacher training and professional development (Adams, 2003).

Just as community remains a vital part of Christine's teaching practice, working in a community of artists is the greatest support to her artistic practice. She said, "I think in being an artist, it's kind of a community. Having a community of artists is what's most supportive for me. Whether it's in a school or whether it's my friends." Christine gets together to create art with several different groups of people. For her, making commitments to other artist friends is in part a strategy to remain accountable to her plans to make art. Regarding getting into the studio to work, she said, "I always love it once I'm in there, but sometimes it would be challenging to get there if I didn't have a reason." Communities of fellow artists give Christine a reason to work.

Acknowledgment by one's community is also important. Christine is supported by having a lot of galleries, so she has "a lot of people that care about [her] work and want more of it." This acknowledgment is really motivating: she produces a lot more art when she has a deadline and reason to do it. When reflecting on support, Juliet also added, "The fact that people love your work... gives you strength." While artist teachers' life work involves serving communities and using communities as a medium of expression, they also rely on support and acknowledgment from their communities in turn.

Influence of Students

Artist teachers devote their energy to their students and find reciprocity and inspiration in their relationships with students. Some artist teachers create art simultaneously with their students and leverage their artist identity to connect with and support students during the creative process (Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Juliet introduced a metaphor to describe the energy output involved in teaching. She said teaching is like “exhaling for a whole semester,” and if it’s a great semester, “there's a kind of reciprocity in that your students are eagerly, enthusiastically inhaling and responding.” Juliet finds this dynamic very satisfying, although it does mean that she is “just in giving mode.” She finds reciprocity because

Seeing students find their voice [and] helping students find their power is a beautiful thing to do that nurtures the soul, and there's no question that every once in a while I have an exceptional student who I find inspiration in as an artist myself.

Florence also finds inspiration in her students. While she expressed initial hesitation about the fact that she didn’t create personal artwork very often, she reiterated her purpose and the way in which teaching was art in itself. Florence pondered,

If I've been teaching for 48 years by choice, I guess I really like it, and there's something about using the children and all the stuff in my room and the themes of life and the calendar, and whatever's happening in our country: using all of that as fodder. That is a work of art: making something out of all these little people and all this stuff and having them have an artfulness experience.

Thus, teaching itself is Florence’s primary creative practice. She creates art through her work with students (Bremmer et al., 2020). Although the energy devoted to students may inhibit artist

teachers' ability to be prolific as artists, the connections they form with their students are the most worthwhile and meaningful part of teaching.

Creating artwork at the same time as her students strengthens Christine's teaching and heightens her empathy regarding the vulnerability of the creative process. Christine believes that "it's really good to be an artist if you're going to teach art because it does really remind you that making art can be quite a vulnerable thing, especially in process." Before COVID-19, Christine made all of her artwork in the print shop, which also served as classroom space, so students would see when she "did something that wasn't so great." Christine described this challenge:

It was very hard to get used to when I first did it, because I was sure that everyone would think I was no good, or it'd be just so terrible to see me make a mistake. But it ended up being good because I think it has allowed me to be more vulnerable, and also have an empathy for students trying things they haven't tried before.

Even for a professional artist, the creative process is challenging and vulnerable. Artist teachers can use their artistic practice as a resource for their teaching practice. Art teachers who are also practicing artists can act as role models for their students, stay in touch with ways to talk about art, and more effectively relate to and support their students throughout the creative process (Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Students can also form a part of these artist teachers' artistic community. Christine believes that creating her own art and teaching "feed each other back and forth" She said,

It's very exciting to see a student become engaged with something and be really excited about something. But also, just making, just being in the process at the same time students are in the process, we can all learn back and forth from one another.

Christine constantly learns from her students, both as an artist and an art teacher. Students are a central element not only to artist teachers' teaching practices but also in their artistic practices.

These artist teachers found inspiration and growth while devoting themselves to their students. An educational institution's core purpose is to serve its students. In order to best support students, institutions must support teachers. However, educational institutions do not always respect and support artist teachers' dual identities (Hatfield et al., 2006; Strickland, 2020).

The Role of Institution

Ideally, an institution would act as a resource similar to that of a community. In some cases, artist teachers' institutions form a part of their community of support. In other cases, artist teachers seek out the support in their community that they lack from their institutions.

The dynamics at artist teachers' institutions are a major factor in supporting or inhibiting their ability to thrive as both an artist and an art teacher. Institutions of K-12 public education do little to support artist teachers' artist identity (Graham & Zwirn, 2010). The presence of institutional respect and support fluctuates over artist teachers' careers. A lack of institutional respect inhibits artist teachers' ability to thrive in either their art teacher or artist identity. Institutions of higher education support artist teachers in being an artist by recognizing one's work as an artist as a legitimate part of one's work as an art teacher. Teaching roles outside of the institution of school can offer greater flexibility and unique learning opportunities.

K-12 Education. Artist teachers teaching art in K-12 education receive the least support for maintaining their dual identities. Brooke, an art teacher at a public high school, laughed when asked if her institution supports her in being an artist. She answered, no, not at all. She said,

Being a teacher, they expect you to give your life to teaching. There's nothing that they're like, yeah, you should have an outside life and we'll support you in that endeavor... I mean, if I were to go out and be an artist in my downtime and I told them, I'm sure they would give me kudos or something, but it's not like [they'd support me in that].

Brooke's institution doesn't value her identity as an artist. Her administrators may have viewed Brooke's artist identity as something she possessed outside of school rather than something she could leverage to benefit her teaching. Brooke may have laughed at the question because the idea that her school would support her was so far from imagining that it seemed absurd. Advocating for her identity as an artist did not seem possible. As a result, Brooke feels sad when thinking about her identity as an artist.

Florence also teaches in public K-12 education, but at an elementary school. Of the wide range of institutions at which Florence has taught over her 48-year career, she felt most supported when arts integration was central to her institution's mission. The most significant challenge Florence experiences specific to being an elementary school teacher is the extremely limited amount of time she has with her students. She said,

I have almost 300 students. I have 20 different classes. And I have them for 45 minutes a week. So I did the math and this semester from August to December, I saw them for 14 hours and 15 minutes each class. 14 hours is not very much when you have many, many standards and evidence outcomes and measures of student learning and big, important, beautiful skills you want them to be exposed to and develop and practice. It's not going to happen in 14 hours. . . that's part of the overwhelming nature of [teaching art], that the possibilities are infinite for what you could do, or the conversations you could have about

art, or the artists' work you could look at or the techniques you could try out, it's all infinite, but you have 14 hours a semester to do that with 300 people.

Florence's impact on students' lives could substantially increase if her institution gave her more contact time with them (Hatfield et al., 2006).

Higher Education.

Adjunct Positions. Adjunct positions are a major challenge within higher education.

Although none of these artist teachers currently work in adjunct positions, they described it as a context in which maintaining a healthy identity as either an art teacher or an artist was impossible. The one time Christine considered giving up on being a teacher was while working many different adjunct jobs. She said, "When I went from having my tenure job to being an adjunct, I was expected to do all this stuff for very little pay and no support. And so that was the most difficult." Thus, the stability of a full-time or tenure teaching job is important.

Community College. Juliet, an art teacher at a community college, described herself as being at an odd point in her career because in recent years her institution has not supported her artist or teacher identities. Although she insisted upon her own agency to persevere in the face of this challenge, Juliet described it as a "constant... chipping away of self-confidence when you work someplace that doesn't treat you respectfully." The lack of respect and support Juliet experiences at work has called her sense of identity into question. She said,

It's hard to strike a different kind of balance because identity kind of feels in the air.

Which is a very weird place to be at when you're turning 60... It's not like I'm an honored senior faculty member. I am a senior faculty member who is like a crazy old lady who they want to keep away from the department. And I'm the only full-time Studio Art faculty.

However, in the past, there were times when Juliet's institution did support her. She deliberated,

The institution is definitely sucking the life out of me at the same time that I am totally indebted to the institution for giving me tenure and stability as a single mom, and the ability to buy my own home and help my children financially.

Thus, the role of an institution fluctuates over an artist teacher's career. While Juliet's institution supported her ability to be both an artist and an art teacher in the past, it now inhibits her ability to enact either identity.

Private Liberal Arts. The context of higher education is the best at supporting both artist and art teacher identities because, in higher education, work as an artist is an established and legitimate part of one's work as an art teacher (Graham & Zwirn, 2010). For example, making art is part of Christine's job. She voiced the challenges of artists working in public K-12 education and the privilege of her context, saying,

I think one of the really tough things about being an artist and a teacher is the time element. Because you really have two full time jobs. I feel great admiration for public school teachers who are also artists. One of the benefits about being a college or university teacher is that part of your job is to do your research. So it is hard to sometimes make time, but it is actually your job.

The fact that making art is part of Christine's job in higher education lets her find a balance between teaching and art-making, both of which she greatly values. However, even in higher education, studio art is not always given the same esteem as other academic subjects. Christine encountered that "Being in studio art, our work isn't always recognized as research." When funding was provided at a conference for presenters, Christine wasn't recognized as a presenter; she said, "Having a piece of art, I had to really argue, was me disseminating my work." Despite

her position as the artist teacher with the most supportive institution, Christine still needs to consistently advocate for the legitimacy of being an artist.

Additional resources Christine has in her context of higher education are a supportive art department and access to a great studio with a press. Christine uses the college print shop to produce her artwork. This studio access and the expectation that Christine would work as an artist while teaching enables her to maintain a strong identity as an artist.

Nonprofit. Rob, the director of a nonprofit, essentially founded his own institution. He values his position outside of the school system because it gives him more flexibility and enables him to teach skills students may not learn within a typical art class. He said,

Having kids learn individually and be able to self-express, but also be able to come together and figure things out with different kids and make something that's better than the sum of the parts is what inspires my teaching, or guides my teaching. As well as using art as a vehicle to learn more about yourself, to be in the world. So I do have a bias. I was never a regular art teacher and I find Sculpted Sofa's role is best when we are kind of adjunct to a normal school art program.

Teaching through a nonprofit gives Rob a unique opportunity to guide students in collaborative art-making processes.

Money

What educational institutions do provide are stable incomes, which significantly support artist teachers. For instance, Juliet's regular teaching income allows her to have a respectable studio space to work. Her college and local arts organizations have supported her with grants, which were not only fiscal boosts but also encouragements to her artistic momentum.

Additionally, Juliet believes that artist residencies are the best support for an artist since they

enable you to “shut off your academic year” and not worry about money. She said that grants and artist residencies were “key to continuing to flourish as an artist, as well as an educator, because it's restorative time. And it's an affirmation that you have something to offer.” She summarized, “I think time, space and money: those are the three keys to striking true balance.” The three resources of time, space, and money are the evidence of respect.

Money is a deciding resource for whether artist teachers become artists, what they choose to teach their students, and how they spend their time and energy. Lack of money prevents individuals from becoming an artist. For example, halfway through university, Brooke switched her major from drawing to an art teaching major because she realized she was “spending a lot of money on something that probably couldn't be lucrative at all.”

Florence addresses this reality by conceptualizing being an artist very broadly. She believes that “the whole starving artist thing is just so not what's happening in the world,” because art is everywhere and transforming the world. She believes, “You are an artist, we're all artists. We all have artfulness, and it looks different for all of us. All we're here to do is find what ours is, and go for it.” However, Florence said she doesn't encourage children to grow up to be artists. Effectively, despite the idea that everyone is an artist in their own way, it is not feasible to become a practicing artist without substantial economic resources. While art can be found everywhere, support for devoting one's life to creating art cannot be found everywhere.

Rob is also attuned to this reality. It informs the content of his teaching: he thinks it is a disservice to only teach mural painting to kids without many options or a strong family support network because he believes it is nearly impossible to become an artist without the support of family money. To illustrate this point, he said, “Among my university class who are still making art, it's really slim. Their commonalities were: they were really good and came from a really

wealthy, connected family.” Therefore, Rob’s goal is to teach kids real skills that will be useful to them in their lives. He finds that instead of just mural painting, “Welding, 3D relief, ceramic tile mosaics, and stained glass pieces all provide a really rich and awesome art form, but they're also job training skills.”

In addition to determining whether artist teachers become artists and what they choose to teach their students, money shapes how artist teachers spend their time and energy. Raising money is one of the many balls Rob juggles with Sculpted Sofa. Rob wishes he could just focus on supporting his teachers, but instead, he spends great amounts of time and energy writing grants, finding ways to save money, and raising money. Rob emphasized how easy his work would become if money were not such a significant factor.

Creative Energy

While money is a substantial external resource, creative energy is a valuable internal resource. Since much of artist teachers’ creative energy goes into teaching, they find it challenging to retain the creative energy necessary for being an artist. Most artist teachers tend to sacrifice the creative energy needed for being artists for the sake of teaching art (Bremmer et al., 2020).

When asked how she feels about being an artist, Brooke said she feels sad, because she doesn’t put her free time into making art. While Brooke wishes she had more time, she believes that the challenge is really about a lack of energy: she often feels extremely burnt out from teaching. When Brooke does have free time, she uses it to recharge rather than to produce art. She explained, “Teaching is a lot of energy. So a challenge is having the energy to support my desire to make art. There's a desire, but... that passion all goes into teaching.” In order to produce art, Brooke needs a lot of energy and space for emotional catharsis. Since her creative

energy is exhausted by teaching, Brooke doesn't create art with the limited free time she does have.

Artist teachers deliberately strategize to surmount the challenge of lack of energy. In order to continue to be an artist while teaching, Christine only works on pieces for which she has already done most of the planning. She explained, "My strategy is: always have a lot of [art pieces] started, so that when I'm teaching, I'm just working on them and I have something already going so that I don't have to start inventing them." This strategy is necessary because while teaching, "It is really hard to come up with ideas. Because it seems like a lot of my creative energies go into the class."

As the director of Sculpted Sofa, Rob feels like he is "juggling and balls are flying all over the place." While he wishes he could focus on just the teaching part of the nonprofit, fundraising and development demand a lot of energy. This results in Rob feeling like he isn't currently as good at teaching, because, "My brain is just getting ripped apart. There's so much stuff I have to focus on." Therefore, a major challenge to Rob's identity as an art teacher and an artist is the division of energy among all the roles he is juggling. While painting a couple of days each week used to feel great, Rob said, "Now when I paint, it's just brutal." Rob's creative energy has been "all stopped out." He explained,

The part of my brain that's reserved for a creative outlet is completely stressed. And I don't have any extra. So I'm really not making art now, except rarely and in the context of a show or something that's also a fundraiser for Sculpted Sofa.

Although Rob's peers express sadness that he isn't painting, he doesn't miss it, because building a community art park that will be open to thousands of people in perpetuity is a significant life

accomplishment that takes a lot of creative energy. Therefore, to a degree, Rob accepts the fact that his personal well of creative energy is used up for the greater purpose of his nonprofit.

Time

Artist teachers must balance the resource of time between their two professions (MacDonald, 2017). Christine found that the balance of time between her two identities was not a perfect balance: over the years, she developed rhythm and strategies to engage both and find balance within the continuous imbalance. She explained,

My most recent strategy is that it doesn't really work out to be a balance for a long time. ... I have moments when it's all about making art and moments when it's all about teaching. Or it's mostly about teaching and a little bit of making art. Or I'm sort of thinking about my next class, but I'm making art. It might balance out after many months or years, but it isn't really a balance. And then one of the best things is if you can take advantage of holidays and summers.

The balance of time is dynamic and requires intentionality. With experience, artist teachers develop a rhythm amidst the imbalances. Artist teachers can leverage the time available during holidays and summers to support their artistic practice.

Artist teachers express the importance of an intentional designation of time between teaching and making art. Juliet said, "I love that idea that we decide about the separation and the designation of time. It's very important." When Juliet feels balanced, her weekends are dedicated to the studio and the weekdays are dedicated to teaching.

While some artist teachers can work as both an art teacher and an artist within a week, other artist teachers need longer, clearer divisions of time. For example, Florence doesn't go into her studio after work. Upon entering the world of creating art, she feels like, "I just could stay

there forever,” however, she seldom enters that world because it necessitates a large amount of time, with no commitments or interruptions. When Florence does go into the world of creating art, she said,

There is always a result because I can go there in my mind, it's emotional and intellectual and spiritual, and I have time to go to that place that I need to be in. And if I don't have all of that at the same time, it's not going to happen. So it doesn't happen very often.

Each artist teacher developed their own strategies for balancing time, and each artist teacher's balance was different.

The extent to which artist teachers access resources for maintaining both their artist and art teacher identities impacts their personal and professional fulfillment as well as the quality of art education they can provide their students (Adams, 2003; Garber et al., 2020; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hall, 2010; Thornton, 2011). Community, students, institution, money, creative energy, and time are the salient resources through which artist teachers are or are not supported in their dual identity effort. When artist teachers lack support within a certain resource, they seek support through other resources. For example, many of these artist teachers turn to their communities for the support they lack from their institutions. The more support artist teachers receive from these resources, the more likely it is that they can thrive as both art teachers and artists. These resources set the groundwork for artist teachers' ability to achieve a balance between their dual identities.

Part III: Intertwined Nature of the Identities

The identities of artist and art teacher sustain each other. The identity of the artist gives artist teachers the skill of creative problem solving, which enables them to teach dynamically and

constantly change their curriculum. The identity of art teacher means artist teachers are constantly learning and incorporating the skills and mediums they learn into their artwork.

Artist Identity's Influence on Teaching: Creative Problem Solving & Constant Curriculum Change

Artist teachers refine the skill of creative problem solving through their artistic practices; this skill in turn strengthens their teaching. A salient way in which artist teachers' strength of creative problem-solving benefits their teaching is through constant curriculum change (Graham & Zwirn, 2010).

Being an artist influences the way Brooke thinks: she is a creative problem solver in both her art and teaching. She said,

I'm a process oriented person. And especially with metalsmithing, one of the reasons why I loved it is it's so much problem solving. Because you come up with an idea and then it's never easy to make it; it's always very technical and complicated, so you've really got to figure out your steps. I enjoy doing that in my real life. I'm really good at problem solving. Whenever I want something, I don't stop until I get it. I will solve that problem, I'll figure it out... and I always come up with really creative solutions. I feel like I never get stuck in one way of figuring out how to do something. As a teacher, it's made me more flexible because I'm okay with creativity and problem solving.

Brooke brings her artistic strengths of problem-solving, creativity, and flexibility into her teaching.

Brooke changes her curriculum frequently. For example, in the context of students' high rates of mental health challenges after their return to in-person schooling, she kept her classroom as a space for creative outlet rather than stressing about catching up on content like the other

subjects. Brooke's flexibility allows her to adapt her teaching to the changing needs of her students.

Christine also constantly changes her curriculum. She said, “My feeling is that if you teach exactly the same thing all the time, I get bored, the students would get bored. It's like, oh, I've seen all these projects before.” Christine added,

Constant change is something that's really important as a teacher. You need some kind of structure that people are comfortable with so they know what's gonna happen, but you also have to be flexible if something isn't working out.

Notably, in her 48 years of teaching, Florence has never used a curriculum. Her goal is to create safe spaces for creativity and risk and make something unforgettable and meaningful happen in every lesson. She explained, “You want them to really have had an experience that stops them and makes them think, or makes them feel proud of themselves, or makes them come up with a good question.” Florence’s urgency for something meaningful to happen is heightened by the limited time available in elementary school. She said, “I want the kids to experience the life of art. Art in life. And along the way we do tools and techniques and elements of art and art history. And we address all the standards.” Florence’s artistic expertise allows her to address all the art standards in a natural and meaningful way.

These artist teachers leverage their artist identities to remain flexible, keep their students and themselves engaged, and teach meaningfully.

Teacher Identity’s Influence on Art: Cycle Between Teaching and Personal Artwork

When teaching art, artist teachers continue to learn in order to teach and integrate what they learn into their own artwork. Christine, in particular, demonstrates a close connection between her teaching and personal art. She constantly learns skills and experiments with new

mediums in order to teach and then integrates those processes or mediums into her personal artwork. Christine spent an entire summer figuring out how to make woodcut prints in order to teach a college woodcut printing class; now reductive woodcut prints are her primary medium.

When Christine taught a class in sculpture and animation, she first had to learn about those mediums herself. She said, “And so this is sort of a pattern that has developed... where I'm teaching these things that I have to learn how to teach. And that's always interesting, challenging.” She would then use what she learned in her personal art. Christine said her work in installation “came directly out of teaching, cause I was telling students they could make art out of anything. And then I started listening to myself about, well, I could make art out of anything.” Christine described this cycle between her teaching and personal artwork: “It's exciting. Keeps me on my toes. I have to keep learning stuff. I can't pretend to keep up, but I have to keep learning stuff.” Teaching invigorates Christine’s life by challenging her to be a lifelong learner.

Rob also experiments with many different mediums through teaching community projects. He said his personal use of various artistic mediums is “really crazily tied up in Sculpted Sofa.” Rob began using more permanent art forms in his personal artwork after transitioning to that medium in teaching. He described,

It was really fun. I'd done ceramics, but I'd never done any tiled covered sculpture. I would have never even thought about it. But after working with the material and building armatures and welding, experimenting and doing other things and seeing things that didn't work [I've been able to incorporate it into my own art]. I've been able to experiment with a lot of stuff through community projects.

In summary, teaching informs these artist teachers’ identities as artists by promoting constant experimentation, expansion, and learning (Garber et al., 2020).

Achieving Balance: Concluding Portraits

Each artist teacher has achieved a unique balance of identities. They aspire to support others and remain lifelong artists.

Juliet. Juliet has balanced many changing identities: she spoke of the balance of motherhood and career, the balance of being a spouse, and the balance of being a curator, painter, and parent of emerging adults. Although Juliet's balance has been off due to a loss of institutional support for her identity, she believes she will rediscover her balance once she begins working regularly in the studio again. Juliet remains a powerful and impactful teacher. She said,

It is wonderful for students to see a vibrant, empowered painter who isn't the wealthiest in the world. Isn't the most famous in the world, but is producing and has things to say.

And it's so exciting for them and exciting for me in turn to share with them, where I find sparks and how.

Juliet wants to support other artists with necessary resources and maintain relationships based on reciprocity. She said,

I have wanted to create an artist residency where I would be able to get all the nourishment of these great talents who would come in and have space, time, and money for both myself and to nourish others.

Brooke. Brooke's teaching has essentially become her art, because she invests all of her creative energy into her teaching (Bremmer et al., 2020). Although Brooke said the challenge of having enough energy to support being both a teacher and an artist has “obviously negatively impacted me wanting to be an actual functioning artist,” she asserted, “Teaching becomes your art, because I have that creative brain so I feel like, whatever project I touch, I put my own weird little creative twist on it.” Although she isn't creating her own artwork, every day Brooke helps

her 100 students with technique and creative problem-solving. Thus, every day, she is “supporting a hundred pieces of art.” Brooke said the creativity she possesses as an artist “gives you a fresh outlook on things to keep you from getting burnt out.” Brooke's artist identity sustains her teaching identity. She hopes to create art again once completing graduate school for mindfulness.

Rob. Rob described himself as a bit of a reluctant artist because he has never been exclusively committed to art. Instead, he creates freedom for himself to exercise all these different parts of me fully. And that's what it meant to be me. Not like, oh, I'm only doing art; that's what it means to be an artist. I'm definitely an artist, but I'm also a climber and I'm also a teacher and I'm also a dad and I'm also a partner.

Rob successfully engages multiple identities through his community-based teaching and craftsperson-based public art.

Rob wants to be a lifelong artist. He told a story of his friend who was a lifelong artist and teacher, who lived until he was 102, and would host life drawings until the end of his life. Rob said,

I know there's no way I'm pulling that off, but you know, you want to be able to [make art] as long as you can. So he's kind of a role model. And obviously artists work until they're dead, because you're talking about the practice that you built, that's your practice. There's no reason you'd stop or that you need to stop. And you're also the world's expert on the way you do art. So why wouldn't you do it? People are still going to buy it and they're still going to be interested in it. So that's my game plan.

Christine. Christine's artist and art teacher identities are very intertwined; she always engages both identities. She said, “As an artist, we're always engaged with what's around us and

seeing new things... I have a hard time saying, oh, this is my artist hat and this is my teaching hat." For Christine, the identities of artist and art teacher are not "hats" she can put on and then take off depending upon the situation. Rather, Christine engages her artist identity through teaching, and her teaching identity through creating art. While making art, Christine thinks about ideas for teaching; while teaching, Christine thinks about ideas for her art. She is always using both identities.

Christine's artist and teacher identities sustain each other. She reflected that she likes both being an artist and a teacher because "They feed different parts of me." Being an artist feeds Christine's need for introspection: she explained, "I need alone time to think. In order to generate ideas, in order to get things going and figure things out." Being an art teacher feeds Christine's need for interaction: she needs critique of her artwork and the motivation to constantly learn through teaching. She concluded,

I do feel it's a gift to be able to do both. And I don't think I would be as happy alone in my studio or only teaching. For me, it's really important to have both. And I think otherwise I'd go stale as a teacher. And I think I'd be lonely as an artist.

Christine also wants to be a lifelong artist. She pondered how her identity would change upon retiring from teaching,

I've been a teacher for so long that I think those identities are really intertwined. When I retire at some point, how will I be an artist? I think one of the gifts is that we can always be artists. We don't have to retire from being an artist, but how will it be different if I'm not a teacher?

Thus, Christine's identities are so intertwined that she can't imagine one without the other.

Florence. Florence’s artist and art teacher identities are also very intertwined; for her, both identities are about the skill and practice of tapping into what she calls “the infinite artfulness of the world.” Florence is an artist as she teaches and an art teacher as she practices art. Over her 48-year career, she has nurtured thousands of students across diverse contexts. She said her goal is to always help her students “feel validated and proud and like they might try it again. I don't want anyone to stop.” Florence believes in the infinity and abundance of people’s creativity and passes that belief on to her students.

Florence expressed gratitude for the opportunity to interview, saying,

During this week I’ve been so passionate and happy and fulfilled because of this conversation. Because I had this conversation with myself all week and now I'm having it with you. And it's just like at the crux of my life. I mean, it's what my life is about. No one asks me these questions. No one ever asks me these questions. So that's why I love it so much. Thank you.

Questions of identity are central to artist teachers’ existence and very worth asking, analyzing, and reflecting upon.

This study aims to highlight these five artist teachers’ voices and share their wisdom to better understand the questions of what resources are necessary to maintain the identities of artist and art teacher and how the identities inform each other. I am grateful for the narratives these artist teachers shared with me. What I have learned has informed my own conceptualization of my artist and art teacher identities, as well as my goals for the future.

Reflection

I want to be both an artist and an art teacher. The question of how to balance both identities and professions has always been on my mind, yet I have never come across literature or received professional development or guidance on the topic. It is hard to imagine a reality in which I can thrive in both professions; challenges such as a lack of time, money, energy, and support seem like major obstacles to overcome.

I want to believe that it is possible to be both an artist and an art teacher; I want to have a model for myself in others for the way in which I can find a way to thrive in both of these identities. I want to know what resources to access, what context to choose to teach in, and what expectations to have. I want to shape my life in a way that will be most supportive to myself and best enable me to support others.

Previously, I have felt as though choosing either profession would require me to devote myself entirely to it. Maybe teaching art in itself could become my artistic practice. However, the specific type of fulfillment drawn from a personal artistic practice is important to me. I could choose to devote myself entirely to being an artist. However, I would find loneliness and lacking: I want to share art, use it as a tool for communication, mentor young artists, and support change in the world around me. When I chose to enter the MAT program, I felt a sense of failure as an artist. Within the demanding structure of the program, I have not practiced art. In the past, I have felt selfish in my desire not to devote myself entirely to teaching, so discovering the framework which acknowledges that the ability to sustain one's artistic identity can benefit one's ability to teach and the quality of students' art education has been important.

This study has restored my desire to develop both identities. What Christine said about her artist and art teacher identities feeding different parts of her resonated with me and my own

reasoning for why I want to do both. She said, “I think otherwise I'd go stale as a teacher. And I think I'd be lonely as an artist.” I felt inspired by the interviews I conducted. These five artist teachers were honest, open, vulnerable, and wise. They all had a lot to say and we could have talked for longer than the hour.

I plan to focus on further developing my identity as an artist before I enter the field of teaching in a full-time capacity. The reality of the lack of support for maintaining both identities in the context of K-12 education informs my decision not to enter K-12 education right now. Although I would like to access the resources found in teaching art in higher education, such as the expectation that I'd have an artistic practice, co-workers who are also artists, and recognition as an artist, I'm not considering an MFA now due to financial reasons. I'm considering outside-of-school and after-school contexts for their flexibility and the authenticity available when working in a non-traditional context. However, the nonprofit route may not have the same reach and impact as teaching within the structure of a school, it may also lack stability and resources such as money.

My identity as an artist must be supported and valued, not only for my own fulfillment but also because it will improve the quality of art education I can offer my students. In order to secure that support and value, I must access the resources these artist teachers spoke of. First, developing a strong foundation of internal power—through connecting with what is most important to me, building time management skills, and developing my artistic practice—will be vital to sustaining my goals despite the self-doubt that comes with being an artist and art teacher. Furthermore, I will focus on building community, so that I can work in a community of artists, teach in the community, and create art that has a purpose in a broader community.

This study has helped me develop reasonable expectations: I know and trust that the balance between artist and art teacher identities will not work out to be a balance, but that over time, it can become a dynamic balance. The fact that four out of five of the artist teachers whom I interviewed were over 60 years old gives me perspective: identity development is a life-long objective that requires substantial time.

Rather than growing resentful of one profession for keeping me from flourishing in the other profession, I will meditate on the ways in which the two professions can sustain each other. I can leverage my artist identity to support my teaching. The constant learning involved in teaching can support my artistic practice.

Each of the five artist teachers found their own way and balance. Likewise, I want to find my own balance of identities—to find how they can sustain each other and myself. I can choose to work in environments that will support me in that endeavor. The wisdom drawn from these five artist teachers now forms a ground as part of my “internal power” structure.

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Appendix A

Artist & Art Teacher Identity Interview Questions

1. What is your background as an artist?
 - a. Tell me about the art you do. How does being an artist influence your way of thinking? How do you feel about being an artist?
 - b. How has your artistic practice changed over time?
2. What is your background as an art teacher?
 - a. How has your teaching practice changed over time?
 - b. Tell me about the teaching you do. How does being an art teacher influence your way of thinking? How do you feel about being an art teacher?
3. How do your identities as an artist and an art teacher inform each other?
 - a. What are the challenges to being both an artist and an art teacher?
 - b. What supports you in being both an artist and an art teacher?
 - c. How do you balance time for your art and your work as an art teacher?