

Background

Watched through a one-way mirror in the blank confines of an off-white cement room, four fathers and I break open oranges that match the synthetic colors of their worn sweat suits. The smell of the oranges fills the room and gets under our fingernails as we listen to four voices projected from a digital recorder. The voices are of four young people, aged 16-19, discussing the stresses of being separated from their fathers who, like the men listening, are also in prison or jail. Their discussion is matter-of-fact and honest, not judgmental, but the questions they ask bring tears to the eyes of the men in the room. *I never thought about that, how it would make them feel that way*, says one of the men. He is halting, reflective in his comments. We finish listening and I press record, the men begin to speak and respond, adding their own conversations to the growing archive. In a few days, I will take this recording to the four people, aged 16-19 whose fathers are incarcerated and we will mirror the same process; *That's exactly what my dad would have said*, the second group reflects.

The recordings were one aspect of a longer dialogic, arts-based research project that took place between 2009-2010. The project, *What Cannot Be Taken Away: Families and Prisons Project (WCBTA)*, investigated the impact of incarceration on families through a multi-month dialogue between non-related incarcerated fathers and people with incarcerated parents.¹ The weekly dialogic process produced the materials, or data. We then analyzed this data and organized it into large-scale portraits that narrated chosen aspects of their experiences with incarceration. When exhibited, the portraits are shown together or in some combination with additional materials that include audio recordings, writings, documentation of the process and historical context on the growth of the prison system.²

Intro

This chapter explores a set of dialogic art activities that were used as research methods to elaborate understandings and articulations of experience with the prison system.

The project was initiated out of a set of personal observations made while working as a teaching artist in a historically disinvested public school. In particular, I was struck by the parallel discipline systems that existed in the nested community contexts of school (suspension, expulsion) and neighborhood (incarceration). As a

¹ The project can be seen at evanbissell.com

² In this chapter I use only first names as was originally agreed upon in the group. I use “we” when the entire group engaged in activities. The eight portraits were co-created with Chey, Liz, Sadie, Darren, Ben, Melvin, Vontek and Joe. Thanks to Dee Morizano-Myers who co-facilitated workshops in the jail and to Community Works for their logistical and programmatic support.

white educator in a school that was almost entirely students of color (the majority of teachers were white), I was further struck by the lack of curricular focus, awareness or complex analysis of incarceration and its impacts. This project began as a way to address this lack and to use my access as an educator – especially as a white, college-educated man with no incarcerated family members – to make connections across guarded spaces. Through this, my hope was that our creative research and shared learning would challenge those institutional forms and reflect nuanced negotiations of incarceration by people directly impacted. After reaching out to a number of organizations doing related work, I connected with the non-profit Community Works West, a group that works with men in jail through the program Resolve to Stop the Violence and children of incarcerated people (Project WHAT!).

Within this essay, I use “art” as an umbrella for collective and individual inquiry processes that include reflection, conversation, development of symbols and metaphor, and the construction of visual and written narratives. I refer to “data” as the materials that come out of that artistic process, whether spoken, written or represented visually. I explore how the arts based nature of this dialogue led to nuanced and incomplete narratives of experiences with the prison system that reflect an *insistent humanness* in the context of a dehumanizing institution. This insistent humanness is understood as a complex, imperfect, and entangled representation of experience that includes social, physical, mental and spiritual aspects of being. Grant Kester (2011) notes the particular, “...ability of aesthetic experience to transform our perceptions of difference and to open space for forms of knowledge that challenge cognitive, social, or political conventions.” (p. 11). Following this, the visual and aesthetic forms of data collection and analysis that we employed – abstraction, symbol and metaphor – created opportunities to address topics that were otherwise unapproachable and acknowledged multiple ways of knowing that could have escaped, or been buried by, the dominance of spoken or written reflections.

The final portraits are, to follow Donna Haraway (1988), visual representations of situated knowledges, or objectivities that are partial in their sight as informed by positionality and experience. The dialogic process of their creation and the shared exhibition of the final portraits does not create a complete picture of incarceration, but rather a prismatic view of the way that a broad social system impacts eight individuals in shared, and yet distinct, ways. Through this process, I argue that relationships to narrative authority were shifted, creating new validations of expertise and opening multiple possibilities for action. I also briefly discuss how those possibilities were not fully seized or supported in order to strengthen future efforts.

Art and Participation in Public Health Research

I turn to the field of public health in order to develop three related arguments. A strong body of work explores the contributions of community based participatory

research (CBPR) to social justice and health equity efforts (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008; Minkler, Vásquez, Tajik, & Petersen, 2008; Wallerstein & Duran 2006). The inclusion of art in participatory research, including, but not limited to, examples like photovoice (Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998), have been shown to enrich the production of knowledge and its accessibility (Boydell, Gladstone, Volpe, Allemang, & Stasiulis 2012; Fraser & Sayah 2011). This essay builds on this work and introduces the framework of insistent humanness in arts based participatory data collection, analysis and representation.

First, the presence of an arts based participatory action research approach challenges what expertise is valued and made actionable in public health efforts. Public health, like many disciplinary fields, practices what Jason Corburn (2005) calls disciplinary "boundary-keeping" - a policing of *who* can produce knowledge, *what* knowledge is valued, *how* it is valued and *what* is made actionable in the pursuit of health outcomes. Central to a participatory action research orientation is a redistribution of the production and application of knowledge as a form of power (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011). A participatory action research approach, when done critically and with accountability, can shift whose knowledge is valued and how it is created. Creative and artistic processes value knowledge that is historically marginalized from public health but holds rich analytic and descriptive power for understanding and developing strategies to address health inequity. As Shannon Jackson argues, this cross-sector art trespassing "exposes and complicates our awareness of the systems and processes that coordinate and sustain social life." (Thompson, 2012, p. 93).

Second, as acceptable forms of expertise are expanded, new streams of critique and analysis become available. As Balazs and Morello-Frosch (2013) contend, CBPR can extend not only the relevance and reach of research, but also its rigor. I argue that an arts based strategy expands this further. Many of our conversations during the project focused on the embodied impacts of the prison system: stress, physical health, addiction, and mental health. Generally, these health concerns, aggravated by prison and the interlocking social systems of which prison is part, are subsumed by the narrative that prison and criminal laws are necessary elements of a healthy society. This notion builds from the idea that crime is a "disease" and an element of a "few bad apples," and that prison, as a "surgical" intervention can address this. Indeed, Ruth Gilmore (2007) characterizes the logic of the era of mass incarceration as one of "incapacitation," or the removal of a person without any attempt to change the conditions, which led to their incarceration.

However, the portraits and surrounding materials developed in this project present a more complex understanding of health that implicates the prison system as a public health concern. These ideas are increasingly gaining traction in the field of public health, with some pointing out the role prison plays in driving health disparities (Cloud, 2014; The Editorial Board, 2014) and others revealing the residual health impacts of incarceration on families and communities (Hoffmann,

2015; Hatzenbuehler, Keyes, Hamilton, Uddin, & Galea, 2015). This work is in dialogue with social movements and organizing work that make public the impacts of the prison system on black, Latino, Native, and poor communities of all races and ethnicities. Within this project, the findings were reached through dialogic arts activities, allowing us to avoid reproducing the dominant idea of criminality as disease that can, and does, circulate among those most impacted by the prison system and prison supporters alike. In this way, the often organic and abstract data collection process extended the rigor of a possible public health analysis of the prison system by expanding the scope of analysis.

Third, a dialogic arts-based participatory research process connects individual experiences to each other, and to the social and historical construction of those experiences. Following the call of Leung, Yen and Minkler (2004), among others, this pushes public health past an overemphasis on individual level risk. The dialogic form of the project removed the isolation of individual experience and emphasized shared experience. Following a community based participatory research orientation, it built off the understanding that, “knowledge is constructed socially and therefore...research approaches...allow for social, group, or collective analysis of life experiences of power and knowledge.” (as cited in Leung, Yen, & Minkler, 2004, p. 2). The dialogic aspects were essential to the development of situated knowledges and the production of narratives that prison is never limited to individual impacts. As one of the project members, Liz reflected,

“Having people who have been through what you’ve been through, you’ll want to listen to them more and be able to relate. And when you can relate to someone, that’s like the biggest thing you can do to help someone heal, empathizing, just being like, “I know what you’ve been through, man I’ve been through it I know its hard, but there’s another way there’s another road.” I feel like it’s our duty to reach out to another person who’s going through the same thing. Its about accountability and building community.”

In this way, the shared process emphasizes a social or collective response to the multiple and varied impacts of mass incarceration.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

In the following section, I provide an in-depth description of two methods of data collection and the process of data analysis. The descriptions provide insight into processes we used while exploring how visuality and dialogue contributed to findings. The first method develops and connects personal, social and historical stories of self-understanding. The second addresses the limits of description and the role of dialogue and visuality in revealing those. The third section explores the process of analysis.

The Orange Meditation

In 2005, I began working with the artist Brett Cook.³ In workshops and collaborative projects, Cook frequently includes a mindfulness exercise inspired by the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh (Hanh and Lama, 1992). Participants are asked to put out their hand and close their eyes. Cook places a raisin, or sometimes an orange, in each person's hand and the group describes the texture and detail of the fruit with their eyes closed. They are then asked to chew the raisin slowly. As a group, they then describe the complete life-cycle of the raisin – from Cook's bringing it to the group, to the raisin's purchase in the store and the worker who placed it there, its journey from the processing plant to its drying process in the sun, its earlier life as a grape and before that as a flower and the nutrients it derived from the soil, water and sun.

This exercise opens up questions about where one draws the boundaries of their origin story and self-definition. When eating the raisin or orange, when does it cease to become a fruit and become you? Is it possible that you become slightly more raisin?

In *What Cannot Be Taken Away* (WCBTA) we expanded this and involved artistic elements. I decided to use oranges as a visual parallel to the orange prisoner uniforms mandated by the Sheriff. We began by describing the oranges only using our sense of touch and smell and then, including sight, the outside skin of the orange. We then drew our oranges using the blind contour technique, where the drawer only looks at the object they are drawing and does not lift their pencil from the paper. The emphasis was on trying to describe the orange with as much accuracy as possible, rather than creating a predetermined image of the fruit.

Next, we silently peeled the oranges and paid particular attention to the smells, texture of the peel on the inside and out, the presence of the pores in the skin and their "sweating." We then arranged the peels alongside the orange and drew them using a contour technique, where the drawer can look at their paper but can't lift their pencil. The idea is to capture the exact contour, or outline of the peel and fruit in relation to each other.

The third stage involved breaking up the fruit segments and closely examining one wedge, holding it up to the light, smelling it, counting the wedges, and identifying colors that we saw. This final drawing was a longer drawing of any part of the orange with no restrictions on the process of rendering. We compared the different styles of drawing and which aspects created challenges or supports.

³ For two decades, Cook has facilitated large-scale, collaborative art projects that, in their participatory development, draw heavily on contemplative practices and Freirean pedagogy.

At this point, we silently ate our first orange slice and then constructed the story of the orange, from fruit to seed and the nutrients that made it grow. After discussion of the life story of the orange and our connection to it, I gave each person a piece of reflective mylar paper. On the paper, they were asked to write a letter to an ancestor – real or imagined – that constructed a story of self similar to the one we had created for the oranges. We then shared the letters as a group. I later took the letters from the fathers to the young people and vice versa. The following week, we grounded these stories within a historical context of the growth of the prison system in California by examining key events and trends on a timeline. Each person then placed their story and experiences with incarceration within that timeline.

Antonio Gramsci wrote that, “The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory...therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.” (as cited in Said, 1994, p. 33)

In WCBTA, the longer histories of self and the prison system constructed during the orange exercise were contributions to this inventory. Through this process, each group member had to make decisions about which “trace” to pick up and include in the inventory. In the limits of the different drawing styles and the finite space of the letter, we were left with an awareness of the partial representation of the oranges and of self. Together, we contemplated which details were included, which weren’t? What were the imperfections of our descriptive and analytic powers? Could we still recognize the orange? What aspects made one orange different from another? Similarly, the letters we wrote to our ancestors were necessarily partial stories of self.

At the same time, the field from which we collected historical traces was expanded through an inquiry process into the boundaries of an isolated self. While an institutional narrative of the group members’ experience draws a line around the moment of a criminally defined act, the process invited a broader and more complex field of analysis. As C. Greig Crysler (2016) notes, “...the arbitrary bounding of a given problem only serves to disable the analyst’s ability to understand the complex intersection of forces at work in a given situation.” (p. 21). The letters to ancestors drew connections to a longer history and experience that extended beyond the prescribed boundaries of criminality. Multiple letters addressed conditions in one’s neighborhood as a way to connect contemporary challenges and possibilities with those experienced by ancestors impacted by systems like slavery or segregation. In their writing and sharing, the letters destabilized, in part, the authority and weight of institutional narratives of individualized criminality.

Paper sculptures

The childhood game of searching for animals in the shapes of clouds is a simple illustration of the way that our perceptions of phenomena are subjective. Often, through dialogue, discussion and description of our different points of view, we can share what we see with friends, or see it in a new way given what they might have seen. In this way, visual forms that approach descriptions of a phenomenon, but don't precisely describe it, present the opportunity for dialogue and debate about perception. While my isolated perception of a cloud might fall closer to a positivist framework of knowledge that relies on direct observation, a social construction of meaning with friends comes closer to a constructivist framework that relies on co-created knowledge (Leung, Yen, & Minkler, 2004).

Building off of this childhood game, I gave each member a blank piece of white paper and asked them to create a sculpture that represented their relationship to their parents. The limitations of the form meant that, for the most part, the sculptures were sketches of ideas rather than precise visual representations. Further, these were represented as symbols, metaphors or abstractions that allowed for multiple interpretations. In order to convey a more precise meaning, the sculptures required narration and discussion. We also discussed the way that sculptures next to each other changed their meaning. For example, Joe crumpled up his paper as a representation of garbage, while Ben carefully constructed a "flying heart." [see image]. The first garbage sculpture was not fully crumpled though, which raised questions of why not. Did this signal hope, possibility or something else? The seemingly opposite representations – the heart and garbage – prompted conversation about the different relationship to mothers and fathers, and sons and daughters.

The goal was not to create complete understandings through a single object, but to spark group dialogue and discussion about relationships and their intersection with the prison system. The sculptures created a shared language of symbols and metaphors to begin from, and as the conversation progressed, these ideas were pushed and applied in different ways by different people. The visual, intentionally non-precise "data" allowed for continued reinterpretation and co-constructed meanings that were then applied in the development of the final portraits.

A Continuing Inventory

As the weeks progressed, we continued to collect data in multiple ways. We developed more visual and written exercises like those previously described. We looked at historical and contemporary context of the prison system. I carried audio recordings between the two groups as a more "direct" conversation. We also practiced painting techniques through large-scale paintings of each member's eyes, a symbol decided on by the group as both unifying and individualized.

All of our notes and materials were collected in shared sketchbooks, which, in the sense that Gramsci (as cited in Said, 1994) describes, were uncatalogued archives of

the infinity of traces that the prison system had on their lives. Larger materials – the eyes, the timeline, and other workshop materials – were hung on the walls each week as the bare space of our meeting room in the jail was transformed by the growing archive. In a literal way, the exercises sought to make visible the traces of the social conditions that led to and came from incarceration within the workshop space each week.

The Final Portraits

Learnings from analysis

Our next step was to make sense of the data we had created. As we combed through the materials, three ideas became apparent. The first was that the limitations of the visual form – the composition of a formal portrait, a form that we decided on as a group – limited the amount of material that could be included. This meant that “making sense” of the data in an analytic form (the portrait) also meant acknowledging the partial nature of its descriptive power.

Second, reviewing the archive and identifying the narrative scope of the portraits revealed the gaps in what had been made visible up to that point in our process. This prompted an iterative process of analysis and investigation. For example, in reviewing his materials, Vontek recognized the need for a deeper exploration of a childhood moment. The cataloguing of the data allowed us to return to this moment and expand upon it as a central component of his portrait.

Finally, it became apparent that much of our data was a result of the group dialogue. These elements would not have otherwise surfaced if not for the exchange of ideas, materials and words. For example, a comment by one of the fathers became a quote that appeared in Chey’s portrait because it so closely resonated with her relationship to her father. It stood in for her father’s presence within the process and allowed her to respond to the comment within the group space. She then used the quote to anchor the narrative of her portrait [See image of portrait and drawing]. Similarly, a comment by a young person prompted the focus of one of the father’s portraits, which centered on themes of forgiveness and his own relationship with his father.

Analysis as Implicit Critique?

The activities that we used to generate data sought to balance investigation of social context and personal history. The members also brought an active analysis and lived awareness of the ways that the prison system targets nonwhite people and poor people. The final portraits tended to focus on a nuanced subjectivity rather than explicit political analysis of this context. The portraits, as narrative acts, contained both, “occasions when racialized subjects not only step into the recognitions given to them by others but provide intuitions of a future in which relations of subjugation will (could) be transformed” (Carby as cited in Browne, 2015, p. 69).

Each of the portraits held the possibility of this transformation, symbolized through elements that include the removal of a mask, the presence of keys, changing weather, wings, theater curtains and active escape. The transformation of relations pictured within the portraits are transcendent and metaphorical rather than practical, yet they retain an implicit critique of the objective designations of criminality that undergirds the logic of the prison system. To follow Simone Browne (2015), the portraits then, while not making formal or targeted claims to specific rights of the imprisoned or their families, function as decommodificatory narrative acts. They act against racialized public narratives of criminality, particularly of black youth, that deny humanness through characterizations like “super-predators” (Dilulio, 1995) and “demons” (Thomas, 2014). This decommodification is an insistent claim to humanness. It contradicts the narratives produced by a prison system that creates what Lewis Gordon calls a, “denied subjectivity,” which functions as a, “structured violence where ‘all is permitted.’” (as cited in Browne, 2015, p. 110). The multi-faceted dialogue led to a wide-range of data that could be drawn from to compile insistently human portraits.

Data Collection, Representation and Public Health – Insistent Humanness

The situated knowledges that were surfaced through this project, in its slow and iterative process of discovery, its reliance on abstraction, metaphor, visuality, and dialogue, would likely be nearly impossible to capture in an experimental design or the gold standard of public health, the randomized controlled trial. Further, if we had pursued traditional public health representations of data alone, a distilled analysis would likely lose its insistent humanness. Given that this project focuses on a highly asymmetrical power system – incarceration – the retention of this insistent humanness in the presentation of the data is crucial for expressing multiple ways of knowing that disrupt objective narratives of criminality. As Michael de Certeau wrote, “the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.” (as cited in Sirmans, & Budney, 2008, p. 39). The critical incorporation of art and dialogue within a public health framework reminds us that the knowledge we collect, document, and make actionable is never *just a viewpoint and nothing more*. Rather, insistent humanness is the texture and embodiment of people’s lived experience and the relations that shape them. The following section explores the importance of insistent humanness in data collection and analysis as a political action, its potential value for rigor in public health research and the role of dialogue.

Data Representation as a Political Act

Separating or controlling for aspects of lived experience in ways that elide the interaction of multiple forces, experiences, history, and identities narrows both representations and resulting action. In her qualitative study of epidemiological and lay definitions of race, Janet Shim shows how epidemiologists concern with, “statistical confounding between class and race,” in cardiovascular disease research

tended to contrast with the analysis presented by those living with CVD who emphasize, “that race and class *intersect* and *interact with* each other” (Shim, 2005, p. 411)(original emphasis). In the previous descriptions of data collection methods, I intended to show how the work offered by WCBTA moves towards an insistent humanness and away from reproducing categories of “vulnerable” and “marginalized,” identities. In WCBTA we did this through complex and reflexive partial representations of lived experience through the expanded boundaries of analysis that art and dialogue allows for.

Disentangled, categorical, dehumanized representations through data can dangerously reproduce narratives that are ahistorical and focus on decontextualized risk factors. This facilitates, what George Lipsitz (2015) calls the “aestheticizing of political immobility,” which normalizes hierarchies and distributions of power, thereby reinscribing risk through a denied subjectivity. Similarly, Megan Boler’s (1997) critique of “passive empathy” within multiculturalism illustrates the danger of representations that allow for a consumption of another’s experience without action. Narratives that produce sympathy often place the reader/viewer/listener in a place of expertise about someone else’s experience. As a result, action is often taken *on behalf of*, rather than *by* or *with* those most directly affected by an issue.

The challenge of data representation is familiar within public health, which largely employs a positivist framework of counting morbidity and mortality. Public health must move past sympathetic representations, which means expanding what forms of data and methods of collection are valued, how they are represented, and who is involved in this process. Data and analysis created through an arts-based participatory research framework can support this through complex, intersectional analyses and representations. Can these representations also be reflexive and invite a more sustained engagement on the part of the viewer? In WCBTA, this was attempted by showing the portraits alongside annotations created by the group members [see drawing], presentation of the data/materials from the process, historical context and interactive activities for viewers.

Expanding Rigor

Broadening what counts as data and how it is represented in public health research can also expand rigor of the analysis. For example, toxic stress, or the continual exposure to negative experiences that one cannot control, is increasingly viewed within public health as a major source of health disparities (Shonkoff et al. 2012; Francis, Diorio, Liu, & Meaney, 1999; Geronimus, Hicken, Keene, & Bound, 2006). Reoccurring conversations during WCBTA about stress revealed how incarceration intersects with other social determinants of health to contribute to toxic stress.

Sadie investigated this theme through a composition that placed her portrait on a stage with a spotlight, representing the idea that she was an actor in someone else’s play and that the role she was cast in as the daughter of an incarcerated man

destined her to end up in prison. [See image] Above her head is a cartoon thought bubble filled with dozens of small drawings that complicate the image that she feels is projected onto her. Melvin designed his portrait so that he appears to balance on a tightrope. On one side are gravestones filling the street where he grew up, representing the trauma of losing so many close friends and the potential for his own early death. Demons tempt him to make money by selling drugs due to higher returns and social status, another demon represents harassment by the police, and another represents the “mask” he wears to conceal his “authentic” self. On the other side he clears away clouds and reveals his daughter walking on the beach. [See image]

While the portraits do not offer a statistical analysis of cortisol levels (how stress levels are being measured in lab experiments with rats for example), they represent nuanced manifestations of stress caused by incarceration. This expands analysis of the ways that the prison system contributes to stress and the limits of its rehabilitative potential.

The Role of Dialogue

Finally, the dialogic process connected individual experiences to each other. As I’ve stated earlier, and in line with theorizing on participatory research, much of the data would not have been generated without the relational aspects of the project. Questions posed by one member prompted personal reflections of another, symbols created by one were picked up and transformed by another. Many of the members shared how the group aspect of the project sparked new reflections on their own experience and that their experience wasn’t an isolated occurrence or phenomenon. The portraits borrow themes and symbols from each other and frequently reference the relations created through the research.

As facilitator, I supported the dialogue as a connector – through my institutional access to the jail and my ability to carry materials and ideas back and forth – and as a reflector – ensuring that all aspects of our data collection were available for analysis in the evolving conversation and that our research and final paintings were contextualized and representative.

Limitations

While the dialogic process was essential, it fell short of supporting continued action for social justice. This remains a major unanswered possibility of this project; how can, or should, the relationships continue, and how could the relationships have more directly supported action that targeted the material conditions of incarceration? Could the process and outcomes also have been leveraged for report backs to larger groups within the jail or with families impacted by incarceration, targeted media advocacy, or a more concerted analysis of the portraits to develop policy memos, organizing strategies or contributions to public health research on

incarceration? Multiple installations of the project in a diverse set of locations, including Alcatraz Island, a law school, a school of education, juvenile hall, galleries, and more, meant that the work did reach a varied audience of people connected to these issues. However, efforts to aggregate these connections, learnings and potential actions were not realized. These elements would have required a more protracted process and ongoing support, which the project did not have at the time. This chapter is one effort outside of the participatory process to capture some of the learnings in order to share them forward. In future iterations of this or similar projects, it will be essential to forefront and discuss these opportunities.

Conclusion

In this essay I have shown how select methods of data collection in *What Cannot Be Taken Away* used dialogue and art to produce intergroup subjectivity and public narratives of prison that destabilize dominant narratives of criminality. The valuing of individual objective experiences in the data collection generated situated knowledges – objectivities that are partial in their sight as informed by positionality and experience (Haraway, 1988). Haraway (1988) refers to this process as a, “doctrine and practice of objectivity that privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections and hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing” (p. 178). Following Gramsci’s (as cited in Said, 1994) notion of cataloguing the “infinity of traces” as a process of critical consciousness, the final portraits were acts of inventorying the data collection process. The portraits, when displayed publicly are further supplemented through accompanying materials that lay out a broader socio-political and historical context. Taken as a whole, the WCBTA project offers insistently human, provocatively incomplete, and powerfully subjective analyses and representations of the historical, relational, community and personal impacts and experiences of incarceration.

This process holds rich potential within public health, but is also relevant in other human-focused and traditionally positivist fields. Public health is an evidence-based field and the data that drives its decision-making and action remains dominated by random controlled trials with an emphasis on individual level interventions (McGuire, 2005; Mackenzie, & Grossman 2005). While funding for participatory research in public health has increased in the last twenty years, it remains a small portion of the overall funds available for research (Minkler, Blackwell, Thompson, & Tamir, 2003), with likely a much smaller portion incorporating art as a core research method. The limits on what kinds of research qualify for funders maintains the boundaries of knowledge production – limiting who can drive the production of knowledge, what types of knowledge are valued and in what form it is counted as actionable knowledge. Can public health, or other empirical fields, sit with the uncertainty of a song or portrait as data? Arts based participatory research forms like those developed in WCBTA hold the potential for rich descriptive power that strengthens analytical rigor and supports an insistent humanness that does not

contribute to categories of predetermined vulnerability. These strategies are essential to public health practices that seek to act from a place of solidarity.

Works Cited

- Balazs, Carolina L., and Rachel Morello-Frosch. 2013. "The Three Rs: How Community-Based Participatory Research Strengthens the Rigor, Relevance, and Reach of Science." *Environmental Justice* 6 (1): 9–16. doi:10.1089/env.2012.0017.
- Boler, Megan. 1997. "The Risks of Empathy: Interrogating Multiculturalism's Gaze." *Cultural Studies* 11 (2): 253–73. doi:10.1080/09502389700490141.
- Boydell, Katherine M., Brenda M. Gladstone, Tiziana Volpe, Brooke Allemang, and Elaine Stasiulis. 2012. "The Production and Dissemination of Knowledge: A Scoping Review of Arts-Based Health Research." *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 13 (1). <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1711>.
- Browne, Simone. 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Cloud, David. 2014. "On Life Support: Public Health in the Age of Mass Incarceration." Vera Institute of Justice. <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/on-life-support-public-health-mass-incarceration-report.pdf>.
- Corburn, Jason. 2005. *Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice*. Urban and Industrial Environments. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Dilulio, John. 1995. "THE COMING OF THE SUPER -- PREDATORS." *Weekly Standard*. <http://www.weeklystandard.com/the-coming-of-the-super-predators/article/8160>.
- Francis, Darlene, Josie Diorio, Dong Liu, and Michael J. Meaney. 1999. "Nongenomic Transmission Across Generations of Maternal Behavior and Stress Responses in the Rat." *Science* 286 (5442): 1155–58. doi:10.1126/science.286.5442.1155.
- Fraser, Kimberly Diane, and Fatima al Sayah. 2011. "Arts-Based Methods in Health Research: A Systematic Review of the Literature." *Arts & Health* 3 (2): 110–45. doi:10.1080/17533015.2011.561357.
- Geronimus, Arline T., Margaret Hicken, Danya Keene, and John Bound. 2006. "'Weathering' and Age Patterns of Allostatic Load Scores Among Blacks and Whites in the United States." *American Journal of Public Health* 96 (5): 826–33. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2004.060749.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2007. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. American Crossroads 21. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Hanh, Thich Nhat, and H. H. the Dalai Lama. 1992. *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. Edited by Arnold Kotler. New York, N.Y.: Bantam.
- Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575–99.
- Hatzenbuehler, Mark L., Katherine Keyes, Ava Hamilton, Monica Uddin, and Sandro Galea. 2015. "The Collateral Damage of Mass Incarceration: Risk of Psychiatric Morbidity Among Nonincarcerated Residents of High-Incarceration Neighborhoods." *American Journal of Public Health* 105 (1): 138–43. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2014.302184.
- Hoffmann, Emily von. 2015. "How Incarceration Infects a Community." *The Atlantic*, March 6. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/03/how-incarceration-infects-a-community/385967/>.
- Kester, Grant H. 2011. *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Leung, Margaret W., Irene H. Yen, and Meredith Minkler. 2004. "Community Based Participatory Research: A Promising Approach for Increasing Epidemiology's Relevance in the 21st Century." *International Journal of Epidemiology* 33 (3): 499–506. doi:10.1093/ije/dyh010.
- Lipsitz, George. 2015. "Ferguson as a Failure of the Humanities." Lecture, Princeton University, May 1. <http://publicaffairs.princeton.edu/events/ferguson-failure-humanities-lecture-american-studies-scholar-dr-george-lipsitz>.
- Mackenzie, Fiona J., and Jason Grossman. 2005. "The Randomized Controlled Trial: Gold Standard, or Merely Standard?" *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 48 (4): 516–34. doi:10.1353/pbm.2005.0092.
- McGuire, Wendy L. 2005. "Beyond EBM: New Directions for Evidence-Based Public Health." *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 48 (4): 557–69. doi:10.1353/pbm.2005.0081.
- Minkler, Meredith, Angela Glover Blackwell, Mildred Thompson, and Heather Tamir. 2003. "Community-Based Participatory Research: Implications for Public Health Funding." *American Journal of Public Health* 93 (8): 1210–13. doi:10.2105/AJPH.93.8.1210.
- Minkler, Meredith, Victoria Breckwich Vásquez, Mansoureh Tajik, and Dana Petersen. 2008. "Promoting Environmental Justice Through Community-Based Participatory Research: The Role of Community and Partnership Capacity." *Health Education & Behavior* 35 (1): 119–37. doi:10.1177/1090198106287692.
- Minkler, Meredith, and Nina Wallerstein, eds. 2008. *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health: From Process to Outcomes*. 2nd ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- . 2011. *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health: From Process to Outcomes*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

- Shim, Janet K. 2005. "Constructing 'Race' Across the Science-Lay Divide Racial Formation in the Epidemiology and Experience of Cardiovascular Disease." *Social Studies of Science* 35 (3): 405–36. doi:10.1177/0306312705052105.
- Shonkoff, Jack P., Andrew S. Garner, The Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, And Dependent Care, And Section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, et al. 2012. "The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress." *Pediatrics* 129 (1): e232–46. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-2663.
- Sirmans, Franklin, Jen Budney, Menil Collection (Houston, Tex.), P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, and Miami Art Museum, eds. 2008. *NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith*. Houston, Tex. : New Haven: The Menil Collection ; Distributed by Yale University Press.
- The Editorial Board. 2014. "Mass Imprisonment and Public Health." *The New York Times*, November 26. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/27/opinion/mass-imprisonment-and-public-health.html>.
- "The Paradoxes of Design Activism: Expertise, Scale and Exchange | FIELD." 2016. Accessed March 1. <http://field-journal.com/issue-2/crysler>.
- Thomas, Dexter. 2014. "Michael Brown Was Not a Boy, He Was a Demon." *Al Jazeera*, November 26, sec. Opinion. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/11/michael-brown-demon-ferguson-2014112672358760344.html>.
- Thompson, Nato, ed. 2012. *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*. 1st ed. New York, N.Y. : Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Creative Time ; MIT Press.
- Wallerstein, Nina B., and Bonnie Duran. 2006. "Using Community-Based Participatory Research to Address Health Disparities." *Health Promotion Practice* 7 (3): 312–23. doi:10.1177/1524839906289376.
- Wang, Caroline C., Wu Kun Yi, Zhan Wen Tao, and Kathryn Carovano. 1998. "Photovoice as a Participatory Health Promotion Strategy." *Health Promotion International* 13 (1): 75–86. doi:10.1093/heapro/13.1.75.