

The Anthem of Opposition
Rapper and Poet *Carl Óg* Presents a Critique of Cancel Culture
- *A View of Development Education and Arts Based Research Through*
Change Lab 2020.

Elayne Adameczyk Harrington

National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

Professional Master of Education (Art & Design)

2021

National College of Art & Design, Dublin.
School of Education.

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Submitted to the School of Education in Candidacy for the Professional Master in Education
(Art & Design) of Elayne Adamczyk Harrington, 2021.

I hereby declare that this Research Project is entirely my own work and that it has not been
submitted as an exercise for a diploma or degree in any other college or university.

Signed: _____

Date:

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The Anthem of Opposition - Rapper and Poet *Carl Óg* Presents a Critique of Cancel Culture - A View of Development Education and Arts Based Research through Change Lab 2020.

Introduction

Development Education (Global Citizenship Education)(DE) refers to a theory and praxis built around awareness of people, places and customs in the wider world beyond one's own community. Art and education play a vital role in reaching beyond their respective realms and expanding the mindset and values rooted in educators and education globally. Observing the roles of others in the world and locating one's purpose and duty as it relates to that expanded relationship points toward transformation and radical ways of addressing social justice issues (15 Ways to Advance Social Justice in your Community, n.d.). Sustainable Development Goal 10 - Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) aims at reducing inequality throughout the global community and is not limited to focusing on one's own country. This particular SDG emphasises the importance of equity in terms of financial, social and personal as they relate to sex, creed, ethnic and class background, as well as ability and race (#Envision2030: 17 goals to transform the world for persons with disabilities | United Nations Enable, n.d.). Acquiring access to resources and essential services for oppressed communities and groups is an intrinsic part of eradicating poverty (Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

The Change Lab is a model of collaborative practice (King, 2020) and a space for student teachers of Professional Master of Education (PME) in the School of Education to come together at the midpoint of their art teacher education in the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) in order to investigate and respond artistically and critically to contemporary and current themes. The Change Lab provides a critical contextual model of art education with Deweyan and Freirean perspectives (King, Murphy, 2019). It is a strategy for developing pedagogical approaches which promote socially

engaged practice by employing a hands-on approach which should involve radical ideas that spring from this studio-based group work and process. One of the benefits and aims of the project is to unpack how this research can be translated into the classroom and where it can sit within standard curricula. The Ubuntu Network is a national network that promotes and supports the DE into post primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Ireland committed to education for global citizenship, sustainable development and social justice (King, 2020). This approach bears promise to contribute building a more participatory and engaged post primary student junior and senior cycle curriculum.

The framework for the research is arts based research (ABR) - a creative research method which gathers and analyses data collected from subject participation in project work. It can be described as "any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology"... the arts may be used during data collection, analysis, interpretation and/or dissemination" (Jones and Leavy, 2004, pp.1-2). It interprets engagement in the processes of exploration which are oriented around expressive arts. Some of the genres of art media used by researchers include: visual arts, such as drawing, painting, collage and performative such as music, dance and song. Also and perhaps most significant to our project work - written arts based research methods involving poetry, fiction and prose. Interestingly, a subset of another creative based research method is technology, which covers film, photography and audio.

This year's Change Lab is a particularly unique incarnation since it had to be executed and exhibited during COVID-19. This unprecedented period struck up our group, a collective sense of restriction, management of space along with notions of belonging. All this along with ideas around new models of exchange and interaction arose within our group and individual research. Capturing snapshots of our own experiences ranging from our own art practices, teaching experiences and personal experiences throughout COVID fueled the initial drive for us to explore a modern movement and social justice issue. Change Lab consists of groups of artists/teachers working within the gallery space and the NCAD gallery to combine their findings and exhibit work that exemplifies their blended

individual approaches to DE related fields of research. Our particular group, which we named 'Resolve' was based upon reduced inequalities and oppression within our chosen theme which focused on the online world and since COVID enhanced the necessity of internet usage it was even more pertinent. The nature of the themes we touched on pointed towards a social justice issue oriented around standards of communication, freedom and relational problems as related to the internet.

Chapter 1 - Documentation & Analysis

Cancel Culture & Online Antics

1.1

Carl Óg - Catalyst & Creator

The overall theme of the 2020 Change Lab was pitched as *A Moment in Time*, based on the photography exhibition *Moment in Time: A Legacy of Photographs*, which would mark one of our first outings under the new COVID19 healthcare protocols and restrictions as well as our final public expedition together as a PME class. The key concepts of *place and space* were important factors since during the summer within COVID all students had responded individually to a prescribed brief underlining this theme. This extracurricular task served as a precursor to delving deeper into the brief for Change Lab upon return to college. These responses were presented at the very beginning to kickstart our collective thinking around DE and ABR as means to inform how we teach as art educators in a post-primary context as well as a way to assimilate and interpret the current unprecedented times as artists/researchers.

Professor Sarah Glennie remarked on the gallery as a formerly fixed physical site (King and Murphy, 2020). This roused anticipation and intrigue at the prospect of working inside the NCAD gallery with a view to producing a normal exhibition in abnormal times. Glennie commented further on the need for work that communicates to an audience on multiple virtual platforms whilst considering what constitutes a gallery space in this time of global pandemic (2020). My personal response was answering directly to the new mode of online teaching and increased reliance upon technology to communicate and the value of exchange between learners, the public, educator and artist. This was pertinent to King's proposition of space in the context of a thinking, teaching and learning space, as well as considering the pedagogical spaces which we create (2020). I showcased a project I did in collaboration with a young poet called Carl Óg. I had been invited by a teacher from

Beneavin De La Salle College to film a message of encouragement to the students for May 2020 Wellbeing Week. Having just been introduced to Carl after hearing his debut rap single I decided I would make this something truly collaborative, longer-lasting and harder-hitting than a simple and fleeting message of hope. I independently commissioned the young poet to write and record a piece around the theme of wellbeing in COVID. He entitled the spoken word piece 'Note To My Younger Self' ([#1 Weekly Wellbeing Wednesday with TMM, feat. Carl Óg - Rap Vlog \(Beneavin Wellbeing Week\)](#)). Prior to introducing Carl's self-shot formatted work, I elaborated on the elements of Hip-hop in order to share the knowledge and transformative power of this contemporary cultural movement. The aim was that this would help all young people including Beneavin students to get critically and creatively engaged at this difficult time.

The initial phase of Change Lab brought about discussion of oppressed social groups and pertinent current affairs such as police brutality and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. This stemmed from the image of the Black man in society based on what we took from the simulated gallery activity. We selected an image of the artwork of French photographeur JR's enormous fly posted portraits in unofficial public exhibitions. The connection between this depiction and the imagery visible in the media of George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police. The fact of the public being the worldwide witness of this was of huge significance since it was a time when a large amount of the global population was at home and watching this live 'public execution' from their phones/mobile devices via the internet (Almond. S., 2020). Along with SDG10 and the JR image, our group selected Irish street artist Maser's 'Repeal' piece.

This inspired a debate between mural art as the socially acceptable and 'safer' alternative to the more authentic and underground artform of graffiti. Graffiti has the capacity to bring about reflection on various art issues, including the gallery, audience, autonomy and social elements such as rivalry. Rivalry in graffiti culture is expressed as 'dogging' or 'snaking', which is a form of cancelling. This then brought about the topic of 'redacted text' and when we researched cancel culture quickly

encountered people whose names had not only been essentially wiped out but their very faces or identities had been tarnished thus cancelled. This reminded me of the many defaced George Floyd murals and the 'I Can't Breathe' phrase associated with BLM since the death of Eric Garner from which Trudy would later derive inspiration to create a mask bearing an 'X' over the mouth insinuating free speech being X-ed out or cancelled.



Fig. 1: A 2020 Miami protest opposing the grand jury decision not to indict the police officers involved in Eric Garner's death shows a demonstrator with tape over her mouth reading "I Can't Breathe"/photo source: online - Age of Revolutions.com

Fig. 2: Trudy appropriating the X in her mask making to signify restriction of communication/photo source: Tony Murphy

A critical thinking point of the space and place theme for me was recognising the white cube gallery space as the socially acceptable, clean mainstream space and other cultural expressions that are not generally accepted in the gallery as abject, amateur or underground. The fact of this graffiti, the Hiphop element representing language and words in a visual format then pointed us toward the other verbal Hiphop element - rap. At this point I was compelled to bring Carl's expertise in. I felt he could bring something underground and gritty to this project and into the gallery. All of the contemporary aspects of culture that we focused on underlined a clear interest in basing our research and creative process on a modern movement. We debated and conferred on the topics of community, identity, visibility and inclusion. After days of revision and synthesis with the idea of interpretation of public debate within the online realm dominating the discussions our main theme was whittled down to cancel culture. A process of inquiry ensued and our main question was whether it kills free speech.



Fig. 3: Defaced George Floyd tribute mural, Birmingham/photo source: online - CBS42.com
Fig. 4: 'Women Are Heroes', Kenya/photo source: online - Installation: The Talks/photo: JR Art.



Fig. 5: Week 1 of Change Lab with the 'Resolve' team presenting findings to PME2 after the walking gallery activity/photo source: Tony Murphy

Fig. 6: The beginnings of our group's mind mapping featuring Maser murals in Dublin, sketches from underground graffiti artist ABDO and visual imagery denoting the impact of cancel culture/photo source: Resolve

Since ABR is based around engaging with outsiders, the group agreed to involve Carl Óg. This would also enable us the opportunity to assign authorship to a creator closer than us, in age, sentiments and values to the students we teach, thus authenticating the approach from the perspective of educators. Highlighting the necessity of making this an official commissioned work, we

agreed that this Generation Z poet would write a spoken word piece based on the theme as a basis for launching and driving the research. At this stage, the roles and decision-making were not fully realised but we were cooperating, coordinating and planning. Art teacher education had taught us that a stimulus was required to start a process. Although we had no fixed idea of how our research or artifacts would look, we knew that Carl's spoken word piece would catalyse our individual art practices and that ABR would navigate the process.

We felt ABR could allow us to explore various expressive arts approaches for research, initially considering the prospect of written text and voice. We took the technological strand of ABR and pitched ideas of how to utilise digital media for communication and online exchanges in place of normal means of engagement rendered unfeasible due to COVID. Another promise of ABR in the context of this work was the obvious benefit of accumulating qualitative data as opposed to a clinical, detached analysis of impersonal statistics. We wanted this to be real - to be more real than the digital or the online. We considered the relational aspects of online conflict and the mirrored antagonism of the real world and decided to dissect the positive and negative aspects of cancel culture.

1.2

Change Lab Process & Product - Research Methods

It was decided that myself and Carl would do a walking interview as an alternative to sitting down face to face in a cafe or within NCAD. This was planned over text and I asked in advance if I could take notes, a marker of being ethically aware around collaborative research - keeping in mind Carl was not a subject or a typical participant - he was a guest and a co-researcher, serving us by helping to broaden and diversify the research and create the artwork.

At this point we knew we could not move forward with our own individual art practices or engage without some feedback from or some development on the commission. When some days passed without word from Carl we scheduled a Google Meets conference where the others would have a chance to meet, welcome and thank Carl. A contract was mentioned and the group committed to revisiting it after details had been verbally clarified and agreed upon, such as fee and a clearer proposal of expectations from Carl. It would be imperative to assure him as to how we intended to use his content in line with ABR ethics. We carried on our research on contemporary examples of cancelled figures in society, looking at the fear of expressing opinions online, especially on social media. We concluded that one of the most frequent causes of being cancelled occurred in instances where anti-trans, sexist or blackface sentiments and comments had been expressed generally by well-known figures or celebrities. We collected imagery and information around 'cancelled' figures.



Fig. 7: Cancel Culture and Social Media (research slideshow), source: Eimear - Change Lab, 2020.

Eimear had presented her research earlier which gave me food for thought when thinking of starting dialogue with Carl. She had raised the item of JK Rowling, renowned *Harry Potter* author and anti-trans comments that caused consternation. “The trans activist Munroe Bergdorf says, ‘cancel culture is not the same as being held accountable for your actions’...” (Alexander, 2020). I wanted to put this to Carl and ask him what he thought about cancel culture as a type of punishment or justice. I knew Carl had a deep sense of the meaning of toxic masculinity and oppressive stereotypes since during the summer we had filmed the second of his ongoing spoken word video series - ‘Broken Little Boy’ [Carl Óg - 'Broken Little Boy'](#). His poetic works are provocative and look at the dangers of becoming bound up in left and right and his message seems to support keeping dialogue going rather than shutting it down - but he is also not afraid to ‘call out’ and agrees that it is easy to see where cancel culture can be incredibly effective at combating sexism, racism, or any other type of abuse or harmful wrongdoing to others’ (D’amour, nd.). To the group these views were easy to recognise and agree upon whereas we also observed subtler and more complex views on cancel culture. Journalist and author Owen Jones argued on Twitter. “All too often, ‘cancel culture’ becomes a means for very rich and very powerful people to pretend they are victims when people respond to very controversial things they have used their huge public platform to say” (2020).

This struck up a conversation on classism and I spoke of the 2007 Big Brother contestant Jade Goody who was demonised based completely on class after her racially tinged references to Indian co-contestant unleashed a vitriolic media campaign (Jones, 2011, p. 124) Carl and I wondered why no one seems to be cancelled when it comes to classism and in fact the media seems to have license to cancel and essentially destroy someone. “The case of Jade Goody demonstrated that it is possible to say practically anything about people from Jade’s background. They are fair game.” (2011, p. 126) Noting that *Little Britain* was recently removed from streaming platforms because of racism (Turner, 2020) in a wave of cancellations that swept mainstream entertainment in recent years. Further thoughts that came to mind included: If the working-class inadvertently benefit from the abolishment of Vicky Pollard on the basis that the television show was being banned for racist, anti-trans and ableist aspects anyway, is that justice? And what about Travellers and working-class people who have to endure RTÉ’s *Damo & Ivor*? We had a deep discussion about our national broadcaster and on that note we finished our walking interview. Before we parted, on behalf of the group I pitched our thematic question to Carl: *Does Cancel Culture kill free speech?*

A few days had passed and Carl expressed a ‘block’ regarding the theme. As a group we also felt that COVID limitations were hampering the collaborative and social aspects of the process, so at that stage we welcomed the Google Meets session scheduled for the next day. In the meanwhile I had transcribed my written notes from our casual interview. In accordance with Carl’s reluctance to put his name to any one specific statement from our discussion I was challenged to engage my own creativity with the caution of researcher and the care of educator. I crafted a manifesto from the content discreetly synopsising what was discussed in the interview without pinning down statements or ideas directly onto Carl. A prompt response ensued after texting it to him on WhatsApp. His first draft was complete within hours along with the promise of an audio recording.

The piece entitled *Cancel Culture Manifesto (Dialogue with Carl Óg)* marked a sort of digital epistle exchange, bringing a more traditional approach of narrative building between artists which

the group felt was a significant agent within the Change Lab for nurturing equality, mutuality and true collaboration. The manifesto kick-starts with an instruction, rather an invitation to collaborate - one prevalent in Hiphop culture. Just as in Blues it was a chorus of call and response:

When I say 'culture',
Y'all say 'cancelled'
Culture _____
Culture _____

It then proceeds to list things that are proposed 'cancelled'. Covering a myriad of topics discussed with Carl, the punctuated style is a veiled translation of dialogue which urges listener/audience participation if even echoing the punchline within the privacy of one's own mind, an irresistible chant or gang vocal and the typical 'to and fro' rallying cries heard in protest.

Traditional man is cancelled.
Toxic masculinity - cancelled.
Critical thinking - cancelled.
Truth - cancelled.

Full text: [Community Projects | Elayne Harrington](#) (*Cancel Culture Manifesto*)

Through the lens of spoken, written and visual text, still images, filmed and audio material we began to build toward our exhibition. Trudy, who designs for fashion and interiors, brought her print and pattern colour-focused expertise into the mix with experimental tests using hot pink paint. Working with a batch of photographs provided by me from a previous spoken word video shoot with Carl Óg, Eimear stenciled and fashioned blocks of pastel colour, the rigidity of their shape contrasting with the chosen palette. Hannah brought her multidisciplinary approach from an art and design background to create intricate mind maps and interesting imagery such as faceless figures. Text was scrawled unselfconsciously until one whole wall of the gallery was filled with these explosively haphazard streams of thought seeming to map a system of internal dialogue and outward exclamations, a blend of judgement and wonder. A mishmash of faces made it look like a Facebook police line-up, visual and verbal information so unrelenting, one couldn't tell the victims from the perpetrators.

Trudy overlaid text and redacted and canceled out parts of his words and phrases in a visual response to our theme. My fine art background of sculpture, media and performance as well as

socially engaged practice informs many of the aesthetics and approaches of the project. But it was mainly the latter of these aspects as my Hip-hop and poetry practice which nurtured mine and Carl's working relationship. He and I worked together and separately to create lyrically in the spirit of the rap element of the Hip-hop culture which we have both grown up with.

I provided found images which were pre-existing stills of Carl Óg from a previous spoken word video photoshoot which led to Trudy layering of lyrics and quotes from 'Cancel Culture Piece' resulting in visually impactful experiments with print. Perhaps most pertinent to our development of work and the final realisation the power of words, language and identity were prevalent factors where the final product exhibited a range of work that placed emphasis on redaction, obstruction and censorship, highlighting the impact of *Cancel Culture*.

The ruination of man
Sims, intel and incels
Grandads in the father figure roles
Dad hasn't come back from the dole...
Like the man you were yesterday can't change

The only fans we have are scroll addicts
Analysing, who said what eight years ago?
Collecting a who's who of nazis

This is the age of destroying the world our forefathers and mother's created
with one sentence
I feel offended (Lawlor, 2020).



Fig. 8: Visual responses to the theme from Hannah and Eimear alluding to identity, separation and



Fig. 9: Phrases from Carl Óg's piece on cancel culture printing on altered and black and white portrait images of Carl with redaction, layering and colour.



Fig. 10: Stenciling and taping to censor, obstruct and eliminate words.



Fig. 11: Trudy's initial text redaction trials with 'Cancel Culture Manifesto' and Carl Óg's initial handwritten draft of 'Cancel Culture piece'



Fig. 12: A print of Carl's handwritten work with partial text obstruction/highlighting maintaining the 'shocking' pink palette.



Fig. 13, 14: Written and performative work as well as moving image and photography stills from the Cancel Culture shoot with Carl Óg on location at Arran Quay, Dublin for the filming of the spoken word video to be made available for viewing online.

Fig. 15: Digital Media: editing the footage and mixing Carl's vocals.

Chapter 2 - Further Analysis & Reflection

The Working-Class Element & Ethical Arts Based Research

2.1

Status and Social Justice

This chapter will analyse and reflect on the ABR approach within our project and investigate the potential of DE to transform the traditional classroom into a radical learning environment, therefore recognising the Change Lab as ideal praxis for post-primary education.

The idea of involving an outsider in our project was continuing in the spirit of collaboration as with the previous Beneavin College work featuring Carl, as well as a conscious act of passing the baton. The act of our PME group of artists, teachers and researchers moving over allowed Carl's autonomy to preside and equalise his role within the Change Lab team. Since viewing this research through a DE lens it is pertinent to mention that, as a white male Carl bears a large degree of privilege in a global context but is a representative of an oppressed class within our local community, a factor also at the heart of the decision to involve him. We knew the project must not be either exploitative or reductive. Acquiring permission to record, take photos of Carl Óg and intentions to appropriate his text and image had to be transparent and thorough from the very start. The artifacts we produced were displayed through installation, public and digital exhibition plus utilisation of social media platforms, so with Carl being at the centre of this it was right to have continued contact and exchange, treating it as collaboration. To allow misinterpretation or interfere with Carl's contribution would be to condescend and harm, the way that mainstream culture usually does to the voice, face and creativity of the working-class. 'For a very, very long time, certainly in much of the twentieth century, the working-class was idealized (sic) by a small number of very influential intellectuals, people in the arts and education. Otherwise it was patronized (sic)' (Jones, p. 111, 2012).

The majority of the PME staff and student body is made up of white middle class women. When we continually see this type of representation in teacher training and within the professional field in classrooms teaching students like Carl, it fails to create a picture of diversity and inclusivity which DE beckons for our global community. So an inversion of hierarchy which placed a young working class man at the centre (and not in a tokenistic way) positioning him to inform the collective NCAD PME student and staff and the audience was, if not radical, at least refreshing. Since there can be a lot of rhetoric about DE as a vehicle for social change (Bourn, p. 50. 2015) the necessity to engage effective means of authenticating the research process was clear. To self-attenuate, as a teacher with status and power or as a professional artist in order to learn from the wisdom of an oppressed voice and, in turn, assist elevating his power is the ultimate act of distributing power properly and therefore a perfect application of DE. Douglas Bourn referred to elements of influence from Andreotti's work that can be seen in the practice of a number of DE organisations in the UK; one of six being: understanding the significance of power relations. (p. 46, 2015).

2.2

Access, Authorship & Application

As with cancel culture, the disposability or negation of a voice, a story and a presence is the sad reality for people of the lower classes in Irish culture, so it is right to elevate such a voice since, in turn, that can help us teachers to remain humble, teachable and current. Still, I had my concerns based on the fact of both art practice and ABR being deeply deeply transpersonal (Leavy, 2020). To combat the wariness around placing Carl in a vulnerable position I took the action described previously, arranging a fee for the commission, a meeting between Carl and the rest of the group and the organisation of a contract. Engaging someone from outside of the realm of the institution also added an essence of socially engaged art practice to the process. 'To participate is not to create homogeneity but to generate vitality' (Helguera, p. xii, 2011). So this was not just an opportunity to enrich Carl by engaging him in culture/art through the institution, as though he were a student and we experts or teachers with all the answers and the art. The point was that he would embellish, enlarge and meaningfully build upon research, allowing us to be informed by his talent and natural expertise, thus creating a true collaboration with equity and balance of power.

We wanted to invite him in so that he might open up questions around masculinity, class and the online world. For me, Carl's insight from the standpoint of a Generation Z youth along with his working class roots and culture was a chance to hint at what Kerry Guinan calls 'liberating art from class' (Liberate Art - Kerry Guinan, n.d.). This may not have been the key aim of our project, but his voice and presence alone asserts this value. Carl remarked that he had formerly been 'barred' from NCAD on the basis of his attire and not being a student of the college. Ironically, during the Change Lab some local young men who tried to pass through the grounds to get home, perhaps with similar gait or maybe even donning the same brand jacket as Carl were ejected. Carl Óg would speak to the institution and its audience more radically than us alone.

The collaboration commenced with a naturally ethnographic walking interview. Although the focus was not on the environment and the NCAD surrounding, it is worth mentioning that Carl is local to Dublin 8. Activating the conversation on the street amongst other social injustice issues such as poverty and gentrification in the area set the tone for an in-depth dialogue. The style and approach of how the work was carried out informed the end-product and the value of the process. But it is the relationship that allowed this to happen, the connection and identification with Hiphop as a movement and as a culture that speaks to communities and to young people. Being invested in and knowing the value of poetry, of youth and community and having extra-curricular connections and commitments is what gave this project its depth and weight. That is what a focus on DE through the Change Lab and an active ABR approach has supported.

Research that is presented by researchers who are socially separate from the subjects and participants always exemplifies separation and implies power dynamics. This will never support a fully ethical and autonomous approach to social research. Until communities are executing their own research within their own societies in a manner that maintains autonomy and distinction, research will always be viewed with skepticism. So when Carl did not want to be directly quoted under material from our interview it exhibited a healthy cautiousness against the risk of his words, thoughts and feelings being taken out of his control, distorted or misinterpreted. On the note of dissemination and publication of research, although it may extend beyond a journalistic or academic audience on occasion, research may not be as far reaching or as ethical as thought. Non academic involvement in the process is key in order to truly bridge that gap, or chasm. Again, in the spirit of passing the baton, as in truly handing over complete authority by allowing other non professionals to enact change, to disrupt and to decide how exactly research is utilised.

The recent publication of a long term project by Fiona Whelan entitled 'What Does He Need' in collaboration with Broken Talkers and Rialto Youth Project states that it aims to explore how men and boys are shaped by and influence the world they live in (Whelan, 2020). This is inaccurate - it is a

project that looks at young working-class men. It is my estimation that this work literally caricatures working-class culture and the work ebbs dangerously on the cusp of fetishisation. The young men involved in the research and creative process, some of whom are under 18 create 'semi-fictitious' characters who divulge the desolation of poverty in poetry. This puts communities at a risk that seems too subtle for artists and researchers to realise. This type of research does not help to liberate the oppressed nor does it stand as social commentary or subversive satire. This is a dialogue that needs to happen between the youth and community sector and art institutions.



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

Fig. 16: Dublin poet Carl Óg performing 'Cancel Culture piece', a spoken word work commissioned by *Resolve* with the support of the School of Education for the Change Lab 2020 exhibition Launch in NCAD Gallery. The piece can be viewed on Youtube: [Cancel Culture Piece - Carl Óg \(Change Lab 2020\)](#)

Fig. 17 & 18: Carl pictured within the 'Does Cancel Culture Kill Free Speech?' installation, NCAD Gallery, 1st October, 2020.

Conclusion

The Positive Values of Arts Based Research & Remaining Critical

Although interaction was very different from former days in the School of Education and Change Lab, especially due to the mask-wearing, our group still accomplished intimate connection, enabling innovative and imaginative praxis and collaboration to unfold. When Carl Óg had writer's block, as an artist I was able to create spontaneously in order to inspire a shift or to translate the theme so that it spoke to him. This seems to echo some typical 'teacher' qualities of encouragement but rather than this being a teacher-learner moment, I would suggest this simply shows that pastoral support and guidance are limited to the classroom or the teacher job description - it can be a natural means of working together regardless of position or status. In this instance the mutuality and the balance of power was when the valuable learning, building of relationships and real education was happening. If standard curriculum based education was carried out in this way, with a complete shift in the mentality around the status of students, arguably, we would soon realise that no one is more qualified than the community and families of origin from which we come, as well as ourselves to educate us and empower our lives and that of those around us.

Carl's hard-hitting reaction to an autocratic online culture that disregards these very principles is a tonic for what ails the institution as well as a wake-up call for society. Young people are at risk of becoming blinkered critics but not actually learning how to be healthily critical. The opportunities to build tolerance and understanding, nurture love and forgiveness - notions that are not often heard in the academic institution, much less in post-primary schools are not commonplace. Aside from not enough of the right types of teachers teaching, the content is missing a lot of authenticity. Although in theory the curricular content could work, its execution is failing and that is

down to its delivery and the social and moral mind behind it. With the deficit thinking and the social division standard schooling can look a lot like a dichotomous cancel culture of its own.

The Change Lab asks whether the PME can be a socially engaged model for art education and can it sustain its commitment to art as a vehicle for transformation, social justice and citizenship within our second level schools (NCAD, 2017). Without DE we could not have brought the authenticity and real experience and wisdom as viewed through Carl Óg's assimilation, interpretation and response to the field of research. This opens the door for new ways of seeing and processing vital findings of the post-primary learners and their lives, thus authenticating education.

ABR evidences a multilayered and egalitarian approach to research, emphasising the principle of accessibility in, aiming to engage non-academic audiences thus serving the general public. That is to say the development of an intrinsic and constant awareness of the global community, as with DE is to look and work toward enhancing society at large. An ABR informed art educator bears promise to bring critical and creative value and expertise to the classroom which compliments and authenticates the specifications within the current visual art curriculum in Ireland (Junior Cycle Visual Art Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments, 2019).

The Cancel Culture theme enabled our group to work with great variety in terms of contemporary issues and the project itself showed that ABR can take place in various different formats. Through innovative dissemination online and live in the gallery space, our Change Lab realisation truly reached other places and nontypical audiences and momentarily agitated the institution and academic expectations. Our group's willingness to assign academic and artistic power to Carl Óg in order to vocalise on the topics of social injustice and relational discourse online, we learned from his authorship. Through local collaboration, our worldwide community can set its sights on real global unity.

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