**A diptych of dilemma: Becoming an artist and a teacher**

**The frame- An introduction**

The impetus for this article derives from an identified need for research to deliver further insight into the challenges inherent to becoming an artist and teacher (Graham & Zwirn 2010; Hall 2010). Of particular interest are the implications an existing and active artist practice can have for the beginning teacher. According to Hall (2010), becoming an art teacher is a complex process within which personal and professional identities and practices intertwine. This being the case, there is great value in examining the specific actions, decisions and consequences that contribute to shaping the artist becoming teacher process. In this article, I adopt Deleuze’s (1995) use of the term becoming through which to examine formation and interactivity of artist and teacher identity. By definition, becoming is taken as experimentation with the unknown and new coming into being, or *be-coming* (Semetsky 2010). As such, becoming is understood and realised in this article as the movement evident in changes between particular events, such as the interchange inherent to an artist becoming a teacher.

This article explores three teachers’ capacities to maintain arts practice from the perspectives of early career (myself), competent (Angus), and proficient (Jane) artists and teachers (two other participants). All three participants identified as having active artist practices prior to commencing their teacher training. Within this article, Kitchin, Morgan and O’Leary’s (2009) definition of an early career teacher is applied, which defines an early career teacher as someone working within their first five years, post training of professional teaching practice.

As researcher and participant in this study, my own experiences constitute the early career perspective, with my data encapsulating my journey to establishing an artist practice, my teacher training and the first two years of my professional practice as an art teacher. The other two participants’ narratives reflect perspectives of competent (Angus with 15 years experience in teaching) and proficient (Jane with 40 years experience teaching) practices in art and teaching. Through the sharing of and reflection upon our narratives, we were able to elucidate meaning into how each others’ experiences affected us individually and collectively, which then opened the possibility for much greater understandings of self and other to be obtained (Ahn & Filipenko 2007; Fivush & Haden 2003). In this article, a competent teacher is delineated as someone having an excess of five years teaching experience, aligning with Feiman-Nemser’s argument that early career teachers need a further “three or four years to achieve competence and several more to reach proficiency” (2001: 3).

Significant to this article is the interpretation and communication of meaning given to our experiences of becoming art teachers. Research methods that acknowledged the participant’s backgrounds and thinking as both artists and teachers was therefore deemed essential. Through a/r/tography, anecdotal excerpts from each of our stories of experience were selected around which we collaborated to render these in prose. The prose was then interwoven throughout the article to help draw together our perspectives into a vibrant and flowing metanarrative. Throughout the article, the collective participant perspective is referred to as ‘our’ and ‘we’ to indicate our constructed metanarrative. It is in and through the layers of this metanarrative that a richly detailed picture of becoming emerges to elucidate factors that can influence teachers’ capacity to maintain arts practice. In doing so, this article reveals openings through which the unfolding transformative experiences of becoming artists and teachers is illuminated, and within which we can glean deeper understanding of how art teachers can negotiate and resolve challenges encountered in the process of becoming artist and teacher.

**An Existing Picture- Theoretical background**

 Becoming an artist and teacher is a complex process informed by myriad variables. According to Hall, becoming an art teacher requires the entangling of “personal and professional identities as a teacher and an artist; personal and pedagogic philosophy and approach, the ethos and character of their school and the stage of their career” (2010: 109). Through a theoretical lens of becoming, the entwining of artist and teacher identities and practices can be conceived as evolving within a complex map of rhizomatic relations, indicative of “a system without centre or central organising motif” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 12). The rhizome names a principle of connectivity, which can assist the ways we perceive resonance between seemingly conflicting practices, and is innately creative in its capacity to allow us to enact harmonies and synthesis. Multilayered rhizomatic constructs allowed connections to be drawn between seemingly disparate fragments of information, which cande-stratify one’s old ways of thinking (Semetsky 2010) and allow for the creation of different assemblages. These assemblages demonstrated the moments of encounter, within which significant decisions and choices made towards becoming an artist and teacher could be identified and examined.

Stewart (2003) suggests that artists bring an array of complex skills, perspectives, interests and talents highly pertinent to learning. It is also acknowledged that arts practice in itself is “a dynamic process and complex activity that is socially constructed” (2003: 2). This is indicative of how an artist grows both in and through the practice of art making (Carroll 2006). Where the artist’s perspective, experience and processes are created within the context of professional practices in the field (Stewart 2003), their practice becomes situated in historical, social and cultural contexts, mirroring a teacher’s experience. In this way, through processes of making [internal] and presenting [external], how artists share and make meaning of their work resonates with social constructivist approaches to teaching and learning.

In conceptualizations of dual practices, the term artist teacher is not by any means new in current contemporary education and arts circles, rather “artist teacher is a powerful and frequently used term in the fields of art, museum studies, art history, and art education” (Daichendt 2009: 33). There is a still-expanding body of literature revolving around the notion of art teachers who maintain dual practices as both teacher and artist. Interest from researchers in the concept of “teaching artists” or “artist teachers” is evidenced across literature (see Booth 2010; Daichendt 2009; Zwirn 2002). Despite the promotion of positive benefits an artist practice can bring to a pedagogical repertoire, Booth infers that “the field of teaching artistry does not speak in a unified voice – never has and possibly never will” (2010: 1). In this way, definitions of an artist teacher and a teaching artist appear similarly indeterminate.

Despite ongoing developments, artist teacher and teaching artistry is acknowledged as having no creditable certification processes and no suggested sets of curricula (Booth 2010). To encourage beginning art teachers to build their sense of professional self upon ambiguous grounds of practice, such as artist teacher and/or teacher artist, requires caution due to being already preoccupied with negotiating the uncertainty and transience of beginning teacher identity (Cohen-Evron 2002). Several researchers (Daichendt 2009; Hall 2010; Hickman 2010; Graham & Zwirn 2010) emphasise the great potential for synergy between artistry and pedagogy, or arts practice and teaching practice; however, in order to genuinely realise this exchange, the artist teacher must first be able to effectively facilitate reciprocity between their artist and teacher practices (MacDonald & Moss 2013; 2015). This is where acknowledgement of artist and teacher as both distinctive and entwined is important to becoming.

The motivations that bring an artist to enter into teaching can have implications for the quality of arts learning they can offer. The fact that the majority of art specialists enter pre-service teacher training with “studio art and/or art history backgrounds” (Davis 2008:177) does not mean that they have successfully “developed the knowledge, skills or conceptual understandings necessary to *teach* visual art” (Grauer 1998: 20). What this infers is that it is not simply a case of ‘if I can make art, then I can teach art’. Graham and Zwirn echo this in stating that “being an artist does not mean that great [art teaching] pedagogy will follow” (2010: 8). Artists who enter into teaching grapple with a number of challenges. One of these challenges is to understand the various ways their practices as artists can and will inform their practices as teachers (Hatfield, Montana & Deffenbaugh: 2006). Another is resolving how they might feel about the inference that their inability to sustain themselves entirely through their artist practice might be perceived as reflecting failure as artists, or that “those who can, do; those that cannot, teach” (Bernard-Shaw: 1903, as cited in Booth 2010: 1).

**Methods and mediums**

The framework for this article embraces a constructivist paradigm, aligning with naturalistic qualitative method approaches (Hatch 2002), for which autoethnography, narrative inquiry and a/r/tography are well suited. In exploring three distinct perspectives of experience, a sense of purpose and renewed dynamism was realised in the way that individual and other work can be approached and conceptualised. Through exploration of participant data generated from journals, semi-structured interviews and creative artistic practice, critical event narrative analysis (Webster & Mertova 2007; Woods 1993) was used to unfold perceptions and experiences of becoming artists and teachers. In working as a Levi-Straussian (1962) bricoleur, and in consult with Angus and Jane, I interwove diverse aspects of the research, drawing from existing literature and our individual narratives, to assemble a literary collage of rhizomatic complexity. This allowed for the moving of our stories into and around each other, and to explore in creating new meanings. In imagining the research as an inherently creative and collaborative act, I was able to better elicit and explore the places where participant sense of self and subject was constructed (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005; Sameshina 2008).

The discussion unfolds as it would in exploring an artwork for meaning, and that is through the careful consideration of questions pertinent to an artwork’s intended outcomes. In considering our stories as an artwork, researcher and participant were able to “become with them [our stories] as we are drawn into their compound” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:173) and as such, the discussion unfolded as a blending of data and reflection, of substance and message. In order to gain deeper understanding of the transformative experiences we had undergone throughout the courses of our professional careers as teachers and artists, critical event narrative analysis was undertaken. Within the context of narrative investigation, Woods describes a critical event as having the **“**right mix of ingredients at the right time and in the right context” (1993:102) to profoundly impact upon the person behind the story.Critical event narrative analysis enabled retrospective identification and elucidation of significant moments and incidents that occurred as the participants sought to concurrently evolve their professional practices as artists and teachers. In consult with Angus and Jane, I extrapolated rich and specific examples of the complex challenges we as participants each experienced in beginning teaching and seeking to achieve viable balance between art making and teaching. The ensuing experiential insights detailed in this article are not purported to be representative of all artists and teachers, but rather exemplify how individual experiences can be collectively drawn together to raise and contextualise important issues regarding processes inherent to becoming artist and teacher. In this way, the methodological processes adopted align with what Reissman describes as narratives not being able to “speak for themselves or have unanalysed merit; rather they require interpretation when used as data in social research” (2001: 401).

**A diptych of dilemma: An unfolding illustration**

In this section, an illustration of the factors that were determined as impacting the most upon our capacity to maintain artist practice in beginning teaching is unfolded, and in doing so suggests future potentialities (O’Sullivan 2006). Through this process, the creation of a ‘diptych’ as a multimodal rendering (MacDonald & Moss, 2015) of the collective exploration of our becoming artists and teachers is presented. The diptych comprises the metanarrative, where panels of data and prose were arranged through the process of analysis to show the aligning and contrasting ways we, as participants encountered the spaces between becoming and being artists and teachers. In what follows, a process of artistic and analytic exploration, to describe, understand, and ultimately challenge how artist and teacher can co-exist with meaning and purpose is illustrated. Through generation and exploration of critical events and creative prose, the factors deemed most critical were **Time**, and **Priorit**y**.**

**Panel 1: Time**

*Finally the paint is dry*

 *Fingers drag slowly over the surface*

*Searching for hints of what lies beneath*

*The dry glassy veneer of* ***time***

Emerging as critical for each of us as we sought to become artists and teachers, was the challenge of finding and giving sufficient time to both practices. All three of us perceived our art making and teaching as incredibly time hungry practices and professions.

“I felt as though I needed much more time to get my head around just being a teacher before I started to think more seriously about how artist and teacher might come together.”- Abbey.

Jane managed a highly successful professional artist practice while teaching, which included gallery representation both within the state and nationally. She was running a gallery full-time, teaching full-time in a large art department and started postgraduate study, all whilst meeting demands for production of artwork for exhibition. She revealed that in order to achieve this, the reality was that “something ended up getting trimmed somewhere”, and inevitably, if you are not prepared or able to reduce your output expectations, it is often quality or depth in arts practice that is easiest to skim.

“While I was teaching, the art work I made looked the part, but it was lacking the resolution and integrity that full-time attention now allows me to achieve”. – Jane.

We each agreed the practice that we would consciously choose to “skim” in such situations was always the artist practice, but we did acknowledge how, in beginning teaching, we might have also inadvertently found ourselves at times neglecting the quality of our teaching.

“Before I knew it, I was moving onto nutting out the next challenge.

I knew I was overlooking some potentially crucial learning.

Having said this, there simply wasn’t time to look back.

I was reluctant to revisit the discomfort anyway”. – Angus

An issue for Angus as a beginning teacher was not being able to fully digest the significance of experiences before the veneer of time started to gloss things over. As beginning teachers, we each described how our focus would often shift to surviving as opposed to understanding how to improve practice. For us, we agreed that our experiences in beginning professional teaching practice were further problematised by the fact that we struggled to find time to reflect upon and examine our actions as we transferred theoretical understandings to the physical classroom context. We were also often reluctant to allocate time to revisit the discomfort of confronting situations, especially if we felt unprepared to make adequate sense of it. As such, our experiences indicate a propensity to be overwhelmed by a perceived inability to attend to our own learning, and this is when we would find ourselves most likely to ‘teach to survive’ as opposed to developing best practice. For these reasons, we agreed that time was essential for us as beginning teachers to be able to make such assertions, and to identify and work to resolve obstacles that we perceived as inhibiting the development and integrity in our practices.

*Sweeps of subtle glaze*

*Slices of texture*

*A composition of complication*

*Speaking to and for each other*

*A show of investment*

*A whisper of incompetence*

We agreed that our experiences indicate the shared perception that a lack of time contributed to a disconnection with our truth, and from the passions that brought us into teaching. Jane and Angus experienced similar disconnection to their arts practice in starting teaching, although for Jane this was a more deliberate decision, as she believed she would not be able to teach well if she tried to keep up her arts practice. She felt confident in her ability to resume art making once she was settled into teaching.

Jane indicated the belief that if she had tried to keep both art making and teaching going at the same momentum, both practices would have ultimately suffered. In this way, Jane’s approach to beginning teaching showed a depth of maturity and realism that my own early career perspective lacked. In beginning teaching, Angus similarly chose to reprioritise his commitments to only existing commercial art clients over his own personal artistic pursuits.

“If I could have got by financially without doing the commercial artwork in the beginning, I would have let it be whilst I was settling into becoming a teacher”. – Angus.

Our realities of becoming teachers meant we each had less time and energy to dedicate to art making, and as such, a renegotiation of our priorities towards art making was necessary. Angus agreed that finding and managing time as an artist and teacher posed a challenge, but he also perceived this as being just another feature typical to working as an artist and a teacher.

“Technological advancements in digital imaging have freed up a lot of time for me over the years. I can easily work late into the night doing reports on the laptop, or be spending time with my family while editing images on the iPad.” – Angus.

It was in these ways that Angus suggested he was able to make increasingly better use of his time throughout the course of his careers in both teaching and art making. Our experiences confirm and exemplify the ways teachers and artists alike become familiar with and adept at navigating the challenges associated with working under and within the constraints of time (Throsby & Zednik 2010) – a reality of our experiences in both professions. We agreed that we could easily teach or make art full-time and be incredibly busy in doing so.

*In practice*

*Out of practice*

*Give to one*

 *Lose to another*

*No one is satisfied*

*Or so it seems*

In starting out teaching, I convinced myself that the distance I created to my arts practice during teacher training contributed to the struggles I experienced in settling into teaching. A lack of time undoubtedly contributed to my inability to resume and perform many of my activities as an artist; however, the real issue inherent to my struggles in teaching was not allowing sufficient time and attention to establish myself in the classroom.

“During my first year of teaching, I didn’t give my art practice any serious thought, let alone produced anything substantial. I was suddenly a ‘real’ teacher, and I found the expectations overwhelming. I felt like I was doing no good in either [practice]”. – Abbey.

Although frustrated by the challenge of effectively managing my time to allow for meaningful engagement with both art making and teaching, an unexpected benefit appeared to emerge from my disconnection with art making. Upon eventually reconnecting with my artist practice, I found that I had become freer in my willingness to experiment. The break I had created from engaging in artwork actually allowed me to be less bound to my old and familiar ways of working. We agreed that what was initially perceived as negative aided the recovery of self-belief in expressive competence and potential (Bernstein 1996; Burke 2006; Hall, Thomson & Russell 2007).

**Panel 2: Priority**

*To prepare*

*Or to paint*

*A diptych of dilemma*

*Both must be done*

*But which will come first*

*The* ***priority*** *or the preference?*

“I think there are different times throughout the year that the two practices get played off against each other. And there’s no doubt there are times throughout the year when both suffer because of it”. – Jane.

Our experiences reflect a shared understanding that it was challenging to continue the momentum of the arts practice we had prior to beginning teaching. Jane went so far as to suggest that she did not think it was reasonable to expect that in any time during her teaching, she could or should have sought to maintain her arts practice in a full-time capacity. Angus concurred, saying he only needed to look at how much time and energy he invests in making art and teaching to realise that it was entirely impractical to maintain both at high levels.

Our experiences of negotiating balance between art making and teaching practices indicate a perception that unrealistic expectations were to the detriment of both practices. We agreed that in trying to maintain equivalent performance and output in both teaching and art making had the potential to see us doing neither well. Situations inevitably arose where either teaching or art making had to be given priority over the other.

“The art practice is really important to enhancing the quality of your art teaching, but none of that will matter if you can’t get your head around the teaching first”. – Abbey.

Despite the challenges inherent, we each perceived that it was entirely possible to strike a satisfying and healthy balance between our work as artists and teachers; for Angus and Jane in particular, the longevity of their careers in both professional art making and teaching is testament to this possibility. This was evidenced in Jane’s capacity to maintain the quality and volume of artwork necessary for gallery representation, and in Angus’s completion of a Master of Contemporary Art whilst simultaneously producing work professionally for exhibition and other commercial projects. At the time of collecting data for this study, Angus led a large visual and media arts department in a government college, whilst Jane had only very recently retired from leading a large visual and media arts department in an independent school. Further to this role, Jane was also director of the school’s successful independent gallery. Throughout the course of their professional careers, Jane and Angus both managed to negotiate a successful, but admittedly challenging, balance between the demands inherent to their roles as teachers and artists.

“Don’t put pressure on yourself to produce as much art as you were prior to teaching. You’re not going to be able to do that when you start out teaching. Once the stability in your teaching practice comes you can start to re-engage more meaningfully with your art practice”. – Jane.

Both Jane and Angus indicated that their ability to create this balance evolved gradually over the course of several years, requiring a degree of conscious prioritisation of one practice over the other at different times. Angus suggested that if it were possible, he would have reduced his art making during the first three years of beginning to teach. He suggested that if there were no question of financial survival, he would have absolutely prioritised his attention toward “working out the teaching”. Similarly, Jane described making a conscious decision very early on in her teaching career to all but cease her art making and concentrate on settling into teaching, and that this decision was critical to enabling her to successfully establish herself as a teacher.

“One [practice] is always in front of the other. They cycle around

depending on what's happening professionally in regard to your artwork or your teaching work”. – Angus

What Jane and Angus’s experiences exemplify is the shifting nature of balance between artist practice and teaching practice (Hoffman-Kipp 2008). The ability for the teacher and artist to successfully enact this balance shift largely depends upon how established the artist is in their teaching career, and the experiences they have in negotiating professional practice. In our shared experiences of beginning teaching, we agreed that this balance was especially difficult to enact. Our successful negotiation of balance between existing artist practices and beginning teaching practices relied on our preparedness to prioritise development in our weaker practice, which we fervently agreed was teaching. Before genuine balance could be realised, we each felt it essential to tackle the disparity in establishment between our art making and teaching practices.

“My expectations to perform in the classroom [teaching] far exceeded my capabilities or experience. I really wanted to put everything into my teaching and succeed; that takes time, effort and full dedication. I had the exact same expectation and approach to my artwork. It was a recipe for disaster in every way.” – Abbey.

Our experiences as artists becoming teachers reflected an intention to “weave the pursuits of teaching and art making into a tapestry of complementary activities” (Graham & Zwirn 2010: 56). Despite this best intention, we each found in beginning teaching that this was incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to realise. We agreed that our ability to do this required a preparedness to make realistic decisions about expectations of our artist practice, and prioritise consolidation of our learning as teachers.

*Worries, fears, doubts*

 *Retreat into the meditative rhythm*

*Of moving paint back and forth*

*Sweeping aside the whirring activity*

*Of an overactive brain*

*With each stroke of the brush*

*Things quickly quieten*

*A mind returning to a blank canvas*

*Where it resumes agonising over the next move*

Despite a distinct difference of professional obligation inherent between our artist and teaching practices, we either felt the pressure of expectations to maintain engagement in meaningful arts practice, or could see the professional value in doing so for the benefit of our art teaching. Despite being difficult to balance, we collectively ascribed to the belief that teaching and art making had powerful capacity to support and enrich one another, which we felt was critical to furthering confidence and competence in both practices. In beginning teaching, we agreed that these beliefs proved dangerous as they inhibited our preparedness to allow dedicated time for each practice.

“In the beginning, don’t let pressure to make art interfere with your actual teaching. Once the stability in your teaching practice comes you can you start to re-engage meaningfully with your art practice”. – Angus.

Our shared experiences indicate that the moments in which we found ourselves frustrated and lost in the negotiation between art making and teaching were the critical moments whenwe should have redirected our attention back to our teaching. By not prioritising the acclimatisation to our new teaching contexts, we poorly positioned ourselves to tackle the complexity of understanding how, when and where our practices and propensities as artists could inform our teaching in meaningful ways. We agreed that the first three years of our teaching practice was a time during which we were particularly vulnerable to underpreparing and overextending ourselves, thus the sensible prioritisation of our development as making balance between artist and teaching practices difficult to realise.

 *Like building the surface of a painting*

 *We lay foundations in learning to teach*

*Upon which further layers will come to settle*

 *Each one informing and influencing the next*

 *There are still so many layers yet to unfold*

This elicits the importance of the first formative years of teaching, where it can be difficult to undo bad habits and approaches once they are established (Churchill et al 2011; Marsh 2010).As such,we shared the belief that behind every good art teacher was an artist, but critical to achieving quality was getting the balance and timing right. In our beginning teaching, we found that it was especially important to prioritise the establishment of sound teaching practice, as acclimatising to the reality and demands of the classroom was a significant challenge in itself**.**

**Openings**

*Words upon a page*

*Depleted tubes of paint*

*Content scattered across the surface*

*Of one assembled meaning*

In much the same way as “a good story offers not a final closure but a challenge to reflect on familiar norms” (Barone 2000: 98), openings inherent to our stories are offered. Attempting to articulate definitive conclusions has the potential to interrupt the meaning making process for the reader. With this in mind, reflections upon the implications of those factors identified as influencing the participant’s capacities to maintain arts practice in beginning teaching are highlighted as openings.These openings are intended to elicit evocative and provocative questions (Barone 2000; Deleuze 1995), as opposed to fixed, finite or singular answers, and to also elucidate how the space of the research process unfolded both within and for this article as allowing for a type of becoming through processes of reflection and recognition.

Our perceptions of and management of time emerged as a critical influencing factor upon our capacities to become teachers, whilst simultaneously maintaining a pre-existing level of art practice. The manner in which we found ourselves compelled to prioritise practices over each other, and our attitudes towards tackling challenge emerged as significant. Artist practice is recognised as significant to enhancing the quality of learning the art teacher can offer (Bolanos 1986; Graham & Zwirn 2010; Hatfield, Montana & Deffenbaugh 2006) however, our becoming teacher experiences implied the need to be considered and sensible about when, where, why and how we performed as artists. We agreed that artist practice could be perceived as significant to enhancing the quality of learning art teachers can offer, which is in alignment with existing research (Daichendt 2009; Hall 2010; Zwirn 2002). However, exploration of our experiences revealed the potential for great difficulty to be encountered in trying to coordinate when and where the demand of each practice might increase or decrease, or when in becoming teachers, should a particular practice be prioritised over the other. The prioritising of becoming teacher demonstrated the need to address the disparity evident between pre-service teacher knowledge and beginning teacher competence, and to be mindful that an existing artist practice has the potential to both cloud and clarify the in-between space. Despite best efforts to provide novice teachers with rich and formative experiences, our experiences illustrate the crucial void that remains between expectations and experience in practice (Dotger & Smith 2009), but in doing so, our problem solving processes inherent to navigating this void, or traversing this space, are revealing.

Artist practice can be perceived as significant to enhancing the quality of learning the art teacher can offer; however, our experiences indicate that it is potentially impractical for beginning art teachers to expect to maintain, or quickly resume high levels of professional art output whilst becoming teachers. Insights from our experiences help elucidate the struggle that Bullough elaborates upon in his experiences of negotiating the “double-identification and membership” of artist and teacher, where he too described the experience of negotiating reciprocity between practices as a painful struggle during which he became “deeply and profoundly conflicted” (2005: 246). Further to this, our becoming highlights the difficulties that can be faced as beginning teachers, specifically, to manage and coordinate when and where the demand of each practice might increase or decrease, or when we should prioritise a particular practice over the other. As such, this article reveals the detriment of encouraging becoming teachers to aspire towards ambiguous and indeterminate conceptualisations of identity and practice, such as artist teacher, and how this has the potential to exacerbate the challenge of fluid movement in-between artist and teacher space. This reiterates and demonstrates in practice Hall’s (2010) provocation that “negotiating a new identity that integrates the teacher self or persona with an artist self is not a straightforward or always comfortable process” (p. 107). Despite evidence of synergy between artist and teaching practices, our experiences indicate that this synergy was unstable during the first few years of professional teaching practice. It is therefore suggested that pre-service art teachers be supported and encouraged to linger in the transient space between artist and teacher (MacDonald & Moss 2014; 2015) in order to unravel contentions and resolve disconnects between expectations and understandings of what professional teaching practice entails, and the implications this has for becoming teacher and artist.

In creating and allowing for openings, a ‘blank canvas’ upon which we can re-imagine how art teachers might be better prepared for the realities of teaching can be envisaged. In creating opportunities at the pre-service level for art teachers to identify and address areas of insecurity or weakness in their teaching of skills, they can potentially be better positioned to concentrate their efforts on evolving pre-service teaching understandings into the context of professional practice, which in turn might allow for more fluid and meaningful dialogue with, as and for their becoming artist and teacher.

*Pathways, aversions, repairs and cover-ups*

*Dance across the canvas plane*

*Eyes track around the map of becoming*

*Looking back and forth*

 *Up and down*

*The diptych of dilemma unfolds*

*Unbound by the edges of its frame*

In opening, this article represents experiences of becoming artists and teachers from the perspective of beginning, competent and proficient teacher, with the intention of not limiting any one reading to what is immediately perceived. This is pertinent to understanding how we can achieve integrity and become our own authentic selves when we step into and share “the life-worlds of others” (Hayler 2011: 4). It is hoped that people will elicit their own openings from within ours and actualise experience “through multiple different/ciations” (Semetsky 2010: 479).

*Even though the paint has long since dried*

*The dilemma reinvents its shape*

*Always becoming*

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